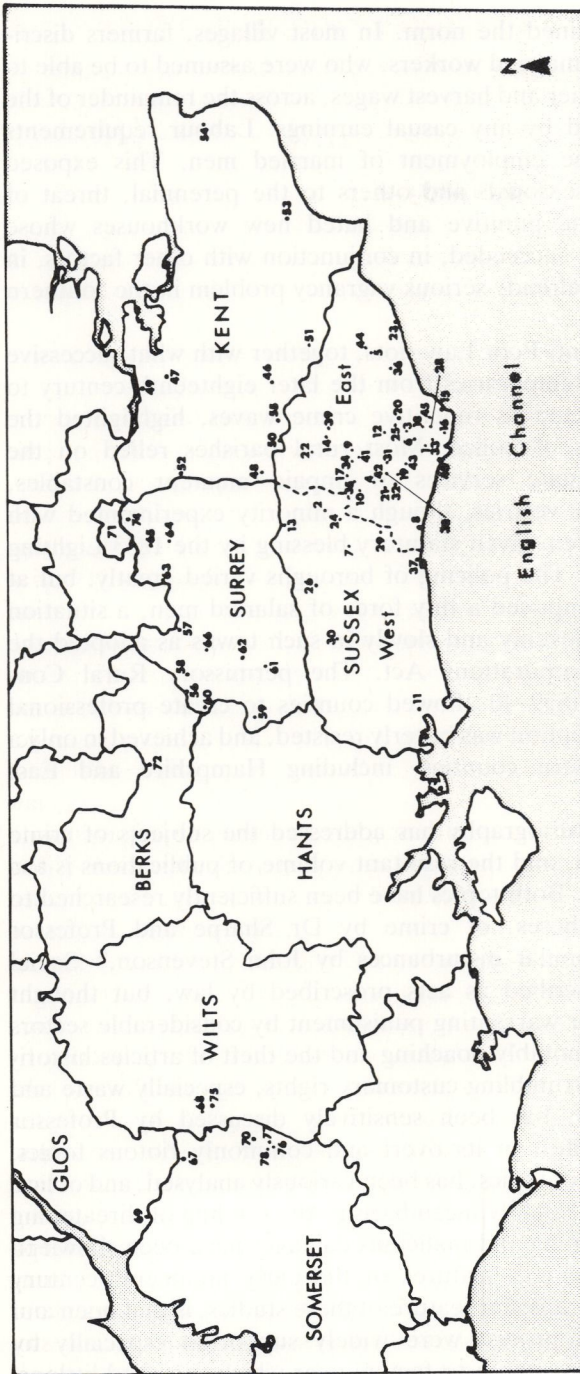


Popular Protest and Social Crime: The Evidence of Criminal Gangs in Rural Southern England 1790–1860

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Introduction

The burgeoning poverty problem in the rural South achieved scandalous proportions during the intense and prolonged post Napoleonic war agricultural depression. Low prices for farm produce, the tardy and inadequate reductions of rent from high wartime levels, and the increasing real costs of national and local taxes, generated a considerable shrinkage of cereal acreages combined with less intensive farming, to have a devastating and prolonged impact on entire rural communities from 1815 until the later 1830s. During this period, farmworkers, as the notorious victims of low pay, under- and unemployment, were joined by many craftsmen, and the situation was further aggravated by scores of bankruptcies among smaller farmers, together with the relative impoverishment of hundreds of larger agrarian capitalists. The operations of the old poor law expanded hugely, with the resultant conflicts between ratepayers with opposing interests, and between poor-law authorities, the Bench, and claimants, to turn it into a theatre for continuous altercation laced with perennial social protest.¹ Social-security administration figured strongly in the Captain Swing rising of 1830.² Most southern counties were among the most pauperised in the country, with Sussex invariably at the top of lists compiled on the criteria of *per-capita* poor-law expenditure. The attempt to sanitise the rural economy, by the enforcement of laissez-faire economic principles through the radical, utilitarian Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which illegalised the payment of all non-medical relief to able-bodied males, constituted a major break with the past, despite widespread practical modification of the law through minor evasive tactics.³ The resultant traumatic shock experienced by working people galvanised an episodic riotous response in the South, followed by more enduring covert protest, including arson against the properties of the new Poor Law Guardians. Initially at least, most farmers retained their customary policy of minimising winter-time employment, and seasonal



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|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|---|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Alfriston | 10 Chailey | 19 Glynde | 27 Isted | 36 Ninfield | 45 Willingdon | 54 Sandwich | 62 Guildford | 70 Frome | 75 Trowbridge (Wilts) |
| 2 Ardingly | 11 Chichester | 20 Hailsham | 28 Jevington | 37 Portslade | 46 Brencley | 55 Tunbridge Wells | 63 Kingston-on-Thames | 71 London | 76 Cloford |
| 3 Arlington | 12 Chiddingfold | 21 Hamsey | 29 Keymer | 38 Ringmer | 47 Chobham | 56 Bagshot | 72 Reading | 73 Portsmouth | 77 Marston |
| 4 Barcombe | 13 Copthorne | 22 Hartfield | 30 Kirdford | 39 Rotherfield | 48 Edenbridge | 57 Chertsey | 74 Southwark (the Borough, south of the Thames effectively in London) | 78 Nunney | |
| 5 Battle | 14 Crowborough | 23 Hastings | 31 Laughton | 40 Seaford | 49 Gravesend | 58 Chobham | | | |
| 6 Berwick | 15 Eastbourne | 24 Haywards Heath | 32 Lewes | 41 Uckfield | 50 Groombridge | 59 Farnham | | | |
| 7 Bolney | 16 East Dean | 25 Horsebridge | 33 Littleton | 42 Wellington | 51 Hawkhurst | 60 Frimley | | | |
| 8 Brighton | 17 Fletching | 26 Horsham | 34 Maresfield | 43 West Fife | 52 Hayes | 61 Godalming | | | |
| 9 Buxted | 18 Folkington | | 35 Newick | 44 Whatlington | 53 Lympe | 69 Bristol | | | |

mass lay-offs remained the norm. In most villages, farmers discriminated against unmarried workers, who were assumed to be able to spin out peak summer and harvest wages, across the remainder of the year, supplemented by any casual earnings. Labour requirements were met from the employment of married men. This exposed thousands to the seasonal, and others to the perennial, threat of incarceration in the punitive and hated new workhouses whose deterrent objective succeeded, in conjunction with other factors, in vastly inflating the already serious vagrancy problem in the southern countryside.⁴

The Swing and anti-Poor Law riots, together with what successive generations of contemporaries from the later eighteenth century to the 1860s, interpreted as repetitive crime waves, highlighted the antiquated systems of police. Most rural parishes relied on the infamously inadequate services of unpaid amateur constables, annually elected by vestries, though a minority experimented with paid officers, a system given statutory blessing by the 1833 Lighting and Watching Act. The policing of boroughs varied greatly, but at their best, they comprised a tiny force of salaried men, a situation which improved unevenly and slowly in such towns as adopted the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. The permissive Rural Constabulary Acts of 1839–40 allowed counties to create professional forces, but their adoption was bitterly resisted, and achieved in only a minority of Southern counties, including Hampshire and East Sussex.⁵

Much recent historiography has addressed the subjects of crime and popular protest, and the resultant volume of publications is too vast to review here. Both topics have been sufficiently researched to permit major syntheses, of crime by Dr Sharpe and Professor Emsley, and of popular disturbances by John Stevenson.⁶ 'Social crime', loosely described as acts proscribed by law, but thought neither immoral nor warranting punishment by considerable sectors of the community, notably poaching and the theft of articles historically embraced by crumbling customary rights, especially waste and woodland products, has been sensitively discussed by Professor Rule.⁷ Popular protest in its overt and commonly riotous forms, across a huge range of topics, has been variously analysed, and of late more covert forms, notably incendiarism, the sending of threatening letters, animal maiming and malicious damage, have been shown to have become permanent features of the early nineteenth-century countryside. The paramount feature of these studies, is that open and secretive modes of protest were widely supported especially by working people, in response to factors over which they had little, if

any, control, and were therefore legitimate expressions which regularly succeeded in achieving some redress of grievances.⁸ Certain aspects of contemporary criminology, have been investigated by historians, and rejected in the case of Victorian identifications of a criminal class,⁹ but there has been no systematic study of criminal gangs despite their recurrent contemporary identification over this period, and their centrality to early Victorian debates over crime, public order and police.

From time immemorial, organised crime had evoked great fears. The 'formidable gang' led by the Clapson brothers in the mid-1790s, allegedly 'at least 36 strong' included 'the noted Jigg', 'so long a terror to the neighbourhood in which he resided'. Squire Fuller's detachment of Yeomanry Cavalry was called out to surround the house in which he was detected, and his arrest followed his being felled by a 'naked sword'; his, and the Clapsons' subsequent transportation was hailed a great deliverance by the affluent in rural Sussex.¹⁰ The appearance of metropolitan 'black legs' at provincial fairs generated somewhat lesser, but repetitive anxieties, revealed for example in the Mayor of Reading's 1810 resort to 'hand bills . . . cautioning the public'; this served to deter some villains from attending the fair, but they decamped on stolen horses.¹¹ The present essay seeks to analyse organised crime, principally that committed in the rural South, to re-examine historians' apparent penchant for categorisations like 'social crime', 'popular protest', and indeed the notion of 'rural crime' itself.

The West Firle Gang

The neighbouring villages of West Firle and Glynde, in the vicinity of Lewes, were among the most 'closed' in the South. West Firle (population, 1811, 551; 1821, 644) was virtually totally owned by the resident Lord Gage, Glynde (population 1811, 203; 1821, 250) contained only 1100 acres, of which 1000 were farmed by John Ellman, the epitome of a thrusting, entrepreneurial, and socially aspirant big-farming tenant, whose success was symbolised by his son's eventual elevation to the county Bench.¹² One criminal association active in this district in the last years of the war before 1815, was led by Joseph Attree, a thirty-four year old journeyman blacksmith, employed at West Firle. Three of Ellman's workers, his twenty-three year old groom Samuel Horsecraft, and two labourers Henry and William (aged thirty in 1815) from the deviant Kenward family,¹³ and sawyer William Wood, comprised the other known members of this

criminal fraternity. They all poached locally. Rabbits were the principal target; they were usually snared, and this, together with the need to steal a gun, from Ellman, which they intended to return, probably reflects 'close' village prohibition of firearm possession by proletarians. They also regularly fished Gage's 'Garden Pond', pillaged his vegetables, and even raided his cucumber frames. More serious crimes were facilitated by Attree's skills; when he picked locks and made replacement keys for owners who had lost the original, he often made a duplicate for himself. He thus had access to at least the parish 'Coal Hole', Gage's substantial pigeon-house, and Ellman's wine cellar.¹⁴

Stolen rabbits, alcohol, pigeons and coal, were consumed in this group's families. Horsecraft even had his share of six pigeons 'baked at Stephens the Baker's'. But stolen goods were also sold. Customers for pigeons included Lewes postman Tinsley who supplemented his income by 'buying pigeons for Shooting Matches', and Lewes 'pie-man' Worsell who took rabbits, which Attree on occasion also hawked round Lewes pubs. Two of his brothers worked as cellarmen in different Brighton hotels, and were ideally placed to fence 'a Brace or two' of carp, periodically brought over by Attree.

Although this fraternity were cautious, with Horsecraft occasionally rejecting Attree's suggestions for targets about Ellman's establishment, they had a number of narrow escapes. Horsecraft feared that 'he would be transported' about Christmas 1813, when Ellman offered a reward for the stolen gun, and Attree was almost detected when removing the wires from snared rabbits. Attree's undoing followed his boasting to Thomas Howard, one of Gage's labourers, whom Attree wished to recruit; Howard joined, but at the instigation of Gage's gamekeeper whom he informed. Howard went on a number of pond, garden and pigeon-house raids in the summer of 1815. On the gang's arrest Horsecraft cracked, and in October was admitted King's Evidence, but the lack of corroborative evidence led to charges being preferred against only Attree and William Kenward for theft, and Worsell for receiving. The former two received seven-year transportation sentences, but the latter was acquitted, and joined a long tradition of receivers found not guilty by juries hostile to the evidence of approvers against those not directly responsible for theft. Interestingly, Gage also attended this Quarter Session to formally qualify as a magistrate.

Stanton Collins and the Alfriston Gang

Alfriston, nestling in the Cuckmere Valley's penetration of the South Downs, was a moderately sized village, with a relatively gently rising

population from 590 in 1811 to 648 and 694 in 1821 and 1831. In 1820, its 2445 acres were principally owned by five non-residents, Lady Burlington, Lords Gage and Cavendish, General Chowne and Thomas Harben, and let to substantial farmers. Several Downland farms extended beyond the parish boundaries.¹⁵ One major tenant, and the largest ratepayer, Henry Pagden, also owned the Great Tithe. Residential and commercial property, including two or three farmhouses, were owned by tradesmen, including the various branches of the prosperous Brooker family, who invested the profits principally from shopkeeping, in residential property during the late eighteenth century. Tradesmen domiciled elsewhere made parallel investments, including the Collins family. In 1807, Charles Collins rented premises, which he bought in 1816, for his butchering business. John Collins, a Brighton draper, also invested in a house. So too did butcher James Collins, since 1794 of Chiddingly, some eight miles distant, who purchased the honeycombed and ramshackle amalgam of buildings known as the Market Cross, in 1815. James's sons, Stanton and Steven, were born in 1796 and 1805 respectively. Stanton was probably apprenticed to Charles in the 1810s, and in 1822 took over and rented these premises, prior to buying the Market Cross from his father. In 1824 the father handed over the Chiddingly business to Steven, thereby establishing both sons in the butchering trade. Stanton erected new premises on adjacent land in 1826–7, raising the capital by mortgaging the Cross to his father for £500.¹⁶

Economic divisions were underpinned by religious affiliations. Since the seventeenth century, the village had hosted a strong dissenting element, reflected in the ambitious construction in 1801 of a 400 seat Congregational Chapel destined for a stormy future. Only one Alfriston farmer, John Bodle, was a Chapel worshipper, and support derived principally from tradesmen, with some farmworkers, from Alfriston and neighbouring villages. John Newman was an original trustee; in 1799 he went into a partnership in a tanning business with twenty-one year old Charles Brooker, who soon broke his family's Anglican allegiances, and was eventually appointed to the ministry and a trusteeship. In 1810 he married his partner's sister, Elizabeth. Brooker was involved in various rifts, including the 1811 decision to exclude visiting preachers from the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, and the 1812 contested appointment of George Betts as pastor. Betts's ministry was also troubled, notably by his 1825 refusal to marry Brooker to his deceased wife's sister, Ann. The couple were married, but under Anglican auspices, and although Ann was buried in the Chapel on her premature death in 1827, another dispute exploded in 1831 with Brooker locking Betts out of

the building, in an episode which terminated in riot charges brought at the Assizes. This 'foolish business' in the estimate of an Anglican vicar who attended court, at least produced 'some amusing . . . cross questioning'. A substantial proportion of the congregation seceded and worshipped in the Seven Croft Barn during the 1830s, leaving Brooker and the new pastor to dominate the Chapel, until this rump split fatally in 1839, when Brooker again used his powers as trustee to lock-out his opponents. Despite these ruptures, some loyalties survived. Labourer William Ford, who joined in 1807, benefited from charitable collections in the 1810s, and 'Died in the Lord' in 1838, having responded positively to censure over the conduct of a beershop which he ran in the last years of his life. John Thorncraft, an Arlington farmworker, was another early communicant who continued into the 1830s, surviving censure for heavy drinking in the 1820s. Thorncraft's four children were all baptised in the Chapel, including son Samuel in 1809.

Some tradesmen retained Anglican loyalties. Stanton Collins's two children were baptised as Anglicans, and in 1820 voted for a controversial rate to repair and extend the church. However, farmers comprised the backbone of the Anglican congregation, symbolised by that branch of the Brooker family who graduated into farming during the war years, when William took the tenancy of the sixth largest farm in the parish. Churchwarden from 1801 to 1811, and again in 1825, William transferred the farm lease to son James in 1819, who survived a change of owners in 1822, and took – in partnership – an additional farm in 1823. James's son, Charles Springate, was farming his own land on his early death in 1850, and all his six children were baptised Anglicans. Civic officers were drawn from both sides of the religious divide. Anglicans William and Charles Brooker Senior both served as overseers in 1813, and the former again in 1816; in 1825 Charles Junior served with his trading partner Newman. Property owned jointly by William and Charles Senior was rented to the parish from 1801 to house paupers, and in 1827 the vestry rented part of the Market Cross from Collins, for subletting to impoverished farmworkers. Alfriston housed a disproportionate number of labourers as their numbers were swelled 'by the residence there of labourers working for farmers in adjoining [Downland] parishes there being very few cottages' available in the latter. Many labourers were also in receipt of allowances in-aid-of-wages.¹⁷

But, if members of both the trading and farming sectors of the community thus exploited the old poor law, the post-war agricultural depression generated conflicts between 'the trades' and the farmers, which principally derived from the latter – both inside and outside the

parish – driving poor rates up through minimising employment in general, with mass lay-offs during the winters, and also paying derisory wages. During one typical February, according to a hostile observer, the labourers

were all without Employment, loitering about in listless and destructive Idleness and receiving relief . . . beyond the wages given to independent labourers in some parts . . . the population discontented & the paupers laugh at the honest labourer when they see him doing his utmost to keep off the Parish, telling him what a fool he is to work himself to Death . . . when they can get just as much from the Parish.

Nevertheless, harsh decisions by cost-conscious vestries were universal, and expanded the poor law as a theatre for three-dimensional conflict between, farmers and tradesmen, and claimants with both, the latter ‘terming’ parish officials ‘their Enemies’.¹⁸

Alfriston’s geographical location gave the village superb advantages for smuggling, and its eighteenth-century notoriety as a centre for contraband was broadened in the early nineteenth century by the scale of crime and protest. In 1831 the press said its ‘population abounded with smugglers, poachers and bad characters’, and in 1834 the vicar noted that Alfriston was ‘famous for disaffection . . . for years a scourge to the Neighbourhood’. In February 1824, Henry Pagden asserted that along with all farmers he had ‘for some Time past lost divers Quantities of Oats, Barley and Peas’, and a press report the following year related that the district was infested by ‘plunderers’ who stole clothing, implements, and anything edible from farm premises; farmworkers, including Pagden’s, were also victims, losing jackets and even lunchboxes. Charles Brooker repeatedly suffered at the hands of shoplifters. Thieves targetted Anglican churches; copper piping was stolen at Alfriston, and at nearby Folkington even the ‘large copper sundial’ disappeared. A prosecuting society, founded during the war, and supported principally by Downland farmers from several parishes, struggled futilely against successive crime waves. Minor successes were scored against petty thieves, including the one month hard labour term served by the seventeen-year old Samuel Thorncraft for the theft of seven apples from major farmer Ade in 1826.¹⁹

Arson in the district assumed serious proportions in the 1790s, and before the end of the war, Downland farmers who introduced threshing machines were threatened with incendiarism. The trough of the depression in 1822, and a peak year for incendiarism, included among its victims farmers who used threshing machines at adjacent Folkington and Jevington. In October 1829, another machine owner,

farmer, and tithe-proctor Rogers of neighbouring Ardingly, ignored threatening letters against its use, and a massive fire, started in different places, consumed thirteen hay and wheat ricks, and the barn containing the offensive technology. Although the rector subsequently ascribed the start of Captain Swing in Sussex to this incident, the Alfriston district was not an epicentre of that revolt.²⁰ In the autumn of 1830, the nearest mass mobilisations occurred six miles away to the north and east, at Laughton and Eastbourne. But arson was again employed against threshing machine owners at nearby Berwick and East Dean. However, it is symbolic that a fugitive Swing rioter from Ninfield, a Wealden Swing centre, sought sanctuary at Alfriston, and on his arrest was 'rescued on the road', with the terrified constable forced to unlock the handcuffs. Alfriston farmworker William Pearson was acquitted of the rescue at the Assizes.²¹

Smuggling remained a further volatile ingredient. Tradition has it that Congregationalist leaders condemned participation, and in April 1815 a party of Seaford fishermen stoned the Chapel; the fact that the only man arrested secured his release with bail set at the huge sum of £100, suggests that these men were smugglers. Chapel leaders effectively compromised, accepting a public apology, in return for abandoning legal proceedings. Stanton Collins was reputedly a leading smuggler, and tradition again has it that this was the source of serious antagonism between him and the younger Charles Brooker. The hard evidence on this score eludes, but antagonisms certainly derived from Brooker's resort to litigation in 1825 over the alleged rape by Collins, of a girl employed by him under the vestry's auspices. Brooker, as overseer, together with Newman and churchwarden William Brooker, were the responsible parish officers at the time, whereupon 'many determined young men . . . were heard to vent the most violent threats and express the greatest disgust' at these officers' conduct. All of their properties were the targets of nocturnal attacks, but the rewards offered by the prosecution society drew blanks. Committal proceedings against Collins foundered on evidential problems, whereupon the dispute was transferred to inter-personal innuendo exchanged in the columns of the county press. The Brookers launched prosecutions against Collins's friend, William Adams of The George, who was fined heavily and subsequently imprisoned, for repeated licensing offences early in 1826, successes which stimulated further attacks on the Brookers' properties.²²

Whatever Collins's involvement in smuggling, in the 1820s he emerged as the organiser of an extensive criminal fraternity. He dealt

in stolen corn, the Lewes brewer Chitty being one regular customer, and Collins also fenced rustled sheep. Much intelligence of appropriate targets came from farmworkers, some of whom including Sam Thorncraft, had permanent employment, and who regularly liaised with Collins at The George. Several of these men were convicted criminals, including Thorncraft, William Pearson and George Huggett; others, like Lewis Awcock, John Reeds and William Adams's son, Robert, were not. A typical raid occurred on 20 April 1831 after Huggett and Pearson inspected the Rev. Capper's tithe barn at Arlington to see 'if there was any booty worth having'. On discovering oats, they repaired to The George, and Collins subsequently provided the cart for the theft of twenty-eight bushels valued at £3. A similar robbery executed by Collins and Robert Adams at Litlington netted twelve bushels of barley, which they took to Collins's brother-in-law, miller John Gorrington of Horsebridge, some six miles from Alfriston. Gorrington was clearly a prosperous rogue who employed several men, including one who had been tried recently for thieving from a previous employer.²³ Gorrington's employees were suspected members of Collins's fraternity, and the miller himself was 'not much surprised' to be called up at 1 a.m. one night to receive goods stolen by Collins. On 11 November 1831, an itinerant jeweller staying overnight in the village, was robbed of his entire stock of 481 items valued at over £200. These were but some of a spate of thefts enumerated by the press in 1831 under the headline 'Depredations . . . prevailing at Alfriston'.²⁴

The terrorist tradition established in the 1820s was maintained but not restricted to affluent targets. Labourer Sawyers had his beehives thrown into the Cuckmere, and shoemaker Boniface's house was stoned. The parsonage barn, rented by two farmers, including the dissenter Bodle, was fired in October 1831, and huge corn stocks destroyed. Thorncraft thought little of taking days off from his employment of 'several years' with farmer Ade of Ardingly to spend at beerhouses. Although suspected of allegiance to Collins, Thorncraft blandly asserted that Ade "'knows better than to discharge me'", and on one occasion flourished a steel 'that was what he set the barns and hovels on fire with'. Collins himself became more brazen in the tense atmosphere prevailing in the immediate aftermath of the Swing revolt, and even one of his defence witnesses subsequently admitted that Collins' 'Character has been blackened of late'. In plebeian circles he achieved folk hero status, given a rough musical rendition by Thorncraft in the Royal Oak at Arlington.

Collins is merry merry there;
 And we will be merry, merry here,
 And set the barns on fire,
 About their ears.

Collins's downfall followed theft accusations levelled against brother-in-law Gorringe, and the arrest of confederate William Pearson, who eventually cracked after repeated judicial interrogation. He, and Gorringe, saved themselves by giving evidence against Collins, who was arrested while driving through Lewes on 26 November 1831. Excited press speculation at the impending dissolution of the Alfriston gang extended to farmer Ade, who had Thorncraft arrested, but quickly lost his nerve when unable to expeditiously find a magistrate to commit, and Thorncraft was released. Collins, charged with corn theft and receiving, rather than the sheep stealing of legend, knew on his committal on 2 December that he faced transportation. On the 4th he conferred in Lewes jail with his attorney, and paid his mortgage by signing over the Market Cross to his father.²⁵ Collins subsequently handed over 'several thousand pounds' to his daughter, thus evading the sequestration to the crown of transportees' assets.

Ironically, many of the propertied inhabitants of Alfriston, including Collins, had been summonsed for jury service at the same Assize at which he was indicted; in the event farmers from Hamsey and Newick – themselves the recent targets of Swing and serious sufferers from crime – deputised. Social tensions in the district increased in the days proceeding the trial on 13 December. Sinister conversations were overheard in the beershops and at The George. On Sunday 11 December the dispute at Alfriston Chapel exploded into riot, and Brooker laid charges against two members who took the Rev. Betts's side, but the sparse evidence does not reveal any relevance to the impending trial of Collins. That evening, concerted attempts to intimidate prosecution witnesses commenced, with arson attacks on Ade at Arlington and Brooker at Alfriston. Ade's three barns, full of corn, and two adjacent hay stacks were fired. 'Several well known suspicious characters' drinking at The George, and more from the 'various beer and pothouses in the neighbourhood', 'left *en masse*', some to 'render assistance', others including those responsible, Thorncraft and John Reeds to watch. At this moment an incendiary device exploded in Brooker's warehouse, only to be immediately extinguished by a passer by, or 'the whole of the adjacent premises' would have ignited and spread to the 'very old . . . buildings in the town'. In the event the witnesses against Collins held fast; indeed, Brooker was so determined to give evidence, that he distinguished

himself by stating that on the night central to one charge, 'I saw a cart under the trees, but cannot swear that it belonged to Collins'. This presumably contributed to Collins's acquittal on the receiving charge, together with Huggett tried for the theft itself; Collins was convicted on the other indictment, although his co-defendant, Robert Adams, was found not guilty. Collins was sentenced to seven years transportation, as was Lewis Awcock, convicted of robbing the itinerant jeweller.

Meanwhile the net closed on Thorncraft. The Bow Street detective sent down, discovered incendiary devices, including a 'scallop shell with . . . brimstone in it', at Thorncraft's lodgings, and it was also established that Thorncraft had tried to implicate a fellow employee, who had accused Thorncraft of thieving, in the arson attack. His accomplice, Reeds, quickly calculated that the preservation of his own life depended on a swift confession, and he went on in a 'cool, deliberate and unfeeling manner' to give the evidence to the March 1832 Assize which sealed Thorncraft's fate. After his conviction,

he stood unmoved during the passing of the sentence, and at its conclusion several of his companions advanced to shake hands with him. Among them were most of the witnesses,

including the wives of the proprietors of beershops patronised by him, the labourer subjected to his attempted incriminations, and other workmates, at least two of whom were from families like his own who had worshipped at Alfriston Chapel. Thorncraft 'assumed a ferocious appearance, and . . . shook . . . his fist at' Reeds. Thorncraft's religious upbringing was reflected when he told his aged parents that while he did not fear death, 'I fear some dread on meeting my God'; he declined to name any partners in crime, and stoically refused twice to make the customary scaffold speech regretting his criminal career: instead, his 'composure and fortitude' sufficed to 'astonish the spectators'.

The removal of Collins, Thorncraft, and two others in 1831-2, dealt with but a minority of criminal associates. As one Alfriston resident, Ann Marchant confided, the authorities had 'secured some but . . . there are still many left'. Henry Pagden's new vigilante patrols, comprising the more determined farmers, scored a few minor successes, although they were not responsible for the successful charges brought in 1835 against John and James Huggett for assault and robbery, sheep stealing, and animal maiming, for which they were transported. Too many of the old confederates remained active, including John Reeds, and the 'inveteracy for thieving' hardly abated. In the early 1830s the press was discouraged from reporting

incendiarism, but one Lewes journalist who reported another Arlington blaze in the autumn of 1832, also claimed that the current situation mirrored that obtaining two years earlier during Swing.²⁶ Meanwhile, Charles Brooker who was also a recurrent victim of crime after Collins's transportation executed some extraordinary property deals. In May 1832 he purchased the Market Cross for £800 from Collins's father, raising £500 through mortgaging the building to Lewes butcher Waters. As Brooker soon claimed that Collins's nine year old son, also Stanton, was his tenant, this deal was clearly part of the plan to preserve Collins's Alfriston business intact.²⁷

This tense situation in the district was aggravated further by the furore of the protracted Reform Bill crisis, and the subsequent politicisation campaign by working-class radicals in the countryside. Alfriston was one theatre where 'the poison of some popular political publications has been instill'd into' workers.²⁸ The passage of the radically utilitarian Poor Law Amendment Act, and the arrival of assistant commissioner Hawley to implement the legislation in the area in September 1834 brought this tension to fever pitch. Hawley ordered existing poor-law authorities to soften up current claimants by modifying existing relief schemes on the new Act's principles, notably that no payments should be made to the able-bodied, until rigorous examination of every recipient's circumstances, and then only in return for work.

The work itself should be digging, and it is quite immaterial whether or not it returns one farthing to the Parish purse as a lucrative speculation, it is from the System and not from the Profit that the parish will reap its remuneration and advantage . . . By a strict adherence to this System you will find that you shortly get rid of some of your worst and most idle characters and though a first essay may not . . . induce . . . all to find more desirable and more profitable employment elsewhere immediately, still it will have the effect of making them more provident in future, and the [harvest and ploughing] wages of the ensuing Autumn will be laid by, to avert the necessity of accepting Parish relief on the above terms the following Winter.

Hawley also insisted that existing workhouse inmates be subjected to rigorous discipline. A crop of summary convictions reveal that the magistracy supported parochial poor-law authorities in their various responses to Hawley, 'some trying gradual & minute alterations; some plunging at once into bolder & harsher measures'. Those on the receiving end asserted that 'Government is not the Poor Man's Friend', as

'a cruel & unjust law has been passed, that they are deprived of their rights, & that the magistrates are disgraced for not having taken their parts against their Oppressors'.²⁹

The Act's support derived mainly from landowners and major farmers, including Pagden. The latter's support at Alfriston for Hawley's crusade stimulated an incendiary attack on his farm, and goods worth over £700 went up in flames. It caused prodigious alarms, press comment that 'the character of the English peasant is entirely changed', and proof of Hawley's contention that the village was 'notorious for the bad Character of its inhabitants'. John Reeds and another were arrested immediately 'somewhat hastily . . . interrogated without . . . a magistrate', and released, while another suspect fled reputedly to America; rewards, and another Bow Street detective drew blanks, except an anonymous letter threatening Pagden's life. Miscellaneous protest, notably covert 'depredation and wanton outrage' continued throughout the 1834-5 winter.³⁰

These events galvanised fierce opposition to Alfriston's – and Seaford's – incorporation into Hawley's proposed Eastbourne Poor Law Union; his insistence 'would destroy the harmony that would otherwise prevail' amongst agrarian capitalists in the other parishes. Hawley was undeterred, as his political calculations projected a pliant Board of Guardians, with existing premises in the former barracks used as a workhouse, ideal for the immediate classification of inmates on the new Act's principles, to quickly create an East Sussex equivalent of the model Union established through the dictatorial sway of the Duke of Richmond, in his territory at Thakeham, in the western division.³¹ Charles Brooker, horrified over the un-Christian separation of man and wife under the new regime, decided to fight it from within by election to the Board, which entailed standing against Pagden backed by 'a Combination of agriculturalists'. Brooker claimed that 'the Trade, or rather the Householders are for me', but he was supported by only one farmer, the dissenter Bodle, who shortly died. 'Death or Liberty' flags accompanied the election, which Brooker won, but on Pagden's instructions, the responsible parish officers, including farmer Dray, the owner of the barn where the anti-Brooker dissenters worshipped, ruled illegally that Brooker's property qualifications were inadequate, and formally returned Pagden. Brooker was personally rebuffed by Hawley, who nevertheless privately informed the Poor Law Commission that Brooker had been 'ousted . . . unfairly'.³²

Brooker fought on, 'harangued the populace in the Public Highways', and appealed for support from 'the Working People', thereby generating their 'hostility to their Employers', who responded by a

printed spoof royal proclamation against 'persons assembling together'. In April 1835 Brooker arrived at the inaugural meeting of the Board of Guardians, but was refused admission. His return to Alfriston was 'met by a considerable concourse . . . with banners and mottoes', and a band. He orchestrated a petition from 'the labourers of Alfriston', took it personally to Somerset House, where he was denied an audience by Edwin Chadwick. Further covert protest erupted, especially malicious damage to the properties of those 'Farmers and Tradesmen' joining Pagden in a boycott of Brooker's and his son-in-law's businesses. Hawley argued for Pagden's maintenance in office, as a new election would galvanise 'renewed excitement destructive of all parochial government'. Chadwick penned a masterfully tactful letter to announce the decision, pragmatically attributing electoral 'irregularities' to 'misapprehension' on the parts of the churchwardens and overseers: Mrs Marchant, the wife of one, whose devotion to 'a quiet social life' underpinned her long-term aversion to Alfriston, neatly portrayed relationships in the 'place; . . . a scene of discord and to be free from it I must remain for ever in my own little circle'.³³

The Amendment Act's implementation caused a further furore; the election of two working-class delegates from every parish to lobby the new Board, was quickly subsumed by the emergent 'United Brothers of Industry', a farmworkers' trade union, formed to prise out wage increases to compensate for the abolition of allowances in-aid-of-wages. Union recruitment forged ahead through rallies, which are difficult to demarcate from the repeated mass lobbyings of the Board; the 'machinations . . . of desperate Characters in . . . Alfriston' were central in both phenomena, and possibly to a riotous explosion of open protest in nearby Willingdon when the new relieving officer was ceremoniously carted out of the parish. Hawley seized on this incident to orchestrate show trials, which reflected traditional divisions, with farmers giving evidence for the prosecution, and tradesmen for the defence. The jail sentences were met with two Downland fires, and further incendiaryism in September, when the huge crowd which convened revealed 'great apathy' to firefighting. The remainder of the year witnessed repeated 'wanton' slaughter of notably Guardians' sheep, the carcasses ostentatiously left in the fields. Only Hawley's repeated attendance at Board meetings, combined with strategic deployment of army detachments, infiltrations of secret policemen, and the collapse of the 'United Brothers' after a lock-out, saw the belated introduction of workhouse classification. The house itself remained a centre for protest – from within. Regular revolts by youths, more by able-bodied men refusing

to work and visiting their wives *en masse*, and the 'demolition' of 'three very strong cells', originally designed to incarcerate soldiers, eventually broke the governor, who took to heavy drinking. His replacement's arrival was greeted by an attempt to fire the house.³⁴

Covert protest characterised the later 1830s and early 1840s. Nevertheless, the Eastbourne Board emerged as a cohesive and determined administration, and Brooker abandoned plans to fight Pagden electorally, in favour of a more ambitious political campaign. Through a series of press articles, pamphlets, and rallies, he attempted to imitate the northern Anti-Poor Law Movement, and eventually became a Chartist, twice standing unsuccessfully for the Brighton parliamentary constituency, shortly before his death in 1843. He made at least one rhetorical reference to earlier events:

We have heard of the Alfriston gang, and no wonder that persons have been sent abroad for outrageous proceedings at Alfriston; pity, it seems, that a few more, as associates to accompany them, had not been shipped off from Alfriston.³⁵

The Barcombe Gang

Barcombe, in the Ouse valley three miles to the north of Lewes, comprised 'remarkably neat houses, but scarcely anything in the shape of trade', other than a corn and oil mill. The village experienced typical post-war demographic growth, rising from 753 inhabitants in 1821, to 1028 in 1841. Several of the larger farmers, including Nathaniel Guy, also cultivated land in adjacent parishes, and Lewes butchers, among them Benjamin Morris, rented or owned pastoral land in Barcombe. Amongst the wealthiest residents was the rector, Robert Allen, possessed of the living annually worth £719, and Captain Richardson JP, the largest landowner. Allen, like Morris, was a Swing target in 1830, and the rector claimed that several of the farmers, in cahoots with Richardson, directed a mass assembly of labourers to the rectory, who were appeased only by promises of tithe reductions. Acrimony between the two men continued for years, with Allen repeating and Richardson denying the allegations to the Tithe Commissioners in 1838. Pre-1834 poor rates were high, and administered by a tight, oligarchic vestry comprising the richest farmers in close consultation with Richardson; the rates 'would never have been collected' from the lesser contributors, but for the exertions of a full-time, professional assistant-overseer. The notorious Roundsmen System was used, but only ephemerally to counter peak

January lay-offs of farmworkers, whose deteriorating attitude to their employers was attributed exclusively by Richardson to the influence of the new beershops, which he argued required much stricter control or 'there will not be an industrious man in the Parish'. Barcombe did not figure in the anti-New Poor Law riots of 1835, though neighbouring Ringmer witnessed a fierce protest, and the imprisonment of a core of leaders. In the later 1830s Barcombe vestry annually excused between twenty and forty of the smallest ratepayers, mostly labourers, from payment.³⁶ The high incidence of crime, and perennial poaching, was attributed to the proximity of Lewes. The larger farmers subscribed to the Hamsey, Barcombe and Chailey Prosecuting Society, whose regular resort to rewards rarely resulted in criminal convictions.³⁷

In 1839, in the words of a member, the 'Ringleader . . . for some years' of the Barcombe gang was thirty-three year old William Heasman, a 'smooth-faced light haired gawky countryman', domiciled with his wife Martha, four children under ten, and his aged mother, in the 'old workhouse premises', converted into a row of tenements. Heasman received old poor-law benefits prior to 1835, but under the new legislation was excused rate payments as his children were 'all young'. Heasman was one of several children; a brother was a farm foreman, and an unmarried sister was a yearly servant on village farms. Like many of his plebeian neighbours, Heasman kept a pig and fowls; he 'never had constant work', but did specific tasks on a casual basis for village farmers, and on occasion laboured for Lewes residents. In common with many farmworkers he migrated for the hop-picking season. Perhaps he was one of those locally identified to the Constabulary Commissioners as 'idle drunken fellows who could hardly live upon the wages they chose to earn and have recourse to other means'. Heasman certainly achieved notoriety among his class for 'getting his living by thieving', and he boasted that his livestock was raised on stolen corn, while his fuel came from raids on faggot and hop-pole stacks.³⁸ There is evidence that Barcombe farmworkers, like those elsewhere, were divided into 'roughs and respectables',³⁹ the latter rewarded for their honesty including the character who handed over a concealed hoard of three fowls to their owner, and received them back for his own consumption. One young labourer, Elphick, would not join Heasman for poaching, saying that 'my Father and Mother would be crazy if I ever did'. Heasman particularly feared, on three counts, his next-door neighbour bar one, thirty year old James Towner. First, Towner was in Richardson's permanent employ. Secondly, Heasman knew that Towner saw 'him bring things home at different times', and was 'afraid . . . [he] should

tell some of the Captain's Men'.⁴⁰ Thirdly, Heasman's attempts to protect himself by drawing Towner into the criminal fraternity were vehemently opposed by Towner's wife, because even the suspicion of wrong-doing could jeopardise her husband's job. Heasman intimidated those workers he believed might incriminate him:

if he knew any one saying anything against him or trying to hurt him he would . . . have his revenge . . . in any kind of way by poisoning their Hog if they had one or destroying their Bees.⁴¹

A combination of sympathy, temptation and intimidation, served Heasman well between 1835 and 1839. Towner – and Elphick – were eventually drawn in; George Tapp, employed by the Rev. Allen, was clearly intimidated. The village shoemaker concealed vital information about shoes mended by him, and worn by a Heasman associate, from constable Austin in pursuit of the robbers of a Ringmer barn. Big farmer Knight's employees 'did not make much answer' to questions about the discovery of stolen sheep skins. One labourer said it all with the admission that

I never told . . . my Master nor a Peace Officer nor to any one which might have led to detection, but I spoke of it amongst my fellow workmen.

Heasman's known criminal associates were principally drawn from his working neighbours. Thirty-six year old John Jenner, a self-employed carpenter, commonly worked 'Trug making . . . Fence making', but like so many craftsmen in the depressed post-war years was reduced to 'Farming' labour on occasion. William Miles (21) and George Day (22) were both principally, though neither permanently employed at the Mills. The remainder, Richard Funnel (45), Joseph Markwick (35) and Elphick (24) were all agricultural day-labourers. Jenner and Markwick were family men; Funnel and Towner had five and six children respectively, and were invariably excused poor-rate payments.⁴² Only George Ware, a higler of Buxted, and later of Lewes, was not a local man.

The catalogue of this association's exploits once Heasman 'confess[ed] . . . to all I can recollect', was extensive; the absence of corroborative evidence restricted criminal charges to the asterisked items only on the following list.

*23 April 1836: Hamsey: theft of two sheep from farmer Nathaniel Guy; Heasman and Funnel.

*30 November 1837: Barcombe: theft of one sheep from Benjamin Morris; Heasman and Funnel.

*27 May 1838: Barcombe: theft of two sheep from farmer James Brook; Heasman and Funnel.

*11 August 1838: Wellingham: theft of two sheep from farmer John Rickman; Heasman, Jenner and Funnel.

*3 September 1838: Barcombe: theft of partridges, beehives and onions from farmer Richard Knight; Heasman and Jenner.

*14 September 1838: Fletching: theft of three sheep from farmer Charles Cave; Heasman, Jenner and Markwick.

*8 November 1838: Chailey: theft of four lambs from farmer Charles Carey, part of flock depastured for Lewes auctioneer, Richard Verrall; Heasman and Jenner.

*7 December 1838: Barcombe: theft of three sheep from the 'Common Field', occupied by farmer Lashmar, who farmed Great Henver Street Farm, Hamsey, though domiciled in Lewes; Heasman and Jenner.

*20 January 1839: Hamsey: theft of twenty-one chickens from Morris's labourer, who kept them on commission for Barcombe farmer, Henry Guy; Heasman and Miles.

9 February 1839: Barcombe: theft of 60lbs pork, 40lbs. butter, from forcibly-entered dairy of N. Guy; Heasman and Jenner.

*19 February 1839: Ringmer: theft of a sack of oats from farmer Water's barn, and wheat from Clayhill Farm, owned and farmed directly by Henry Blackman JP; Heasman and Miles.

April/early May 1839: Barcombe; theft of three sheep from Richardson; Heasman, Jenner and Markwick.

*10 June 1839: Newick: theft of one sheep and a lamb, from farmer John Ellis; Heasman and Day.

*21 July 1839: Barcombe: theft of three hens and eight turkeys from farm of Brighton banker, George Wigney; Heasman, Day and Elphick.

August 1839: Chailey: theft of two 'sacks . . . of Wheat Ears' from farmer Carey's ripening crop; Heasman and Towner.

August 1839: Barcombe: theft of one chicken and six chicks from N. Guy; Heasman and Towner.

Early September 1839: Barcombe: theft of twelve chickens from farmer John Waters, and five geese from Knight; Heasman and Ware.

*12 September 1839: Hamsey: theft of one sheep from Waters; Heasman and Day.

Late September 1839: Isted: theft of ten geese from Mr Atree; Heasman and Day.

3 October 1839: Hamsey: theft of eleven geese from blacksmith and occupier of Covell's Farm, Samuel Smith; Heasman and Day.

*6 October 1839: Barcombe: theft of six fowls from farmer Thomas Foster; Heasman and Day.

11 October 1839: Barcombe: theft of three sheep belonging to Morris, but depastured on the Rev. Allen's glebe; Heasman and Towner.

Heasman, who poached game and fish, and stole fuel and grain on his own, took one and occasionally two of his associates on these raids. Although his criminal activities were regular and extensive, and his notoriety thoroughly earned, at times he was directly motivated by poverty; there is a suggestive chronological coincidence between the apparent start of his criminal career, and the first winter of the New Poor Law, which was particularly severe on the casually employed. One November (1838) when demand for labour customarily plummeted, Heasman 'came' to Jenner 'and said he was starving' as he had no work; desperation on this occasion clearly stimulated determination, for having failed to entrap the first target of sheep, 'Heasman said he must have something he would rob a hen roost'; they ended up at Chailey and unusually took four 'rubbishy things' from a flock of lambs. Heasman also exploited his neighbours' poverty. In February 1839 Miles 'said he had got no work' and 'he didn't know what he should do'; Heasman recommended that 'we get a little Wheat and . . . have it ground into Flour' and they raided two barns. In June 1839 Heasman and Day 'had nothing to do that day and we agreed to have a sheep'. On Saturday 5 October following, Heasman contacted Day 'told him I should like to have something for a pudding . . . for tomorrow', and with Day's concurrence in securing a decent Sunday dinner, fowls were stolen. Towner's poverty drove him to join Heasman in 1839, a year of inflated living costs; unable to afford his customary breast of lamb, Towner was reduced to boiling bones for fat for suet 'cakes . . . for the Children which was cheaper than Bread and Cheese and Meat'. His crisis broke when he 'must kill my Pig' although 'it was doing well . . . for I could not keep it longer'. But unemployment, financial difficulties and hunger, were not invaried stimuli; Jenner 'had work' when he went after sheep, and succumbed to Heasman's stated preference for Jenner as he 'had been before'.

The participants invariably divided the booty, though status clearly mattered, with younger and less experienced partners receiving smaller portions. Mutton and lamb were partially eaten fresh, and the remainder salted, and concealed outside homes, including meat hidden in a rick thatch and taken 'a bit at a time when we wanted'. Stolen beasts were always eaten, and never sold, and skins abandoned; the sale of fells was commonly the source of rustlers' detection.⁴³ Getting stolen wheat ground caused problems when it

was 'missed' and 'Enquiries made', and had to be concealed until the heat died down. Heasman fenced some poultry through Barcombe butcher Coppard, and also disposed of booty through the notorious beershop, brothel and lodging house, kept by Traft at Lewes.⁴⁴ Heasman spent the odd day at Traft's establishment, tipping with the serving girls, and on one occasion when Heasman arrived with eleven partridges, Traft despatched the one-legged Smith, who hung about the beershop executing such commissions, to licensed dealer Oliver. He made an offer, and tangential evidence suggests he was supplied by several poachers and fowl-thieves.⁴⁵ Samuel Simmons who 'sold fish and poultry' was another 'likely man' to purchase stolen articles, and representative of those at the bottom of market-town entrepreneurial hierarchies, whose insecure base was reflected in his residence in Hailsham workhouse a year later. Higler Ware was similarly placed; on one occasion he 'must have some . . . Geese or Chickens . . . soon for he had got no Money' to finance legitimate deals. Ware encouraged Heasman to become a regular supplier, initially in January 1839 'when Fowls sold so dear'. But Ware never paid 'the full price as he knew how we came by them', and Heasman also supplied him on credit. Although Ware went on some raids himself, his heavy drinking worried Heasman, who preferred simply to supply those in need of Dutch courage.

Heasman was resourceful and careful. Targets were usually identified beforehand, and friends often supplied intelligence in the comfort of the Royal Oak at Barcombe, where some raids were planned. Further intelligence derived from Heasman's sister, including that of her employer's recent slaughter of a hog, which could be 'got out pretty easy', and Jenner came too despite acknowledgement that this constituted 'House Robbing'.⁴⁶ Heasman refused to operate in wet weather to avoid the chance of detection through footprints, the recurrent fate of thieves in the countryside. The record is full of Heasman's caution, typified by his killing and disposal of a day-old chick, which he intended to raise with his own fowls, when he noticed its deformed claw. He was furious with Towner's theft of feeding dishes which enhanced the possibility of detection. Heasman drank moderately, if at all before setting out, and enforced the same on his partners. He operated in a restricted district with which he was thoroughly familiar, and his furthest – and temporary – fence lived eight miles away, which in the main minimised distances to be traversed with stolen goods. Moreover, only one known victim was targetted for reasons other than pure theft. Heasman noted that farmer 'Knight and I are not very good friends', which derived from being sacked, and vengeance motivated Heasman's planned robbery

of the partridges Knight shot on the first day of the 1838 season. When a mere eleven birds were found in the farmer's safe, Heasman 'said it would not satisfy him', so he took a beehive and two bushels of 'pretty good onions'. Heasman's abstinence from 'protest theft' was probably contrived to minimise suspicion.

On 15 October 1839 the victim of fowl thieves obtained a warrant to search Heasman's house; no fowls were discovered, but forty pounds of mutton temporarily there – which Heasman admitted 'looks bad' – were. He decided to pre-emptively incriminate his partners, correctly anticipating that either Jenner or Towner might turn informer to save themselves, and in the event they were encouraged to think they might become Queen's Evidence by the wily Henry Blackman, who spent days interrogating these men and achieved confessions from all three. Heasman's crew had not simply and extensively thieved from local farmers and two landed gentlemen and magistrates; the fraternity had targetted the properties of important members of the urban bourgeoisie, including Brighton banker Wigney, butcher and meat merchant Morris, and wealthy auctioneer Verrall, both of Lewes. In addition, Heasman had supplied urban criminals, including the notorious Traft, against whom charges were also brought. Heasman's evidence permitted five charges against Jenner, four apiece against Day and Funnel, two against Miles, and one each against Towner and Elphick, and the net was closing on Ware, who decamped, only to be arrested in 1840. Their convictions would dissolve a major criminal association comprising primary thieves and active fences. The Grand Jury came under pressure from the Session's chairman to indict, despite evidential flaws. Although Heasman, described by the press as a 'rustic Jonathan Wild',

gave his evidence on each trial in a quiet and unconcerned manner, as if he had been the most innocent person in the world, describing the details of each robbery with perfect coolness and without the least hesitation,

the prosecution partially collapsed. The first trial, of Miles for theft, brought a rider to the guilty verdict that he had 'been drawn . . . by an older offender'. The second case against Miles was dropped. The prosecution's resort to the evidence of Heasman's wife against Funnel, was rejected by the court, and two other charges against him dropped; a joint charge with Jenner was 'abandoned' during the trial. Other prosecutions were also abandoned while in process, and additional charges withdrawn. Traft too was acquitted. Jenner's, and Towner's confessions served, to secure their conviction, and respective ten and fifteen year transportation sentences. Miles

escaped with a year's hard labour. If Heasman's performance evinced 'a possibility of contrition in his mind', he did not return to Barcombe, though the acquitted Funnel and Markwick were both subsequently listed as excused ratepayers.⁴⁷

The Battle Gang

Farmworker Jack Wood, and bricklayer George Stunt, were the dominant members of a gang active in the Battle area in the later 1830s, before it was broken up in 1840. Jack, married to Phoebe, and the father of several children, received poor relief in the early thirties, and had been acquitted of arson at the December 1833 Assize.⁴⁸ Stunt, unlike his confederates, was domiciled at Hastings with his wife and stepson. He probably came from Hawkhurst, and narrowly evaded conviction for breaking into a windmill in 1837. Ironically, one of his subsequent partners in crime, thirty-one year old journeyman butcher James Jenner, was at that time a part-time paid 'helper to a constable', and involved in Stunt's arrest. Jenner moved to Battle, where the other gang members – farmworkers William Foord and James Marchant, both thirty – lived. Jack Wood's notoriety derived in part from suspicion that he was an arsonist; Stunt's 'character . . . was tolerably well known' at Battle, customers at the Half Moon on one occasion 'kept on chaffing him about various robberies', including burglary at a church. Jack's arrest in December 1839, his conviction and fifteen-year transportation term imposed in March 1840, triggered a chain of events, which included Stunt's arrest, and confession, followed by his turning Queen's Evidence against his confederates.⁴⁹

Stunt's truncated catalogue of criminality started with a raid on a potato stack with labourer Thomas Langley in November 1838; in the following March they were joined by Horace Metcalf in chicken stealing. Six days later, Stunt conspired with James Marchant, then lodging with fellow labourer Timothy Potter – who had given evidence against Wood for arson⁵⁰ – to leave the front door open to facilitate access to bacon which Potter had smoking up his chimney. Marchant would 'go in and blunder about as if I was drunk as I have done before'. Stunt implemented the plan, but escaped detection only through hiding the bacon in a 'Brick Kiln', from whence it was lifted by unknown parties, 'sack and all'. This petty criminal profile changed once Marchant and Stunt teamed up with Jack Wood, as reflected in their first known job, namely the burglary of a farm bailiff's house on Stunt's old stomping ground at Hawkhurst. The

haul comprised a shotgun, cloaks and other clothing, a writing desk, violin, tea-caddy, nine items of marked silver-ware, and three bottles of spirits.⁵¹ The loot was taken to Wood's house. Marchant presented the tea-caddy to a girl-friend, and Stunt sold the violin to a Hastings 'broker' through his ten year-old stepson, who was instructed to say that 'his father sent him as he wanted to buy victuals and had no work'. The disposal of the silver and the gun required greater exertions; the trio went to Brighton, with which they were familiar,⁵² selling the cloaks at a Lewes 'Secondhand Shop' en route;⁵³ Marchant pawned the gun for the unrealistically low sum of fifteen shillings, left the ticket with a local villain, a common ploy with experienced thieves. A woman pawned the remaining clothes for Stunt, while Wood arranged for 'a man to carry' the silver to London, but refused to reveal the carrier's name to Stunt.

On 4 December 1839, Stunt, Wood and Jenner teamed up to burgle a shopkeeper at adjacent Whatlington; the loot comprised '3 bladders of lard', eight cheeses, 'a quantity of mens . . . and boys ready made Jackets', trousers, various women's gowns, shawls and petticoats, and several pairs of sheets. Although Stunt and Jenner decided against wearing the jackets which they selected for themselves, Wood who was becoming flushed with success, openly wore his, correctly calculating that precise identification of such mass-produced articles was impossible. On the following Saturday, these three, now joined by William Foord, got so drunk that they were refused further service, and once Stunt revealingly argued that 'we were not going to rob the Man . . . the money belongs to the [Turnpike] Commissioners', cavalierly implemented their plan to rob the keeper of the Tavoli Tollgate. Disguised with masks, they stole a horse to lure the keeper from his house, but a melee developed, because they had not reconnoitred and were unaware that a game-keeper was also staying at the gatehouse. Although the four-man gang escaped, and made their separate ways home, Wood had been identified despite his hood, and press reports confidently and correctly anticipated his arrest. The Battle Petty Sessions swallowed members' 'astonishment' at Wood's insistence on an Assize trial, rather than commitment to the imminent Quarter Sessions, where he feared that 'local prejudice', privately communicated by local magistrates on the score of 'character' to the Chairman, would engineer a stiffer sentence.⁵⁴

If this arrest stunned the partners, the resultant dilemma dictated further recourse to crime to realise the cash 'to employ a Counsellor for Jack Wood'. Two raids were planned, one after sheep, the other for flour, which could be sold. Both expeditions succeeded on 2 and 3

March, but the stress clearly showed, with Foord having to be pressurised to go for the sheep, and Stunt keeping out of the way while the flour was distributed among plebeian neighbours and Phoebe baked mutton pies for Jack to eat in Lewes Jail. When Stunt sent his stepson to fetch more flour for his use, his wife acknowledged the risk by beating the lad for going; little Thomas passed Jenner's message 'that the Philistines were about' to his stepfather, whose predicament was aggravated by the simultaneous news that William Cobbett's barrister son John, briefed for Wood's defence, had lost the case, whereupon a fifteen-year transportation sentence was imposed. Stunt's subsequent conduct suggests concern that Wood might seek a reprieve through impeaching his confederates; when taunted over Wood's sentence in an angry exchange in the Half Moon, Stunt blurted out that 'he would speak the truth', and gave some details; he was arrested, and once his ploy that 'he might have told . . . any lies he pleased' in the pub, failed to convince the examining justices in a five-hour marathon hearing, he finally confessed to the eight offences enumerated above. Only Foord among the main members escaped conviction on at least one charge, and Jenner, Marchant, and Metcalf, all received seven-year transportation sentences. Two minor associates were acquitted on indictment for theft, as were Phoebe Wood and two others on receiving charges, and thus compromised journalistic confidence that 'a gang of the most desperate characters in the neighbourhood' had been annihilated.⁵⁵

Clarke of Brighton and Wicks of Lewes

Frederick Clarke, a twenty-five year old hairdresser, ran a 'much frequented' lodging house in Thomas Street, part of a well-known Brighton rookery, with Martha Lemon who posed as his wife. Among their criminal associates were shoemaker Charles Wicks (33) of Lewes, his girlfriend, a prostitute, Ann Peters, originally from Chichester, Ned Moore, an elusive character possibly based in the metropolis at Southwark, and his mistress, Mary Baker: she came from Keymer, seven miles from Brighton where her mother lived. The latter couple were travelling hawkers, dealing in lace and ribbons. Another character, who was never named, was an accomplished thief, and like Moore, used 'picklock keys'. In mid-December 1839 they targetted a Lewes beershop, run by an elderly couple, who were rumoured to keep considerable sums of money in their private quarters over the bar. Lemon and Clarke, and Moore and Baker, put

up separately overnight in Lewes, the latter couple staying at Traft's notorious establishment, meeting up together with Wicks in the morning, the day of 'the great cattle show' when the town was packed with 'many strangers'. Later that afternoon Wicks and Clarke reconnoitred the target beershop, returned in the evening, feigned inebriation, 'and said that they had been to all the Houses in the Town but could find no company to suit them because they were . . . drunk'. Heavy drinking was followed by rumbustious singing, painter Howell, a temporary lodger, 'never heard a man sing louder or have a stronger voice'; 'singing and making a dreadful noise' in the landlady's parlance, whose husband was 'pressed . . . to sing' as well. Clarke popped outside occasionally, saying 'that the Beer was strange to him . . . and ran through him very quick', but in fact opening up the landlord's private quarters, and then ensuring that his confederates – Moore and the un-named man – had finished the job. Twenty-one pounds in money, 35/- worth of silver and other cutlery, and ten silk neckties, were stolen, together with lodger Howell's 'box' containing clothes, £2-10-0, and 'a Gold Brooch with "Mary" engraved on the back of it'. The total value of the haul was calculated at £27-10-0.⁵⁶

These goods were immediately despatched in a pre-arranged fly to Clarke's Brighton establishment. The unknown man slipped off with £10 in cash, leaving the three men, and two ladies to regroup, and share the remaining booty. They used a device, common among thieves, of making cash payments to compensate for unequal divisions of the property. After a night in Brighton, Clarke and Wicks headed independently for Portsmouth, Wicks leaving Peters at Chichester, while Lemon stayed to manage the lodging house. Although the robbery was discovered within the hour, detection came not from close pursuit, but through the liaisons of different police forces, spiced with sheer luck. Two days later, Wicks entered a Chichester draper's shop; the owner, Robert Pascoe, was also chief of the city police. Pascoe thought Wicks's demeanour strange, and 'instructed my son to watch him', but suspicion ended once Wicks spent £1-12-0 on a 'Mackintosh' and left. Three hours later Pascoe received information – including descriptions of some of the suspected parties – from the Brighton police. Pascoe went to the coaching inn, and arrested Wicks who was waiting for the Portsmouth stage. Wicks failed to secrete the neckties he was carrying, and after a night in the custody of the Brighton police, was returned to Lewes where he confessed to the interrogating magistrate, though he disclaimed knowing Moore's surname or the identity of the unnamed man. The Portsmouth police arrested Clarke on 16 December, but not his two

companions, presumably Moore and the other character, because their descriptions were unavailable.

On 18 December the Brighton police raided Clarke's premises, and went to Baker's mother's place at Keymer on the 19th; on Christmas Eve, Traft's establishment was searched, and he, his wife and employees, subjected to prolonged magisterial interrogation. Suspected stolen property was found on all three premises, but none of it from the beershop robbery. 500 yards of ribbon, 100 yards of edging lace, and ten shawls, were identified as part of a haul, valued at £50, taken during a burglary of 'General Shopkeeper' Arnold of Bolney, twelve miles from Lewes on 3 December 1839.⁵⁷ Although the 'shop marks' had been removed, the evidence sustained the prosecution of Lemon for receiving, Clarke for receiving and the beershop robbery, and Wicks – who failed in his attempt to turn Queen's evidence – for robbery. Clarke was acquitted of robbery, but not on the receiving charge to which the gold brooch was central. He and Wicks were transported for ten years, and Lemon spent six months in Lewes Jail. Moore and the un-named man were never apprehended, and Traft escaped yet again; he could not be held responsible for the contents of parcels entrusted to his care by occasional lodgers.

The Guildford Connection

Excellent evidence of the relationships between itinerant and principally unskilled workers, nomadic hawkers and general dealers, and criminal gangs, derive from those responsible for an extensive number of burglaries, primarily in Sussex and rural Surrey in 1850–1, and almost certainly before. Two components of this loose, indeed amorphous association, were tried for major crimes, namely four for the burglary and murder of the Rev. Hollest at his Frimley vicarage, Surrey, on 28 September 1850, and seven for the burglary at the Misses Farncombe's mansion near Uckfield on 1 January 1851.⁵⁸ The evidence proves the involvement of those named in the following list of crimes.

4 June 1850: Kirdford, Sussex: burglary, with violence, at Mrs Harriett Stoner's 'small grocer's shop'; theft of £11–10–0 in cash; John Isaacs, Samuel and Levi Harwood, James Jones, John Smith, James Hamilton.

4 July 1850: Cuckfield, Sussex: burglary of John Penfold's farmhouse; theft of a watch and a gun; James Hamilton, Edward Isaacs, William Brooks.

16 July 1850: Hayward's Heath, Sussex: burglary of Mrs Kennard's public house; theft of two gold and three silver watches, plate, clothing, and a gun; James Hamilton, William Brooks, John and Edward Isaacs.

28 August 1850: Portslade, near Brighton: burglary of general dealer Baker's premises: theft of clothing and cloth; committed by unknown confederates, but James and Sarah Edwards among the receivers.

20 September 1850: Arlington, Sussex: burglary with violence, at vicarage of Rev. Vidal; theft of cash, three watches, plate, and silver cutlery, valued at over £40; Hiram Smith,⁵⁹ Levi Harwood,⁶⁰ and at least one more man.

28 September 1850: Frimley, Surrey: burglary at vicarage and murder of Rev. Hollest; theft of 21 guineas in cash, several watches, two snuff boxes, bloodstone brooch, silver pencil case and ornamental knife; Levi and Samuel Harwood, James Jones, Hiram Smith.

30 November 1850: Frensham Common, near Farnham, Surrey; shoemaker Charles Marshall, lured from his house by traveller asking directions, and knocked unconscious; sister assaulted: theft of silver watch, 'old sovereigns', two pistols, two pairs of trousers, and other unspecified items; William Brooks and seven unknown others; receivers included the Edwards, Elizabeth Oliver, James Gulliver.

Early December 1850: Maresfield, Sussex: burglary of Knight's workshop: theft of various tools, subsequently used for breaking and entering, found in possession of two of the Uckfield burglars, William Hillyer and Thomas Morgan.

12 December 1850: Chailey, Sussex: burglary of the Six Bells, proprietor Mrs Hurst; theft of watch, spoons and other items; William Brooks and unknown others.

31 December 1850: Holtye Common, Hartfield, Sussex: burglary of the White Hart, proprietor Mr Kenward; theft of a bundle of calico, sheeting, and a 'considerable number of silver spoons'; James Hamilton, John and James Smith, Thomas Morgan, William Hillyer.

1 January 1851: Uckfield, Sussex: burglary of elderly Farncombe sisters' mansion: theft of £20 in gold, one £10 and seventeen £5 banknotes, some silver money, forty-five items of silver cutlery, silver watch chain, pepper box, several brooches, two mourning rings, gold chain, two gold seals, and a diamond ring, alone valued at £70; William Brooks, James Hamilton, John and James Smith, Thomas Morgan, William Hillyer, Joseph Carter.

Some details are known about these criminals. Richard Trower, who adopted the alias of Hiram Smith, by which he will be known here, was born at Merton in 1826; his father, foreman at a paper mill,

was transported in 1830 for thieving from his employer, and his three children were brought up on their mother's earnings as a laundress. Hiram worked with her until 1844 when he became a potboy at Wandsworth, which he abandoned after eight months and 'joined a gang of tramping hawkers'. He was described as a hawker on his arrest for robbery from the person in the vicinity of Gravesend in November 1849, only to be acquitted at the Kent Assize in March 1850. Arrested shortly afterwards with one of the Isaacs on suspicion of housebreaking, and the still unsolved highway robbery and murder of the Brighton brewer Griffith in February 1849, which attracted an offer of a pardon for an approving accomplice, and a £300 reward for information; both men were released for lack of evidence.⁶¹ Several of Smith's villainous associates lived in Guildford, a notorious centre for criminals active in the adjacent unpoliced and wild countryside, which embraced 'a great quantity of waste land';⁶² they included Levi Harwood, who lodged with girlfriend Mary Ann Croucher at the Swan beershop, a decidedly shady establishment.⁶³ Harwood had been imprisoned as a youth in 1842 for burglary at Guildford.⁶⁴ The other two of this core, 'called the Guildford men', by associates elsewhere, were Levi's cousin, Samuel (25) and James Jones. Jones had had a narrow escape earlier in 1850, when he successfully claimed that he had bought articles, proved to be stolen, in his possession, though Levi's close mate George Brisk, was transported for this offence in March. Samuel Harwood and Jones lived at the Wheatsheaf; Benjamin Downes, who helped run this pub, 'did not know that they work for anyone', though both were 'out at night at times'. The Wheatsheaf, at which several labourers lodged, the Rose and Crown, the Malthouse Tap – a beershop run by Jones's brother-in-law – together with the Swan, were all subject to regular surveillance by the town's small police force headed by Superintendent Hollington.⁶⁵

Itinerant criminals commonly contacted this Guildford core to act with them. John Isaacs (25), a hawker, 'had no regular residence, but lives in a travelling waggon', recruited both Harwoods and Jones for the Kirdford burglary in June 1850. In the following month, Isaacs took valuables stolen at Hayward's Heath to Levi Harwood, who used his superior knowledge of London fences to dispose of them. Isaac's brother, Edward, was an occasional criminal partner. James – 'Butcher' – Hamilton, aged twenty-nine, dealt in horses and 'travelled about the country selling brooms', while his wife and small daughter resided in a house on a 'remote part of Woking Common', 'the heart of a notorious resort for Gypsies, vagabonds and other indifferent persons', where 'scarcely three days elapse . . . without the Commission of . . . greater or less depredations'.⁶⁶ Hamilton first

met John Isaacs at Farnham Fair, where they traded a stolen donkey. Three more associates, William Hillyer (23), Joseph Carter, and Thomas Morgan (30), also had 'huts' on Woking Common. William Brooks was another nomadic hawker, who lived in a tent with thirty year old spinster, Elizabeth Oliver. Brooks's uncle, bricklayer James and aunt Sarah Edwards, both aged fifty, were domiciled in a cottage in an obscure part of Crowborough Common, which was also used as a depot for stolen goods by Brooks. His sister, Eliza Howis, currently lived with James Gulliver, and periodically at the Edwards's, and both traded in items stolen by Brooks, often with brothers John (25) and James Smith (18), both basket-makers, a common itinerant's trade. Indeed, only shoemaker Morgan had a skill, though most associates laboured occasionally. Carter worked on a school built at Uckfield in the spring of 1850. Hiram Smith sought labouring work at the 'new water works' erected at Kingston-on-Thames. Hamilton – who still went hop-picking – Hillyer and Carter, came from the Rotherfield district of Wealden Sussex, and had been employed as ploughboys by farmer Acheson.⁶⁷

Most of the victims lived in relatively isolated locations, and were targeted on the basis of variously obtained intelligence. Carter identified the Farncombes' mansion while working nearby, and had known one of the servants for some years. The sisters lived on investment income, which – incredibly in one journalist's estimation – 'was usually transmitted by the carrier's', half-yearly, though a delay in the despatch of the payment about the time of the robbery denied the gang an even larger haul of cash.⁶⁸ Hollest's Frimley vicarage was reconnoitred by Hiram Smith while peddling plates at the house four days before the robbery. Hollest's disinterest in the merchandise was followed by his refusal to give Hiram food or drink; Smith used the incident to strike up conversations with two men encountered in the street, complaining that his reverence 'was a tight fit' for not buying plates, 'and I also tried it on for a bit of chuck [food] . . . "but it was no go": "the bloody Parson . . . would not give me so much as a drop of small beer"'. Ironically, one of these characters was builder and parish constable Macey, though as he was working, he had no mark of office. Through visual observations, and in these and other conversations, Smith learned that Hollest had four or five domestic servants, and that he kept the funds of the National School.⁶⁹

Having identified a target, gang members normally travelled in pairs to a nearby rendezvous. All four concerned in one raid on an inn were encamped in Copthorne Common; they went in pairs the seven miles to 'the Ouse Valley Viaduct on the Brighton Railway', and then together at night walked the mile and a half to Hayward's

Heath along the permanent way. Greater planning accompanied other exploits. John Isaacs and Hamilton identified the Kirdford shop, went to Guildford to apprise the others, liaised at Godalming, split into two groups for the twelve mile hike to Balls Cross, just a mile from the shop. Hamilton, Hillyer, the Smith brothers, and Brooks, spent Christmas 1850 at Woking discussing possible targets, and then met up with others, including Carter and John Isaacs, at Brooks's tent, pitched near Edenbridge in Kent on 30 December, prior to the proposed raid on Downlands at Uckfield. By then Hamilton had additionally identified the White Hart at Hartfield, but only the Smiths, Morgan and Hillyer, went on this job on 31 December. They returned to Brooks's tent, shared the food with those present, but not the other booty. On the following night the entire gang raided Downlands. Chief Justice Campbell, who tried these men, expressed some astonishment at their capacity for 'Meeting together in four different counties', and a West Sussex magistrate advanced the burglars' organisational prowess as revealed by 'the system of communication adopted by tramps', as a powerful argument for reform of his unprofessionally policed county.

On arrival in the target's vicinity, an advance party reconnoitred, before a final decision to break-in. Look-outs were invariably posted; the raiding party discarded shoes and top clothes, donning old garments which were usually destroyed afterwards. Premises were often entered dexterously. At Kirdford one of the Harwoods 'bored a hole in the shutter with a centre bit', melted the lead in the exposed window with a candle, and removed a 'whole frame of glass'. Entry into the Frimley vicarage proved more complicated; the woodwork holding iron bars across a scullery window was cut away, and the bars removed: the next obstacle, a locked door to the kitchen, was bored through in two places with Levi Harwood's 'worm', permitting 'a person with a crooked instrument to pull back the bolt on the opposite side'. Some of the burglars were 'very small men' and two were 'scarcely five feet high'.⁷⁰

Having effected entry, the burglars silently amassed booty from items found on the ground floor. Intelligence rarely extended to the precise location of money, which was commonly kept with other valuables in bedrooms; fear of burglars was the reason for shop-keeper Stoner concealing her takings under her pillow. Many householders, especially those in remote parts, kept loaded firearms at the ready. Captain Marples JP, domiciled in rural Surrey, observed that

his house had been armed for a long time, and he never went to bed without having a six-barrelled revolving pistol under his pillows.

Among those 'always' keeping loaded guns at their bedsides were shoemaker Marshall of Frensham Common, and butler Wood at the Uckfield mansion. The need to interrogate victims over the whereabouts of money and valuables, and to terrorise them, dictated the use of masks and arms. The Harwoods used pistols, loaded with marbles, and gang members not carrying guns, carried alternative weapons, swords, crowbars and jemmies. Victims, or their servants, regularly resisted; Mrs Stoner was dragged about by her hair until 'nearly fainting' before she revealed the hiding place. The Rev. Vidal was assailed in his sleep, said his cash was in a desk, and handed over the key accompanied by an impromptu lecture on the hereafter; the burglars

dragged him to his study, where they took upwards of £20 in gold and silver. The man with the sword drew it across his [Vidal's] throat, and threatened to use it if he made a noise.

He was then locked in his bedroom during his housekeeper's interrogation; she too 'courageously offered them the Bible'. At Downlands Wood was disarmed while trying to use his gun.⁷¹ At Frimley, the Rev. Hollest leapt out of bed, and was shot while attempting to seize the poker; he pursued the burglars, fired a shotgun at them as they fled across the lawn, and collapsed. The police faced armed men in pursuit of these criminals.

Despite their panic, the four attackers rigidly adhered to their practice of dividing into pairs when leaving the scene; one pair returned to Guildford, the other went directly to London with the booty. The seven Uckfield raiders split into three groups, and met up eight miles away on Crowborough Common. Some of their booty was divided, with bargaining and compensatory cash exchanges, but valuables, including plates with identifiable crests, and some, but not all banknotes, required elaborate disposal, and John Isaacs took such items to Guildford immediately for courier despatch 'by the early train' to London. Final settlement was made after these goods were sold to fences, though this created a fertile forum for distrust and argument, and for unequal sharings, in part legitimised by individual status and the running of additional risks in getting goods to fences. Elizabeth Oliver, Brooks's cohabitee, was arrested in Tunbridge Wells; a bag, hidden in her skirts contained watches and seals, and sixteen guineas, the proceeds of fencing. One of the watches, according to a watchmaker, had been subjected to

a process technically called "christening" . . . the plate had been turned upside down, and the name and number obliterated.

But less valuable items of loot were also identifiable, and many gang members concealed shares in remote places, for later recovery. When Brooks's uncle's cottage was searched, the police discovered

a large quantity of the most heterogeneous description . . . jackets, trousers, shawls, silk and cotton handkerchiefs, calicoes, pillow cases:

'cart loads' were removed.

The Hollest murder and the Uckfield robbery, together with the impressive list of unsolved crimes, generated criticism when they took place within the jurisdiction of professional police forces, and castigation of the situation – notably in rural Surrey – where the only professional forces, were the tiny borough establishments. Frimley, 'at the centre of the hop country', with '40 or 50 straggling houses', was one of ninety-three Surrey parishes policed under the ancient system of elected amateur constables. The positive role of the current incumbent, Macey, was restricted to evidence of his fortuitous encounter with Smith during the latter's begging encounter with Hollest. Although first on the scene, Macey was too overwhelmed even to take charge of the housebreaking implements strewn about the scene, or to search the gardens.⁷² Immediately intelligence reached Justice Austin of the Godalming Borough police committee, he ordered the head policemen, Inspector Biddlecombe, to the scene ten miles outside his jurisdiction, on the following morning (28 September); he was soon joined by Detective Kendall of the Metropolitan Police, who went on Home Office orders, though in the event his expertise was limited to co-ordinating tangential enquiries. The vigilant Guildford Borough Police made the key breakthrough, with the arrest of three of the four responsible at their lodgings on 29 September, on the grounds that they were 'all absent from home' on the night of the 27th. The police's success was compromised by the necessity to hold them overnight in the single cell available, before solitary confinement was achieved through dispersal to police custody at Farnham and Godalming. The fourth man, Samuel Harwood, was also shortly arrested in Guildford, in possession of the sole stolen item recovered, a Georgian penny token.⁷³

Immediate offers of a £150 reward for the arrest of the murderer, and a pardon for the evidence of any accomplice who had not fired the fatal shot, paradoxically both hindered and facilitated the creation of a strong prosecution case. It created 'jealousy' between the Guildford and Godalming forces. Inspector Biddlecombe had established how the burglars broke in, discovered the footmarks of two sets of naked feet, and detected where one burglar had fallen heavily on a gravel path. Biddlecombe also established that a servant girl had

seen the gang loitering in the village about midnight, and could identify Jones and Hiram Smith. The Guildford police found dried blood between Levi Harwood's toes, and established circumstantial evidence of various sittings of gang members by townsfolk over the 25–29 September period, including Jones's purchase of an ounce of gunpowder, and Smith's enquiry over the prices at a gunsmith's. Bloodstained stockings, and some cloth identical to that used for the two 'green baize masks', discovered near the vicarage, comprised the remaining evidence; this was not the stuff for murder convictions, and as the press admitted, a confession was desperately needed.⁷⁴

During the time of the repeatedly adjourned inquest hearings, Smith coldly analysed his predicament; his mother, who had supplied the sixteen pounds to pay for his successful defence seven months earlier at the Kent Assizes, refused further funds, and Smith feared that he would be undefended on a charge of murder, committed in fact by Levi Harwood. On 10 October, Superintendent Hollington of the Guildford Police, exploited the fact that the prisoners could no longer liaise, and engineered rumours of a "split" between the suspects, and with these percolating 'a complete disclosure' was confidently predicted. On the 13th Smith said that "it behoves every man to take care of himself", closely studied the terms of the pardon outlined in the handbills, and despite the studied refusal of either his jailer or Hollington to confirm that the pardon would be 'acted upon', decided that he was eligible. The publicity accompanying his confession released a further flood of rumours that he had also admitted to 'several other murders and burglaries in different parts of the country', including the killing of Brighton brewer Griffith. Although the latter claim made periodic appearances in the press, it was categorically denied by the Guildford police in October 1850. If Smith had admitted to Griffith's murder, he would have been tried, thereby nullifying his strategy over the Frimley killing. Moreover if he had even admitted complicity in another murder committed during another robbery, his evidence against his Frimley partners might be fatally compromised in jurors' estimations. It was for precisely these reasons that lawyers defending the Harwoods and Jones hammered away over the Griffith case, but they failed to elicit anything other than a denial from Smith under intense cross-examination. Smith's evidence was crucial to the conviction of Levi Harwood and Jones, but Samuel Harwood evaded conviction with these two on 15 April 1851, principally because he was not in the room when the fatal shot was fired. Levi Harwood reserved admitting that he fired the gun until the morning of his execution. On cousin

Samuel's acquittal, he was re-arrested, and charged with the Kirdford shop burglary in June 1850.⁷⁵

The evidence for this charge derived directly from the detection of the Uckfield burglars. At daybreak on 2 January 1851, butler Wood contacted P.C. Relf of the professional East Sussex county force. Relf, accompanied by his son, spent an inordinate time investigating the mansion. Eventually, details were circulated to the Metropolitan Police, and all forces in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire; they reached the Guildford Police on the 4th. By then a major breakthrough had been fortuitously made. James Hamilton, John and James Smith, with their part of the booty including banknotes, calicoes and an umbrella, spent much of 2 January regaling themselves at the Rose and Crown at Groombridge, twelve miles across the Kent border from Uckfield. Arguments developed when Hamilton initially resisted the Smiths' insistence that he conceal the umbrella and calico in a nearby wood. The landlady sent for the local amateur constable Piddleden; he kept the pub under surveillance for three hours, during which a further row developed when John Smith picked up a sovereign and refused to return it to Hamilton. Piddleden appeared on the scene, and incredibly Hamilton had John arrested. A crowd gathered, and somebody informed Piddleden of the hidden package, and he arrested the other two. Although this district was under the permissive 1842 Parish Constables Act, whereby a professional supervised all the village policemen, Piddleden failed to inform his superior, and hurriedly took his three prisoners the three miles to Tunbridge Wells, as that Borough force had cell accommodation. The Borough Police had heard of events at Uckfield, recognised that three prime suspects had come their way, and at this juncture completely seized the initiative, despite the fact that these men had committed no crime in their jurisdiction. Hamilton, who rapidly decided to approve, confirmed the police's suspicions.⁷⁶

When the Guildford Police received details of the burglary, they went to the notorious Swan, where they encountered, and after a struggle, arrested Hillyer and Morgan, armed with a pistol and a knife respectively; the former managed to 'swallow something', presumably a banknote, and 'nearly choked'; a search revealed that he was penniless but in possession of a good quality jacket. Morgan had a marked towel, and a decent cloak, all items on the list of stolen goods. Superintendent Morton, had established the Guildford connection from Hamilton's confession at Tunbridge Wells, and Morton arrived at Guildford to find these two suspects in custody. Morton secured the help of the Guildford Police to assist with the arrest of Carter at his Woking Common residence. Only Brooks and John

Isaacs remained at large, and between 5 and 10 January Morton, 'scoured . . . Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire', after leads, but returned to Tunbridge for the committal hearings on the 11th. Meanwhile his colleague, Superintendent Dadson, had followed up Hamilton's information that goods had been concealed on Crowborough Common, and from this location traced footprints to the Edwards's house, and without informing the East Sussex police, discovered the store of articles stolen by Brooks. Elizabeth Oliver was not present, but she was detected among the huge crowd hoping to catch a glimpse of the prisoners being taken to court. The Tunbridge Police seized on her possession of goods stolen at Hartfield, also in Sussex, to investigate that burglary too. Dadson and Morton then renewed their hunt for Brooks who had been sighted at beerhouses at Bagshot and on the Surrey-Hampshire border, and subsequently in the notorious countryside between Woking and Chertsey. As the net closed, the Tunbridge men secured the services of other officers; heavily armed and 'disguised as gypsies', they 'made a minute examination of the district. Lodges, barns, stables, piggeries underwent the closest inspection', and Brooks was surprised, asleep under straw in a barn, and handcuffed before he had chance to use his knives. Only John Isaacs remained at large, his description circulated to police forces nationwide.⁷⁷

On 17 January the Tunbridge Bench committed Brooks and the five principals to Lewes Jail for the Uckfield break-in. All seven, including approver Hamilton, set out – heavily ironed – in the Tunbridge Police's open 'cart', guarded by a strongly-armed detachment of the chagrined East Sussex force. The gang tried to engineer incidents by frightening passing horses, and a superb chance presented itself when

seeing a gang of Irish labourers approaching and calculating . . . on their sympathy, [Brooks] raised his heavily manacled hands and aimed a blow at Dadson, knocking off his hat . . . at the same time he called upon his fellow prisoners to leap . . . Hillyer instantly responded . . . by dashing his handcuffs against the side of the vehicle . . . to snap them, but failing that . . . attempted to throw himself on the road.

Police threats to shoot the first man to move kept the Irish at bay, leaving Brooks to make a final, forlorn bid for freedom, to the crowd milling outside Lewes prison.

At the Sussex Assize on 12 March 1851, Hamilton's evidence sufficed to convict all six for the Uckfield job; Edward Isaacs was found guilty of the Hayward's Heath burglary. A miscellany of additional charges against various men were dropped once all were

sentenced to life transportation. Receivers Oliver, Gulliver and Howis, were transported for fourteen years, while Brooks's uncle Edwards was sentenced to the mitigated penalty of two years imprisonment, after a solid character reference from his periodic employer over thirty years. Hamilton, who claimed to be penniless and 'in considerable peril', was retained in police custody, 'until his services can be dispensed with'.

They were soon in demand. The arrests of his partners permitted John Isaacs to invest the proceeds of goods fenced by him in London, in a new travelling van. He moved to Somerset, another county which had resisted implementation of the 1839 Rural Constabulary Act, to live at Frome, policed by two paid and seven amateur policemen; all nine were reputedly too terrified to confront the substantial criminal element in the town, some of whom were 'connected with gangs in Bath, Bristol, Bradford and Trowbridge'. Isaacs was allegedly 'organising another gang' when arrested in undisclosed circumstances, on 11 April 1851, and handed over to the Tunbridge Police, together with items of jewellery stolen at Uckfield. Dadson and Morton, while collecting Isaacs, also investigated his new van, discovered over forty miles away, but the jewellery found in it, was not on any police list of stolen property. Isaacs was committed, after three 'densely crowded hearings' with 'gypsies forming a large part of the auditory', by Horsham Petty Sessions. By the time of his and Hiram Smith's trial for the Kirdford shop burglary in August 1851, all their partners in the Frimley and Uckfield robberies had been 'executed or transported'; these remaining two were also convicted principally on Hamilton's testimony, and sentenced to life transportation.⁷⁹ One final dramatic incident ensued. In October 1851, John Isaacs, while awaiting transportation in Lewes Jail, dexterously fashioned a key from wood, cotton and tin, accomplished the 'extraordinary' feat of opening his cell door, and made a dash for freedom when the gates were opened to admit warders on the morning shift. He was seized in the High Street and ordered into leg-irons for the remainder of his stay. An enquiry revealed that the cell doors could be unlocked – but only from the outside – 'by a bit of wire'.⁸⁰

Most southern towns contained districts crammed with impoverished inhabitants, among which were criminal elements, including itinerants and vagrants, putting up overnight or for lengthier stays, in varieties of cheap lodgings. Gangs, often comprising ephemeral associations of less-skilled criminals were commonly formed to prey on targets in the adjacent countryside, notably in districts without a professional police in the mid-nineteenth century. At times, usually during the winter months of peak under- and unemployment,

criminal activity achieved a crescendo, virtually terrorising affluent residents. At the end of 1852 for example, villains based in Frome committed 'numerous felonies and depredations' in Nunney, Cloford and Marston Biggott, including two actual and one attempted burglaries, three barn break-ins, a big fowl theft and a highway robbery, in the space of three weeks.⁸¹ During the same winter the unpoliced area of rural West Sussex near Brighton, suffered a spate of burglaries. The 'mansions' of prosperous members of the Brighton bourgeoisie, and parsonages, formed the principal targets, but several lesser establishments, including commercial premises, were also burgled. Some of the bigger houses were repeated targets; the Rev. Wheeler's was entered thrice, the banker Hall's twice, and Buckingham House, owned by Henry Colville Bridger, also thrice. Entries were invariably gained through obvious weak spots, notably dairy windows, with elementary tools, including knives and on one occasion, an 'iron bed screw'. This apparent lack of sophisticated equipment, possibly explains the number of abandoned break-ins, by would-be burglars not in the same league as the Guildford connection, with operations restricted to the theft of clothing and food found on ground floor rooms only. Most items were consumed, sold through the second-hand market, or pawned.⁸²

Conclusions

Much of this evidence compromises or challenges both a range of analyses of social crime and popular protest, and even more assumptions about these topics. Indeed the very notion of gangs, requires qualification. Much organised crime was committed by a complex series of changing partnerships, with up to seven or eight people at times, as at Downlands and Farnham Common; some of these people had specific skills, especially over breaking and entering, which appears to have put their services at a premium among often widespread and numerous, but loose and shifting criminal associations. The Guildford connection contained men whose expertise at house-breaking derived from their miniscule size and dexterity with implements. If some characters, including Heasman, were demonstrably major initiators, a series of ephemeral but precise circumstances governed the choice of partner for particular enterprises. Poverty was an important ingredient, though its force as stimuli varied. Unemployment, impecuniousness, and indeed hunger, repeatedly figured in Barcombe events. Some farmworkers were permanently employed, but like Thorncraft at Arlington, thieved to

supplement income, or like Towner at Barcombe, adopted criminal strategies originally to get through a crisis. There is a suggestive chronological coincidence between the apparent start of Heasman's criminal career and the implementation of the Poor Law Amendment Act. Three members of the Guildford connection came from one highly impoverished Wealden district, where farmers discriminated against younger unmarried labourers for employment, and the timing of this three's virtual abandonment of farmwork and resort to itinerant criminality occurred at about the age of eighteen. Itinerants and vagrants were the perennial organisers of joint criminal expeditions, including raids into the hinterlands of towns. Some of this crime was committed by people simultaneously engaged in miscellaneous petty trading, and hawking provided a cover both for the gleaning of intelligence of targets, and for the disposal of certain stolen goods, notably items of clothing, but also wholesale volumes of textiles burgled from village shopkeepers. Contemporaries accurately identified a close relationship between itinerancy, hawking and crime, as revealed by several of the gangs studied here.

But organised criminality was neither the sole prerogative of impoverished farmworkers, nor itinerants and vagrants working the marginal and black market economies. Skilled men including carpenter Jenner and bricklayer Stunt, were representative of rural artisans who were victims of the post-war depression, and the latter's explanation that unemployment drove him to sell articles, including a stolen violin, was unquestioned. To the several artisans encountered above, we may add a twenty-two year old mason, employed by a criminal association active at Chiddingly in 1818-9, to make a breach in the roof of a building, and after the robbery hired to repair it by the unsuspecting owner.⁸³ Many petty dealers, especially those who dealt in perishable farm goods, and organised the supply from country to town, had perilously insecure financial bases, and are found as thieves, in their own right, in partnership with others, and as important disposers of stolen goods, as revealed by the details from Lewes. There is some evidence that pre-1834 demographic growth was in part absorbed by men, unable to secure farmwork, getting a foothold in rural craft industries⁸⁴ and the petty entrepreneurial ladders; under the old poor law, both categories received some aid from public funds.⁸⁵ The reformed social security system ended such assistance, while the prospect of the workhouse simultaneously increased the pressures to somehow contrive a living, which led to a marked expansion of the numbers of small-time dealers. Dealing partly in stolen goods could make the difference between success and failure.⁸⁶ There are examples of criminal gangs including men from

the ranks of the hard-pressed small farmers, like Stevens of Chobham, the son of one, whose share of extensive thieving was partly fed to his horse, ownership of which he was determined to preserve.⁸⁷

Attree of West Firle was not the only smithy who equipped himself with the keys to the premises of neighbours. Master blacksmith Langridge of Hayes, Kent, gave wet clay to labouring associates to take the impressions of keys, and they subsequently used the fashioned article to gain entries to steal foodstuffs, chickens 'times out of Number', iron for Langridge's forge, and also silver plate.⁸⁸ The theft of such valuables, like Attree's encouragement of repeated raids on Ellman's wine-cellar, suggests though it does not prove, that these characters were hardly exclusively motivated by poverty. Want certainly did not motivate Collins at Alfriston, nor his brother-in-law the miller. Collins entertained socio-economic aspirations, and while his engagement in smuggling was seen as a legitimate exercise by some – but not all – of his affluent neighbours, his orchestration of numerous robberies to further inflate his income was universally condemned by the propertied inhabitants of Alfriston and adjacent parishes.

In their justly famous study of Captain Swing, Professors Hobsbawm and Rudé, project a picture of essentially innocent but deprived farmworkers driven to revolt by the duration of intolerable living standards and experiences.⁸⁹ In fact, a proportion of Swing activists had criminal records,⁹⁰ and as revealed here, other Swing protesters, including William Pearson of Alfriston, and Jack Wood of Battle, were members of subsequent criminal organisations. Alfriston particularly had a long history of the use of incendiarism as popular protest, yet some arson – and other forms of covert protest – was also the product of intimidatory strategies deployed against victims and potential prosecution witnesses. The puritanical Brooker suffered intimidation on both counts, while Thorncraft – convicted of theft while a youth – intimidated his own long-term employer with thinly-veiled arson threats, and stole with virtual impunity. The permutations of social crime and popular protest experienced at Alfriston, derive from juxtapositions of variously motivated incendiarism and other forms of covert attacks on property, smuggling, working-class trade unionism and politicisation, and Brooker's campaign against the New Poor Law, further intermixed with long-term religious differences and the struggles between ratepayers with opposing interests. Alfriston's experiences may have been unusual owing to their intensity and complexity, but less-rich variants are found elsewhere. Barcombe's subjection to Swing, was followed by Heasman's career, and he used terrorist tactics to prevent suspect

proletarians from informing, though his targets contained just one known example of selection for purposes of personal revenge, to which one detects at least a tinge of "popularity" over the issue of sackings. Parallels include fraternities which troubled Brenchley, Kent, and Chobham, Surrey, in the later 1840s; the former adopted incendiarism to cover house-breaking expeditions, because as members had "steady work they would not be suspected". The village farmers repeatedly targetted by the latter, responded by funding the employment of a policeman: his activities compromised the gang, which reacted with anonymous letters threatening animal maiming and arson, "if you don't due away with the Pleace". The subscribers' steadfastness was rocked by seven fires in the space of a week.⁹¹

Yet some criminal associations reveal moralistic undertones. The Battle gang discussed the fact that the cash in the tollgate keeper's possession was not his, but the anonymous Turnpike Commissioners'. Robert Hurd, one of the notorious Frome gangsters,

boasted . . . of some of his exploits at races, fairs etc, and . . . that he had made up his mind never to murder, rape, or to rob a poor man, but . . . he considered it no harm whatever to rob any one who had plenty.⁹²

There is no direct evidence that the Guildford connection was conditioned by such sentiments, and if their robbery of the Farnham Common shoemaker might suggest that they were not, these were ambitious criminals determined to steal very valuable items wherever possible, and this was reflected in their commonly targetting the very wealthy. Their hauls were often substantial, and at times they were flushed with cash; while they partially reflect Rudé's categorisation of the 'acquisitive criminal',⁹³ adopting illegal means to a higher standard of consumption, there is no evidence that they aspired to change their life styles, as symbolised by John Isaac's investment of part of the proceeds of robbery in a new caravan. The proceeds from crime at least permitted some of the more successful to cut something of a dash, exemplified by Charles Wicks who 'dressed in a rather swellish style'.

Gangs operative in the rural South in fact represent dimensions of an amorphous criminal network, with something of a metropolitan focus. Isaacs, the closest we have encountered here to a genuinely professional criminal, used London fences extensively. But this was not the sole prerogative of the more spectacular fraternities. The Battle gang was capable of arranging to have traceable valuables disposed of through London, and the associates of Clarke, who moved effortlessly from Brighton to Lewes, prior to lying low in Portsmouth, also included those with metropolitan connections.

Provincial interconnections are exemplified by the trial of men convicted of wheat and hay thefts at Lympne and Sandwich in 1835, which revealed that they were part of 'a gang of thieves' who 'forwarded the goods stolen' in East Kent 'by boat to Brighton for disposal, and vice versa'.⁹⁴ Certain public houses, many beershops, and a multitude of lodging houses, were centres in these networks. In the later 1830s, the Royal Commission on Police was informed that Brighton

contained numerous lodging houses, the keepers of which furnish matches, songs, laces, and many other petty articles, which are hawked about as an excuse for vagrancy . . . and it gives them opportunities . . . of greater consequence, observing the fastenings and other circumstances that may lead to robbery . . . the principal robberies . . . have been concocted in vagrant lodging houses, and rendered effectual through the agencies of the keepers . . . intelligence is given and received by clients.⁹⁵

Clarke was the keeper of just such an establishment in Brighton, and he knew Traft of the Lewes beer and lodging house intimately. The most rustic of our gangs, namely those at Barcombe and West Firle, disposed of some stolen goods through such agencies, thereby items stolen in these villages ended up, for example, in Lewes-baked pies, and on the slab of a licensed game dealer. Other urban traders, especially pawnbrokers and second-hand clothes dealers, were additional components; even town millers, or their employees, clandestinely processed stolen grain, and one journeyman at Brighton, hawked such flour round the beershops on Sundays.⁹⁶

West Firle also proves that organised criminality was not the exclusive preserve of villains domiciled in the 'open' villages of contemporary legend, but extended to 'closed' parishes too. Criminal gangs, however, do confirm another contemporary claim, that they – and the beershops and other establishments patronised by them – were the agencies for 'progressive crime', whereby youths graduated from lesser to more serious crime. At Barcombe, the teenager who originally refused to accompany Heasman on poaching forays, later joined him for illegal fishing, and graduated subsequently to sheep-stealing.

But gangs had one fundamental weakness. It will have been noted that the convictions of gangsters we have encountered, virtually invariably derived from confessions. As a trial judge said of two sheep-stealers convicted on the evidence of a third at the Kent Assize in 1832,

members gave strength, and encouraged . . . crime, yet they also increased danger; for whenever the hour of difficulty arose . . . some were willing to sacrifice comrades . . . to extract themselves.

Hopes were entertained that publicity accruing to approvers would convince gangsters 'what slender ties men are bound together in crime', and arrested villains were pressurised "'to keep their guts in'" and not "'snitch"''.⁹⁷ While every case here conforms to the dangers identified above, the historical evidence itself principally comes from the depositions of witnesses, including approvers, and the press reports of criminal acts and trials. Such sources rarely permit the historian to assess the performance of undetected – or at least unprosecuted – criminal associators. Police officers often lamented their inability to collate evidence adequate to prosecution, at least for serious, as opposed to the petty crime, they were convinced gangsters were guilty of.⁹⁸

Historians of policing customarily attribute increased support for compulsory statutory intervention to create professional forces to the industrial and political disorders of the 1830s and 1840s.⁹⁹ Yet the Chartist threat stemmed primarily from its metropolitan, Midland, Northern, South Walian and industrial Scottish epicentres, which were also the principal theatres of violent industrial disputes. In some senses the activities of criminal gangs performed a parallel function for Southern opinions on the police issue. Organised crime repeatedly exposed the deficiencies of the police, from which even the professional forces established under the Rural Constabulary Acts of 1839–40 were not immune. In 1845 for example, Chief Constable Mackay of East Sussex was compelled to defend his force from stringent criticism over their lack of liaison with the Brighton Police, which facilitated the escape of a gang of burglars. Ironically, their eventual capture was achieved by Inspector Biddlecombe of Godalming who pursued them for five days, covering four hundred miles, during which he was 'scarcely out of the saddle, and . . . knocked up four horses'.¹⁰⁰

Equally crucially, organised crime, also generated acute public fears, symbolised by press debates over 'security . . . measures' to be taken by rural residents, which concluded that 'country ladies would not be the worse for knowing how to load and discharge a gun'. Although the Hollest murder was almost in a class of its own, it was in the context of the perceived 'fearful . . . increase . . . of burglaries and highway robberies'.¹⁰¹ The Surrey Bench responded very quickly; a sub-committee recommended the implementation of the Rural Constabulary Act within two months of Hollest's death, emphasising that 'the efficiency of a Rural Police depends principally

upon a vigilant attention to the movements of suspicious characters, and to their place of resort'. At the full Quarter Sessions in December 1850, a relatively huge number of magistrates – thirty nine – gave their uniquely unanimous vote for the Act's immediate implementation, and their detailed proposal was accepted by the Home Office within two days.¹⁰² The Kent Sessions also speedily insisted that all Petty Sessional divisions adopted the 1842 Parish Constables Act, while in East Sussex Mackay used the Arlington robbery, the Hollest murder, and the fact that 'people were really in constant fear', to wrest agreement to augment his force from an unusually united County Bench.¹⁰³ In January 1853, shortly after his arrival at the Home Office, Palmerston retorted to complaints of high levels of criminality from Devon, by suggesting the implementation of the 1839 Act, adding that "this was not done in Surrey until the Frimley murder frightened the ratepayers and I suppose that the Devon farmers are waiting for some similar event".¹⁰⁴ The scale of organised crime, and the apparent impunity of gangsters in unprofessionally policed districts, formed part of the evidence given to the 1852–3 parliamentary select committee to prove that amateur 'parish constables are not of the slightest use'. After a burglary at Frome, two parish constables cautiously tailed one suspect brazenly carrying a roll of stolen cloth, 'and although he was by himself they passed him' by, because 'he was such a desperate fellow'. Similar evidence was woven into the litany of police reformers, and was an important ingredient in their triumph with the 1856 passage of the County and Borough Police Act, which finally extended professional policing nationwide.¹⁰⁵

Notes

¹ R.A.E. Wells, 'The development of the English rural proletariat and social protest 1700–1850'; *idem.*, 'Social conflict and protest in the English countryside in the early nineteenth century; a rejoinder', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 6 (1979), pp. 122–5; 8 (1981), pp. 516–24, reprinted in M. Reed and R. Wells (eds), *Class, Conflict, and Protest in the English Countryside 1700–1880* (1990).

² E.J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1973 edition), *passim*.

³ W. Apfel and P. Dunkley, 'English rural society and the New Poor Law; Bedfordshire 1834–47', *Social History*, 10 (1985).

⁴ R. Wells, 'Resistance to the New Poor Law in the rural South', in M. Chase (ed), *The New Poor Law* (University of Leeds, 1985), esp. pp. 43–5. *Idem.*, 'Social protest, class, conflict and consciousness in the rural South-east, 1700–1880', in Reed and Wells, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 148–9, 153–4.

⁵ D. Foster, *The Rural Constabulary Act 1839* (1982), *passim*. C. Emsley, *Policing and Its Context 1750–1870* (1983), pp. 70–3. L. Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and Its Administration from 1750*, 5 vols. (1948–85), IV, pp. 263–70. A

Brundage, 'Ministers, magistrates and reformers: the genesis of the Rural Constabulary Act of 1839', *Parliamentary History*, 5 (1986). R. E. Foster, 'A cure for crime? The Hampshire Constabulary 1839-1856', *Southern History*, 12 (1990). *Idem.*, *The Politics of County Power. Wellington and the Hampshire Gentlemen 1820-52* (1990), ch. 5. R. Wells, 'Implementation and non-implementation of the 1839-40 policing acts in East and West Sussex', *Policing and Society*, 1 (1991). Edwin Chadwick's customary manipulation of local evidence, led the 1836-9 Royal Commission on Police to grossly exaggerate the deficiencies of the unreformed police. R. Storch, 'Policing rural southern England before the police: opinion and practice, 1830-1856', in D. Hay and F. Synder (eds), *Policing and Prosecution in Britain 1750-1850* (Oxford, 1989), p. 215.

⁶ J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in early Modern England* (1986). C. Emsley, *Crime and Society in England 1750-1900* (1987). J. Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances in England 1700-1870* (1979).

⁷ J. Rule, 'Social crime in the rural south in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', *Southern History*, 1 (1979). Cf. B. Bushaway, *By Rite. Custom, Ceremony and Community in England 1700-1880* (1982), esp. chs. 5 and 6.

⁸ Wells, 'The development . . .'. E.P. Thompson, 'The crime of anonymity', in D. Hay, P. Linebaugh and Thompson (eds), *Albion's Fatal Tree* (1975). J. Archer, 'The Wells-Charlesworth debate; a personal comment on arson in Norfolk and Suffolk', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 9 (1982). *Idem.*, '"A fiendish outrage?": a study of animal maiming in East Anglia 1830-1870', *Agricultural History Review*, 33 (1985). A.J. Peacock, 'Village radicalism in East Anglia, 1800-1850', in J.P.D. Dunbabin (ed), *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1974).

⁹ C. Steedman, *Policing the Victorian Community* (1984), esp. pp. 25-6. Emsley, *loc. cit.*, ch. 6.

¹⁰ *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 11 Jan., 14 and 21 Mar., 8 Aug and 10 Oct. 1796.

¹¹ *Reading Mercury*, 24 Sept. 1810. Cf. *Sussex Advertiser*, 13 Dec. 1824.

¹² *B[ritish] P[arliamentary] P[apers]*, 'Poor Law Report' (1834), Appendix B, Q[uestion]. 128, reply of John Ellman. For a less than incisive study of the first John Ellman, see S.P. Farrant, 'John Ellman of Glynde', *Agricultural History Review*, 26 (1978).

¹³ Henry Kenward was arrested for stealing nineteen fowls from Ellman in 1814; *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 31 Jan. 1814. I am indebted to Shirley Chase for permitting me to read her unpublished paper on nineteenth-century criminality at West Firl.

¹⁴ Evidence of the West Firl gangs activities derives principally from Horsecraft's voluminous confession, T. Howard's account of a lengthy conversation with Attree, and the interrogations of receivers Worsall and Tinsley, all Aug-Sept. 1815, E[ast] S[ussex] C[ounty] R[ecord] O[ffice], QR/E745, plus arrest and trial details, *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 21 Aug. and 23 Oct. 1815.

¹⁵ *BPP.*, *loc. cit.*, Appendix A, pp. 501-2, 522.

¹⁶ There are two parish histories, F.A. Pagden, *History of Alfriston* (1908 edition), studiously eshews the author's family's role in early nineteenth-century events. A.C. Piper, *Alfriston, the Story of a Sussex Village* (1970), is very dependent on the earlier work, and suggests that with the withdrawal of the heavy army presence at the end of the war in 1815, the place 'gradually settled down to become the quiet and peaceful village we know today . . . and there is little of historical interest to record after this date', p. 23. Piper reiterates Pagden's factual errors, which derive in part from oral sources and from T. Geering, *Our Parish* (1884). Family reconstitution methods are used in this study, but the well-known difficulties in this approach may be responsible for some inaccuracy in the personal relationships. Sources used for these in the first three paragraphs, except where indicated, comprise: Alfriston; Anglican parish registers, Par. 230/1/2/1; 230/1/3/1; 230/1/5/1; vestry minutes, 1628-1825, AMS. 5567:

Congregationalist Church minutes, NC.19/1/1: Land Tax records, 1780–1832, LT/Alfriston: Deeds, Market Cross, AMS. 5581/57/1–10. Chiddingly; Anglican parish registers, Par. 292/1/1/3; 292/1/2/1; 292/1/3/1: vestry minutes, Par. 291/12/1: Land Tax records, 1780–1832, LT/Chiddingly: annotated copy of 1821, 1841 and 1851 censuses, Par. 292/37/1. Ade family, uncatalogued deposit, D. 304. All in ESCRO. Alfriston Congregationalist Church registers, 1804–37. P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], Registrar General, 4/2218.

¹⁷ *Sussex Advertiser*, 17 Feb. 1874.

¹⁸ I. Thomas JP, Willingdon, to Edwin Chadwick, 20 Sept. 1834; Hawley, and Brooker, to the P[oor] L[aw] C[ommission], 9. Feb. and 1 Apr. 1834, PRO. M[inistry of] H[ealth], 12/12854.

¹⁹ *Brighton Gazette*, 1 Dec. 1832. King and Fell, to J. Hitchens, and to E.J. Curteis, 10 and 15 (with enclosures) May 1822; Union Prosecuting Society handbill, and Day to Duncannon, 8 and 26 Nov. 1834, PRO. H[ome] O[ffice], 64/1, ff. 205–8; 64/4, ff. 206–8. Pagden's deposition, 11 Feb. 1824; Thorncraft, summary conviction, 6 Sept. 1826, ESCRO. QR/E789, 799. *Sussex Advertiser*, 17 Jan. 1830.

²⁰ Wells, 'The development . . .'; *idem.*, 'a rejoinder . . .', in Reed and Wells, *loc.cit.*, pp. 42–5, 78. *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 7 Apr. 1806. 1 and 22 Apr. 1822, 12 and 26 Oct. 1829. *BPP.*, *loc. cit.*, Ardingly answer to Q. 53, rural queries. Depositions against John Bonds, 8 Oct. 1813, ESCRO. QR/E737. Letters to Lewes solicitors King and Fell, from Curteis, and Hitchens, 5 and 10 May; Searle's deposition, 1 Apr. 1822, PRO. HO.64/1, ff. 205–8.

²¹ This listing of limited participation nevertheless exposes further deficiencies in the tabulation of incidents in Hobbsawm and Rudé, *op. cit.*, appendix III. *Sussex Advertiser*, 22 and 29 Nov. 1830. *Hastings and Cinque Ports Iris*, 4 Dec. 1830. Indictments, Sussex Winter Assize, 1830, PRO. Assi[zes], 35/270/5.

²² *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 17 Apr. and 26 June 1815, 12 Dec. 1825, 23 and 30 Jan., 6, 20 and 27 Feb., and 6 Mar. 1826.

²³ Depositions against S. Saunders, and Lewes Jail calendar, Aug. and Oct. 1831, ESCRO. QR/E809.

²⁴ This and the following paragraph are based principally on reports in the *Sussex Advertiser*, esp. 1 Aug., 17 Oct., 7 and 28 Nov., 5 and 19 Dec. 1831, 16 Jan., 13 Feb., 6 Mar. and 7 Apr. 1832, trial reports of Collins, and Thorncraft, *Brighton Gazette*, 1, 15, 22 and 29 Dec. 1831, 22 and 29 Mar. 1832. Indictments, Collins, Huggett, Awock, Thorncraft, jury lists and jail calendar, PRO. Assi. 35/271/5; 35/272/5. *Maidstone Gazette*, 30 Aug. 1831. Reward handbill, enclosed by the Earl of Plymouth's solicitors, to Melbourne, 11 and 17 Dec. 1831, PRO. HO.64/2, ff. 502–5.

²⁵ Deed, 2 Dec. 1831, ESCRO AMS. 5681/57/5.

²⁶ For non-reportage of arson see below. *Sussex Advertiser*, 16 Jan., 13 Feb. and 5 Mar. 1832. *Brighton Gazette*, 29 Nov. and 13 Dec. 1832. N. Barwell to the Home Office, 27 Nov. 1832, PRO. HO. 64/3, ff. 215–6. Indictment of Huggetts, PRO. Assi.35/276/5. Charles Wille, diary entry, 2 Nov. 1834; Mrs Marchant to S. Peskett, 8 Jan. 1832 and 26 Nov. 1834, ESCRO. AMS. 5569/28; 5774/4/5, 8.

²⁷ Deeds, 1832, ESCRO. AMS. 5681/57/7/9. Brooker to the PLC., 1 Apr. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854.

²⁸ Thomas to Chadwick, 25 Sept. 1834, PRO. MH. 12/12854. For a broader context, see R. Wells, 'Rural rebels in Southern England in the 1830s', in C. Emsley and J. Walvin (eds), *Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians 1760–1860* (1985), pp. 140–3.

²⁹ Thomas to Chadwick, 25 Sept. 1834; John Storr to the PLC, 28 Apr; Hawley to the Willingdon overseers, and the PLC, 7 and 9 Feb. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854. Summary convictions, 1834–5, ESCRO. QR/E826–7.

³⁰ *Brighton Gazette*, 6, 20 and 27 Nov. 1834. Clerk, Hailsham Bench, enclosing

reward bill, and Rev. Day, to the Home Office, 8 and 26 Nov. 1834, PRO. HO. 64/4, ff. 188–9, 206–8. Wille diary entry, 2 Nov. 1834, ESCRO. AMS. 5569/28. Hawley, and Alfriston parish officers, to the PLC, 9 Feb. and 11 Apr. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854.

³¹ Lady Burlington's steward to Hawley, 10 Feb., and Hawley to the PLC, 9 Feb. Hawley to Nicholls, 15 Feb. and 19 Mar. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854; 32/38.

³² Brooker, 17 and 19 Mar., 1 Apr. and no date, and Hawley, 11 Apr., to the PLC; Hawley to Nicholls, 12 Apr. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854; 32/38. *Brighton Patriot*, 7 Apr. 1835, and 31 July and 7 Aug. 1838.

³³ Letters to the PLC from, Brooker, 17, 19, 20 and 24 Mar., 1 Apr. and no date, Hawley, 15 and 19 Mar., and 11 Apr., churchwardens and overseers, and draft reply, 15 and 24 Apr. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854. *Brighton Patriot*, 31 July 1838. Marchant to Peskett, 26 Sept. 1834, ESCRO. AMS. 5774/4/8.

³⁴ Hawley to the PLC, 27 and 29 (twice) Apr., 1 May, 18 Oct., 28 Nov. and 26 Dec. (with enclosures), and to Nicholls, 12 Apr., 10 and 14 May; Clerk, Eastbourne Union, to the PLC, 28 Sept., 3 Oct. and 24 Dec; Storrs to the PLC, 10 and 28 Apr; Inspector Clarke to Col. Rowan, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, 29 Apr. 1835, PRO. MH. 12/12854; 32/38. Earl of Chichester, to Lord John Russell, 15 July, and F.H. Gell to the Home Office, 20 May 1835, PRO. HO. 52/27, ff. 217–8; 64/5, ff. 72–3. Ellman to the Duke of Richmond, 13 May and 16 Sept. 1835, W[est]SCRO, Goodwood Mss. 1573, 1578. *Brighton Patriot*, 14, 21 and 28 Apr., 5 and 19 May, 14 July and 29 Nov. 1835. *Sussex Advertiser*, 18 May 1835 and 1 Feb. 1836. For the broader picture, see Wells, 'Resistance . . .', pp. 24–9.

³⁵ *Ibid.* *Brighton Patriot*, 31 July 1838. Alfriston Chapel minutes, ESCRO. NC. 19/1/1. See also R. Wells, 'Southern Chartism', *Rural History*, 2, 1 (1991).

³⁶ Piggott's, *Sussex Directory* (1845), p. 597. Rev. Allen to Melbourne, 15 Feb. 1831, PRO. HO. 52/15, ff. 11–2. *Brighton Guardian*, 21 Nov. 1838. *BPP*, *loc cit.*, Appendix B, Barcombe replies to Q's 28, 32–7. Wells, 'Resistance . . .', p. 22. Barcombe vestry minutes, 1837–57, ESCRO. Par. 235/12/1. *Brighton Herald*, 20 Nov. and 18 Dec. 1830.

³⁷ *Sussex Advertiser*, 29 Aug. 1831. *Brighton Guardian*, 16 Mar. 1836.

³⁸ Barcombe vestry minutes, 1 Feb. and 18 Nov. 1838, and 25 Apr. 1839, ESCRO. Par. 235/12/1. Chailey Union return to the Constabulary Commissioners, 1837, PRO. HO. 73/8 pt. i. Examination of Joseph Markwick, 1 Nov. 1839, ESCRO. QR/E865.

³⁹ A. Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men: Rural Radicalism in Norfolk 1870–1923*, (1985), pp. 32–5. Wells, 'Rejoinder . . .', pp. 75–7.

⁴⁰ Towner claimed that 'Heasman has always been against me because I worked for . . . Richardson'.

⁴¹ The evidence for the Barcombe gang principally comprises the fourteen confessional statements made by Heasman, further confessions by associates Towner and Jenner, and the statement of victims and witnesses, made Oct. and Nov. 1839, ESCRO. QR/E865; QCV/2/E31, and press accounts of the arrest and trials, esp. *Brighton Gazette*, 4 Nov. and 2 Dec. 1839. Detailed references are given only to other sources.

⁴² Vestry minutes, ESCRO. Par. 235/12/1.

⁴³ For examples of such detections see R.A.E. Wells, 'Sheep rustling in Yorkshire in the age of the industrial and agricultural revolutions', *Northern History*, XX (1984), p. 141.

⁴⁴ Traft also 'sometimes worked for his Father', a barge-owner on the Ouse; his claim that his dealings with Heasman amounted solely to the exchange of beer for a puppy, was a lie. The beershop was a frequent target for police and judicial enquiries, including the activities of the Clarke gang, examined below, and in 1843 Lewes Town Commissioner Wille recorded, 'attended the magistrates respecting "Traffs" being a Bawdy house'; diary entry, 21 Feb., ESCRO. AMS. 5569/30.

⁴⁵ Oliver gave an unconvincing account to the investigating magistrate, and was virtually forced to give evidence against Traft, with the unusually high surety of £30 being exacted as a recognizance to prosecute.

⁴⁶ Jenner possibly tried to interest Heasman in burglary; Jenner could identify targets and reconnoitre house lay-outs while 'working'. Under fierce cross-examination, Heasman admitted that he had 'broken open houses', but the sole detail relates to Guy's dairy.

⁴⁷ Barcombe vestry minutes, 1840-5, ESCRO. Par. 235/12/1.

⁴⁸ Wood's indictment for firing farmer and overseer James Patching's corn stack, PRO. Assi. 35/273/5. Trial report, *Brighton Gazette*, 19 Dec. 1833. At least one altercation had occurred between the two when Wood refused to walk the six miles daily to designated parish employment on the roads, 'saying that to walk that distance was enough for a day's work': Patching capitulated with a straight forward cash relief payment.

⁴⁹ Much of this evidence derives from Stunt's seventeen-page confession, in which he repeatedly refused to admit participation 'in more robberies', and the depositions of victims and witnesses, ESCRO. QR/E869. Committal and trial reports, *Brighton Gazette*, 8 Mar., 15 Apr. and 25 May 1840. Further references are restricted to additional sources.

⁵⁰ Wood's indictment, *loc. cit.*

⁵¹ Bailiff Lavendar's failure to mention the spirits suggests that they were smuggled.

⁵² Stunt later mentioned several streets, and he patronised The Globe, a centre for organised labour and Chartists in the town. *Sussex Advertiser*, 29 July 1839. *Brighton Gazette*, 15 Apr. 1841.

⁵³ Despite their being 'numbered and stamped with the Maker's name'.

⁵⁴ 'Those who have much experience in Quarter Sessions practice will not participate in the astonishment because they know that every prisoner who is arraigned at the county Bench labours under some local prejudice and the disadvantage of less intelligent juries than . . . at the Assizes; and if found guilty, the punishment awarded by the judge is free from prejudice on the score of character'. *Brighton Guardian*, 11 and 18 Dec. 1839. *Brighton Gazette*, 23 Mar. 1840.

⁵⁵ *Brighton Guardian*, 15 Apr. 1840.

⁵⁶ The main sources for the Clarke gang comprise Wicks's confessions, 13 Dec. 1839 and 7 Feb. 1840, depositions of victims and witnesses, including police officers Solomon and Pasco, 13-28 Dec. 1839, ESCRO. QR/E867.

⁵⁷ Arnold deposed, three weeks after the event, and subsequent to Clarke and Wicks's arrests, that a 'great quantity of my goods was missing. Several boxes which contained Lace, Lace Edgings, Men's Silk Neckkerchiefs and pocket Hankerchiefs, Lace Insertions, a large quantity of plain, black, white, and coloured Satin and Sarcenet Ribbons, some fancy satin and Lutestring and Guaze Ribbons. Ten or Twelve Shawls . . . also a quantity of women's Silk, Muslin and other Hankerchiefs . . . several . . . lengths of Persian, some . . . plain . . . others coloured and embossed. Six or seven pieces . . . of White Satin Jean - several figured waist Ribbons several Muslin Collars, and also various other articles', plus fifteen shillings in cash.

⁵⁸ The *Brighton Gazette*, July 1850 to Aug. 1851 is a major source for accounts of individual crimes, incidents in the developing detection process, committal hearings, and the major trials at the Assizes for Surrey, for Mar., and Sussex, Mar. and Aug. 1851. Detailed references are given for other sources, but only exceptionally to specific issues of the *Gazette* across this period.

⁵⁹ An alias; see below.

⁶⁰ *The Times*, 22 and 31 Oct. 1850.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 19 Oct. 1850, 1 and 26 Apr. 1851. *Maidstone Gazette*, 26 Apr. 1850. Indictment, PRO Assi. 35/290/5. For the Griffith murder see, *Brighton Gazette*, 8 and 15 Feb. 1849; thanks are due to Zachary Hewlett for searching press files on the case.

⁶² See esp. the speech of the Rev. Carnagie JP, at the West Sussex Sessions debate respecting the implementation of 13 Vic. cap. 20 superintending constables act in each division, *Brighton Gazette*, 13 Apr. 1851. Guildford Board of Guardians, return to Constabulary Commissioners, 1837, PRO. HO. 73/5: conditions in 'several parishes may be deemed unfavourable for the development of industrious habits and for the apprehension of offenders'.

⁶³ Run by Hannah and William Seabrook; Hannah 'misunderstood, or chose not to answer the very leading questions . . . put to her' by the Bench at the committal hearing of her lodger who 'shook his head' at her 'in a menacing manner'. At the police's suggestion, Hannah agreed to dictate and sign a deposition rather than deliver her evidence in open court. *Windsor and Eton Express*, 19 Oct. 1850. *Berkshire Chronicle*, 2. Nov. 1850.

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 26 Apr. 1851.

⁶⁵ Downes's deposition, 12 Oct. 1850, PRO. Assi. 36/6.

⁶⁶ Woking, return to the Constabulary Commission, 1837, PRO. HO. 73/5. *The Times*, 13 Jan. and 24 Apr. 1851.

⁶⁷ *Mark Lane Express*, 10 Nov. 1851. Superintendent Hollington's deposition, 29 Oct. 1850, PRO. Assi. 36/6.

⁶⁸ *Maidstone and South Eastern Gazette*, 7 Jan. 1851.

⁶⁹ Smith's confession, 13 Oct; evidence of Macey, roadworker Hockley, and schoolmistress Bulpin, at inquest Oct. 1850, PRO. Assi. 36/6.

⁷⁰ Evidence of Biddlecombe at Hollest inquest; Smith's confession, PRO. Assi. 36/6. *Windsor and Eton Express*, 5 Oct. 1850.

⁷¹ *Rochester Gazette*, 1 Oct. 1850. *Windsor and Eton Express*, 19 Oct. 1850. *Berkshire Chronicle*, 7 Dec. 1850. *Maidstone and South Eastern Gazette*, 7 Jan. 1851.

⁷² Macey's evidence at inquest, 22 Oct. 1850, PRO. Assi. 36/6.

⁷³ The coin 'could pass for money altho' it would not be taken at some of the shops'; it had been the topic of a brief conversation following its receipt as a National School payment by Mrs Hollest: her husband 'observed that George the Third had not had much respect paid to his memory'. Evidence of Mrs Hollest, Kendall, Biddlecombe, and Hollington, at inquest, 8 to 18 Oct. 1850, PRO. Assi. 36/6. *Windsor and Eton Express*, 5 and 19 Oct. 1850. *Berkshire Chronicle*, 5 Oct. 1850.

⁷⁴ *The Times*, 3 Oct. 1850. *Windsor and Eton Express*, 5 and 19 Oct. 1850. Inquest evidence, and depositions of Biddlecombe, Hollington, Sergeant High, servant Mary Gouldstone, gamekeeper Everett, gunsmith Adsett, shoemaker Cobbett, butcher Colebrook, bricklayer Perry, shop assistant Weston, W. Penny, and Swan landlady Seabrook, PRO. Assi. 36/6.

⁷⁵ Evidence of Hollington and Keeve, adjourned inquest, 22 Oct. 1851, PRO. Assi. 36/6. *Berkshire Gazette*, 2 Nov. 1850. *The Times*, 1, 2, 8 and 16 April 1851. *Brighton Gazette*, 17 Apr. 1851.

⁷⁶ *Maidstone and South Eastern Gazette*, 7, 14 and 21 Jan. 1851.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 Jan. 1851. The Tunbridge Police continued to recover stolen property during the next three months from a variety of locations, including Crowborough and Guildford. *Maidstone Gazette*, 4 Mar. 1851.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 28. Jan. 1851.

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 19 Apr. 1851. *Maidstone Gazette*, 8 and 22 Apr. 1851. Frome Petty Sessions, return to Constabulary Commissioners, 1836, PRO. HO. 73/5. *Keene's Bath Journal*, 11 Nov. 1851. Evidence of Alfred Hughes, ex-Surrey County Constabulary, subsequently Chief Constable of City of Bath Police, BPP, 'First Report of the Select

Committee on Police in England, Scotland and Wales', 603 (1852-3), vol. xxvi, Qs. 1292-5.

⁸⁰ *Brighton Gazette*, 16 Oct. 1851.

⁸¹ Clerk, Frome Petty Sessions, to the Home Office, 6 Dec. 1852, with enclosed depositions, PRO. HO. 45/4085. These incidents seem to have been studiously ignored by the Bath press which served Frome, namely *Keene's Bath Journal*, and the *Bath Chronicle*.

⁸² *Brighton Gazette*, Dec. 1852 to Mar. 1853. It was reported that 'it is not a little singular that the property stolen' in nearly twenty burglaries, 'has been of very small value, the total losses . . . under £50'.

⁸³ *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, 5 and 12 July 1819.

⁸⁴ E.A. Wrigley, 'Men on the land and men in the countryside; employment in agriculture in early nineteenth-century England', in L. Bonfield, R.M. Smith and K. Wrightson (eds), *The World We have Gained* (1986).

⁸⁵ Among the thousands of examples was the £5 paid by Frant parish to Thomas Page 'towards assisting him in the Business as Butcher'; vestry minute, 2 May 1831, ESCRO. Par. 344/12/1/3.

⁸⁶ Wells, 'Social protest, class . . .', in Reed and Wells (eds), *loc. cit.*, p. 126.

⁸⁷ *Maidstone Gazette*, 16 and 30 Jan. 1849.

⁸⁸ Confession of John Williams, Maidstone Jail, 6 Apr. 1829, and unsigned 'Remarks', PRO. HO. 52/8, ff. 109-10; see also *Kent Herald*, 11 Mar. 1847, for the case of another 'very extensive gang' which specialised in corn robberies using 'skeleton keys', based at Langley, and principally concerned in supplying the black market at Rochester.

⁸⁹ Hobsbawm and Rudé, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁹⁰ Wells, *loc. cit.*, pp. 164-5.

⁹¹ *Maidstone Gazette*, 16, 23 and 30 Jan., and 20 Mar. 1849.

⁹² *Bath Chronicle*, 22 Apr. 1852.

⁹³ G. Rudé, *Criminal and Victim: Crime and Society in Early Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1985), esp. pp. 78-9.

⁹⁴ *Kent Chronicle*, 9 June 1835.

⁹⁵ *Sussex Advertiser*, 29 Apr. 1839.

⁹⁶ *Brighton Gazette*, 4 Nov. 1841.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 Mar. 1841 and 24 Mar. 1842. *Maidstone Gazette*, 7 Aug. 1832.

⁹⁸ *BPP*, *loc. cit.*

⁹⁹ Radzinowicz, *op. cit.*, IV, ch. 6, pt. v, 'The challenge of disorder'.

¹⁰⁰ *Brighton Gazette*, 16 Jan., 6 Feb., 13 and 20 Mar., and 10 Apr. 1845.

¹⁰¹ *Maidstone Gazette*, 22 Oct. 1850.

¹⁰² *Report of the Committee of Justices . . . for Extending the Protection of a Police Force* (1850), enclosed by Surrey Clerk of the Peace, together with magistrates' petition, to Sir George Grey, and reply, 2 and 4 Dec. 1850, PRO. HO. 45/3308.

¹⁰³ *The Times*, 15 Oct. 1850. *Maidstone Gazette*, 22 Oct. 1850.

¹⁰⁴ Cited by C. Emsley, *Policing and its Context 1750-1870* (1983), p. 79.

¹⁰⁵ *BPP*, *loc. cit.*, Qs. 1293-5.