

The Kendrick Bequests: an Experiment in Municipal Enterprise in the Woollen Industry in Reading and Newbury in the Early Seventeenth Century

CHRISTINE JACKSON

On 30 December 1624, whilst struggling to withstand the effects of a severe and prolonged depression in the cloth trade, the towns of Reading and Newbury received an unexpected windfall. John Kendrick, Master Draper and Merchant Adventurer of the City of London, and a member of a leading Reading clothing family, died leaving generous bequests to the two towns in his will.¹ The total of his charitable donations, excluding bequests to relatives, friends, neighbours, colleagues, and employees, amounted to some £19,000 dispersed throughout the wide range of charitable causes defined in the Elizabethan Statutes of Charitable Uses of 1597 and 1601.² Reading and Newbury were bequeathed slightly more than two thirds of the sum, receiving legacies to the total value of £8,400 and £4,800 respectively, split between a number of schemes intended to provide opportunities for employment and self-betterment amongst their poor, especially those customarily employed in cloth manufacture. Born in Reading in 1574, the elder son of Thomas Kendrick, an ambitious clothmaking mercer and town burgess, John Kendrick attended Reading Grammar School and Saint John's College, Oxford, before entering the cloth trade. He appears to have worked for to or three years in the family business in Reading to learn the trade of clothmaking before moving to London to serve a commercial apprenticeship under John Quarles, a Master Draper and Merchant Adventurer. John Kendrick was admitted to the freedom of the Draper's Company in 1602 and called to the Livery in 1614. By this time he had already established a substantial and profitable trade in Reading and Kentish coloured cloths with the Low Countries, and by the early 1620s, apparently unscathed by the commercial dislocation of 1614–17, had amassed a considerable fortune.³ John Kendrick ranks amongst the great charitable benefactors of the early

seventeenth century, and his bequests provide an outstanding example of the application of charitable funds to municipal enterprise in the woollen industry in the early seventeenth century.⁴ Tragically, only limited success attended his posthumous efforts to preserve and revitalise clothmaking in Reading and Newbury, and it is perhaps unsurprising, in view of the large sums of money involved and the depressed economic climate of the 1620s and 1630s, that the implementation and administration of the Kendrick bequests caused concern and controversy at local and national level, and, indeed, have been assigned by some commentators a role in the decline of clothmaking in the two towns.

John Kendrick's bequests included detailed instructions concerning their implementation. To Reading, he bequeathed the sum of £7,500, to provide relief and employment for the poor. The legacy was to be paid in three annual instalments by his executor, his friend and trading partner, Lawrence Halstead, commencing one year after his death. The mayor and burgesses were instructed to purchase

. . . a faire plot of ground within the said towne of Readinge, or the liberties thereof: and thereupon shall erect and build a strong house of Bricke fit and commodious for setting of the poore on worke therein; or else shall buy and purchase such an house, being already built, if they can finde one alreadie fitting, or that may with a reasonable summe be made fit for the said use; the same house to have a faire garden adjoyning, and to be from time to time kept in good and sufficient reparations by the said mayor and burgesses for the time being for ever. Which house and garden my will is, shall be used and occupied by such as the said Maior and Burgesses and their Successors from time to time for ever shall appoint and ordaine for the employing and handling of the stocke of money by me hereby left and devised to that purpose.

The residue and remainder of the £7,500, once ' . . . Lands and Heritaments of the cleare value of fifty pounds by the year, over and above all charges and reprises. . . ' had been purchased to provide an annual income of £50 for John Kendrick's sister, Anna Newman, and after her death to establish a fund to be distributed half-yearly to the poor of the town, were to be used as a

. . . common stock to be employed and bestowed in [the] trade of clothing, either in making of coloured cloathes, or whites, as the time shall require; and also in working of Wooll, Hemp, Flax, Iron, grinding of Brasill woods and other stuffes for Dying, or otherwise, as to the said Maior and Burgesses aforesaid and their Successors for ever shall seeme convenient for the employment of poore people, and for the preservation and encrease of the said common stocke.

Finally the will specified that the mayor and burgesses

... shall have the election, placing, and ordering, as also the displacing (if cause bee) of all and every person and persons to be employed in the handling and husbanding of the said common stocke in the house aforesaid ... Wherein yet my desire is, that they shall preferre the poore of the said towne to the said worke and emploiment before others of other places.

To Newbury, John Kendrick bequeathed the sum of £4,000, with similar conditions regarding the purchase of a 'commodious house and garden' and the provision of a common stock to 'set the poore on worke'. The sum was again to be paid in three instalments.⁵

To both towns John Kendrick bequeathed the sum of £500 to provide interest free loans to clothiers for specified periods. In the first instance the loans were to be made for seven years to named clothiers, that is to James Winch (£200), Walter Bye (£100), Richard Stampe (£100), and William Blacknall (£100) of Reading and to Thomas Newman (£100), Richard Avery (£100), Martin Broaker (£50), William Goodwyn the Elder (£50), William Goodwyn the Younger (£50), Timothy Averie (£50), Robert Bacon (£50), and Griffin Forster (£50) of Newbury, each giving bond with two sufficient sureties to ensure repayment. Thereafter, the money bequeathed was to be loaned in parcels of £50 to ten 'honest industrious poore clothiers' who were freemen of the two towns (or to other tradesmen if insufficient clothiers were available) for a period of three years, each providing good security for the loan and prohibited from taking advantage of the loan on more than one occasion. John Kendrick further bequeathed the sum of £100 to provide marriage dowries for fifty deserving poor maids in Reading and £50 to provide marriage dowries for twenty-five deserving poor maids in Newbury.⁶

John Kendrick's decision to bequeath such a large proportion of his fortune to charitable projects in Reading and Newbury was undoubtedly influenced by his close connections with the two towns through birth and trade, and by his knowledge and understanding of the poverty, deprivation, and social instability caused in clothing towns by prolonged commercial dislocation. Like other merchant benefactors of the period, he concentrated upon the need to attack the causes of poverty and provide opportunities for individual self-betterment, rather than upon supplying direct relief for poverty and hardship.⁷ The provision of loan funds was a popular means of assisting poor but ambitious freemen to become established in their trades, and indeed, several loan funds already existed in Reading.⁸ Similarly, precedents also existed for the founding of workhouses and the donation of common stocks to provide employment for the poor, though never

before on the scale conceived by John Kendrick.⁹ He was clearly well aware of the enormous responsibility that he was placing upon the shoulders of the mayors and burgesses of Reading and Newbury, and declared his 'special trust and confidence' in them to carry out his wishes. Realist that he was, however, he made provision that in the event that either town failed to implement the bequests on the terms specified, its legacy would be forfeit.¹⁰ Few details have survived to tell how news of the Kendrick bequests was received in Reading or Newbury. It is known that in Reading church bells were tolled on 25th January, 1625, the day of John Kendrick's funeral, and on 7th February a commemorative sermon was preached at Saint Mary's Church, the cost of which (£6 16s. 6d.) was later deducted from the monies received.¹¹ The official response in Newbury was undoubtedly similar.

Following receipt of the first instalment of the Kendrick bequest in mid-January 1626, the mayor and burgesses of Reading discharged their duties as instructed with regard to the loan fund and maids' dowries, and proceeded to purchase a house and land in Minster Street from William Kendrick, capital burgess and brother of the benefactor, for £1,900, which, together with an adjoining plot of land purchased from Anthony Blgrave for £32, was to provide the site for the Kendrick workhouse. It was agreed that William Kendrick would remain in the house until December 1626, and that clothmaking equipment would be purchased from him for use in the workhouse at a price determined by independent appraisers.¹² Lack of funds prevented further action, and it was not until the second instalment of the bequest had been received in February 1627, that work to extend and improve the buildings on the site commenced.¹³ The mayor and burgesses decided to extend the existing house and buildings to form three sides of a square around a grassed quad to provide ample accommodation, workshops, and warehouses for the project.¹³ 'The gatehouse and outside . . . [were to be made] . . . faire accordinge to the intent of the will'.¹⁴ In March 1627 a sub-committee of six burgesses was appointed to be 'Surveyors of the worke and buildinge', and negotiations begun with local builders and suppliers.¹⁵ The work was largely complete by December 1628, and is recorded to have cost £1,846. £257 15s. 0d. was paid to William Kendrick for clothmaking equipment purchased from him, and a further £122 spent on 'Twelve broad loombes with thier tackle, and for the sheares and presses, racks and other necessities to sett the poore to worke in the house'.¹⁶

After much discussion, and having sought legal advice concerning both the implementation of John Kendrick's wishes and whether it was necessary to seek 'the aid and helpe of Parliament' in pursuing the project, the mayor and burgesses of Reading decided to operate the

Kendrick workhouse as a 'common clothing house' and to offer shares in the residual common stock of £3,600 to the town's clothiers on the understanding that the money would be invested in the trade of clothing and in the making of cloth in the workhouse, thereby providing employment for the poor and earning a profit to increase the common stock.¹⁷ By early 1627 however, complaints were being voiced that the poor of Reading had as yet received little benefit from the Kendrick bequests, and at least one alternative scheme had been mooted.¹⁸ Following discussions over the summer, the mayor and burgesses agreed in September 1627 that William Kendrick should remain in the workhouse until the following June, and receive a loan of £1000 from the bequest to provide employment for the poor. Covenants were drawn up requiring him to make three cloths a week in the house, using wool provided, and employing workers appointed by the mayor and burgesses. Three master weavers, two master shearmen, and one master burler, together with other workers, were appointed in December 1627. When William Kendrick belatedly repaid the loan in August 1628, '... to the good likinge of the Companye he paid £40 towards the increase and maytenance of the stocke'.¹⁹

During the summer and autumn of 1628, articles of agreement were drawn up detailing the terms on which shares of the common stock would be distributed.²⁰ These stated that the 'undertakers' were to employ their share of the common stock in making cloth to provide employment for spinners and carders as well as other trades from the town rather than those from 'remote places'. The undertakers were to use only materials provided by the Corporation and to make the best profit possible for the borough. They were required to keep seven looms in constant use in the workhouse, and to provide employment for as many wool pickers, spinners, carders, spoolers, quillers, weavers, burlers, and shearmen as were needed to service them at the rates customarily paid in the town. They were expected to set to work such poor people as the mayor and burgesses placed in the workhouse, and were not permitted to discharge them. They were not allowed to employ more than two or three apprentices between them nor to use more rooms in the house than had been allocated to them. Finally they were required to produced regular accounts for the mayor and burgesses and to pay the increase achieved or to return the stock at the agreed time.²¹

In September 1628, twelve clothiers were appointed 'undertakers' of the stock, subject to satisfactory sureties being provided. It is not known how they were selected, though nepotism appears to have figures prominently in the process.²² £1,200 was loaned to Thomas Kendrick and William Gandy, who were allowed to take up residence

in the workhouse, and £300 each to William Turner (Senior), William Turner (Junior), Anthony Brackston, Richard Burren and Walter Bye, while James West, Humphrey Evans, John Cule, and John Harrison each received £150. Each undertaker was expected to pay a proportion of his profit (at an annual rate of at least £8 in the £1,000) at specified intervals to increase the size of the common stock. The clothiers were required to make one cloth per £300 loaned each week in the workhouse, and to contribute 12d. per cloth, in addition to the allowance for flocks, towards the '... charges of repayringe the house and mayntenance of all such utensells and implements as belonge to the makyng of cloth in the house. . .'²³ Applications had already been received for employment in the workhouse. In October, twelve master weavers, twelve journeymen weavers, eight master shearmen, eight journeymen shearmen, and six burlers were chosen, apparently according to merit and ability, and allocated amongst the clothiers. Edward Slack and William Parr were appointed as overseers of the clothworkers and weavers respectively, at a rate of £10 per annum, responsible to the mayor and burgesses for the supervision of personnel and maintenance and replacement of equipment and materials in their workshops.²⁴ They were required to keep detailed records of their outgoings and of monies paid to them by the clothiers. Surviving records of receipts and expenditure for the periods 1 December 1628 to 24 June 1629, 29 September 1630 to 29 September 1631, and 25 March 1635 to 29 September 1635, illustrate the problems faced by the Kendrick workhouses in covering costs when trade was depressed or uncertain.²⁵ Initially, the undertakers were allowed to use rural spinners, but as the economic situation in the town deteriorated, restrictions were imposed upon their freedom to do so. From March 1630, following '... the great clamour of divers poor people lacking worke and employment in spynninge and cardinge. . .', the undertakers were required to place a 'woofe' a week in the town for spinning, and in November 1630, Walter Finemore was allocated accommodation and lent £100, on good security, to employ twenty-five spinners in the workhouse.²⁶

The undertakers commenced operation at the beginning of November 1628, and their first accounts were presented in July 1629 for the period to 24 June 1629. During this period, 343 cloths (including both broadcloths and Spanish cloths) were woven in the house, and an increase of £80 08s. 6d. shown on the common stock.²⁷ As the economic situation deteriorated, however, the profitability of the workhouse declined, and in October 1630 the accounts for the past fifteen months showed an increase of only £74 9s. 0d., and several undertakers paid in their stock. In September 1631 there were complaints of insufficient

work being available in the workhouse, and the remaining eight undertakers, including James Winch, who had taken the place of Thomas Kendrick, reported a further decline in the increase to £51 10s. 0d. William Gandy announced his intention to repay his stock the following year.²⁸ In July 1632 twelve new clothiers were offered a share in the common stock, and in December, eleven clothiers, including three newcomers, accepted shares of the common stock upon new articles of agreement. James Winch took a major share of the stock (£1,200) and remained in residence in the workhouse.²⁹ Though 1633 saw an improvement in the fortunes of the workhouse, this proved to be temporary. From 1635 onwards, the rate of increase paid by the undertakers declined and many defaulted.³⁰

In Newbury the course of events is less well documented. On 8 May 1626 the mayor and burgesses received a licence to purchase in mortmain 'a capital messuage called the Castle and one acre of meadow ground adjoining', from John Chamberlain of Donnington Castle, together with £100 per annum of other lands, to enable them to perform the will of John Kendrick.³¹ A sub-committee of four burgesses was appointed to design, arrange and supervise the erection of additional buildings on the site. The contract for the work was signed with Richard Emes, a carpenter from Speenhamland, on 5 July 1626. It gives a detailed description of the proposed dimensions and appearance of the additional buildings to be erected, which together with those existing would enclose a central courtyard. There were to be seventeen rooms of various sizes, including a weaving shop, clothworking shop, dye-house and a chamber for storing finished cloths. The workhouse was clearly intended to be attractive as well as functional in design, since numerous special features were specified, such as a the use of 'handsome windows of wood, of a freestone mouldinge'. The contract price, excluding materials which were provided by the corporation, was £65. The committee monitored the contractor's progress on a weekly basis, and inspected his accounts to check that materials provided by the corporation were not misappropriated.³² According to an account submitted to the Privy Council in September 1637 the total cost of purchasing the site for the workhouse, erecting additional buildings, and providing clothmaking equipment amounted to £1,646 17s. 1d., of which £454 15s. 6d. was disbursed on the purchase of the site and the licence of mortmain, and the remainder on building and equipping the workhouse.³³

Unlike their counterparts in Reading the mayor and burgesses of Newbury, whose legacy was in any case smaller, opted to run their Kendrick workhouse as a single, largely self-sufficient, business concern. With the exception of milling, there was provision for all

Number and Type of Cloths produced by the Newbury and Reading Kendrick Workhouses, October 1630 to September 1631.

Fig 1 Quarterly Output of the Newbury Workhouse

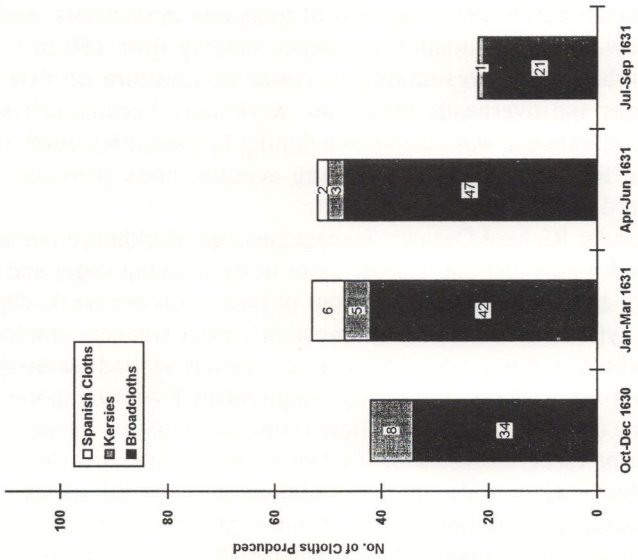
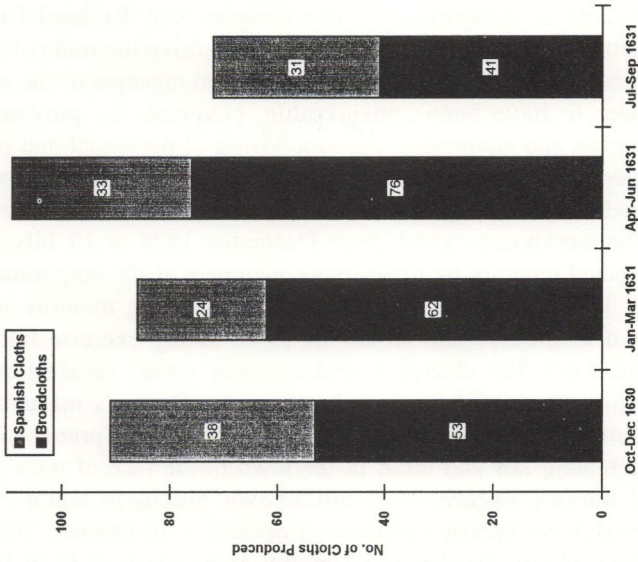


Fig 2 Quarterly Output of the Reading Workhouse



Data extracted from Richard Derow's Account Book and Reading Clothier's Book. B.R.O. Newbury Clothier's Book, D/EPT/uncat.; Reading Clothier's Book, R/Box22

stages of production to be carried out on the premises, though almost all of the spinning and a proportion of the cloth finishing processes was allocated to outworkers.³⁴ The clothworker, Richard Derow, was appointed by the mayor and burgesses 'to drive the trade of clothing at Newbury'.³⁵ His responsibilities, as general manager of the workhouse, appear to have been considerable, covering the purchase of raw materials and equipment, the supervision of personnel and payment of wages, and the transaction of cloth sales to both local and London drapers. He was required to provide a detailed account of expenditure at the workhouse, which from December 1628 to 19 July 1630, was inspected monthly by three senior members of the corporation.³⁶ From July 1630, however, the practice of conducting monthly inspections was discontinued and an annual stock-taking exercise introduced to replace it.³⁷ The change in practice may signal satisfaction with the smooth running of the workhouse under Derow's management, but doubtless also reflects the corporation's growing preoccupation with maintaining law and order in the town in the face of trade depression and harvest failure. It is not known precisely when Newbury's Kendrick workhouse commenced operation. In October 1627 Richard Derow, Martin Brooker and Timothy Avery received £126 10s. 6d. out of the residual common stock of £2,175 11s. 0d. to pay for wool purchased for the workhouse. In February 1628, Richard Derow received £20 to cover the cost of tools and implements, and thereafter received regular monthly payments, ranging from £80 to £399, up till October 1628, presumably to cover expenditure on raw materials, wages and overheads before the workhouse became self-supporting. The workhouse was clearly functioning by December 1628, from which date Richard Derow's surviving account book provides a detailed record of its expenditure.³⁸

Under Richard Derow's management the workhouse maintained four broad looms and one narrow loom in its weaving shop, and appears to have aimed to produce some four or five cloths per week, depending on the type of cloth and the number of casual weavers employed.³⁹ The workhouse employed a nucleus of regular skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers, frequently supplemented with temporary workers, some (usually women or children) only included on the payroll for one, two or three weeks. Richard Derow was assisted in his supervisory duties by George Pearce (succeeded in 1631 by 'Ed' Thicke) and in his administrative duties by Mr. Holmes. During the first year for which accounts are available (1 December 1628 to 30 November 1629), 213 cloths were woven in the workhouse, including ninety-eight ordinary broadcloths, forty ordinary kersies, and thirty-three ordinary Spanish cloths. Some eighty names appear on the payroll during this period, of

whom about sixty were probably employed at the workhouse. Less than forty were employed on a regular basis. Eleven weavers appear on the payroll, of whom six were employed on a regular basis but not all concurrently. Eleven townswomen were provided with spinning during the year, though only two, Goodwife Curre and Goodwife Paine, were employed on a regular basis. The largest proportion of wool used was spun at rural spinning houses in Ham, Long Parish, and Wantage. Unskilled work (including picking, mangling, rubbing and tucking) was given to twelve men, women and children on a regular basis, and to a further twenty on a casual basis. It is uncertain how many of the clothworkers and drawers appearing on the payroll were employed on the premises. A similar number of cloths (221) was woven in the period December 1629 to November 1630 (during which time the cloth trade was depressed and food in short supply so that it is interesting to note that the number of spinsters employed in the town had increased to eighteen, five on a regular basis), but through lack of demand, output dropped to 167 during the following twelve months. During 1631, in an undated petition, the mayor and burgesses wrote that '... by reason of the deadness of the trade of clothing, the workhouse has not taken that effect which was expected, and part of the stock is decreasing. . .', and sought support for schemes to '... regain the loss and preserve the stock whole. . .'.⁴⁰ The final full year for which accounts are available, December 1631 to November 1632, showed an increase in the number of cloths woven to 198.⁴¹ The account book ends without explanation in May 1633, though the workhouse clearly continued to operate for a further three years since the annual stock-taking exercise at the workhouse continued until August 1636. By this date, the workhouse had lost money in trading in four out of eight years and the common stock had decreased to £1,761 13s. 7d., made up largely of unsold cloths at home and in London (mainly dressed, but a few undressed) valued at £1,197 10s. 8d. and debts amounting to £352 18s. 4d. owing to the stock.⁴² It was perhaps then that management of the workhouse passed into the hands of the clothiers, William Barnard and Richard Batchelor, who received loans from the remaining common stock in return for using the trade of clothing in the workhouse and providing employment for the poor.⁴³

Controversy sprang up around the implementation of the Kendrick bequests in Reading at an early date. Even before the second instalment of the bequests had been received, concern was expressed about the corporation's intended course of action, and in February 1627 a group of Reading freemen sought permission for Steven Langley of Slough to meet the mayor and burgesses to put forward, on their behalf, a scheme for establishing a workhouse and common stock in Reading, '... that

by his said dissertations the common stock of £7,500 should bee in all respects employed and dispursed in sure thrifty maner as their pious deceased Benefactor did really intend itt should bee devised for the only use and uttermost generall supply and maintenance of all honest industrious poor people . . .'.⁴⁴ Langley was concerned that control of the endowment, and the financial benefit to be derived from it, should not be vested in the hands of the rich and powerful, and therefore suggested that ten honest poor clothiers should be appointed by the town's freemen to take control of the stock, and that a further ten honest men should be appointed by the mayor and burgesses to supervise them. The workhouse was to be operated as a common clothing house, providing temporary work to unemployed clothworkers. He also advocated that a proportion of the profit earned on the common stock should be shared amongst the workforce.⁴⁵ The scheme was rejected by the mayor and burgesses who declared that they ' . . . were otherwise resolved contrarye to [the] petition. . .'. Undeterred, Langley petitioned William Knollys, Earl of Banbury, a leading Berkshire landowner and former Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and the King and Privy Council for support, but following an enquiry undertaken by the Earl of Banbury and the Berkshire Bench of Justices, Langley was ' . . . commanded to meddle noe further at his perill.'⁴⁶

Dissatisfaction with the corporation's handling of the Kendrick bequests mounted in Reading during the severe and prolonged trade depression of 1630 to 1631. As economic conditions in the town deteriorated, there were growing and increasingly bitter complaints that a small group of clothiers, mainly members of the corporation, or their friends or relatives, were deriving private gain from the common stock loaned to them, and that insufficient employment was being provided for the poor.⁴⁷ Relations were also strained between some of the undertakers and the workmen allocated to them. For example in April 1630 it was informed that Thomas Smyth, a master-weaver, cursed and wished the pox upon the clothier, William Gandy. In May, he was dismissed for 'divers misdemeanours', including criticising the mayor, but a few months later was pardoned and reinstated. In April 1632 William Thatcher was overheard to wish that the Kendrick money had been cast into the river: he was dismissed from his employment in the workhouse and committed to the Counter. In July 1632 William Bowles, a master-weaver, was reported to have insulted William Gandy and boasted that ' . . . he was a better weaver than William Gandy was a clothier . . .'. His fate is not recorded.⁴⁸ Though the conflict in the workhouse may reflect personality clashes and social divisions, the pressure upon clothiers to increase productivity and cut wages in

response to the slump in demand and falling cloth prices were undoubtedly also a significant factor. The corporation responded harshly to criticism by individual townsmen. In February 1632 Humphrey Parker was accused of speaking '... approbrious words against the Mayor and Burgesses ... that the Towne was governed by a company of geese in furred gowns ...', for which offence, though he claimed '... the wordes were [merely] by the relacion of Mr. Langley ...', he was sentenced to a day in the pillory.⁴⁹

By May 1631 rumours of the misuse of the Kendrick bequests in Reading had reached Whitehall, and, disturbed by reports of distress and disorder in the town during a period of prolonged and severe commercial dislocation, and concerned that despite the considerable charitable funds bequeathed to them, the mayor and burgesses were failing to provide employment and alleviate the distress of the poor, the Privy Council appointed a commission '... to inquire and finde out how a legacy of 8000 li. or thereabouts, given to pious uses by John Kendrick of London, draper, deceased, hath bin disposed of. As also to view and survey ... a certaine publique workehouse and land thereunto belonging, purchased with parte of the said legacie.'⁵⁰ The Privy Council's intervention reflects the growing concern of the government during the years of Personal Rule, 1629–40, with the plight of the poor (inspired in large part by the need to maintain law and order) and its willingness to take direct and swift action to resolve local disputes, particularly when public security was threatened or there was evidence of negligence by local officials.⁵¹ In October 1631, the commissioners, Sir Francis Knollys, Sir Thomas Vachell, Sir Richard Harrison, Sir Edmund Sawyer, William Trumbull, and Francis Windebanke, issued a warrant requiring a written report from the mayor and burgesses of when John Kendrick's legacies had been received and how the money had been spent.⁵² This was prepared and despatched in November.⁵³ In January 1632, the mayor and burgesses were summoned to appear before the commission to answer further questions about the implementation of the Kendrick bequests and to resolve discrepancies in the report.⁵⁴

The commission's enquiry continued during 1632 and into 1633. The commissioners attempted to resolve the important issue of whether John Kendrick had intended the legacy to be used for the benefit of the rich as well as the poor in Reading, and identified a number of areas in which the terms of the will had been disregarded or the legacy misused. They investigated and confirmed the claim that the mayor and burgesses had been overcharged by William Kendrick for the house and land purchased from him. They also queried the high cost of renovating and converting the house, particularly in comparison with the relatively

low cost of equipping it, and questioned the wisdom of reserving less than half of the legacy for the common stock. The commissioners raised numerous questions about the corporation's administration of the common stock, particularly concerning the poor rate of increase achieved (a mere £191 19s. during the three-year period from Michaelmas 1628 to October 1631) and the use made of it. The poor, they found '... have not bene sett on work so well as before the stock was given. . .'. The commissioners further criticised the inadequate guarantees accepted by the corporation for repayment of the common stock and the clothiers' loans.⁵⁵ During the course of the enquiry several petitions were presented to the commissioners, including one from the 'poor workfolk' of Reading asking for Steven Langley's scheme to be reconsidered, and another from a group of clothiers suggesting that the common stock, which they claimed had been allocated to a few privileged clothiers at the expense of the town's poorer clothiers and had consequently caused '... much trouble and hartburning . . .', should be invested in land and the income used to provide employment for the poor.⁵⁶

Confronted by the commissioners with evidence that the legacy had been misused, the mayor and burgesses defended their actions but admitted that the foundation of the Kendrick workhouse had afforded little benefit to the poor since employment had been provided there only at the expense of employment in the town.⁵⁷ In August 1632, having been advised of the opinion of the Privy Council, and pessimistic of the future of clothing in the town, the corporation agreed that '... if the purchase of land may stande and be able with the will of Mr. Kendrick, that they would be readye to doe thereon as they shalbe directed.'⁵⁸ The machinery of government, however, moved slowly, and it was not until 1639, following the exhibition of a bill of information against the mayor and burgesses by the town people of Reading and a further enquiry by the archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, himself a native of Reading, that an Exchequer Decree was passed altering the terms of the will.⁵⁹ During 1639 the mayor and burgesses of Reading proceeded as directed to purchase land with the remaining common stock of just under £3,000, and to re-organise the workhouse to provide accommodation and training facilities for orphan children.⁶⁰ From 1640 interest-free loans of £80 were granted to the town's younger clothiers.⁶¹ Sadly, the continuing slump in the cloth trade and the economic uncertainty which preceded and followed the outbreak of Civil War thwarted the corporation's efforts. The town's woollen industry derived little benefit from Laud's far-sighted provisions for the better management of the Kendrick bequests. During the century following the end of the Civil War, the Governors of Christ's Hospital

made several attempts to wrest the Kendrick bequests from the corporation, and in 1849, finally succeeded in proving misuse and obtaining the principal part of the legacy for the Hospital.⁶²

Newbury corporation appears to have been spared the recurrent accusations of misuse and mismanagement levelled at Reading corporation. No evidence has survived of local concern or controversy, (thanks perhaps to the less controversial form of organisation implemented at the Newbury workhouse, and also to the fact that Reading corporation, the named beneficiary of any forfeiture, was scarcely in a position to criticise the actions of a fellow recipient of John Kendrick's charity), but the town's woollen industry derived little if any long-term advantage from the implementation of the bequests. The value of the principal parts of the legacy declined as a result of trading losses (losses of over £500 were reported during a Privy Council enquiry undertaken in 1637), of the non-repayment of loans (debts owed to the workhouse amounted to £317 4s. 0d in 1641), and of the propensity of the mayor and burgesses to divert money from the common stock to alleviate distress and finance other municipal ventures in times of hardship.⁶³

Why did John Kendrick's posthumous efforts to preserve and revitalise clothmaking in Reading and Newbury prove so unsuccessful that both contemporaries and early local historians assigned them an important role in the decline of the Berkshire woollen industry? There can be no doubt that the implementation and administration of the Kendrick bequests were hampered by the severe trade depressions of the 1620s and 1630s. Trade was frequently dislocated during this period by currency manipulations, war, commercial disputes, plague and other factors, and in addition, the market for woollens, particularly heavy broadcloths, declined considerably during this period due to changes in the pattern of supply and demand in the cloth trade. The expansion of the new draperies, the growth of foreign competition, and the long-term commercial dislocation caused by the Thirty Years War created a situation where the English woollen industry had little choice but to diversify or contract.⁶⁴ With clothmaking in Reading and Newbury hard hit by the recurrent trade depressions of the 1620s and 1630s, the much-needed Kendrick bequests were poorly invested. However, a number of other factors also contributed to their premature collapse.

To some degree the fate of the Kendrick bequests was sealed almost from the time of their conception. John Kendrick's intentions regarding the foundation of workhouses in Newbury and Reading, though detailed, were actually only loosely defined, thus allowing flexibility of action, but at the same time leaving scope for disagreement as to their

interpretation and implementation. In both towns the mayor and burgesses appear to have been more concerned with meeting the donor's stipulation to provide fine accommodation for the workhouses than with providing employment for the poor as quickly as possible, and as was pointed out during the Privy Council enquiry into the misuse of the bequests in Reading in 1631, reserved insufficient funds for the common stock (slightly less than fifty per cent in Reading and slightly more in Newbury).⁶⁵ The payment of the bequests in three instalments, presumably dictated by long-term financial commitments, together with the reluctance or inability of Laurence Halstead to hand over the money at the times specified, hindered their implementation, and may have laid the mayors and burgesses of Reading and Newbury open to charges of tardiness when they were in fact merely proceeding cautiously.⁶⁶ The form of organisation chosen for the Reading workhouse, perhaps not unexpectedly in a town dominated by the clothing interest, provided support to clothiers as well as to the poor, and was thus open to misuse and criticism. Poor management also played a part in the failure of both workhouses. The responsibility for implementing and administering the bequests was in any case a heavy one to impose upon the increasingly overworked mayors and burgesses of the two towns. The administration of the workhouse and common stock was undertaken somewhat reluctantly by the mayor and burgesses of Reading, who from the start would have preferred to invest the legacy in land, had the terms of the will allowed it.⁶⁷

Greed and self-interest, particularly in Reading, also appear to have hindered the implementation of the Kendrick bequests and to have led to some misuse of the funds provided, thus provoking criticism and controversy. It is a striking feature of John Kendrick's will that the bachelor, lacking legitimate heirs of his own body, bequeathed only a relatively small proportion of his great fortune to his family. His brother, sisters, nephews and nieces received only half the amount (£9,500) devoted to charitable projects. His brother William, a wealthy man in his own right, received a mere £2,000 to be divided between himself and his two children and appears to have been determined to remedy this deficiency by deriving personal benefit from the bequests.⁶⁸ He sold his house, garden, and workshops in Reading, together with a farm and land in Tilehurst to the mayor and burgesses at an inflated price. It was noted by the mayor and burgesses in 1627 that the farm and lands in Tilehurst yielded an income of only £55 per annum, instead of the £60 anticipated, and by the commissioners undertaking the Privy Council enquiry in 1631, that '... the house is valued by hable men that have seen it not worth £1,000 nor can be sould again at that value ...'.⁶⁹ Having sold his house and workshops,

William Kendrick remained installed there for nearly three years, rent free, despite the embarrassed efforts of his fellow burgesses to remove him.⁷⁰ William Kendrick's son, Thomas, and nephew, William Gandy, were among the first undertakers appointed to borrow the common stock, receiving the lion's share and being allowed to dwell in the workhouse, despite the fact that both had completed their apprenticeship and been admitted to the freedom of the borough only that same year.⁷¹ When Thomas Kendrick paid in his share, his place was taken by James Winch, John Kendrick's nephew and adopted brother.⁷² Both William Gandy and James Winch were accused by other clothiers in the town of using their share of the common stock to undercut cloth prices and to profiteer in the wool market.⁷³ James Winch also proved difficult to remove from the workhouse, and remained there for over twenty years, despite failing to repay £600 owed to the common stock and running up considerable rent arrears. The mayor and burgesses finally resorted to legal action to remove him in 1650.⁷⁴ John Kendrick had clearly intended to provide help to his relations in Reading (his uncle, Walter Bye, adopted brother, James Winch, and cousin, Richard Stampe were nominated in his will as the first recipients of the loan fund) but excessive advantage appears to have been taken by his family of funds donated to provided employment to the poor. The Kendricks were by no means the only sinners. Several members of the corporation including Richard Burren and Anthony Brackston acted as undertakers for the common stock.⁷⁵ In Newbury, the appointment of Richard Derow does not seem to have been entirely unbiased, since he was related to the wealthy and influential Houghton family and apparently counted leading members of the town corporation such as William Weston and Hugh Hawkins among his friends.⁷⁶

Claims that the unequal distribution and misuse of John Kendrick's Legacy to alleviate poverty and encourage clothmaking had caused the decline of the cloth industry in Reading, were first voiced in the 1630s. A petition presented to the Privy Council by the townspeople of Reading in 1637 complained that the recipients of the clothiers' loans and shares in the common stock used them to subsidise their own businesses and undercut cloth prices, thereby forcing less fortunate clothiers out of business or leaving them with no option but to debase the quality of their cloths in order to produce a competitive product. The petition contended that,

... by this means there are not so many clothes made in the town by near a third part, as were before the legacy was given, and these worse wrought than formerly they were wont to be, which turns to his Majesty's great loss in his customs, and to the decay of trading in that flourishing town.⁷⁷

Table 1: Analysis of the occupations of the Mayors of Reading 1624–40 with notes of any known personal benefits derived from the Kendrick Legacies:

Year	Name	Occupation	Personal Benefit Derived from Kendrick Charity
1624	William Maulthus	Mercer	
1625	Roger Knight	Mercer	
1626	Christopher Turner	Clothier	Nominated poor maid 1625
1627	William Iremonger	Brewer	
1628	Nicholas Gunter	Gentleman	
1629	Walter Bateman	Clothier	
1630	Thomas Turner	Clothier	
1631	John Newman	Clothier	
1632	William Kendrick	Clothier	Sold land and property at excessive profit. Enjoyed use of common stock of £2000 1626–7. Nominated poor maid 1627.
1633	Robert Maulthus	Gentleman	
1634	Robert Bent	Apothecary	
1635	John Dewell	Draper	Purchased cloth from Newbury workhouse on credit. Possibly from Reading workhouse also.
1636 & 1637	George Thorne*	Clothier	Nominated poor maid 1635.
1638	Anthony Brackston*	Clothier	Undertaker of Stock 1628 & 1632. Nominated poor maid 1635.
1639	Richard Burren*	Clothier	Undertaker of Stock 1628. Nominated poor maid 1625 and 1635.
1640	John Jennings*	Brewer	

* These men were responsible for the safekeeping of the Kendrick capital and enjoyed the use of the money for considerable periods without payment of interest.

Data extracted from John Kendrick's Accounts, Charity 1625–50, R/2296 and John Kendrick's Account Book 1626, R/Box 25.

Table 2: Analysis of the occupations of the capital and secondary burgesses of Reading 1624–40 (excluding those who served as mayor) with notes of any known personal benefits derived from the Kendrick Legacies.

Year took office	Name	Occupation	Personal benefit derived from Kendrick Charity
1598	Walter Bye	Clothier	Recipient of loan fund 1625. Undertaker of stock 1628.
1600	John Bagley*	Fishmonger	
1605	Thomas Burges	Clothier	
1606	Anthony Knight	Unknown	
1611	Richard Winch	Clothier	Nominated poor maid 1633.
1614	William Brackston	Clothier	
1619	John Blake*	Clothier	
1620	John Saunders	Lawyer	Handled legal matters relating to the implementation of the Legacy.
1620	Arthur Curtys	Draper	
1630	Robert Dye	Chandler	
1630	William Jacobb	Mercer	
1630	Thomas Harrison	Brewer	
1630	Peter Burningham	Chandler	
1630	Thomas Thackcham	Mercer	
1635	George Woldridge	Haberdasher	
1635	Richard Jeyes	Glover	
1635	Edward Baker	Tanner	
1635	William Turnour	Clothier	Undertaker of stock 1628
1635	William Brackston Jr.	Clothier	Recipient of loan fund 1638
1635	William Stretch	Draper	
1636	Edward Hamlin	Unknown	
1639	Christopher Blower	Apothecary	
1639	William Turnour Jr.	Clothier	Undertaker of stock 1632, 1635 Recipient of loan fund 1638
1639	George Thorne Jr.	Clothier	Undertaker of stock 1628, 1632, 1635 Recipient of loan fund 1635
1639	Thomas Dewell	Draper	
1639	Simon Dye	Malster	
1640	Thomas Bateman	Clothier	Supplied raw materials to the Newbury Workhouse and purchased cloths from it on credit.

* These men were responsible for the safekeeping of the Kendrick capital and enjoyed the use of the money for considerable periods without payment of interest.

Data extracted from John Kendrick's Accounts, Charity 1625–50, R/2296 and John Kendrick's Account Book 1626, R/Box 25.

Early local historians, such as J. Britton, E.W. Brayley and the Rev. P.H. Ditchfield, also emphasised the important part played by the Kendrick bequests in the decline of the Berkshire woollen industry, blaming quality debasement and the consequent loss of reputation for the dramatic fall in demand for Berkshire cloths in the 1630s.⁷⁸

Certainly Laud's enquiry in 1637 corroborated both the extent of the decline in clothmaking in Reading in the 1620s and 1630s and the validity of accusations of undercutting by beneficiaries of the legacy, and there is independent evidence from several sources of an increase in the incidence of faulty manufacture in the town from the late 1620s onwards, but as a later local historian, R.F. Dell writes, it seems unlikely, that the Kendrick legacy could '... have been anything more than an irritant to the trouble.'⁷⁹ Reading's cloth industry, as William Kendrick informed the Privy Council in 1632 had been slowly declining since the second decade of the seventeenth century.⁸⁰ In Newbury, the decline of clothmaking can be traced to the withdrawal of investment by its leading clothing families as far back as the third quarter of the sixteenth century.⁸¹ Though the unequal distribution of the Kendrick legacy may have encouraged a greater degree of undercutting and thus led to more widespread quality debasement, both practices were common during trade depressions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not least during the 1620s and 1630s. By 1630 in any case, the level of quality debasement in broadcloth manufacture nationally was causing concern in government and mercantile circles, leading first to the appointment of a commission to investigate abuses in clothmaking in the western clothing counties, and later to the issue of a royal proclamation prohibiting deceitful practices and faulty workmanship countrywide.⁸²

The decline of the Berkshire woollen industry was not an isolated event, but rather one episode in the gradual but relentless decline of England's traditional woollen manufactures, the manifold causes of which were complex and often interrelated. Contemporaries were almost unanimous in placing much of the blame for the decay of the English cloth trade in the early seventeenth century upon the revival and expansion of native woollen production in continental Europe, particularly in the United Provinces where manufacture increased rapidly following the launch of the abortive Cockayne project in 1614. The problems caused by the growth of foreign competition were further aggravated by the uncompetitiveness of English woollen prices, which resulted in large part from the heavy burden of taxation imposed upon English woollen exports by home and foreign governments; by national commercial policy and the self-interest of the trading companies; and by the dislocation and loss of traditional markets in northern and north-western Europe during the Thirty Years' War. In hindsight, however, the most important factor appears to have been the failure of individual clothing areas to respond wholeheartedly to changes in

taste and fashion, especially the rising demand for lighter, cheaper, more varied and less durable products (as illustrated by the success of the new draperies), in existing markets or to new opportunities in the growing markets of southern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Levant. Local factors such as the social ambitions and investment strategy of leading clothing families; proximity to the rapidly expanding London food market which afforded alternative investment and employment opportunities in the processing, marketing, and distribution of foodstuffs; the deterioration in the quality and availability of local wool supplies; competition from rural manufacturers in Yorkshire and the West Country where wage costs were lower; and the disruption of trade, industrial production, and everyday life during the Civil War years, together with the heavy financial losses incurred by clothiers during this period, further contributed to the difficulties faced by the Berkshire woollen industry in the seventeenth century.⁸³

There can be no doubt that the implementation of the Kendrick bequests had a significant effect upon the political and economic lives of Reading and Newbury in the period between John Kendrick's death and the outbreak of Civil War, and helped shape the response of the woollen industry in the two towns to the recurrent trade depressions of the 1620s and 1630s and to the long-term decline in demand for traditional woollen products. In the short run, the endowment of workhouses and common stock in Reading and Newbury created additional employment in the two towns in clothmaking, and perhaps more importantly, provided employment opportunities on a regular or casual basis for needy individuals unable to find work in the private sector, thereby alleviating distress among the poorest clothworkers. It appears, however, that, particularly when the demand for coloured broadcloths was depressed and pressure upon prices high, that this may have been at the expense of employment in the private sector. In the long run, employment in the Kendrick workhouses, as in the private sector, dwindled as unsold cloths stockpiled. The usefulness of the generous loan funds, which in more auspicious times might have provided an impetus for expansion for a new generation of clothiers, was also diminished by the poor trading conditions of the 1620s and 1630s, and, of course, by the outbreak of the Civil War. John Kendrick had made a brave attempt to halt the decline of clothmaking in Reading and Newbury and relieve poverty in the two towns, but the scale of the problems involved defied solution in the manner in which they were tackled, and the size of the bequests proved too great for the towns to handle.⁸⁴ Though the unequal distribution of the Kendrick bequests was not, as has been claimed a major cause of the decline of the Berkshire woollen industry, it certainly contributed to the timing, pattern, and severity of the decline of clothmaking in the county.⁸⁵

Notes

¹ B(erkshire) R(ecords) O(ffice). The Last Will and Testament of Mr. John Kendrick, (hereafter John Kendrick, Will), copy included in John Kendrick Accounts, Charity 1625–50, R/2296.

² Statutes of the Realm, 39 Eliz. I, c.6; 43 Eliz. I, c.4.

³ H.M. Appleby, *The Kendrick Book* (Reading, 1948), pp. 32–5; A. Friis, *Alderman Cockayne's Project and the Cloth Trade* (Copenhagen and London, 1927), pp. 282–4.

⁴ W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of London 1480–1660* (1960), p. 114.

⁵ John Kendrick, Will.

⁶ John Kendrick, Will.

⁷ W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480–1660* (Aylesbury and Slough, 1959), p. 42.

⁸ Jordan, *Charities of London*, pp. 177–9; B.R.O. Statement of Sums of Money (Loan Funds), Reading Box 67, Bundle 19, No. 11.

⁹ W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England, 1480–1660* (1961), p. 269.

¹⁰ John Kendrick, Will.

¹¹ *Records of the Borough of Reading: Diary of the Corporation* (ed.), Rev J.M. Guilding, (1892–6), Vol. II, pp. 215, 219; B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 32.

¹² B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 2, 32; *Reading Records*, Vol. II, p. 253, 273.

¹³ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 4.

¹⁴ Appleby, *Kendrick Book*, p. 68.

¹⁵ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 4; E.W. Dormer, *John Kendrick of Reading* (Reading, 1927), p. 23.

¹⁶ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 4; *Reading Records*, Vol. II, pp. 340, 342.

¹⁷ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 22; Statement of Account of Receipt of Use of Kendrick Legacy, 1624–1631, Trumball Add. Ms. 57.

¹⁸ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 2, 3, 4; Trumball Add. Ms. 57; *Reading Records*, Vol. II, pp. 278–80. The cost of the legal advice (including the enquiries made about exhibiting a bill in Parliament) amounted to £21 16s. 6d, on top of the legal fees of £15 10s. from the land purchases and £20 for drawing up and engrossing the articles etc.

¹⁹ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 5; *Reading Records*, Vol. II, pp. 333, 339.

²⁰ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 6, 8, 5, 22.

²¹ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 18, 19.

²² B.R.O. Notes on Charitable Donations, Reading, 1631, Trumball Add. Ms. 57.

²³ See below pp. 20–23.

²⁴ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 19, 40, 22; Trumball Add. Ms. 57.

²⁵ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 14, 20, 21, 22.

²⁶ B.R.O. Reading Clothiers Book, R/Box 22; Note of Receipts and Disbursements of Kendrick Workhouse 1630–1 and 1635, R/Box 67, Bundle 3, Nos. 5 and 7.

²⁷ *Reading Records*, Vol. III, p. 7; B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 27, 31. The term 'woof' was frequently used to designate the quantity of weft or woof wool (the cross threads woven into the warp) required for one cloth.

²⁸ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 26, 30.

²⁹ *Ibid.* fos. 30, 29, 34, 38, 36.

³⁰ *Ibid.* fos. 40, 42, 41.

³¹ *Ibid.* fos. 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 51.

³² C(alendar of) S(tate) P(apers) D(omestic) Chas. I, Vol. 24, Appendix, p. 56.

³³ B.R.O. Articles of Agreement for Building Kendrick Workhouse, Newbury, 1626, N/QK/4/1. A full transcription of the Contract is given in P.H. Sellwood, 'Newbury "Cloth Hall" Origin and Subsequent Uses', *Transactions of the Newbury and District Field Club*, X (1957), pp. 21–40.

- 33 P.R.O. S.P.D. Account of Expenditure of Kendrick Legacy, Newbury, 16/368/8.
- 34 B.R.O. The Newbury Clothier's Book, D/EPT Uncat.
- 35 B.R.O. Newbury Corporation Records (1627–35), N/AC/1/1/2, p. 1.
- 36 B.R.O. D/EPT Uncat.
- 37 B.R.O. N/AC/1/1/2, pp. 2–20.
- 38 B.R.O. D/EPT Uncat.
- 39 B.R.O. N/AC/1/1/2, p. 10; D/EPT Uncat.
- 40 P.R.O. S.P.D. Petition of Mayor and Burgesses of Newbury concerning Kendrick Legacy, 1631, 16/205/46.
- 41 B.R.O. D/EPT Uncat. Calculations of the numbers employed in the workhouse are similar to the numbers quoted by the mayor of Newbury in a report to the Sheriff of Berkshire in May 1631, which stated that 60 or more poor persons were employed in the Kendrick workhouse and spinning work provided for 50 poor households in the town. P.R.O. S.P.D. 16/192/14ii.
- 42 B.R.O. N/AC/1/1/2, pp. 18–20.
- 43 P.R.O. S.P.D. 16/368/8.
- 44 B.R.O. Steven Langley, Account of Implementation of John Kendrick's Will, Trumball Additional Mss. 42; *Reading Records*, Vol. II, p. 339.
- 45 B.R.O. Trumball Additional Mss. 42.
- 46 *Reading Records*, Vol. II, pp. 339, 348, 353; B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 5.
- 47 *Reading Records*, Vol. III, pp. 7; B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 38; Trumball Add. Mss. 57.
- 48 B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 27, 28, 35, 40.
- 49 *Reading Records*, Vol. III, p. 99.
- 50 *Acts of the Privy Council*, Vol. XLVI, p. 358.
- 51 The despatch of commissioners to Reading followed close upon the issue to Justices of the Peace throughout the country, 1630–1, of the Book of Orders giving standing instructions on matters such as the provision of poor relief and the organisation of food supplies. C.G.A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500–1700, Vol. II Industry, Trade and Government*, (1984), p. 242.
- 52 P.R.O. S.P.D. Orders of Commissioners to Mayor and Burgesses of Reading, 1631, 16/202/24.
- 53 *Reading Records*, Vol. III, p. 92; B.R.O. Trumball Add. Ms. 57.
- 54 B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 39; *Reading Records*, Vol. III, p. 97.
- 55 B.R.O. Trumball Add. Mss. 57; P.R.O., S.P.D. Francis Windebanke's notes and queries concerning Kendrick Legacies, Reading, 16/210/95; Grounds for concluding Kendrick Legacies misemployed, 16/210/96.
- 56 P.R.O. S.P.D. Petition of poor workfolk of Reading on behalf of Steven Langley, 16/204/37; Humble Petition of Other Clothiers of Reading, 14/98/52; B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 40.
- 57 P.R.O. S.P.D. Letter from William Kendrick to the Privy Council, 1632, 16/222/45.
- 58 *Registers of the Privy Council*, PC 2/422 p. 147; B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 40.
- 59 In a report presented to the Privy Council, Laud recommended that the common stock should be invested in property and the rents used to provide interest-free loans to young beginners in the cloth trade. He advised that £80 would be an appropriate sum for such loans and that the maximum sum loaned should not exceed £200: any surplus money could be used to pay apprenticeship fees for poor boys or provide marriage portions for young girls; Laud further recommended that the workhouse should be retained for the use of orphan children to enable them to learn a trade prior to being apprenticed at the age of sixteen. His recommendations were accepted with a few modifications and formed the basis of the Exchequer Decree. Laud appears to have taken an active interest in the affairs of Reading during the 1630s. Though not himself appointed to the commission despatched to investigate the alleged misuse of the

Kendrick Legacy in 1631 he was doubtless kept well informed of its findings by his close friend Francis Windebanke. In 1634, during a metropolitan visit to Reading, Laud ordered an enquiry into the spiritual health of the town. In 1636 he intervened in the appointment of the master of Reading Grammar School. In 1638 he obtained a new borough charter for Reading. V.C.H. *Berks*, Vol. II, p. 392; Dormer, *Kendrick*, pp. 28–33; *Privy Council Registers*, Vol. 1, p. 276; H.R. Trevor Roper, *Archbishop Laud 1573–1645* (1944, 2nd. Ed. 1965), pp. 33, 383; V.C.H. *Berks*. Vol. III, p. 356.

⁶⁰ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 52 7 54; *Reading Records*, Vol. III, pp. 448, 455.

⁶¹ *Reading Records*, Vol. III, p. 435.

⁶² Dormer, *Kendrick*, p. 44.

⁶³ P.R.O. S.P.D. 16/368/8; B.R.O. N/AC/1/1/2, pp. 12–13; Garlick, *Newbury*, p. 110; List of Debts to Newbury Workhouse, 1641, N/QK4/2. The debtors included Mr. James Halstead, £50, and Mr. Malthus and Mr. Bateman of Reading, £80.

⁶⁴ C.A. Jackson, 'The Berkshire Woollen Industry, 1500–1650' (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Reading Univ. 1993), pp. 181–9, 233–48.

⁶⁵ B.R.O. Trumball Add. Mss. 57.

⁶⁶ John Kendrick, Will; *Reading Records*, Vol. II, pp. 270–2, 406, 408, 410; B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 2, 3, 4, 18.

⁶⁷ *Reading Records*, Vol. III, p. 67.

⁶⁸ John Kendrick, Will.

⁶⁹ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 11; Trumball Add. Mss. 57.

⁷⁰ B.R.O. R/2296, fos. 3, 5, 11, 14.

⁷¹ B.R.O. Reading Freeman's Records, R/HMC XL VII.

⁷² B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 54.

⁷³ P.R.O. S.P.D. Humble Petition of Other Clothiers of Reading, 14/98/52; Sir Francis Knollys' observations on the misemployment of the Kendrick Legacies, 16/243.

⁷⁴ B.R.O. Petitions and Letters from James Winch to Reading Corporation, Reading Box 67, Bundle 2, Nos. 14–17; *Reading Records*, Vol. IV, pp. 334, 360, 502, 523.

⁷⁵ B.R.O. R/2296, fo. 19.

⁷⁶ I am indebted to Mrs. J. Dils for this information.

⁷⁷ Dormer, *Kendrick*, p. 29.

⁷⁸ J. Britton and E.W. Brayley, *The Beauties of Berkshire* (1801), pp. 95, 113; V.C.H. *Berks*, Vol. II, p. 392.

⁷⁹ R.F. Dell, 'The Decline of the Clothing Industry in Berkshire', *Transactions of the Newbury and District Field Club*, X (1954), p. 60.

⁸⁰ P.R.O. S.P.D. 16/222/45.

⁸¹ Jackson, thesis, pp. 152–4, 243.

⁸² Acts of the Privy Council, Vol. XLVI, p. 94; G.D. Ramsay, 'The Report of the Royal Commission on the Clothing Industry, 1640', *English Historical Review*, LVII (1942), p. 484.

⁸³ Jackson, thesis, pp. 233–54.

⁸⁴ The failure of municipal enterprise in Reading and Newbury was not unique; for example in 1569, the city authorities in York had established a cloth workhouse to employ poor carders, spinners and weavers, but the scheme failed because the cloth produced was of inferior quality and more expensive than cloth produced in the private sector. H. Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries from the Earliest Times to the Industrial Revolution* (1st pub. Oxford, 1920, revised 1965), p. 64.

⁸⁵ Jackson, thesis, pp. 248–54.