

Barnet & District Local History Society

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Some notes on Hadley Parish Poor house 1768 - 1835



'Thus do the useful end their days'

Goya's grim comment on the old age that awaited the labour.

Like most other parishes, Hadley used a mixture of outdoor and indoor relief. Parishioners receiving outdoor relief lived in their own houses and got a weekly or monthly cash payment. Indoor relief meant living in the poor house.

The first reference to a poor house is in 1731, when a cottage near the pound was used for that purpose. In April 1738, the vestry

minutes recorded "It was agreed to take a lease for 14 years for a house now in the possession of Joseph Webb to fit it up for a workhouse for the poor of this parish. Mr Egerton to sink a well and to repair a shed for a necessary house. The parish to pay œ6 a year for the premises".

In order to save costs in 1747 "The Overseer (of the Poor) to give notice to all those who reside in the Poor House to put their children out to service".

Prior to 1768 most payments in Hadley were for outdoor relief, with indoor relief being farmed. The practice of "farming" the poor meant that a contractor undertook to clothe, feed and house the poor for a fixed per capita sum each year, keeping whatever surplus was made as his salary. A doctor or an apothecary was appointed by the parish to look after their health.

In 1721 for example outdoor pensions were paid monthly to

Widow Churchman	1 shilling
Johnson	ditto
Warpole	ditto
Griffick(sic)	ditto
Nune	ditto
Huntley	ditto
Smith	ditto
James Bowman	ditto
Goody Elles	4 shillings
David's boy for his schooling	one penny per week

The poor wore badges marked with the name of the parish to prevent them from begging. The accounts for 1721 show "Paid for 13 badges for the poor 1s 6d".

As little as possible was spent. In 1753 "Paid Mr Tuffe, for victuals and drink for Clench's children one month and a truss of

straw for them to sleep on - 2s 0d". On the next line in the account book "For stabling and feeding my horse one night = 4s 0d."

In 1755 the parish paid "Mr Tull of Cheshunt, his bill for keeping the poor of the parish, charges and all expenses £61 5s 0d for six months." Naturally he made a profit out of the business.

It all changed in 1768. On 7 Feb the vestry "ordered and resolved that the poor of this parish be taken from the person that now hath them and that the parish will provide for the poor in another way.

Resolved that the parish do take Mr Warboy's house and premises now occupied by the Foundling Hospital at Hadley (or Mr West for them) from Lady Day next for one year only for the use of the poor of the parish.

Further resolved that a proper workman be employed to survey and make an estimate of the expense it will cost to repair the said house to make it wind tight and water tight and that this be done previous to taking the house."

A week later on 14 Feb, it was "Resolved that Mr Fisher be desired to send to the vestry the deeds relating to the poor house in the churchyard, the alms houses and any other houses belonging to the parish or such as are in his possession."

"Mr Long informed that the survey had been taken since the last vestry of the house of Mr Warboys. The now vestry agrees that it will not cost £10 to put the house in repair for the poor."

The money to pay for all this came from a special poor rate of 1s 6d in the pound granted "towards the provision of the proper clothing for the poor and the necessary furniture for the poor house" at a special meeting of the vestry held on 13 March 1768.

The rate book for March 1768 contains the entry

"Mrs West - empty" crossed out with the words "Now parish poor house" inserted.

When the poor house opened in March 1768, the inhabitants were :-

Widow Mimms - an aged woman; Widow Shuffer;
George Tuffe aged 11; Elizabeth Quintain - 11; William Lenton - 9; Mark Lloyd - 7; Wm Wright - 9; Joseph Simmonds - 6; Wm Quitain - 7; Mary Hadley - 11; Joanna and Elizabeth Quintain (twins) - 8; Elizabeth Renton - 8; Sarah Clement - 6; Elizabeth Taylor - 12; Anne Wright - 13; Jane Williams - 8; Sarah and Rebecca Williams - both 7.

There were also

Charles Pulton - an old man

Thomas Huntley "

William Ball "

Esther Brown - an old woman

Rowland Bunyan and his wife

Richard Scott and his wife.

It would appear that, at first at any rate, some of the orphans from the Foundling Hospital stayed on.

Additional items needed to be bought to complete the setting up of the poor house. By the end of the first year in March 1769, the total spent were

New kitchen items	£79 19s 7d
clothing	£54 5s 10
house etc	£155 3s 14d
Casual poor	£49 5s 9d
Repairs	£15 2s 7d

During that year, 2s 6d was earned by the children going out gardening.

A complete inventory of all the furniture and fittings in the poor house was taken every year. A selection from a typical year (1780) is :-

Kitchen - A fire grate, 2 shovels, 1 poker, 1 pair tongs, 1 oven, 2 pot hooks, 1 roasting spit, 2 tin lamps, 1 dredging box, 1 chopping knife, 3 tin pots, 1 toasting fork, 1 hammer, 11 warming pans, 18 spoons, 5 earth pans, 1 kitchen table, 1 oval leafed table, 4 stools, 1 child's chair.

Pantry - 9 pewter dishes, 12 plates, 13 Queensware dishes, 1 bason (sic), 4 baking trays, 1 copper saucepan, 1 brass saucepan, etc.

Parlor - Fireplace with fender, 1 poker etc, 1 arm chair, 1 small arm chair, 2 small tables, 1 clothes chest, 1 clothes brush.

School room - 1 Ironstone, one 8 day clock, 2 large clothes chests, 5 spinning wheels, 1 reel, a small box of spindles.

Dairy - 1 China milk pail, 4 earth pans, 1 large meal bowl, 1 tin skimming dish.

Washhouse - Copper with furnace, 4 pails, 2 barrels, garden tools.

Clock room upstairs - 1 clock, 2 trestles, 1 clothes horse, 1 broom

In the closet - 6 pairs blankets, 1 bolster, 1 counterpane, 4 cover lids (sic).

Bed chamber No 1 - 1 bedstead, 1 chair, 2 mattresses, 4 blankets, 2 sheets.

Bed room 2 - 1 table, 2 chairs, 4 bedsteads with sheets, blankets and coverlids.

Bed room 3 - 4 beds with clothes.

bed room 4 - 1 bed complete, 1 table.

Bed room 5 - 1 bed with feather mattress

Bed room 6 - 1 iron bedstead, 1 mattress bedding.

Apparel was also recorded for each inmate (1780)

Bone - 1 coat, 1 breeches, 2 shirts, an old pair of breeches that was Nune's, 2 pairs stockings

Austin - 1 coat, 1 breeches that were Ashwell's, 2 pr stockings, 2 shirts

Jonathan Scott Senr - 2 shirts, 2 pr stockings, 1 waist coat, 2 breeches, 1 pr shoes

There were 13 men and boys in all.

The women had :-

Mimms - 1 shift, 1 pair stockings,

Ruth Mimms - A shift, 2 pr shoes, 1 pr stockings, 1 check apron, 1 house dress, 1 handkerchief.

Lento - 1 gown, 2 shifts, 1 check apron, 1 pr shoes, 1 apron, 1 quilted coat.

There were 14 women and girls all told.

After the Napoleonic War had ended, there were numbers of discharged troops and sailors looking for work. There was also a recession. The number of inmates in the poorhouse rose and the vestry decided to try to reduce numbers by making life inside unpleasant.

The minutes of the vestry meetings say all that is necessary.

22 Sep 1821 The committee feel it a duty to state the motives which induced them to recommend the adoption of a tread mill.

It will not be necessary for them to enlarge upon the lamentable circumstances of increasing pauperism, nor the regret which all ranks of society must feel, at the want of some regulations for improving the present Poor Law, 'tis sufficient for the purpose to declare they feel it an imperative duty to prevent the increase of those evils they deplore. Tho' no doubt many causes have

concluded to produce the present alarming crisis, your committee feel assured that the increasing pauperism which distinguishes the present day, is chiefly attributable to the absence of the Honest Pride, which once characterised the British Peasantry, who would suffer every hardship rather than apply for parochial assistance. This first principle being depraved, he steps into poverty and crime, for they are now almost synonymous terms, until at length the bonds that hold society together are loosened, the Poor Man forsakes his natural protectors and hurls defiance at his best friends and benefactors, and should the present state of insubordination continue, the consequences are too dreadful to anticipate.

To meet dreaded Evil, your committee hope that by giving employment to those who really desire it will be a great means of restoring the deserving man to his place in society and rescue him from the debasing principle of receiving alms and also discover the impostor who only makes the want of employment an excuse to starve his wife and children.

The rate of remuneration must necessarily be under the rate of wages given in the vicinity to induce applicants to seek employment elsewhere in preference to being a burden to the parish, but still it should be sufficient to support existence, and by discovering the industrious and deserving laborers, your committee doubt not will procure him the earliest employment that season and circumstances allow. These are the reasons which influence your committee in recommending the mill in question and should the desirable results follow, they will felicitate themselves on the event and thus the whole parish, rich as well as poor, be eventual benefited.

George Wood, Rev J K Thackeray. Thos Dinsdale

(It is interesting to note that having made the connection between poverty and crime, the committee did not act on it).

A single treadmill turning a single grindstone was purchased and set up next to the poor house. Those on outdoor relief as well as the inmates had shifts on the wheel.

Nov 26 RESOLVED that the paupers receive one shilling a bushel for grinding the grain, and as a further encouragement, married men receive half a peck of flour per week and for each child a quarter peck.

RESOLVED that the bread be made in the house.

March 1822 RESOLVED The thanks of the vestry be given to Rev J K Thackeray, Thos Dinsdale, Geo Wood and J Darby for the attention to the management of the mills by which a very material saving has been made to the parish.

As the century moved on, a strong body of opinion felt that the care of the poor had become too large an issue to be left to individual parishes. As a result of the Poor Law Act of 1834, which abolished the old system, a number of neighbouring parishes combined to form the Barnet Union.

Land on Barnet Common was purchased and the Barnet Union workhouse built. The parishes concerned then closed their poor houses.