A Micro-History of the Poor Relief Response to Crisis and Dearth: Quainton, Buckinghamshire 1796-1804

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Abstract

Many local studies have looked at the application of poor relief at parish level. This thesis is unique in considering how the rural agricultural parish of Quainton responded to the dearth of 1799-1801. It considers how flexible Quainton’s relief system was in response to economic crisis and whether, in this context, it served as a ‘welfare state in miniature’ or was merely a ‘safety net’ for the parish’s labouring poor. The micro-analysis of aggregate data shows that expenditure grew by 144 per cent during the dearth. Quainton, initially, was slow to adopt a modified bread scale. After its adoption, aid to poor families with non-productive children escalated, reaching a peak in March 1801, but quickly declined as wheat prices stabilised. Despite the greater level of support given to these families it is questionable whether they were provided with a subsistence income.

Roundsmen’s wages, which had supported Quainton’s unemployed and underemployed labourers, failed at the height of dearth and did not return to a similar level after the crisis. Illness claims and other subsides increased and remained elevated during the 1802-1803 fiscal year, compared to levels between 1796 and 1799. In the post-dearth, the level and means of poor relief in some cohorts of recipients declined below the level of support provided in the pre-dearth.

Quainton’s poor were hit hard by the dearth. In all, this thesis argues that Quainton’s poor relief system demonstrated a certain level of flexibility and was able to respond to higher prices of provision imposed by the dearth, an expectation of a ‘welfare state in miniature’. However, only a few tenets of that welfare state remained in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Therefore, in reality, Quainton’s poor relief system was more of a ‘safety net’ of last resort for the majority of the parish’s labouring poor.
Acknowledgements

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In Memory of

My 4th and 3rd great-grandfathers Charles King, for their work as Quainton’s overseer of the poor in 1778, 1790, and 1800.
## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies</td>
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<td>BMR</td>
<td>Basal Metabolic Rate</td>
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<td>BMI</td>
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<td>HC</td>
<td>House of Commons</td>
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<td>HL</td>
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<td>LDSL</td>
<td>Latter Day Saints Library</td>
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<td>MERL</td>
<td>Museum of English Rural Life</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
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<td>PAL</td>
<td>Physical Activity Level</td>
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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis investigates poor relief in the English parish of Quainton during the years surrounding the dearth of 1799-1801. The dearth, or what G.W. Oxley calls the `Final Crisis`, was the result of three consecutive crop failures; the summer wheat harvest of 1799, and both the winter and summer wheat harvests of 1800.\(^1\) Investigating poor relief in a single agricultural parish during this period allows for close analysis of the level and means of support received by the labouring poor and an exploration as to whether local parishes had the flexibility to support their poor in the face of economic crisis. The main questions this thesis addresses are: What level and means of support did the poor receive in the years prior to the dearth of 1799-1801? How did support change during the dearth and were these measures abandoned or retained once the economic crisis had stabilised? Was Quainton`s poor relief structure flexible enough to meet the needs of its poor during the dearth? Could it be said that Quainton was a `welfare state in miniature` or a `safety net` for the parish`s labouring poor? What were the underlying attitudes of the parish`s poor law authorities and did parish relief as part of an `economy of makeshifts` provide the labouring poor with a subsistence income, before, during, or after the dearth?\(^2\) Finally, given the findings from the previous questions, can Quainton in a broader sense be classified as a comparatively `generous` parish?\(^3\)

It is argued that the parish of Quainton offered a flexible poor relief system that during the dearth provided additional support to its poor particularly to lone-parent families, the unemployed, families with non-productive children, and a variety of pensioners. In addition, it was equally responsive to improving economic conditions after the dearth, with the increased level of relief being quickly withdrawn. Questions of sufficiency, motive, and generosity require further research, but overall

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1 G.W. Oxley, Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601-1834 (Newton Abbot, 1974), pp. 55-56.
2 Survival strategies for the poor included wages, poor relief, charity, help from kin or neighbours, co-habitation, apprenticeship of children, and pawning belongings in their time of need.
3 This comparison encompasses the parishes of Icford, Emberton, Chalfont St Giles, Wavendon, Stoke Goldington, and Middle Claydon in Buckinghamshire`s Ashendon Hundred; BPP, HC, Abstract of Answers and Returns Made Pursuant to an Act, 1804, pp. 22-23.
this micro-historical analysis offers a snapshot of a complex and responsive poor relief system that, for a myriad of reasons, attempted to support its poor through times of economic difficulty.

Even though this research is limited to a short period, it provides a basis for future study regarding the flexibility of local parish responses to economic crises, especially concerning the roles played by family allowances and wage subsidies. Several old poor law case studies cover this timeframe, but make brief acknowledgement of the dearth, if at all. Whilst some research does address the dearth, these analyses are incapable of extrapolating the level and means of support offered to individual paupers at the depth included in this thesis.

Quainton is an excellent example of a large-sized, mixed-agricultural parish, located in the south of England, in what D.A. Baugh classifies as a 'Speenhamland County' (a bread scale parish) of Buckinghamshire. Due to the lack of alternative employment in the parish, Quainton's survival was dependent on the revenues produced by its agricultural community. It therefore serves as a strong case study through which to analyse how underemployment and unemployment tied to the seasonal and unpredictable nature of agricultural markets influenced poor relief expenses.

Many scholars have contributed to the study of the Old Poor Law. With recent advances in computer technology and greater access to primary documents, the study of poor law history has developed from general to specific, enabling researchers to

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test arguments that were previously impossible. Recent works have introduced or elaborated upon several themes that have direct bearing on this research including; the dearth of 1799-1801, the poor law crisis of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, gender and life cycle poverty, micro-politics and the `welfare-state-in miniature`, the `economy of makeshifts`, regionality, and particularity.

**Dearth**

An understanding of the dearth of 1799-1801 is central to an analysis of poor relief expenditure at the turn of the nineteenth century. R. Wells referred to the dearths of the 1790s as `famines`, for which he was highly criticised by his contemporaries who believed that such terminology exaggerated the situation.\(^\text{8}\) Arguably, without a flexible poor relief system there would have been mass starvation and increased mortality for England at that time had no mechanism to outlast deficient harvests. The problem with consecutive crop failure was that grain stocks were totally exhausted during the first failure, compounding the crisis in subsequent episodes.\(^\text{9}\) Prior to 1750, England was a `significant net exporter of wheat`, but by the end of the eighteenth century England had outstripped its capacity to produce enough grain products to meet the growing needs of its population and thus became more reliant on foreign imports.\(^\text{10}\) Total imports of wheat rose from 12,283 imperial quarters in 1781 to 29,844 in 1799. Between January and June 1800, England imported 27,844 imperial quarters whilst by December 1800, government sources estimated that England had a wheat deficit of two million imperial quarters, even counting anticipated imports.\(^\text{11}\) E.A. Wrigley points out `that demand for grain products were relatively inelastic, meaning that even the slightest change in the supply could have a dramatic impact on price`.\(^\text{12}\) Compounding this, grain prices after the 1795-1796 dearth did not fall back to their pre-dearth level.

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Consequently, the dearth of 1799-1801 sent inflation soaring and further intensified England’s dependence on foreign imports of grain.

As the diet of the labouring poor was heavily dependent on grains (wheat in the south of England and oats in the north), the increased price of these commodities had a major impact on poor relief expenditure. A.E. Wells estimates that in 1794 a family of four spent 4 shillings (s) 5 pence (d) a week on bread. By October 1800, this had risen to 12s. At the peak of the crisis, in March 1801, a family of four could have spent 17s a week on bread. Therefore, during the 1799-1800 fiscal year, Wells estimated that families experienced an average weekly deficit of 3s 10d, which climbed to an average of 6s 10d in 1800-1801, leaving no funds for the other necessities of life. The majority of the poor had no recourse except to either apply for poor relief or starve to death. Despite the arrival of ‘700 Corn Ships in the River Thames’ in January 1801, the price of wheat continued to rise and did not decline until late March 1801. Hence, the dearth of 1799-1801 contributed significantly to the poor law crisis at the turn of the nineteenth century.

**Poor Law Crisis**

It is important to understand both the absolute and the *per capita* rise in poor relief expenditure in order to comprehend Quainton’s position in a broader context. By 1803, total poor relief expenditure in England had risen to £4,267,965, a *per capita* rate of 9s 6d. This became a topic of major concern for many at the turn of the nineteenth century. The sharp rise was the result of a myriad of factors, those foremost in the literature besides the dearth will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

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13 R.A.E. Wells, ‘The development of the English rural proletariat and social protest, 1700-1850’, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 6, no. 2 (1979), pp. 115-139, p. 121. Wells makes no mention of how these deficits were calculated.


15 P. Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1882* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 22. These figures reflect an increase from an average of £689,971 in 1748-1750 to £2,004,238 by 1783-1785.

16 T.R. Malthus, in *An Essay on the Principles of Population* (1798), *Library of Economics, and Liberty*, suggests that humanity throughout time has been subject to poverty and that the only way to control relief spending is to control population growth. He contends that population increases at a ‘geometric’ rate, but the means of subsistence rises at an ‘arithmetic’ rate, meaning that the population of any given nation had the potential to outstrip its resources.
M. Blaug’s seminal work rests its argument on the fact that population growth in England had exceeded the nation’s ability, at least in the agricultural areas, to provide full-time employment. He argues that chronic unemployment, substandard wages in areas specialising in the production of wheat, and the lack of alternative employment opportunities resulted in policies of giving modest allowances to families with children.\(^{17}\) Compounding this in the agricultural sector was the movement from live-in servants to day-labourers. The seasonal nature of grain crops meant that a large proportion of agricultural labourers were either underemployed or unemployed during most of the winter months. Blaug maintains that wages in the south were too low to provide a minimum standard of living for a family; therefore, subsidisation was necessary, which he contends continued into the nineteenth century.\(^{18}\)

Offering a different perspective, D.A. Baugh focuses on the relationship between grain prices and poor relief from 1790 to 1814. He infers that the most sensible way to look at poor relief expenses (real value) is in relation to the price of wheat. In contrast to Blaug, Baugh argues that *per capita* poor relief in agricultural parishes moved in harmony with wheat prices rather than unemployment.\(^{19}\) The severe weather in the autumn of 1799 that extended into 1800 sent the prices of commodities and poor relief expenditure to new heights.\(^{20}\) Wheat, the lifeblood of the southern poor had nearly tripled in price by March 1801, but agricultural wages remained unchanged. The real value of wages dropped below subsistence level and the poor had no recourse other than to seek poor relief. In order to understand fully the relationship between the price of commodities and poor relief expenditure, as proposed by Baugh, micro-level studies such as that provided in this research are needed.

According to G.W. Oxley, the Old Poor Law system had a long tradition of giving cash payments to the ‘able-bodied’ when wages fell to levels that could not support a family. He maintains that, with the adoption of bread scale schemes in


\(^{19}\) Baugh, ‘Cost’, p. 58.

\(^{20}\) According to S. Urban, *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 69 (1799), the price of wheat in London per imperial quarter was 46s in January 1799 and by November had risen to 90s.
1795, the Old Poor Law took on a `new face’. The poor harvest in 1794 threatened massive starvation as corn prices doubled whilst wages failed to keep pace. The Speenhamland bread scale was initially viewed as a `temporary measure, an emergency response to unusually severe seasons and high prices’. Nevertheless, in reality, it may have been widely used in some regions a core part of the relief system in agricultural parishes; however many historians argue that it had a long-reaching, detrimental impacts.

Oxley claims that the crisis of 1794-1796 created `no clear cut distinction between pauperism and independence’ as the `able-bodied’ labourer, who would have turned to the poor relief system only in cases of emergencies was now dependent on regular relief. He argues that these types of systems were also highly advantageous to employers as they could keep wages low knowing that the parishes would make up the difference, thereby redistributing some of the cost of maintenance of these labourers and their families across all ratepayers. This was probably not the case in Quainton as all of the ratepayers were heavily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, and as a consequently there was minimal redistribution to ratepayers who did not employ the labouring poor.

In short, an attempt to single out a specific reason for skyrocketing poor relief expenditure during this period is impossible. It was the result of a combination of structural factors and short-term changes in unemployment and food prices. As a result, emergency measures such as bread scales, allowance-in-aid of wages, and the use of roundsmen for some parishes became the norm. This research analyses the impact of these changes on Quainton’s poor relief policy.

21 Oxley, Poor Relief, p. 110.
23 K. Polanyi, The Great Transformation (Boston, 1944), pp. 78-79.
24 Ibid., p. 113.
25 Roundsmen were unemployed agricultural labourers who made the rounds of the area’s farms every morning in search of work. In some parishes, farmers were obliged to employ a certain number of labourers based upon the value of their property. Oxley, Poor Relief, p. 117; J.P. Huzel, ‘The demographic impact of the Old Poor Law: more reflection of Malthus’, The Economic History Review, New Series, 33, no. 3 (1980), pp. 367-381, p.379. Huzel, in contrast to Malthus, argues that population increase was not a result of parish allowances, but was caused by social, economic, and political issues. In addition, even though some of the labouring poor were able to migrate, large families were riveted to their parish of settlement because of the settlement laws.
Poverty, Gender, and Life-Cycle Poverty

Poverty was an escalating issue in England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Socio-economic factors resulted in a greater percentage of England’s population being susceptible to poverty, causing poor relief expenditure to escalate. Poverty was particularly widespread in the rural southern agricultural counties of England where population proliferation, newly developed farming practices, and the seasonal nature of agriculture, decreased the demand for labourers, increased male underemployment or unemployment, and marginalised women and children in the agricultural labour market. Lack of alternative employment options and declining cottage industries such as lacemaking, straw plaiting and spinning, which mainly employed women and children, put families at greater risk, as their income was necessary for the survival of the family unit. Coupled with low agricultural wages, this meant that poor families earned less as an economic unit, were progressively unable to keep pace with inflation, and were, consequently, more susceptible to life-cycle poverty.

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Figure 1.1 Rowntree’s Diagram of Labourer’s Life-Cycle Poverty

B.S. Rowntree, in his study of York in the late 1800s, suggested that a pauper’s life-cycle was marked by five alternating periods of ‘want’ and comparative ‘plenty’ (Figure 1:1).\textsuperscript{27} He maintained that individuals were more susceptible to poverty (periods of ‘want’): first as children; after marriage when there were non-productive young children in the household; and finally, in old age or when they were unable to work due to infirmity. The two periods of comparative ‘plenty’ were from when individuals started earning money until early marriage, and when their wage earning children had not yet left home.\textsuperscript{28} Additionally, S. Williams argues that ‘the proportion of the population suffering life-cycle poverty most probably increased’ as independent labourers became progressively wage-dependent, whilst at the same time their set of strategies for survival, (‘economies of makeshifts’) contracted.\textsuperscript{29} Accordingly, S. King feels that, ‘welfare historians have been slow to engage with the concept of life-cycle poverty.’\textsuperscript{30}

The specific life-cycle points at which the poor traditionally became more vulnerable to poverty are reflected in poor relief rolls. Widows, lone-parent households, orphans, and the elderly or disabled, as well as a disproportionate number of females, initially dominated these rolls. However, towards the end of the eighteenth century, not only did the level of poverty increase, but its structure changed rapidly. According to T. Wales in his seventeenth-century study Norfolk, the poor relief system became a ‘victim of the breakdown of the household economy’, which is certainly still evident in both the eighteenth and nineteen century.\textsuperscript{31} Overseers’ accounts in southern England point towards increasingly younger and more male-dominated poverty as economic conditions gave birth to the Speenhamland bread scale, roundsmen and allowances-in-aid-of wages.\textsuperscript{32} Additionally, elderly men became more susceptible to employment marginalisation

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{30} King, \textit{Poverty}, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{32} Quainton supported large families and unemployed labourers prior to the late 1790s. CBS, PR 169/12/6, Overseers’ Accounts.
\end{footnotesize}
due to the surplus of labour. It became more acceptable for parishes to support older men as they were less expensive compared to an employed labourer with children. Williams found that women in some Bedfordshire parishes remained the principal recipients of relief, but were often placed in the position of convincing male-dominated vestries that they deserved relief. The female dominance of the poor law rolls in these parishes did not change until after 1815, when a large number of men and boys received occasional unemployment relief. B. Stapleton, whilst studying Odiham, discovered that many widows with families were in a continual poverty trap, which conformed to neither the rural nor urban life-cycle phases described by Snell and Rowntree. It can be suggested that without a husband’s wages there was no way for a widow to earn enough to escape financial dependency on the parish, even after her children had left home; for them there were no periods of comparative ‘plenty’.

Welfare State in Miniature and Micro-Politics

Some historians believe that the poor relief systems in parishes of southern England were a ‘welfare state in miniature’. This is because the structural components of parish relief toward the end of the eighteenth century were somewhat comparable to the broad spectrum of services provided by a modern welfare state. For example, parishes increasingly provided pensions for the elderly and disabled, medical and nursing services, wage supplements for the underemployed or unemployed, and child allowances and support for orphans and illegitimate children, all of which were financed and administered at the local level. P. Thane suggests, however, that historical references, which propose that the Old Poor Law may have ‘equalled or outstripped those of the modern welfare state’, should be treated with

33 Williams, Poverty, p. 129.
34 Ibid., p. 163.
35 B. Stapleton, ‘Inherited poverty and life-cycle poverty: Odiham, Hampshire, 1650-1850’, Social History 18 (1993), pp. 339-355. Snell states that there was a particular life-cycle to rural poverty: (1) ‘with family men aged about thirty-four with three or more children as yet economically unproductive, and (2) the aged being particularly dependent on the poor rates.’ Snell, Annals, p. 28. Rowntree’s description of urban life-cycle consists of five alternating periods of want and comparative plenty (see Figure 4:1) Rowntree, Poverty, p. 136.
36 Blaug, ‘Poor Law’; Snell, Annals.
caution. She points out that there are qualitative differences between the modern welfare state, which guarantees services to those over sixty-five, and relief under the Old Poor Law, which was extended only to a minority of the elderly poor. This is true to the extent that, in order to receive relief under the Old Poor Law, recipients were subject to a strict needs test and receipt of relief was conditional upon a recipient’s conformity to norms of behaviour. Under the Old Poor Law, ‘English men and women could count on the relief authorities to help them in a variety of well-defined situations: old age, widowhood, illness, and disability’, sometimes well before what modern society classes as old age. That said the structural components of Quainton’s poor relief system closely align with those of the modern welfare state.

Poor relief encounters were organised around face-to-face negotiations between overseers and their neighbours. For many of the families that played key roles in rural parish vestries of southern England, their own livelihoods depended on the availability of an agricultural workforce that was in a reasonable state of health, without which their communities would not have survived. Therefore, in the light of growing poverty, they had no choice but to provide relief to the needy.

Power in the English parish, as described by Williams, was transmitted and negotiated through a triangle: the labouring poor, the parish officers and vestry, and the county magistrate. S. Hindle points out that another triangle also existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ‘between the parish, the magistracy, and the central court of common law’, as the judges ‘acted as mediators and makers of policy’. Often the lines between these groups were blurred. According to M.H.D. van Leeuwen, ‘both elites [the upper levels of society] and the poor act in their own interests, agreeing together upon a particular relief package in exchange for the desired “behaviour” which depended on the shape of the welfare institution and upon

38 Ibid., p. 51.
39 Ibid., p. 55.
40 Williams, Poverty, p. 10.
Hindle’s research on Holland Fen centres on complex paternalistic principles of the social and political relationships between these groups and he consequently suggests that because overseers viewed themselves as possible recipients of poor relief in their own old ages, their decisions formed social insurance for themselves. The shape of poor relief practices in a parish were based upon obligations, responsibilities, group interplays, social and religious duty towards the poor, and a developing sense among the indigent that they had a `right` to relief.

Overseers and the vestry were central to the formulation of poor law policy and the assessment of poor rates (taxes) within local communities. According to Williams, faced with increasing poverty, some parishes in southern counties found it necessary to move the taxation burden further down the social scale, thereby increasing the number of ratepayers as well as the propensity to rate the poor. Even with potentially more vestry members, farmers with large landholding still dominated the vestries of rural parishes in southern England. They could still outvote small landholders, tradesmen, and cottagers because their power resided in the fact that, as the main employers, they controlled the economies of their communities.

Questions of settlement and entitlement weighed heavily on the minds of parish officers, as more of the indigent population considered poor relief their `right`. This was compounded by the officers` inability, as established by law, to question a poor person`s settlement (their right to receive poor relief from the community) until they became chargeable. The `right to relief` was a `crucial weapon in the battle to avoid starvation` resulting in the indigent seeking out gentry to whom they could appeal when vestry did not rule in their favour. Quainton`s parish officers were not

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45 Williams, Poverty, p.77. Williams’s points out that this practice was prevalent in Bedfordshire. This, however, did not infer that the poor would receive settlement and therefore be entitled to relief. Quainton’s ratepayer records do not survive; therefore, it cannot be determined whether this practice was implemented.
47 Hindle, On the Parish, p. 409.
immune from being brought before the magistrate by the labouring poor when the vestry did not find in their favour.\textsuperscript{48}

Magistrates not only settled disputes between the poor and vestry regarding poor relief, but also were instrumental in addressing the general plight of the poor. As P. Dunkley argues, the 1790s represented

a real watershed in the history of poor law administration, for after that decade magistrates in large number moved to control directly relief distribution in order to avert intolerable economic pressure on the poor.\textsuperscript{49}

For example, the magistrates of Buckinghamshire during the Epiphany session of 1795 ruled on a scale for supplementation of wages for the poor based on the number of children in a family less than ten years of age, a month prior to the more generous Speenhamland ruling in May 1795.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{Economy of Makeshifts}

O. Hufton, in her study of poverty in eighteenth-century France, uses the term ‘economy of makeshifts’ to identify a set of strategies which the poor exercised in order to survive.\textsuperscript{51} The adoption of this phrase by English historians is slightly different, as the degree of geographic mobility demonstrated in France was not present in England because of settlement laws and a lack of seasonal migration.\textsuperscript{52}

Both ‘economy of makeshifts’ and J. Innes’ ‘mixed economy of welfare’

imply that “legal charity” or formal welfare provided by a parish… invites reconstruction of the alternative survival strategies through which the poor themselves might put together a living.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{48} CBS, Q/SO/26, Quarter Session 1800–Epiphany 1801. Michaelmas Session 1800, the case of Benjamin Coles and his wife Phillis.
\textsuperscript{50} CBS, Q/SO/24, Quarter Session Easter 1794 to Easter 1797.
\textsuperscript{52} S. King, \textit{The Poor}, p. 13.
Towards the end of the eighteenth century, in southern England’s agricultural belt, the ‘economy of makeshifts’ changed dramatically due to factors that caused the breakdown of the family economy. Poor families not only used these strategies during periods of ‘want’ or ‘destitution’, but also in their day-to-day struggles to survive. These strategies included the gathering of different types of material support via wages, parish relief, common rights (which decreased after enclosure), charity, the assistance of kin or neighbours, co-residence, apprenticeship or service, pawning, re-marriage, and friendly societies.

A question that remains to be answered by historians is how the poor managed to balance their ‘economy of makeshifts’ during different life-cycle stages or periods of crisis. J. Broad suggests that poor families became conversant with the seasonal and life-cycle nature of different poor relief options and were, consequently, able to manipulate them to their advantage. S. King believes the key factor lies in the nature of specific individuals and the families. He points out that the differences between the deep or rich ‘economy of makeshifts’ in the north and west of England might have been a response to, rather than an explanation of, the restricted entitlement and generosity of poor relief, as compared with the shallow ‘economies of makeshifts’ in the south and east.

This section explores the role played by ‘wages’ and ‘poor relief’ in the poor’s ‘economy of makeshifts’ as opposed to such strategies as the help of kin or neighbour, and cost savings of co-habitation that have left no paper trail. According to A. Tompkins, uncovering the significance played by wages in providing subsistence can be challenging due to the changing trends and seasonal nature of employment for men, women, and children during this time. The position of wages

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54 King, *The Poor*, p. 20.
55 Enclosure in this sense means the fencing of parcels of common or wasteland, usually by hedges, restricting the labouring poor’s common rights. There were no friendly societies in Quainton during this period.
59 King, ‘Conclusion’, p. 268.
in the `economy of makeshifts` depended upon the availability of work, the skill level of those seeking work, the composition of a household, a family’s life-cycle phase, the health of individuals, and the combined factors that determined prevailing wages. In theory, as agriculture was the residual employer, the size of the population it had to support directly or indirectly, either on the payroll or on the parish, was governed not only by size of the labour requirement but also by numbers seeking work.

Though Quainton’s local economy did not change outwardly with the advent of the Industrial Revolution (from 1760 onwards), the promise of employment for a young labourer elsewhere might have affected Quainton’s level of surplus labour. However, families posed a larger threat of dependency on the parish since they tended to be riveted to their parish of settlement.

Poor relief coupled with wages became a significant component of the `economy of makeshifts` in southern English counties. The significance of parish relief within the `economy of makeshifts` depended upon regionality, particularity, and the specific factors that reduced individuals to a life of poverty. Many coping strategies of the poor went undocumented; nevertheless, parish overseers and charities documented their interactions with the poor. These documents speak to the burden of poverty imposed on communities and thus are of great value to historians. S. King and Snell both point out that overseers’ accounts in southern England present a very different picture of poverty and poor relief from those of the north and west, which were less generous. During the late 1790s and early 1800s more individuals and different groups of paupers throughout England found it necessary, to apply to parishes for assistance as the cost of commodities escalated whilst wages remained

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62 L. Scott-Taylor and E.A. Wrigley argue that the Industrial Revolution accurately occurred much earlier, in the sixteen-century population growth and the fact that a ‘substantial fraction of each rising generation in rural areas found employment in secondary and tertiary trades’ which ‘often involved migration into towns’. L. Scott-Taylor and E.A. Wrigley, ‘Occupational structure and population change’, www.geog.cam.ac.uk [accessed 31/10/2015].
63 These themes are echoed throughout S. King Poverty and Welfare in England 1700-1850.
64 Snell, Annals; King, Poverty.
Nevertheless, M. Hanley found that wages were still a vital strategy, even for those on relief, and that it was rare that someone labelled `poor` did no work at all.65

Regionality and Particularity

The Elizabeth I Act of 1601 charged the parishes of England with the maintenance of their own poor. It did not specify, outline, or establish an infrastructure for doing so.66 Hence, over time, regional differences dictated how the Old Poor Law was interpreted and acted upon. Historians have analysed and classified these regional differences in various ways. For example, Oxley argues that two regional patterns of parishes emerged, with contrasting characteristics. In the north and west, several nucleated villages or hamlets were gathered together into an extensive parish, which did not coincide with single social and economic communities. Therefore, ratepayers might have been less willing to contribute to the maintenance of paupers in a distant hamlet, making administration difficult. In contrast, parishes in the south tended to be more localised. Consequently, parishioners were more willing to support their neighbours in their time of need.67

S. King, one of the most influential historians writing on subject of the regionality of poor relief, identifies two specific areas of difference in the application of poor relief between the north and west versus the south and east. First, the rural communities and towns of the south had a `wider definition of entitlement’ and ‘granted more substantial nominal allowances’ to more paupers.68 Secondly, the southern and eastern parishes intervened earlier in the descent of individuals into poverty and recognised `relative` as well as `absolute` poverty.69 The package of relief received by individual paupers in the south tended to be higher than that offered to those on either regular or casual relief in the north and west. S. King estimates that additional irregular payments, in either cash or kind, could have added

65 Hanly, ‘The economy’, in King, The Poor, p. 27.
66 39 Eliz., c. 2, The relief of the poor, in C. Pickering (ed.), Statutes at Large, from the thirty-ninth year of Queen Elizabeth, to the twelfth year of King Charles II (Cambridge, 1763), vol. 7, p. 30.
67 Oxley, Poor Relief, pp. 34-35.
68 King, ‘Conclusion’, p. 257.
69 `Absolute poverty’ is defined as the minimal requirements necessary to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, healthcare, and shelter. `Relative poverty’ is defined as being below some relative poverty threshold.
30 per cent to a pensioner’s income.\textsuperscript{70} Thirdly, there were ‘considerable and increasing gender differences’ in both indoor and outdoor relief, with the poor rolls becoming more male-dominated in the south and east due to family allowances and wage supplements.\textsuperscript{71} Finally, in the south and east the majority of the most vulnerable groups, elderly persons, widows and children, ‘were not dependent on the communal welfare system’ and received welfare packages that ‘rarely guaranteed a subsistence living’.\textsuperscript{72} Therefore, in order to avoid dependency on their communities or to supplement their poor relief stipends, paupers needed to employ ‘economies of makeshifts’ in order to survive.

In the last chapter of \textit{Poverty and Welfare}, S. King takes his argument one step further and suggests that England’s macro-regions can be carved up into at least eight sub-regions, each with distinct experiences with regard to issues such as entitlement, nominal relief, and sentiment pertaining to relief giving (Figure 1:2).\textsuperscript{73} Although there is complex local diversity, he argues that wider patterns of relief can still be seen. Thus, S. King ‘encourages welfare historians to move away from thinking about the English poor law system, to thinking about English poor law system and regional states of welfare’.\textsuperscript{74} Moreover, he cautions historians to keep in mind that even within these sub-regions the experience of generosity or entitlement depended upon the individual demographics of each parish and its socio-economic factors.

\textsuperscript{70} King, ‘Conclusion’, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 258.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., pp. 257-258.
\textsuperscript{73} Quainton is located in King’s sub-region 6, which he labels as the classic rural `south’, which includes Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire. King characterises this region as spending considerable amounts of poor relief on large numbers of paupers. Ibid., p. 264.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., pp. 268-269.
This thesis advances the study of S. King’s theory of regionality and particularity. In so doing, it shows that, even within one parish, poor relief was provided in many different ways. In keeping with Shave’s study of rural Dorset and S. Kings of Calverley, this thesis reconstructs the lives of a select number of individual paupers not only to illustrate the scope of relief rendered to them, but also to exemplify the life-cycle crises that brought them to seek parish relief in the first place. In addition, the study goes beyond that presented by S. King in that it extrapolates the total yearly support received by each of Quainton’s poor by category of relief. The picture of that relief is presented in subsequent chapters.

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75 Shave, ‘The dependent poor’; King, ‘Reconstructing’.
Primary Records: Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts

A quantitative analysis of Quainton’s overseers’ account entries serves as the main plank of this research. The records that parishes were required by law to keep as a justification of their poor rate expenditures are also vital to an investigation of poverty during this period. Vestry minutes, along with churchwardens’ and overseers’ accounts, paint a picture of how English parishes functioned as a political and administrative system. The survival and quality of overseers’ records varies, however, from parish to parish and from region to region. Parishes with detailed records that have survived are a rarity.

Quainton’s overseers’ accounts date back to 1675, with the last entry noted in 1925. The accounts between April 1791 and 16 July 1796, and 1815 and 1827 have not survived. The British government did not require vestries, to keep written vestry minutes until 1819. Therefore, only a small number of early vestry minutes have endured. Unfortunately, only one vestry minute for Quainton has survived. Without vestry minutes, the overseer records may provide a biased view of the level of poverty within the community, as their accounts record only the names of those in receipt of parish relief, not those denied support. Vestry minutes would have provided further insight into the reasons behind the changes and decisions made by overseers on a daily basis. In their absence, an attempt has been made to isolate objective information from the overseers’ accounts and to supplement this, where necessary, with other sources and research to speculate on the motives behind the overseers’ decisions.

The majority of the research in this thesis is based on aggregate data extracted from Quainton’s overseers’ accounts. Interpreting this data depends upon the identification of patterns, decision changes, the individual characteristics of the overseers, and what these meant for the overall pattern of relief. The key to

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76 CBS, PR/169/12/7 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts, 1796-1800; CBS, PR 169/12/8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts, 1800-1806.
78 The one vestry minute that has survived was found in the farm account of John Bunting. Wherein he writes that ‘on 4 February 1801 the members of the vestry (named) unanimously agreed to receive the Lady Saye & Sele legacy as afford by the Trustees (Viz) Eight pounds to each boy (apprentice) and make the rest up out parish sufficient for the master of the boy to wash and cloth him during his apprenticeship’. MERL, BUC 6/1/1, The Leys, Quainton, 1794-1806.
historical research of this nature is to interpret the overseers’ line items. These must not be viewed through the eyes of a twenty-first century historian, but through the eyes of the overseers who recorded them, as ‘human beings interpret and engage with the world in which they live and are not simply driven by external forces’. Simply put, they were viewed with an understanding that acknowledges the overseers’ subjective interpretations.

The database used in this study was designed to be as flexible and inclusive as possible and to be comparable with the format of the primary sources from which the data was derived. Coding fields were added to individual tables to facilitate the extraction of specific data. A report was then designed to extract the total amount of relief received by each recipient, per sub-category of relief, per fiscal year. As a result, it is possible to compare an individual recipient’s relief across the continuum.

Other primary documents were used to supplement this analysis including the 1801 census, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (BPP HC), Abstracts and Returns for 1803, Quarter and Petty Session minutes, and bastardy, settlement, and removal records. Although vast, these primary sources produce a contemporary narrative of the administration of the Old Poor Law.

Only through this mass of aggregate data can one gain an understanding of the application of poor relief and a picture of the lives of the poor. This thesis therefore compares Quainton’s poor relief against other local and regional studies with reference to various themes that run through current literature on the topic.

**Conclusion**

In order to understand the significance of the aggregate data that is discussed in Chapters Three to Six, an analysis of the socio-economic, demographic, and occupational structure of the parish and how it relates to Quainton’s poor relief...
system is first necessary and this is presented in Chapter Two. The total quantity and quality of relief is discussed, as well as the response to increased poverty at the national, county, and comparative parish levels. This includes a discussion of administrative expenses that were not directly applicable to Quainton’s poor, but essential to the function of its poor relief system.

Generally, historians have divided the analysis of poor relief into two distinct categories, `direct relief` and `casual relief`. Here, however, due to the complexity of Quainton’s aggregate data, the analysis is divided into four distinct categories, each with its own chapter. A broad definition of `direct relief` is used, which includes `settled collection` (pensions), regular long-term allowances, and out-of-parish relief. Normally, Speenhamland-type family allowance and roundsman stipends are addressed under `casual relief`, but due to the high prevalence of these forms of relief in Quainton they are discussed independently. Miscellaneous casual relief entries are discussed in a separate chapter.

Broadly, the analysis of the means and level of support given to Quainton’s poor during the dearth years reveals a poor relief system that was flexible and responsive to wider economic forces. Although initially reluctant to do so, the decision of Quainton’s overseers to increase family allowances based on a bread scale indicates that the parish understood the necessity of poor relief in order to ensure the survival of its poor. The quick withdrawal of support after the crisis similarly indicates that welfare support was not purely generous charity, although it is difficult to assess motive through this type of micro-historical analysis. Concerning the question of generosity, mortality, and morbidity, the figures herein presented suggest that the increased relief during the dearth was still insufficient to thrive; further research will be required to assess fully whether the levels of support provided a subsistence income for Quainton’s poor.
Chapter Two: Introduction to Quainton, Buckinghamshire

Wrigley and Schofield state that ‘English demographic history… is the first step to attaining a better understanding of the interplay between population characteristics and the economic, political and social environment in which they developed’. Therefore, it is necessary to establish the demographic structure and environment that informs this analysis of Quainton’s poor relief expenditure at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The Land

The open parish of Quainton, Buckinghamshire, in the Ashendon Hundred, is situated in the Vale of Aylesbury, approximately five miles north-west of the market town of Aylesbury. The township of Quainton occupies a central position in the parish. The hamlet of Shipton Lee is not included in this study, as it was not amalgamated with the parish until 1886. In 1768, there were 1,108 acres of common fields in the parish. By 1841, the parish covered 5,346 acres, and comprised 1,266 acres of arable land, 3,518 of acres of meadow, 316 acres of woods and plantations, 316 acres of common land, and eight acres of glebe and roads. Therefore, it can be assumed that approximately 792 acres of common land were enclosed between 1768 and 1841. The map presented on the previous page is a GIS reproduction of how the parish might have looked like during this period Figure 2:1.

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4 G. Rodwell, Doddershall and Shipton Lee (Quainton, 2003), p. 51. Up until 1886, the hamlet of Shipton Lee had its own overseer, surveyors and constables. Further documentation that it was responsible for its own poor, can be found in Quainton’s vestry minutes of 1866.
5 G. Rodwell, Quainton Property Deeds: Land (Quainton, 2004), p. 53.
6 Most likely, these were private enclosures as no records are found in Parliamentary Papers.
Map of Quainton
The common land that was enclosed in 1841 is within large parcel of land surrounding the village.

In 1801, the parish faced a real threat of parliamentary enclosure, which sought to include the remaining 316 acres of common pastoral land. Quainton’s landowners/occupiers delayed this until 1841, stating

that such division and enclosure would be attended with an expense to the proprietors far exceeding any improvement to be derived therefrom, and would be, in many respects highly injurious to the petitioners and to the proprietors at large.\(^7\)

According to the 1822 Rights in Common there were 89 horses, 149 cows, and 1,190 lambs on Quainton’s common land.\(^8\) Not only was the enclosure proposed at the height of the dearth, but also potentially would have affected the ability of the poor to provide their family with a subsistence diet.

‘The surface of the parish was diversified by a cluster of insulated hills... rising gradually, to the height of 786 feet above the level of the sea’.\(^9\) In addition, the soil of the parish is characterised as ‘blue clay with a stratum of course sand, hard grit stone, and various loam’.\(^10\) These factors influenced the district’s changing usage of land from one focused on arable cultivation to grazing for sheep and cattle as the nineteenth century developed. A sales announcement for the manor farm of Le Grange, Shipton Lee in 1788 of 1,345 acres listed eight dairy farms on the freehold estate, which alludes to the type of farming practiced in the rest of the parish.\(^11\) In addition, it is reasonable to assume other crops besides cereal were raised, including fodder for animals; John Bunting, in his farm accounts noted the purchase of ‘[illegible] and crop yield of beans’.\(^12\) The woodlands on the westerly border of the parish were shared by the adjoining parishes of Grendon Underwood and Woodham, and it is unlikely that the poor had the right to gather firewood on these lands.

\(^7\) BPP, HC, Quainton’s Enclosure 1801, pp. 270-71; Rodwell, Quainton Property Deeds, p. 1. p. 53; CBS, PR 169/27/5 Tithe Map, 28 October 1841. Under the law, only landowners who actually lived on their land were subject to poor rates. Large absentee landowners did not usually pay poor rates; their tenants/occupiers whose rents were greater than £10 a year paid the rates.
\(^8\) G. Rodwell, Quainton: Various Other Documents (Quainton, 2001), p. 61.
\(^9\) Lipscomb, The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckinghamshire (Leighton Buzzard, 1847), vol. 1, p. 390.
\(^10\) Ibid., p. 390.
\(^11\) G. Rodwell, Doddershall, p. 106.
\(^12\) MERL, BUC 6/1/1, The Leys, Quainton, 1794-1806.
Therefore, it would have been necessary for Quainton’s labouring poor to purchase fuel. There was a gravel and stone quarry on the north side of Quainton Hill, a clay pit just north of the village on the south side of the hill, and an extraction pit on south-eastern border of the parish (Figure 2:1).

The United Kingdom Land Tax Redemption of 1798 lists 51 landowners/occupiers. Accordingly, the majority of land in this open parish was held by the nine individuals who paid more £10 in taxes Table 2:1. The total acreage of the Denham estate, owned by the non-resident landowner, Sir Francis Godolphin Osborn, is unknown but it was divided between eight occupiers. The Pigotts of Doddershall owned 1,293.28 acres, and the manor itself stood on 146 acres; the remainder of the land was occupied by three farmers and a woodsman. The Pigott name, however, does not appear on the 1798 Land Tax Redemption List, possibly suggesting that they had redeemed the Land Tax by paying a lump sum, which would have exempted them from future payments. Additionally, the names of the major employers of roundsmen did not appear on the redemption list, therefore it can be assumed that they also paid a bulk tax. Quainton’s labouring, landless poor, therefore, dominated the population. The census of 1801 and other documents provide further insight into the lives of this majority of the parish’s population at the turn of the nineteenth century.

15 According to Sarah Charlton, archivist, Centre for Buckingham Studies, property owners could pay a bulk payment equivalent to 15 years’ worth of taxes.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Proprietors</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Name of Occupiers</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Sums Assessed</th>
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<td>£1 7 1/2d.</td>
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<td>George Clark</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>£1 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Read</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>10s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hughes Senior</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>11s. 11 1/2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Carr</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Jonathan Clark</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>16s. 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bett</td>
<td></td>
<td>John Clark</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>£1 6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Clark</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Joseph Clark</td>
<td></td>
<td>16s. 1 1/2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Twyram</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gabriel Allen</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>3s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Marks</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>£4 10s. 2 1/2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wheeler</td>
<td>Schoolmaster</td>
<td>Thomas Marks</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>2s. 2 1/2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Reeves</td>
<td></td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>£1 10s. 10 1/2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Leverett</td>
<td></td>
<td>John Reeves</td>
<td></td>
<td>£3 5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hughes</td>
<td></td>
<td>John Reeves</td>
<td></td>
<td>£1 1s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jemima King</td>
<td>widow</td>
<td>Charles King</td>
<td></td>
<td>£1 4s. 5 1/2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles King</td>
<td></td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td></td>
<td>17s. 9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Reeves</td>
<td></td>
<td>Benjamin Toovey</td>
<td></td>
<td>2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bunting</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>2s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UK Land Tax Redemption 1798, p. 63, Ancestry.com. An Assessment made in Pursuance of an Act of Parliament passed in the 38th Year of His Majesty's Reign, for granting an Aid to His Majesty by a Land Tax to raised in Great Britian, for the Service of the Year 1798.
The People

Wrigley and Schofield warn historians that ‘the nineteenth-century English censuses should only be compared with one another with some caution since they were subject to a number of distorting influences, which affected the different censuses in varying degrees’.\footnote{Wrigley and Schofield, Population History, p. 588.} The early censuses relied heavily on the work of overseers and other parish officials. John Richman, in a letter to his friend Thomas Poole in 1803 wrote,

> You, know, I have some experience in the gross amount of dullness of all probable overseers and can the better provide accordingly, I wrote the schedule and questions at some length and have promised to superintend the printing upon which much depends.\footnote{M. Drake, ‘Census of 1801-1891’ in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), Nineteenth-Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods of Social Data. (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 7-46, p. 11.}

He later recanted this assumption noting that ‘the overseers in the southern counties were better qualified and more educated men’ because from the poor relief system they were ‘officially cognisant of every individual and the number of children of every individual, who from poverty and consequent obscurity may be supposed often to escape particular notice in other nations’.\footnote{Ibid., p. 24.} Perhaps with Richman’s further involvement in the compilation of later censuses, he had been too quick to pass judgement on the intellect of the overseers especially in southern England, where the labouring poor were more heavily dependent on poor relief and came into close contact with parish offices than in northern England.

England’s estimated population in 1791 was 7,852,555; by 1801, this had risen to 8,872,908, a 13 per cent increase.\footnote{T. Wrigley, ‘English county population in the late eighteenth century: male occupational change and economic growth 1750-1851’, www.campop.geog.cam.uk/research/project/occupations/ [accessed 23 December 2014].} In 1801, the population of the county of Buckinghamshire was 107,444 and the Ashendon Hundreds, which included Quainton, was 9,665. The population of Quainton was 750: 363 males and 387 females.\footnote{BPP, HC, ‘Enumeration Abstract 1801’, Histpop, http://histpop.org. [accessed 17 September 2011].} This thesis looks at the history of 381 named recipients of poor relief, between July 1796 and March 1804. There are 81 different surnames, 50 of which
have more than one claimant on relief; this suggests that, there was widespread both lateral and vertical multi-generational poverty in Quainton.

**Table 2:2 Quainton’s Crude Baptism and Burial Rate 1796 - 1804**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baptism</th>
<th>National CBR</th>
<th>CBR</th>
<th>Burials</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>% Children</th>
<th>National CDR</th>
<th>CDR</th>
<th>Natural Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49.33</td>
<td>35.51</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>24.82</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>61.33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26.66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>37.60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34.66</td>
<td>24.08</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26.66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65.33</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stanley G. Cook, *Burials at Quainton Buckinghamshire 1599-1881*, (Quainton), p. 24-27; Familysearch.com; E.A. Wrigley, R.S. Davies, J.E. Oeppen, R.S. Schofield, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*, (Cambridge, 1997), Appendix 9, p. 614. Baptismal and burial rate has been used instead of birth and death rate as only those record in the Church of England records were used. Some members of the parish were Baptist and those rites would have been recorded in their records which did not survive.

Based upon crude burial and baptismal figures, Quainton’s population increased during this period (Table 2:2). As Quainton had no industry, it is unlikely that it was affected by inward migration, except for an influx of farm servants or the labouring poor who returned to their parish of settlement in times of need, in accordance with migratory patterns of the nature noted by Snell. Quainton’s crude baptismal rates exceeded the national average in 1796, 1801, and 1806, whilst the crude burial rates were lower or equivalent to the national crude death rate. Obviously, the factors that previously had controlled population growth were not as effective, as Quainton’s birth rate was higher than the death rate. Further, the 1801 burial rate was 100 per cent higher than that recorded in 1798 whilst nine deaths (seven children), were recorded between October and December 1800 and 12 (two children) between January and February 1801, meaning that 21 deaths occurred during the height of the dearth. These figures imply that

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21 Population figures used in calculating the crude baptismal and burial rates are from the 1801 census: CBR=(b/p)*1000, CDR=(d/p)*1000.
22 The baptismal and burial records used here are those recorded by the Church of England.
malnutrition might have been a contributing factor in these deaths. In 1801, only five children died, substantially lower than the number recorded in other years, perhaps the more susceptible children had died during the early years of the dearth. The baptismal rates fluctuated during the study period, but were not significantly different during the dearth.

The 1801 census provides limited information regarding the occupational breakdown of the parish. It notes that 358 persons were chiefly employed in agriculture, 138 in trades, and 254 were in neither of these two categories. In addition, it reveals that 38 per cent of the Ashendon Hundred population was chiefly employed in agriculture, whereas in Quainton this proportion was 48 per cent. These figures are misleading because the 254 inhabitants reported, as being neither employed in agriculture nor trade, is exceedingly high number for a parish with no industry, or a large middling or gentry class. The 1811 census thus appears more accurate. Out of 190 families listed, 177 (93 per cent) were classified as being highly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood; which is in keeping with the rate that would be expected. The occupational breakdown constructed from the raw data in these censuses is further reinforced in other, more specific historical documents, which aids the validity of the conclusions proffered.

The Posse Comitatus List of 1798, termed the ‘civilian power of the country’, provides a more comprehensive breakdown of parish occupations than the 1801 census, and includes the names and occupations of men between the ages of 15 and 60. This breakdown shows that four out of every five men in Quainton derived their livelihood directly from agriculture as farmers (18), farm servants (28), or labourers (60). The other 35 men were indirectly dependent on agriculture, as their trades and services supported the agricultural community. The list also noted the number of draught horses, wagons, and carts, as well as their respective owners, who would be available if needed by the Crown (Table 2:3).

24 BPP, HC, Enumeration Abstract 1801.
26 G. Rodwell, Quainton: Various Other Documents, p. 39-41.
27 Ashendon Hundreds Posse Comitatus List 1798 (Aylesbury, 2003), pp. 12-14. This list does not include the men already serving in the militia, dissenting clergymen, licensed teachers, or Quakers.
Wages in Quainton were at subsistence level; as Joseph Mayett wrote in his autobiography c. 1790, ‘my father was a labourer and worked for six shillings a week in winter and nine in summer’. Sir F.M. Eden, a contemporary historian, similarly reports that male labourers in the parish of Buckingham were paid a daily wage of between 1s to 1s 6d; in Maids Morton, 1s to 1s 2d; in Stony Stratford; 1s to 1s 4d; and in Winslow, 1s to 1s 2d a week. Blaug, however, reported that in 1795 wages in Buckinghamshire were as high as 8s a week. Quainton’s overseers’ accounts support a prevailing minimum wage of 1s a day for married roundsmen and those unable to work due to illness. Based upon Buckinghamshire’s Epiphany Session ruling of 1795, which set a minimum wage of 6s a week for a married man and his wife, it is reasonable to assume that this was the prevailing wage for labourers in the months of November and December.

Table 2:3 Quainton’s Posse Comitatus 1798 List of Horses, Wagons and Carts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Horses</th>
<th>Wagons</th>
<th>Carts</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Wagons</th>
<th>Cart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Addams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Hughes Jun.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriel Allen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Charles King</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Anstiss</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edward King</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Ash</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thomas Layton</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bunting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Joseph Lee</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cane</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>William LUCKET</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Clark</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thomas Marks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Clark</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edward Read</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Coleman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>John Read</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Curtis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>John Reeves</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Deverell</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thomas Reeves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Eldridge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>William Robinson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Harwood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Martin Rogers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Hewitt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thomas Sare</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hughes Sen.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Joseph Stapp</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ashendon Hundreds: Posse Comitatus Lists 1798, B.R.S 22. in Quainton Various Documents, p. 41.

28 The names that are listed on Table 2:3 were the main employers of roundsmen.
32 Roundsmen wages in Quainton were wholly paid out of the poor rates.
parish. Why there were still 23 male farm servants in Quainton, when there were day-labourers in the parish that were not fully employed is unknown, perhaps it was more efficient for dairy farmers to have live-in servants, because cows need to be milked twice a day. John Bunting hired James George as a farm servant on 12 October 1797 at a yearly wage of £7 17s 6d (3s a week) and ‘John Poleard on 13 October 1797 at £4 15s (1s 3d a week) plus 5s for ‘behaviour’ to serve till Michaelmas 1798’. Granted that farm servants were at the beck and call of their master, their wages, although less expensive on the surface than those of day-labourers, did not include the cost of room and board which, if taken into account, would have meant that farm servants’ wages were potentially more expensive. Thus, for some farmers, the employment of day-labourers might have been the cheaper option.

No estimation of female occupations can be derived from the 1801 census. Lacemaking in Buckinghamshire was in decline by 1826, although in 1841 there were still 4,440 lacemakers in Buckinghamshire (16.77 per cent of the total in England and Wales). Within Quainton there were 20 female lacemakers listed as heads of households in the 1841 census. It is therefore reasonable to assume, in the absence of contrary data that in the early 1800s there was a substantial number of women and children in the parish employed as lacemakers. Eden noted that women lacemakers in the parish Buckingham could earn from 6d to 1s a day; this would suggest that the wages of women in Quainton could have been equivalent to that of their husbands.

According to Wrigley and Schofield, children below the age of ten were said to have contributed nothing to production, whilst those aged 10-14 contributed very little, whereas those aged 15-19 attained a productive rate equal to 75 per cent of an

33 CBS, Q/SO/24, Quarter Sessions Easter 1794 to Easter 1797.
34 MERL, The Leys.
35 P. Bernard, ‘Lacemaking schools in Buckinghamshire’, MA thesis, (Open University, 1974), p. 10. In 1801, the overseers were paying for the ‘schooling’ of girls, so it can be assumed that this would have been for a lacemaking school as girls were not generally educated in the formal sense. There are also receipts for lace in the overseers’ accounts. D. Thorpe (ed.), Buckinghamshire’s Industrial Heritage, (Buckinghamshire, 2007), p. 55; G. Rodwell, Overseers’ Accounts 1675-1925 (Quainton, 1993), pp. 63-73.
36 Rodwell, Quainton: Various Other Documents, pp. 63-73.
Joseph Mayett wrote, ‘when I was about 7 years of age I was set to lacemaking’. There is no way of knowing how many children in the parish were set to lacemaking or the amount they contributed to the income of their families. Moreover, children under the age of ten in Quainton were ‘on the rounds’. It is reasonable to assume that some element of particularity existed that accounts for the differences found in Quainton that were not apparent in Wrigley and Schofield’s work. In addition, children employed as agricultural labourers earned two to three shillings a week, which was a substantial rate when compared to that of their fathers, and was vital to the survival of their families. When boys and even girls became old enough, some went into service or entered trades as an apprentices.

Table 2:4 Apprentices 1796-1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Birthdate</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/29/1796</td>
<td>Joseph Curtis</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Robert Curtis</td>
<td>3/25/1775</td>
<td>Robert &amp; Rebecca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/18/1797</td>
<td>Joseph Curtis</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>John Busby</td>
<td>1/26/1781</td>
<td>Richard &amp; Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/1800</td>
<td>Richard Wood</td>
<td>cordwainer</td>
<td>John West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/06/1802</td>
<td>Robert Maiden</td>
<td>butcher</td>
<td>James Baker</td>
<td>1783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/09/1803</td>
<td>Joseph Curtis</td>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>Samuel King</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>Charles &amp; Bett</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UK, Register of Duties for Apprentice’ Indentures of 1711-1810, ancestry.com. These are only the indentures noted during this study period. This does not necessarily mean that these were the only boys from the parish that were indentured during this time period.

The ‘UK Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices Indentures’ between 1711 and 1810 lists the names of 49 children from Quainton, but only five were apprenticed between 1795 and 1803 Table 2:4. Generally, the children on this list were apprenticed out by their parents to a tradesperson for a fee. Those indentured by the parish or charities were exempt from this tax and therefore did not appear in this roll. Two of Quainton’s established charities also supported the apprenticing of poor children.

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40 CBS, PR 169/12/7-8, Overseers’ Accounts. P. Kirby, *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870* (Basingstoke, 2003) suggests that the earning of children for the very poor might have provided the family with a higher standard of living. Yet, at the same time, it put pressure on elder children to seek employment while there were still non-productive children in the household, pp. 3, 30. He also quotes D.C., Coleman who pointed out that ‘far from thinking it was morally wrong, contemporaries though it wholly right that children, especially those of the poor, should be put to work and kept out of mischief by being given employment, preferably by doing useful jobs within their own capabilities’, in. *The Economy of England, 1450-1750* (Oxford, 1977), p. 19
Unfortunately, the records of the Thomas Pigott Charity (1704), do not survive. It is recorded, however, that the aim of the Lady Saye and Sele Charity (1787) was to support six boys from the parish each year, but due to the trustees’ mismanagement, it is questionable if any were apprenticed prior to 1805.\textsuperscript{42} The only record that the parish assisted with the apprenticeship of a boy during this study period was noted on 6 July 1799, whereby the parish spent £1 on Edward King’s son for ‘his clothes he being gone apprentice’ and an additional £2 on 20 July 1799 on the ‘King boy for apprentices’.\textsuperscript{43}

Several charities in the parish were designed to meet the other needs of the poor (Appendix B). In 1816, the Abstract of Return of Charitable Donations lists the charities named for Matthew Nash (1667), John Ecles (1777), and Mary Ecles (1780) as bread charities. How active these charities were during the dearths of 1795-1796 and 1799-1801 is unknown, as no archival records survive. Dame Ann Pigott (1762), Patrick Symmer (1691) and the Susanna Booth and Ellen Pydwell (1692) were educational charities, whilst the Richard Winwood Charity (1686) provided moneys for the building of the alms-houses on Church Street (Figure 2:2 and 2:3).\textsuperscript{44} These were designed to house three poor widows and three poor widowers over the age of fifty who were ‘of good report and of sober and religious conversation’.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} There is no documentation in the archives to suggest that any boys were apprenticed prior 1805.\textsuperscript{43} CBS, PR/169/12/7, p. 346.\textsuperscript{44} BPP, HC, Abstract of the Return of Charitable Donations for the Benefit of Poor Persons, Made by the Ministers and Churchwardens of the Several Parishes and Townships in England and Wales, 1816, image 64.\textsuperscript{45} G. Rodwell, Quainton Clubs and Charities: Winwood Charity Almshouses (Quainton, 2005), p. 8.
This brief picture of the parish of Quainton and its inhabitants lays the foundation for the discussion of poverty and poor law administration that is addressed hereafter. An understanding of the level and means of poor relief needs to

46 Both photographs used with the permission of the Buckinghamshire County Museum.
be viewed within the context of the parish’s configuration (geographically and demographically) and with regard to the wider contemporary economic environment. An overall assessment of Quainton’s poor relief history and comparative analysis thus adds further context to the micro-analysis of Quainton’s poor relief aggregate data presented in subsequent chapters.

**Comparative Poor Relief History**

Like other parishes in England, poverty in Quainton dramatically increased in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Table 2:5). The total poor relief expenditure of England and Wales was £1,530 million (4s 2d *per capita*) in 1776, climbed to £2,004 million by 1783-1785, and in 1803 reached £4,268 million (8s 10d *per capita*).\(^47\) G. Boyer reports that, in southeast England, poor relief *per capita* expenses were between 7s 2d and 11s 6d from 1783 to 1785, and rose to between 11s 5d and £1 7s 1d in 1803.\(^48\) The *per capita* for the Ashendon Hundred in 1803 was 19s 8d. In Quainton it was 19s 2d, less than both the national and Ashendon Hundred figures. However, 1803 was a period of relative socioeconomic stability. In 1800-1801, at the height of the dearth, Quainton’s *per capita* poor relief reached £2 1s 10d. It follows that, if population increase were the only reason for amplified poor relief expenditure, the *per capita* expenditure would not increase. Commenting further, Boyer ‘ruled out parliamentary activity’ as no rulings were passed between 1796-1834 that regulated outdoor relief, concluding that that the ‘timing of movements in relief expenditure can be explained by changes in economic conditions’.\(^49\) B. Hilton goes on to suggest that politicians were interested in the impact that poor relief expenditure ‘placed on the local tax base’ and, contributing to this, were ‘constraints on agriculture, and the unwillingness of government to do no more than mop up at the margin of society’.\(^50\)

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\(^48\) Boyer, ‘English Poor Law’, Table 2.


### Table 2:5 Quainton Poor Relief

**Expenditure 1796-1815**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s.</th>
<th>d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>1,239</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>1,808</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>1,537</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804-1805</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805-1806</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806-1807</td>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807-1808</td>
<td>1,132</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808-1809</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809-1810</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1811</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811-1812</td>
<td>1,652</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812-1813</td>
<td>2,044</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813-1814</td>
<td>1,763</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814-1815</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-9, Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts

In the late 1800s, there were clear signs that the poor relief system was under severe strain due to the increased numbers of poor people seeking assistance and the cost of maintaining the system. Sporadic assessments of these expenses were documented in the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers and in the eyes of the politicians, the findings of the first such assessment, that of 1776, were so significant that it became the index for sequential returns. Thomas Gilbert Esq. produced the second return, a composite of relief data between 1783 and 1785. No returns were produced in the 1790s whilst that of 1803 was produced during a less volatile phase, a brief period of peace during the French wars. The comparison of parishes in the Ashendon Hundred presented in Table 2:6 analyses these three returns. The Ashendon Hundred’s total poor relief expenditure increased 52 per cent between

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53 BPP, HC, 1787, T. Gilbert, Report from the Committee on Certain Returns, Relative to State of the Poor, and Charitable Donations, 1787, p. 559.
54 BPP, HC, 1804, Abstract of the Answers and Returns Made Pursuant to an Act, 1804, pp. 22-23.
### Table 2.6 Ashendon Hundred: Comparison of Total Poor Relief Expenditure 1776, 1783-1785 and 1803

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>1796</th>
<th>1783-1785</th>
<th>% Change 1776-1785</th>
<th>1801</th>
<th>1785-1803</th>
<th>% Change 1801</th>
<th>Per Capita in Shillings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashendon Hundred</td>
<td>2,907</td>
<td>4,411</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>9,665</td>
<td>18.57</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Clayton</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>148.7</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Clayton</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>325.0</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Grendon</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>449.8</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorton</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandborough</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwood Grendon</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>106.7</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogshaw with Fulbrook</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ickford</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>141.1</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illmer</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>184.9</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingley</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>261.0</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kingwood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>900.0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lagershall</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>185.7</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fleet Morton</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>592.5</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>147.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Morton</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>292.7</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakley</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>290.5</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oving</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>279.2</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitchcott</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>690.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>59.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>294.5</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarrrendon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>320.0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabbington</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipton Lee</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>400.0</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studley</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towsersey</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waddesdon</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>1,338</td>
<td>1,338.0</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westcott</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nether Winchenden</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>160.0</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Winchenden</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>204.0</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodham</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wooton Underwood</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>152.0</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woringhall</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150.0</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average % Increase: 113.5  218.23

Source: BPP, HC, 1777, Gilbert, T., Report from the Committee Appointed to Inspect and Consider the Returns Made by the Overseers of the Poor, in Pursuance of Act of Last Session: Together with Abstracts for Returns, Reported of Fourteenth Parliament of Great Britain, 1777, p. 306; BPP, HC, 1787, Gilbert, T., Report from the Committee on Certain Returns, Relative to State of the Poor, and Charitable Donations, 1787, p. 559; BPP, HC, Abstract of Answers and Returns, Relative to the Expense and Maintenance of the Poor of England, 1803-04

Image 25 of 734.
1776 and the 1783 to 1785 return, and thereafter by a further 103 per cent by 1803. But, the increases witnessed in the individual parishes varied widely [based on individual parish totals]; between 1776 and 1783-1785, the average increase was 113.5 per cent and by 1803, it was 218.23 per cent; however, if the outlier for the village of Quarrendon is removed the average increase for the Ashendon Hundred was only 106 per cent, thereby bringing the figure more in line with that quoted by in the parliamentary return for 1803.

In 1776, Quainton’s total poor relief expense was £251 11s. Between 1783 and 1785, the average was £354 4s 3d, an increase of 41 per cent within ten years, noticeably less than the average in the Ashendon Hundreds. Expenses by 1803 had climbed to £761 12s 3d, an increase of 115 per cent, which is comparable to the average in the Ashendon Hundreds. These figures were substantially less than those recorded during the dearth period of 1799-1802 (Table 2:6), which suggests that the level of poverty in the parish as time progressed increased, and that Quainton had the flexibility to respond to the economic crisis and the increasing needs of the poor. In addition, poor relief expenditure in the parishes of the Ashendon Hundred grew dramatically, even before the elite voices of the late 1790s attacked measures employed by parishes to check the suffering of the poor. As George Nicholls, a contemporary historian noted, the root of rapid increases in ‘poor relief may have been by the occasion of war’ in the late eighteenth century, and by the occurrence of scarcity of food commodities and high prices.55

55 G. Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, in Connexion with Legislation and Other Circumstances Affecting the Condition of the Poor (London, 1854), vol. III, pp. 139-140.
### Table 2.7: Comparison of Poor Relief between Quainton and other Buck's Parishes April 1799-April 1802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Population 1801</th>
<th>Per Capita Mar. 1799</th>
<th>Per Capita Oct. 1799</th>
<th>Per Capita Apr. 1800</th>
<th>Per Capita Oct. 1800</th>
<th>Per Capita Apr. 1801</th>
<th>Per Capita Oct. 1801</th>
<th>Per Capita Apr. 1802</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>467.14 8</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>363.13 4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>826.70</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>698.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ickford</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>11.16 2</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>55.4 7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>101.15 11</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>80.1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emberton</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>241.4 2</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>344.17 10</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>692.3 7</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>559.10 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalfont St. Giles</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>343.17 4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>510.11 11</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>857.2 8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>492.16 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverdon</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>185.18 5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>176.6 1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>357.14 7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>409.4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke Goldington</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>305.6 6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>544.13 3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>279.14 1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>560.12 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Claydon</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.11 3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>56.15 10</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>95.16 1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>111.17 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S. Pr 169/12/7-8, Quainton's Overseers' Accounts: Pr 113/12/1, Ickford; Pr 71/12/2 Emberton; Pr 35/12/4, Chalfont St. Giles: Pr 220/12/4, Waverdon; Pr 194/12/2, Stoke Goldington; Pr 52/12/4 Middle Claydon. Note: Per Capita rate has been figured to the nearest pence.
Table 2:7 presents a comparison between Quainton and several parishes in Buckinghamshire that have surviving overseers’ records that covered the dearth years of 1799-1802.\textsuperscript{56} Those that recorded biannual accountancy showed a high level of \textit{per capita} relief in April, a reflection of the high dependency of the poor during winter due to the seasonal nature of agriculture. By 1800, poor relief expenditure in all the parishes had increased yet, by April 1802, the level of relief had declined except in the parishes of Stoke Goldington and Middle Claydon, which were higher than those recorded in April 1799. The population of Quainton and Chalfont St Giles were similar, but Quainton’s poor relief expenditure and \textit{per capita} rate was significantly higher. This can be attributed to the fact that only 90 out of 176 families in Chalfont St Giles were directly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. In contrast, Stoke Goldington, a predominantly agricultural parish, had the highest \textit{per capita} of 38.48 in April 1801. Tables 2:6 and 2:7 show the wide diversity in the level of poor relief expenditure and \textit{per capita} spending between parishes. Whether these results are a manifestation of the economic diversity of individual parishes or a reflection of the sentiments of their overseers’ views of poverty is unknown, although each of the parishes would have been deeply concerned about those who might become `chargeable'.

Prior to 1795, during the first forty days of an immigrant’s presence in a parish, overseers could question those whom they felt were ‘likely to be chargeable’ in the future, regarding their parish of settlement.\textsuperscript{57} If Quainton was not the interloper’s parish of settlement, or if they did not have settlement papers from their ‘home’ parish, the vestry could send them on their way. In 1795, following the Removable Act which amended the Settlement Law of 1662, overseers could no longer question an immigrant’s settlement until they became ‘chargeable’.\textsuperscript{58} Surviving records show that between 1703 and 1822, there were 146 `orders for removal’ in Quainton. Of this number, 111 persons/families were removed from Quainton, whilst 35 were

\textsuperscript{56} See Appendix C for more information on these parishes.
\textsuperscript{57} ‘Likely to be chargeable’ meant that, in the eyes of the vestry, an individual or family might in the future seek poor relief from the parish.
\textsuperscript{58} R. Burns, \textit{The Justice of the Peace and Parish Offices} (London, 28\textsuperscript{th} ed., 1837), vol. IV, p. 761; 35 George III, c. 1, \textit{An Act to Prevent the Removal of Poor Persons until They Become Actually Chargeable}, 22 June 1795. If the person was unable to travel, under the Act their removal could be postponed. In addition, the cost of transporting the poor back to their parish of settlement was borne by the removing parish.
returned to Quainton. Furthermore, of the 18 persons/families noted during the study period, eight were removed from Quainton and ten returned.\textsuperscript{59} Accordingly, the overseers demonstrated due diligence in identifying those who, under the law, were not eligible for any form of parish support.

As the parish was potentially liable for maintaining bastards born in the parish, the overseer also sought support from the responsible parties for children born out of wedlock in the parish. There were several bastards on the parish rolls between 1796 and 1804. For example, in 1797, Bishop Rodwell of East Claydon was ordered by the magistrate to pay £2 17s 6d for the ‘lying-in and maintenance of Ann Knibb and her bastard child until the present session’, then 2s 6d weekly.\textsuperscript{60} The mother was ordered to pay the churchwardens and overseers of Quainton the sum of 1s 6d a week.\textsuperscript{61} In Midsummer 1800, a maintenance order was issued for Elizabeth Taylor and her bastard son. Robert Stapp, the father, was ordered to pay £8 8s for the lying-in and maintenance of Elizabeth and child, and 2s a week as long as the child was ‘chargeable’. The mother was also ordered to pay 6d a week to the maintenance of the child.\textsuperscript{62} It is evident that Quainton’s overseer recognised the fact that two individuals were party to the conception of bastard children and therefore went after those who were responsible for the child’s upkeep.

\textit{Quainton’s Total Poor Relief July 1796 – 31 March 1804}

Only by looking at Quainton’s overall level of relief during these years, can one get a glimpse of the possible level of poverty in the parish and the role played by the vestry in shouldering the burden of supporting the communities labouring poor. The level and means of support rendered to Quainton’s poor varied widely as the parish reacted to the rising price of wheat; Figure 2:4 shows total poor relief expenditure per fiscal year alongside the average fiscal year price of wheat. As demonstrated, a positive correlation exists between total poor relief expenditure and the price of wheat.

\textsuperscript{59} See Appendix D for further information.
\textsuperscript{60} CBS, Q/SO/24, Quarter Sessions Easter 1794 to Easter 1797.
\textsuperscript{61} CBS, Q/SO/25, Quarter Sessions Midsummer 1797 to Epiphany 1800.
\textsuperscript{62} CBS, Q/SO/26, Quarter Sessions 1800 to Michaelmas 1801.
Note: Start date for 1796 was 17 July.


Figure 2:4 Total Poor Relief and Wheat Prices per Fiscal Year 1796-1804

Figure 2:5 Quainton’s Total Poor Relief by Category 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

Source: C.B.S. PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts.
In Figure 2:5, this data is further analysed, with total relief separated into various sub-categories of relief. These are subsequently discussed in later chapters of this thesis. Combined settled collections and allowances, miscellaneous casual relief and administrative costs all reached a high in the 1801-1802 fiscal year, whereas family subsidies increased dramatically in late 1799, reaching a peak in 1800, they returned to nearly pre-dearth levels in 1802-1803. Support to the underemployed or unemployed reached a peak in autumn 1800, declining thereafter and closing at a level below that recorded in 1796-1797. The finer points of these expenses are addressed in following chapters.

**The Cost of Administering Relief**

Like all bureaucratic entities, a certain percentage of Quainton’s poor relief budget was taken up in administrative costs. These costs were not directly applicable to the maintenance of the poor, but essential to the continuance of the system. As part of the 1803 Abstract and Return, Parliament was concerned about administrative costs. It specifically addressed the amount spent on ‘suits of law, removal of paupers, and expenses of parish officers’. Table 2:8 provides a breakdown of these administrative categories and shows that Quainton’s administrative costs ranged from a low of 3.48 per cent in 1802-1803 to a high of 13.05 per cent in 1801-1802 of the total poor relief budget. Williams notes that Shefford’s administrative costs accounted for up to two-fifths of its total poor relief expenditure, which was considerably higher than the proportion experienced by Quainton. The £23 10s 4d reported by Quainton to Parliament in 1803 did not, however, take into consideration the administrative costs identified in this study.

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63 BPP, HC, Abstract 1803, pp. 22-3.
64 Williams, Poverty, p. 53. The percentage quoted by Williams for the town of Shefford, was not applicable to Quainton, but does provide a reference point. No figures are quoted for the rural community of Campton, which would have been a comparable parish.
65 BPP, HC, Abstract 1803, image 25.
### Table 2:8 Total Administrative Costs 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1796-1797</th>
<th>1797-1798</th>
<th>1798-1799</th>
<th>1799-1800</th>
<th>1800-1801</th>
<th>1801-1802</th>
<th>1802-1803</th>
<th>1803-1804</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>£24 18s. 10d.</td>
<td>£5 8s. 2d.</td>
<td>£8 3s. 7d.</td>
<td>£8 19s. 11d.</td>
<td>£2 12s. 7d.</td>
<td>£35 3s. 9d.</td>
<td>£1 18s. 9d.</td>
<td>£7 14s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry</td>
<td>£13 8s. 2d.</td>
<td>7s. 10d.</td>
<td>£3 7d.</td>
<td>£51 3s.</td>
<td>£8 10s. 5d.</td>
<td>£10 4s. 4d.</td>
<td>£11 3s. 6d.</td>
<td>£28 3s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Pocket</td>
<td>£1 19s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>17s.</td>
<td>£26 16s. 5d.</td>
<td>£70 4s. 6d.</td>
<td>£84 5s. 9d.</td>
<td>2s. 8d.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>£4 9s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£3 2s. 6d.</td>
<td>7s.</td>
<td>£5 3s. 6d.</td>
<td>£4 18s. 7d.</td>
<td>£1 15s. 4d.</td>
<td>£5 6s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>14s. 7d.</td>
<td>4s. 10d.</td>
<td>11s. 11d.</td>
<td>3s. 6d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>9s. 9d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£1 12s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vestry</td>
<td>£2 12s.</td>
<td>£3 15s. 10d.</td>
<td>£3 17s. 7d.</td>
<td>£6 11s. 11d.</td>
<td>£13 4d.</td>
<td>£9 10s. 8d.</td>
<td>£8 5d.</td>
<td>£8 13s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal</td>
<td>£1 8s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>17s. 3d.</td>
<td>15s. 7d.</td>
<td>£4 11s. 10d.</td>
<td>9s. 9d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement</td>
<td>6s. 10d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£1 5s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£5 5s. 4d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>15s.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagrants</td>
<td>£16 7s.</td>
<td>£28 7d.</td>
<td>£5 12s.</td>
<td>£13 18s. 1d.</td>
<td>4s. 6d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Rates</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£28</td>
<td>£5 12s.</td>
<td>£22 8s.</td>
<td>£44 16s</td>
<td>£5 12s.</td>
<td>£32 6d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fiscal Year Total**
- £66 3s. 11d.  
- £37 13s. 9d.  
- £55 7s. 5d.  
- £114 7s. 5d.  
- £131 17s.  
- £189 7s. 8d.  
- £29 7s. 8d.  
- £85 1s. 1d.

**Source:** C.B.S., PR 169/12/7–8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1804.
Total administrative expenses like other types of poor relief were also higher during the dearth, mainly due to ‘out of pocket’ expenses. Between 1799 and 1802, the parish found it necessary for the overseers to advance the parish a total of £181 6s 8d to balance the books. Generally, poor rates were based on the previous year’s disbursements, but in a period of economic crisis and uncertainty, it would have been difficult to set the rates at a level that would cover the next fiscal year’s disbursements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 January 1797</td>
<td>£18 6d.</td>
<td>To treasure of this county the fine for default in not raising one man his Majesty's service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1797</td>
<td>£1 13s. 10d.</td>
<td>To the treasurer of the county the sum levied on Doddershall in default of raising a man for his Majesty's service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 1797</td>
<td>£3 3s.</td>
<td>Expenses to London concerning Spencer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Jun 1797</td>
<td>£4 4s.</td>
<td>No reason given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 March 1800</td>
<td>£5 3s. 1d.</td>
<td>Trial of Thomas Foster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 April 1801</td>
<td>£27 9s. 3d.</td>
<td>James and Addams Bill concerning the trial of Strapp and Coles last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 March 1804</td>
<td>£1 10d.</td>
<td>Chief Constable toward ** of W. Terry’s ** son being maliciously maimed and killed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts

Legal expenses not only the fees incurred for the signing of the rates by the two Justice of the Peace, but also county taxes, and expenses incurred by parish authorities while in attendance at Waddesdon’s Petty Sessions or Aylesbury’s Quarter Sessions in support of the parish’s poor. As noted in 1797 (Table 2:9), heavy fines were imposed when the parish did not meet its quota for His Majesty’s services. Not only was Quainton responsible for provision the men chosen by ballot, but also, according to the overseer’s account, for other associated expenses. In 1803-1804, this included £21 ‘paid for volunteers’, with an additional expense of £5 incurred ‘for volunteers being trained and exercised’.  

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66 39 Eliz., c. 2., For maintenance of husbandry and village.
67 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers.
68 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers.
Table 2:10 John Bunting’s Constable Account 1799-1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 June 1799</td>
<td>My warrant and swearing into my office</td>
<td>3s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pair of hand-cuffs with lock</td>
<td>2s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 June 1799</td>
<td>Meeting at Brill</td>
<td>3s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warrants the same day</td>
<td>3s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 July 1799</td>
<td>Assis and sessions presentment</td>
<td>2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 September 1799</td>
<td>Meeting at Ashendon</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 September 1799</td>
<td>Justices expenses (Piddington)</td>
<td>10d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 October 1799</td>
<td>Swearing presentment</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 January 1800</td>
<td>Swearing presentment</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 February 1800</td>
<td>Meeting Winchester?</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 February 1800</td>
<td>Presentment</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 February 1800</td>
<td>Presentment</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 April 1800</td>
<td>Presentment</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 April 1800</td>
<td>Presentment</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: M.E.R.L., BUC 6/1/1, The Leys, Quainton, 1796-1806.

In addition, and with reference to contemporaneous primary sources, John Bunting, Quainton’s constable from 1799-1800, provides an excellent example of costs involved with the performance of his duties (Table 2:10). These are important to note because they shed light on the fact that the poor rates were used to finance other community services that normally, in the modern sense, would be beyond the scope of poor relief expenses. Arguably, the ratepayers saw no alternative means of supporting this office and were therefore willing to pay for civil order out of the poor rates.

Vestry meeting expenses also increased significantly after March 1799 as the economic circumstances of the poor became more tenuous, and they remained high throughout the rest of period of study. These meetings became more frequent and were presumably well attended and lengthy, given the amount spent at the local pub, which sometimes exceeded £1. Without the ability to forecast the future, frequent adjustments to the preliminary draft of a bread scale were needed as the price of bread increased during the dearth. Indeed, during the dearth this occurred almost weekly at its height as witness by the notations bread prices in the ledger margin.

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69 MERL, The Leys. 'Presentment' means the giving of testimony regarding a committed crime.
Settlement, removal, and bastardy expenses in Quainton were minimal, but some of these costs were hidden in other expenses. For example, the parish spent £2 7s 6d on the removal of Simon Simms, but this did not include the £8 5s of his accumulated bills that the parish paid. The expenses at the Midsummer Quarter Session in July 1800 for Benjamin Coles’ settlement and Robert Strapp’s bastardy cases cost the parish £3 9s 10d. In addition, a bill of £27 9s 3d was paid in April 1801 to a ‘James and Addams’ on their behalf. It is evident that parishes in this era became involved in the legal issues of the poor, for example, in 1803, Richard Sharp was brought before the Quarter Session for ‘begetting Elizabeth Hutchings of Hogshaw with child’, and in his defence the parish spent £1 8d. In addition, Edward Read and Richard Wood, Quainton farmers, put up personal bonds of £15 each to ensure his presence at the next session. The costs associated with these cases presumably were more cost effective in the long run than parish shouldering the total burden of support for bastards.

John Wheeler and his son were Quainton’s parish clerks and received total wages of £23 12s 10d (an average of 1s 7d a week) during the period of this study. Based on wages of agricultural labourer, theirs was not a substantial wage given the work involved, for it included the booking of weekly disbursements and biannual receipts, the reckoning of the accounts, ‘making the rates’, ‘calculating the tithe in the poor rates and settled collections’, and making a ‘fair copy of an abstract of Lady Seye and Sele’s charity to this parish’ among other responsibilities. However, as the overseers only carried a daybook, the clerk’s services were vitally essential as they provided the permanent and sustainable record of the accounts.

Prior to May 1800, the parish advanced £5 12s quarterly to a parish officer for ‘vagrants’; whether this money was meant to entice vagrants to be on their way or was used to pay for the apprehension of a rogue or vagabond, is unknown. Again, it can be assumed that the parish officers were acting in the best interest of the parish by eliminating those without entitlement from the parish. However, in April 1800,

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70 CBS, Q/SO/25 Quarter.
71 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseer’s Accounts.
72 CBS, Q/SO/27, Quarter Sessions Epiphany 1803, Easter 1804.
73 Ibid.
this line item was dropped from the accounts. Presumably, the parish had adopted another measures to deal with the issue of vagrancy.

There is no evidence in Quainton’s overseers’ accounts that would lead one to suspect that there was any overt mismanagement. Poor Law commissioners might have felt otherwise given that the management of small rural agricultural parishes, such as Quainton, fell on a small minority of parishioners who were in fact (according to the Report on the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Law) ‘managers of their own interests’. Self-interest certainly had some impact on the decisions made by overseers, for without the survival of the labouring poor at some level of subsistence, their farms would not have survived. It can be inferred that the overseers walked a thin line between giving the labouring poor enough support to survive and not giving them so much that it cut into their profit margins.

**Conclusion**

This demographic overview of Quainton and its poor relief history has provided a foundation for the material that will be presented in the following chapters. It has also presented some comparative analysis, thereby placing Quainton in the context of its wider region and the national picture.

It is difficult to classify Quainton as more or less `generous` in comparison to other parishes in the Ashendon Hundred or those parishes that have surviving records for 1799-1802. Both the 1802-1803 Abstract and 1799-1802 parish data show that a wide diversity of poor relief efforts existed amongst these Buckinghamshire parishes. Nevertheless, those with surviving dearth data recorded increased expenditure during the dearth and, in the majority of cases, a decrease in such expenses with the concurrent reduction of wheat prices. The total expenditure data supports Baugh’s

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75 F.G. Emmison, ‘The relief of the poor at Eaton Socon, 1706-1834’, in *The Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1931-1934* (Aspley Guise, 1933), vols. 14-16, pp. 1-93. Eaton Socon contracted out part of its poor relief and it was in these incidences that there was recorded mismanagement of the accounts.

assumption that there existed a positive correlation between the price of wheat and poor relief expenditure.\textsuperscript{77}

In the context of this regional variation, the case for a micro-level study becomes evident. While trends exist, diversity across parishes requires a more narrow investigation in order to draw conclusions about the impact that various economic pressures had on poor relief expenditure patterns. Consequently, this one-parish study, which also covers but a short period of time, provides a reference point for further studies regarding the level and means of support rendered to the labouring poor during this critical period in England’s poor relief history.

Chapter Three: Settled Collections and Other Allowances

Pensions form the basis of any welfare system, whether that of the `welfare state` of today, or the poor relief systems administered under the Old Poor Law. The question central to this work is whether the application of the Old Poor Law was `rough and ready` as claimed by P. King or that of a `safety net` as alternatively advanced by P. Thane. She believed that poor relief provided `a very basic “safety net” but rarely more` and `if it was a “welfare state in miniature” it was ungenerous even by the uneven standards of the modern welfare state`. Poor law historians divide poor relief into two categories: `casual` relief, consisting of irregular payments, which were either in cash or in kind; and `direct` relief, which was comprised of `continuous payment over six months`. This chapter presents a slightly different and more comprehensive study of the character of direct relief than studies hitherto. In so doing it dissect what Quainton`s overseers called settled collections` along with irregularly recorded bulk `out-parish` collections. Through pattern analysis of the underlying aggregate data, a third category of direct relief, `allowances` were identified by the author. They were either regular stipends given to non-pensioners over extended periods of time or `in cash` supplements provided to recipients of settled collections. These three forms of direct relief reveal important nuanced variations at critical points in the life-cycle of the individual recipient. Whereas, the lower classes in English society were more vulnerable to poverty because their wage earning capacity dipped below the poverty level.

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This chapter illustrates how Quainton’s provision of direct relief to those it deemed ‘deserving’ was not stagnant. Rather, fluidity existed between the various categories of relief and individual recipients in relation to situational changes and economic volatility at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These changes are illustrated through a three-stage analysis of the underlying aggregate data: pre-dearth (17 July 1796 to 23 March 1799), dearth (24 March 1799 to 17 April 1802), and post-dearth (18 April 1802 to 31 March 1804). Within this three-stage analysis, the following questions are answered: Who were the recipients of direct relief? Who else might have benefited from this means of support? Did the composition of recipients of direct relief, change over time? What level and means of support was rendered to each category of individuals? How generous was direct relief in a comparative context? Did the ‘generosity’ of direct relief change over time? Were the recipients of direct relief ‘in poor’ or ‘kin rich’? What impact did the presence of militia wives and widows with non-productive children have on direct relief? Finally, was the parish sufficiently reimbursed for the support of militia wives?

**Administration of the Old Poor Law**

The ‘For the Relief Poor Act’ of 1601 established a legal responsibility for parishes to take care of several broad classes of the ‘non-able-bodied’ impotent poor: the lame, the old, the blind, and others among the ‘deserving’ poor who, because of mental or physical maladies could not be ‘expected to support themselves by work’. Pensions were the mainstay of this Act but, unlike pensions today, they did not promise mandatory entitlement to a standardised income at the age of 65. Instead, persons could be defined as ‘old’ at variable ages as ‘defined by their appearance and capacities’. 

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4 The dearth period in this analysis was extended to include the 1801-1802 fiscal year because the height of the dearth occurred at the end of the 1800-1801 fiscal year.  
Pensions were means-tested and adjusted according to the nature and circumstances of recipients as viewed by the parish vestry. King suggests that a majority of persons over the age of 70 along with a substantial number between the ages of 65 and 69 received poor law pensions. In addition, Ottaway states that poor relief under the Old Poor Law was vital to ‘assuring subsistence for a substantial minority of the elderly’ in eighteenth-century England. Based on the known age of Quainton’s collection recipients in 1800 of those that could be traced through church records, 23.5 per cent were over the age of 60 (Table 3:1). However, the Abstract of Returns of 1803 notes that 65 per cent of those on permanent relief in the parish were over 60 years of age or permanently disabled. Might this discrepancy be explained by the fact that 50 per cent of recipients in this study were of unspecified age?

For many, relief commenced when their chronological age and physical attributes coincided. Sokoll, in his examination of letters from Essex’s poor, found that they expressed ‘growing disability, being unable to do hard work, episodes of

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7 Williams, ‘Poor relief’, p. 486.
10 BPP, HC, 1804, Abstract of the Answers and Returns Made Pursuant to an Act, Passed in the 43rd Year of His Majesty, 1804, p. 23. Due to the limitations of vital records, it was impossible to estimate the ages of all of the recipients. The ages used in this study were adjusted based on the age of the individual in 1800.
weakness and fatigue, and exhaustion of body and soul.11 Traditional pensions were not meant to be the sole or main source of income for such persons; Thomson suggests that there was no pretence by poor law administrators that pensions should represent the upper limits of income for the elderly and that poor relief was intended to be a supplement to other incomes. Hunt supports this theory, additionally contending that pensions were disability payments, not pensions in the modern sense.12

Hunt disagrees with Thomson’s argument that Old Poor Law pensions were more valuable in absolute terms than the average working-class wage and were ‘equivalent to 70 to 90 per cent of the spending power of the average, younger adult of “the working class”’.13 Widows’ pensions in Quainton between 1796 and 1804 were only equivalent to the wages of a young boy (2s to 3s a week) and only comparable to 33 to 41 per cent of the wages of a married agricultural labourer. Certainly, a wide disparity in pension levels and variation in the proportion of the elderly supported by communal resources existed. The term ‘generosity’ has been widely used in the assessment of pensions. In furtherance of he discussed of S. King’s work in Chapter One, he argues that the two identified areas of regionality (north and south) could be further divided into eight sub-regions in which the generosity of any given parish was a factor of ‘their distinct experiences of such issues as entitlement, nominal relief levels and sentiment of relief giving’.14 ‘Generosity’ in this sense is thus defined as the value of allowances in relation to broadly defined background levels of living standards among the wider population.15

Welfare historians differ in their ‘interpretation of the scale of generosity and its timing’.16 Paupers at the beginning of the nineteenth century were indeed receiving more support from their local parishes but, as S. King and Smith suggest,

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14 King, Poverty, pp. 261-262.
15 Ibid., p. 55
16 Ibid.
one has to factor in the effects of inflation in the late eighteenth century as it ‘eroded largely static payments’. S. King contends that the rising costs of food and fuel in the 1790s affected both pensions and relief-in-kind, and that these fluctuations alone could have added 20-30 per cent to gross relief expenditure even without any change in the number of recipients. The question of generosity should, therefore, be limited to regular pensions, which in some communities constituted a major portion of the relief whilst in others it was of minor concern compared to other forms of welfare expenditure. S. King contends that in order to understand the characteristics of communal generosity there is a need to know the ‘total relief package’; taking into consideration the proportion of welfare payments directed towards regular pensions and what percentage of individuals receiving pensions also received non-pension help such as fuel and clothing in addition to other cash and in-kind relief.

The 1601 Act implied that there existed a familial responsibility to care for less fortunate family members. Family bonds within which one could be held responsible became progressively narrower, and by the eighteen century were limited to immediate relatives. Accordingly, these became limited to blood relatives with a direct relationship, and did ‘not extend beyond the mutual ties of parents to children and the responsibility of grandparents to grandchildren’ but this was ‘relatively rarely implemented’. Therefore, if 33 per cent of the elderly aged over 60 did not have children living nearby, as suggested by Smith, it is reasonable to assume that a large proportion of Quainton’s elderly might not have received any support from their kinship networks and would therefore have had no alternative but to seek relief from the parish.

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18 King, Poverty, p. 87.
19 Ibid., p. 155.
21 Ottaway, The Decline, p. 175
Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of `direct` relief expenditure for settled collections, regular allowances, and other collections between 17 July 1796 dearth and 31 March 1804.\textsuperscript{23} Settled collections expenses in the pre-dearth and the dearth were approximately equivalent, but were 29 per cent higher than post-dearth expenditure. The subsequent decrease of 34 per cent by 1804 brought expenses for settled collections and allowances to similar levels. Allowance expenses gradually increased over time, reaching a peak in 1801-1802, which was 137.5 per cent higher than the level noted in 1796-1797. This was due to the increased number of militia wives with non-productive children on the rolls and their movement from settled collections to allowance in October 1800. Other collections remained stable and did not exhibit any dearth-related increase. Whether these findings were solely the result of a change in the composition of direct relief or a reflection of the parish`s ability to adjust levels and means of support based upon a changing economic climate is explored in the following sections. The first two categories of `direct` are discussed

\textsuperscript{23} The term `settled collections` as used by Quainton`s overseers denotes what other researchers class as `pensions`, but does not carry the modern-day definition of what constitutes a pension, namely moneys received from government or corporations when one reaches the age of retirement.
separately within the three sub-periods of direct relief whilst other collections have not been approached in this manner.

**Settled Collections 17 July 1796 – 31 March 1804**

Settled collections were distinct from other entries in Quainton`s overseers` accounts as they were recorded biannually on Lady’s Day and Michaelmas. Entries were limited to the individual pauper`s name, the number of weeks during which a collection was received, the value of the weekly pension, and the biannual total. Comments were rare. Individual pensioners were not placed into clearly defined categories except in the case of widows. Identifying the types of recipients is problematic for modern-day historians as they struggle to classify and understand the nature of this form of poor relief, as primary records often do not provide any cues. S. King, for example, in his analysis of 14 southern and eastern parishes identifies only four categories of recipients: widows, unspecified females, children, and males. In contrast, through family reconstruction and pattern analysis of Quainton`s overseers` accounts, 12 cohorts of pensioners were isolated: widows; widows with children; widowers; widowers with children; elderly couples; married couples in which one spouse was disabled; militia wives; spinster; bachelor; disabled child; illegitimate child; and unknown. These recipients fall within the four main life-cycle stages: in sickness (temporary or permanent mental illness or physical disability); in old age (inability to provide for self-through work); in the absence of a bread-winner (militia wives and widows with non-productive children, deserted wives, and widows); and as children (orphans, illegitimate children).

S. King also found that the sexual composition of overall poor relief was changing, and that the percentage of regular male pensioners in southern and eastern England had reached 40 per cent by 1800. The percentage of males in Quainton`s collection rolls increased from 19 to 30 during the period of this study. In contrast,

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24 The naming of the pauper in the accounts varies. Widows were not usually addressed by their Christian name, but by surname only. Poor males were referred to by surname only and sometimes their occupational title if there was another individual in the parish with the same name. Stipends for children were referred to by their father`s surnames with the word `boy`, `girl`, or `child` in the notation.
26 _Ibid._, p. 165.
the other cohorts of poor relief were dominated by males as head of household or as single labourers.
### Table 3: Pre-Death Settled Collections 9 October 1796 - 23 March 1799

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>1796 - 1797</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recipients</td>
<td>Pension Distribution</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recipients</td>
<td>Pension Distribution</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2s. 4s.</td>
<td>2s. 4d.</td>
<td>£109 10s. 2d.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2s.-4s. 4d.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£114 2s.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2s.-4s. 9d.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
<td>£80 14s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows with children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5s.-8s. 6d.</td>
<td>4s. 11d.</td>
<td>£25 11s. 7d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5s.-5s. 6d.</td>
<td>3s. 6d.</td>
<td>£18 10s.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-4s.</td>
<td>3s. 9d.</td>
<td>£19 14s. 5d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s. 4d.-4s.</td>
<td>3s. 7d.</td>
<td>£18 15s.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-4s. 11d.</td>
<td>2s. 10d.</td>
<td>£22 7s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowers with children</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£4 16s.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married couple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3s. 4d.-6s.</td>
<td>7s. 8d.</td>
<td>£30 17s.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3s.-6s.</td>
<td>4s. 10d.</td>
<td>£37 10s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-6s.</td>
<td>5s. 6d.</td>
<td>£28 16s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with Children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3s.-7s. 7d.</td>
<td>4s. 3d.</td>
<td>£33 3s. 6d.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5s.-7s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>£15 10d.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2s.-6s. 5d.</td>
<td>2s. 1d.</td>
<td>£26 15s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married disabled</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>11d.</td>
<td>£2 8s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>11d.</td>
<td>£2 8s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia wives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s. 6d.-7s. 5d.</td>
<td>2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£13 9s.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-6s.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1s. 3d.-4s. 1d.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
<td>£45 7s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinsters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2s.-7s.</td>
<td>2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£53 6s.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2s.-6s. 4d.</td>
<td>5s.</td>
<td>£55</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2s.-6s. 5d.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£46 4s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>£5 4s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-4s. 8d.</td>
<td>3s. 8d.</td>
<td>£18 18s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
<td>£3 18s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>2s. 5d.</td>
<td>£6 6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate child</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£25 3s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s.</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td>£4 10s.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s.</td>
<td>1s. 7d.</td>
<td>£16 8s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2s. 9d.</td>
<td>£306 15s.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2s. 9d.</td>
<td>£313 6s. 6d.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2s. 4d.</td>
<td>£322 8s. 10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S. PR 169/127-8 Quaインターン's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806
Pre-Dearth

Between 1796-1797 and 1798-1799, the settled collections portion of Quainton’s total relief budget dropped from 40 per cent to 36 per cent (Table 3:2). While total expenditure remained stable, by end of the pre-dearth the number of collection’s recipients had increased by 26 per cent, its portion of the total budget was being displaced by other forms of relief. In the aftermath of the 1795-1796 dearth, collection recipients received higher average weekly pensions than those noted later in the pre-dearth. The overall annualised average weekly stipend in the pre-dearth dropped from 2s 9d to 2s 4d a week, the result of a 23 per cent increase in the number of pensioners with only a 2.29 per cent increase in expenses. This greatly affected widows, for even though their numbers remained the same their average weekly stipend by 1798-1799 dropped to 1s 11d, 1s less than noted in the previous year.

![Figure 3:2 Pre-Dearth Biannual Settled Collection Pension Distribution 9 October 1796 - 23 March 1799](source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1800.)

Considering the complications inherent with the concept of ‘generosity’ and the nature of the Old Poor Law, Figure 3:2 displays the pre-dearth scale and distribution of Quainton’s settled collections, which at the beginning and end of the period was almost evenly split between those who received less than 3s a week and
those in receipt of a sum in excess of 3s. 27 S. King, in his study of fourteen parishes in ‘the south and east’, found that only 20 per cent of pensioners were in receipt of less than 3s a week. Therefore, Quainton appears to have been more generous. 28 In contrast, in Terling, H.R. French reports that 65 per cent of weekly pensions between 1795 and 1800 were less than 2s, a considerably different finding to both this study and that of S. King. 29

Whilst the parish was willing to provide widows with a higher level of support in the immediate aftermath of the 1795-1796 dearth, as a consequence of shifting priorities or increased needs of other classes of poor relief recipients, the parish dramatically cut back their support. Without vestry collaboration it is impossible to know what truly motivated this budgetary reallocation with any certainty. Even though Quainton’s pensions at the end of the eighteenth century were comparable to those reported by Snell in southern England (at between 2s 6d and 3s a week), Quainton’s annualised average pensions were lower.

The second largest group of collections` recipients in Quainton were ‘spinsters’. On the surface, their average pension seemed to be significantly higher than those of widows. However, several of Quainton’s spinster (sisters) co-habited; consequently, the overseers only made one account entry. Therefore, their individual pensions were generally equivalent to those of widows, but in some cases, they received between sixpence and a shilling a week more, which suggest that they might have lived independent from other kin. Obviously, Quainton’s poor relief was based on face to face knowledge of the individual circumstance and stipends were tailored to meet the needs of individual recipients.

Historians make little mention of `militia` wives in poor law research, but their presence in Quainton dramatically affected poor relief expenditure. The Families of Militiamen Act of 1793, outlined the government’s obligation towards militia families:

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27 Table 3:2 and Figure 3:2; the weekly average presented in Table 3:2 is the annualised average, whereas Figure 3:3 represents the total number of recipients that received pension within the category represented in the chart.
28 King, Poverty, p. 151.
The Families of Militia Men chosen by Lot ordered to march on actual service to receive a weekly Allowance out of the Poor Rates, to be reimbursed out of the County Stock (allowance according to the usual and ordinary Price of Labour in husbandry where families dwell), any sum not to exceed the price of one Day’s labour, nor less than one Shilling, for each and every Child born in Wedlock and under the age of 10 and for the wife whether she has children or not any sum not to [exceed] the Price of one day’s labour, nor less than one shilling County treasurer.30

In the pre-dearth, the number of militia wives on the collection rolls increased and by 1798-1799 they accounted for 15 per cent of direct relief expenditure - an increase of 250 per cent over that estimated in 1796-1797, but their average weekly stipend was only 1s 11d. As illustrated, the range of their non-annualised pensions varied, suggesting that individual circumstances, besides the number of young children in a household, were a consideration (Table 3:3). As a consequence, parishes found themselves in a deficit. In 1795, Eden reported that the parish of Buckingham paid out £300 in relief for support of militiamen’s families. The parish of Winslow also paid out £30 in support of militia families, which was not fully repaid by the government.31 Likewise, Quainton shouldered a large percentage of the burden of support for militia wives and their children. Therefore, it can be concluded that the amount specified under the Act was not sufficient to support these families. In addition, it meant that parishes assumed part of the expense of waging war, thus contributing to the higher cost of poor relief.

Quainton received £34 3s 2d directly from Buckinghamshire’s county treasurer for the wives of Corporal William Pratt and Sergeant Francis Brownutt during the pre-dearth. However, the parish was reliant on the timely receipt of funds from the substitute parishes for the seven men from Quainton who had volunteered to serve in his Majesty’s forces for men from other parishes. During the pre-dearth Quainton only received £34 10s 8d from the substitute parishes. This therefore suggests that Quainton would have only received the amount prescribed under Act from the county treasurer and the substitute parishes. However, due to the

30 33 Geo. III c.8, Families of Militiamen Act 1793.
Table 3:3 Militia Wives Allowances in Addition to Pensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1796 - 1797</th>
<th></th>
<th>1797 - 1798</th>
<th></th>
<th>1798 - 1799</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number Recipients</td>
<td>Allowance Distribution</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Number Recipients</td>
<td>Allowance Distribution</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. - 1s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3d. - 6s.</td>
<td>2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 1 Child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s. 4s.</td>
<td>3s. 11d.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3s. 5s.</td>
<td>3s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 2 Children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4s. - 10s.</td>
<td>5s. 7d.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1s. - 19s.</td>
<td>7s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 3 Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s. - 5s.</td>
<td>4s. 9d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7 Quanton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1800.

Averages have not been annualized.
irregularity of receipts of payments, it is impossible to determine accurately the rate per person that the parish received. Consequently, if militia families had additional needs it fell on the shoulders of their parish of settlement to provide that relief. As a result, in the pre-dearth, Quainton incurred a pension deficit of £56 5s 1d, which did not include the supplemental allowances received by these women. The heavy impact of militia families’ support on collections forced Quainton’s vestry to make an important decision during the dearth regarding how it would continue to support these families. The vestry decided to remove militia wives and widows with non-productive children from settled collection and to provide support through weekly allowances.
Table 3:4 Dearth Settled Collection 24 March 1799 - 17 April 1802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Allowance Range</th>
<th>Weekly Average</th>
<th>Annual Amount</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Allowance Range</th>
<th>Weekly Average</th>
<th>Annual Amount</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Allowance Range</th>
<th>Weekly Average</th>
<th>Annual Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 2d.</td>
<td>£79 18s.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2s. 6d.-5s. 1d.</td>
<td>2s. 4d.</td>
<td>£78 6s. 5d.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1s. 16d.-3s. 5d.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£101 4s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow with Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 1d.</td>
<td>£2 14s.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2s. 8s. 9d.</td>
<td>3s. 3d.</td>
<td>£25 7s. 10d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s. 5d.</td>
<td>1s. 1d.</td>
<td>£5 13s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3s. 6d. 5s.</td>
<td>3s. 7d.</td>
<td>£27 11s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5s. 6s. 2d.</td>
<td>7s. 1d.</td>
<td>£36 19s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-5s. 1d.</td>
<td>6s. 6d.</td>
<td>£16 8s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower with Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s. 4s.</td>
<td>3s. 10.</td>
<td>£9 18s. 7d.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>1s. 9d.</td>
<td>£4 12s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2s. 8d. 5s. 11d.</td>
<td>3s. 1d.</td>
<td>£24 14s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5s. 7s.</td>
<td>1s. 8d.</td>
<td>£8 11s.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5s. 6s. 9d.</td>
<td>1s. 1d.</td>
<td>£8 11s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with Children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2s. 8d.-7s. 4d.</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>£31 11s. 6d.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-9s. 1d.</td>
<td>1s.</td>
<td>£10 15s. 2d.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7s.</td>
<td>7s.</td>
<td>£6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Disabled</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s. 6s.</td>
<td>2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£13 10s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s. 2s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 5d.</td>
<td>£5 5s. 5d.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Wives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2s. 6s.</td>
<td>2s. 9d.</td>
<td>£56 15s.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1s. 11d.-9s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£58 3s. 5d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s. 2d. 5s.</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£6 17s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinster</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2s. 6s.</td>
<td>2s. 5d.</td>
<td>£49 15s.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2s. 6d.-11s. 7d.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
<td>£52 11s. 7d.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2s. 5d.-3s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£56 15s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6s.</td>
<td>4s. 2d.</td>
<td>£10 14s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5s.</td>
<td>3s. 3d.</td>
<td>£8 10s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s.-3s.</td>
<td>2s. 1d.</td>
<td>£10 16s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s.-3s.</td>
<td>2s. 1d.</td>
<td>£10 16s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s. 2d.-5s.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£6 10s. 5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£13 19s. 6d.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s.</td>
<td>1s. 1d.</td>
<td>£11 7s. 7d.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 7d.</td>
<td>£21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5s. 4d.</td>
<td>4s. 9d.</td>
<td>£12 7s.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1s.-4s. 8d.</td>
<td>3s. 5d.</td>
<td>£31 4s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2s. 7d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£332 8s. 2d.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2s. 9d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£353 10s. 10d.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2s. 10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£288 13s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dearth

As Quainton entered the dearth of 1799-1801, the settled collections proportion of the total relief budget decreased to 27 per cent. Collections were displaced by allowances, subsidies for families with non-productive children, and unemployment benefits. Total expenditure by 1800-1801 had only increased by 15 per cent since 1796-1797, not that significant given the economic climate. The redistribution of collection recipients in October 1800 to allowances and a decrease in the number granted assistance in the latter part of 1801-1802 resulted in a decrease in collection expenditure of 21 per cent (Table 3:4). However, the total weekly annualised average stipends during the dearth increased slightly from 2s 7d to 2s 10d, comparable to the average recorded in the first two years of the pre-dearth. This was due in part to the increased weekly stipend afforded widows from 2s 4d to 2s 11d in 1801-1802 and the 22 per cent decrease in the number of recipient on the rolls in 1801-1802.

According to the biannual accountancy of April 1800, 60 per cent of pensioners received more than 3s a week. By October 1800, this trend had completely reversed and 61 per cent of settled collections recipients received less than 3s a week (Figure 3:3).

Source: C.B.S. PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers’ Accounts

Figure 3:3 Dearth: Biannual Settled Collection Pension Distribution 24 March 1799 - 17 April 1802
In contrast, Quainton closed the dearth period with 65 per cent of its pensioners in receipt of pension that was less than 3s a week and five to ten per cent of which received less than 2s a week. At this level, individual pensioners would have been unable to buy one loaf of bread a week. Therefore, `economies of makeshifts` would have played a significant role in their survival. Indeed, even those in receipt of two to three shillings a week certainly at this point would have been struggling to survive. As Barker-Read suggests, it can be said that `pensions were normally fixed at a level, which ensured that together with other known resources the pensioner had sufficient income for a diet that just barely met their needs for survival`.

Source: CBS, PR169/12/8, Quainton`s Overseers` Account, p. 542.

Figure 3:4 Example of Overseer Account 4 October 1800

Minor adjustment to collections` pensions are noted in the overseers` accounts during this period, presumably, these adjustments are based on the circumstantial changes of the recipients. However, the predominance of militia wives and widows with non-productive children on settled collection significantly changed the scale of

relief as noted by the prominence of pensions of over 3s a week in the biannual accountancy of 4 October 1800 (Figure 3:2). The weekly pensions of 13 women (militia wives and widows with non-productive children) were increased 12 times between April and October (Figure 3:4). Presumably, this was an attempt to keep abreast of the increasing price of bread. The overall level of relief received by these women had increased since the pre-dearth until the average weekly pension received by a militia wife with three children between April and October 1800 was 9s 6d (Table 3:5). This was considerably more than a labourer with the same number of children, whose average family allowance of only 4s 11d, in addition to his wages. Evidently, these women received additional compensation to make up for the loss of their husbands wages, probably the portion of his wages that the overseers felt would have been attributed to support of his wife and children.

Others settled collections’ recipients did not receive such generous stipends as militia wives. During the same period, only eight other pensioners received a one-time increase of sixpence a week; there is no direct evidence that the remaining 30 pensioners received increases related to the price of bread. Likewise, Newbold noted that in the parish of Claydon ‘of the seven widows recorded one received 1s a week, the other six were paid 2s 6d a week’, a similar rate as Quainton’s widows. However, he reports that as bread prices rose, the pensions of the ‘six widows was increased to 3s on 15 December 1799 and then to 3s 6d on 19 January 1800’,33 The upper limit reported by Newbold was higher than Quainton’s widows, who received an adjustment during the dearth. Even if this afforded them enough money to buy a loaf of bread a week, they would have relied heavily on their other ‘economies of makeshifts’ to provide additional food and the necessities of life. One can only speculate that in some cases there were other mitigating circumstances that precluded the overseers from increasing their pensions during the dearth.

Table 3:5 Dearth: Militia Wives Weekly Pensions 23 March 1799 - 17 April 1802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1799-1800</th>
<th>13 April 1800-4 October 1800</th>
<th>5 October 1800-4 April 1801</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weekly Allowance Range</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recipients</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allowance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recipients</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 3d.-4s. 11d.</td>
<td>2s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife 1 Child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2s.-7s. 4d.</td>
<td>3s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife 2 Children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3s. 9d.-8s. 8d.</td>
<td>5s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife 3 Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9s. 6d.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806
Faced with a biannual total poor relief expenditure of £825 12s 3d in October 1800, the vestry decided to remove militia wives and widows with non-productive children from collections. As noted in Table 3:5, the range of individual compensations is indicative of the overseer’s attempts to provide these women with a subsistence level of support. As of 4 October 1800, they received weekly allowances, which took into consideration the number of children (as noted in the account entries) as well as the changing price of bread.

During the dearth, Quainton received £99 5s 8d from the county treasurer and £29 11s 3d from substitute parishes for militia families. These funds covered the women’s pensions, but not their allowances, and resulted in a total deficit of £210 for their support during the dearth. Even though Quainton did not shoulder all the burden of support for the substitute’s families, they proved expensive, because Quainton chose to adjust their pensions and later their allowances in response to economic pressures imposed by the rising prices of bread.

The average weekly pension in most groups of settled collection’s recipients increased during 1800-1801, but decreased in 1801-1802. This demonstrates that at some level compensation did increase in response to the dearth, but likewise decreased as the economic situation stabilised.\textsuperscript{34} The death of widows, spinsters and the disabled, in addition to the movement of the militia wives and widows with children to allowances, contributed to the decrease in total number of recipients by the end of this period. This resulted in an 18.34 per cent reduction in expenses by 1801-1802, which was 5.86 per cent lower than the amount spent on collections in 1796-1797. The overall average annualised pension increased throughout the dearth years, but there were variations within each cohort.

\textsuperscript{34} The average pension in 1799-1800 was 3s 5d: by 1800-1801 it had increased to 4s 3d, but dropped to 3s 4d in 1801-1802.
Table 3:6 Post-Dearth Settled Collection 18 April 1802 - 31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1802-1803</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1803-1804</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number Recipients</td>
<td>Pension Distribution</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Yearly Total</td>
<td>Number Recipients</td>
<td>Pension Distribution</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Yearly Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1s.-3s.</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£66 12s.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1s. 7d.-4s.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
<td>£59 11s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow with Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
<td>8d.</td>
<td>£1 16s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-5s.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£13 3s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4s. 4d.</td>
<td>3s. 5d.</td>
<td>£17 13s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower with Children</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3s. 6d.-6s.</td>
<td>4s. 6d.</td>
<td>£58 17s.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4s. 5d.-6s.</td>
<td>5s.</td>
<td>£51 14s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with Children</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Disabled</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£4 16s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>£5 2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Wives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£4 16s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s. 2d.</td>
<td>8d.</td>
<td>£1 16s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinstor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-4s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 13d.</td>
<td>£41 4s.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1s. 11d.-4s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£39 10s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>7d.</td>
<td>£1 10s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>11d.</td>
<td>£2 8s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s.</td>
<td>1s. 5d.</td>
<td>£11 4s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 5s.</td>
<td>1s. 9d.</td>
<td>£8 18s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-5s.</td>
<td>3s. 1d.</td>
<td>£16 11s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/8 Quinlin's Overseers' Accounts 1800-1806.
Annualized weekly average has been used
Post-Dearth

With economic stabilisation in the post-dearth, settled collections once more claimed a higher proportion of Quainton’s total relief budget. By March 1804, it accounted for 26 per cent of the budget; although this was significantly lower than the 40 per cent figure recorded in 1796-1797. This suggest that either other cohorts of relief had displaced collections budget position or alternately parish officers were more closely scrutinising those they deemed “deserving”, resulting in a decline in both the level of support, and number of recipients. Therefore, collections expenditure in 1803-1804 was 33.75 per cent lower than the amount recorded in 1796-1797 (Table 3:6). Lone-parent households and married couples with children, who had commanded higher pensions in previous periods, were virtually non-existent in the post-dearth. Indeed, as of March 1804, only one childless militia wife remained on collections. The overall annualised weekly pension dropped from 2s 10d in 1801-1802 to 2s 2d in 1802-1803, but then increased slightly in 1803-1804 to 2s 6d. The percentage distribution of pensions also changed dramatically and, by 31 March 1804, 56 per cent of recipients received less than 3s a week while 36 per cent received less than 2s a week (Figure 3:5). The economic climate had not changed that drastically, bread was still 1s 6d a loaf, so what pre-empted this change in policy is unknown.35 Pensioners in receipt of less than 3s a week would still have relied heavily on their “economies of makeshifts” for other necessities of life, as their stipends were inadequate given the price of food.

Estimating Who Benefited from Settled Collections Relief

Various historians have tried to estimate the total number of parishioners who might have benefited from pensions. Slack used a multiplier of 1.9 to establish this figure, however in the case of Quainton this might not be appropriate given that a number of recipients had multiple children. Based upon Slack multiplier, potentially eight to 14 percent of Quainton’s population might have benefited from settled collections pensions. If this multiplier was applied to the Abstracts and Returns of 1803 statistics, it suggests that 14 per cent of Quainton’s population benefited from settled collections (Table 3:7).

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38 The average of those that benefited from pension was derived by using Paul Stack’s multiplier of 1.9 and the 1801 census population figure of 750.
39 BPP, HC, 1804, Abstract.
### Table 3:7 Answers to Abstracts and Returns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Person Permanently on Relief</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children of Permanently Relieved &lt; 5 yrs.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children of Permanently Relieved &gt; 5 &lt;14 yrs.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Persons Above the Age of 60 with permanent illness or infirmity</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Persons on Occasional Relief</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Earned by the Poor Towards their Maintenance</td>
<td>£40 2s 7d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Expended on Maintenance of the Poor</td>
<td>£738 1s 11d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Spend on Settlement/Removal</td>
<td>£23 10s. 4d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure of other Purpose including Militia</td>
<td>£139 4s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>£900 16s 3d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1803-1804, Abstracts of Answers Made Pursuant to an Act, Passed in the 43rd year of His Majesty King George III, pp. 22-23

However, this could have been substantially higher, as the other numbers listed above ‘on permanent relief’ is somewhat unclear and misleading (Table 3:7). The assumption is that those listed as ‘permanently on relief’ were recipients of settled collection, which according to the 1803 aggregate data amounted to 35 persons. It is possible that this included the militia wives and widows with non-productive children that received allowances during this fiscal year. Seeing that there are significant numbers of children listed, it is reasonable to assume that this is the case. Certainly, the number in receipt of ‘occasional relief’ is within the range supported by the aggregate data.

#### Settled Collections and Winwood Charity Comparison

Winwood’s widows received between 2s and 2s 6d a week, the equivalent to that received by the majority of parish-maintained widows in the pre-dearth and dearth. However, in the post-dearth, Winwood’s widows received more, as a majority of the pensions of parish widows dropped below 2s a week. In contrast, parish widowers received an average of 4s 6d a week compared to the 3s received by almsmen. During the dearth, the almsmen received sixpence more a week, ‘on account of the dearness of provisions’, but this was quickly rescinded when wheat prices stabilised.\(^{40}\) In addition to their stipends, alms persons received free single resident housing, fuel, medical and nursing care and a set of liveries a year. As alms

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\(^{40}\) CBS, CH 20/FA/1, Account Book of Winwood Charity, 1764-1832, p. 408.
persons aged and their situation changed, the charity, like the parish, made some slight adjustments in the weekly stipend and additionally paid for caregivers and/or nursing care. For example, John Taylor’s daughter received sixpence a week to take care of him during the last year of his life. In September 1797, Mr Turner (practitioner) was called in to administer John Ladiman’s arm ‘due to misfortune’. It is evident, therefore, that the total benefit package received by an individual alms person was of substantially greater value to recipients.

From account notations, it is evident that alms persons were expected to employ other ‘economies of makeshifts’ in order to survive. This included work. John Brion, on 20 September 1800 was allowed an additional sixpence a week on ‘account of having no work, and losing part of his harvest’. On 25 October 1797, the charity paid 1s 6d for ‘lacemaking hooks and thimbles for alms-house use’, but there was no indication that the charity benefited from the sale of the lace. Similarly, as noted in Table 3:7, the parish’s poor in 1803, reportedly earned £40 2s 7d towards their care, the equivalent of three and a half pence a week for each of the reported 52 paupers ‘permanently on parish relief’. In 1802-1803, the overseers noted receipt of £3 8s from the sale of lace; whether the parish was acting as an intermediary and turning over moneys to pensioners is unknown. The parish’s accounts also note that widows were ‘doing’ for others. However, there was no evidence in the account that these moneys counted towards their maintenance. What this does point out is that both the parish and the Winwood relieved widows and widowers were expected to contribute to their own support.

Some historians suggest that alms persons were ‘kin-poor,’ but this was not necessarily the case in Quainton. Almsmen John Ladiman and John Brion both had sons who received parish support for their large families. Widow Marlow was likely the mother of William Marlow another poor relief recipient with five children. Evidently, these alms persons were either unable to live independently or had become too much of a burden physically or economically for their families to support.

41 Ibid., p. 364.  
42 Ibid., p. 268.  
43 Ibid., p. 414.  
44 Ibid., p. 372.  
45 BPP, HC, 1804, Abstract, pp. 22-23.
In conclusion, the widows and widowers supported by the Winwood charity were financially better off than those on parish relief. Their benefit packages included housing, clothing, medical and nursing care, and fuel in addition to their weekly stipends. In contrast, a parish-sustained recipient, who received very little in addition to their pension, and relied heavily on their other `economies of makeshifts` to provide for their other necessities of life.

**Allowances**

No previous study has devoted much attention to those cash payments, which were not classified as pension, but were, nevertheless, made over an extended period. These stipends were identified through pattern analysis of the aggregate data. This was necessary because the majority of these entries were void of specific documentation beyond the name of the individual and the amount received. However, after October 1800 they did note the number of non-productive children in the households of militia wives and widows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Recipients</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3:8 Nominal Linkage Between Settled Collections and Allowances*

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers’ Accounts 1796-1806/

---

46 These are consistent weekly payments of the same amount over an extended period.
Allowances in the pre-dearth accounted for eight to 11 per cent of Quainton’s total poor relief budget. In 1799-1800, because the major cost of supporting militia wives and widows with non-productive children was born by collections, allowances accounted for only ten per cent of the total relief budget. However, by the end of the dearth, the allowance portion of the total budget had climbed to 19 per cent. By the end of the post-dearth such costs accounted for 25 per cent of the total poor relief budget. As illustrated in Table 3:8, there was a significant overlap between those who were on the collection’s roll and those who received concurrent allowances. The fluidity that existed between collections and allowances; was more notable during the pre-dearth and dearth, when militia wives and widows with non-productive children received allowances in addition to their pensions. After their removal from collections, the percentage of overlap dropped. Therefore, for those still on pensions in the post-dearth, supplemental allowances were indicative of circumstantial changes.

For some of Quainton’s poor, allowances were a precursor to being added or removed from collections. For example, Widows Ann Warner and Elizabeth Foster most likely received regular allowances for an extended period until they were added to collections in April 1797 and October 1797, respectively. How allowances fitted into the overall pattern of direct relief is broken down into the relative sub-periods used earlier in this chapter.

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47 Determining the length of time that these women received weekly allowances prior to 17 July 1796 was not feasible due to the lack of surviving records.
### Table 3:9 Pre-Dearth Allowances 17 July 1796 - 23 March 1799

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1796 - 1797</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1797 - 1798</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1798 - 1799</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recipient</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allowance Distribution</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weekly Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yearly Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recipient</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allowance Distribution</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weekly Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yearly Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s.</td>
<td>£3 10s. 7d.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
<td>2s. 12d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow with Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6d.-1s. 6d.</td>
<td>11d.</td>
<td>4s. 17s. 7d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.-8s.</td>
<td>2s. 4d.</td>
<td>£4 10s.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Disabled</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s.-6s. 8d.</td>
<td>3s. 3d.</td>
<td>£6 1s. 5d.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2s.-12s.</td>
<td>4s. 10s.</td>
<td>£18 6s.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia wife</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-10s. 6d. 3s. 8d.</td>
<td>£30 1s. 5d.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1s. 3d.-4s. 6d.</td>
<td>5s. 7d.</td>
<td>£24 15s. 5d.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6d.-3s. 11d.</td>
<td>6s. 1s. 6d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6d.-3s.</td>
<td>2s. 1d.</td>
<td>£6 13s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s.-5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Adult</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>£4 4s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.-12s.</td>
<td>2s. 2d.</td>
<td>£4 4s.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s.-2s.</td>
<td>1s.</td>
<td>£1 4s.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>£2 2s.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Child</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4s. 6d.-5s.</td>
<td>4s. 11d.</td>
<td>£6 3s. 7d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s.-8s.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£4 16s.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s. 6d.</td>
<td>4s. 6d.</td>
<td>4s. 6d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s.-8s.</td>
<td>2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£4 16s.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weekly Average** | **Yearly Total** | **Weekly Average** | **Yearly Total** | **Weekly Average** | **Yearly Total** | **Weekly Average** | **Yearly Total** | **Weekly Average** | **Yearly Total** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.5d.</td>
<td>£62 16s. 5d.</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£70</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£96 6s. 6d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-Dearth

In the initial aftermath of the 1795-1796 dearth, Quainton’s allowances might not have been exceedingly high, but without records from April to mid-July 1796 that cannot be determined with any certainty. The expenses for the last year of the pre-dearth, 1798-1799, were 37.5 per cent higher than the 1796-1797 estimate (Table 3:9). Supplemental allowances for militia wives and widows with non-productive children accounted for the majority of this expenditure. Militia wives became more prominent and more expensive to maintain, as their pensions were insufficient to support their families. In addition to their pensions and miscellaneous casual relief in 1798-1799, militia wives received an average annualised allowance of 1s 6d a week. During the Irish Rebellion of 1798, the government provided an additional allowance as the Buck’s Militiamen that were deployed in Ireland (which has been accounted for in these figures).

Sisters and widows without children received very little support in addition to their pensions during the pre-dearth. In fact, during 1797-1798, widows received no extra money. In contrast, the number of `married disabled` recipients increased three-fold during this time, which suggests that in cases of disability, the overseers were optimistic that the individual’s condition would improve. If this is accepted, then it follows that it made sense to provide them with a weekly allowance, because once they were on collections, it would be hard to remove them, even if their conditions improved. Quainton paid allowances and even pensions to disabled children of working age. This may have been based on the fact that children over the age of nine were considered productive members of their families; therefore, assuming that the child’s disability precluded them from productive employment, the parish must have felt obliged to provide for their maintenance as it would have placed undue strain on their already struggling family. Williams notes that children’s allowances were limited to orphans, as relief history of the other children in a parish was part of a family’s analysis.48

48 Williams, Poverty, p. 104.
### Table 3:10 Dearth Allowances 24 March 1799 - 17 April 1802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1799-1800</th>
<th>1800-1801</th>
<th>1801-1802</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number Recipients</td>
<td>Weekly Allowance</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow with Children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-8s</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3s.-4s. 6d.</td>
<td>7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower with Children</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinsters</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6d.-2s.</td>
<td>3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Wives</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1s. 3d.-£2 15s.</td>
<td>2s. 9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with Children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7d.-4s. 6d.</td>
<td>11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Disabled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10d.-6s.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Adult</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.-16s.</td>
<td>9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Child</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1s. 2.-5s.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostered Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread Allowance</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1s. 5d.</td>
<td>£116 18s. 3d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 159/127-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806.
Annualised averages were used.
Dearth

Allowances were the third highest expense during the dearth after settled collections and miscellaneous casual relief (Table 3:10). Out of a total of £585 1s 5d, support for militia families amounted to £298 12s, or 61 per cent of the dearth allowance budget. In contrast, aid to widows with children accounted for an additional £115 17s 1d or 23 per cent of the total budget.

The removal of widows and militia wives with non-productive children from settled collections in October 1800 had a dramatic impact on allowance expenditure as their stipends were adjusted in accordance with the price of bread. Perhaps overseers felt a weekly needs assessment was necessary given the volatile economic climate. The aggregate data supports the fact that not only did their allowances increase as the price of bread increased, but as soon as bread prices dropped, their allowances decreased, but not as abruptly as family allowances, which is an aspect of this study discussed in Chapter Four.

Mary Ann Plant, a militia wife with four non-productive children at the height of the dearth in March 1801, received for several weeks an allowance of 17s 6d. This was 3s 6d more than that received by a labourer with four children, which was in addition to his total family income. By December 1801, Mary’s allowance had dropped to 8s 9d a week, whilst the labourer only received 3s in addition to his family’s wages. Presumably, these women continued to be compensated for a portion of their husbands’ wages that would have been attributed to their support.

The same is evident in the support of widows with non-productive children. Sarah Checkly, a widow with three children received 14s at the height of the dearth, whereas, a labourer with three children received 8s 10d in addition to his family’s income. By December, Sarah’s allowance had dropped to 5s 2d and the labourer was only in receipt of a family allowance of 1s 4d.

Fostered children received very little mention in the overseers’ accounts until May 1801. The Acts of Elizabeth I established the legal obligation for parishes to support ‘such others among them being poor and “unable to work” such as
orphans. Edward Curtis, of Quainton, was awarded 2s 6d a week for the care of John Elliman’s child after the death of John’s wife Ann on 12 March 1801. This was later reduced to 1s 6d a week. Thomas Taylor fostered the three children of his brother Mason Taylor, a militiaman, after the death of wife Elizabeth in September 1801. Thomas received an allowance of 7s 9d a week for the three younger children, in addition to the 1s 6d for the ‘boy’ of working age. Not only was the parish paying for the fostering of orphans but in Elliman’s case it was paying for the care of a child that he was unable to care for after the death of his wife, because he had to work to support his other children. The same is true for the Taylor children, but in their case, it is uncertain whether the father was still alive.

In February 1802, a ‘bread allowance’ was added to direct relief. This was extended to the ‘girls’ of widows, upon reaching the age of ten. They received an allowance of between one shilling and 1s 5d a week. It is questionable whether these moneys were an incentive to keep the last remaining daughter at home to support their mothers in their declining years. Another possible explanation is the lack of agricultural employment for young girls in the parish due to the changing roles of men, women, and children in the agricultural sector between the 1690s and the 1860s. Farmers would have been less likely to hire a young inexperienced girl, while there were still men on the ‘rounds’. Domestic service was also scarce during the dearth as farmers and tradesmen, who might have employed these girls, most likely had less disposable income to do so. Therefore, might this also be akin to the in-lieu-of-roundsman wage afforded young boys in the parish? This is discussed in Chapter Five.

Allowance expenditure in 1801-1802 was 364 per cent higher than the estimated 1796-1797 figure and 63 per cent higher than the 1800-1801 figures. Indeed, allowances actually surpassed casual relief expenditure during that year. The

49 39 Eliz., c.3, For the Relief of the Poor; 39 Eliz., c. 4, For punishment of rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars; 43 Eliz., c. 2 Poor Relief Act 1601; Williams, Poverty, p. 104.
50 Presumably, the child was Felix Elliman, baptised 17 August 1800.
51 It is questionable whether Mason Taylor was still alive, as there is no evidence to suggest that he returned home during this period.
53 Snell, Annals, p. 17.
movement of militia wives and widows off collections did not result in a cost saving. In reality, the combined moneys spent on collections and allowances prior to the dearth were nearly equivalent to those recorded during the dearth. This therefore, suggests that even though there was a change in strategies, it did not at this point result in a cost saving.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1802 - 1803</th>
<th>1803 - 1804</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number Recipients</td>
<td>Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow with Children</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1s. 4d.-5s. 6d. 2s. 3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow with Children</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2s.-5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Wives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2s.-6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with Children</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Disabled</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1s.-6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batchelor</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Adult</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s.-2s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 4d.-3s. 1d. 5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7s. 6d.-12s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostered Child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-7s. 6d. 2s. 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread Allowance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1s. 3d.-1s. 7d. 4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/8 Quantin's Overseers' Accounts 1800-1806
Annualized averages have been used
Post-Dearth

Post-dearth allowances accounted for 19 per cent of Quainton’s total 1802-1803 budget and 25 per cent of its 1803-1804 budget (Table 3:11). The closing expenses for 1803-1804 were 159 per cent higher than the estimated figures for 1796-1797, and this was mainly due to the increased presence of widows and militia wives with non-productive children. Nevertheless, the number of people receiving allowances dropped 29 per cent by 1803-1804. There was also a significant decrease in allowance expenditures in 1802-1803, as a consequence of the lull in the war between England and France. As England re-entered the war, allowances increased primarily due the compensation of militia wives. The overall annualised weekly allowance dropped to 1s 6d in 1802-1803, and increased to 2s 1d in 1803-1804, both of which were substantially less than noted in other years covered by this study. This was the result of the stabilisation of bread prices and a decrease in the number of children under the age of ten in militia households. However, expenses could have been much higher. During the Napoleonic war, men could be excused from military service by paying a bounty. Probably predicated on previous experience of an incurred deficit of £522 3s 7d between 1796 and 1803 for the support of the militiamen’s families, the overseers made the decision in 1803-1804 to pay a bounty of £10 per man for the seven men from the Quainton that had been called to active duty in his Majesty’s forces.

Widows without children received no additional cash allowances in the post-dearth and spinsters likewise received very little. Several of the disabled poor died during the dearth, but total expenses remained stable, resulting in an increase in average weekly stipends. Support of foster children in the post-dearth was higher than the partial year compensation noted in 1801-1802, but remained constant during this period. Bread allowances were well established and doubled by 1803-1804. The closing figures for the post-dearth demonstrate that there was a concerted effort by Quainton’s overseers to decrease allowance expenditure, while at the same time maintaining their commitment to support lone-parent families, orphans, and the disabled.
"Other Collections"

‘Other collections’ were moneys paid to the labouring poor who either lived outside their parish of settlement, or farmed-out illegitimate children, or families of substitute militiamen. Tables 3:12-14 provide a breakdown of these payments in the three sub-periods that have formed the chronological framework of this chapter. Over the course of this study, other collections accounted for 3.29 to 9.13 per cent of total poor relief expenditure minus administrative costs. Due to the infrequency of these disbursements, it can be assumed that these were not paid until bills were received from a ‘host’ parish, or the substitute’s parish of settlement, or caregiver. Thus, fluctuation in total yearly expenses can be attributed to the irregularity of the submission of bills to Quainton’s overseers, which ranged from five-85 weeks.

The first identified group of other collection recipients were those that received what is termed ‘out-parish relief’. Generally applicable to elderly paupers, these consisted of informal agreements between three involved parties: the pauper, the ‘home’ (settlement) parish, and the ‘host’ (resident) parish. In some cases, these were a financially favourable option for the parish of settlement as the costs incurred with returning paupers to their ‘home’ parishes could be burdensome. Thomson suggests that there is very little evidence that overseers sought to transfer elderly pauper back to their parishes of settlement. Quainton’s entries of this type include the name of the pauper, host parish and the total sum transmitted. The number of weeks relieved or the amount received per week was not always specified and therefore it is impossible to establish whether Quainton received the payment for substitute militia families specified by the Act. The four members of the Crook family are a good example of out-parish relief. Church of England records do not substantiate their settlement in Quainton or their host parish. However, the surname does appear in the Waddesdon Hill Particular Baptist Church records in the early...

54 S. King, “‘It is impossible for our vestry to judge his case into perfection from here’” given the distance dimensions of poor relief, 1800-40’, Rural History, 16, no. 2 (2005), pp. 161-189, p. 164.
### Table 3:12 Pre-Dearth Other Collections 17 July 1796 - 23 March 1799

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1796 - 1797</th>
<th></th>
<th>1797 - 1798</th>
<th></th>
<th>1798 - 1799</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Pension Recipients</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Yearly Total</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Pension Recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s.3d.-2s.</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>£6 16s. 8d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s. 3d.-2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1s.6d.-2s.1d.</td>
<td>1s. 7d.</td>
<td>£8 8s.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Substitute</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*10 10s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s. 4d.-2s.</td>
<td>8d. 3s.</td>
<td>£7 18s.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s.-2s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£33 12s. 5d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1s. 5d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7 Quain's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1800.
Annualized average has been used.
Table 3:13 Dearth: Other Collections 5 October 1799 - 17 April 1802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1799 - 1800</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1800-1801</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1801-1802</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recipients</td>
<td>Allowance</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Recipients</td>
<td>Allowance</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1s. 6d.  - 2s. 1s. 8d.</td>
<td>£12 17s. 6d</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2s.  - 4s. 6d. 2s. 2d.</td>
<td>£22 18s. 6d</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2s.  - 4s. 3d. 2s. 1d.</td>
<td>£21 6s. 3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.  - 4s. 6d. 9d.</td>
<td>£2 6d.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1s. 6d.  - 2s. 1s. 5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1s.  - 2s. 9d. 1s. 1d.</td>
<td>£14 8s.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1s.  - 2s. 6d. 1s 2d.</td>
<td>£14 18s. 6d</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1s.  - 2s. 6d. 1s. 9d.</td>
<td>£13 17s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Substitutes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2s. 5d.</td>
<td>£6 7s. 1d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s. 4s. 9d.</td>
<td>£12 5s. 4d.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2s.  - 4s. 6d. 2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£18 5s. 4d.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4s.  - 4s. 6d. 2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1s. 9d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£49 17d.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2s. 1d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£65 8s. 7d.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806
Annualized average were used.
Table 3:14 Post Dearth Other Collections 18 April 1802 - 31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1802-1803</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1803-1804</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>Pension</td>
<td>Weekly Average</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>Recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2s.-3s.</td>
<td>2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£26 10s. 6d.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegitimate Child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1s. 6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
<td>1s. 6d.</td>
<td>£15 9s. 6d.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Militia Substitute</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td>£4 6s.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4s.-4s. 3d.</td>
<td>12s. 11d.</td>
<td>£33 11s. 3d.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2s. 10d.</td>
<td>£79 18s. 2d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1800-1806

Annualized average have been used.
nineteenth century where Quainton’s nonconformists attended services and in other parish documents.\(^{57}\)

In addition, widows Hester Crook of Risborough and Jane of Brandeham received an average weekly pension during the pre-dearth of less than 2s a week. However, in 1800-1801 their average weekly pension was increased to 2s 8d. Whether this increase was due to the high price of commodities or the circumstances of these individuals is unknown. Unlike some of the other widows in Quainton during the post-dearth, the stipends of out-parish widows did not drop below 2s a week. Mary Crook’s stipend increased after the birth of a child in 1802. Both of these examples demonstrate that Quainton was willing to adjust the level of relief of ‘out-parish’ recipients based on changing needs.

Whether these paupers chose to remain in their host parishes to be near kin is unknown, as vital records do not substantiate this assumption. No other requests for supplemental payments were noted for the Crook family. However, in the case of Widow Jemima Clark of Brackley, the overseers did record an ‘extra allowance’ for fuel of 3s 4d on 20 April 1799 and 10s on 12 December 1801.\(^{58}\) Apparently, host parishes could petition the parish of settlement for additional moneys, apparently in the of Crooks’ their economies of makeshift were sufficient to provide for their other necessities of life.

The second group of ‘other collections’ recipients were children. Several of Quainton’s illegitimate children were farmed-out to caregivers outside the parish. There is no record baptism in the established church for of these children, which is not unusual for bastard children as during certain periods of English history there was ‘a widespread view that bastards should not be christened’.\(^{59}\) Their average stipend received by their caregiver was between 1s 2d and 1s 6d a week, this was meant to provide for all their needs. There is no evidence that their stipend increased

\(^{57}\) This accounts for the absence of baptismal records by the Church of England. Non-conformists from various parishes, including Quainton, were members of the Waddesdon Particular Baptist Church founded in 1785. The only surviving records that list members’ names start in 1801. CBS, PR 169/16/1, Miscellaneous Settlement Records.

\(^{58}\) CBS, PR 169/12/7-8, Overseers.

during the dearth. This level of relief makes one question what type of care these children received or if they actually survived.

The third group of recipients were the families of men recruited by Quainton to serve in his Majesty’s armed forces in their places. Quainton was responsible for paying the substitutes’ home parishes for support of these families as prescribed by law. Further support was left to the generosity of the home parish. For example, the family of Richard Chester of Thames first appeared in the records in June 1797 as a substitute for Michael Lee of Quainton, who was in his late fifties and in ill health. After Michael’s death in February 1799, the parish upheld its obligation to Richard Chester’s family until April 1802, while concurrently supporting Michael’s wife and child. Richard Chester’s wife initially received a pension of 1s 4d for herself; this was increased to 2s 8d on the birth of her first child and 4s after a second child was born. However, there was no apparent adjustment in the substitute families’ stipends during the dearth of 1799-1801. Michael Lee’s wife received the same allowance as other widows with non-productive children. Evidence has shown that Quainton did at times provide direct relief to those who had parish settlement but for various reasons were not living in the parish itself.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has illustrated how the levels and means of ‘direct’ relief were adjusted in response to the changing needs of Quainton’s poor in light of the economic crisis imposed by the dearth of 1799-1801. In the years surrounding the dearth, the structure of direct relief changed and it is evident that the overseers were actively paring down relief expenditure in the later years of this study. Not only did the number of recipients covered by direct relief decline, but the level of relief changed as well. In 1798-1799, 53 named individuals appeared on the settled collections roll; by 1803-1804, this had been reduced to 31 recipients. This decrease is in part explained by the shift of widows and militia wives with non-productive children from settled collections to allowances and the death of some recipients in the interim accounts. The increase in the number of pensioners with stipends under 2s a week in the post-dearth was significant. Presumably, however, Quainton’s

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60 33 Geo. III, c. 8, Families of Militia Act, 1793; 43 Geo. III, c. 72, Militia Allowance Act, 1803.
overseers were being more selective in whom they admitted to, or kept on, direct relief. Economic conditions had improved by the post-dearth, but it is highly unlikely that individual circumstances had improved that much. Apparently, by the end of this study, more of Quainton’s poor remained on allowances as expenses were 159 per cent higher than those recorded in 1796-1797 and were nearly equivalent to the amount spent on collections in 1803-1804 (Table 3:15).

Table 3:15 Direct Relief
17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Settled Collections</th>
<th>Other Collections</th>
<th>Allowances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>£306 13s.</td>
<td>£30 13s.*</td>
<td>£62 14s. 2d.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>£313 6s. 7d.</td>
<td>£26 1s. 5d.</td>
<td>£70 1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
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<td>£96 6s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>£332 6s. 10d.</td>
<td>£49 17s.</td>
<td>£116 19s 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>£342 2s. 10d.</td>
<td>£76 3s. 5d.</td>
<td>£176 15s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>£213 8s. .</td>
<td>£75 2s. 10d.</td>
<td>£301 10s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>£204 7d. .</td>
<td>£79 17s. 4d.</td>
<td>£158 6s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>£203 2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£34 14s. 7d</td>
<td>£197 5s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>£2219 3s. 5d</td>
<td>£454 12s. 7d</td>
<td>£1179 1s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only includes aggregate data from 1 July 1796
Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts.

At no time during the period addressed by this study did pensions account for the bulk of poor relief expenditure unlike that reported by Williams in her study of Compton and Shefford. It is important to note the shifting trend in poor relief expenditure towards the support of a greater number of able-bodied poor in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and the cumulative expenditure of the three components of direct relief in the both pre and post-dearth accounted for more than 50 per cent of the total relief budget. However, during the dearth, other forms of relief had displaced ‘direct’ relief’s overall percentage of the total budget, thus illustrating the parish ability to respond to the economic pressure of the period.

As suggested by Williams, Quainton exhibited a willingness to contribute more direct relief to lone parent households, militia wives, and widows and widowers with

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61 Williams, 'Poor relief', p. 499.
non-productive children than families headed by married couples. However, this level of commitment was subject to economic pressures, with relief being adjusted accordingly. Between April 1799 and October 1800, the majority of collections` recipients that received increased stipends were militia wives and widows with non-productive children, but these increases were minimal. After their removal from the collections` roll, their weekly allowances increased and decreased in response to the price of bread and the circumstance of the individual recipient. In February 1802, the parish instituted a bread allowance in support of widows with young girls, which further demonstrates Quainton`s commitment to the support of lone-parent families.

Other pensioners, however, received minimal pension adjustments during the dearth and some received none. Unlike family allowance that will be discussed in Chapter Four, these modifications did not come into effect until April 1800, six months after the adoption of a bread scale, which left this group of venerable pensioners to struggle through the winter of 1799-1800. Widows, widowers and spinsters received very little in further cash allowances unless they were being compensated by the parish for the care of others parishioners. This meant that at the height of the dearth, those pensioners whose weekly stipend was less than 3s could not afford to buy one half-peck loaf of bread a week. It can be assumed that in order to survive, a majority of collections` recipients must have co-habited either with kin or other parishioners and relied heavily on their other `economies of makeshifts`. Quainton continued its commitment to out-of-parish recipients, but there is no evidence of increased stipends related to inflation during dearth or that the parish provided substitutes families higher allowances than those prescribed by the Parliamentary Acts. Support of bastard children was minimal.

This chapter has also highlighted the importance of dissecting variations in the types of direct relief received. The analysis of the aggregate data has provided some knowledge into the application of `direct` relief and the flexibility of the parish to respond to economic crises. This micro-historical analysis of direct relief has also demonstrated the diverse nature and flow of recipients through the two subcategories of direct relief; settled collections and allowances. Missing documentation and the

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62 Ibid., p. 513.
inability to gain insight from those who administered the poor law are barriers to micro-historical research. It is difficult, therefore, to answer the questions raised by the data concerning whether Quainton’s level of direct relief was more generous than that of other agricultural parishes in Buckinghamshire or whether Quainton’s poor lacked alternative ‘economies of makeshifts’. Nevertheless, the following chapters continue to explore these important nuanced questions and use further innovative analytic frameworks to do so.
**Chapter Four: The Reality of Family Survival**

This chapter addresses what was to become a highly controversial component of old poor law administration; namely the support of able-bodied families with young children. It provides a better understanding of how economic change and the shift away from a `moral economy` affected the families of the industrious poor during the dearth of 1799-1801.\(^1\) These families are representative of Rowntree`s second poverty trap, which he theorised occurred after marriage when there were still non-productive children in a household.\(^2\)

During the dearth, Quainton instituted a new means of poor relief that particularly addressed the challenges faced by these families. This chapter explores that initiative, by answering the following questions: What type of family subsidy scheme did Quainton adopt and when did it go into effect? Who were the recipients of this relief? What level of support did each family structure receive? Was there a correlation between wheat prices and the level of assistance these families received? Did the levels and means of support change over time? It proposes that the extent to which the form of relief provided the labouring poor with a subsistence income. Indeed, this warrants further research, but this is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, some evidence and hypotheses relating to this topic are presented in Appendix F.

Overall, the data presented in this chapter reveals how Quainton`s overseers demonstrated an initial reluctance to increase relief expenditure to able-bodied families, and thereby revealed an acceptance of contemporary criticisms of `over` providing relief. Nevertheless, when the economic situation worsened during late 1799, the pressure of increasing poverty led to the introduction of Quainton`s own

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bread scale. After that, a positive correlation can be traced between relief expenditure and the price of wheat.

**Setting the Scene: Critics of Providing Relief to Able-Bodied Poor**

Before the late 1790s, the relief systems of England’s southern and midland agricultural counties did not focus on supporting the families of able-bodied labourers. This was largely because of the dominance of the prevailing idea that poor relief to those who were able to work, would encourage reliance on public relief rather than self-sufficiency. Commenting further, and following his travels in Berkshire in 1797, Sir Fredrick Eden declared that ‘it very rarely happens that a labourer supports himself, wife, and two children, without applying for parochial aid’.\(^3\) This type of assistance was criticised because it was ‘a bounty on indolence and vice’ and created a ‘universal system of pauperism’.\(^4\) Malthus argued that the Old Poor Law had an ‘obvious tendency to increase population growth without increasing food for its support [and that a] poor man may marry with little or no prospect of being able to support a family in independence’.\(^5\) Clarkson, a contemporary of Malthus, arrived at much the same conclusion, from a different point of view. In his 1816 work, he stated that

> charity, to be consistent with public welfare, should be most solicitous to stop short of encouraging of vice (procreation and idleness), and equally cautious not to injure the principles of industry, for mistaken benevolence weakens the foresight, energy, and bodily exertion of that part of society, which are primarily composed of the labouring poor, by taking away the necessity to work.\(^6\)

Essentially, critics were concerned that excessive relief to able-bodied families was leading to unsustainable population growth and providing a disincentive to work.

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Modern historians have assessed the validity of these charged criticisms. Some support the conclusions of the Old Poor Law critics. Boyer contends that the types of poor relief schemes adopted during the years of high wheat prices might have caused a serious work-disincentive.\(^7\) In so doing, he assumes that a correlation existed between poor relief and unemployment rates as relief payments were substituted for wages.\(^8\) Others, however, find fault with the Malthusian argument; Blaug suggested that wage supplements ‘sapped the initiative of agricultural workers and thus contributed to increased expenditure’.\(^9\) However, he also noted that ‘family allowances subsidised substandard wages’ and that ‘the scale of outdoor relief does not suggest that it could have devitalised the working class by offering an attractive alternative to gainful employment’.\(^10\) If wages were below a biological minimum of sustenance, market factors that controlled unemployment would have been ineffective because labourers could not have worked at their maximum potential.\(^11\) Baugh maintains that relief to the able-bodied did not drive down wages or reduce the incentive to work, but acknowledges the fact that large amounts of poor relief were bound to affect labour supply and wages. He contends that the per capita cost of poor relief in agricultural parishes moved in harmony with the price of wheat.\(^12\) Accordingly, he felt that the Speenhamland scale did not matter, ‘what mattered was the shape of the poverty pattern, and the shape [of] change’ and that...‘some rural parishes in the south of England adopted bread scales when harvests failed, but many chose other remedies.’\(^13\)

Some modern historians suggest that parish authorities were highly influenced by critics like Malthus and consequently explored various avenues to stave off the spiralling cost of poor relief at the turn of the nineteenth century. Whether or not these systems increased population, encouraged laziness, or affected wages and

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\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Blaug, 'Myth', p. 151.

\(^10\) Ibid., p. 162.

\(^11\) Ibid., p. 154.


\(^13\) Ibid., p. 67. The Speenhamland system was poor relief for poor families with non-productive children and was based on the price of a half-peck loaf of bread and the number of children under the age of ten.
labour markets is debatable, but what can be confidently stated is that something had to be done to prevent absolute destitution and starvation in the wake of the accelerating price of food commodities during the dearth of 1799-1801. To do this, the parish authorities attempted to establish a subsistence income for the growing class of labouring poor. Evidence in Quainton’s overseers’ account suggests that the parish provided some level of support to families with non-productive children during the dearth of 1795-1796, but there is no indication that it was based on a bread scale. Perhaps, based upon (bad) experience during the 1795-1796 dearth, Quainton’s vestry decided that during 1799-1801 dearth, they needed a scale of relief that was based upon the price of bread and the number of non-productive children within a given household.

**Linking Relief to the Price of Wheat: The Introduction of a Bread Scale**

The Speenhamland bread scale was not the first judgement handed down by local magistrates to address the plight of the labouring poor during the dearth of 1795-1796. Several months prior, the Buckinghamshire magistrate issued a ruling that guaranteed the labouring poor a minimum income based upon the number of children in their families. The Buckinghamshire Quarter Session minutes of 15 January 1795 stated that,

…for the support the Industrious Labourers and his family and that where it happens that the [illegible] Labourer and his Wife and such of his Children as may be to able [illegible] [illegible] duly and honestly perform the [illegible] Labours on which they may [illegible] [illegible] employed and yet do not earn the weekly Sums after mentioned the [illegible] ought to be made up to them by the Parish Officers Viz.

For a single Man according to his labour

For a Man and his Wife not less than 6s

For Do. [sic] with one or two small children 7s

and For every other Child under the age of ten years 1s.\(^{14}\)

\(^{14}\)CBS, Q/SO/24, Quarter Session Easter 1794 to Easter 1797.
The county clerk was ordered to deliver a copy of this ruling to the parishes’ overseers. Two months later the *Reading Mercury* reported an incident in Aylesbury, whereby ‘a mob, consisting chiefly of women, seized the wheat that came to market, and compelled the farmers to whom it belongs to accept such prices as they thought proper to name’.15 This suggests that either the wages set by Buckinghamshire’s magistrate were inadequate in relation to escalating price of wheat, or that the guaranteed minimum wage had not been implemented at parish level. Further standardisation of agricultural wages was later addressed by the Buckinghamshire magistrate, at the Summer Quarter Session 1802 and the Petty Session on 1 December 1804 and 25 April 1805.16

On 6 May 1795, two plans were put before the Berkshire magistrates. The first proposal was for the ‘purpose of rating Husbandry Wages by the day or week’ as were empowered by 5 Eliz., c. 4.17 The second was ‘that they act in uniformity in the relief of the impotent and infirmed poor, by a table of universal practice, corresponding with the supposed necessity of each family,’ with the underlying recommendation being that farmers would increase wages in proportion to the current rising price of provisions.18 Instead, they adopted a system based upon the number of children in a family and the price of a half-peck loaf of bread. The funding for this came out of parish coffers instead of directly out of the pockets of farmers, thus spreading the cost relief across all ratepayers.19

15 *Reading Mercury*, 20 April 1795.
16 CBS, PS/AY/M/2 Minutes of Petty Sessions 1803; C.B.S., Q/SO/27, Quarter Sessions Epiphany 1802 to Easter 1804, quoted in G. Rodwell, *Quainton: Various Other Documents* (Quainton, 2001), pg. 34-35.
Table 4:1 Speenhamland Bread Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gallon loaf</th>
<th>Single Man</th>
<th>Single Women</th>
<th>Man and his Wife</th>
<th>One Child</th>
<th>Two Children</th>
<th>Three Children</th>
<th>Four Children</th>
<th>Five Children</th>
<th>Six Children</th>
<th>Seven Children</th>
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In reality, Speenhamland provided a minimum guaranteed income; it was ‘a scale of relief to top up local wages to a minimum amount based upon the number of non-productive children in a family and the price of bread’. The parish then made up the individual’s or family’s income to the level listed on Table 4:1. The Speenhamland scale as designed stopped when bread prices reached 2s. Although bread prices in the pre-dearth were within the parameters noted above, the stipends received by Quainton’s poor families decreased over time and were not comparable with the Speenhamland scale. By the end of the pre-dearth, Quainton rolls were dominated by large families whose stipends were only sixpence a week. Speenhamland was not applicable during the dearth of 1799-1801. This was because, by November 1799, bread prices had already reached 2s 2d for a half-peck

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loaf, and by March 1801 were 3s 9d. Consequently, Quainton developed and adopted a modified Speenhamland-type bread scale in November 1799. Unfortunately, no written documentation of this scale survives.

**Figure 4.2 Quainton's Bread Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When a Gallon Loaf is 1 Child</th>
<th>2 Children</th>
<th>3 Children</th>
<th>4 Children</th>
<th>5 Children</th>
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Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8, Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts 1796-1804; M.E.R.L., The Leys, Quainton 1794-1800.

The scale illustrated in Table 4:2 is an extrapolation based upon information found in the Quainton’s overseers’ account entries and was the actual amount received by the recipient in addition to the wages of the family.

In late 1799, Quainton’s parish clerk periodically noted the price of a loaf of bread in the left-hand margin of the account ledger. These figures correlate with the bread prices recorded by John Bunting in his farm account and the monthly prices quoted on the Bill of Mortality in the *Gentleman’s Magazine.* In addition,

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22 John Bunting’s farm account records are in poor condition and a vast number of pages are missing; therefore, only a few pages survive that refer to the prices of wheat and bread during this period. The bread prices quoted by the *Gentleman’s Magazine* were for a peck loaf of bread; for the purpose of this research, the prices recorded have been halved, as bread was generally sold in half-peck loaves or smaller.
Quainton’s overseers’ entries noted the number of children under the age of ten in each family. Based upon this information, it is possible to compare the generosity of Quainton’s modified bread scale and the Speenhamland scale, if the latter is expanded to include the higher bread prices exhibited during the 1799-1801 dearth and that the weekly wage of the labourer is deducted. For example, when bread prices reached 3s 9d in March 1801, a family with five children based upon an expanded Speenhamland scale would have been entitled to a maximum guaranteed allowance of 30s a week. If such a family’s income was hypothetically was 6s a week, the family would have received 24s from the parish, but according to Quainton’s scale, the family would have been entitled to only 16s 6d.

It would appear that not only were old poor law critics such as Malthus, David Ricardo, Edwin Chadwick, and Jeremy Bentham out of touch with the plight of the poor, but that Quainton’s overseer demonstrated initial hesitancy to adopt measures that would deal with the inflated price of bread as it climbed towards 2s a half-peck loaf by October 1799. In addition to drafting a less generous bread scale, Quainton’s overseers imposed an upper limit on the allowances for different sized families that they were willing to support, as illustrated in Table 4:2.

The Poor Law Commission of 1834 assumed that Speenhamland-type scales were ‘widely rooted’. Boyer contends that the literature provides no evidence that the system of allowance in aid-of-wages was the usual form of relief used by parishes. Neuman states ‘that as far as evidence goes not one parish in sampling [of parish records in Berkshire] can be said to have definitely adopted the Speenhamland scale at any time’. He further concludes that allowances were often of a ‘temporary sort’ of relief. Sokoll, similarly, refers to a ‘flour list’ in the parish of Ardleigh as the predominant form of poor relief during the dearths of 1795-1796 and 1799-1801, with pauper families receiving 1s per child under the age of 12.

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23 Through family reconstruction, it was determined that the children noted in Quainton’s overseers’ accounts were those under the age of 10 years. 
27 Neuman, Speenhamland County, quoted in Boyer, Economic History, p. 11.
Furthermore, ‘family allowances’ were also used during the 1795-1796 dearth, but not in the 1799-1801 dearth.\footnote{T. Sokoll, \textit{Households and Families among the Poor: The Case of Two Essex Communities in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century} (Bochum, 1993), p. 147.} Williams notes that during this period the rural village of Campton paid a stipends which conformed to ‘classic’ child allowance based on number of the children in a household and adjusted every couple of months ‘in line with volatile prices’.\footnote{S. Williams, ‘Malthus, marriage and poor law allowances revisited: a Bedfordshire case study, 1770-1834’, \textit{The Agricultural History Review}, vol. 52, part 1 (2004), pp. 56-82, p. 71.} Initially ‘child allowances’ payments were 6d per child, but there was ‘considerable variation in allowances within each family size’ which were ‘sensitive to change in local prices and the personal needs’ of individual families.\footnote{Ibid.}

Support for a family with four children ranged from 2s to 5s a week, which was significantly less generous than allowances for the same size family in Quainton.\footnote{D. Eastwood, ‘The republic in the village: parish and poor at Bampton, 1780-1834’, \textit{The Journal of Regional Studies}, 12, 1 (1992), pp. 18-28, p. 21.} Perhaps this was because agricultural labourer’s wages in Berkshire during the 1790s was 7s to 9s a week. Although, Williams does not have a quote on the wages of lacemakers during the dearth, she does report a wage of 5s and 9s a week in 1808.\footnote{F.G. Emmison, ‘The relief of the poor at Eaton Socon, 1706-1834’, in \textit{The Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1931-1934} (Aspley Guise, 1933), vols. 14-16, pp. 1-93, p. 55.} Eastwood, however, noted that ‘between 3 February and 18 April 1801 that parish of Bampton spent £60 a week in poor relief’, of which ‘£135 went to subsidies to local farmers to prevent layoff of labourers or cutting of wages’, and the rest of which went to the workhouse.\footnote{CBS, PR 71/12/2 Overseers’ Account Book Emberton 1783-1803; CBS, PR 113/12/1 Overseers’ Account Book Ickford 1784-1804; CBS, PR 35/12/4 Overseers’ Account Book Chalfont St Giles; CBS, PR 117/12/1 Overseers’ Account Book Great Kimble 1793-1803; CBS, PR 220/12/4 Overseers’ Account Book Wavendon 1795-1809; CBS, PR 194/12/2 Overseers’ Account Book Stoke Goldington 1795-1809; CBS PR 52/12/4 Overseers’ Account Book Middle Claydon 1799-1801. The records for} Apparently, the labouring poor Bampton received no direct family allowance. Emmison similarly provides no evidence that the parish of Eaton Socon adopted a bread scale, but noted that expenses increased 48 per cent between 1799 and 1800 and that it ‘was the first occasion when a large number of men demanded relief’.\footnote{Ibid.} Of the six parishes in Buckinghamshire examined during the course of this research, only Waddesdon’s recorded small payments in-lieu-of-bread between December 1800 and August 1802.\footnote{Ibid.} However, total poor relief, in all of
these Buckinghamshire parishes, did increase during the dearth (Table 2:4). Perhaps these parishes used a Speenhamland-type system, but did not specifically identify it as such in their account entries.

Why Quainton adopted a bread scale, while other parishes in the agricultural county of Buckinghamshire did not, remains a mystery. Perhaps previous detrimental experience during the dearth of 1795-1796 made Quainton’s authorities more responsive to this option, given the severity of the economic situation in 1799.

**The Reality: Family Relief in Quainton, 1796-1804**

Based upon Quainton’s overseers’ account entries for July 1796, it is evident that the parish did provide minimal support to poor families with non-productive children throughout the dearth of 1795-1796. However, there is no evidence that it adopted a bread scale during the dearth. If the parish did, it was scaled down in practice. Regardless, a minimal level of support continued for larger families until Quainton adopted a modified bread scale on 2 November 1799.

It is apparent, from the number of overseers’ entries each week, that a substantial number of Quainton’s poor families were struggling to maintain a subsistence income and faced potential starvation during the dearth of 1799-1801. It is difficult in the present to unravel the patterns of relief shown in these accounts and to discern how the overseers handled pleas for assistance in this period of rapid inflation and economic recession without leaving the poor destitute or deeply alienated. Assistance to families with children at first accounted for a small percentage of Quainton’s total poor relief budget. The level of such subsidies during the dearth of 1795-1796 is unknown, but accounted for an estimated eight per cent of the 1796-97 budget based upon the records that have survived. Family assistance plummeted to four and then two per cent of the total relief budgets during 1797-1798 and 1798-1799 respectively. However, with the adoption of a bread scale on 2 November 1799 this climbed to 15 per cent in 1799-1800. Three crop failures in a row dramatically affected the family subsidy proportion of the total budget causing it reach 36 per cent in 1800-1801. With the arrival of foreign wheat imports and good

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these parishes were in such a very poor condition that further study would have been very difficult. See Appendix C for a short narrative on these parishes.
crop yields in 1801, the percentage dropped to 17 per cent in the 1801-1802 fiscal year and then to three per cent in 1802-1803. However, even when England re-entered a war with France in 1803, aid to families with non-productive children remained at three per cent.

Figure 4.1 Family Allowances/Wheat Price Comparison 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804
Effective 2 November 1799, Quainton’s overseers’ account entries noted the number of non-productive children in each family. Most of these families had children of working age that were not specified in these entries. Household reconstruction and pattern analysis was used to verify and delineate the number of non-productive children in households prior to the inception of the bread scale. The ability of productive children to contribute to the total family income would have been limited. Given wages of 2s-3s a week, they would not have been able to purchase a loaf of bread at the height of the dearth. Figure 4:1 provides an overview of the correlation between Buckinghamshire’s wheat prices and the cost of family support from 17 July 1796 to 31 March 1804. Major peaks in family subsidy expenditure coincide with the same in wheat prices.

The first peak, in the autumn of 1799, correlates with the adoption of the bread scale and was followed by an even higher peak during the winter of 1799-1800. Both variables exhibit a slight trough in July and August 1800, allowances more so than wheat. This was followed by the highest peak of all in March 1801 when the price of wheat reached 154s per imperial quarter. This was presumably compounded by higher than normal underemployment and unemployment that winter, both of which were caused by the near failure of the roundsmen system in December 1800. Bread prices decreased after foreign wheat imports reached local market towns in March 1801, after which there was an almost simultaneous decrease in both family support and wheat prices. Wheat prices increased slightly in July 1801, but again decreased immediately afterwards. However, the decrease in family support was more dramatic. By the post-dearth both family support and wheat prices seem to have levelled off. The following discussion of the aggregate data emphasises the fluctuations contained in each of the sub periods of this study.

36 Prior to the inception of the modified bread scale in November 1799, the number of non-productive children in each recipient’s household was not noted. Therefore, an estimate based upon family reconstruction was used prior to that date.
Figure 4:2 Pre-Dearth Family Allowances/Wheat Price Comparison 17 July 1796-23 March 1799
Pre-Dearth

While a direct correlation between family assistance and the price of wheat can be seen in the pre-dearth period, it is not as obvious as that seen in other timeframes (Figure 4:2). Family assistance declined at the tail end of the 1795-1796 dearth as a consequence of a late summer harvest and the stabilisation of wheat prices, which had dropped from a high of 105s 5d in March 1796 to 62s 9d an imperial quarter by October 1796. This resulted in an autumn trough. Expenses from January to May 1797 were higher than those noted in the other winters of the pre-dearth period; this could have been a delayed effect of the previous dearth, as there was a higher-than-normal level of unemployment with more labourers on the `rounds` compared to the subsequent two winters. No wheat prices were published in The Gentleman’s Magazine from March to June 1797, but according to M. J. Chambers and R. Bailey’s analysis of aggregate wheat prices between 1665 and 1850, they were between 49s to 51s a quarter. Therefore, unknown forces may have played a part in this exaggerated level of family support. The summer trough of 1797 extended over three months but was not as deep as that noted in 1798. Wheat prices for the rest of this period fluctuated between 43s and 59s per imperial quarter. In July 1798, the level of family support dropped during the harvest season and remained relatively low throughout the autumn and winter of 1798-1799, even though wheat prices remained stable.

Application of a five-month moving average to the underlying aggregate data does not show as strong a correlation between family assistance and the price of wheat as one might have expected. More information would be needed to draw further conclusions, but it could be a sign that the parish was making a conscious effort to reduce relief expenditure. With bread prices at 1s 5d-1s 6d a half peck loaf by the late pre-dearth period, families with four or more children were receiving only sixpence a week in addition to their wages, whereas under the Speenhamland scale they would have received a total guaranteed income of 13s 7d, which included their wages.

37 M.J. Chambers and R. Bailey from the University of Essex provided a database of aggregate wheat prices (1998).
38 An imperial quarter is eight bushels of wheat.

Figure 4:3 Dearth Family Allowances/Wheat Price Comparison 24 March 1799 - 17 April 1802
Dearth Period

The dearth of 1799-1801 presents a different picture of expenditure (Figure 4:3). By May 1799, wheat prices had increased from a low of 45s per imperial quarter in December 1797 to nearly 60s and bread prices had surpassed 1s 6d per half-peck loaf. At this level, the majority of Quainton’s labouring poor would have received family assistance under the Speenhamland scale. However, Quainton’s overseers made no adjustments to the level of support received by these families, even though soaring bread prices would have affected the purchasing power of Quainton’s labouring poor. By July, the price of wheat had exceeded 68s per quarter and by October it was 85s. In the first half of the 1799-1800 fiscal year, the family assistance of those that did quality for relief was held at the 1798 level of 6d-3s a week, when wheat prices was less than 50s a quarter.

Total monthly family expenditure for October 1799, totalled £1 14s and the price of a loaf of bread was 2s 6d. After the adoption of the bread scale, on the 2 November 1799, the total for that month climbed to £29 2s 6d. Forty-seven families received relief in November of 1799, 28.7 per cent of the total number of families listed on the 1801 census. This sharp rise in expenditure was further compounded by seasonal unemployment during the autumn and winter of 1799-1800 as family incomes dropped. In contrast, Williams notes that 15-24 per cent of families Campton relieved during 1800s with rates varying from 2s to 5s over the period of

39 C.H. Feinstein, ‘Perpetuated: Real wages and the standard of living in Britain during and after the Industrial Revolution’, The Journal of Economic History, vol. 58, no. 3 (1998), pp. 625-658. Feinstein in this article formulated a table that compares index of ‘monies earnings’, ‘cost of living’, and ‘real earnings’ for the manual working class of Britain. The indices for period covered in this study shows that the ‘cost of living index’ from 1798 to 1799 had increased by 21 per cent and the ‘average full-employment real earning’ had decreased 13.3 percent. By 1800, the ‘cost of living index’ had increased to 57.3 per cent and ‘real earning’ had decreased by 29.5 per cent from the figures reported in 1798. This illustrating the widening gap between the ‘cost of living index’ and ‘real earnings’. By 1803, the ‘cost of living index’ reported was still 13.2 per cent higher than the 1798 figures and the ‘real earnings’ was only 2 per cent lower than 1798 figures. Thus showing that after the dearth that ‘cost of living index’ was still high. However, he reports that ‘real earning’ were 14 per cent higher than that recorded in 1790. One has to remember that there are averages and do not take into regional variations.


1799-1802 for a family with four children.\textsuperscript{42} Family assistance in Quainton in the summer of 1800 declined from a high in March of £52 2s to £21 8s in August as bread prices dropped from 2s 8d to 2s 4d. Therefore, fewer families qualified for relief. This was followed by a second dramatic increase in family assistance, as harsh weather affected both wheat harvests of 1800. By March 1801 54 families were in receipt of family allowances.

Employment options during the winter of 1800-1801 were grave, as ‘roundsman’s’ work became non-existent. On 1 December 1800, the overseers directed John Wheeler, the parish clerk, to draft and deliver a notice to ‘find men work,’ but little was found. ‘Roundsmen’ entries dropped from a high of 129 in November 1800, to seven in December, followed by 25 in January 1801, 21 in February, and 29 in March 1801, which were considerably lower than the number of entries noted in the winter of 1799-1800.\textsuperscript{43} Perhaps the parish’s ratepayers felt that they could no longer support both cohorts of relief (‘roundsman’ and family allowances) at a constant level during this economic crisis. This certainly had an impact on the purchasing power of the labouring poor as the level of family assistance soared to unprecedented highs of £60 14s in January, £87 2s 11d in February and £89 10s in March 1801.

Against this backdrop of economic turbulence, foreign imports of wheat finally arrived, according to Wells, in London in January 1801.\textsuperscript{44} By mid-March 1801, imported wheat began to reach the local markets in Buckinghamshire. Consequently, wheat prices dropped to 140s a quarter in April and family assistance abruptly declined, followed by a slight elevation during the winter of 1801-1802. Wheat prices exhibited a much smoother decline than family assistance after the peak of March 1801. Wheat prices did not drop below 100s a quarter until September and did not go below 70s a quarter until May 1802. The price of wheat decreased slightly during the summer of 1800 and 1801, but this was not noticeable in the 1801.

\textsuperscript{42} Williams, “Malthus”, p. 71: Histpop 1801, p.6.

\textsuperscript{43} In early 1801, a number of females appeared on the roundsman rolls, suggesting that economic conditions during the dearth even affecting female employment. The number of roundsman’s entries for the same months of the 1799-1800 fiscal year were 129 in November, 150 in December, 159 in January, 128 in February, and 103 in March.

The application of a five-month moving average to the aggregate data illustrates a positive correlation between wheat prices and the level of family assistance during the dearth years. Although it appears that there was an initial reluctance to increase support when the economy first started to deteriorate, it can be furthered that by late 1799 the quickly worsening situation of many labouring families had placed sufficient pressure on Quainton’s overseers that they began responding to the immense fluctuations seen in the price of wheat.
Figure 4:4 Post-Dearth Family Allowances/Wheat Price Comparison
18 April 1802 - 31 March 1804

Post-Dearth

The correlation between wheat prices and expenditure in the post-dearth period was not as smooth as that noted in either the pre-dearth or the dearth. However, the application of a five-month moving average shows that wheat prices and family assistance were still positively linked (Figure 4:4). The two peaks in assistance in both May-June of 1802 and 1803 surpass the figures for the same months in 1799, as does the relief level during the winter of 1803 and the first three months of 1804. However, the data for 1797-1798 (May-June) shows an elevation during these months as well. The reason for this recurring increase in assistance is unclear although it may be attributable to the fact that wheat prices historically increased slightly in late spring and early summer in advance of the next harvest as storehouse grain was depleted. In the early months of 1802-1803 wheat prices remained fairly stable at 62s to 67s 6d per quarter. By November 1802, wheat prices finally dropped to below 60s a quarter, but prices never returned to the pre-dearth level of 49s 8d recorded in March of 1799.45 The price of wheat in June 1803 was still 58s a quarter, and a half peck loaf of bread cost 1s 7d. Whether this was enough to trigger increased family assistance is questionable and the summer trough seen between August and September 1802 was late and short-lived, presumably owing to the continued high price of wheat. The summer trough of 1803 was early and extended from July through September, after which family assistance gradually increased as more labouring poor qualified for relief due to seasonal unemployment. Trends in wheat prices were reasonably smooth with a slow decline of 15s per quarter over the post-dearth. Wheat prices closed at 51.8s, significantly lower than the opening pre-dearth price of 81.2s per quarter in July 1796. However, the plateau was short lived, as wheat prices in 1804-1805 again increased to a high of 94s 6d a quarter.46

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Figure 4.5 Number of Family Assistance Entries per Month 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

Source: C.B.S., PR/169/12/7 Quanton's Overseers Accounts 1796-1800; C.B.S., Quanton's Overseers Accounts 1800-1806.
Explaining the Trends

The analysis of the previous sections demonstrates the existence of a range of trends that cumulatively show a positive correlation between wheat prices and assistance to poor families with non-productive children. In order to assess how these trends truly affected the daily lives of individual labouring families, Figure 4:5 approaches the aggregate data from the perspective of looking at the number of family support entries recorded per month. In so doing, it addresses the extent to which family assistance expenditure was governed either by levels of relief received or the number of those seeking relief. The data suggests that in reality it was probably a combination of both factors.

Figure 4:5 illustrates that a greater number of poor families qualified for assistance and appeared on the rolls with greater frequency during the dearth compared to the pre-dearth and post-dearth. In addition, the number of family support entries during the pre-dearth was more erratic than that demonstrated in the post-dearth. The period opened with a normal decline in assistance as the parish recovered from the effects of the 1795-1796 dearth. Why there was an exaggerated increase in entries during the winter and early spring of 1797, that is not evident in 1798 or 1799, is unknown. If it was due to lingering effects of 1795-1796 dearth, then presumably the same effect should have been noted after the 1799-1801 dearth. However, this may have been hidden, as the height of the economic crisis occurred during the winter of 1800-1801. Over the course of 1797-1798, the entries per month fell, and became almost non-existent by the summer. As previously noted, in mid-1799, in spite of increasing bread prices and the foreseeable poor harvest, the number of family support entries did not increase. In fact, the overall number of those receiving relief was lower than the number noted in 1798.

The adoption of a bread scale by Quainton’s overseers resulted in an immediate increase in the number of entries per month, as greater numbers of poor families qualified for assistance. There were distinct summer troughs in 1797, 1798, 1802, and 1803. However, there was no trough in 1799 and only a slight decline in July 1800. Unlike the dramatic decline in expenditures recorded after March 1801

47 There were 2,033 entries in the pre-dearth versus only 674 in the post-dearth.
(Figure 4:1), the number of entries dropped slowly over the course of 1801-1802, as smaller families did not qualify for assistance when bread prices dropped below 2s for a half-peck loaf. The decrease in the number of entries during the post-dearth again suggests that there was a concerted effort by Quainton’s overseers to hold family support to a minimum, despite the fact that bread prices were still relatively high and well within the range of the Speenhamland scale.

Figure 4:6 presents an overview of relief rendered to Quainton’s poor families in relation to the number of non-productive children in their households. Following the dearth of 1795-1796 there was a downward trend in support to all families. However, families of different sizes did receive some level of support during the winter of 1797. Only families with four or five children appeared frequently on the rolls from June 1797 until the first major expenditure peak in November 1799, whereas smaller families oscillated on and off relief during the pre-dearth, as dictated by the seasonal nature of the agricultural year.
Figure 4:6 Total Monthly Support Received by Various Sized Families 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

Source: C.B.S., FR/169/12/7 Qualton's Overseers Accounts 1796-1800; C.B.S., Qualton's Overseers Accounts 1800-1806.
At the height of the dearth, families with two, three, or four children accounted for the majority of family assistance. The steep decline after March 1801 was more pronounced for families with two children and, after an extended trough from March to September 1801, these families barely register on the graph. Decline in support for families with three to four children was smoother and marked by a plateau, followed by a slight incline in the winter of 1802, before dropping to just above the baseline by April 1802. Hidden under such statistics are the families with only one child. Their support did not increase significant until January 1800 and by July 1800, their support had dropped back to the baseline, as only 7s was paid to these families during that month. After March 1801, their support decreases much earlier and at a quicker rate than that of large families. They were completely off the rolls by September 1801.

Families with five children do, however, present a completely different picture for a number of reasons. The number of families with five children fluctuated widely. Only two families were on the rolls at the beginning of the dearth, with another two added in June 1800. Therefore, the increase in expenditure was more gradual, and was at its highest point in January 1801, after which the number of families with five children dropped back to two. This resulted in a much smoother decline. The family with six children did not appear on the rolls until September 1802. In 1803-1804, the only families that remained on relief were those with four to six children.

48 Some of the fluctuations noted were due to the birth of one child and/or the death of another.
The total number of weeks that a family remained on assistance varied substantially (Table 4:3). Families with one to three children were less likely to qualify for assistance or to remain on the rolls for an extended period, as periodically their incomes exceeded the qualification limits for relief. During the dearth, the number of families that qualified for support increased by 28 per cent. As expected, during the dearth families tended to stay on relief for longer than in the pre-dearth or post-dearth periods. However, during the dearth, 38 per cent of families, primarily those with one child, received support for less than ten weeks. While significant, given the economic climate, 29 per cent of one-child families in the pre-dearth and 48 per cent in the post-dearth received a family allowance for less than 10 weeks. A mere 27 families qualified for assistance during the post-dearth, a decrease of 67 per cent from the number recorded immediately hitherto. Larger families, that had been consistently dependent on assistance during the dearth, did not necessarily appear on the rolls during the post-dearth. For example, George Nichols, with five non-productive children, received no family support for two weeks in March 1803, for only one week in July, and none at all in August, because of the higher wages he received during the calving and harvest seasons. Likewise, William Casemore, father of four children under the age of ten, received no support from August 1803 to January 1804, as presumably his wages and those of his three unmarried sons disqualified him from receiving any additional relief.
Table 4:4 Range and Mean Allowance per Family Size by Sub-Period
17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1796-1799</th>
<th></th>
<th>1799-1802</th>
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<th>1802-1803</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with one child</td>
<td>3d.-4s.</td>
<td>9d.</td>
<td>6d.-10s.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>1s.-4s.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Two Children</td>
<td>3d.-2s.</td>
<td>4d.</td>
<td>4d.-13s.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>3s. 7d.</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Three Children</td>
<td>3d.-4s.</td>
<td>1s. 1d.</td>
<td>7d.-10s.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>6s. 9d.</td>
<td>6d.-1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Four Children</td>
<td>6d.-5s.</td>
<td>8d.</td>
<td>1s. 4d.</td>
<td>6d.-14s.</td>
<td>5s. 4d.</td>
<td>6d.-2s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Five Children</td>
<td>6d.-9s.</td>
<td>8d.</td>
<td>3s. 5d.</td>
<td>6d. -16s. 6d.</td>
<td>6s. 10d.</td>
<td>9d.-3s. 1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Six Children</td>
<td>2s.-4s.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR/169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806.

Analysis of Quainton’s aggregate data verifies that family assistance was, for the majority of the parish’s labouring poor, a `safety net`, as suggested by Thane.\(^\text{49}\)

Overall, Quainton’s overseers were consistent in the level of support that they awarded to deserving families. Without vestry minutes to help explain the actions witnessed in their accounts, it can only be assumed that they had specific qualifying criteria and limits. Table 4:4 illustrates the discretionary range of allowances awarded to these families during the three periods covered in this analysis. There was no carte blanche guaranteed allowance; the variance exhibited was in response to prevailing economic climate and, presumably, individual family circumstances. However, the majority of recipients would have received the minimal support noted.

Table 4:5 Dearth Range and Mean Allowance per Family Size
23 March 1799 - 17 April 1802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>23 March 1799 - 1 November 1799</th>
<th>2 November 1799 - 17 April 1802</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with One Child</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Two Children</td>
<td>6d. - 1s.</td>
<td>9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Three Children</td>
<td>6d. - 1s.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Four Children</td>
<td>6d. - 1s. 6d.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with Five Children</td>
<td>6d. - 3s.</td>
<td>1s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4:5 breaks down family allowances during the dearth period into two phases, pre- and post-adoption of the bread scale. As noted, assistance increased

significantly after 2 November 1799 with the adoption of the bread scale. Outliers, however, affected the post-adoption ranges. As mentioned earlier, Quainton’s overseers had pre-set upper limit for family allowances; for one child 3s 6d a week, two children 7s a week, three children 10s 6d, four children 14s a week, and for 5 children 16s a week. There were other anomalies and these reflected the reality of the non-uniform nature of relief distribution. For example, John Harris, who had two children, received between 10s and 13s a week in January and February 1801 while other families of the same size received 5s a week. Obviously, other factors could affect the amount of relief received by these families. Nevertheless, based on the mean relief received by these families during the dearth, one can suggest that some that they were potentially unable to buy even one extra loaf of bread a week. Therefore, it can be additionally advanced that the combined family resources of the labouring poor: wages, poor relief, and ‘economies of makeshift’ did not provide these families with a subsistence income. This meant that potentially their income did not provide them with a subsistence diet. This might not have included the necessary calories to earn a living or any activities beyond eating and personal hygiene.\(^{50}\) This question, while beyond the scope of this chapter, is explored further in Appendix F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-dearth</th>
<th>Dearth</th>
<th>Post-Dearth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Number of Children</strong></td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Family Size</strong></td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Beneficiaries</strong></td>
<td>334</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Population (750)</strong></td>
<td>44.50%</td>
<td>52.40%</td>
<td>25.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4:6 Average Size of Families with Non-Productive Children on Family Allowance 1796-1804

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8, Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts.

It is difficult to ascertain what percentage of Quainton’s population was hovering near starvation, as it is impossible to estimate the total number of persons over the age of nine in each household in addition to the husband and wife. Therefore, the average family size presented in Table 4:6 is based solely upon information provided in the overseers’ account entries. In 1796, Sokoll reported an average household size in Ardleigh of 5.45, which although slightly higher than

\(^{50}\) R. Floud, R.W. Fogel, B. Harris and S.C. Hung, *The Changing Body: Health, Nutrition and Human Development in Western World Since 1700* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 43. Also, see Appendix H.
Quainton’s estimated of 5.22 in the pre-dearth period, included children under the age of 12, whereas Quainton’s only included children under the age of ten. The presence of smaller families during the dearth decreased the average family size to an estimated 4.8, only slightly higher than the early modern English standard of 4.75. The absence of small families in the post-dearth drove the average size of families on assistance upward.

Based upon these figures, a large percentage of Quainton’s population benefited from family assistance. Sokoll estimated that in 1796, 42 per cent of the households he studied were paupers; unfortunately, he did not give a later estimate. An estimated 44.5 per cent of Quainton’s population benefited from family support in the pre-dearth, this increased to 52.4 per cent during the dearth, and then dropped to 25.2 per cent in the post-dearth. Presumably, the lower percentage witnessed in the post-dearth was reflective of either a tightening in qualification standards, a tightening of the relief budget or higher wages; the latter suggested by the ruling made by the magistrates during the Easter Quarter Session of 1802. Given that 8-14 per cent of Quainton’s population potentially benefited from the receipt of collections, it can be suggested that, together with family assistance data, 60-66 per cent of the population would have benefited from these two forms of poor relief alone during the dearth of 1799-1801. However, this estimate is low because it does not take into consideration children over the age of nine or other adult members of the household.

Conclusion

Once overseers of Quainton had established a bread scale, they quickly responded to the changing purchasing power of families with non-productive children as wheat prices fluctuated. The bread scale adopted by the parish of Quainton provided a lower level of relief than an adjusted Speenhamland scale.

51 T. Sokoll, *Two Essex Communities*, p. 91.
53 Sokoll, *Two Essex Communities*, p. 150.
Whether the parish could have supported a higher level of relief is unknown. Once foreign imports of wheat reached local markets, there was an immediate and sharp drop in family support expenditure followed by a steadier decline as wheat prices fell. Apparently, the overseers had tightened their budget by the post-dearth as the level of family assistance was significantly lower than that observed in the pre-dearth, even though wheat prices remained relatively high. The five-month moving average illustrated in Figure 4:1 supports Baugh’s contention that there was a direct correlation between poor relief expenditure and the price of wheat. This work also supports Sokoll’s argument that poor relief expenditure changed simultaneously with, rather than lagging behind, fluctuations in the price of wheat.\textsuperscript{54}

This analysis of family assistance underlying aggregate data has demonstrated that Quainton’s relief system was flexible enough to respond to changes in the economic climate and with the seasonal nature of agricultural employment. The parish’s response to the dearth although late, was significant, but receded as soon as the economic crisis ended. Whether the support rendered to Quainton’s labouring poor was ‘generous’ is a hard question to answer as it depends upon how ‘generosity’ is defined. Without comparative studies of the dearth of 1799-1801, assessing and justifying the degree of generosity is impossible at this juncture. What can be said is that the purchasing power of the poor was greatly affected by the dearth. Based upon the data presented here, it appears that the support received by these families was not generous in that it did not adequately address this monumental change in their purchasing power.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 144.
Chapter Five: Relief for the Unemployed and Underemployed

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, male unemployment, underemployment, and a decline in real wages were major societal concerns.¹ According to the Posse Comitatus, 66 of Quainton’s agricultural workforce were agricultural labourers and therefore vulnerable to seasonal unemployment or underemployment. Agricultural labourers were not the only group of people susceptible to threats of limited work and unreliable wages. Parish tradesmen likely struggled to make a living in times of economic crisis. Consequently, a third significant segment of Quainton’s poor relief system alongside settled collections, and family allowances, was relief for those struggling to find work and decent wages. This chapter looks at the various levels and means of assistance rendered to the unemployed labourers of Quainton. The analysis and discussion concentrates on three types of unemployment and underemployed benefits: `roundsman` wages, `in-lieu-of-roundsman` payments, and `no work` stipends. Specifically, it addresses the following questions: What portion of the total relief budget was applied to unemployment benefits? What means and levels of support were rendered? When did these various types of unemployment benefits go into effect? Did they show seasonal variation? What were the marital statuses and ages of the recipients? How many workdays did the parish subsidised each month? Did the means and levels of unemployment benefits change over time? The answers to these questions will further help to answer the central question of this thesis, which is whether the parish was a `welfare state in miniature` or a `safety net` which provided only the minimum level of support needed (and perhaps not even that) for those facing the harshest consequences of the economic crisis of the time. Though so doing this chapter shows how the underemployed and unemployed in Quainton were provided for during the dearth of 1799-1801.

Quainton’s Labour Market in Context

A discussion of the agricultural labour market is necessary in order to contextualise the situation faced by Quainton’s labourers during the period of this study. Agricultural employment in southern England was seasonally determined, with higher rates of unemployment during the winter months. Even more than the usual seasonality of harvest cycles, variability in annual weather patterns meant that during particularly harsh winters the ground might be too hard to cultivate, contributing further to agricultural unemployment. Howlett contemporaneously noted,

How amazing is the contrast to the poor labourer between a severe and frosty winter and a mild and open one? He goes forth to his work with almost as little interruption as in the warmth of summer, or the mildness of autumn.²

During this time, hiring practices were also changing with farmers moving away from hiring servants to using day-labourers, a process that also affected unemployment levels. Outdoor agricultural labourers’ employment similarly depended upon the type and mixture of farming being practised, patterns of landholding in a particular parish, crop yield levels, and the ‘differences in the length of the lease which a farmer still had to run’.³

Changes in harvest technology in the mid-eighteenth century, such as the use of heavier tools like the scythe in England’s southern counties, further affected the sexual division of agricultural labour by decreasing the work available to women.⁴ Lack of female agricultural employment put pressure on male employment and total family incomes.⁵ In 1795, D. Davies observed, ‘whereas now, few of these [i.e. women] are constantly employed ... so that almost the whole burden of providing for their families rest upon the men’.⁶ Davies suggested that increased wages and the

³ Ibid., p. 693.
⁴ Snell, Annals, p. 45-46.
⁵ Ibid., p. 50.
⁶ D. Davies, The Case of Labourers in Husbandry Stated and Considered (London, 1795), quoted in K.D.M. Snell, Annals, p. 56.
revival of employment for women were the solution to the unemployment problem of the 1790s.\(^7\)

G. Boyer approaches unemployment from an economic perspective. He contends that the parallel decline in cottage industries such as lacemaking during this period increased the willingness of farmers to lay off labourers during winter months in order to rehire the same men at a lower wage later. This is contention that is based upon the assumption that the agricultural labourers would be more willing to accept substandard wages.\(^8\) This was, therefore, an economic model that yielded the conditions under which implicit labour contracts including seasonal layoffs and outdoor relief were an efficient method of securing an adequate peak-season labour force.\(^9\)

The administration of poor relief was also affected by the political make-up (micropolitics) of the parish; in rural parishes this would have been dominated by labour-hiring farmers.\(^10\) Baugh argues that employers progressively decreased wages knowing that parishes would make up the difference.\(^11\)

Thus, as with the modern welfare state, one of the major roles of rural parish poor relief systems was the provision of unemployment benefits to the seasonally unemployed or underemployed agricultural labourers.\(^12\) The relative tightness of the local labour market, a parish’s relief policies, and the availability of an `economy of makeshifts` determined the level of employment in a parish, and consequently determined the amount of assistance rendered.\(^13\) Boyer argues that unemployment benefits allowed wages to fall low enough to clear the labour market as they guaranteed labourers a subsistence income during slack seasons.\(^14\) It follows, according to Boyer, possibly ‘the lower winter wage that existed in parishes using [the] roundsmans system were in fact market-clearing wages’, meaning that the rate

\(^7\) *Ibid.*, p. 56.
\(^10\) *Ibid*.
\(^12\) Boyer, *Economic History*, p. 15.
\(^13\) Boyer, *Old Poor Law*, p. 127.
paid to a roundsman, or unemployed labourer, could have been lower than the going wage because it reflected decreased demand at that time of year.\footnote{Ibid., p. 17.} The Royal Commission`s Report of 1834 argued that the `roundsman` system `enabled labour-hiring farmers to reduce wages to a minimum, or even below the minimum of what would support an unmarried man, and throw upon others the payment of part of the wages actually received by their labourers`.\footnote{N. Senior, `Report on the administration and practical operation of the poor law`, \textit{Library of Economics and Liberty}, pp. 68-70, 233-237, 59; http://www.econlib.org/library/YPDBooks/Reports/rptPLC0.html [accessed 13 November 2013], quoted in Boyer, `The Old Poor Law`, p. 114.} As previously discussed in Chapter One, some contemporaries thought was that `making up wages from the parish rates in proportion to their family size totally destroyed all inducement to industry among the labouring poor and swelled the assessment to an enormous extent`.\footnote{J. Dunkin, \textit{Oxfordshire: History and Antiquity of Hundreds of Bullingdon and Proudgley}, vol. II (London, 1983), quoted in A. Crossley, (ed.), \textit{A History of the County of Oxford}, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=101946#n2 [accessed 13 February 2014]; Sir G. Nickolls, \textit{A History of English Poor Law} (London, 1854), vol. III, p. 124.}

The basic argument against the provision of unemployment benefits out of poor rates was that it partially redistributed the tax burden from labour-hiring ratepayers to non-hiring ratepayers. Nicholls, in his commentary on the parish of Winslow, Buckinghamshire, wrote:

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In rural parishes, the vestry would indeed be more likely to favour the application of poor-rates to pay the wages … for the majority would be employers of labour, and might expect to get their work done in this way at least direct cost to themselves than in any other.\footnote{Sir G. Nickolls, \textit{A History of English Poor Law} (London, 1854), vol. III, p. 124.}
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However, the majority of Quainton`s ratepayers, according to the Land Tax Redemption of 1798, were `roundsman` employers.\footnote{Ancestry.com, `UK Land Tax Redemption 1798`, (2014), http://search.ancestry.co.uk [accessed 2 November 2014]. For further information on these landowners/occupiers.} This therefore meant that the transferred burden was minimal due to the small size of the tradesmen and gentry classes in Quainton and, as Boyer points out, the transferred burden of unemployment benefits was notably less than that of family allowances.\footnote{Boyer, \textit{The Economic History}, p. 16; G. Boyer, `English Poor Law`, \textit{EH.net}, http://eh.net/encyclopedia/english-poor-laws [accessed 2 November 2014].}
There is some speculation that the employers of `roundsmen` were obligated to hire a certain number of labours based upon the size and value of their property holdings. This appears to be the case in Quainton; out of the 66 named employers of `roundsmen`, 15 assumed the major burden (Table 5:1). The majority of these employers were tenant farmers under Lord Francis Godolphin Osborn, which is borne out by the 1798 Land Tax Redemption document. Furthermore, it can be assumed, based upon the land tax assessments, that these employers also paid the major portion of the parish’s poor rates. The remaining named employers were smaller tenant farmers, tradesmen, and the Reverend Bladen Downing, who periodically employed agricultural labourers an average of 25 times during the eight-year period of this study.

Snell suggests that structural unemployment decreased between 1793 and 1814 due to England’s war with France and acknowledges that there were regional aspects to unemployment patterns, with the south being more vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations.21 Quainton existed in an environment in which the ‘breakdown of the traditional economy’ produced a class of labourers who, during slack seasons, could not find non-agricultural work in the parish or in close proximity.22 In contrast, J.

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22 Boyer, *The Economic History*, p. 175.
Boys, in his 1795 narrative on Betchanger, Kent, recorded that, ‘we have the greatest scarcity of labourers and ploughmen I ever remember, owing probably, to the demand upon our population by army and navy’. However, this did not seem to be the case in Quainton. The depleted harvests of the 1799-1801 ‘generated less work, [and] thus lower income, amongst agricultural labourers’.

Parish-centred literature has paid little attention to the various types of unemployment benefits utilised by parishes beyond a descriptive introduction. Emmison, in his study of Eaton Socon, specifically mentions ‘roundsman’ payments but no detailed figures or numbers are noted. Nevertheless, he opines that significantly more men received parish support during the dearth. In the same manner, Williams notes in her study of Campton and Shefford that surplus labour in the post-war period (1815-1822) resulted in wages being topped up, but she does not mention such relief prior to those dates. Indeed, the number of unemployed men and boys in Campton in 1801 barely registers on the scale. However, she does state that the number of men on relief increased during the dearth, but gives little detail beyond that. These oversights neglect a very significant part of parish poor relief systems and therefore warrant a prominent place in this thesis and result in the need to ascertain what Quainton’s package of unemployment looked like.

**Unemployment Benefits Utilised by the Parish**

**The Roundsman System**

The most widely used unemployment benefit system in Quainton was the ‘roundsman’ system. ‘Roundsman’ wages were paid to agricultural labourers who would go from one farm to another each morning in search of work. Generally, a parish’s vestry would calculate a total wage bill based upon the previous year’s figure, and then levy a portion of the poor rates to cover that amount. Each ratepayer

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26 S. Williams, *Poverty, Gender, and Life-Cycle under English Poor Law: 1760-1834* (Woodbridge, 2011), Figure 15, p. 153.
agreed to pay either their allotted sum either in wages or in poor rates, based upon
the assessed value of their property. As noted in Dorking’s vestry minutes, there
were ‘numerous hands [labourers] for whom it is impossible to find any kind of
profitable employment’. Persistent unemployment created a system of sustained
struggle between labourers who on the one side desired the highest possible wages
from employers or the parish, and parish officials, farmers and employers on the
other side who wanted to give as little as possible, particularly during times of
economic uncertainty. Whether Quainton’s labouring families felt oppressed or
expressed feelings of anger towards parish officials is not evident from the surviving
documents of this period. Other types of unemployment schemes utilised by
parishes were ‘out of the rates’, ‘labour-rates’ (not used until 1820 according to
Boyer), and the ‘billet’, ‘ticket’ or ‘stem’ system. All of these addressed the
problem of unemployment but with slightly different nuances.

The wages of Quainton’s ‘roundsmen’ were noted weekly in the overseers
account ledger. Whether Quainton’s labourers carried a ‘ticket’ is unknown;
however, the overseers must have utilised some sort of system to corroborate whom
the labourers worked for and the number of days worked. Account entries included
the labourer’s name, employer’s name, and the number of days worked, as well as
the amounts received. Apart from a period in early 1801 when several females
received ‘roundsman’ wages, only single boys/men and married labourers appeared
in the accounts.

In the late eighteenth century there was a growing tendency for farmers to hire
servants for shorter periods of time, ‘to avoid settlement associated with yearly
hiring, and to ease the increasing parochial dependency of the married’ because

32 A ‘ticket’ was a note of assignment given by an overseer to a labourer, who presented it to his
employer as warrant for his employment. This was signed by the employer and then carried back to
the overseer as proof that a labourer had fulfilled the conditions of relief. Nicholls, A History, vol. II, p. 57.
servants were more expensive to maintain than single labourers on relief. If a hired servant did obtain settlement, there was a greater chance that they would marry and bear children in the parish. The major reason behind the decline in the use of farm servants after 1760 was the inflated cost associated with providing them with room and board. For example, John Bunting hired James George on the 12 October 1797 for £7 17s 6d or 3s a week which was the approximate equivalent of the price of a half-peck loaf of bread. It appears that a ‘cottager [labourer] could be kept at an expense very little exceeding that required for a single man’ who was ‘fond of rambling’ and ‘indifferent to their master’.36

Historical literature provides little insight into lives of farm servant or agricultural labourer because a large percentage of working class men were illiterate. Joseph Mayett Jr of Quainton was one of the exceptions, writing one of the few surviving autobiographies written by a farm servant. It provides insight into the lives of Quainton’s young boys as they moved into adulthood. He was baptised in Quainton on 4 June 1783 and was set to lacemaking at age 7. In 1795, at the age of 12, he entered the agricultural labour market. Dissatisfied with his circumstances, Joseph writes ‘such a disgraceful manner yet he [God] provides a hard place of labour for me that prevented me from taking to pastimes and pleasure as many of the youth did and are commonly subject to at the age as I’. In retrospect, Joseph Mayett Jr believed he had been dealt a harder life than other boys in the parish. However, the aggregate data bears witness to the fact that he was not treated any differently to other boys of the same age. Kussmaul reconstructs Joseph Mayett Jr’s journey of servitude starting at age 12, listing 12 different hirings within seven years (Table 5:2).40

35 MERL, BUC 6/1/2, The Leys, Quainton 1794-1806.  
38 Ibid., p. 2.  
39 Ibid., p. 4.  
Some of the dates recorded by Joseph appear to be incorrect. During the winter of 1796-1797 for example, per Kussmaul’s interpretation of his autobiography, he was in service. Yet overseers’ accounts recorded weekly ‘roundsman’ wages of 2s from October 1796 to February 1797. In January 1801, he reappeared on the parish’s rolls and was once more in receipt of intermittent ‘roundsman’ wages throughout the year, which suggest that he did not have a contract during that year. In Kussmaul’s eyes, Joseph was too ‘quick to [respond to] wrongs done him’. In so doing, he was not mindful of settlement laws and willingly left employment before the end of his contract year on several occasions. What Joseph did not realise was that labour was a market commodity, which like other commodities, was subject to supply and demand. The movement away from live-in agricultural servants toward shorter contracts meant that there were more unemployed boys and young men in the market place and a greater of number married men with young families who did not have a guaranteed weekly income.

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41 Based on the structure of the roundsman notation it was possible to differentiate father from son of same name, based on the number of days worked and the wages received. When Mayett’s father worked as a ‘roundsman’, he earned 6s a week.
42 Kussmaul, Servants, p. 93
43 Ibid.
According to Joseph Mayett Jr, when his father Joseph Mayett Sr appeared on the ‘rounds’ as a labourer he received between 6s a week (1s a day) and 9s during harvest season.\textsuperscript{44} Extra wages earned during harvest seasons, (which could last approximately eight weeks), were not however enough to supplement a family’s income during periods of underemployment or unemployment. In 1795, Eden noted that in the parish of Buckingham, ‘earnings [were] irregular, from 1s [to] 1s 6d a day’, whereas in Maids Morton they were 1s to 1s 2d a day.\textsuperscript{45} In Winslow, they were 6s to 7s a week including breakfast, but during ‘hay-time’ (harvest season) they were 7s a week with board, and in Stony Stratford, they ranged from 1s to 1s 4d.\textsuperscript{46} It appears that roundsmen’s wages in Quainton were lower than wages in surrounding parishes. Thirsk contends that within the ranks of casual labourers there were groups of itinerant specialists who by virtue of their skills, such as being a hedger, could have commanded a higher wage. This could account for the higher range of wages reported by Eden.\textsuperscript{47} Perhaps in contrast to neighbouring parishes, Quainton did not have specialty labourers who commanded higher wages.

Buckinghamshire’s magistrate during the Epiphany Quarter Session of 1795 set a guaranteed minimum income of 6s a week (1s a day) for a married agricultural labourer without children, which was the amount paid to Quainton’s ‘roundsmen’ regardless of the number of children in their family.\textsuperscript{48} In addition, it was not unusual for Quainton’s overseers to combine the number of days worked as a roundsman with the wages earned and the family’s allowance in one entry. Wages for boys and single men were, per the magistrate’s ruling, ‘according to his labour’.\textsuperscript{49} Boys on the ‘rounds’ in Quainton received a wage of 2s to 3s a week or 4d to 6d a day depending on their age, whereas girls received 1s 7d to 3s 2d a week. During the 1802 Easter Quarter Session, the magistrate further addressed wages for different trades and tasks, some of which were higher than those previously set.\textsuperscript{50} Whether Quainton’s farmers adopted this higher scale in 1802 is not clear. The new wages as outlined for

\textsuperscript{44} Kussmaul, \textit{Autobiography}, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{45} Eden, \textit{The State}, pp. 24-27.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{47} Thirsk, \textit{Agrarian}, p. 677.  
\textsuperscript{48} CBS, Q/SO/24, Quarter Sessions Easter 1794 to Easter 1797.  
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{50} CBS, Q/SO/27, Quarter Sessions Epiphany 1802 to Easter 1804.
a day labourer of 21 years of age and older was 1s 2d a day or 7s a week. However, despite this, only a few of Quainton’s married labourers who were on the `rounds` received 7s a week; the rest received 6s a week or 1s a day. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that Quainton’s farmers adopted the higher standard wage for agricultural labourers who were not on the `rounds`.

Quainton’s `roundsmen` were paid wholly out of the parish`s poor rates, which was not an unusual practice in Buckinghamshire. Eden notes that in the parish of Winslow, ‘most of the labourers are on the rounds… and in winter sometimes 40 are on the rounds… wholly paid out of poor relief’. However, Eden does not mention the use of a roundsman system in the three other Buckinghamshire parishes he visited.

**In-lieu-of-Roundsman Payments**

The basis for Quainton’s utilization of `in-lieu-of-roundsman` wages is obscure. It is unclear as to whether it was meant to provide a minimum supplemental income to families whose young sons, of working age, that were unable to find regular work as day-labourers or as roundsman, or whether it was designed to prevent young labourers from leaving the parish to seek apprenticeships or industrial jobs in the big cities, thereby guaranteeing farmers a peak-season labour force. Presumably, this system would not preclude these boys from working as roundsmen when work was available. In essence, the one shilling a week received by the fathers on behalf of these boys was an income subsidy. As noted by Blaug,

hardly any of the dire effects ascribed to the Old Poor Law stand up in the light of available empirical knowledge…The Old Poor Law… was, in essence, a device for dealing with the problem of surplus [labour] in the lagging rural sector of a rapidly expanding but still underdeveloped economy. And considering the quality of social administration in the day, it was by no means an unenlightened policy.

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51 Ibid.
53 Blaug, `Myth`, p. 176.
‘No work’ Stipends

Recipients of ‘no work’ stipends included boys and both single and married men. Reasons listed by the overseers for these payments outside the dearth period were ‘snow’, ‘no shoes’, or ‘after work’ [looking for work]. Labourers in these incidences received their usual daily wages for the number of lost days. Through pattern analysis and nominal linkage, it has been established by this study that some of the casual relief entries recorded in December 1800 were the equivalent of a labourer’s ‘roundsman’ wage in November. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that these entries were for ‘no work’ as the overseers noted the total number of days worked and employer name if these were roundsman entries. Because of the decline of ‘roundsman’ work and the ‘in-lieu-of-roundsman’ stipend in December 1800, ‘no work’ became virtually the only unemployment benefit utilised by the parish. Recipients of ‘no work’ stipends received from 2s 6d to 4s a week. For some this was just enough to buy half-peck loaf of bread, which illustrates that the expectation was that families would draw on other aspects of their ‘economy of make-shifts’ in order to survive the dearth. However, as quickly as ‘no work’ entries appeared on the rolls, they dwindled as bread prices declined and unemployed agricultural labourer found work as ‘roundsman’ or boys received ‘in-lieu-of-roundsman’ wages. By the end of the post-dearth period, utilisation of these forms of unemployment benefits were significantly less than noted prior to 1799-1800.

Trends in Unemployment Relief during the Study Period

Having, therefore, proffered a basic understanding of the prevalent forms of unemployment benefits utilised by Quainton, it is possible to explore the major trends in these relief categories during the timeframe of this study. The best means of gaining an understanding of the situation faced by the parish is look at total unemployment relief expenses, the number of days worked, and the marital status of the individual labourers.

54 CBS, PR 169/12/7-8.
Table 5:3 Unemployment Benefit
Percentage of Total Poor Relief 17 July
1796 - 31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>In-Lieu of Roundsman</th>
<th>In-Lieu of Roundsman</th>
<th>No-Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1801</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806.

Unemployment benefits did not account for a large percentage of Quainton’s overall poor relief budget but they were still vital to the existence of the parish. Table 5:3 demonstrates the changing importance of this means of support and the distribution between the three forms of unemployment benefits used by the parish, as well as the decline of all such benefits after the 1800-1801 fiscal year.
Figure 5.1  Unemployment Benefit Expense Distribution 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers Accounts' 1796-1806
Figure 5.2 Roundsman Distribution of Days Worked by Marital Status

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts 1796-1806
Figure 5:1: presents a visual picture of Quainton’s total unemployment benefit expenses across the continuum of this study. Both Table 5.3 and Figure 5.1 demonstrate a marked change of policy during the dearth and the decline of all types of unemployment benefits by 1804. The drastic change seen at the end of the dearth of 1799-1801 was the result of the failure of the ‘roundsman’ system in December of 1800 after the unprecedented expenses witnessed in November 1800. Perhaps, in an effort to conserve the energy of the parish’s unemployed labourers, the ratepayers opted to pay them for ‘no work’ or perhaps the weather was so bad that there was no work to be had.

Three possible explanations exist for the dramatic changes witnessed in the post-dearth. First, as commodity prices stabilised regular employment opportunities in the parish increased. Secondly, young men like Joseph Mayett may have decided that the parish had nothing to offer them in terms of employment and opted to join His Majesty’s armed forces. Finally, that the vestry became less willing to support unemployed labourers following the period of relatively high expenditure during the dearth.

Figure 5:2 demonstrates the seasonal nature of agricultural employment by marital status, based upon total days worked. From analysis of the data recorded therein, it appears that during the pre-dearth single labourers accounted for approximately 66 per cent of the total days worked. As the parish moved closer towards the dearth, a greater number of married labourers were on the ‘rounds’; presumably the result of a weakening labour market. These men did not necessarily have smaller families; several had four or five children. It is apparent, therefore, that regular employment had becoming tenuous, even for married labourers. In addition, Figure 5:2 very explicitly illustrates the seasonal nature of agricultural employment. Summer troughs start approximately in July each year, but their length varies from year to year. This meant that the majority of Quainton’s agricultural labourers were fully employed during the harvest and did not have resort to making the ‘rounds’. Although, agricultural labourers were able to earn a few extra shillings week, it was certainly not enough to enable them to put money aside that would support of their families during the winter months. The distribution between boys/single male and
married laboured became more evenly split as the parish moved towards the dearth. In the aftermath of the dearth, roundsman work drifts off to next to nothing, and the work that did exist being evenly split between the single and married labourers.

Table 5:4 Unemployment Benefit Recipients at the Height of the Dearth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Roundsman</th>
<th>No Work</th>
<th>In-lieu-of-Roundsman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Days</td>
<td>Total Recipients</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1800</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1800</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1800</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1801</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1801</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1801</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 1801</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May. 1801</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., 169/12/7-8 Quanton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806.

Table 5:4 looks more closely at the latter months of the dearth of 1799-1801. It illustrates the important shift from a reliance on `roundsman` wages to `no work` stipends. During these critical months, there was an initial increase in `roundsman` days worked. By November 1800, the number of days worked increased 161 per cent; that month alone accounted for 35 per cent of the total `roundsman` expenses for the fiscal year. Forty-five per cent of those on the rolls were married, but total expenditure was almost evenly distributed between single boys or men £23 17s 7d and married labourers £23 1s 5d. In contrast, only 30 `roundsman` days were subsidised in December 1800, whilst 44 agricultural labourers received `no work` stipends. This total was significantly less than the 76 roundsman who received wages during November 1800. Presumably, the other 32 `roundsmen` were either regularly employed or received other forms of poor relief. The majority of those who received `no work` stipends were boys and single men. The married `roundsmen` who did receive a `no work` stipend, either had no children or just one child. Therefore, it can be concluded that regular employment would have been given to labourers with larger families. As suggested in Chapter Four, family assistance alone would not have provided a subsistence diet without the wages of the head-of-household and even then it was questionable. `In-lieu-of-roundsman`
stipends, while still administered, were barely visible at the height of the dearth. Although a definite shift from `roundsman` to `no work` is seen, the total cost of unemployment benefits from December 1800 through May 1801 was lower than that recorded in the same months of both 1798-1799 and 1799-1800. `No work` accounted for £72 3s 5d during this period.

The downward trend in overall unemployment benefits towards the end of the dearth period resulted in a significant decrease in unemployment compensation in the post-dearth. The total `roundsman` wages for March 1804, were £3 17s 2s compared to £9 2s 6d for the same month in 1799. This noticeable change implies that other forces affected the parish’s labour market. With England` s re-engagement in war with France in 1803, there was active recruitment for His Majesty` s services, but Quainton chose to pay the bounty of the seven labourers that were picked by ballot. Five of the seven men were married; the other two presumably could have been married in another parish. In addition, single men, like Joseph Mayett, might have entered His Majesty` s services voluntarily, as the parish had little to offer them except a life of drudgery and uncertainty.
Figure 5.3  Roundsmen Days Worked 17 July 1796 - 31 March 1804

Source: C.B.S. PR 169/12/7-8 Quantmon's Overseers' Accounts 1797-1806.
Figure 5:3 illustrates three aspects of Quainton’s unemployment situation: the cyclic nature of agricultural unemployment, the total number of days worked by roundsmen, and the yearly as well monthly distribution of days worked. Employment in the agricultural parishes of southern England was affected by the seasonal nature of crops. Winter and summer wheat were harvested in July and August and winter wheat was sown in September. Even with seasonal continuity, a wide diversity is evident. Undoubtedly there was a higher rate of employment during the summer months, but there was still a surplus of labour, even in good the years, as illustrated by the number of men still on the `rounds` during the harvest season. In the pre-dearth, 143 different labourers found it necessary to make the `rounds`, followed by 195 during the dearth, and 112 in the post-dearth. This meant that the vast majority of the parish’s labour force, (which, according the *Posse Comitatus* consisted of 60 labourers between 15 and 60 years of age) were not accounted for on this list. Quainton’s agricultural workforce was certainly larger than documented. The second seasonal trough noted was in March and April of each year, during the calving season and the sowing of summer harvested cereal crops. ‘Roundsman’ days normally increased as the parish entered late autumn and the winter months except after 1801, when there was, as noted, a marked decrease in roundsman support.

In the post-dearth, there was a dramatic change. Between January and March 1804, only 584 ‘roundsman’ days were recorded compared to 1,889 logged during the same months of 1800. The total number of ‘roundsman’ days recorded during 1802-1803 fiscal year was 55 per cent less than that documented for 1797-1798.
Figure 5:4 shows the age distribution of `roundsmen` during the three sub-periods identified in this study. In the pre-dearth and dearth, more boys between the ages of 10 and 15 were on the `rounds`. Boys under ten years of age rarely worked out in the fields during the pre-dearth, but this changed in the dearth and post-dearth; as the purchasing power of families decreased. Forty-five per cent of `roundsmen` employed during the dearth were under the age of 20. Wrigley and Schofield believed that `children under age ten contributed nothing to production and those 10-14 contributed little...[those in the] 15-19 group attain 75 per cent of adult level'. Perhaps these young boys were not as productive as adult labourers, but their weekly wages were one-third of that earned by their fathers, a significant amount for families that were struggling to keep food on the table. During the dearth, there was an increase in the number of labourers between the ages of 21-50 years who were on the `rounds`, though it can be suggested that many still had non-productive children in their households. At the other end of the age range, 13 per cent of the roundsmen were over the age of 60, four were over 70. Ottaway found

55 Ages of individual labourers were based on baptismal records. This analysis therefore does not include data for individual with untraceable baptisms. FamilySearch.org, https://familysearch.org/.
the elderly poor were ‘expected to work as much as possible’ even if they became dependent on poor relief.57 In this way, therefore, the working years of Quainton’s agricultural labourers extended well beyond those worked by labourers in modern society. Most of Quainton’s agricultural labourers would live in poverty all of their lives due to substandard wages and the uncertainty of employment. As this chapter has shown, there was no expectation of full-time employment for any of Quainton’s labouring poor and most adolescent labourers had nothing to look forward to except continual toil, uncertainty, and poverty.

Conclusion

Quainton, like modern welfare providers within the welfare state, provided a range of unemployment benefits to the labouring poor. The key problem faced by the parish was a year-round surplus of labour, a consequence of the cyclical and the changing nature of agricultural employment. Unemployment benefits to Quainton’s labouring poor were extended well beyond the working age limits of the modern state. The ratepayers were cognisant of the fact that for most of the year there was not enough regular work for a significant number of the parish’s agricultural labourers. The `roundsman` system was widely used by Quainton in the late 1790s, and reached an all-time high (in total number of days worked) in November 1800. As the parish moved towards the height of the dearth, more married men appeared on the rolls. However, by December 1800 the roundsman system collapsed and was barely visible during the first five months of 1801. Gradually, roundsman benefits were re-established before nearly fading away again in the post-dearth. Based on the aggregate data can it be concluded that Quainton’s vestry had decided that they could no longer support unemployed labourers at the levels demonstrated in the past or did unknown factor come into play. The overall decrease in all means of relief in the post-dearth, suggests that a majority of these labourers that depended on the roundsman system might have been worse off that they were during the dearth.

An `In-lieu-of-roundsman` stipend not only added to the total family income, but was also a means of supplementing the parish’s ready supply of surplus labour

when no `roundsman` work was available. It was more prevalently used during the pre-dearth and post-dearth, but declined during the dearth. With the near-collapse of the `roundsman` system in December 1800, the overseers changed strategies. `No work` stipends were a specific measure utilised by the parish from December 1800 to April 1801 when the `roundsman` and `in-lieu-of-roundsman` benefits were rarely used. The parish paid unemployed labourers the equivalent of their normal `roundsman` wage for `no work`. Boys and single men accounted for 65-80 per cent of those receiving `no work` stipends. As `roundsman` and `in-lieu-of-roundsman supplements returned, this form of unemployment benefits was rarely used.

All forms of unemployment benefits in Quainton decreased after January 1802 despite the fact that wheat prices remained higher than they had been during the pre-dearth period. It is hard to imagine that regular employment options had increased in such an agriculturally dependent parish. In a vestry comprised mostly of rate-paying landowners and occupiers [farmers], the only conceivable explanation for this decrease is that the vestry had reassessed its situation and tightened the parish’s welfare budget ‘to minimise all demands on their limited capital assets’. Of course, this conclusion warrants further research, but it offers one plausible explanation of the data trend.

As most of the ratepayers in Quainton were farmers, they had a stake in keeping a ready supply of agricultural labourers in the parish and were, therefore, willing to pay higher rates to do so. P.K. Bardhan suggests that that these benefits were ‘implicit contracts with labourers for future commitment of labour’ or, alternatively, ‘a simple model of profit-maximisation by farmers…like unemployment insurance provision with other feasible methods for hoarding labour’. The answer to such alternative hypotheses depends upon whether farmers paid agricultural labourers a wage equal to the marginal product of labour. If that were the case, any relief payments received by labourers raised their incomes above the marginal product of labour. According to Redford`s Model, this was inefficient.


for labour-hiring farmers because, in reality, total payment (wages and relief) to individual labourers would have exceeded the marginal product of that labour since the farmers were paying a share of the poor rate. Nevertheless, many have argued that this inefficient system was widely implemented in agricultural parishes between 1795 and 1834, which indicates how important it was to secure an agricultural labour force during peak seasons. The livelihood of the other ratepayers in the parish of Quainton was dependent on the agricultural community. Therefore, they were probably not averse to paying poor rates to support the parish`s unemployed agricultural labourers. Even if farmers had paid higher wages as an incentive to decrease outward migration, they would still have been faced with a surplus labour force for approximately 44 weeks in every year. Essentially, farmers were faced with the seasonality of agricultural cultivation which meant that, in order to secure an adequate labour force in the high season, they had to spend a great deal through poor relief in the off season when there was little actual work to be done.

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Chapter Six: Miscellaneous Casual Relief

Previous discussion of `casual` relief in this thesis has centred on family allowances based upon a bread scale and compensation to the underemployed and unemployed labourers. Contemporaries saw these as the main sources of increased poor relief expenditure at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, all forms of `outdoor` relief provided to the able-bodied poor outside of the workhouse were questioned by parliament. Accordingly, this chapter examines other forms of `casual` relief that were important aspects of the `welfare-state-in-miniature` in their own right. These included compensation of illness, health care, burials, rent, food, clothing, fuel, and sundry items. These are a testament to the varying levels of generosity and wide variety of `in-kind` and `cash` relief granted Quainton`s poor. At the same time, they reveal, how, when put together, the various packages of poor relief provided a `safety net` for the poor. The analysis of the aggregate data in this chapter addresses the following broad questions: What part of the overall poor relief budget did miscellaneous casual relief represent? What level and types of miscellaneous casual relief were rendered and did these change over time? What do these miscellaneous forms of casual relief reveal about Quainton`s response to the dearth of 1799-1801?

Importance of the Miscellaneous Categories of Casual Relief

The majority of other one-place studies of poor law accounts have recognised the role played by `in-kind` and occasional `cash` allowances, but no study provides an in-depth analysis of aggregate data during a period of economic crisis, though Williams comes close in her analysis of the parishes of Campton and Shefford between 1760 and 1830. She divides her data into five categories of casual relief, including clothing, burials, rent and lodging, food and drink, and medical care. However, the data was examined in ten-year increments; therefore, her 1800 figures for rural village of Campton can act only a reference point.\(^1\) By narrowly focusing on the years of economic crisis, this work contributes an analytic specificity that

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\(^1\) S. Williams, Poverty, Gender, and Life-Cycle under English Poor Law: 1760-1834 (Woodbridge, 2011), Figure 7, p. 46.
offers a more direct, isolated conclusion. Therefore, the discussion in this chapter is not specifically broken down into the chronological sub-periods used in the previous chapters. Rather, it addresses individual categories of miscellaneous casual relief over the continuum.

In a detailed analysis of this sort, it is difficult to separate expenses that were directly applicable to the `deserving poor1 from other expenses, which could have a tendency to ‘undermine the reliability of expenditure data’. Pattern analysis was used to improve the reliability of the underlying data. Out of the 7,592 miscellaneous casual relief entries recorded, 3,359 included only the name of the individual recipient and the amount received, but no comments. Therefore, through pattern analysis and comparison to other entries that had comments, it was possible to place the majority of individual entries into generic categories. The 748 entries that could not be classified are recorded as `unknowns`. However, not all entries that did have comments fitted neatly into one of the identified generic category; these entries have been classified as `sundry` expenses.

Miscellaneous casual relief accounted for 14 per cent of Quainton`s total relief budget in 1797-1798; by the end of the pre-dearth, it accounted for 20 per cent. It decreased to 14 per cent in 1800-1801 but, by 1802-1803, reached an all-time high of 30 per cent of the total relief budget, and closed in the post-dearth period at 26 per cent. Table 6:1 provides a detailed breakdown of these expenses across the timeframe of this study.

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2 Examples of expenses that were directly applicable to the poor are, burial expenses, rent, clothing, and pensions. Examples of expenses that were not directly applicable to the poor are county rates, stationery, the cost of sending a letter, and vestry meeting expenses. D.A. Baugh, 'The cost of poor relief in south-east England, 1790-1834', *The Economic History Review, New Series* (1975), pp. 50-68, p. 53.
Table 6:1 Total Miscellaneous Casual Relief 17 July 1796–31 March 1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Nursing</th>
<th>Burials</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Fuel</th>
<th>Sundry</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>£41 1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£19 1s. 6d.</td>
<td>£14 16s.</td>
<td>£4 17s. 6d.</td>
<td>£12 18s.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£9 10d.</td>
<td>6d.</td>
<td>£4 15s. 1d.</td>
<td>£4 7s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>£50 2s. 1d.</td>
<td>£26 18s.</td>
<td>£1 6s. 10d.</td>
<td>£2 11d.</td>
<td>£26 13s. 6d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£8 4s. 3d.</td>
<td>1s. 8d.</td>
<td>£2 11s.</td>
<td>£26 1s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>£50 5s. 5d.</td>
<td>£47 18s. 6d.</td>
<td>£3 6s. 5d.</td>
<td>£4 9s. 8d.</td>
<td>£28 19s. 8d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>£27 7s. 5d.</td>
<td>£1 18s. 1d.</td>
<td>£11 16s. 5d.</td>
<td>£3 18s. 7d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>£95 14s. 6d.</td>
<td>£11 16s.</td>
<td>£15 2s. 8d.</td>
<td>£3 12s. 7d.</td>
<td>£18 14s. 4d.</td>
<td>£2 2s. 11d.</td>
<td>£19 15s. 1d.</td>
<td>£1 2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£23 19s.</td>
<td>£36 2s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>£127 18s.</td>
<td>£12 17s.</td>
<td>£16 16s. 4d.</td>
<td>£13 3s.</td>
<td>£15 7s.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£6 4s. 8d.</td>
<td>£60 6s.</td>
<td>£3 5s. 3d.</td>
<td>£14 13s. 3d.</td>
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<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>£137 3s. 5d.</td>
<td>£21 6s. 4d.</td>
<td>£18 7s. 7d.</td>
<td>£12 5s. 4d.</td>
<td>£11 15s. 6d.</td>
<td>£3 4s. 3d</td>
<td>£10 9s. 5d.</td>
<td>£17 14s. 5d.</td>
<td>£7 13s. 6d.</td>
<td>£11 1s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>£93 8s. 11d.</td>
<td>£62 1s. 10d.</td>
<td>£16 1s. 2d.</td>
<td>£14s. 6d.</td>
<td>£9 8s. 6d.</td>
<td>£4s. 11d.</td>
<td>£8 14s. 10d.</td>
<td>£42 5s. 5d.</td>
<td>£4 4s. 1d.</td>
<td>£5 14s. 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>£55 17s. 2s. 6d.</td>
<td>£9 7s. 11d.</td>
<td>£2 2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£15 11s. 8d.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>£8 17s.</td>
<td>£9 8s. 6d.</td>
<td>£76 11s. 11d.</td>
<td>£11 9s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total | £651 11s. 2d. | £202 1s. 8d. | £95 4s. 11d. | £44 6s. 1d. | £139 8s. 8d. | £5 12s. 1d. | £98 13s. 8d. | £132 17s. 1d. | £134 16s. 3d. | £113 8s. 10d. |

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts' 1796-1806.
The expenditure for the 1801-1802 fiscal year was higher than that recorded in the first two fiscal years of the dearth years. This was mainly due to a sustained level of illness. Expenses related to illness and associated practitioner and nursing care were major components of the miscellaneous casual relief budget and accounted for £891 5s 10d, or 52.56 per cent, of the total expenses over the eight-year period, an average per capita expense of 3s. ‘Illness’ is discussed separately from other health care expenses because of its direct correlation to the physical well-being of the labouring poor and their ability to work productively. The significance of the role played by miscellaneous casual relief in the lives of Quainton’s labouring poor is, however, discussed in the following subsections, and this approach aligns with the identified generic categories of miscellaneous relief in Table 6:1.

**Illness**

M.E. Fissell points out that health care as part of ‘poor relief’, ‘needs to be understood as part of the larger, propped-up domestic economies in an environment in which disaster, be it illness or lack of work, may occur at any time’. Consequently, to some degree, the provision of health care can be seen as a logical focus of parish relief systems since health can be so intrinsically tied to the ability of persons to provide for themselves. As discussed above, relief for illness represented a major part of the total health care budget and accordingly the nuances of this category warrant attention. This section resultantly explores the following questions: Who were the primary recipients of illness benefits? What were the common kinds of illness that warranted such relief? How often did the average illness recipient appear on the roll? Were illness benefits, in effect, disability insurance?

Unlike Sokoll in Essex, no contemporary pauper letters or vestry minutes for Quainton survive that bear witness to the claims of illness made by Quainton’s poor. Like other forms of relief, the boundaries between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ recipients were a function of the perception of the parties involved. Illness was often the precipitating reason that compelled the labouring poor to seek aid from the parish in the first place.

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Seeking parish relief in times of illness was ‘moving beyond the traditional sources of health care, such as neighbours and kin’. While some level of parish relief for illness was always present, expenses increased during the dearth, as seen in Figure 6:1. Over the eight-year period covered in this study, £660 10s 9d was spent on illness, an average of 40 per cent of the total miscellaneous casual relief budget per year. This may suggest that there existed an intrinsic link between illness and other hardships or detrimental conditions, such as unemployment or suppressed wages, which in turn meant that less money was available for a subsistence diet and other associated effects that fuel poverty.

S. King argues that ‘the sick poor had no automatic entitlement to cash relief’ for illness. In Quainton, very little was given in kind for claims of illness. There were times when the overseers questioned the legitimacy of a parishioner’s complaint of illness. For example, on 24 April 1802, the overseer noted that John Harvey was ‘lazy, I believe’, but he still received 2s 2d for being ill for two days. Obviously, it has to be assumed that negotiations took place between the involved parties and that a number of requests were denied.

Noticeably, there was a cyclic nature to illness-related welfare. Like other forms of poor relief, it decreased during the harvest seasons and increased in the autumn and winter months. Again, as seen in other forms of relief, the longevity of these troughs varied yearly. Presumably, the prospects of higher wages during harvest seasons enticed the marginally ill and less motivated to head for the fields in the hope of earning extra money.

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6 CBS, PR 169/12/8 Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts, p. 283.
Figure 6.1 Illness Expense per Month

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806.
Nevertheless, as in modern society, certain illnesses were more prevalent during the colder months. The insanitary and crowded living conditions and nutritional status of England’s labouring poor during this period in history meant that they were more susceptible not only to common ailments, but also to infectious diseases that could run rampant through the parish. An entry in Quainton`s schools` logbook, written 90 years later records the following excerpt from a local newspaper, which speaks to the sanitary conditions in Quainton;

A large portion of the cottages in the village were ruinous and filthy and out to be swept away. They were packed together in a way suggestive of London slums and many should be pulled down and the materials burn[ed]. They were alive with vermin and the state of the poor children when they came to be laid out for burial was too sad to be described. The village had a good water supply from the spring in the hills behind it but the site of the village is literally saturated with its sewage and can scarcely be said to have any drainage at all. The drain which does run through the place w[as] intended only for surface water but contain[s] a festering mass of sewage which would be enough to poison an army.\(^7\)

As illustrated in Figure 6:1, the cost associated with illness during the dearth followed the same pattern of increased expenditure, as noted in other categories of relief. In 1799-1800, expenses were 45 per cent higher than those reported in 1798-1799. Over the next two years, outlays increased by another 13 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. Unlike other cohorts of poor relief, however, illness expenditure did not drop abruptly after the price of wheat declined. In fact, a higher level of support was extended through the winter of 1802-1803. Indeed, morbidity and mortality in Quainton increased during the dearth because the labouring poor were unable purchase enough food to provide their families with a subsistence diet. The effects of malnutrition likely extended beyond the improvement in the macroeconomic of food commodities, and this potentially explains the higher and sustained rate of illness exhibited in this data. In contrast, Williams specifically did not note any significant increase in medical and health care during 1800s.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) Williams, *Poverty*, p. 45.
The number of illness claims per month (Figure 6:2) provides a very similar picture to the pattern seen in Figure 6:1. The application of a five-month moving average demonstrates that a higher level of sustained illness claims extended well into 1803. In 1800-1801, illness claims increased 114 per cent over the number recorded in 1798-1799, and remained at that level during the 1801-1802 fiscal year. Evidently, based upon the figures presented here, Quainton’s labouring poor were slow to recuperate and recover from the conditions imposed by the dearth. The parish authorities recognised this, as illness expenditures were not trimmed back as dramatically as other categories of relief in 1801-1802 or in the post-dearth. Importantly, the increase in expenditure was not a matter of increased compensation per individual, but rather the result of more individuals claiming to be ill.

Complete analysis of who experienced ‘illness’ in Quainton is difficult to assess, as 45 per cent of the entries attributed to ‘illness’ had no accompanying comments. The ability to answer such a question adequately is thus restricted by the lack of documentation. Out of the 4,734 entries, 55 per cent of the ‘illness’ entries had comments; of those 1,159 were for someone other than the head-of-household and were comprised of 604 for ‘wife’, 74 for ‘son’, 137 for ‘boy’, and 344 for ‘girl’ or ‘daughter’. The sums received by these individuals varied from sixpence to two shillings a week, suggesting that their compensation was based upon the number of workdays lost due to illness multiplied by the individual’s daily wage. Consequently, stipends for the reported illnesses of the 149 children and 55 widows mentioned in the accounts were only between sixpence and a shilling a week, which is reflective of their lack of earning power. In contrast, the head-of-household received a stipend based on the number of days lost due to illness (noted by the overseer) and his daily wage, although some entries did not include the number of lost days. It is therefore impossible to determine the actual number of days lost by agricultural labourers due to illness.

9 Overseers used the words ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ or ‘daughter’ to designate children who were productive members of the household. ‘Child’ was used to denote a non-productive child.
10 Pattern analysis did verify that these entries were for illness.
The majority of illness entries recorded in Quainton’s overseers’ accounts were more akin to sick leave or disability insurance and used to ‘offset the shortfalls in earnings’. It is speculated, therefore, that the parish was obliged to extend relief in the short term in order to decrease the threat of larger compensation in the long term if the health of a recipient did not improve. Only on rare occasions did the overseers note that money dispensed was for medicine, food, or other items associated with an illness. This suggests that cash relief at least was correlated less to illness severity and more to the economically productive time that was lost, and that Quainton’s relief system may have been designed to serve as an economic ‘safety net’ rather than a charitably-motivated ‘welfare state’. For example, William Harris was returned to Quainton in May of 1798 due to a hand injury because he became ‘chargeable’. By August, he was receiving a weekly allowance of 5s. On 14 October, the parish paid 15s 3d for his expenses at St Bartholomew Hospital in London ‘to try for the cure of his locked hand’. An extra 10s 3d was spent later that month. He must have worked intermittently during this time, as there are breaks in his allowance payments. The majority of his 45 illness claims were for a given number of lost workdays. Poor families lived so close to the margin of starvation during this time that money lost due to the inability of a family member to work had a dramatic impact on the survival of the family unit as a whole. There were also economic repercussions for the ratepayers, since not only did relief expenses increase, but also farm productivity could have been negatively affected.

Quainton’s overseers made little mention in their accounts regarding the nature of illness other than ‘lameness’, ‘bad eyes’, ‘whooping cough’, ‘putrid fever’, and ‘possible smallpox’. In March and April 1802, the Mayho family received £2 9s 3d for ‘possible smallpox’, yet no other families were afflicted and no smallpox deaths were recorded. The cost of ‘lying-in’ for John Taylor’s wife of Newport in 1798 was £1 19s 6d.

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11 Williams, Poverty, p. 46.
12 King, ‘Stop this’, p. 234.
13 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers’ Accounts.
14 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
15 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers’ Accounts.
Some paupers appeared once or twice on the rolls, whereas others received weekly stipends for longer-term disabilities (Figure 6:3). For example, Rebecca Harding, a 23-year-old lacemaker, received eight weeks of support in the late summer of 1802 at 2s 6d for ‘bad eyes can’t see to work’. Out of the 258 named individuals who received payments for illness, 105 appeared on the rolls fewer than six times during the period covered by this study. The overall average number of times an individual appeared on the rolls during the study period 18.35, which in reality is high when it is considered that this figure represents just over 2s a year per individual.

Three of Quainton’s labouring poor were on the rolls in excess of 120 weeks. George Plant Sr’s name appeared 134 times due to reported illnesses for himself and his daughters. John Warner appeared 141 times, receiving stipends for various members of his household, including himself. Edward King was listed 153 times; again, the entries were for various members of his family, but primarily for his ‘idiot’ daughter. As seen here, moneys were generally paid to the head of a household; however, this did not necessarily signify that they themselves were ill.

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16 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
In summary, it appears that the prime claimants of illness were male labourers, however the benefit may have been for another member of their household. Due to the limited information, it is not possible to make any assumptions regarding the nature of illnesses. Based upon the account entries and amounts awarded, the bulk of the entries seem, in fact, to have been disability payments. It is conceivable that the figures presented here are a conservative estimate, the source records are in many respects incomplete, and therefore more conclusive pattern matching was not possible.

**Health Care**

**Medical Practitioners**

The provision of health care and medical practitioner services to Quainton’s labouring poor differ from claims of ‘illness’ in that these were not cash payments. Traditional sources of health care for the labouring poor were family, neighbours, and friends. According to Fissell, even those with limited ‘economies of makeshift’ could find medical treatment within their means.\(^{17}\) For those who could not afford medical care, ‘self-dosing, quack remedies, and recourse to herbal remedies administered by wise men and women were often the first response to illness’.\(^{18}\) According to Gestrich, Hurren and King, even though the broad dimensions of welfare spending had been established, in the literature, ‘there was little in the sense of what components of this spending were either allocated to medical-welfare narrowly or widely defined’.\(^{19}\) In other words, very little work has been done with aggregate data to define the levels and means of health care services that either were or were not provided to the poor at the parish level. Therefore, this section explores the following questions: What types of professional and non-professional medical services were provided by the parish? Were their limitations to some of these services? Were recipients provided the basic tenets of healthcare system?

\(^{17}\) Fissell, ‘The “sick”, p. 38.


According to Simmons` Medical Register, the ratio of practitioners to the population of Buckinghamshire in 1783 was less than 1:2999. A. Digby points out that there was a growing regional split, with southern England having a higher ratio of practitioners than northern counties because the south was more densely populated and more developed compared to the north. ‘Sufferers in the north of England were more prone to consult a member of the medical fringe…than a medical practitioner’, who found penetration of the south more successful. The majority of the southern parishes preferred to pay for services performed instead of entering into contractual agreements. Those parishes that entered into annual contracts with medical practitioners did so with hopes of providing more cost-effective treatment. At the same time, however, if the contracts were too low, the poor could be deprived of treatment. In 1796, Eden reported that in Chesterfield, Hereford, St Albans, and Ashby De La Zouch, parishes paid around £10 a year for their contracted practitioner although some paid as high as £30. According to Digby, rural parishes in the eighteenth century paid between £5 10s and £10 10s for a contracted physician a year, but due to price inflation between 1793 and 1815, doctors gained a market advantage.

Contracting with medical practitioners was a means by which a parish ‘could predict and limit medical spending’. On 10 May 1800, Quainton`s overseer noted that Mr Sims (probably a member of the vestry) received three shillings for his ‘expenses in contracting with the doctor’ (Table 6:2). Williams, in her study of practitioners’ incomes, suggests that medical contracts were based upon the population of a parish. Whether this was the case in Quainton is unknown.

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
26 Digby, A Medical Living, p. 226.
27 Williams, ‘Practitioners’, p. 159.
28 Members of the ‘middling class’ and ‘gentry’ were addressed by their full names in the accounts, while the labouring poor were addressed by their surname only or sometimes by their surname and occupation. Widows were designated as such.
Dr Thomas MacGrath, who ministered to several parishes in the Wixamtree Hundreds of Berkshire, per capita cost ranged from 4s 1d to 11s 5d. Yet, Williams reported that the per capita expense for Campton and Shefford’s poor was only 1s 6d and 1s 1d per annum respectively. Based upon Dr Turner’s bill in April 1798, Quainton’s per capita cost was 6s 5d, considerably higher than that quoted by Williams, but well within Dr MacGrath’s range. The actual per capita cost of contracting out health care in Quainton is difficult to specify with any certainty, as the lengths of the contracts were not indicated and the parish apparently contracted multiple practitioners concurrently based on the information provided in Table 6:2.

Generally, practitioners accepted contracts from parishes within their local vicinity. On 11 September 1802, Scragg (a poor relief recipient) was paid a shilling by the parish to fetch Dr Turner, who lived over ten kilometres away in Winslow. John Bunting was Quainton’s only contracted practitioner who lived in the parish.

29 Williams, ‘Practitioners’, p. 169.
30 The comment provided in Table 6:2 are those recorded in the overseers accounts, as such the word ‘bill’ used in this context presumably is the ‘contracted’ price for practitioners services for a specific time period of time.
31 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
However, Dr George Lipscomb, a surgeon, and the author of *The History and Antiquity of the County of Buckinghamshire*, was at some point a resident of the parish, but there is no evidence that he actively practised during the period of this study.

Contracts specified the limits of a practitioner’s practice with ‘midwifery’ (except in difficult births) and ‘bone-setting’ being the most common exception because they were too ‘time consuming and expensive for the practitioner’ to be concerned with.\(^{32}\) According to Bunting’s farm account notations, he was presumably a male midwife and apothecary.\(^{33}\) In the limited pages of his farm account that survived, he recorded 37 deliveries, one of which was a set of quadruplets who later died. His records include the names of parents, the sex or name of child, and the exact times and dates of births. Whether he handled cases that are more complicated is unknown, as the records that have survived only cover a short period of time. Whether the costs associated with these deliveries were embedded within the Bunting’s bills [as noted in Table 6:2] submitted to the parish is also unclear. The parish’s informal practitioners provided other types of health care services to the poor.

**Informal Practitioners**

Informal practitioners were non-contracted members of the parish who provided medical services to the parish’s poor, including bone setting, bloodletting, midwifery, and the provision of medications.\(^{34}\) Bloodletting was thought to cure or prevent illness and William Uff, himself a poor relief recipient, was Quainton’s bloodletter. He received between four and ten shillings for his services, but was rarely called upon.

Whether midwives attended the majority of Quainton’s births is unknown. Total expenditure for ‘midwifery’ provided by the parish during this study was only £3 6s, all of which was recorded during the dearth. Quainton’s midwives received 5s for each delivery, the same amount reported by Stringer in 1802 Northamptonshire.\(^{35}\)

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\(^{33}\) MERL, BUC 6/1/1, *The Leys, Quainton, 1794-1806*. There is no documentation to suggest that the John Bunting had any formal training as a nurse midwife, physician, or apothecary.

\(^{34}\) Stringer, ‘Depth’, p. 50.

The Church of England in Quainton recorded 393 baptisms during this period. However, a midwife paid for by the parish attended only ten births during the eight years of this study; three were militia wives who, due to limited income and resources, probably could not have afforded the services of a midwife. The majority of families either turned to kin, neighbours, or paid for midwifery services out of their own pockets. Based upon a lack of evidence in the overseers’ accounts in support of this benefit, it can be assumed that there was no expectation among the poor that the parish would pay for midwifery services.

**Medicines**

Whether the cost of `physick` (medicines) were included in contracted practitioners’ bills is unclear. There is very little mention of the direct provision of medicine to the individual poor of the parish. For example, Ann Plant was ordered red wine by the doctor on 13 August 1797, which was paid for by the parish. On 2 February 1798, the parish spent £1 2s for medicine for John Spencer. Again, on 28 July 1798, another £2 7s 6d was spent on `medicine` for him. Elizabeth Maul received two shillings for medicine for her son on 1 February 1800. John Bunting in his farm account lists a variety of preparations for ailments. In April 1802 he presented a bill to the parish of £15 4s 2d for ‘medicines for the poor’. Based on the wages of the average labourer, the incurred costs noted above for `physick` were well beyond what they could afford. The parish, therefore, was placed in a either position where if they did not pay for medicines for the poor they could die or potentially be on parish relief for the rest of their life.

**Nursing Care**

Not only were professionals and informal practitioners called upon to administer medical services to the poor, the parish also paid nurses and caregivers to provide direct care to the ill. Most of the caretakers or nurses were women, but on rare occasions, males were paid to attend men. The majority of Quainton’s caregivers were themselves poor relief recipients, widows, family members, or

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36 Baptismal rate is not directly comparable to the birth rate during this period, but can be used as an estimate.
37 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers’ Accounts.
38 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
39 MERL, The Leys.
40 Williams, ‘Poor relief’; Williams, Poverty, p. 146.
neighbours. It is suggested that this could have reduced Quainton’s overall financial outlay if the income received by the caregivers made them ineligible for other poor relief benefits in their own right. It is unknown whether Quainton’s widows, who provided nursing care, worked under the stipulation that Cowe found in Wimbledon’s vestry minutes, whereby ‘if any pension poor are hearty and able to nurse such as are [sic] sick and they refuse then ordered by the officers they shall have their pension taken off’.41

Nursing duties varied from the direct management of an ailment to ‘doing’ and ‘washing’ for those in need. Quainton’s caregivers and nurses received an average of one to two shillings a week. The time they spent per week caring for the ill is not documented. Sitters who stayed up all night with the ill were usually paid less. For example, on 13 May 1798, Mary Mayett received a shilling for sitting-up with Goody Trewell.42 Caregivers often provided long-term continuity of care for the parishioners with acute ailments. Mary Mayett cared for ‘wounds’ and was ‘doing’ for William Mainwood’s wife from 4 December 1802 to 2 April 1804, for 1s 6d a week.43 Others, such as Mr. Read, a farmer, ‘cared’ for Paul Collier for 83 weeks. He initially received a shilling a week which was eventually doubled. Mrs Lipscomb and Mrs Toovey also cared for the sick and were paid out of the parish coffer.44

Nursing entries during the dearth accounted for 35 per cent of the total number of miscellaneous entries recorded in the eight years of this study. However, expenditure during the dearth accounted for 71 per cent of that total miscellaneous expenditure. Evidently, illness during the dearth became more profound; the poor were unable to manage without the help of others in the community, as their families/neighbours were also sufficiently ill or deconditioned to the point where they were unable to take care of each other. It can be assumed that, due to the higher level of illness recorded in the parish during the dearth, the services of practitioners would also have increased, but this is not assured because of the absence of medical records and irregular accounting practices. The fact that all of the recorded

42 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers’ Accounts.
43 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
44 These individuals were not themselves on assistance. Mrs Lipscomb was the wife of George Lipscomb, author of The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckinghamshire.
midwifery cases occurred during the dearth suggests that midwifery was not normally a health care benefit that the parish provided. This implies that, like the modern welfare state, the parish did have a basic platform of a healthcare service, with contracted practitioners and nursing care, but that there were limitations. Practitioners’ contracts can be viewed as a ‘safety net’ for the parish as a whole, since they provided a safeguard against undue expense over the long term. However, health care services were only a ‘safety net’ for individual paupers as some services were apparently subject to a means test and not a ‘right’, meaning that they would turn first to family/neighbours and unorthodox treatment, resorting to parish assistance only in acute cases or when all other avenues of assistance had been exhausted.

**Burials**

Death triggers a number of emotional responses and paramount of these amongst Quainton’s poor would have been ‘fear and despair for families left behind by the breadwinner or child caregiver’. The poor were stripped of their dignity when their ‘economies of makeshifts’ did not afford them an independent burial, as the alternative being a ‘pauper’s’ funeral. For Quainton’s poor, a pauper’s burial would have been a sign of failure. According to R. Lee, a ‘respectable funerary display was a powerful articulation of social aspiration and attainment’, whereas a “‘pauper’s funeral” publicly signified his abject poverty and degradation’. It can be assumed that Quainton’s poor law officials recognised the ‘customary and moral rights of the dependent poor to a decent funeral’, which in turn reflected the cultural and physical role of a funeral in society.

Evidently, most of Quainton’s dependent poor drew upon their ‘economies of makeshifts’ to provide decent funerals for their deceased. Forty-one per cent of the families whose family members died during this period turned to the parish for some level of help with funeral expenses. A funeral meant additional costs, including

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48 Ibid., p. 325.
burying the corpse in wool, which many of the poor could ill afford. The 1678 Act of, 31 Car II c. 8 stated:

No corpse of any person (except those who shall die of the plague) shall be buried in any shirt, shift, sheet, or shroud or anything whatsoever made of mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, of in any stuff or thing, other than what is made of sheep wool only… or be put in any coffin lined with… any other material but sheep`s wool only.\footnote{30 Car II, c. 8, 1678, Charles II, 1677 & 1678: An act for burying in Woollen, BHO/British History Online, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp885-886Act of [accessed 18 May 2015].}

This Act was not repealed until 1814.\footnote{Bass, ’Administering’, p. 158; 54 Geo III c. 108, Burying in Woollen 1814.} The provision of wool for burial was mentioned in eight entries. Normally, the monthly burial expenses in Quainton never exceeded £1. However, total burial expenses in 1800-1801 amounted to £14 6s 2d, partly because of the biannual accounting practice of recording bills from providers of goods and services to the parish’s poor, but also because of the higher death rate (as discussed in Chapter Two) (Figure 6:4). Burial expenses for April 1801 alone were £6 14s 5d. It is suggested that this was the result of the diminished purchasing power of the poor, due the economic climate of the dearth.

Quainton`s overseers` account entries offer a wealth of information regarding burial expenditures. For example, Thomas Curtis was paid £5 11s 4d on 2 April 1801 for ‘12 coffins and other works’. The following April he again received £4 8s
7d ‘for coffins and other work’. The burial of Miller Toovey’s `idiot’ son Joseph on 9 April 1801 cost the parish £1 2s 2d. This included a burial fee of 2s 6d for the parson and clerk, a coffin at 10s 6d, along with bread, cheese, and beer for the mourners at 5s 7d, as well as an unspecified amount of 4s 6d. Funeral costs for children were less expensive. Joseph Curtis received only 2s 6d for a coffin for William Knibb’s child in October 1800.

The majority of the 32 families (out of 156 deaths) that turned to the parish for burial assistance during this period only received a small proportion of the total incurred expenses. For example, 44 out of 135 entries were for the laying out of the deceased. Poor women of the parish received 2s 6d each for the laying out of an adult parishioner, but only 2s for a child because less preparation was involved. Nineteen entries were for the costs of bread, cheese, and beer for mourners. Obviously, burial expenses depended upon the age of the deceased, the amount of assistance requested by the family of the deceased and/or the discretion of the overseers based on their perception of the family’s need.

Overall, the surviving documentation reveals that the majority of Quainton’s poor families drew on their `economy of makeshifts’ to provide their loved ones with a decent funeral. They did in some cases appeal to the parish for assistance either for specific costs that they could not afford, or possibly to elevate the social status of a funeral. It is important to note that without substantiation from the vestry minutes, it can only be suggested that poor families received the support they sought. The aggregate data supports the fact that there were more requests for burial assistance during the dearth, as normally the number of requests per year was fewer than 19, but in 1801, this increased to 43. Based on the aggregate data, it can be suggested that, in the eyes of the vestry, burial assistance was based on need and was not a `right’.

Rent

According to J. Broad, the rapidly rising population at this time affected the supply of rural housing. For some communities, increased pauperism had a significant impact on the administration of poor relief because of the shortage of

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housing.\footnote{Ibid., p. 165} This may have been one of the reasons why the final enclosure of Quainton was halted in 1801 as, assuredly, there would have been cottages on the common land. The 1803 census notes that there were 147 inhabited houses and one uninhabited house in Quainton, but there were 164 families. Evidently, there was not enough housing in the parish, but families might also have co-habituated because it was more cost effective. The poor paid rent, possibly even if their cottages were built upon waste or common land. Although shelter is a necessity, rent was a bill that the labouring poor may have postponed as long as possible, as hunger and illness were more pressing priorities. In this period of rising rural poverty and poor relief expenses, landlords who were ratepayers might have been faced with choosing between paying higher poor rates for rent subsidies or receiving no rent.\footnote{Ibid., p. 166.}

Rent subsidies were received by 33 of Quainton’s poor during this study period. Some appeared on the rolls only once; others were on for weeks, months, and years. Normally there were only 10-15 entries per year, but during the dearth, this increased. Out of the eight-year total of 140 entries, 46.5 per cent were recorded during the dearth.

The parishioners who requested support were primarily single individuals or persons facing a life-cycle crisis. ‘Lucus’ received a shilling a week for Widow Lee’s ‘house room’ in 1799, and the parish paid the same amount for George Dodd’s ‘house room’ between 16 November 1799 and 1 February 1800. It also paid three weeks’ room and board for Mason Taylor’s children after their mother’s death in September 1801. A total of £1 11s 4d was paid for the lodging of William Harris and his wife when they returned to Quainton because of his hand injury.\footnote{CBS, PR 169/12/7-8, Overseers’ Accounts.} However, some recipients were expected to pay back the rent money advanced to them by the parish; for example, on 26 October 1796, militia wife Fanny Taylor received 10s 6d for rent, on the condition that it was repaid out of her settled collection stipend.

Rent subsidies were usually short-term, extended only until a crisis had abated, or the individual recipient’s income was sufficient to pay for housing. Seemingly, however, this was not the case for the occupants of John Hughes’ three cottages at
North End House. The parish paid £2 5s to £2 12s 6d half-yearly from 1796-1804 for the occupants of these cottages without any apparent repayment to the parish. In addition, the parish paid for renovation and repairs. In 1802, the cottages were occupied by Casemore, Harris, and Burnell, all poor relief recipients with large families and a history of multi-generational poverty. Presumably, however, their rent subsidies would have been taken into consideration whenever they applied for additional forms of poor relief.

Life-cycle crises placed both a personal and financial drain on families, which in the incidences noted above were brought on by the death or the absence of a breadwinner, injury, old age, mental incapacity, or the additional expenses implied by large families. Through their decreased purchasing power and the exhaustion of their ‘economies of makeshifts’, these labouring poor had no alternative but to turn to the parish when their rent payments finally came due.

**Food**

Legislation at national and county levels addressed the scarcity of cereal crops during the dearth and proposed measures to both cut down on consumption and simultaneously feed the starving masses. Jackson’s Oxford Journal on 1 February 1800 reported that in Buckinghamshire, the Justice of the Peace and Grand Jury had, earnestly recommended to all Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the several Parishes in the County… [to] adopt a Plan of procuring for the poor under their Care and Management a good and wholesome Bread made of a Mixture of Wheat and Barley Flour, or Potatoes; and to distribute such Bread, and also good strong Soup, and such other Provisions as can be provided as a Substitute for Bread, amongst such Poor weekly at as low a Rate as [illegible] the same can possibly be made, for and in Part of their usual Allowance or weekly Sustenance, instead of giving to them the Whole thereof in Money…to distribute amongst such Poor weekly a quantity of Soup in Lieu of any extra Allowance in Money, beyond the usual Rate of Relief usually given to the Poor.®

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55 G. Rodwell, *Quainton ‘History of Some Old Houses and Their Inhabitants’* (Quainton, 2005), p. 27.
The probable rationale behind this recommendation was that it would ensure both the provision of food and that money intended for food would not be wasted on other things. Even if Quainton had maintained a soup kitchen, as suggested, a soup-based diet would have provided only a third of the minimal daily caloric intake needed by recipients. There is no evidence that Quainton adhered to this recommendation and, unlike Ardleigh, Quainton neither utilised a flour bill or list nor provided any supplemental food to the parish’s poor during the dearth. The distribution of flour would more or less have ensured the provision of bread. The presence of a baker in the village of Quainton and the fact that the overseers’ accounts note the payment of bread bills for individual recipients suggest that the parish’s poor did not bake their own bread. Therefore, they needed ‘cash’ stipends to buy bread.

As noted in Figure 6:1, the parish spent very little on food for the poor. Out of the 14 recorded entries, one was for mutton, one was for beer and the remaining 12 were accrued bread bills for the poor. Quainton’s vestry believed that the high level of ‘usual relief’ that it provided to the parish’s labouring poor under the bread scale, and other forms of relief, accompanied by the recipients’ ‘economy of makeshifts’, should have enabled them to buy a subsistence diet.

**Clothing**

For those living on the edge of subsistence, the ability to purchase new clothes or even repair or alter hand-me-downs would have been a major concern. Without adequate clothing and shoes, the poor could not weather the elements or work productively. Several entries for ‘no work’ were for ‘no shoes’. According to V. Richmond, ‘the clothing supplied by the parish was of inferior quality and possibly stigmatic’, whereby, ‘each request for parish clothing had to be justified and risked

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60 This assumption is based upon the fact that the parish paid the accrued bills for bread for a number of its poor. The purchase of bread from a baker was a more cost-effective custom in parishes like Quainton, which lacked a source of cheap fuel.
rejection’. 62 S. King does not agree, stating that ‘clothing was a visible sign of poverty and of how well the parish cared for their poor’. 63 He inferred that the poor might have been more ‘well dressed’ than members of non-elite farming families. 64 Whether Quainton went as far as stitching badges on the clothing that it provided in order to denote a pauper’s dependence is unknown. These badges would have served as a symbol that visibly differentiated clothing recipients from the greater community. 65 Quainton’s overseers’ entries suggest that a large percentage of clothing and shoes was earmarked for ‘boys’ (probably upon entering the work force), fostered-out children, children of widows, and the mentally impaired.

Clothing expenses included moneys for ‘bedding’, ‘shoes’, ‘shirts’, and ‘breeches’ amongst other items. Mr Lee’s bill for ‘cloth for the poor’ on 8 October 1797, came to £4 17s 8d. On 23 March 1799, Mr Wood’s bill for ‘shoes for the poor’ was £4 5s. Later in the year he billed the parish another £2 19s. 66 Mr Layton’s bill for ‘cloth for the poor’ on 2 April 1801 amounted to £6 12s. 67 The overseers’ entries noted the cost of many individual items of clothing; probably, this was for tailoring the garments made out of cloth purchased by the parish. Even if the purchases of bulk cloth were taken out of the equation, it does not appear that clothing expenses increased during the dearth. Presumably, provision of clothing was of a lower priority given the other needs of the labouring poor during the period.

62 Ibid.
63 King, Poverty, p. 158.
64 Ibid., p.46.
66 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers’ Accounts.
67 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
According to S. King, the replacement or repair of clothing seemed to be frequent, and suggests that a complete wardrobe for the average male needed to be replaced every eighteen months, but not all at once. For example, Quainton spent £3 5s 5d on clothing for Dodd, an ‘idiot’, over a five-year period (Table 6:3). He received nine items of clothing prior to his death in late 1800, whereas the other 54 named individuals received one to four items over the course of the eight-year period. Even though George was not an ‘average male’, he still did not receive a complete wardrobe of clothing. In fact, according to Quainton’s overseers records, there is nothing to suggest that the poor received clothing to the extent suggested by King. The provision of clothing for the poor during the dearth accounted for approximately 50 per cent of both the total number of clothing entries and the overall expenditure recorded during this study. Thus, the frequency with which the poor turned to the parish for clothing increased as their purchasing power decreased due to the inflated prices of commodities during the dearth of 1799-1801.

**Fuel**

The availability of fuel in Quainton was limited and the loss of common land during the late 1800s diminished the poor’s ability to gather firewood even further. It is questionable whether they even had the right to gather firewood from the woodlands located on the westerly periphery of the parish as these was owned by the

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68 S. King, ‘Reclothing’, p. 46.
Pigott and Curtis families and shared with adjacent parishes. Neither did the nature of the soil nor the climate in Quainton support the growth of peat or turf that could have been used as fuel. Eden estimated that fuel costs for the poor in Kendal, Westmorland, might have been as high as £5 a year. In his analysis of the family of a weaver with eight children, from Kendal, he noted fuel costs of ‘2s a week for 26 weeks (£3 12s); and 1s 4d a week for 26 weeks (£1 15s’). 69 Williams noted that expenses related to the provision of fuel in Campton and Shefford had, in 1800, increased fourfold over the 1790 figure. 70 In Quainton, however, before the dearth very little fuel was provided at parish’s expense.

Quainton`s overseers` accounts show that minimal amount of wood or coal was distributed by the parish before July 1800. The total cost of wood incurred by the parish was £9 9s 1d. On 2 July 1803, £2 18s 6d was spent for men and beer for the cartage of ‘20 loads of wood’ at that cost £4. How this wood was distributed is unknown, there is only one entry for 1s 8d for wood for five widows. John Bunting, on 18 September 1798, recorded the following, ‘raised by Voluntary Subscription at Quainton for the supply of the poor with coal at the moderate price of 2.6 Hund. £16 6s’. 71 On the surface, one would think that this was a charitable donation, but on 5 October 1799, the overseers` accounts noted the receipt of £11 14s 6d ‘from Buntins coal acct’. Again, on 22 December 1799, another £6 was received from the sale of coal. However, there was no notation, other than Bunting`s, that the parish purchased any coal in 1798 or 1799.

During the dearth, the parish paid comparably much more attention to the availability of fuel for the parish’s poor. In July 1800, the parish purchased coal at 18d per hundredweight, from Goggins, a coal trader, in Oxford. It was carted from either the wharves in Buckingham, Heyford, or Stalford, on the Oxford Canal by road to Quainton. The purchase cost, cartage, weighing and maintenance of the coalhouse during this period amounted to £123 2s 7d. 72 Examples of the other recorded costs were: cartage of 36 tons at 9d per hundred weight (£22 10s),

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70 Williams, Poverty, pp. 45-46.
71 MERL, The Leys.
72 This figure is based upon the expenses listed in the accounts. Purchases were made during the summer probably because of a lower market price during low-consumption months.
unloading of 30 tons at 8s 6d, and weighing of 15 tons at 15s 6d. There is no evidence to suggest that the manual labour was provided by Quainton’s own labourers.

The overall picture of miscellaneous ‘casual’ relief expenditure was distorted by fuel costs. The overseers’ disbursements were misleading, for it first appeared as though the parish was providing free coal to the poor. However, upon further review of the biannual accounts, it is apparent that coal receipts totalled £111 10s 5d.\textsuperscript{73} The parish was actually reselling the coal to the poor at 20-23d per hundredweight. The resale prices were less than the parish’s total inclusive cost for obtaining the coal, but very little was absorbed by poor rates.

The only direct mention of fuel dissemination to individual recipients in the overseers’ accounts was to five widows on 16 January 1798 and the ‘distribution of wood and coal during severe weather’ on 23 March 1799.\textsuperscript{74} Evidently, during the dearth the parish had the forethought to purchase coal in bulk during low usage months, thereby enabling its poor to purchase coal at lower market prices than would otherwise have been available. One can assume that, based on the aggregate data, the vestry believed that the labouring poor’s combined ‘economies of makeshifts’ were sufficient to cover the purchase of coal.

\textsuperscript{73} CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
\textsuperscript{74} CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
Sundry

‘Sundry expenses’ noted in this thesis cover items that did not fit neatly into the aforementioned identified categories of casual relief discussed in this chapter. These account for a small portion of the parish’s total relief budget (Table 6:1). Even so, they bear witness to the breadth of Quainton’s poor relief. The examples in Table 6:4 illustrate the extent of these disbursements, the most significant of which was the payment on bounties. In an apparent effort to stave off potential uncompensated expenses for militia wives, in 1803-1804 the parish paid an in-lieu-of-service bounty of £10 for each of the seven men who had been called to active duty in the militia. Quainton’s vestry ultimately believed that future poor relief expenditure would be lower if these men remained in the parish to support their families.

Several of the sundry items in the budget were short-lived. Christmas stipends were paid out yearly primarily to agricultural labourers ‘on the rounds’ during the
pre-dearth period. In January 1801, Quainton’s vestry decided to fund the ‘schooling’ (lacemaking) for ‘girls’. They received a weekly stipend, which was initially 3s 6d during the dearth, but was later reduced to 2s 4d and then 1s 4d. Conceivably, these moneys compensated their families for their daughters’ lost wages while they were being educated. The total amount paid to the father of these girls by March 1804 was £44 10s. Other sundry items were for ‘marriage’, ‘fetching things’, and ‘apprenticeship’, all of which were important not only to the recipients, but were also sometimes in the best interest of the parish. The demise of some benefits suggests that the vestry re-examined its poor relief budget, and decided that it could no longer afford to support certain types of benefits.

Unknown

Unfortunately, it was impossible to pattern match all of the overseers’ entries. The 748 unmatched entries accounted for £106 14s 8d over the course of the study period. There was insufficient evidence to place these entries with any certainty into the stipulated categories of relief. ‘Unknown’ stipends generally ranged from sixpence to two shillings a week, suggesting that they may have been for illness, in-lieu-of-roundsman wages, or allowances. ‘Unknown’ expenses were higher in 1799-1800, although these included several large sums; this increase cannot be attributed to the dearth due to lack of evidence.

Conclusion

The data reviewed in this chapter has shown the diversity and level of miscellaneous ‘casual’ relief provided by Quainton during the years 1796-1804. As illustrated, miscellaneous casual relief expenditure increased during the height of the dearth and remained elevated through 1801-1802. However, externalities of the dearth, like illness, extended even longer. The 1802-1803 expense figures were higher than those noted in the pre-dearth period, which suggest that the residual effects of malnutrition brought on by the dearth carried over into subsequent years. It is evident that the ‘safety net’ provided by old poor law was not inflexible, and was
extended even wider during the dearth.\textsuperscript{75} Overall, there was no abrupt decline in casual relief that correlated with the late dearth and post-dearth decline of wheat prices as witnessed in the other types of relief discussed in this thesis.

The analysis of the aggregate data in this broad category of relief indicates several significant issues. Payments for illness were, in essence, paid sick leave or disability insurance in that these stipends correlated with the productive value of individual workers. The parish recognised the worth of contracting medical practitioners as untreated illness or injury had a direct impact upon the community’s economic base. It is evident that Quainton’s poor were thought to be able to draw upon their `economies of makeshifts` for certain necessities. For example, there was no expectation that the parish would pay for midwifery services, or burial expenses. The provision of fuel by the parish was also not an expected part of the poor’s total welfare package since a majority of the cost of the purchase of coal during the dearth was offset by the receipt of moneys from the re-sale of coal to the parishes poor.

Unfortunately, the inclusion of the purchase costs and other items in the overseers’ accounts for fuel distribution makes it difficult to establish a clear picture of the level of `casual` relief directly afforded to the parish’s poor during the dearth and post-dearth periods. Still, this chapter has again shown that Quainton’s poor relief system was flexible enough to respond to changes in the economic climate of 1799-1801. Even though Quainton’s poor relief system had some of the characteristics of a `welfare state in miniature` during the crisis, for many of the parish’s labouring poor it remained a `safety net` that they turned to when all their other resources had been exhausted.

\textsuperscript{75} King, \textit{Poverty}, p. 57; Williams, \textit{Poverty}, p. 141.
Chapter Seven: Case Studies and Conclusion

The previous chapters of this thesis have presented a breakdown of the individual types of poor relief rendered by the parish of Quainton during the years surrounding the dearth of 1799-1801. Although this research focuses on only a short window of time, it directly illustrates how the various forms of relief came together to support the parish’s poor not only during what Rowntree identifies as their periods of ‘want’, but also during a period of economic crisis.\(^1\) The data and facts presented here echo the multifaceted analysis of this thesis, and summarise the level and means of support rendered to the families of Quainton’s labouring poor through individual case studies. These personal stories offered below provide an in-depth look at a select group of individual families and the circumstances that surrounded their poverty. They give colour and context to the higher-level analysis presented in previous chapters. Combined, they reveal, on a micro scale, the lessons from previous chapters regarding who received relief from the parish and how this relief changed in response to external economic pressures and changing individual circumstances.

Case Studies

Elizabeth Taylor and her children are an example of poverty brought on by the absence of the primary wage earner, the birth of a bastard child, and the ultimate death of the residual parent, culminating in the fostering out of her children. Elizabeth was the wife of militiaman Mason Taylor. Based on Elizabeth’s support history, there is no evidence that her husband was present in the parish for any significant period of time during the course of this study.

Up until October 1800, Elizabeth received a pension for herself and one child, which increased after the birth of her second child. In addition, she initially received infrequent cash allowances, which by 1799 became weekly, for the ‘making up her money’. As of 4 October 1800, she became like other militia wives, reliant on allowances. In early 1801, she gave birth to the bastard son of Robert Strapp. The parish made Strapp pay for Elizabeth’s ‘month’ and 2s a week for the support of the child. Elizabeth’s oldest son appeared on the ‘rounds’ infrequently. Thus, it can be assumed that at other times he was gainfully employed. Elizabeth became ill in mid-1801 and received help with ‘washing’ and nursing care, both paid for by the parish. She was buried on 12 September 1801, with burial expenses being absorbed by the parish. After her death, the parish assumed support for her three children under the age of ten and the older boy. Ultimately, they were fostered out to their father’s brother, Thomas, who was himself frequently ill and in receipt of poor relief.

### Table 7:1 Total Poor Relief: Elizabeth Taylor and Children 1796-1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Years</th>
<th>Settled Collections</th>
<th>Casual Relief</th>
<th>Family Allowance</th>
<th>Roundsman</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Average Shillings per Week</th>
<th>Per Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>£9 2s. 7d.</td>
<td>16s</td>
<td></td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>£9 18s. 7d.</td>
<td>3s. 10d.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>£12 1s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£13 1s.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>£9 3s.</td>
<td>£2 2s 10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£11 5s. 10d.</td>
<td>4s. 4d.</td>
<td>2s. 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>£11 4s.</td>
<td>£8 8s. 2d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£19 11s.</td>
<td>7s. 6.25d.</td>
<td>2s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>£14 18s.</td>
<td>£11 4s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£26 2s.</td>
<td>10s. 0.5d.</td>
<td>3s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>£11 11s. 7d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17s. 7d.</td>
<td>£12 9s. 2d.</td>
<td>4s. 9.5d.</td>
<td>1s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>£26 5s. 7d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£26 5s. 7d.</td>
<td>10s. 1.3d.</td>
<td>2s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>£19 11s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£19 11s.</td>
<td>7s. 6.25d.</td>
<td>1s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S. PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts.

Monies for 1802-1804 reflect the stipends paid for 2 children and the boy after the death of their mother.

Elizabeth and her children’s average weekly *per capita* allowance peaked between 1800-1801 at 3s 4d, but thereafter decreased (Table 7:1). Without other sources of income, Elizabeth would barely have been able to provide her family with a subsistence diet based on the price of bread at the height of the dearth. Whether Elizabeth received help from kin in the parish is questionable as they themselves were on the dole. After her death, the

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2 CBS, PR 169/12/8, Overseers’ Accounts.
children’s *per capita* stipends were in line with other resident bastard children and those farmed out by the parish. The vestry also contributed to the upkeep of Elizabeth’s eldest son, even though he was in all likelihood still employed. Still, it is difficult to conclude that this relief would have been ‘generous’ as it was meant to cover all of the needs of three non-productive children. It can be seen from the case of Elizabeth that Quainton exhibited a commitment to provide relief for struggling families, but that the variability of that help and low value of the assistance in real terms belied a truly generous welfare system.

**George Dodd:** As an ‘idiot’, George exemplifies the type of support rendered to those who, because of either mental or physical disability, did not have the capacity to support themselves. George, the bastard son of Lucy Dodd and George Fellows, was baptised on 29 June 1766. There is no indication that either of his parents was still alive or that he had other kin in the parish during the period of this study. It is hard to determine whether George was capable of contributing to his own support. There is one notation in the 1796 Overseers’ Accounts that states he received 3s for 6 days lost wages due to illness. Initially, he received weekly money for illnesses, but later the word ‘ill’ was dropped from these entries. Quainton’s overseers had a tendency to provide weekly stipends to individual paupers for extended periods prior to making the decision to add them to the settled collections roll. George first appeared on the collections in October 1797. However, in April 1799, he was removed and a weekly allowance was reinstated. He reappeared on the collections roll in October 1799 and remained upon it until his death in December 1800. He received a rent allowance for 13 days in 1796 and then money for a ‘house room’ during the last three months of his life. George also received a significant amount of clothing from the parish compared to other welfare recipients. George was buried on 25 December 1800, but not at parish expense.

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3 CBS, PR 169/12/7, Overseers’ Accounts.
Table 7.2 Total Poor Relief: George Dodd 1796-1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Settled Collections</th>
<th>Casual Relief</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Average Shillings per Week</th>
<th>Per Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>£5 4s.</td>
<td>£7 9s. 7d.</td>
<td>£7 9s. 7d.</td>
<td>1s. 9d.</td>
<td>1s. 9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>£8 14s.</td>
<td>£10 1s. 7d.</td>
<td>£10 1s. 7d.</td>
<td>3s. 11d.</td>
<td>3s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>£2 12s.</td>
<td>£10 6s. 7d.</td>
<td>£10 6s. 7d.</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>4s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>£8 10s.</td>
<td>£9 6s. 8d.</td>
<td>£9 6s. 8d.</td>
<td>5s. 6d.</td>
<td>5s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>£6 5s. 7d.</td>
<td>£8 17s. 7d.</td>
<td>£8 17s. 7d.</td>
<td>3s. 5d.</td>
<td>3s. 5d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts

During 1800-1801 recipient only received collections for 34 weeks due to his death

George’s story illustrates the fluidity and fluctuation of welfare relief that many of Quainton’s residents experienced. He oscillated between two forms of relief between 1797 and 1800, probably because of his decreased capacity to contribute to his own support, although this had little effect on his average weekly stipend. This vignette also reveals some gender biases in Quainton’s relief system. As a man, George received a higher weekly allowance than a widow would have. Still, this higher allowance was barely enough to buy one loaf of bread a week during the dearth. This once more indicates that while some relief in Quainton may have appeared generous in relative terms, in actuality, it was quite meagre..

Sarah Checkley, like George, experienced the inconsistency of the various types of relief while dealing with the challenges of becoming a widowed mother. Sarah was the wife of James Checkley and together they had eight children, six of whom were presumably alive during this period. Sarah qualified for a pension in her own right, but was not consistently on the rolls. While her husband was still alive, they infrequently received a minimal family allowances for their four non-productive children but, by the time of James’ death (May 1800), only two of the children in the household were under the age of ten. This meant that they did not always qualify for family assistance. They received a weekly ‘cash’ stipend of 2s between 1796 and 1798. It appears that James was periodically gainfully employed as he was infrequently on the ‘rounds’. Payments for family illness were infrequent, but became more common as James approached death. After his death in May 1800, Sarah’s pension increased slightly. In October 1800, she was removed
from the collections rolls and became solely dependent on allowances based on the price of bread and the number of her non-productive children. The parish paid for the burial of her husband and later her son James in 1802. She also received money for her daughters’ schooling in 1801. Between 1800 and 1803, Sarah received 15s biannually for rent. Sarah died in 1807 at the age of 54.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Settled Collections</th>
<th>Casual Relief</th>
<th>Family Allowance</th>
<th>Roundsman</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Average Shillings per Week</th>
<th>Per Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>£7 16s.</td>
<td>5s. 7d.</td>
<td>11s. 2d.</td>
<td>11s.</td>
<td>£9 3s. 5d.</td>
<td>3s. 6d.</td>
<td>7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>£4 15s.</td>
<td>£2 18s. 5d.</td>
<td>12s.</td>
<td>16s. 2d.</td>
<td>£6 3s. 2d.</td>
<td>2s. 4d.</td>
<td>4.66d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>£2 8s.</td>
<td>£3 1s.</td>
<td>£6 5d.</td>
<td>£1 15s.</td>
<td>£5 6s. 5d.</td>
<td>2s. 1d.</td>
<td>4.16d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>£5 8s.</td>
<td>£3 1s.</td>
<td>£2 18s. 2d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£16 4s. 5d.</td>
<td>6s. 5d.</td>
<td>1s. 3.4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>£13 14s. 10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£34 10s. 7d.</td>
<td>13s. 3d.</td>
<td>3s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>10s.</td>
<td>£30 14s. 7d.</td>
<td>£2 18s. 2d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>£31 4s. 7d.</td>
<td>12s.</td>
<td>3s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td></td>
<td>£13 10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£13 10d.</td>
<td>5s. 2d.</td>
<td>1s. 9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td></td>
<td>£12 18s. 7d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£12 18s. 7d.</td>
<td>5s. 2d.</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8, Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts

Prior to the death of Sarah’s husband, the family’s per capita poor relief was minimal. Sarah appears, on paper, to have been financially better off after the death of her husband, which reflects the parish’s commitment to the support of lone-parent families. While her allowances did increase and might have been considered generous during the dearth, it sharply declined in the post-dearth as both the price of bread and the number of non-productive children in her household declined. However, while this relief may appear substantial (during the dearth) compared to earlier chapters of Sarah’s life, it remained unpredictable and volatile and was not, therefore, a cure all to the numerous difficulties faced by poor individuals at this time.

Edward King and his family are an example not only a family with a large number of non-productive children but one with working age children as well. As a tailor, Edward livelihood was reliant others in the community, whose wages were unpredictable give the cyclic nature of agriculture employment and the economic conditions of the times. Nonetheless, he was one of the highest-volume users of the poor relief system because of his large
family. Edward and his wife Elizabeth had 12 children, five under the age of ten during this study and Mary, an `idiot'. He received an allowance for Mary until she was added to the settled collections in October 1797. Her pension continued until her death in February 1801. The parish paid for her burial and that of her brother in April 1799. Edward received intermittent family support in the pre-dearth and weekly family support during the dearth, but his name was dropped from the rolls in 1803. His three boys, John, William, and Robert, all of whom were of working age, received intermittent roundsman wages or an in-lieu-of-roundsman stipend, mainly during the winter months. Edward and Robert also received money for `no work' at the height of the dearth. Additionally, the parish paid for the indenture of John in July 1799. Edward and his family received also other forms of `cash' or `in-kind' poor relief throughout the period. In spite of the additional income brought into the household by his sons, the family found it necessary to seek parish support in order to survive. Even though Edward received the highest family allowance in the parish during the dearth, his *per capita* was not the equivalent of a half-peck loaf of bread a week.

### Table 7:4 Total Poor Relief: Edward King 1796-1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Settled Collections</th>
<th>Casual Relief</th>
<th>Family Allowances</th>
<th>Roundsman</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Average Shillings per Week</th>
<th>Per Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>£6</td>
<td>£7 15s. 7d</td>
<td>£2 3s. 7d</td>
<td>£13 15s. 7d.</td>
<td>£13 15s. 7d.</td>
<td>5s. 2d.</td>
<td>9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>£7 1s.</td>
<td>£7 11. 7d</td>
<td>£5 5s. 7d</td>
<td>£1 10s.</td>
<td>£21 8s. 2d.</td>
<td>5s. 7d.</td>
<td>9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>£8 2s.</td>
<td>£7 10s. 7d</td>
<td>£13 8s. 10d.</td>
<td>£1 2s. 7d.</td>
<td>£30 4s.</td>
<td>8s. 2d.</td>
<td>11s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>£7 10s.</td>
<td>£6 7s. 7d</td>
<td>£24 1s. 5d.</td>
<td>19s</td>
<td>£38 18s.</td>
<td>1s. 8d.</td>
<td>15s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>£6 2d.</td>
<td>£16 7s. 5d</td>
<td>£3 4s. 2d.</td>
<td>£26 3s. 7d.</td>
<td>£10 11s. 5d.</td>
<td>2s. 2d.</td>
<td>10s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>£10 3s. 10d.</td>
<td>£4 11s. 5d</td>
<td>£1 12s. 7d</td>
<td>£16 7s. 10d.</td>
<td>£4. 5d.</td>
<td>1s. 5d.</td>
<td>6s. 5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>£4 15s. 5d.</td>
<td>£2 8s.</td>
<td>£3 8s.</td>
<td>£10 11s. 5d.</td>
<td>4s.</td>
<td>7d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., Pr 169/12/7-8, Quainton’s Overseers’ Accounts.

The case studies presented here have drawn together various forms of poor relief and have shown that while on the surface *per capita* poor relief for some might have appeared comparatively generous, the real value in relation to the bread prices was exceedingly meagre.
Further, each individual pauper’s story reveals trends in support that have not been fully addressed in other research. Accordingly, this thesis makes a unique contribution to the furtherance of existing academic knowledge. These case studies and the preceding chapters reveal that, during times of economic hardship like the dearth of 1799-1801, Quainton’s relief system prioritised families with non-productive children and families or individuals that, due to disability, unemployment, or illness, had a reduced earning capacity.

Conclusion

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the validity and the cost of poor relief expenditure was questioned. Quainton was not immune from this concern but, as demonstrated in this thesis, the vast majority of Quainton’s poor households were unable to earn a subsistence wage with which to support themselves and their families during specific life-cycle periods of ‘wants’ and/or economic crises, such as the dearth of 1799-1801. At the same time, ratepayers were concerned about their ability to carry the burden of so many. Poor relief expenditure increased to accommodate the growing needs of Quainton’s poor who were faced with hyper-inflated wheat prices. Once the price of bread declined, there was a definite push to decrease expenditure across most categories of relief, so as to bring expenses in line with what ratepayers thought they could support, while retaining the surplus labour needed to meet the seasonal nature of work during the agricultural year.

Prior to the dearth, minimal support was rendered to two-parent families with non-productive children. In November 1799, Quainton adopted a modified and less generous bread scale than the Speenhamland scale, thus Quainton increased its support to families headed by abled-bodied males with non-productive children. Whilst under normal circumstances parishes would only have supported two-parent families with a large number of children, this research has revealed that Quainton provided additional support even to smaller families. Thus, Quainton’s widows and militia wives with non-productive children not only received a small stipend for their absentee
husbands, but an adjustment based on the price of bread. Once the price of bread started to decline, support to families with non-productive children immediately decreased. Very few of Quainton’s other pensioners received a pension increase during the dearth.

Support for underemployed and unemployed agricultural labourers in the form of roundsman wages failed at the height of the dearth and was replaced by ‘no work’ stipends. Total unemployment expenditure was not, however, equivalent to that witnessed during the winter months of the pre-dearth. Presumably, support of family units was a higher priority for the parish during this time of crisis. In addition, in an effort to deter the outward migration of young boys, Quainton utilised in-lieu-of-roundsman stipends to maintain a surplus labour force capable of meeting the agricultural needs of the parish. In the aftermath of the dearth, the level of unemployment benefits did not return to the levels demonstrated in the pre-dearth.

The case studies presented in this chapter illustrate that poor relief played a major role in the ‘economy of makeshifts’ of Quainton’s labouring poor. In light of the high price of provisions during the dearth, their per capita relief would not have afforded them the ability to buy a half-peck loaf of bread a week. Even if the wages of husbands and wives were factored in, they still would have had to draw heavily on their other ‘economies of makeshifts’ in order to provide sufficient food and the other necessities of life for their families.

Illness and health care maintenance accounted for a major portion of the casual relief budget. The rationale for this appears to be that, without a workforce that possessed a reasonable state of health, the community, as a whole might not have survived. However, there seems to be no expectation that the parish would pay for the services of a midwife or burials. Quainton’s poor relief benefit package also did not generally include payments towards fuel, food, rent, or clothing, as these expenses were infrequently noted. Nonetheless, during the dearth, expenses in all categories of casual relief did increase.
A number of specific conclusion can be drawn about Quainton’s relief system from the research carried out as part of this study. First, the bread scale adopted by Quainton’s overseers was less generous than that of the Speenhamland scale. Secondly, Quainton provided a more comprehensive package of support than surrounding parishes for which there are surviving records. Thirdly, Quainton, as with other parishes mentioned in this thesis, exhibited a degree of flexibility that enabled it to increase poor support in response to the economic crisis imposed by the dearth. Fourthly, the majority of these parishes quickly retracted that level of support in the aftermath of the crisis. Fifthly, there was a concerted effort on the part of the vestry in the post-dearth to tighten the budget and return to the pre-dearth level of expenditure. Finally, there is a positive correlation between poor relief expenditure and the price of wheat at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The evidence provided in this research supports S. King’s contention that, even within macro areas of regionality, there were sub-regions in which the experience of generosity or entitlement depended upon the individual demographics of each parish and its socio-economic factors. In addition, it has illustrated that a strong correlation existed between poor relief expenditure and the price of wheat not only in periods of economic crisis, but also in periods of relative stability.

This research has laid the groundwork for further studies of aggregate poor relief data at the grass-roots level, specifically looking at how various parishes dealt with the changing economic climate and, at the same time, explores the adequacy of such relief. More in-depth information regarding the structure of individual parish relief system, parish demographic and the availability of other ‘economies of makeshifts’ will be needed in order to compare with greater accuracy the generosity of one parish to another. This thesis has shed light on the nuances, mechanisms, and changes over time of a single parish relief system between July 1796 and the end of March 1804 and

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specifically the dearth of 1799-1801. Moreover, it has allowed for an exposition of types of relief and a comparison of relief over time. This dimensional study has therefore enabled a better understanding of who received relief and how this changed based on seasonal and larger economic pressures to be garnered. It has also allowed the process of exploring questions of how adequate the relief provided really was. Through so doing it has noted that some of the strategies initiated by the overseers remained in place, but that the number of those receiving benefits and the value of individual stipends decreased in the post-dearth. Essentially, therefore, the aggregate data not only demonstrates how the means and levels of support in Quainton changed in response to individual circumstances, but also the flexibility of the parish in supporting such persons, and their families, during periods of economic crisis. In the final analysis, therefore, this research supports the idea that Quainton during the dearth might have been a `welfare state in miniature’ that was responsive and flexible, but that for the majority of Quainton’s labouring poor it remained merely a `safety net’ when all else failed.
Broader Contribution of the Study in Summary

Each of the following sections reflects on the lessons offered by this study and demonstrates the contribution that micro studies such as this can make to broader historical discussion and understanding.

Generosity

Although ‘generosity’ has been discussed in previous chapters, it is ultimately difficult to judge as a whole how ‘generous’ Quainton was during the time period of this study because there are multiple ways to evaluate generosity and as a consequence of trends amongst types of relief not always being parallel. The scope of this work does not allow for a comparative assessment of Quainton’s generosity to other parishes. Nevertheless, it is possible to isolate when Quainton’s relief system provided more or less for its poor, and which groups received more of less support. Figures 7:1 and 7:2 approach this question from two different angles; 7.1 looks at total expense per category of relief whilst 7.2 looks the number of named individuals per fiscal year. From such data, it is possible to calculate the gross number of recipients in receipt of the various forms of relief, the gross amount spent, and the expenditure per person.
Figure 7:1 Annual Expenditure per Category of Relief

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts, 1796-1806.

Figure 7:2 Total Named Recipients per Category of Relief.

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts, 1796-1806.

Figure 7:2 demonstrates that more recipients applied for work subsidies than any other sub-category of poor relief until 1802-1803 when
miscellaneous recipient were more prominent. Whether this was partially due to a change in strategies or employment opportunities in southern England is unknown. The average unemployment compensation per individual was 18s in 1796-1797. This increased to £1 4s in 1799-1800, but decreased to 12s by 1803-1804. These figures also show that the number of paupers receiving miscellaneous relief was higher in 1800-1801, whereas expenses in 1801-1802 were higher. Looking at average expenditure per miscellaneous claimant presents a clearer picture of the impact the dearth and Quainton`s ratepayers' response to the circumstances of the poor in their community. In 1796-1797, recipients received an average of 13s. This increased to £2 10s in 1800-1801 and £2 17s in 1801-1802, while in 1803-1804 they received £2 6s. During the dearth, the most expensive category of relief was family subsidies. The average family received an exceedingly high compensation of £9 13s in 1800-1801 compared with an average of £1 7s in both 1796-1797 and 1803-1804. While this demonstrates Quainton`s `generosity` to families with non-productive children in periods of economic crisis, it also shows how quickly that level of relief was withdrawn even as the number of claimants climbed. What these figures show was unexpected and they suggest that the insult imposed by the dearth continued well beyond the apex of the economic crisis.

A majority of Quainton`s labouring poor concurrently received family allowances, wage subsidies, and miscellaneous relief. In reality, a majority of families received considerably higher compensation than that which appears to be the case at first glance. Meanwhile, settled collections [pensions] were displaced by other categories of relief in terms of expenditure and the number of recipients, due in part to the recategorisation of militia wives and widows with non-productive children to allowances. During the dearth, the average allowance stipend per recipient was £7 15s, which compared to that of settled collection recipients was exceedingly high, due to the parish`s commitment to women with non-productive children. By 1803-1804, settled collections and allowances were nearly equivalent in expense and number of named recipients. Although these figures appear to be `generous` in comparison with non-dearth years in Quainton, that cannot be stated with any certainty without
analysis being undertaken that factors in `cost of living index` and `real earnings` for these years. What has been demonstrated here is that ratepayers in southern England had the flexibility to provide an increased level of support to a greater number of paupers during periods of economic crisis, and their commitment to its surplus labour force through not only work subsidy schemes but also lost wages due to illness. However, it also demonstrates that ratepayers were conscious of their bottom-line and quickly reassessed changes in both economic climate and individual circumstances; adjusting stipends accordingly.

**Gender**

The question of gender and age have been at the forefront of historical literature regarding the Old Poor Law in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the rolls became increasingly dominated by the names of male paupers. Most poor law relief literature does not take into account that the majority of these men were not seeking relief in their own right. The wages of the labouring poor were not keeping pace with the rate of inflation, which was compounded by underemployment and unemployment in the agricultural sector, especially during the winters. Consequently, more married men, boys and single men turned to their parish to provide a subsistence income for their families. Behind each of these men were wives or mothers, who in the prime of their lives, were struggling to keep their families alive. At this time in history, the family was seen as an economic unit of production, children aged ten and older would have turned over their wages to their mothers to manage.\(^1\) Presumably, even if they went into `service`. These women and children were in receipt of `indirect` poor relief. In essence, `able-bodied` families who in times of inflation or situational crises had no choice but to turn to their parishes in order to survive were dominating the poor relief rolls of England.

In contrast, widows, spinsters, and widows or militia wives with non-productive children received `direct` poor relief in their own right. Quainton’s

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widows in both the pre-dearth and dearth periods received higher levels of support than those of Winslow Buckinghamshire as reported by Eden in 1796.² In the post-dearth however, the stipend for some widows decreased and were comparable to those reported by Eden. Pensions for ‘indigent single women’ in Winslow were lower than those noted in Quainton, but like Winslow, they increased as the recipient aged.³ On Winslow’s list of ‘indigent persons’ [55 persons benefited from these pensions] Eden lists widows with children, but no militia wives. However, later he writes, ‘near £40, are now, yearly, paid to families of militiamen: about half the sum is re-paid to the parish by the county treasurer’.⁴ Perhaps due to the insecurity of employment in southern England the majority of those recorded in his Majesty’s armed service from Quainton during this period acted as substitutes for men in other parishes in the hopes of providing their families with a higher standard of living. Thus, leaving their wives to the mercy of the parish. Government allowances and the monies received from substitutes’ parishes proved insufficient given the economic climate. Consequently, parishes were put in the position of adjusting stipends of militia wives in accordance to the price of bread and situational changes. Widows with non-productive children in Quainton were treated in the same manner. When the children of these women reached the age of ten, their stipends were decreased and eventually they found themselves in receipt of the same level of relief received by widows. It would have been difficult for women with very young children and/or no kin in the parish [who could have tended the children] to earn extra income, meaning that they were presumably very dependent upon the monies received from the parish. The unanswered question is whether the poor relief received ‘directly’ or ‘indirectly’ by these poor women provided any more than a subsistence income and did their ‘absolute poverty’ or ‘relative poverty’, put them in a position of feeding their families first.

³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid., p. 32.
Out-Parish Relief

Table 7:6 Percentage of Out-Parish Relief per Fiscal Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Widows</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Illegitimate Children</th>
<th>Militia Substitute</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total Fiscal Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1796-1797</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797-1798</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798-1799</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>7.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799-1800</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1801</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-1802</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802-1803</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>9.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1804</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.S., PR 169/12/7-8 Quainton's Overseers' Accounts 1796-1806.

‘Out-parish’ relief is barely mentioned in the historical literature pertaining to poor relief. Quainton’s overseers were meticulous in noting the monies destined to out-parish recipients. Quainton is therefore a strong case study for exploring how parishes treated resident and non-resident poor differently. In Quainton, ‘out-parish’ relief played a minor role compared to the funding of the parish’s ‘home’ poor. The figures in Table 7:5 represent the percentage attributed to ‘out-parish’ per fiscal year, based upon Quainton’s total relief budget minus administrative costs and the parish’s irregular distributions to ‘host’ parishes or individual caregivers [in the case of children]. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, total ‘out-parish’ relief accounted for less 10 per cent [average five per cent] of the total relief budget per fiscal year. This variation in percentage is due in part to the irregular disbursement of stipends, though the noted percentages decreased as the cost of ‘home’ parish support increased in response to economic pressures. The individual weekly stipends received by ‘out-parish’ recipients were consistent with the basic pre-dearth stipends received by the same ‘host’ categories of recipients discussed in the previous chapters. However, for ‘out-parish’ paupers there were no apparent stipend adjustments to account for changing

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5 The figures are not representative of the amount received by individual recipient per year, as the distributions were not noted on regular bases.
economic conditions. The changes witnessed in the level of relief to `out-parish` recipients were instead reflective of the circumstances of the individual recipient, for example the birth of a child. Moreover, there is no indication that the level of relief afforded `out-parish` affected the level of relief received by resident poor. Quainton’s vestry demonstrated a willingness to consider pleas from paupers [with legal settlement in Quainton] who lived elsewhere in England. Nevertheless, in the absence of vestry minutes, it is not possible to determine how many paupers were denied relief because of situational needs or non-residency.

Comparative History

This dissertation presents a thorough in depth look of a single case study. While a detailed comparative study is beyond the scope of this work, the findings contributed here about Quainton open up possibilities for comparing data and reflection on themes such as `generosity`. This has been a one-place-study of a southern England agricultural parish during the period surrounding the dearth of 1799-1801. There is no known work that covers a similar parish during these specific years, making direct comparative observations impossible. Despite this the works of Davies (1787) and Eden (1796), provide data on similar Buckinghamshire parishes that can be directly compared, at least by theme, to Quainton.

The logical place to start in terms of comparative analysis is wages. The most reliable record of wages in Quainton was documented in the autobiography of Joseph Mayett, an agricultural labourer from Quainton, who reports that his father earned 6s a week and 9s in the summer. Based upon on this information the yearly wage for Quainton’s agriculture labourer [if fully employed], including an eight week harvest season, would have been £16 16s a year. Eden’s reported that the weekly wage for labourers in Winslow’s Buckinghamshire was ‘6s to 7s a week, besides breakfast; in hay time, 7s a week, and board’.\(^6\) A weekly wage of 7s [for roundsmen] was rarely reported

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\(^6\) Eden, *The State*, vol. II, p. 19
in Quainton; this was seen only in the post-dearth, and whether Quainton`s wage labourer received, this higher amount is unknown. It is reasonable to assume that they did not, when a labourer in Quainton was ill, he received a compensation 1s a day. However, in Davies` earlier study of Berkshire parishes, he reported a base wage of 7s to 8s a week.\(^7\) The main employment for women in this area was lacemaking. Eden noted that in Winslow women earned 8d-9d a day [£1 19s a year]. Davies points out that the presence of younger children [at the breast] made the wives incapable of doing work besides the ‘necessary business of their families’ and therefore he used the slightly lower wage of 6d a week for the women in his study.\(^8\) Based on the figures noted above the total income for a married couple in Quainton with or without children would have been £18 15s a year [6s 9d a week]. Neither Davies nor Eden included a budget for a family in Buckinghamshire, so the following comparative analysis is based on a family from Berkshire:


\(^8\) *Ibid.*
Table 7: Sample of Family Budget from Streatley, Berkshire

**Streatley.**

*Expenses and Earnings of a Labourer's Family in the Parish of Streatley.*

THE man is 50 years of age; has a wife and seven children, three of whom are out at service: the ages of the four youngest, at home, are as follows; five, seven, twelve, fourteen. The two oldest, who are boys, drive the plough, for some neighbouring farmers. The two youngest do not work. The wife earns about 18. 6d. a week, throughout the year. The man in winter earns 8s. a week; and, at present, 12s. a week. For about ten days in the wheat harvest he receives 3s. a day. So that, altogether, the earnings of the family, consisting of six persons, amount, annually, to about £46. The following are their expenses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 half-peck leaves a week, or 410 in the year, at 1s. 9d. each</td>
<td>£36 8 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb. of cheese a week, at 7d. the lb. yearly</td>
<td>3 0 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb. of butter a week, at 9d. the lb. yearly</td>
<td>3 18 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lb. of sugar a week, at 9d. the lb. yearly</td>
<td>3 18 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 oz. of tea a week, at 3s. the lb. yearly</td>
<td>0 19 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ lb. of oatmeal a week, at 3d. the lb. yearly</td>
<td>0 6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ lb. of bacon a week, at 3d. the lb. yearly</td>
<td>3 5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d. in milk every week, yearly</td>
<td>0 3 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candle, soap, salt, flax, blue, &amp;c. yearly about</td>
<td>2 7 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House rent</td>
<td>2 5 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuel is chiefly beech-wood collected in the woods: what is bought costs about 1 0 0.

**Total Annual Expenses** £63 18 8

**Total Annual Earnings** 46 0 0

**Deficiency** £17 18 8

Source: Eden, vol. 2 p. 15.

The budget for the family of six in Streatley provides a good example of the possible levels of consumption for a family in Quainton. Since poor relief family allowances in Quainton were based on the price of half-peck loaf of bread, it is hard to envision what conditions were like when the price of a
loaf of bread was 3s 6d. The family shown in this budget consumed eight loaves of bread a week, which at 1s 9d a loaf would have cost 14s, well in excess of the total weekly wages of Quainton’s households. If the same rate of consumption was maintained, when the price of a loaf went up to 3s 6d, the cost would have been 28s. Using the average weekly wages for a labouring family in Quainton with four non-productive children and an average weekly relief stipend [1800-1801] of 9s 1d, total income would have been 15s 10d per week, leaving the family with a deficiency of 12s 2d. While the Streatley family would have had a higher consumption level than a family with young children, (because they had several children over the age of ten), the average family in Quainton would still have had a considerably high deficiency. Unfortunately, Davies does not record the amount of flour purchased by the poor in his budgets, making comparison difficult.9 The question remains, how did families of the labouring poor in southern England survive? Either their ‘economies of makeshift’ made up the difference or their level of consumption of bread was much lower than that indicated in the Eden’s budget above.

As the stipends of Quainton’s settled collection recipients in the pre-dearth were predominately in the range of 2s-3s a week, according to Eden’s ‘List of Indigent Persons’, Quainton was more ‘generous’. Winslow’s widows received only 1s-2s 6d, with the predominance of the stipend being below 2s a week. According to Eden, Winslow also had surplus labourers with as many as 40 males on the ‘rounds’ during the winter, partly due to the enclosure of land. He states ‘a great part of labour done in the parish is paid for, out of the Poor Rates, in money given to roundsmen’.10 This was comparable to the situation in Quainton. Unlike Quainton, Winslow maintained a workhouse for 16 paupers [old women, children and one man] who were employed as lacemakers. The Speenhamland system was not mentioned by name, but after Winslow’s poor issued a complaint ‘for want of bread’, the magistrate ordered the overseers to raise the earnings of labourers, ‘according to the number of

9 Davies, The Case, p. 8-12.
10 Eden, The State, pp. 29, 30
children’… [and] were to be reduced, proportionally with the price of bread’.  
11 When comparing one parish to another, one has to read behind the lines in order to ascertain the level and means of support given to the poor. Besides the poor house, Winslow also provided the same means of support to individual paupers. However, without detailed analysis of account entries it is hard to say that they gave the same level of support. Given the information presented here, Quainton’s labouring poor might have been poorer in terms of wages compared to their counterparts in Winslow. However, there are indications that Quainton was more ‘generous’ in terms of support, which show a willingness by the ratepayers to support the parish’s needy through rates rather than increase wages. Whilst in some aspects Quainton appears to have been ‘generous’ but in regards to others it was ‘not’. One has to remember that there are two ways to look at ‘generosity’; in comparison to the relief rendered in another parish, and in comparison to the ‘cost of living index’ and ‘real earnings’.

Parish State

This thesis has presented a picture of a rural parish that was an all-inclusive local administrative body. According to D. Eastwood, the local governments that developed out of Elizabeth’s Act of 1601 were an improvisation and ‘a product of particular process of institutional and cultural formation with irregular guidelines of a magistrate’, which was ‘adapted to govern a particular kind of rural society and to articulate power relationships within the hierarchy’.  
12 In spite of the fact that this thesis concentrated exclusively on the parish’s overseers’ accounts, it provides a glimpse of that portion of the ‘parish state’.  
13 In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ‘parish state’ impacted upon every aspect of the lives of a parish’s labouring poor from the church bells that directed their days to the morality norms that governed their right to poor relief and survival. It provided functions that today, in western countries, are under the providence of secular employers or

11 Ibid., p. 32.
13 Eastwood uses the term ‘English state’ in his work.
city, county, and national governments. The parish handled day-to-day administration while power remained formally under the control of the vestry and its officers, as well as the farmers who were the paymasters of the parish.\footnote{Ibid., p. 32, 34.}  

This thesis has shown that under the umbrella of poor relief, parish overseers were responsible for the establishment, assessment and collection of rates that provided a combination of social services: such as family assistance, pensions, unemployment benefits, sick leave, disability insurance, rent subsidies, medical insurance and other associated services to the deserving poor. However, their responsibilities extended even further. They were also responsible for upholding law and order in the parish, road and bridge maintenance, the schooling of children, and legal matters that pertained to both the parish as a whole and given individuals. The only government monies the parish received were for the support of militia families, but these were insufficient, leaving the parish to shoulder a significant proportion of this support.

The parish was accountable to itself and had little interaction with the county or national government entities. The majority of rulings handed down by Buckinghamshire magistrates were seen as guidelines and were not necessarily adopted by the parishes, except for those regarding settlement, bastardy or criminal cases. For instance, it is unclear whether Quainton adopted the wage scales detailed in the quarter or petty sessions documents recorded during this period. The Justice of the Peace was also required to sign the overseers’ accounts on an annual basis. The Poor Law Commission stated that ‘as things now are each parish is, in respect of parochial management, an independent nation…and the only bond between the fourteen thousand republics, which England and Wales contain, is the inter-parochial code the law of settlement’\footnote{BPP, HC, 1834, \textit{Royal Com. of Inquiry into Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Law Commission, Appendix A}, p. 153a, as quoted, in Eastwood, \textit{Governing}, p. 156.}. In other words, the parish was the state, whose
responsibilities and accountability, was onto itself and as such could fashion a poor relief system that suited the needs of the community. However, one needs to remember that there were regional differences and even particularity between parishes in close proximity to each other.

**Nominal Linkage.**

Methodologically, this study effectively employed nominal linkage and family reconstruction strategies and encountered significant challenges in this area. It therefore offers important lessons for the microanalysis of parish records. Studies of this nature involve repetitive entries [sometimes weekly] per a given pauper, which at times are a composite of several sub-categories of relief. Central to the understanding of each of the overseers` entries then was the reconstruction, where possible, of each family unit. In this case, Familysearch.com and Rootsweb.com were used.

Historians try to bring together data through nominal linkage relating to the same person in order to provide a better understanding of the level of poor relief received by, in this study, a family unit. Barriers to nominal linkage in this study were the tendency for parents to name their children after themselves or the children`s grandparents, the presence of multi-generational poor relief, and the absence of baptismal, marriage or burial records for a large percentage of the population. Therefore, a sophisticated system of nominal linkage was not appropriate for this type of data, as each entry required an in depth understanding of the family as well as the configuration of the documentation. For example, Quainton`s overseers in the accounts tended to address male paupers by surname only. In a situation where there were multiple families with the same surname, an abbreviated forename was added. Males of the `middling class` [suppliers of material or services for the poor] were addressed either by full name or delineated by the word `Mr ` followed by their surname. Females were addressed by their full names or `wife of`, or in the case of widows `Wid. ` was placed in front of their surname. Other members of a household were noted by the word `son`, `girl`, or `wife` in the comment section of the ledgers, after the head of the household surname.
Such notations made it difficult to identify the children (in larger families) with any certainty.

Quainton’s roundsmen entries were a major key to identifying the males in the parish from one another and provided further information that was used in family reconstruction. These entries noted the full name of the individual labourers, the number of days worked, and the amounts received. Based on the fact that boys would have received less per week than an adult married male, it was possible to identify them based on their weekly wage, which was 2s-3s whereas married adult males received 6s a week. Pattern identification and overseers’ comments were an important strategy in completing nominal linkage; as one became familiar with individual families it was easier to put the puzzle pieces together and thereby develop an in depth picture of the individual family unit’s poor relief history. As one became familiar with each family unit, it became easier to discern the line entries and thereby input the money into the appropriate sub-category of relief. To bring this all together an Assess report was designed that totalled each sub-category of relief received by individual families. The work in this thesis therefore presents valuable methodological strategies for overcoming some of the specific challenges of micro-historical research.

This section has addressed some finding that hitherto have not been that apparent in present studies of poor relief in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is hoped that these findings will further contribute to the understanding of the Old Poor Law as administer in the parishes of southern England during a turbulent time of economic pressure.
Appendix

Appendix A: Methodology

MS Access (Access) and MS Excel (Excel) were utilised to perform the data analysis that is central to this research. The rational database was designed to be flexible, inclusive as possible, and comparable with the format of the line items in the primary source documents. Coding fields were added to facilitate further extraction of pertinent data, yet would not distract from source data. The data was divided into five tables with a one-to-many relationship. The recipient or `parent table` contains the available demographic information of the individual recipients named in the overseers` accounts. Based on the preponderance and the multitude of different types of aggregate data, the overseers` entries were divided into four categories (tables) of relief: 1) settled collections; 2) family subsidy; 3) wage subsidy; and 4) miscellaneous causal relief; which includes administrative expenses.

This database contains the aggregate data for 381 individual poor relief recipients, which represent 142 families, 72 of which had multiple generational recipients on poor relief during this research period. Each of the recipients was given primary identifier, or reference number (RID#), which was used to compile information and create links between different tables in the database. When wives or children received relief in their own right, they are denoted by head of households RID#, followed by an alpha designation starting with `A`. Married children were handled in the same manner.

Quainton, recorded poor relief weekly, except for settled collections, which were documented biannually on Lady Day and Michaelmas. The subsidiary tables, except settled collections, were designed to facilitate quantitative analysis, not only by year, but also by month, and even week. The database contained 38,403 entries, which include 780 settled collections, 7,993 family allowances, 6,576 wage supplements, and 16,054 casual relief entries.
Prior to 2 November 1799, the overseers did not note the number of children under the age of ten in the families that received assistance, which after October 1799 was based on a bread scale. This necessitated the reconstruction of family units in order to compare the pre-dearth period (1796-1799) level of support to that rendered during both the dearth (1799-1802) and the post-dearth period (1802-1804).

A vast number of miscellaneous entries noted only the name of the recipient and the amount received, which inhibited the ability to place these entries into designated categories. Individual pattern matching was used to place these entries into appropriate categories. All analysis was based on a fiscal year from Lady Day to Lady Day, therefore parameter queries were used to extract the data from the various tables of the database.

Excel was used for further data analysis, which included the summarisation and analysis of poor relief expenditure by the overseers in old pounds, shillings, and pence, which for graphic presentation need to be in decimalised pounds using the following formula

\[ \text{round}((£+\text{shillings}/20+\text{pence}/240),2) \].
Appendix B: Quainton’s Charities

There is no indication whether the listed charities below, other than Winwood Charity, provided any assistance to the poor during the time covered by this study. This information is based on data collected by the late G. Rodwell of Quainton.

1670 An unknown person gave a parcel of land, later to be called the Bridge Land Charity.

1667 Mathew Nash, a shepherd, gave a house, close and two butts at North End, to buy 12 sixpenny loaves of bread to be given to the poor every good Friday for ever and the overseers to have 1s each for the disposal of the bread.

1672 Dame Anne Pigott laid out £160 in land at Ambroseden to educate the children of Quainton and Grendon Underwood forever, and to buy them bibles.

1686 Richard Winwood Esq. willed £200 to build alms-houses, and endowed them with an estate in Quainton. They were to house four poor widows and four poor widowers above the age of 50 years. Each was to receive 2s every Saturday and a new cloak and gown of 20s value yearly forever, and a load of wood each. Later, the charity built four additional alms-houses on Lower Street (Figure 2:3). The funds that supported the charity were derived from rentals of the Alms-house Farm, land, and tenement properties.¹⁶ There is no evidence that alms persons received any parish support while they were cared for by this charity; however, several of the parish poor rented cottages from the charity at £1 per year. The maintenance of these properties accounted for approximately 50 per cent of the charity’s budget.¹⁷

1691 Patrick Symmer, Rector, gave £50 to educate as many poor children of the parish as the interest would pay for.

¹⁶ G. Rodwell, Quainton Clubs and Charities: Winwood Charity and Almshouses (Quainton), pp. 5-11.
¹⁷ CBS, CH 20/FA/1, Account Book of Winwood Charity, 1764-1832, pp. 343, 346.
1692 Susannah Booth and Helen Plydwell gave £20 for the education of poor children.

1704 Thomas Pigott Esq. Payment of interest of £300 to apprentice children of Quainton and Grendon Underwood forever.

1777 John Eeles gave 20s. a year to be paid out of a quarter of yardland to be given to the poor in 40 loaves of bread the Sunday after Christmas Day for ever.

1780 Mary Eeles gave 30s a year and 60 loaves of bread to be given to the Sunday after Christmas Day to be paid out of the rent of North End Close.

1787 Lady Saye and Sele left a large sum of money to apprentice six boys from Quainton and Grendon Underwood each year and to build a workhouse. Due to mismanagement by the trustees, according to surviving records, no boys were apprenticed until 1805 and the workhouse was never built.¹⁸

As only, the records for the Winwood Charity have survived and not those of the other parish charities, it is hard to gauge whether charities were an important component in the `economy of makeshift` of the parish`s poor.

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¹⁸ G. Rodwell, Quainton Clubs (Quainton, 2005), p. 1.
Appendix C: Comparative Parish Narratives

This appendix offers a brief overview of the overseers’ accounts from several Buckinghamshire parishes with surviving records for the period discussed in this study. The conclusions drawn are based on inferences and assessments made from information provided in these records. Unfortunately, the accounts in most cases are not clearly written and/or provided insufficient documentation, and thus do not present a complete picture of poor relief administration in these parishes. In many cases, the records are in such a poor condition that it is difficult to determine, for example, whether the overseers were categorising payments as pensions or allowances, or ‘topping up’ the wages of agricultural labourers on the ‘round’ or the parish was shouldering the total burden. However, given the details that were extracted, it appears that the majority of Buckinghamshire’s parishes that were reviewed, like Quainton, were flexible enough to provide higher level of support during late 1800 and early 1801, but certainly not to the level exhibited in Quainton. Unlike Quainton, a number of parishes had a workhouse, poor houses, or church houses, but this could not be substantiated through available resources.

Great Kimble lies approximately ten miles south of Quainton. This agricultural parish typography was similar to Quainton and mainly consisted of pasture acreage. Therefore, Great Kimble presumably would have faced the same issues of seasonal unemployment seen in Quainton.

Unlike in Quainton, the overseers of Great Kimble provide no rationale for poor relief payments in their accounts. They provided no biannual or monthly accounting of payment to recipients, which ranged from 4s to £1. These could possibly have referred to pensions, but given the amount they could have been monthly payments. There was no discernible Speenhamland-type support.

During the dearth, relief increased in Great Kimble, but it was difficult to distinguish what type of relief was being rendered to the poor. The total number of disbursements on 9 November 1800 was 63, 2 December 73, 4 January 1801 76, 1 February 108, and 4 March 94. Thus, it would appear that
during the dearth more of the parish’s poor were on the rolls. The first mention of bread was on 6 April 1801, when 150 entries were logged. However, after this there were no monthly entries of this sort until 1802.

There was scant reference to roundsman payments in the accounts during the early part of the study period. As the wages paid range from 1s 6d and 3s, apparently these labourers were possibly boys unless the parish was just topping-off the wage paid by the employer. However, without knowing the total number of days worked, it is impossible to assume that this was a weekly wage or whether the employer paid part of the wages or the parish paid the total wage. Therefore, it is impossible to make major comparisons between the use of a roundsman system in Great Kimble and in Quainton. If in fact all of the recipients in Great Kimble were boys, the starting wage would have been less than that paid in Quainton, but the upper range is consistent with unmarried young men.

It is apparent that, like Quainton, the major impact of the dearth was felt in Great Kimble in the late fall of 1800. As in Quainton, the relief system was flexible enough to increase support to their labouring poor quickly in response to such events.\(^{19}\)

**Ickford** is located west of Quainton bordering Oxfordshire. The majority of the parish is arable land and was cultivated for wheat and beans. However, the outlying fields of the parish were subject to flooding from the Thames and the streams that fed into it.

The overseers` accounts in Ickford were reconciled biannually; there was, however, no separate accounting for pensions. Males and females received similar amounts of between two and three shillings a week. There is no indication that the Speenhamland bread scale was used or that families received relief based on the number of children in their household until November 1800; this was then retracted in November 1802.

\(^{19}\) CBS, PR 117/12/1, Overseers` Account Book, Great Kimble 1793-1803.
Roundsmen in Ickford were generally young boys, but some women were noted on the rounds in 1797. The accounts contain no notation of employers or any indication of whether the parish was paying their entire wage. Roundsman payments, like those in Quainton, fluctuated seasonally.\textsuperscript{20}

The parish of \textbf{Emberton} is made up of three villages: Emberton, Ekeney, and Petsoe. They are northeast of Quainton, near the Northamptonshire border, and were part of the borough of Milton Keynes. This parish is different from its more rural neighbours, in that it had a workhouse. The location of this workhouse could not be established. The account make record of payments to someone who appeared to be a master of the workhouse; at first, there were large payments to a Joseph Sharp of 10-15s a week and later to Mr Cooper of 13s a week. In addition, there were noted payments for bread for the workhouse, burials, and rent.

The accounts provide no indication of whether Speenhamland or another type of bread scale was used. Both the volume and value of relief did increase during the dearth. Weekly disbursements by early 1800 were as high as 30 to 40s, representing an increase of £100 over the previous year. More people also appeared on the rolls at the height of the dearth: there were 55 entries in October 1800, rising to 60 in November, 79 in December, 75 in January 1801 and 131 by April. By 1802, the overseers started to record disbursements weekly, but they were minimal, between one and four shillings a week. In comparison with Quainton, Emberton displayed some flexibility in order to support its poor during this time of crisis, but the type of support was rendered is unknown.

There is minimal notation of roundsman support in the accounts throughout the period. By 1804, monthly total disbursements were in single digits.\textsuperscript{21} There also appears to be a similar trend of decreasing roundsman usage in both Emberton and Quainton during the latter year of the study period.

\textsuperscript{20} CBS, PR113/12/1, Overseers’ Account Book, Ickford 1784-1804.
\textsuperscript{21} CBS, PR 71/12/2, Overseers’ Account Book, Emberton 1783-1803.
Chalfont St Giles is located in southeast Buckinghamshire was a mixed farming community. Apparently, during this period, the parish contracted a large portion of its poor relief management to John Hearne on a monthly basis of £25 to £26. In 1798-99, a Thomas Law apparently took over and received £20 16s 8d. In January 1800, William Buckmaster received £14 3s, which by March was increased to £15 10s. What these bulk payments covered is unknown. There was only one separate notation in the accounts for the purchase of a mop for the workhouse.

Initially, the accounts from Chalfont St Giles only include a few entries for specific individuals and only small amounts. Some of these payments were to militia wives, but none was noted for families with non-productive children. Additionally, other payments were made for mid-wives, burial, pest houses, and rent. Starting in December 1799 there were more payments to individual recipients, ranging from 1s 6d a week to 7s 6d. Individual weekly support by October 1800 ranged from two to 14 shillings. Total casual relief expenses £204 13s 7d was recorded 11 October and allowances were £206 13s. Evidently, during the dearth Chalfont St Giles provided more of its relief budget to individual recipients. By this time, Samuel Springer had taken over the management of the workhouse when the costs of indoor relief had risen to £44 3s 4d a month. By 1802-1803, however, the accounts contained mainly bills, and only a few notations of monies paid directly to individuals, indicating that the parish was only supported the `deserving’ poor that were in the workhouse, in contrast to Quainton’s support of outdoor relief. Apparently, like Quainton, Chalfont St Giles also at some point had gone into debt as there are several notations for the payment of interest on a loan.22

Wavendon parish is northeast of Quainton, near Milton Keynes, was a mixed farming community whose chief crops were cereal grains. In 1795, the overseer noted payments to females of one to four shillings a week, but there is no indication of their marital status. Roundsman wages started at a low of tuppence per day, suggesting that these might have been very young boys. By December 1798, the accounts included payments for illnesses, and an increase

22 CBS, PR 35/12/4, Overseers’ Account Book, Chalfont St Giles.
number of roundsman that noted the name of the employers. Whether the 2s paid was a weekly wage is unknown as the number of days worked is not indicated. Starting in January 1799, there were consistent payments to the same group of individuals, of between two and eight shillings a week; whether these were families is unknown. Militia payments were noted, but not itemised. By August 1800, pensions and/or allowances had increased to £21 per month, but the weekly rates received by individuals remained the same, meaning that more of the poor were turning to the parish for relief.

The first notation of bread for the poor was recorded on 8 December 1800 and continued until August 1802. By February 1801, there was a clear increase in illness claims and the number of agricultural labourers on the `rounds`. By April, the overseers noted payments in lieu of bread of sixpence. A workhouse is noted in the accounts, but no indication that it was widely used by the parish exists. In the post-dearth evidence suggests that some form of allowances stayed in place, but the level of support lower than those noted during the dearth. 23 Again, Wavendon, like Quainton, demonstrated its poor relief system in late 1800 was flexible enough to respond to the economic pressures of the dearth.

**Stoke Goldington** is in the north-eastern part of Buckinghamshire, near Milton Keynes. Besides the 190 acres of woodland, the remaining land was divided evenly between arable land and pasture. Stoke Goldington was not wholly dependent on agriculture as it was also a centre for brickmaking and a coach stop, on the main road from Milton Keynes to Northampton. The village had been the property of the Wrighte family for three generations, which suggests that they had power to influence the decisions made by the vestry. The `parish house`, known as `Widows Money` was purchased by an unknown person to house six of the parish’s poor widows, in addition it provided for the apprenticing of children.

In 1796, the overseers recorded payments for roundsmen, illnesses, and pensions that ranged between one and three shillings a week. There were a lot

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23 CBS, 220/12/4, Overseers’ Accounts, Wavendon 1795-1809.
of men on the rounds in 1798 and there were also records of some payments to wives (possibly militia wives). In April 1799, there was no indication that allowances were paid to families, but weekly pension amounts had increased to levels, as high as six shillings. Increases were also seen in relief expenditure for illness, rounds, and payments to wives along with in-kind payments. By October 1800, pension-type allowances had reached £140 a month. These payments continued for approximately 30 weeks, but individuals still received a minimal 1s 6d to 4s 6d a week compared to families in Quainton. By the 27th October 1800 pension type allowances had increased to £188 10s 3d out of a total of £279 8s 7d. By April 1801 the total was £303 1s 9d, but by the following October, this had dropped to £235 8s 7d. It dropped to £116 13s 9s by April 1802. One has to assume that the parish was supporting families with non-productive children during this period, although this is not specified. In the aftermath of the dearth, payments for illnesses decreased, payment to wives continued, wage supplement declined. However, by 1804, as in Quainton, things had changed again, but in the case of Stoke Goldington for there were lots of men on the `rounds`, but no indication of allowances to families with children.24

**Middle Claydon** was different from the other parishes, as it was a closed parish carefully governed by the Verney family. Therefore, it is not a really a comparable parish to either Quainton or the other parishes presented here. Middle Claydon’s records are very scant. In 1796, there were some miscellaneous entries for ‘in need’ payments made to James Roads (c. 1748) of a weekly allowance of five shillings. Six other recipients received pensions ranging from 1s 6d to 3s 6d a week. In 1797, James received no support from the parish, as apparently his situation improved. The few other named individuals continued to receive their pensions. There is no indication of family support or roundsmen prior to the dearth, during the dearth or afterward. By 1801, most of the disbursements were divided between three individuals, John Hinton, Joseph Hinton, and James Roads. Besides moneys for fixing cottages, there were several payments to other pensioners. Unlike

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24 CBS, PR 194/12/2, Overseers’ Account Book, Stoke Goldington 1795-1809.
other parishes, including Quainton, there was no significant increase in relief or number of those supported during the dearth.²⁵

²⁵ CBS, PR 52/12/1–4, Overseers’ Account Books, Middle Claydon.
## Appendix D: Quainton’s Settlements/Removal 1797-1804

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16/12/1797</td>
<td>John Harvey</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wichen Northamptonshire</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/03/1798</td>
<td>William Harris</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mursley</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/09/1798</td>
<td>John Ginger</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Reslow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/03/1799</td>
<td>Mary Chamberlain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cubington</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/03/1799</td>
<td>William Barnett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grendon Underwood</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/04/1799</td>
<td>Ann Lee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redbourn Hertshire</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/10/1800</td>
<td>Ann Warner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weston Turville</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/11/1800</td>
<td>Lowding</td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Musley</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/11/1800</td>
<td>Scrags</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Not legible</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/01/1801</td>
<td>Piddington</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Middleton Cherney</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/10/1802</td>
<td>Goodgame</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Grendon Underwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/03/1803</td>
<td>Hopcraft</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Berkhampton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/06/1803</td>
<td>Scrags</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Swanbourn</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/1804</td>
<td>Raid</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hulcott</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
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Source: C.B.S., PR 169/13/1-3 Settlement and Removal Orders
**Appendix E: Quainton’s Bastardy Documents 1793 - 1821**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mother Surname</th>
<th>Mother's Parish</th>
<th>Father's Name</th>
<th>Father's Parish</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>Type of Document</th>
<th>Father's Ordered Support</th>
<th>Mother's Ordered Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/20/1793</td>
<td>Margaret Batts</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Thomas Wildon</td>
<td>Hampton Gray, Oxford</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Warrant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/20/1799</td>
<td>Margaret Batts</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Thomas Wildon</td>
<td>Hampton Gray, Oxford</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Warrant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/29/1805</td>
<td>Elizabeth George</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Thomas Deving</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warrant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/10/1806</td>
<td>Hannah Bryant</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Thomas Ward</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warrant</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/15/1807</td>
<td>Ann Cleaver</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>William Payne</td>
<td>Clements, Oxford</td>
<td>Support Order</td>
<td>£13 17s. for lying-in, 1s. 6d. weekly</td>
<td>6d. weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/20/1810</td>
<td>Elizabeth Slade</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>William Slade</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Bond</td>
<td>£100</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/26/1811</td>
<td>Mary Sear</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>John Bradbury</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bond</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Thomas Monks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bond</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/08/1813</td>
<td>Maria Warner</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>John Briany</td>
<td>Buckingham</td>
<td>Warrant</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/21/1814</td>
<td>Maria Warner</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>John Briany</td>
<td>Buckingham</td>
<td>Support Order</td>
<td>£2 lying-in, £3 8s. past due and maintenance of 2s. weekly</td>
<td>6d. weekly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/08/1814</td>
<td>Mary Reutt</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>William Croft</td>
<td>Tring</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>07/18/1815</td>
<td>Ann Griffin</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>John Dubery</td>
<td>Lower Winchendon</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Support Order</td>
<td>£2 lying-in, 1s. weekly, £1 court cost</td>
<td>6d. weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/17/1817</td>
<td>Maria Warner</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Benjamin Smith</td>
<td>Soulden, Oxford</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Support Order</td>
<td>£2 lying-in, £1 parish for main., 2s. wk., court cost £2 8s. 6d. + add £2 8s. 6d.</td>
<td>6d. weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15/1821</td>
<td>Sarah Green</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>George Uff</td>
<td>Waddesdon</td>
<td>Support Order</td>
<td>40s. lying-in, 1s. 6p. weekly</td>
<td>6d. weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/31/1821</td>
<td>Ann Knibbs</td>
<td>Quainton</td>
<td>Samuel Barby</td>
<td>Wittlebury</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Warrant, Examination Letter</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.R.S., PR 169161 Bastardy Papers
Appendix F: Subsistence Income? Subsistence Diet?

Sir Fredrick Eden and D. Davies estimated that a large portion of a poor family’s income was usually spent on food.\textsuperscript{26} Inflated wheat prices during the dearths of 1795-1796 and 1799-1801 bring into question whether the purchasing power of the labouring poor was enough to provide them with a subsistence diet during those times.

Prior to ‘enclosure’ subsistence farming would have been practised by Quainton’s poor on the parish’s common and wasteland. The introduction thereafter of a market-based economy meant that food production and distribution in England was based upon supply and demand. Snell challenges Chamber’s argument that enclosure led to increased demand for labour, and instead suggests that ‘enclosure led to [increased] seasonal unemployment rather than stability of employment’.\textsuperscript{27} This leaves unanswered the question of whether the income of the labouring poor was high enough to compensate them for their lost ability to cultivate and produce food stores on common land.\textsuperscript{28}

Adequate nutrition is not only determined by diet, but also depends upon an individual’s physical activity, the climate in which they live, and the extent to which they are exposed to infectious diseases.\textsuperscript{29} Malnutrition is not just a matter of inadequate calorie consumption, but also the consequence of a lack of diet diversity, meaning access to protein, carbohydrates, minerals, and micronutrients.\textsuperscript{30} The average height of men in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was 66.31 inches compared with today’s average of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} S.F.M. Eden, \textit{The State of the Poor: Or, an History of the Labouring Classes in England, from the Conquest to Present Period} (London, 1797); D. Davies, \textit{The Case of Labourers in Husbandry Stated and Considered} (London, 1795).
\item \textsuperscript{28} Snell, \textit{Annals}, pp. 138-227.
\item \textsuperscript{30} E.M. Young, \textit{Food and Development} (Abingdon, 2011), pp. 36-38.
\end{itemize}
69.7 inches and their average weight would have been about 136 pounds.\textsuperscript{31} A wheat-based diet was the staple of poor families in the south of England. In Quainton, this might have occasionally been supplemented with cheese and beans, as both were produced in the area. Some studies have endeavoured to estimate the caloric intake of the labouring poor during the late 1800s (Table F:1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>5,258</td>
<td>3,869</td>
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<td>8th</td>
<td>3,822</td>
<td>3,473</td>
<td>3,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3,509</td>
<td>3,188</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>2,568</td>
<td>2,333</td>
<td>2,264</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>2,305</td>
<td>2,094</td>
<td>2,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>1,651</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In order to estimate the caloric and nutritional intake of England’s labouring poor, Oddy evaluated the diet that Eden and Davies compiled of labourers in the 1790s. He converted the food expenses described in their writing into quantities based upon the average contemporary price of those commodities. He then calculated \textit{per capita} daily consumption by size of

\textsuperscript{31} R. W. Fogel, \textit{Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America and the Third World} (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 12, 15. See also: Craig Muldrew, \textit{Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness} (Cambridge, 2011). He adds further to this discussion above by providing a detailed analysis of the agricultural labouring class, but it does not specifically address their situation during the 1799-1801 dearth. However, he argued that the \textquoteleft employed labourers[meaning full-time employed labourers] had access to more and better food than previously, which made it possible to supply the economy with necessary energy to produce enough food to feed the country\textquoteright, p. 319. The problem was that there was a shortage of food among families that less access to work, those that were more dependent on wage labour. In these families, he argues that possibly \textquoteleft children too young to work might have been less well fed in order to supply enough energy for the parents and older children to continue to work hard to supply the family with food in years of high food prices\textquoteright, p. 161.
household and applied a nutritional analysis programme to the intake figures. In doing so, Oddy estimates individual daily per capita caloric intake to have been over 3,000 for an average family size of 4.33. It is noted that the per capita caloric intake for a family of 5.4 decreased to between 2,500 and 2,999 during the 1795-1796 dearth, as a family’s total income had to spread much further due the increase size of the family, in addition they would not been able to purchase the same quantity of bread during the dearth due the inflated price of wheat. Therefore, individual caloric intakes for a household of 6.19 dropped below 1,500 per day. This is considerably less than the average caloric intakes of labourers and their families estimated at 1,990 by Davies and 2,170 by Eden. Nevertheless, all of these estimates should be viewed with caution, as the costs of the commodities used were significantly less than the costs witnessed during the dearth of 1799-1801.

Per capita caloric intake during the dearth of 1799-1801 would have been much lower as the poor would have been unable to buy the same quantity of food. Wells notes that families experienced a deficit of 3s. 10d: a week in 1799-1800, which climbed to an average of 6s. 10d, in 1800-1801. Floud states that a ‘significant percentage of the labour force was too poorly fed in the era of the Industrial Revolution to work effectively on a regular basis.’

Basal metabolic rate (BMR) is the principle component of an individual’s caloric energy requirement and depends upon their age, sex, and body weight. This is the energy needed to support the body’s organs. Additional calories are required to perform daily activities such as eating, digestion, and essential hygiene. Combining the caloric requirement of BMR with the extra calories needed to function on the most basic level constitutes a survival diet, or short-term maintenance diet. This does not include the

33 Ibid.
34 A.E. Wells, 'The development of the English rural proletariat and social protest, 1700-1850', The Journal of Peasant Studies, 6, no. 2 (1979), pp. 115-139, p. 121.
36 BMR normally ranges from 1,350 -2,000 kcal a day based on height and weight. Floud, Fogel, Harris and Hung, The Changing Body, p. 43.
calories necessary to earn a living or any activities beyond eating and personal hygiene.\textsuperscript{37}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Decile} & \textbf{Stature (m)} & \textbf{Weight (kg)} & \textbf{BMI} & \textbf{Kcal for BMR} & \textbf{Kcal Consumption} & \textbf{PAL} \\
\hline
\textbf{Highest} & 1.80 & 86.04 & 26.68 & 1,995 & 5,244 & 2.63 \\
\textbf{9th} & 1.75 & 73.77 & 24.12 & 1,808 & 4,258 & 2.36 \\
\textbf{8th} & 1.72 & 68.09 & 22.89 & 1,721 & 3,844 & 2.22 \\
\textbf{7th} & 1.71 & 63.88 & 21.96 & 1,656 & 3,509 & 2.12 \\
\textbf{6th} & 1.69 & 60.33 & 21.16 & 1,602 & 3,251 & 2.03 \\
\textbf{5th} & 1.67 & 57.06 & 20.42 & 1,552 & 3,019 & 1.95 \\
\textbf{4th} & 1.65 & 53.86 & 19.68 & 1,503 & 2,797 & 1.86 \\
\textbf{3rd} & 1.61 & 50.49 & 18.88 & 1,452 & 2,568 & 1.77 \\
\textbf{2nd} & 1.61 & 46.51 & 17.92 & 1,391 & 2,305 & 1.66 \\
\textbf{1st} & 1.56 & 39.63 & 16.2 & 1,285 & 1,872 & 1.46 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Distribution of PAL among British Adult Male 1800}
\end{table}

\textit{Table F:2 Distribution of PAL among British Adult Male 1800}

Source: R. Floud, R. Fogel, R.W. Harris and S.C. Hung, \textit{The Changing Body: Health, Nutrition and Human Development in Western World Since 1700}, C (Cambridge, 2010, Table 2.6, p. 73. \textsuperscript{38}

The use of Floud’s estimated calories to calculate individual PAL, the ratio of calories required for physical activity, shows that those in the bottom tenth of England’s male population would have certainly lacked the energy required for any regular work as their PAL of 1.46 is just slightly higher than their maintenance level BMR of 1.27 (Table F:2). Essentially, they were slowly starving to death.

Excess calories above those needed to maintain the body are considered `residual energy` the calories available for physical work. Fogel estimates that in 1800 the daily residual energy available per adult male in England and Wales was 858, meaning that there was a shortfall of at least 1,000 calories a day.\textsuperscript{39} This suggests that a male in the lowest decile could have had even fewer residual calories available than the level suggested by Floud. A

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}.

\textsuperscript{38} Floud, Fogel, Harris and Hung did not describe how the information in this table was calculated.

\textsuperscript{39} Fogel, \textit{Escape}, p.9-11.
labourer in the second-lowest decile would have had only enough extra calories to spend one-sixth of his day in light activity.  

In this context, an initial estimate of the daily calories available to individuals in different sizes families of agricultural labourers in Quainton is possible. Theoretically, this can be calculated using the combined purchasing power of a labourer’s wages and the labourers’ weekly family assistance. The following variables and formulas were used to calculate the data for Quainton shown in Figure F:1 and 2.

Purchasing Power PP= (Average monthly allowance per size family weekly wage)/average price of bread

Total Calories TC = PP * weight of half peck loaf number of calories in a pound of bread.  = PP * 8.686lb * 1100

Number of Calories per Person per Day = (TC/# days in week)/# of persons household as claimed in overseers’ account


Figure F:1 Average Monthly Available Calories per Individual in Different Sized Poor Families 1796-1804
Figure F:2 Hypothetical Available Calories per Day per Dependents if Allowing for Male Breadwinner

One striking trend that was evident in Figure F:1 is the downward movement of available calories per individual as the purchasing power of labourers declined, even before the onset of the dearth in 1799-1801. Larger families consumed fewer than 1,500 calories per person at that point. The downward trend became more dramatic in July 1799 and slipped even further by October 1799. Calories available per day fluctuated from 1,000 to 1,500 during the dearth. In the post-dearth period, the subsistence diet of families slipped even further, with most individuals receiving only 1,000 calories a day, which was less than what they received in the pre-dearth period.

If this is taken one step further, and the assumption that a labourer required 3,000 calories per day to work productively is applied to this data, it creates a very grave picture of the number of calories that are left over for the rest of his family, as seen in Figure F:2. In this model, calories available for other members of the household would have dropped below 1,000 per day for large portions of the study period.

Even in the pre-dearth period, these calculations show that Quainton’s poor families with three to five children were surviving on fewer than 1,000 calories per household member per day. By July 1799, even the caloric intake of smaller families had dropped below 1,500 as well and fell to less than 1,000 calories per day before the adoption of Quainton’s bread scale in November 1799. At first, it can be assumed that the introduction of the bread scale did have a positive impact on caloric intake for without it, caloric intake would have been well below 1,000 a day. However, during the winter of 1800-1801, even with increased support, the daily caloric intake for many members of Quainton’s poor families was still less than 1,000 a day. The data shows that only families with one child rose above 1,000 calories a day and the majority of these did not receive family allowances during the post-dearth period. It can be assumed that the periodic dips seen during the summers can be accounted for by the higher wages paid during harvests which caused average family subsidies to decrease. An adjustment was not made for this in this analysis. After the dearth, total caloric intake dropped below 1,000 a day for
members of all families except those with one child. Although this has been a hypothetical presentation, it provides food for thought.

The limitations of both of these figures should be acknowledged. It assumes that each family’s entire income went towards the purchase of food. Figure F:1 also does not take into account the higher caloric needs of labouring males and the remaining available calories for their wives and children.\textsuperscript{41} Still, even though this been a hypothetical analysis, both Figure F:1 and Figure F:2 echo the major identified changes in family support policy, which took place during the period of this study. While more work is needed to substantiate this, this initial analysis suggests that Quainton’s poor families had greater purchasing power in the pre-dearth period than in the post-dearth period because the price of bread was lower and family support higher, meaning that they potentially had more residual calories available with which to work.

In summary, this analysis has shown that the majority of Quainton’s male labourers potentially fell within the lower two decile of Floud’s table identifying distribution of PAL among British adult males during the dearth. In all likelihood, labourers would not have had enough residual calories available to work at maximum potential. It is safe to assume, given the caloric levels illustrated here, that all the members of a labourer’s household, particularly children, would have displayed some symptoms of malnutrition, such as decreased stature, low weight, susceptibility to disease, and premature death. Because of this, it is hard to believe that poor families would have deliberately had more children in order to receive more relief, as proposed by Malthus, as quite evidently, the more children the labouring poor had, the worse off they were.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{41} See J. Bourgeois-Pichat, \textit{Population Growth and Development} (New York, 1965) for further information on estimating required calories per different family members, based on age and sex.

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