

Historical Trajectories: English Social Welfare Systems, Rural Riots, Popular Politics, Agrarian Trade Unions, and Allotment Provision, 1793–1896

Roger Wells

Jeremy Burchardt's book, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793–1873*, published in 2002, derives from his 1997 doctoral submission to the University of Reading.¹ Although some themes have been explored previously in scholarly journals² and collections of essays,³ the publication of the revised thesis is very welcome, not least the topic has been with remarkably few exceptions, neglected.⁴ Hence Dr Burchardt's over-riding objective is to 'establish . . . the basic parameters' including 'the timing and scale of allotment provision' which in his estimation 'should be seen as a preliminary attempt to map out largely unexplored territory'. Essentially, he aims to provide a chronological framework, together with some regional considerations, in expectation that this national context will encourage further research – notably in the localities – resulting in an enrichment of our knowledge of an important movement, and probably 'modify some of . . . [his analytical] judgements' respecting its characteristics.⁵

Burchardt identifies three main phases, c.1793 to 1830, effectively post-Swing 1830 to nominally 1850, and c.1845 to 1873. Each of these periods comprises one of the four parts into which the volume is divided. It is the second period in this schema that I wish to challenge; it should be split into two, namely the last couple of months of 1830 during which the Captain Swing mobilisations – though not the accompanying incendiarism – were repressed, to 1833–4, and from 1835–6 to about 1850. In case this alternative appears purely pedantic, the everyday realities of life for farmworkers – still the largest occupational group in the 1830s – were transformed from 1835 on the implementation of the New Poor Law as it was known in polite terms, and in plebeian and radical circles as the 'Poor Man's Robbery Bill'. Burchardt deliberately

marginalizes the Act's impact, for reasons which remain unclear. Indeed the poor laws – old and new – go unmentioned in the introduction, which outlines the chronological framework and the major topics addressed in the analytical chapters comprised in Part III on allotments and rural society. The latter is based on evidence largely deriving from 1830–50, including the famous Poor Law Report of 1834 and its copious appendices containing empirical material, on both allotment provision and its absence. If this is unsurprisingly comprehensively exploited, consideration of the Report's specific political outcome and its impact on allotment provision, is largely eschewed. True, in the context of southern agricultural labourers' receipt of abysmally low wages aggravated by seasonal under-employment, their post-1834 exposure to incarceration in workhouses is mentioned briefly in the text, but the refinement of the period when allotment provision became common – 'after 1830' – is relegated to a footnote, on p.163:

they were essentially a feature of the era of the New Poor Law. Under the New Poor Law relief became more stigmatised and its availability increasingly restricted, rather than being a normal part of family income as it had often been before 1834.⁶

The Swing rising remains the *sole* catalyst in Burchardt's scenario, an identification made by the first parliamentary select committee inquiry into allotment provision in 1843, and he also rebukes that movement's first modern historian for under-emphasising the Captain's seminality.⁷ The present essay originated once a review article on Burchardt's substantial work outgrew reasonable limits. It became clear that proving that the impact of the reformed social welfare system was *the* most critical factor behind allotment provision, in *both* rural and manufacturing communities, required extra space. Moreover, in the process I re-evaluated my earlier argument that before the 1834 Act, 'access to land was not a significant demand of agricultural labourers'.⁸ The enduring presence – despite falling numbers – in many locations of 'peasant' or 'family farmers', together with more resilient 'dual occupationists' who combined a range of skills – among them blacksmithing and joinery – or other enterprises including shop- and innkeeping, with small holdings, has been emphasised especially by Mick Reed. His analysis implies that desire for land survived among a cross-section of countryside communities, including agricultural labourers.⁹ In the 1780s, the Duke of Newcastle exploited the desire of what were 'many hundreds' of effectively squatters – 'a peasant had built a cottage on a spot . . . consider[ed] as no man's land' – to have this formally enrolled as a manorial 'parchment title to his estate which nobody could controvert'. Many were located on 'roadside waste' and under an acre, and

comprised no more than a cottage and a hop-garden.¹⁰ In addition, other linkages over the provision of land for tillage by working-class people from the later eighteenth century, are found in various elements of the recurrent movements for the implementation of democratic constitutional principles, including the most powerful, Chartism: the land issue is also significant for the trajectory of agrarian trade unionism in the later nineteenth century. The issues of especially women, and to a lesser extent, children, working on the land, are relevant to allotments, and they also intrude into agrarian trade unionism. Here, I conclude with a re-examination, from a principally southern perspective, of agrarian trade unionism, and the broader significance of the allotment and more general land issues, but without rehearsing the trajectory of the land element in English political radicalism.¹¹ Readers will doubtlessly detect reflections of this essay's provenance; I hope that the outcome also constitutes an early substantiation of the potential seminality of Burchard's book.

I. Rural communities in war and peace; poor-relief and allotments, 1793–1830.

The issue of access to land for labouring and other categories of poor rural inhabitants was thrown into sharper perspective, by the recurrent waves of resort to private enclosure Acts in the eighteenth century, and again during the French wars (1793–1815); more land was enclosed under private agreements reached between local proprietors, though the documentary record is inadequate to quantification.¹² Considerable contemporary concern over this *de facto* privatisation of land, and the abolition of common rights, is revealed in the heated debates between pamphleteers before and after 1793, and reflected in the award of parcels of land for public purposes in some eighteenth-century and wartime Acts. Normally, such land was rented by farmers, with proceeds paid into the poor-rate fund.¹³ Nor was this the sole expression of enclosure proponents' consciences: as Lord of the Manor of Hessele, the Revd. Richard Sykes, on its enclosure volunteered an annual payment of ten guineas – increasing yearly by one – to be distributed through the vestry to deserving poor parishioners.¹⁴ Poor people customarily kept animals on the rough grazing available on roadside verges; however, in 1823 ten vestrymen at Easterington (East Riding) agreed unanimously

that the poor People should have the privilege of eating the Grass [sic] in the Lanes through the new Inclosure in the Township . . . on the conditions that they hold the Cattle in their Lands, and do no damage to the Fences and ditches. All Cattle found loose within the said Lanes will be impounded.¹⁵

However widespread such arrangements, they represented minor concessions. Dr Neeson has convincingly shown that much middle- and especially upper-class opinion held that common rights preserved a vestige of independence amongst labouring folk which it was believed rendered them insubordinate and workshy, thereby compromising their usefulness for farmers.¹⁶ Despite the attempts of post-1945 historians, among them Professors Chambers and Mingay, to overturn traditional historiography's negative assessment of the impact of enclosure on the poor,¹⁷ older perceptions have been restored – be it in a more sophisticated form – by recent historians, a revision strongly endorsed by Burchardt.¹⁸ If Reed has corrected over simplistic orthodox notions of tripartite rural communities comprising landowners, tenant farmers and labourers, the proletarianisation of the latter was the almost universal product of conjunctions of enclosure, increased farm size – contemporaneously dubbed the 'engrossing of farms' – and quite critically, strong demographic growth. Again, this is Burchardt's position.¹⁹

Substantial farmers were interested in a dependent and *tractable* workforce, and during the war in several regions, largely dispensed with other traditional practices, notably annual live-in service by adolescent boys and youths. Many from the latter category probably became lodgers before marriage, and if the former's earnings pushed up family incomes while they remained at home, by this juncture much of the agrarian labour force became dependent to degrees of *seasonal* totality on the adult male wage, though the evidence suggests that embryonic labour shortages during post-1803 wartime harvests drew in women and children to increase family incomes during the late summer.²⁰ If these changes remained ongoing in the 1790s, which witnessed the start of Burchardt's allotment movement, the principal trigger was the inflation of food prices, partly provoked by marginally deficient harvest yields in 1792, and – critically – the serious deficiency of *consecutive wartime* harvests in 1794 and 1795.²¹ Indigenous shortfalls, aggravated by the difficulties of securing adequate imports of grain in wartime, saw eighteen months during which prices achieved unprecedented levels, punctuated by what contemporaries called periods of 'absolute scarcity' in some regions. What became the most notorious response was the adoption – or readoption in some localities²² – of the so-called Speenhamland scheme, with its sliding scale of incomes based principally on bread prices and the number of dependent children under working age in families. A close reading of the Berkshire magistrates' directive reveals that it was addressed to employers – and farmers were the dominant category – to pay wages to the amount specified, while a *secondary* stipulation directed the overseers in the event of prescribed incomes not being earned, to make them up to that specified. Various points require elucidation.

First, the dictates of the sliding scale were prohibitive for both farmers and the ratepayers on the grounds of costs. Secondly, in other counties, including those adjacent to Berkshire, decisions at both county and parochial levels, were for *static* allowances in-aid-of wages, based on family size, and constituting *de facto* child allowances, which cost less and were wholly paid from the rates.²³ Thirdly, other means of poor relief, including bulk purchases of grain for distribution at subsidised prices, were more appropriate given the collapse of market supplies,²⁴ and in some districts farmers sold cereals to their labourers at low and fixed prices.²⁵ Fourthly, the government's emergency policy for national subsistence hinged on substituting cheaper cereals for wheat, and the consumption of alternative foods including potatoes, and imported maize and rice. Any system designed to maintain plebeians' normal purchasing power would sustain usual consumption patterns, and with it critically compromise the kingdom's capacity to feed itself. All of these policies were reintroduced to deal with the second and much more serious famine of 1799–1801, which effectively brought down Pitt's coalition government and knocked Britain out of the war.²⁶ Among further emergency legislation during these crises were Acts to amend the permissive 1722 (Knatchbull's) Workhouse Test Act to allow outdoor relief to be paid in adopting parishes, and another enabling Gilbert Act adoptees and parishes incorporated under Local Acts – principally in East Anglia – to breach ceilings imposed on poor rates.²⁷ If the latter symbolises the scale of poor relief at these junctures, the response of farmers – who traditionally set wage-rates at the parochial level – was to fix wages at a level roughly adequate to the support of a man and wife with two young children, thus making the poor rate responsible for the sustenance of larger families.²⁸ This system became embedded especially in the principal cornlands and created the scenario which led Malthus and his many disciples to attribute rapid population expansion to the inflated scale of poor relief under the Old Poor Law, an argument confirmed by some recent historians.²⁹

That scenario also cemented farmer power over the workforce; for they were not only the major employers, as in most rural parishes they controlled the vestry, made poor-law policy and took decisions respecting individual claimants, rendering agricultural labourers doubly dependent on them. In many rural communities farmers' hegemonic power was ruthlessly used. At Grainsby in Lincolnshire during the mid-eighteenth century, the Lord of the Manor permitted labouring villagers to 'erect Tenements' on 'various strips of Waste Land lying by the . . . Highway', to which they added gardens, without requiring even a nominal payment. In the mid-1830s Grainsby farmers, in their capacity as parish officers

decided to exert control over these little properties, and told their occupants that if they refused to admit public ownership they 'should no longer have work in the Parish'. The majority meekly complied. Illegal encroachments on the wastes bordering timber enclosures in afforested districts, were also often 'studded with cottages' as on Waltham Chase. In 1816, William Cobbett – then farming at Botley and a vestryman at adjacent Bishop's Waltham – tried to persuade his colleagues to preserve them and add allotments, which would require the Bishop of Winchester's consent, but Cobbett emerged in a minority of one in the vote.³⁰

Burchardt attaches a seminal importance to the subsistence crises centred on the years 1795 and 1800 for the allotment movement,³¹ though his own evidence proves that the seminality was reflected more in the burgeoning post-1795 debate on poverty than on the ground; more acres of print were devoted to the issue than acres of land to farmworkers. He cites Professor Poynter's passing assertion that positive proposals over tackling poverty commonly included the provision of access to land for labourers.³² Among them were cow pastures, hardly the most productive form of land use,³³ more radical schemes for the colonization of waste lands to elevate labourers into small farmers, and with it help sustain repeatedly endangered national subsistence levels in wartime. If the former were introduced by a handful of paternalistically-inclined aristocrats, among them the Earl of Winchilsea, great exertions to that end required legislation and state funding, an unlikely development given the dominance of *laissez-faire* ideology and the disapproval of farmers. Burchardt's allotment data base reveals six sites created between 1795 and 1800, among them the Estcourt family's provision at Shipton Mayne in Gloucestershire and in two adjacent parishes over the Wiltshire border. All these providers were substantial landowners, as were their counterparts responsible for the eight schemes founded during the second stage of the war commencing in 1803. Burchardt quite crucially observes that these providers, together with paternalists like Winchilsea and the visionary advocates of colonization, aimed to reduce or eradicate rural labourers' dependency on the poor law.³⁴

The debate between the pamphleteers enabled opponents to challenge labourers' capacity to manage land, and more importantly to argue that allottees would exhaust their energies at their employers' expense. But, given the paucity of allotment schemes, there was little to get excited over. Instead farmers' wage bills were subsidised to an extent by non-employing ratepayers, especially the clergy where tithes survived and remained liable to be poor-rated. Even more importantly in the wartime era of rapidly rising farm rents reflecting high produce prices – which

never returned to pre-war levels before 1815 – farmers were able to use rate levels to moderate rent increases in negotiations with landowners. During the post-war depression, both existing and prospective tenants used the same criterion to negotiate rent reductions:

the tenant farmer, when he takes a farm, looks at the poor-rates, and the rent which he gives is in proportion to the highness or lowness of his poor rates, and consequently the poor-rate is the landlord's tax and not the tenant's.

As the Revd. Sockett dramatically put it to his patron, the Earl of Egremont, after compiling a statistical account of the 'state we are in' at Petworth during 1831, 'my lord, these labourers have eaten me up' through the poor rate levied on his tithe, 'and they will soon eat your lordship up, if something is not done to stop it'. Here, in addition to allotment provision – which almost certainly pre-dated Swing – Egremont introduced his famous emigration scheme to Canada. A supporter subsequently acknowledged that the latter originated

from a selfish motive, to get rid of them, not to benefit the poor creatures; they were so badly off that they wished to go, and we were glad to get rid of them.

Egremont certainly perceived both allotments and emigration as complementary strategies; others, as we shall see, believed that the former would render 'shovelling out paupers' – in Charles Buller MP's dramatic rhetoric – superfluous.³⁵

These two strategies remained equally relevant, whether used separately or in tandem during the enduring post-war agricultural recession. Demobilisation after Waterloo bloated the labour supply, as did the not unconnected sharp upturn in the birth-rate, and both combined with a marked shrinkage in arable farming – especially of hitherto marginal land recently brought under the plough and stimulated by produce prices – to generate serious under- and unemployment. These conditions proved beyond the control of many vestries, including those in some "close" parishes. In addition to customary allowances in-aid, vestries had to address the problem of 'surplus labour', as it was universally dubbed, notably through make-work schemes, by hiring quarries and gravel pits, increasing maintenance levels on parochial highways, and taking over untenanted farms. There is considerable evidence that such experiences demoralized a significant proportion of the rural labouring population, reflected in soaring crime rates, social protest – including animal-maiming and incendiarism – and in East Anglia, two riotous episodes in 1816 and 1822.³⁶ Although poor rates peaked nationally in

1817–8, ironically emanating from a brief resurgence of food prices, welfare costs remained at high if oscillating levels during the 1820s, germinating renewed critiques – with hardly any substantive defences – of current poor-law administration,³⁷ and symbolised by new editions of Malthus' *Essay on Population* in 1817 and 1826. Many observers echoed Sockett asserting that the real costs of relief ultimately fell on landed proprietors, with the rates 'eating' their rents.³⁸

Some Old Poor-Law critics transmuted utilitarian theory into practical reforms at the local level. If the publicity-conscious Revd. Becher and George Nicholls gave the impression of concerted reforms in Nottinghamshire, their counterparts elsewhere, including the Revd. Whately at Cookham (Berkshire) appear to have been relatively isolated, an impression ostensibly confirmed by the 1834 Poor Law Report.³⁹ In fact, a combination of the compulsory 1818 Act, introducing plural voting in vestries, combined with the permissive 1819 Select Vestries Act, facilitated the election of parish executives with the specified aim of reforming poor-law administration and driving down the rates. The power of appointing salaried assistant overseers tasked with the 'minute' investigation of all claimants' precise circumstances, and often charged with other duties including increasing the productivity of parish employees on the land, the roads and in quarries, was accompanied by the requirement for two, rather than one magistrate, to hear appeals against select-vestry decisions. In practice, this often meant that appeals were heard by several justices at regularised Petty Sessions, whose formal rulings commonly reflected the disciplinary and economising spirit of the 1819 Act irrespective of whether claimants' parishes had formally adopted it.⁴⁰ Indeed, one authority – a Braintree lawyer – writing in 1841, dubbed the years between 1820 and 1834 as 'the "Select Vestry Period"'.⁴¹ And, well he might; there were some spectacular successes. At Terling, squire Strutt – be it after a struggle – convinced the principal farmers to adopt the Act in 1824, and if there was something of an hiatus during the troubled years of 1830–1, a renewed initiative from January 1832 brought the poor rate down from 8/9 to four shillings in the pound in just over three years.⁴²

Historians of social protest in rural England during the depression have perhaps overly concentrated on the regional mobilisations of 1816 and 1822, and the more general one in 1830. The evidence also reveals that many countryside communities *throughout* the depression rapidly became dysfunctional, with some proving virtually ungovernable. The following example admittedly derives from 1822 – which proved the nadir of the depression – and involves the adjacent villages of Headley and Bramshott; neither were particularly representative settlements. First,

they were near Haslemere, where the local woollen industry was in terminal decline. Secondly, they lay just off the main London-Portsmouth road, much used by tramps amongst whom were a considerable number of former servicemen. They were also on the edge of the hilly and *extra-parochial* Hindhead district, which hosted a number of squatter communities on both sides of the Hampshire-Surrey border. In August of that year, William Woods and John Tuckley were convicted for firing two barns at Bramshott, killing six 'fine Cart Horses' and three calves, and sentenced to death. Woods was reprieved by the judge, leaving Tuckley to face the public hangman alone. Tuckley's previous conviction for burglary at Headley, for which he received the extraordinarily lenient sentence of three-months hard labour, clearly proved crucial. Despite this, he was subject of a petition for commutation. The Rectors and all parish officers of both villages and some 35 others, with the alleged support of all six magistrates regularly comprising the Alton Bench, having seen this intelligence 'with alarm in the provincial Newspapers', counter-petitioned the new Home Secretary Peel:

your Petitioners live amongst murderers, Thieves and Incendiaries who for many Years past have been committing every species of Depredation.

Noting that scarcely an Assize passed without a defendant from either village, they produced an impressive catalogue of serious crime. Whomsoever had killed a man in his own house years before was still at large; those convicted included Elizabeth Birmingham for firing a house while robbing it, several further cases of burglary, and more housebreakers and sheep-stealers, for which but one man had been executed, with the rest transported, some of them for life, among them Birmingham. The counter-petition ended by imploring Peel to intervene so that Tuckley 'may never return to Headley again'. Tuckley was hanged.⁴³

Concern over reducing rent rolls from a combination of depressed produce prices, the levels of recipients' dependency on welfare and its social and financial costs, despite the contextualising impact of the new legislation, formed the backdrop to allotment provision during the peacetime years of Burchardt's first phase of the movement. He identifies 39 new schemes between 1816 and 1829, of which eleven were launched in the last three years. This suggests some relationship with both the reducing value of individual recipients' poor relief, and the manifest social tensions germinated by more rigorous poor-law administration. The impact of relief cuts was exacerbated by the three consecutive poor harvests of 1828-30, which compromised labourers' customary peak seasonal earnings. In Somerset in 1829 for example, 'the pressure of the times' persuaded one farmer, a former opponent of allotments, to make ten

acres available. At Crondall – then in Surrey – the new select vestry tried to eradicate aid for all those with access to plots over an half acre after 1822, and eventually compromised by restoring *de facto* child allowances but only with respect to those aged under ten. Allotment providers were concerned with the restoration of social cohesion – reflected in the much vaunted notion of a ‘stick in the hedge’ for farmworkers – and probably as a form of compensation for cuts in relief. If the latter goes unrecognised by Burchardt, he correctly attributes providers’ concern over relief dependency, not least as a proportion made non-receipt a condition of tenancy. Other common regulations included a ban on Sunday working on allotments to facilitate compulsory church attendance. Fracturing these rules, or being convicted of a crime – including poaching – inculcated suspicion among the labouring community and appears to have restricted acceptance of land on offer. Others explained their refusal to take it owing to fears over being discriminated against in the local labour market.⁴⁴

But the most powerful opponents were medium to substantial farmers. Those who remained viable during the depression were too important for landlords’ own economic interests to submit to proprietors’ pressure. The Earl of Carnarvon fulminated impotently over their resistance to his, and

not allowing the poor man his quarter or half acres to rent, are enough to break the spirit of the labourer, & destroy all industry, with every comfort which they ought to have, & could have but the farmers everywhere sett their faces against any improvement of their condition. I have made much progress in improving the state of my own cottagers, but finding such opposition from the farmers always & *beyond my own limits I cannot get the system extended even in the Parishes nearest home*, though giving small occupations to the peasants would reduce the poor rates one half at least (my emphasis).

Squire William Bernard of Clatworthy in West Somerset – who may have been a relative of Sir Thomas Bernard, the driving force behind the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor in the 1790s, and a strong advocate of allotment provision – dismissed as excuses farmers’ identification of potential problems over re-possessing land and enforcing tenancy conditions. Bernard portrayed himself as isolated as he was determined:

the whole conduct and arrangement of the business from first to last has fallen on my Shoulders, there being no one from whom I could derive the least assistance.

He allowed his tenants to pay the rents in instalments whenever they could spare a little cash, and advanced tickets for allottees to exchange for lime from local burners – particularly numerous in the West Country – and reimbursing himself by adding the costs to the rent. Although he admitted that his stipulation of ‘double dressings’ of lime was unpopular, despite this assistance, he rationalised that it made ‘occupant[s] . . . vest a kind of property in the soil’. He also convinced allottees that the investment would be more profitable through the input of wives and children, ‘at present for the most part without employment’.⁴⁵

Barnard additionally observed that

Cottagers['] . . . general practice is . . . to take Crop after Crop of potatoes, frequently without manure, from their Gardens even when their own property, until the Land is completely exhausted.

The provision of potato patches appears to have been a wartime innovation in some localities, and Burchardt reports a further marked expansion after 1815, though in this period he omits to note that beneficiaries were from that diminishing proportion of regular labourers in stable employ, as opposed to their casualised neighbours. If the West Country was the principal region for patches, notably Dorset, where ‘scarcely a parish’ was without, they were also provided over considerable parts of East Anglia. However, Burchardt argues persuasively that these cannot be embraced by the allotment movement, as plots were *temporary* as opposed to *permanent*, sited in corners of farmers’ fields and manured by them, a service included in the rent. Locations were changed with crop rotations, a procedure which in one Dorset provider’s view made patches ‘preferable to the allotment system’.⁴⁶ Some witnesses in their evidence to parliamentarians deliberately juxtaposed patches with allotments, exemplified by farmer Hancock – also from Dorset – who under increasingly aggressive interrogation, finally conceded that his arrangements were ‘not altogether the allotment system’. Indeed, some cynics claimed that providers received more from rents than they would otherwise from the produce.⁴⁷ Bernard also criticised potato patches. First, farmers commonly charged at the rate of eight or even ten pounds per acre for a ‘period seldom exceeding seven months’, and secondly ‘almost always’ rents had to be paid ‘before they take their crop’. Thirdly, they were often located at a considerable remove from tenants’ homes. It was said that where allotments were introduced, current potato plots were ‘knocked on the head’. Burchardt’s demarcation, plus his claim that very few parishes adopted the 1819 Act’s provisions for renting land, and borrowing powers to buy up to twenty acres for allotment purposes,⁴⁸ also underpins his ‘inescapable conclusion’ that his first period witnessed a ‘very low’ though not ‘entirely abortive’ movement.⁴⁹

Ironically, the total of 39 schemes – each of which is listed – is an underestimation, owing to Burchardt's non-consultation of estate and parochial archives. The former is exemplified by the Carnarvon papers. These include the reply to the fourth Earl's 1826 inquiry to Estcourt's son Thomas Grimston Escourt, who reported that when he took over one of the family's estates near Devizes in 1823 – a common initial move for heirs to gain experience during fathers' lifetimes – he created an allotment scheme, which he detailed. He concluded by volunteering that his father, as a long-term provider despite various unfortunately undescribed difficulties, would certainly respond to any request from the Earl. The situation at Crondall derives from parish records, and the use of the 1819 Act in both Hampshire and Nottinghamshire was mentioned in evidence given to parliamentary committees. In the latter county, for example, it was said that some men through allotments became 'small farmers', while others became dual-occupationists, 'huxters, and so on'.⁵⁰ By 1830 the *principles* of access to land for the rural poor had been established as a viable option to counter poverty and associated disaffection, to reinforce paternalism and underpin the traditional structure of countryside communities, with vestries empowered to reduce poor rates by similar means.

II. Captain Swing, labourers' access to land and the divided elite, 1830–1834.

Before we progress to Swing, Burchardt's complacent contrast between late 1830 and the situation obtaining at the very turn of the nineteenth century is not convincing. His assertion that in 1798 English Jacobinism was a spent force is risible, notably in the context of the French invasion preparations which climaxed in the spring of 1801 when famine conditions in England – after eighteen months – peaked. At that precise juncture, no less a figure than Arthur Young, who had throughout that crisis repeatedly argued for plebeian access to land, reasoned that the scale of *political* disaffection would, in the event of an invasion, 'see [countrymen] join . . . [the] enemy in crowds'.⁵¹ Just before Swing exploded in Hampshire, one estate steward observed that '*the whole rural machine is going wrong*' (my emphasis). Shortly after the mobilisations commenced, when he observed the 'mechanicality' of them at first hand, he postulated that

These proceedings will be quelled, but the root of the evil remains, and unless the conditions of the rural population can be bettered, we shall be in as bad a state as Ireland, live in fortified houses & be shot at like wild animals whenever we venture beyond their shelter.⁵²

Once Swing exploded, many knowledgeable observers believed that there were links between the Irish tithe war and Swing, an identification based on the virtual simultaneous start with Captain Rock's onslaught. The Duke of Buckingham observed that

their similarity of character, and the understanding that existed between the principal Irish and English demagogues, it is impossible not to come to the conclusion, that they were not acting in concert.

The dangerous situation in London during the first week of November, when the government ordered the new king not to attend the new Lord Mayor's Guildhall banquet caused 'a great sensation' in Swing epicentres, among them Battle. There were numerous revolutionary and nationalist Irish in London and other larger towns, and ironically reactions against migrant Irish harvesters had played a role in germinating Swing too. Nevertheless, the Home Office encouraged provincial magistrates when dealing with arrested Irishmen – commonly on charges for vagrancy, theft or violence – to have these prisoners searched for threatening letters. Such perceptions among the elite – and indeed many others – were aggravated by the visible disintegration of Wellington's parliamentary majority; his resignation precipitated the enduring Reform Bill crisis, with all its equally enduring uncertainties. Members of the elite repeatedly articulated their fears of potential revolution between Swing and the royal assent to the Reform Bill. Although members of the elite privately articulated fears of revolution have been cited by Dr Brock in his authoritative study of the Great Reform Act, it is an Australian historian, Professor David Kent, who writes of the moment of Wellington's resignation and his protracted replacement by Grey, that

The government was on the defensive, besieged by events largely beyond its control, fearful that the cancer of revolution might reach Britain as it had so many other parts of Europe.

There are *some* similarities between the situation obtaining between the summers of 1830 and 1832, and that experienced between early 1800 and mid-1801.⁵³

Populist political disaffection was also visibly rising in England at the moment Swing exploded. The continental revolutions in August and September 1830 were one causal force, and ominous portents in the estimation of especially many upper-class people. At Ash-next-Sandwich labourer Willcocks revealed a conversation when he was asked

if he knew what the Poor Men had been doing in France, he told him yes . . . & Willcocks then said that this Country would soon come to the same state.

When Swing reached East Anglia, plebeian radicals domiciled in Ipswich designated 6 December for a meeting on Rushmere Heath – in probable imitation of an earlier rally on Penenden Heath called by their Maidstone counterparts – which was announced by hand-written notes on cards

dropped through the gratings of the cellars . . . “We will not starve! therefore we must meet . . . and vindicate our rights. . . . Remember Brussels and Paris! Imitate them on Dec 6! Arm yourselves! Remember!!! Remember!!!”.

Democratic political demands were articulated by Cobbettite leaders of some Swing mobilisations.⁵⁴

Although protesters’ socio-economic demands varied locally, a stop to machine threshing, and increased employment at advanced wages were virtually universal, while changes to poor relief – including more generous benefits and the dismissal of investigative assistant overseers – were common, especially in the south, and notably in Sussex which is incredibly not one of Burchardt’s ‘four chief [Swing] counties’. Demand for access to land was latent in places, notably for smallholdings of two to four acres in one Hampshire afforested district.⁵⁵ A careful reading of the voluminous primary evidence reveals only one promise of allotments – at Alton, also in Hampshire – in the agreements thrashed out in negotiations between Swing leaders and village vestrymen.⁵⁶ This feature of Swing surprisingly eludes Burchardt, though it must be linked with the suspicions he acknowledges over the conditions imposed on allottees. In short, most of Swing’s demands’ focused on wages, employment levels – which included the threshing machine issue – and enhanced welfare benefits, namely the most critical elements of the labourers’ life-support system, which had been increasingly compromised in many communities during *very recent years*. Moreover, they were immediately restorable by employers and others on the spot, and these realities explain why allotments were absent from virtually all protesters’ litanies. This was true over much of Hampshire, where the Duke of Buckingham launched an allotment scheme in Avington and Easton, just two months before the revolt spread into the county. Here, 81 labourers had between a half and two acres. It is possible that the Alton decision imitatively derived from that luminary’s initiative a mere twelve miles away. Moreover, his allottees were unusually not disentitled to poor relief, and if only one of the two-acre men subsequently received public assistance, the Duke’s own steward observed – be it privately in 1833 – that should the county’s magistracy become ‘less liberal in their “bread allowance”’, farmworkers would be more interested in allotments.⁵⁷

Swing rocked the foundations of English landed society. Earl Grey's incoming government was faced with a monumental crisis. In his first days in power, Lord Melbourne arrived at the Home Office at 6am, with the enduring strain of containment and then repression requiring subordinate staff to work on Christmas day; if that was one expression of seriousness, another came in the government's determination to prove that its commitment to constitutional reform did not mean it would tolerate riotous mobilisation, let alone incendiarism. The issue of Special Commissions of Assize for some counties, not least to expeditiously clear overflowing jails – also targeted by some crowds – and with the expressed intention of seeking capital charges for leaders, notably for those deemed to be politically motivated. Nineteen men were executed and nearly 500 sentenced to transportation.⁵⁸ Melbourne was subsequently inundated by petitions for clemency – many of which were supported by at least some members of county elites – and most were endorsed in Melbourne's hand, 'Nil'.⁵⁹

The state's response was not, however, solely repressive. Given the poor law's centrality to Swing, the government conceded a Tory initiative in the Lords with the establishment of a select committee to investigate social welfare, which also heard from veteran allotment providers including the younger Thomas Estcourt and the Revd. Demainbray. The report praised both allotments and parochial resort to labour rates, which advantaged farmers who employed greater proportions of labourers to their acreages and penalised those who did not. Both were advanced by legislation. The Labourers' Employment Act of 1832, provided a statutory framework for permissive vestry adoption of labour rates, though it was a temporary measure expiring in 1834. However, three further Acts, passed during 1831–2, facilitated vestry acquisition of land, including extending the 1819 Act's twenty-acre limit to fifty, and were ostensibly permanent.⁶⁰

Major initiatives to advance allotment provision occurred in a context partially conditioned by these parliamentary developments, and many supporters would have echoed the exclamation of one new provider in Essex, Montague Burgoyne, that 'the Peace & Safety of the Country depends on the system'. Carnarvon, who was ill and not at his Highclere estate in Hampshire when Swing engulfed that county, was adamant that all his ilk must 'give generally good cottages & gardens & Potatoe ground'. He ordered his steward to immediately provide twenty acres at his Christian Malford estate in Wiltshire, where his example was simultaneously followed by the other two principal proprietors in the place. Carnarvon also contacted William Bernard, specifically over the question of the scale of reduction in poor-rates triggered by his scheme at

Clatworthy. If Carnarvon wanted hard empirical evidence to convince others of their utility, Bernard carefully gave a non-committal reply, not least because of the very depressed state of the West Country woollen industry. But he volunteered three pieces of information, deriving from a meeting at the modest market town and minor woollen centre of Wiveliscombe held under his magisterial auspices on 3 December 1830, at that very moment when Swing threatened to embrace Somerset. Those in attendance had suddenly detected the 'greatest Anxiety among both the agricultural Labourers & Weavers to be admitted to allotments'. Secondly, in stark contrast to what the press had widely reported elsewhere, Bernard 'also had great numbers of the labourers of adjoining parishes before me to be sworn as special Constables', who also said that they would rather have allotments than weekly wage rises from eight to ten shillings. Thirdly, in response, parish officers at Wiveliscombe agreed to take twenty acres of land under the 1819 Act, and those present from other communities would recommend their vestries to do the same.⁶¹

But this rejuvenated movement was not only bitterly divided from its inception, but in poor-law funded emigration it also had a rival strategy aimed at directly tackling the critical rural labour surplus problem.⁶² Emigration to British colonies was repeatedly attacked by Cobbett in his customarily vigorous style, where people would 'either die speedily or . . . lead the most degraded and miserable lives'; the sole legitimate overseas destination was the USA with its 'cheap government' and political freedoms. Cobbettites also railed against promoters' true objectives, one of whom, farmer William Budd of Highclere, even extracted a paragraph from the *Political Register* for reproduction in handbill form for circulation in Hampshire in April 1832: when challenged by the elite, he responded by alleging that promoters' principal motive lay in their 'Interest in getting them to any place rather than remain a Burden on the Rates'. Privately, Budd advised prospective emigrants 'to look before they leap, or inquire before they embark'.⁶³

Two societies to advance allotment provision, namely the Labourers' Friend Society [LFS] and the Agricultural Employment Institution [AEI], were founded in 1830-1. Because the former survived, be it after renamings and published its reports on a regular basis into the later nineteenth century, Burchardt is heavily dependent on its illuminating propaganda from its foundation. Of the latter, he notes that 'little is known', of what it 'accomplished'.⁶⁴ The critical difference between the LFS and the AEI was the latter's aim of buying land for letting to labourers with the expressed intentions – echoing Cobbett's dream – of recreating the class of 'small farmers', who according to one supporter, had been 'swept from the face of England, their descendants . . . reduced

to . . . misery and degradation' as under-employed labourers. The LFS had no intention of purchasing land; it aimed to propagate allotment principles, namely as a source of food for labourers using 'spade husbandry' to reduce – and preferably eradicate – poor-law dependency.⁶⁵

Curiously, some advocates were members of both organisations, notably the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Earl of Chichester. The latter's new allotments at his Falmer seat were occupied before the end of 1830, and in the following February he founded the 'Sussex Association for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes', while simultaneously lobbying county squires, including the serving High Sheriff, Thomas Sanctuary, and George Courthope, both active against Swing in the respective vicinities of Horsham and Ticehurst. His lordship argued that half-acre lots would suffice in many districts, but that two acres were necessary in regions including the Weald with its manifest 'superabundance of labour', and sufficient to occupy allottees for half the year, enabling the 'peasant to sell his labour to himself'. The Earl diplomatically hinted that his fellow justices 'must laugh at my wild schemes & sanguine expectations'. Sanctuary supported Chichester, but Courthope raised objections, while one of his squirearchial neighbours, John Fuller of Brightling, fulminated against proposed resort to vestry-funded emigration – 'the rage at present in . . . [Heathfield] parish' – in favour of allotments under existing legislation.⁶⁶ The outcome here is unclear, though neighbouring and virtually bankrupt Burwash, voted for emigration, while Chichester's instruction that Chiddingly vestry should provide allotments – channelled through his client Rector Russell – was minuted, but nothing else; instead, vestrymen committed the considerable sum of £117 to the emigration of two families, with fifteen children between them, and two single men, to the USA.⁶⁷ In fact, emigration and allotments were complementary, not contradictory means of confronting the labour surplus, a point conceded by Chichester. It was at this time that his fellow Sussex grandee, Egremont, launched his major scheme for emigration to Canada, which stimulated the foundation of local societies for promoting the Earl's key objective.⁶⁸

The AEI's purchase of a *de facto* land-colonization fifty-acre site at Cholesbury in Oxfordshire, is the sole achievement recorded by Burchardt;⁶⁹ in part funded by the Duchess of Kent's 'munificent donation', a reduction of the poor rate from 29 to five shillings in the pound had materialised by 1834. Peers were active, among them the Dukes of Buccleuch and Richmond, and several MPs, including H D Goring and H B Curteis, Whig MPs for respectively Shoreham and East Sussex. The AEI's first meeting outside London, convened at Brighton in December 1833, where it had the support of the *Tory Gazette*. It opined that the most

'effectual . . . remedy' for rural revival was the partial reversal of the agricultural revolution, 'to convert the labouring agriculturalist into little farmers or to blend the calling of the farmer with that of the day labourer', little less than a Cobbettite restoration of a classless countryside. A 'great' party of local radical 'tradesmen and mechanics' steered the debate on to the uncomfortably contentious issue of the corn laws, though an AEI spokesman was able to lash the LFS, which 'recommended, but *did* nothing: this Institution proposed to Act'. Subsequently, one supporter tried ineffectually to convert a LFS branch inaugural meeting at Guildford into an acting body with the aim of establishing 'small farmers . . . with as much land as he could cultivate', and ultimately their purchase of the freehold. In fact the AEI's finances were on a downward trajectory, and though it survived to celebrate its second anniversary in 1834, that was its last mention in *The Times*. What happened to Cholesbury remains unknown. Chichester 'suspended' his Sussex association in the face of misrepresentations and 'great opposition'.⁷⁰ The Earl appears to have transferred his allegiances to the LFS; speaking at its inaugural meeting for North Northamptonshire at the end of 1833, he reportedly

bore ample testimony to the *success of the system recommended from his experience of . . . Sussex, and dwelt strongly on the powerful influence, in a moral point of view, it gives the upper classes over the minds of the peasantry!*⁷¹

Only the LFS remained. Yet it too was compromised to degrees. Founded by London surgeon Benjamin Wills, who had a long history of promoting access to land, lobbying landowners among them in 1821 the Hampshire grandee Sir Thomas Baring, and a future Swing target. Burchardt reveals that in that decade, Wills argued for a statutory framework to facilitate land colonisation; his neo-revolutionary ideology had Spencean under tones. As an avid opponent of emigration, Wills outlined his scheme to the 1826–7 Commons select committee on the subject as the alternative to 'surplus population', which the subsequent report – unusually for its genre⁷² – went out of its way to denounce as 'extravagant' and 'ignorant', though nonetheless subversive for that.⁷³ By the time of Swing, Wills appears to have adopted the more pragmatic plan of 'small allotments' provided by substantial landowners, effectually a compromise aimed at diluting farmers' perception that *any* access to land for their labourers would undermine their dependence on their employers. Substantial farmers, especially, were also anxious to retain their *de facto* wage-bill subsidies from the poor rates, and their control of vestry administration which cemented their parochial hegemony. The LFS and most of its supporters seeking to extend allotments after Swing, regarded

their provision as critical for their additional objective of eradicating farm workers' receipt of all forms of publicly-funded relief, as we have seen. Most – but not all – of the schemes introduced in the very early 1830s, used similar rules to those imposed on allottees before 1830, though some conceded that limited welfare benefits might be continued, at least initially. For example, the Revd. Blunt of Nether Wallop (Hampshire) provided prizes for allottees who raised the 'largest family in a well regulated manner and receive the least assistance from the parish'. But such concessions failed to terminate labourers' and others' suspicions. At the AEI's Brighton meeting, the principal spokesman admitted under response to hostile questioning that

in many districts the poor were afraid to accept land, lest they should lose all assistance from the parish . . . there were Magistrates who would not give any relief for paupers if they had a pig or goose in their possession. The overseers would prevent them from having the least relief, so long as they had a stiver to call their own.

This was denied by magistrates in the audience, among them Sir Charles Blunt, Whig MP for Lewes, and Captain Pechell; the latter added that petty dealers in foodstuffs to the former's pig-keeping cottagers were among those in regular receipt of allowances in-aid-of wages and incomes. In fact, both these different perceptions reflected localised practices *within* Sussex.⁷⁴

Repetitive support from sectors of the provincial press encouraged the formation of local LFS branches before 1834, among them Lindfield and Godalming. But, as we have seen, sectors of the supportive press refracted Cobbettite visions. Bath and Wells' and Chichester's joint membership of the LFS and the AEI tended to juxtapose the two organisations. Further conflation was fuelled when the Godalming branch responded to a 'very unlooked for difficulty' by buying over fifteen acres, and installing about forty tenants 'without regard to character', and in their defence, rather superbly claiming that production would 'render unnecessary the introduction of Irish bacon, pork and lard', together with eggs imported from France, to the 'great reproach of the nation'. Godalming enthusiasts also asserted, in contradiction to advanced agrarian capitalism's pretensions, that the creation of small farmers from unemployed labourers had reclaimed some 'really poor land'. This generated further hostile claims that the entire movement's real objective was to transmute surplus labourers into that bugbear of contemporary agrarian capitalism, small farmers, which combined with Malthusian logic would generate a 'cottier tenantry, a retrograde step . . . & the most certain . . . (v. Ireland) to breed an additional race of paupers', in the words of the LFS supporting Marquis

of Lansdowne, to the AEI's Duke of Richmond. Given the fact that the early thirties witnessed the fiercest tithe and rent wars that even Ireland had ever experienced, this constituted a powerful critique, whatever the national shame represented by the consumption of French eggs.⁷⁵

Significant reductions in poor-law costs were achieved. Figures from the Midhurst Spade Husbandry Society, created by local grandee William Poyntz who had no known affiliation but with plots over the quarter to half acre range advocated by the LFS, revealed that R Madgwick's family, in receipt of over £35 in relief over 1830-1, was paid only £5-6-0 in 1833-4, the difference ascribed to his one-acre; the £10 paid to a bricklayer with seven children was halved after he took a half-acre plot across the same period. If the Whig press did not join in Cobbettite eulogies, it nevertheless acknowledged that allotments represented a 'stake in the hedge', restored 'something of that independence of mind' eroded by poor-law dependency, and provided a forum for parents to train children while keeping fathers from beer-shops, thus confirming LFS propaganda.⁷⁶ But whereas enthusiasts like Montague Burgoyne revelled in favourable newspaper coverage of revived paternalism, his campaign aimed at vestries in Essex was rebuffed, and actual provision remained very patchy. Moreover, even where provision was made, it was usually inadequate to satisfy all aspirants. The Midhurst Society had but seven acres and eight tenants; given the scale of the small town's poverty problem at this juncture, these savings were a drop in the ocean, though it could be argued that they might have been marginally larger if smaller plots had accommodated a score of allottees.⁷⁷ However, some new allotments were provided under powers provided under the three enactments in the immediate aftermath of Swing, as at Hambledon and Walton-on-Thames, though again the scale of such provision can be discovered only through systematic exploitation of vestry minute books.⁷⁸

The demise of the AEI in 1834 reflected more than its financial problems and contested objectives. It symbolised the wider decline in the *entire* movement's momentum. Burchardt hints that the mid-1830's decline impacted on the LFS's activities. He cites Captain Scobell, an allotment provider in Somerset, and one of the most enthusiastic LFS campaigners, warning the membership against complacency in 1833, because provision was 'far and wide between'. Indeed, in December of that year, a former LFS travelling agent's experiences led him to conclude that the allotment system was 'not likely to be acted upon in a general way, the farmers being so averse to separate any land from their farms', and aggravated by the fact that labourers' 'Cottages in many instances [were] badly situated for the occupation of land'; the latter point was also strongly made by labourers, who wanted 'handy' – not distant – plots.⁷⁹

Indeed, the evidence suggest an actual decline on the ground, due to farmers' resistance. Their continued strength was revealed by another active LFS peer, Lord Kenyon, when instructions to his Shropshire tenants to provide land transmitted from London through his steward, were ignored; compliance necessitated his lordship's personal intervention. Over two years later, the steward could only admit that farmers steadfastly refused to acknowledge any benefits, and he loyally added that they would – at some time in an unclear future. Conversely, the provision of 'small allotments' in Kentish Wealden locations was largely eschewed on the grounds that public assistance would be cut, and similar manifestations occurred in Buckinghamshire. Here one farmer who dutifully implemented his landlord's commands, said that labourers 'would turn round and say, "It is no use cultivating my garden if it is taken off in another shape"'. Land-agent Driver, responding to a Commons' committee question over the provision of 'small tracts of land' in 1833, very cautiously replied positively, only to add that the benefits fell short of anticipations; under continued interrogation, he finally admitted that

farmers are dissatisfied because the labourers if employed on their own grounds were much fatigued and less able to perform their labour to their employers.

His caution might be explained by his own employer since 1817; he was the receiver of the Crown's rents for eighteen counties.⁸⁰

At Walton-on-Thames, it was said in 1833, that overseers during their year in office had enough trouble collecting the rates to bother with the rents for parish-supplied allotments, and perhaps curiously the tenants soon obliged by abandoning their plots. Members of successive post-Swing parliamentary inquiries into agriculture – which did not systematically address allotment provision – ended up with an ambiguous picture; they had to balance the exaggerated claims presented by some witnesses, exemplified by one from Huntingdonshire that they were supplied 'almost throughout the county', with the visually-bewildering evidence derived from the much-travelled Comptroller of corn returns, in response to a leading question in the Lords on the 'increasing ... disposition' to provide 'cottage gardens': he spluttered,

It may be so, and I suppose it is so, so far as I have seen it; but I have seen it so little, compared with the whole face of the land in the country, it is impossible to measure.

A few days later before a parallel Commons inquiry, the Comptroller regained his composure: the allotment system was 'established but on a very small scale, as far as I know'.⁸¹

III. Populist responses to the New Poor Law in the countryside, 1834–1836.

Burchardt admits that the ‘fit’ of his evidence for his trajectory of the movement between 1830 and 1850 launched in direct response to Swing ‘is by no means perfect’, a reservation initially made in its geography rather than its chronology,⁸² though later we learn that the relative paucity of allotment provision revealed by the 1834 Poor Law Report ‘is not surprising as they were still rare in most counties in 1833’.⁸³ A very close reading of Burchardt’s text, especially the precise chronology in chapter two, reveals a hiatus over 1834–5,⁸⁴ and a marked recovery from 1836, which in fact coincides with the issue of outdoor-relief prohibition orders to able-bodied males and their families by the Poor Law Commissioners. Indeed had he provided a tabulation of foundation dates of new sites for 1830–50 parallel to that supplied for 1793–1830, one suspects that it would reveal a strengthening revival from 1836.⁸⁵ In an earlier publication Burchardt claimed that his ‘movement achieved a considerable political prominence in 1830–4 and again in 1843–5’.⁸⁶ Although political profile and progress on the ground are not synonymous, they are closely related, but his periodisation *and* his presentation *implies* that the original engine was Swing, with the years identified in the 1840s coincident with the return of serious levels of incendiarism, at their fiercest in East Anglia, and contemporaneously perceived as a regional recrudescence of Swing. In the mid-1830s, the momentum behind allotment provision desperately required resuscitation, and it came in the form of the implementation of the New Poor Law which fundamentally changed socio-economic relationships in rural communities, notably though not exclusively in the principal cornlands. The same implemental agency – be it in somewhat different ways – was responsible for the *political* situation identified by Burchardt during 1843–5, which included manufacturing communities.

Some of the older Whigs who came to power in November 1830 were very long-term opponents of the Old Poor Law; as early as 1800 Lord Holland began ‘driving into the heads of all my acquaintance [that] the whole System is radically bad’, while ‘Improvements on it are next to impossible’, though this view was neither a united nor a consistent one among the leadership during their decades of opposition prior to 1830.⁸⁷ Abolition was jettisoned on pragmatic *political* grounds, though Malthus’s modification of his abolitionist stance after an optimistic upward revision of his *economically-determined* perceptions of limits to potential productivity growth, based on additional wealth generated by the burgeoning industrial sector, without jettisoning his overall theory of population, may

have given some theoretical underpinning to mere radical reform of the welfare system.⁸⁸ The centrality of the poor law to Swing facilitated Grey's government's opportunistic 1832 creation of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, which aimed through the orchestration of the massive survey by the utilitarian Commissioners and their roving assistants, underpinned by a series of substantial and detailed questionnaires to local authorities, to provide the empirical justification for fundamental change. The evidence enabled the *laissez-faire* economist Nassau Senior, and the Benthamite Edwin Chadwick to compose the notorious *Report* of 1834, which mobilised classical economics and Benthamite principles to argue for radical reform in place of the original Whig concept of 'impossible improvements'.⁸⁹ The principal targets were the allowances in-aid-of wages and other benefits – including housing – paid to the able-bodied by current poor-law authorities, notably in rural regions and especially in the principal cornlands.

The *Report* also claimed, not unjustifiably, that certain workers' regular incomes in some industries, notably handloom weavers in cotton and framework-knitters in hosiery, were at least periodically augmented by allowances paid by overseers of the poor, with the ominous implication that industrial employers were imitating their agrarian counterparts.⁹⁰ The key principle of 'less eligibility' to govern non-medical relief to at least able-bodied people would be restricted to workhouses for them and their families, initiated by the workhouse test, the 'self-activating' mechanism proving claimants' 'destitution'. The test would also operate as a 'deterrence', and fundamentally reduce existing costs. *Laissez-faire* ideology also stipulated that major reductions in poor-rates presently and relentlessly falling on especially farmers would overcome the depression by greater investment, generating more intensive agriculture and with it enhanced production; inflated profits would encourage more employment at higher wages on the land. Reform of the settlement laws would stimulate the circulation of labour, to complete the equation, and benefit employers in both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors of the economy. Indeed, the *Report* argued that present perceptions of rural labour surpluses were a myth, except in peculiar localities, where the proven utility of publicly-funded emigration could be encouraged, to terminate the problem where appropriate. 'Less eligibility' and deterrence, and carefully identified and supervised emigration would suffice, according to Senior and Chadwick.⁹¹

The evidence strongly suggests that despite especially continued countryside arson attacks, that the shock of Swing was receding, be it more slowly in the most traumatised communities, notably the persistent 'angry feelings' in those containing the families of executed and the more

numerous transported men. The excitement generated by the prolonged Reform Bill crisis, which embraced most countryside locations, was subsequently maintained in some among sectors of that huge majority of the population remaining unfranchised. If not all middle- and upper class residents were frightened by the 'formidable' appearance of political 'agitators in Hampshire as well as elsewhere' as Sir Thomas Baring, these manifestations were nevertheless very real.⁹²

Given the current scale of relief to farmworkers in employment, and during periods of under- and unemployment, popular perceptions of the 'Poor Man's Robbery Bill' are understandable. Its staggered implementation resulting from the removal – in the Lords by an amendment moved by Wellington – of the potentially suicidal clause to ban all non-medical relief to the able-bodied from 1 June 1835, was probably an arrangement to emphasise unity between the political parties' leaderships over the Bill.⁹³ The phased withdrawal of this category's assistance, commonly commenced with part-payment in kind rather than money, followed by the issue of formal outdoor-relief prohibitory orders, usually – but not invariably – restricted to males. However, given the recent history of campaigns to reduce poor relief in the 1820s, and the centrality of local poor-law administration in many localities engulfed by Swing, the fact that countryside justices subsequently *feared* a repetition is understandable. George Courthope, one of the most active East Sussex justices against Swing, articulated his concerns as early as 1832, when making his substantial and authoritative reply to the Royal Commissioners' questionnaire, asserting over the then rumoured proposed limitation of relief to those prepared to become workhouse inmates, that it

w[oul]d rouse a formidable resistance . . . & in these times of popular excitement cannot be carried into effect without endangering the peace of the Country.⁹⁴

Identical sentiments emerged during the Bill's parliamentary passage. Thomas Law Hodges, the radical Whig MP for West Kent, observed in the specific context of the 1 June 1835 clause going through the third reading, that countryside magistrates

would be obliged to fly . . . it would be no longer safe for them to remain . . . and that life and property would not be secure . . . after the passing of this law.

This was a sage observation; although Hodges himself had bravely gone to his South-west Kent estate specifically and bravely to negotiate with Swing rioters, other magisterial colleagues had fled to the towns, with for example the Revd. Collingwood of Hawkhurst seeking refuge in

Brighton.⁹⁵ One of the Tory Barings made the same point, and Cobbett seriously warned of civil war. If that allowed another Swing target, Henry Goring, Whig MP for Shoreham and a West Sussex squire, to riposte that Cobbett should 'look to his own writings . . . [to] find the true cause of the burnings and the riots to which he referred', the Lords were told by the Duke of Richmond that unless the Act was

introduced gradually . . . a rebellion might be the consequence, or something a great deal worse than they had in 1830.

Richmond, a former General who had seen battlefield action, had earned the accurate epithet as the 'Pompey of the Country' for his mobilisation of West Sussex farmers and labourers as special constables, under his own and his son's personal command in the field against Swing – as perhaps only a grandee could – in a desperate attempt to use traditional forms of repressing rioters rather than engage the army.⁹⁶

These fears grew as implementation became imminent. Another East Sussex Wealden landowner – and Tory politician – George Darby, darkly said that advice from assistant commissioner Hawley in November 1834 to pay those engaged on parish-work less than those employed privately, would 'turn . . . the country into the State it was in 1830'. His magisterial colleague on the South Downs, Inigo Thomas simultaneously predicted violent resistance 'from Experience on a former occasion . . . when scarcely a Labourer could be persuaded to be sworn in as Special Constable'. Even the robust Hawley reminded his superiors of 'the weakness of the employers of agricultural labourers during the rural disturbances of . . . 1830'. Burchardt is surely misguided in his confidence that 'landowners . . . had little reason to fear a renewed outbreak of major rioting after the early 1830's'.⁹⁷

The justification of the fears of justices Courthope, Darby and Thomas was proved by social protest generated by the implementation of the New Poor Law from the beginning of 1835, be it in but *parts* of the country. Riots in several rural regions provoked widespread anticipations that a resurgence of Swing was in the offing, fears which were enhanced by protesters' radical plebeian leadership in some locations, and another repeated feature of Swing. The politics of the labourers' predicament was easily exploitable, as the Robbery Bill's passage was facilitated by an alliance between the Whig government and the opposition Tory leadership, and confirmed by Peel's 'hundred day' ministry during which the Tories presided over the start of the implementation; radicals used both to demonstrate the manifest deficiencies of the Reform Act, which only manhood suffrage could rectify. The re-incarnated spectre of Swing saw a speedy resort to the regular army, and where available the

Yeomanry and the Coastguards, with the despatch of possés of Metropolitan policemen to some locations representing another repressive force. This speedy response was a stark contrast to Home Secretary Peel's initial slow reaction to Swing's first manifestation in Kent and penetration of East Sussex in 1830, and was but part of the equation whereby anti-New Poor-Law mobilisations were stopped from snowballing in 1835. Another, and probably more significant factor for the non-escalation of riots, were the disparate features of the implementation process. These included the precise timing of the formation of Unions in rural and predominately agricultural regions over the twenty-four months of 1835-6, and the precise stimulants which galvanised riotous assemblies.⁹⁸

These also varied. In places, it was the first appearances of new Union relieving officers dispensing part of the relief to existing claimants in kind, rather than in cash. Elsewhere, the decision to effect workhouse classification by designating different workhouses inherited by the Unions from parishes comprised within them for the different categories of existing inmates, meant that the separation of man and wife, and the parallel segregation of their children, was achieved through adopting separate institutions, often miles apart: a parallel strategy was used in places for the aged and infirm. These transfers were often impeded by crowds, while further mobilisations aimed to prevent inmates from other parishes being relocated in local workhouses, whom protesters argued had no right to accommodation in 'their' establishment. The initial resort to workhouse orders for the able-bodied sparked further disturbances, and more derived from the stimulus on the start of new central workhouse erection. These different categories of flashpoints, and different timings, meant that if implementation was a common denominator, its visible manifestations were staggered. One candidate for the provocation of very widespread riotous responses, namely the illegalisation of outdoor relief to the able-bodied on a specified day, had wisely been dropped from the Bill as we have seen. Another potential candidate could have materialised if every Union on its foundation had been compelled to build a new workhouse.⁹⁹ Political considerations meant that this was never on the agenda, though the absence of adequate compulsory powers underlay the non-provision of sufficient institutional accommodation by some Boards of Guardians, which delayed the issue of outdoor relief prohibition orders from Somerset House, to the Commissioners' chagrin.¹⁰⁰

Disturbances were not the sole form of protest provoked by the start of the Amending Act's implementation. That also galvanised a post-Tolpuddle recrudescence of agrarian trade unionism, notably the United Brothers of Industry [UBI] formed in February or March 1835, with its

headquarters in south-east Sussex. Supported by the fortuitously simultaneously-established radical *Brighton Patriot*, which included a vitriolic attack on the Act as a component of its 'Prospectus' in its inaugural issue, the Brothers under the leadership of former schoolmaster Thomas Maule, launched a vigorous recruitment drive and campaign for wage increases *specifically* to compensate for the erosion of farmworkers' regularised poor-law allowances, *before* they were finally eradicated. Maule's largely open-air meetings occurred under the surveillance of various authorities, including the Coast Guard backed by the 'Foot Artillery' from the Martello Tower at Eastbourne. Assistant Hawley, in his customary grandiloquent style, described Maule as

one of those itinerant Demagogues who are infesting this District . . . addressing the Paupers elevated on a Table [sic].

Somebody symbolically ran-up a red flag on the huge workhouse – a former barracks – at Eastbourne, shortly before inmates successfully resisted that Union's new Board's attempt to effect classification according to Somerset House's rules. The Tory *Brighton Gazette's* immediate response was that all UBI members should be locked-out by their employers; adopted as a strategy and orchestrated by Whig MPs for East Sussex and Rye, it succeeded in undermining the union by the summer, pre-empting both industrial action planned for the critical harvest season and the current expansion into West Sussex and Kent.¹⁰¹ In October 1835, Sir Thomas Baring, on receipt of substantiated reports

of an intention on the Labourers in the neighbourhood of the City [Winchester] . . . to strike work and assemble in bodies in the . . . ensuing week . . . for a redress of their alleged grievances

over New Poor-Law implementation, and widespread customary autumnal wage reductions commensurate with falling demand for labour. Several villages in this Hampshire district hosted organised radical groupings – that at Wonston even had access to a printing press – and there is shadowy evidence that the inspiration came from UBI activists in West Sussex. According to Colonel A'Court, the responsible assistant poor-law commissioner, the 'extensive circulation' of Cobbett's *Political Register*, with its weekly attacks on the New Poor Law, had 'unsettled the minds of many respectable yeomen', and that the labourers' flawed

plan was to lay up sufficient means to supply their wants for a fortnight or three weeks to endeavour by declining any work during that [ploughing] period, to compel . . . [a] return to their former wages.

Baring copied his request to Home Secretary Russell for a 'small military force' to both Lord Lieutenant Wellington, and the CO of the North Hants Yeomanry. The nearest available regular cavalry were rushed across from the South-west, and comprise another example of speedy resort to force to crush populist mobilisations at this juncture.¹⁰² Further resort to agrarian trade unionism in Essex was crushed by a lock-out, and the prosecution of those involved in violence.¹⁰³

However, if rioting and other mobilisations fell short of becoming universal at this early juncture, disturbances and the UBI's offensive were followed by considerable resort to covert protest, including incendiarism, much of it targeting the properties of elected Guardians and especially that of their *ex-officio* colleagues, namely those magistrates who played an important role in the early stages of implementation. Indeed, in some districts it was feared that leading members of local communities would refuse to stand in elections, and that the justices would cease to attend Boards.¹⁰⁴ Burchardt *eschews* consideration of these protests, and if incendiarism is referred to with reference to Dr Archer's fine study of East Anglia, other secondary sources for countryside anti-New Poor-Law protests go unmentioned.¹⁰⁵ No doubt the likes of Courthope and his colleagues were relieved when – in the event – their apprehensions of Swing's re-incarnation went unrealised, though incendiarism became another matter as the *Brighton Patriot* foretold.¹⁰⁶

IV. The implementation of the New Poor Law in rural regions and the issue of family earnings, 1835–50.

The New Poor Law was the key factor in the post-1834–5 rejuvenation of the allotment movement, and the social welfare system remained of importance in the later nineteenth-century genesis of both agrarian trade unionism and the campaigns for land reform. Moreover, the new system was a critical political factor not only in its centrality to the revival of the popular democratic movement in Chartism, but also in "establishment's" political arenas, at both the local and especially parliamentary levels. Psephological realities certainly militated powerfully against New Poor-Law opponents seizing control of Boards of Guardians in principally rural Unions, not least because Somerset House's favoured model, comprising market or other modest towns, and their countryside hinterlands,¹⁰⁷ was specifically calculated to ensure that the anticipated radical nuclei of urban Guardians, would be out-numbered by bigger farmers who usually – if not invariably – represented agrarian parishes,¹⁰⁸ though there were exceptions including Lewes.¹⁰⁹ But candidates contesting parliamentary boroughs, including some in cornland England, exemplified by Brighton

and Andover, had to accommodate electorates with sizeable proportions of anti-New Poor-Law voters. Moreover, the issue divided both main parties, and Radical MPs. Some, most notably the New Poor-Law repealers, led by the Tory John Walter – High Sheriff of Berkshire during Swing – and the proprietor of *The Times*, which became a critical organ for both repealers and ameliorists. Others included John Fielden, the radical factory-owner and reformer, who sat for Oldham, and his fellow radical Dr Tom Wakley, founder of the campaigning *Lancet*, proud of his native Dorset accent, while describing himself as ‘the representative of labour’ when sitting for Finsbury. They found allies from all sides of the Commons, to force successive governments into agreeing to investigations by parliamentary select committees from 1836.¹¹⁰ Ironically, Melbourne’s ministry used the assistant commissioners to find New Poor-Law supporters in their districts to identify witnesses capable of giving evidence of the early benefits accruing from the new system, who were foisted on to yet another Commons investigation into agriculture which commenced in February 1836.¹¹¹ The succession of select committee examinations of New Poor-Law matters continued into the 1850s, notably over medical issues. They thus went beyond the well-known inquisition into the notorious Andover workhouse scandal in 1846, and its precipitation of the quasi-victory for the system’s opponents with the demise of the Commission itself.¹¹² The context of those investigations was defined by the implementation process, followed by the routine administration of the reformed system; the capacity of MPs on these bodies to include tangential but nevertheless relevant issues, among them allotments, supports Burchardt’s thesis that whatever the very real limits to their actual provision before the mid-1830s, the LFS had achieved something of a propaganda triumph in making politicians aware of their benefits. It was the *realities* of a profoundly altered poor-law which for some transformed allotments into an essential adjunct to the welfare system.

From mid-1835 the Commissioners encouraged new Union Boards to apply for outdoor relief prohibitory orders, a contrivance – as it was made to look as if the decision came from Somerset House – to protect local Guardians. Unions in parts of East Anglia adopted the policy without recourse to the documentation, though this tactic – it was said – was designed to preserve Guardians’ prerogatives to continue paying outdoor relief to some able-bodied people.¹¹³ Certain Boards – among them Petworth – challenged the Commission and had orders imposed upon them.¹¹⁴ In other regions, notably in the West Country, the Commission accepted that local conditions rendered prohibition problematic, and tolerated continued outdoor relief to the able-bodied, notably those with

large families of pre-working age children, a situation engendered and then exploited by local authorities refusing to build sufficient workhouse accommodation.¹¹⁵ It was convincingly argued that labourers became more tractable workers, anxious to attain stable employment by toiling harder, and to secure jobs for wives and older children; 'I now see those [previously unemployed] boys at work, hedging and ditching . . . with their' fathers.¹¹⁶ Real wage rates did not rise, not least because farmers maintained the practice of setting local levels, including customary increases in response to rising food prices from 1837.¹¹⁷

This was but one ambiguous element provoking intense debate over farm labourers' wages under the New Poor Law. On the one hand it was confidently claimed that farmers feared the considerable costs of incarcerating plebeian parishioners with large families in workhouses. In Berkshire, according to assistant commissioner Gulson, on the mere hint of the issue of a workhouse order to such fathers, the Guardian would tell his parish ratepayers:

"Why, we had better raise this man's wages a shilling or two than allow that, it will cost us this, that and the other [for accommodation]". That is the way they look at it.¹¹⁸

The preferred alternative was to reserve steady employment for fathers with larger families, commonly in conjunction with piece rates for 'all the agricultural kind of labour' – especially threshing, ditching, hedging and draining – and massaging their precise work schedules commensurately. For example, a Buckinghamshire farmer gave

all the men with large families the best task work, so that by working more hours in the day they can earn a little more money.¹¹⁹

Beneficiaries were also encouraged to bring a son to work 'to relieve the father, and prevent his being driven to the poor-house'. Substantial farmers manipulated work and pay as a form of compensation for lost welfare benefits, but this was usually self-financing, not least because labourers' working days exceeded twelve hours, with only Sundays off, except for those able to earn a further shilling through attending horses and stock on the Sabbath. Some employers introduced what they dubbed 'indulgences' including malt to 'constant' employees. There is evidence of rising family incomes for some.¹²⁰ Further paternalistic assistance from landlords and clergy came through the agencies of fuel and clothing 'clubs'.¹²¹

On the other hand, some witnesses disagreed, arguing – not implausibly – that the threat of the workhouse *could* also be used to force low wages downwards; no doubt this was the case with some employers, who

legitimated it to MPs in early 1836 with reference to current low prices for farm produce.¹²² The assistant commissioners presented parliamentarians with the theoretically-based assumption that farmworkers' wages would rise, funded through the considerable savings accruing almost immediately through major reductions in the poor-rates, in places as much as sixty per cent – described as 'wonders in some [Wealden] parishes'¹²³ – but they were short on empirical evidence of wages, and subjected to hostile cross-examination. Initially, they prevaricated, and were subsequently forced to concede that wages had not risen universally. Assistant commissioner Adey, who had the distinction of remaining at home on his Hertfordshire estate while he oversaw implementation in that county and neighbouring Bedfordshire, resorted to his past private inquiries as to how his own labouring neighbours survived: 'I could never get, with any satisfaction, at the fact how my labourers and their families supported themselves'. Colleague Gulson tried to engage his interrogators' moral imperatives with reference to 'repeated instances of beershops being shut up': but his dramatic 'the New Poor Law stopped the drawing of the beer' slogan, was hardly evidence of rising wages, nor music to the ears of barley farmers and hop-planters. Alfred Power – originally responsible for Essex – took refuge in his concession that wages which remained stubbornly low owing to surplus labour pools would 'disperse them, and prevent in future its accumulation'.¹²⁴

Some early evidence to this effect in Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, rural Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex, was given to the Commons agriculture committee in February and March 1836. But it was also admitted that farmers' concern over men with larger families came at the expense of work for younger married males. Although some from this category were joined by men with smaller families in temporary migrations for navvying on railway construction, permanent migrants – with the exception of those who migrated to the industrial North under the Poor Law Commission's scheme – who established themselves elsewhere were mainly young and single, as were a proportion of emigrants. At Denham, where a group of militant youthful bachelors had 'completely got the upper hand of the Parish', resorting to descents on overseers' houses 'with pitchforks in their hands', had mostly migrated by the end of 1835, and five had disappeared overseas – all to Jamaica.¹²⁵ Although such satisfactory experiences were not restricted to east Buckinghamshire, they constituted a mere palliative, not least because it became clear that in many cornland communities – while some large family men were 'found some sort of employment' during the slack winter season – others from this category, together with those with lesser and especially no family responsibility, were laid off for several consecutive weeks, desperately struggling to

hold out rather than enter the workhouse. These semi-casualised men were among those without potato patches and 'indulgences', and for whom allotments might prove vital.¹²⁶

An operative conjunction of the current state of the labour market and the effect of the reformed welfare system, was also reported. The first question posed to able-bodied relief applicants by Guardians was 'What is the age of your children?', prior to deciding whether fathers should find work for them, or – for those with many young children – considering whether to offer a workhouse places for one or two siblings, and sometimes three or four.¹²⁷ This strategy represented a concession after the Commissioners initially resisted demands from Unions to exclude men with large families of young children from prohibitory orders, though its introduction was in the full knowledge that resort to this largely hated Old Poor-Law practice retained a powerful deterrent element.¹²⁸ Although it represented a form of outdoor relief to able-bodied men, the Commissioners' legitimated it on several grounds. First they argued that it was a temporary measure, and another mitigation of the immediate impact of the new system. Secondly, it was statutorily underpinned by the unrepealed clauses of the 1601 Act. Thirdly, on occasion they claimed that such children would benefit from workhouse discipline, including 'cleanliness', thereby improving their employment prospects, and with it the capacity 'to maintain themselves independently' in the future.¹²⁹ Fourthly its transitional availability 'before the Workhouses are fully prepared', would enable large families to adapt, notably by getting children – and where possible mothers – into farmwork.¹³⁰ The Commissioners insisted that Boards reported resort to this device in every individual case within a fortnight, for official sanction for usually a prescribed and limited period.¹³¹ This retreat embarrassed Somerset House, not least because the Commissioners had also orchestrated evidence from their assistants and published it in their second annual report in 1836 to argue that farmers employed more wives and especially children on the land, thereby significantly inflating family incomes.¹³² That generated much scepticism, not least because the practice of sending children from large families to workhouses endured into the 1840s, and the Commissioners' claims were eventually tested by the investigation into landwork by women and children in 1843.

The superficiality of the evidence garnered by four especially appointed New Poor-Law assistant commissioners – whose employment was limited by statute to a mere thirty days¹³³ – reflected that key fact, though their report, published under the House of Commons' auspices, is widely used by historians, including Burchardt, who are often unaware of its precise derivation and its *political significance*.¹³⁴ Drs Sayer, Sharpe and Verdun,

acknowledged the Commissioners' role. The latter two are among those historians in the necessary process of challenging Keith Snell's thesis, of the marginalisation of women workers in the principal cornlands in the early nineteenth countryside, an argument which is too heavily based on the very ambiguous evidence deriving from settlement examinations.¹³⁵ Sayer's feminist perception that the report represents the 'first example of an excursion by the state into the countryside on a specifically gendered issue' – which it was not – is then submerged in claims that it was a 'minor affair' because it was not immediately discussed in the Commons, a criterion which reveals an ignorance of normal parliamentary procedures. It was for parliamentarians' and the public's consumption, on an important contemporary issue, namely the demand for child and women workers on the land, and agricultural labourers' *family* incomes.¹³⁶

The outline trajectory is simple. The Commissioners' rigid adherence to classic economic theory, and their very public application of it initially to projecting that farmers' self-interest in enhancing production through increased employment of principally adult male labourers, with a rise in demand generating rising wages and piece rates, funded from substantial reductions in employers' poor rates, had spawned controversy. The empirical evidence respecting adult male real earnings was ambiguous at least, and the Commissioners had extended the application of theory to postulate greater demand for women and children to work the land. Hence the overall social, economic and *political* question now hinged on whether improved family incomes fully compensated for the eradication of regular allowances in-aid-of wages. The assistant commissioners were too hard pressed to report on such matters; the machinery for a much-needed sound empirical resolution of a matter causing public concern, was an investigation of the issue on the ground by four men, limited to an aggregate total of 120 days.

Whatever the shortcomings of the special assistant commissioners' 1843 activities, some of the empirical evidence garnered is important. The fact that in the countryside, for most fathers 'every farthing that can be earned by any member of a labourer's family is of importance to him', appears to be universally applicable; securing work for children impacted adversely on school attendance, a Vale of York incumbent observing that they were 'taken . . . for the most part when a *farthing* is to be got'. Other generalities emerge. First, family incomes varied considerably within localities, and was ascribed to the ages and number of children in work, though the strength of boys was also held to be more important than age in terms of earning capacity. Secondly, demand for women's work on the land fluctuated seasonally, and engagement was also conditioned by the age profile of the family. Thirdly, more seasonal work for boys was to

be found in woodland regions, while equally seasonal hop culture and fruit growing drew in girls and women too. Fourthly, where domestic manufacturing survived, as evidenced here by button-making and straw plaiting in Dorset and other western counties, women and children's earnings might equal half of farmworking father's wages in a region where they stubbornly retained their notoriously lowest level.¹³⁷ Finally, at Castle Acre in Norfolk, temporary assistant Denison also uncovered the system whereby gang-masters mobilised workforces of women, including spinsters and widows, and children from the age of five. Subsequently, Denison's hostile pen-portrait came to haunt especially middle-class perceptions of working conditions in the Victorian countryside, which also served to exaggerate the system's incidence in the public's and politicians' perceptions.¹³⁸

The reporters also encountered 'independent' plebeian 'families ... [perennially] pinched for food', reflecting an earlier investigative Commons select committee being told by an adult male farm labourer that he could not 'do without' his weekly fourpenny halfpence worth of tobacco – which he chewed or 'I really should be starved'.¹³⁹ Assistant Austin reported that during very hard winters fathers would be laid off 'for [up to] many weeks at a time', a customary and widely-used practice, which the Poor Law Commission struggled against with verbose, theoretically underpinned missives directed to Boards – numerically dominated by larger farmers in rural Unions – where the principal employers refused to abandon the practice. Those in parishes comprised in one of the most obdurate, Petworth, persisted in laying off men between the end of autumn ploughing and winter-time coppicing, in addition to bad weather lay-offs, in what appears to have been a calculated campaign to force the ratepayers to support both categories of victim, with the alleged ultimate intention of the full restoration of regular allowances in-aid-of wages. Although Petworth became more accommodating after the 1837 demise of the octogenarian grandee Egremont and a New Poor-Law opponent, farmers in other Unions – notably those in Dorset, the source of Austin's intelligence – appear to have reduced their winter-time labour forces to the bare minimum, and it is probable that their Union Boards exploited the Commissioners' reduced capacity to properly police the system once their core of permanent assistants had been cut to a wholly inadequate nine in 1842, through resort to clandestine extensions of outdoor relief.¹⁴⁰

V. The New Poor Law and the land: the rejuvenation of the allotment movement and the genesis of more radical solutions, 1835–50.

Our examination of the relationship between the New Poor Law and the allotment movement might well commence with the attitude of both the 1832–4 Royal Commission and their assistants in the field, and the 1834 Report itself. As we have seen, Burchardt stresses that these assistants in their lengthy and belatedly published reports from their districts, provided much evidence of the provision of allotments; five of them favoured at least modest volumes of land for agricultural labourers.¹⁴¹ Such acclaim was unwelcome to the Report's authors, notably Chadwick who was notoriously hostile to allotments, despite the delightful irony that as an assistant commissioner in 1833 he acknowledged that allottees' morals were superior to other labourers'. The issue was very deftly discussed and dismissed in the Report: where allotments had 'been introduced and carried on by individuals, it has generally been beneficial', but 'where . . . managed by parish officers . . . it . . . seldom succeeded'. 'The most important result of our inquiries on this subject' was that private arrangements between owner and tenants had proved materially 'beneficial to the leaser as well as to the occupier', because 'the land may be let to labourers on profitable terms' by the former. In these circumstances further 'public inquiry . . . seems to be at an end': the 'practice . . . may be left to the care of their [mutual] self interest' (my emphasis). Burchardt's claim that the *Report*, which achieved a very wide readership, contained 'a favourable discussion of allotments' is mystifying, unless he is conflating it with the subsequently published thirteen folio volumes of appendices extending to nearly eight thousand pages, and which few would have had the energy to plough through. If the *Report* had addressed allotments favourably, its authors would have conceded that for many plebeian families, such an extra source of food would comprise an essential adjunct to the proposed reformed social welfare system – which many observers later acknowledged – it would have been a very different matter. Although there is an element of compromise in Senior and Chadwick's position, allotments were a contemporaneously contested issue: these authors adhered rigidly to free-market ideology, and hence allotments were a private arrangement between individuals, which was of no legitimate import to the state.¹⁴²

The Poor Law Commission stuck rigidly to this argument, with apparently only one and very early exception, in response to an unusual query in October 1835 from the Droxford Union as to whether the fifty acres rented by Hambledon parish officers could be sublet as usual.

Curiously, the Commissioners stipulated a maximum subletting unit of one acre, though I doubt that they had the authority to do so.¹⁴³ The fact that at least some vestries wanted to provide allotments on publicly-owned land causes no surprise, and the evidence implies that in places they did just that. In 1838, parish officers at Chart in Kent, comprised in the Hollingbourne Union, rather oddly formally approached that Board suggesting that it drew up the rules for allotments to be established on parish land; the Guardians, faced with this peculiar request, asked the Commission for advice: its response was as emphatic as it was verbose. The Commissioners reluctantly conceded that they were 'perfectly conscious' of the 'advantages' of 'small allotments' for 'the poor in some cases', but these occurred only where the land was privately rather than publicly-owned. In the latter instance, the allottee

imagines he has a right to the soil, and that the stipulation to pay rent is merely an endeavour to deprive him of part of the parish allowance, is less diligent in cultivating it, and in reserving part of the produce for rent, than when he works as a tenant of an individual, whose interest it is to turn him out . . . for non-payment of rent or general misbehaviour.

They went on to claim that the overseers would protect non-rent paying tenants and 'overlook irregularities', because evictees had 'a ready resort to the threat of throwing himself and his family on the parish'. Chart officials were advised that they might let land to an individual for subletting to allottees, a common device which we encountered with Hampshire incumbents, but the preferred option was sale because the 'possession of landed property, is rarely if ever, advantageous to a parish'.¹⁴⁴ Staines in Middlesex had enclosed land from the waste for allotments under the 1819 Act, and was still letting it in 1841, when the Union auditor objected to the use of rents to buy fuel for needy people. In response to protest at his interference, Somerset House instructed the parish officers to pay the rents into their poor-law fund.¹⁴⁵

In this context, it should also be noted that the argument that the 1835 Parish Property Act cemented the 1834 Act's transfer of control over parish-owned real estate to the *Unions*, was not advanced in either Chart's or Staines' case. Some contemporaries erroneously adopted this legal interpretation, among them the pro-allotment Tory MP for East Somerset, William Miles, when giving evidence to the 1843 select committee on allotments, though he admitted others entertained doubts over this interpretation. Nevertheless, in its formal report, that committee stated that the powers of vestries to secure lands under four Acts passed in 1819 and 1831-2 were 'transferred to the guardians' by the 1835 Act, and

thereafter 'they appear to have remained dormant'. It added, somewhat gratuitously, that allotment management 'will [n]ever be very satisfactorily conducted by the parochial authorities'.¹⁴⁶ In fact, the *sale* of parochial real estate – notably housing accommodation – was strongly promoted by the Commission, not least because thousands of vestries owned domestic accommodation,¹⁴⁷ with many tenants paying low or no rents, and continued to do so, whereby they clandestinely maintained an element of outdoor relief; beneficiaries included the able-bodied. The Commissioners wanted to terminate this practice, with the funds realised being used to sweeten the bitter pill of parish contributions to financing costly new workhouses. They had no power to force these sales. Decisions to sell part or entire parish-property portfolios required a majority vote of ratepayers in vestries convened for that specific purpose, followed by the relevant Union Board's formal application to Somerset House for its endorsement of proposed sales, and on completion, notification for central registration of conveyances. Although subsequent regulations prohibited repairs being funded except from rental receipts, some parishes continued to own domestic accommodation into the later *twentieth* century.¹⁴⁸ Miles' interpretation is accepted by Burchardt, though he also invokes the authority of Theodore Hall, author of an 1886 treatise on the *Law of Allotments*.¹⁴⁹ If there is no doubt that Union auditors had the power to disallow the use of *poor-rate funds* to buy or rent land for allotments, disallowances which would be confirmed by the central board, neither Union Boards nor Somerset House had any powers over land owned by parishes in 1834 unless it was required by the Union's purposes – for example for the erection of new workhouses – and except in another unlikely scenario of any expenditure not being covered by current rents. If contemporary confusion over the precise legal position no doubt deterred some vestries from renting their land to allottees, the issue cannot be clarified except through detailed investigation of vestry minute books, the source of information of Bishop's Waltham's enduring provision, commencing in 1832 and still functioning in 1861.¹⁵⁰

Two exchanges between the Commission and two very different characters in the Stowmarket Union, namely a medical officer in a joint practice with his brother in a district comprised eight parishes, and a partner in a legal firm, and both based in Walsham-le-Willows, are very revealing in this context. Dr Walton Kent and Messrs Golding and King, must have known each other, and though their correspondence was over different matters, their view of allotments and the New Poor Law was identical. In late December 1838, Kent wrote to the *Guardians'* Chairman, relating to the 'considerable privations . . . endured by many' of his patients, though not among the families of those 170 labourers with

allotments in Walsham itself on 105 acres of parish-owned copyhold land; these were 'much better off' like their counterparts in other 'Villages where the *Allotment system* has been adopted (original emphasis)'. Stressing the 'incalculable benefits both upon the parish and the poor' including work for mothers and children in generating a 'supply of the necessities of life', he concluded by urging the Chairman to bring the issue formally before the Board. If the chairman complied, it went unminuted; Kent – who was privately hostile to farmers¹⁵¹ – responded on 6 February 1839 by informing the Poor Law Commission that the Board's recent activities would produce a 'slide back imperceptibly into the old system' of regular outdoor relief to the able-bodied. He enclosed a copy of his letter to the chairman, and categorically asserted that the if allotment system

were to go hand-in-hand with the New Poor Law, the adversaries of the latter w[oul]d be completely disarmed, and its so-called severity w[oul]d be comparatively harmless.

Golding and King put the same point with respect only to Walsham: allotments constituted 'a system which, combined with the operation of the poor law, has produced incalculable benefit for this parish'. However, this was merely an observation made in a letter seeking authorisation for a mutually-beneficial exchange of some parish for private land; their apparent awareness of the Commissioners' parish property disposal policy, led them to emphatically state that the ratepayers would not sell the land. This was passed to Somerset House barrister Lumley, who dealt with routine sales administration; the reply, which would have been signed by secretary Chadwick (said by some contemporaries to be the most despised man in England), noted that the law permitted Boards of Guardians to oversee property exchanges, and – revealingly – enclosed the standard forms for *sale* applications, with hand-written alterations to effect an exchange. He added that the Commissioners 'will not oppose' the transaction despite the fact that 'they do not think it expedient' on the grounds of its copyhold status, and in preference for its enfranchisement and sale. The amended documentation was expeditiously returned, signed by all four parish officers, but only thirteen of the sixteen ratepayers who agreed to the deal in a specially-convened vestry. This was followed by an exchange of letters, for exactly one year, during which Chadwick claimed – wrongly – that the exchange procedure was unavailable unless the land was 'required for the use of the Parish or the Union' the precise words used in the Act, respecting Union Boards' powers.¹⁵² If Golding and King possibly hoped to draw Somerset House into challenging the legitimacy of parish land being used for allotments, they failed, and having fiercely

protested over delayed responses, the exchange was completed with the registration of the conveyance. Lumley's experiences had exposed him to the oft-divisive issue of sales of parochial property, and he made no reference to the land's current use. Dr Kent also had a reply ostensibly from Chadwick, that brusquely thanked him for both letters, without any mention of their contents.¹⁵³

The New Poor Law impacted adversely on most farmworkers, and particularly harshly on those with large families; these factors combined to powerfully re-stimulate the flagging allotment movement. Almost all pre-1835 providers aimed to diminish or eradicate labourers' poor-law dependency, the levels of which were dramatically revealed by Swing and the 1835–6 protests. From 1835, the allotment movement's desire to create independency dovetailed with national welfare policy, and those 'archetypal Victorian values of liberal mid-nineteenth century Britain' as emphasised by Burchardt. His implication that they were different from the 'reinvigorated rural paternalism' identified by some authors and attributed to High Tory motivation which certainly included many LFS members, is less persuasive. Burchardt does concede that both that Society and the architects of the 1834 Act aimed to 'remake the character of the rural labouring poor', while arguing that for 'many within the LFS the new law was anathema' – without marshalling any evidence – and more tellingly that the Society's *magazine's* 'official line . . . was that the new poor law could only be made to work in conjunction with the allotment system'.¹⁵⁴

That was precisely the attitude of Major Wayth, a retired career soldier and an active Radical¹⁵⁵ – 'well acquainted' with utilitarian theory and a supporter – who owned an estate in Bearsted, West Kent. Whilst the Bill was still in the Commons, he chaired a vestry to create 'a system of Land Allotments for industrious Labourers who are likely to be affected by the New Poor Law Bill'. In the following September he published a pamphlet addressed to Kentish landowners, urging adoption of the 'Cottage Allotment system', with minimum quarter acres, with more for fathers based on family sizes. Elsewhere, notably in south Hampshire in October 1834, 'Paupers are begging and praying for land' near their cottages, reflecting the considerable debate in the localities over pending fundamental change, in part fuelled by newspaper speculation. Wayth's view was echoed in the provincial press during the Bill's enactment. The *Hampshire Telegraph* argued that farmers should promote allotments – again for 'industrious labourers' – rather than acquiesce in their 'mischievous confinement in a workhouse':

nothing but a general adoption of the cottage allotment system can save the farmer, and the peasantry from another Special Commission

of Assize, asserted the *Sussex Advertiser* in December 1835, in an issue in which it reported a new LFS campaign in Somerset. Over the next nine months, it covered the creation of allotment schemes, among them that established at Cuckfield by a committee of local gentry, one of whom addressed the local agricultural society on allotments as the other part of the equation to recreate labourers' 'honest pride and independence'. After the allotment provider at Eastbourne Mrs Gilbert – another utilitarian – belatedly learned that Commissioner Lefevre was on a social visit to nearby Brighton, she regretted missing him and hoped for a later 'opportunity of examining facts connected with the success of the important reform he's ... undertaken', obviously the role of allotments.¹⁵⁶

Burchardt puts some emphasis of the evidence of Henry Martin, the LFS agent for West Kent before the 1843 allotments committee. Although hardly a district in the entire county escaped Swing, both divisions of that county experienced anti-New Poor Law rioting in 1835 together with incendiarism in succeeding years. Martin precisely stated that he started his campaign in 1836; he had some success notably in the region about Maidstone, a particularly impoverished one with a genuine labour surplus, and home to many small farmers – of whom Martin was one – and Burchardt also uses Martin's communications to the *Labourer's Friend Magazine*. Indeed, it is asserted that allotment provision in Kent derived from 'the work of one man', but Martin's activities did not extend into the eastern division. In fact, the LFS in East Kent was created in Canterbury at a meeting chaired by Sir Henry Oxenden in May 1835 – at precisely that moment when anti-New Poor-Law rioting was at its height in the division. The principal Speaker, G W Perry, is identified by Burchardt as an indefatigable campaigner for the Society in fifteen named counties, though Kent is not one of them. Perry re-iterated the stock argument that allottees had been conspicuous by their absence from the rural disturbances of 1830, while a support speaker emphasised that New Poor-Law implementation and allotment provision should go on in tandem, a particularly potent argument at this exact juncture. Some East Kent grandees, including Lord Sondes – a LFS enthusiast – did provide allotments, in his case fifty acres in the vicinity of Faversham. The question of what became of them, and others was to become an issue in 1880–1, but substantial farmers predominated in East Kent. Their sustained hostility prevented widespread allotment provision, identified by Burchardt with reference to similar regions, among them parts of East Anglia.¹⁵⁷ Such correlations suggest that probably a majority of landlords were still not prepared to act against the wishes of substantial tenants, despite the fact that both benefited from handsome reductions in rate-

demands, though in Suffolk and parts of Norfolk poor-rates funded quite substantial migration to the industrial North and emigration, under the Commission's superintendence. However, the migration scheme, introduced in 1835 in response to factory owners' insatiable demand for child labour during the mid-thirties boom in manufacturing, embraced only families with several children *under* the age of thirteen, and the rules stipulated that prospective employers organised housing. Although precautions were taken to ensure that the supply 'should never exceed ... the actual demand', the Commission effectively terminated the programme in 1837, as the boom slid spectacularly into a recession. Some, be it restricted districts in East Anglia saw a draining of labour surpluses, and benefited later from the removal of a part of the local rising generation.¹⁵⁸

Petworth, and the adjoining Unions of Droxford and Fareham, were investigated by the first parliamentary select committee inquiry into the implementation of the new system, reluctantly conceded by Home Secretary Russell in August 1836 to mollify intensifying concern among MPs. It convened in February 1837, only for its proceedings to be rudely terminated by the death of William IV in June and the automatic general election. As the committee had been effectively denied the opportunity of examining the Act's hotly contested introduction in industrial districts, Melbourne's government was forced to agree to a successor in the next Session. Many of its members had served on the first, thus ensuring some continuity. However, like its predecessor, its deliberations proved protracted, not least owing to the numerous witnesses called by John Fielden, one of a core of members hostile to the new system. The issue of allotment provision in the context defined by the New Poor Law was unsystematically examined by both committees, but the continuity element led to a brief, but significant commentary in the second's formal report. It unequivocally stated that allotments improved tenants' morals, together with a 'positive increase in the[ir] means of support'; several members had personally observed these results and the entire committee 'could not recommend' allotments 'too strongly'.¹⁵⁹

Neither of these substantial investigations have been consulted by Burchardt.¹⁶⁰ Three of the 1837 witnesses from Droxford were allotment providers. Two became Guardians, namely Henry Wooldridge, a substantial farmer of Meonstoke, and Edward Wyatt of Bishop's Waltham, who owned and farmed a considerable estate extending into two neighbouring parishes. In the immediate aftermath of Swing, Wyatt swung his village vestry behind the reclamation of some forty acres of waste for allotments; he also let his own land to the Revd. Butler, for subletting at Soberton, where some eight labourers had nine acres between them. Wooldridge,

who restricted his allotments to quarter acres, first offered them in 1833, but the few takers were all non-recipients of regular poor relief, almost certainly owing to a tenancy stipulation against allottees receiving public assistance. That situation was transformed in 1835, when demand suddenly exceeded supply, and a fact substantiated by the county's assistant commissioner, Colonel A'Court. Wyatt, who appears not to have made any stipulations as to the size of plots obtained through Butler's agency, made more land available on the Act's implementation, and in 1837 he insisted that the 'system'

is the best means of improving the condition of the labouring man . . . the men see that they can make themselves independent

of poor relief. Wooldridge and Wyatt were equally strong supporters of the Amendment Act, together with the Union's first chairman, another major farmer Richard Stares, who in common with the majority of local farmers remained adamantly opposed to allotments. He had also previously publicly argued that labourers would be forced to accept lower wages despite the loss of allowances, owing to low produce prices. Conversely, Butler was a strident opponent of the Act, as were the majority of south Hampshire incumbents, including two colleagues who managed allotment schemes providing eighty acres at neighbouring Hambledon, where sizes varied up to two acres according to allottees' family size.¹⁶¹

The 1838 committee was informed that the Duke of Bedford – a provider since 1829 – now had some 700 acres devoted to allotments with quarter-acre maximums, while fellow county grandee Earl de Grey let land in units of between half and four acres. One Bedfordshire witness, who argued for plots of up to an acre, said that the aim should be to make 'good labourers not make [them] . . . into farmers'. No doubt grandee providers had some effect on generally hostile farmers, some of whom conceded that owing to the unavailability of non-medical outdoor relief a fully-employed labourer could cultivate quarter acres without compromising his capacity for paid work. Indeed, some farmers may have become favourable because allotments enabled holders to be laid-off in customary style during bad winter weather, a point acknowledged by an allotment supporter: tenants

would then have something to fall back upon in severe weather, because as to *their saving money*, that is out of the question [my emphasis].

Allottees 'thank[ed] God that they had a bit of land, or they must have been in the workhouse'.¹⁶²

This extended look at the impact of the New Poor Law reveals some of the harshness and profoundly adverse effects on farmworkers, which were not fully compensated for by their employers, the obstructive responses of some Boards, unco-operative parish officers, or the minor concessions of the Commissioners. Although the evidence of allotments supplied to the 1837-8 committees reveals schemes preceding Swing, others commencing in its aftermath in 1831-3, the implementation of the 1834 Act clearly led to wider adoption in both Hampshire and Bedfordshire, and in many other counties. The critical change in labourers' scepticism about allotments derived from new realities emanating from the New Poor Law; that was also reflected by some landlords with many allies amongst the Anglican clergy, though most substantial farmers remained opposed.

Yet, the change in labourers' attitudes to allotments retained an element of ambiguity deriving from aspirational elements. We have encountered popular demands for plots of from two to four acres in Hampshire, by men who saw them as their sole viable route to degrees of independent economic status, namely through *de facto* smallholdings. Nor was this new, but clearly related to traditional perceptions of rural communities with structures commensurate with upward social mobility, enabling young labourers to aspire to small farmer status. Customary male and female live-in service from pre-adolescence to young adulthood should enable savings adequate for newly married couples to take a small farm, some of whom would enlarge their acreages, with perhaps ultimately the most successful becoming more substantial agriculturalists. Nor was this view the prerogative of radicals like Cobbett; it was also echoed to degrees, and at times, by conservatives, among them Arthur Young. The latter's inconsistency was in part the product of a long active life during an era of great uncertainty provoked by continental events and their powerful echoes in the British Isles; these endured long after Young's retirement and were further fuelled – be it differently – by the writings of Spence and Cobbett. The great obstacle to the recreation of traditional socio-economic rural community structures was the emergence of substantial tenant farmers seeking to maximise wealth, and their often even more avaricious landlords anxious to inflate their incomes through facilitating the engrossing of farms, and – where necessary – seeking enclosure by agreement and when that proved problematic, using the landed elite's political monopoly to secure land privatisation through statutory means. The final factor in this equation for big agrarian capitalists and the rentier class, remained a large and dependent labour force whose only option – short of migration or emigration – was total reliance on wages earned through tilling their employers' soil.

The *political* power wielded through the dominating organic self-interested alliance between substantial tenant farmers and their landlords, ostensibly looked unassailable. The failure of the AEI was one powerful indicator, and another came in the form of the LFS's calculation that only advocacy of allotments of restricted size stood a realistic chance, though in this context more detail of schemes which did include larger variants should prove interesting. Equally telling was that the contents of neither UBI speeches published in the *Brighton Patriot*, nor further accounts derived from informers infiltrated by local magistrates, made any reference to allotments, despite their numerous provision at Eastbourne by the Earl of Burlington and Mrs Gilbert.¹⁶³ The *Patriot* attacked substantial farmers who had supplanted their smaller counterparts, reiterated the Cobbettite claim that the latter were reduced to labouring; such devastating downward social mobility was a reality, not a fiction,¹⁶⁴ and reversing the trend lay behind the *Patriot's* clear support for the basic principle of land reform. It also published letters on allotments, but within what might be dubbed a Cobbettite framework, exemplified by that from John Dungate of Worth, demanding waste reclamation schemes for the rehabilitation of those small farmers who had been pushed off the land, to which he added the need for a huge increase in allotments for labourers. But the *Patriot's* principal cause was manhood suffrage, though it sustained its campaign against the New Poor Law, exemplified by a lengthy leader in 1836; it continued its hostile reports of the activities of the assistant commissioners in the district, criticised the domination of some Union Boards by grandees and other magistrates – including the Duke of Richmond at Westhamnett – and assailed the plural voting system in elections for Guardians.¹⁶⁵ On one occasion, the *Patriot* published a report from an unnamed but regular correspondent extolling Lord Gage's 1836 provision of 'many' allotments of between one and 1½ acres 'for labourers' at West Firle, and unusually provided ready ploughed without charge for the first year, but its real attitude to re-invigorated aristocratic paternalism was reserved for the Earl of Chichester's allotment supporting and now revived 'Sussex Association': the *Patriot* categorically stated that 'no schemes of this kind will materially benefit the labouring classes', while simultaneously asserting that reduced indirect taxation would germinate more employment at advanced wages, a scenario not to be expected before manhood suffrage.¹⁶⁶ The *Patriot* survived into the early Chartist period and vigorously supported the movement. Although it folded before the emergence of O'Connor's Land Plan, it gave some prominence to Bronterre O'Brien and other itinerant Chartist speakers in southern venues, who addressed the issue of land reform. The paper provided space for the local debates that followed,

including one from a contributor who refused to accept that the land issue 'must wait for legislative interference', partly on the grounds that the trade unions were capable of raising funds adequate to land purchases. The *Patriot* subsequently reported discussions on the 'relative merits of Chartism and Socialism'. Opponents of both nevertheless learned that the paramountcy of private land-ownership was not safe even in southern Chartists' hands.¹⁶⁷

In short, the issue of allotment provision at least as a compensation for the loss of Old Poor-Law benefits was moving up many parliamentarians' agendas, while re-igniting working-class democrats' interest in much more radical solutions to the monopolistic realities of English land-ownership, and the very visible restrictions on access to it. Although neither vision was new, the agency behind the burgeoning interest was the impact of the New Poor Law, and the speed of its development within the Chartist movement during the great industrial depression of 1837-42 – and the hungry forties more generally – impresses.

VI. The New Poor Law, Chartism and the allotment movement in a manufacturing community: Hinckley 1835-50.

A handful of Midland grandees, notably the Dukes of Portland and Newcastle, introduced large allotment schemes from the late 1830s; the latter provided over two thousand in Nottinghamshire, and they extended into mining and other industrial communities. Burchardt attributes this acceleration of allotments in general and its spread to manufacturing districts – notably in the East Midlands – to 'the renewed social and economic crisis culminating in 1842'. He explores the remarkable career of James Orange, a Non-conformist preacher from Nottingham who received minor funding from the LFS, his 'prodigiously' hard-working lecture and propagandist campaign, with one main focus on the framework-knitting villages in the triangle formed by Nottingham, Leicester and Derby. Here, he established local but independent and self-sufficient societies to secure land and administer allotments. All three cities were Chartist strongholds, and the movement was also powerful in the hosiery villages. Burchardt addresses the complex relationship between the allotment movement and the democrats' crusade in the East Midlands. Chartists opposed Orange and working-class allotment campaigners, and if one cause was rivalry, the Chartists understandably accused Orange of diverting plebeians' attentions away from politics. In his lectures, he asserted that his movement was non-political, yet both he and his working-class supporters under questioning from the Commons select committee of 1843, claimed that allottees disengaged from

Chartism.¹⁶⁸ The principal Chartist newspaper, the *Northern Star* largely eschewed coverage of Orange's campaigns, in contrast to the regional press – including the radical *Nottingham Review* which Burchardt cites.¹⁶⁹ He stresses that some common ground was to be found in the Chartist Land Plan. However, he does not point out the differences, notably that subscribers to the latter in the event of winning the lottery for a plot and cottage, did so in expectancy of land adequate to provide for a family: the Plan's prospectus categorically stated that it was designed to 'demonstrate to the working classes ... firstly the value of the land, as a means of making them *independent of the grinding capitalist*', and secondly the necessity for manhood suffrage and the other five points of the Charter itself. The Plan reflected the ideology of the Agricultural Employment Institute rather than the LFS's advocacy of quarter acres.¹⁷⁰

Moreover, in the East Midlands the LFS found fewer supporters among landowners. Orange was forced to adopt the strategy of forming local societies whose starting strategy hinged on the creation of adequate funds – often collected in pence from impoverished knitters – to assure landowners who might provide land, that they would receive market rents. But in this region the role of the New Poor Law was also of critical importance in the context of the recurrent post-1836 economic crises, and responses to them, including the allotment movement; this key dimension is ignored by Burchardt, despite Orange's repeated references to the new welfare system, and – ironically – that uncharacteristic unity of historians that its implementation proved the primary agency in the genesis of Chartism itself. At Leicester for example, working-class democrats reorganised in 1836, but the major stimulant came in late 1837 with the erection of a new workhouse accommodating five hundred, and created the context for the rapidity of Chartist recruitment in the city during the following summer.¹⁷¹

The significance of the reformed welfare system for the allotment movement can be examined through a case history from early 1836 of the eleven-parish Leicestershire Union centred on Hinckley which briefly figures in Burchardt's text. That modest market town hosted a considerable number of framework knitters, which together with the neighbouring villages – in descending order of importance – Earl Shilton, Barwell and Burbage, comprised the county's third largest hosiery centre after Leicester and Loughborough, with about a fifth of the total number of workers. Initially, the labour supply was partially fuelled by parish apprenticeships funded by local authorities in several Midland counties, including Northamptonshire; higher earnings in hosiery also seduced younger agricultural labourers in proto-industrial communities and districts adjacent to the main towns.¹⁷² Overall decline caused by the loss

of overseas markets and aggravated by labour surpluses, accelerated between the Luddite crises of 1811–6 and the early 1840s. Although in stark contrast to cotton, there was no competition from machinery except in yarn production, the decline was punctuated by recurrent and severe depressions in 1818–9, 1825, 1829–30, 1837, 1839–40 and 1842. Parish apprenticeships were one notable casualty. Structural changes included a marked fall in the numbers of modest masters employing journeymen in shops, reflecting the emergent dominance of the hosiers responsible for the distribution of yarn to individual framework knitters, classic domestic manufacturers, whose wives and children were central to production; hosiers paid piece rates for stockings, socks, gloves and shirts, which in periods of equilibrium became governed by 'the Statement', a list of agreed prices negotiated by the stockingers' unstable trade union.¹⁷³ Others also supplied yarn, especially interlopers dubbed 'bagmen', commonly shopkeepers, who also operated the truck system. Most knitters hired their frames, notably from the hosiers, but also bagmen, and others who invested in frames purely for the rental profits. A declining proportion of stockingers owned their own frames, and those comprising the residue were vulnerable to hosiers offering work only at reduced rates. Demand for frames remained buoyant, in part inflated by stockingers' concern to rent two or more for older children and often wives, to be reflected in weekly rents rising from ninepence to a shilling,¹⁷⁴ while earnings of adult males fell from 12/- in 1815 to between seven and eight shillings in 1841. The precise contributions of family members varied according to the number and age of the children.¹⁷⁵ Earnings fell further during slumps, owing to under-employment, with adult males at times unable to earn more than four to five shillings, a situation repeatedly aggravated by operatives' attempts to compensate by working extra hours which invariably generated over-production and with it more unemployment. Hinckley specialised in coarser gauged brown 'cotton full and half hose'. Some workers – a proportion under pressure from parish officers – migrated to Leicester where all the different articles were manufactured, in hopes that such diversity provided greater employment security, though for a minority this proved illusory and they returned. Nevertheless, a combination of outward migration, and seeking accommodation in smaller and cheaper premises, meant that there were many untenanted cottages in Hinckley's hosiery parishes by the early 1840s, a rare manifestation anywhere in England at this juncture.¹⁷⁶

The impact of this decline, punctuated by recessions, on knitters and their families was formally investigated in 1845. Significantly, key information came from Poor-Law Union officials. Relieving officer Vann asserted that many families were reduced to sleeping in one room, often

with 'bedding for [only] one bed' while others were without even 'a bedstead'. Vann's colleague, a doctor, confirmed that knitters' 'frequently . . . very damp' houses, situated 'up lanes and narrow passages', were 'badly ventilated', surrounded by cess-pools, resulting in perennial 'low fevers'. Diet was 'decidedly inefficient . . . and their clothing too'. The fact that most adults were 'very small' in height reflected prolonged childhood malnutrition which put them on a par with many cornland farm labourers.¹⁷⁷ The collapse of all but two of Hinckley's fifteen friendly societies was a further eloquent testimony to impoverishment. The alleged widespread resort to prostitution was another feature.¹⁷⁸

Under the Old Poor Law, outdoor relief addressed the under- and unemployment accompanying depressions to both those domiciled in their settlement parishes, and to migrant workers living in Leicester; known as non-resident relief, it was a key facilitating function for that huge migration to emergent industrial districts and towns, with its origins in the later seventeenth century and by the early nineteenth, deeply entrenched, to be reflected by that time in magistrates' orders for its payment by claimants' parishes of settlement despite the absence of any statutory authority.¹⁷⁹ During slumps many stockingers received 'relief for weeks and months together' – including *de facto* child-allowances for larger families – and in the villages some of unemployed were ordered to join their farmworking neighbours 'on the round', applying to farmers for work at wages subsidised from the rates.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, even when depressions lifted, 'much difficulty was found in striking the names' of poor-relief recipients from 'the Parish List', a factor when combined with receding piece-rates also saw a considerable extension of regular allowances in-aid-of wages for large families, including those residing in Leicester.¹⁸¹ It was this situation – not peculiar to the Midlands – which permitted the authors of the 1834 Poor Law Report to claim that allowances in-aid-of wages, so entrenched in the cornlands, were extending their evil operations into manufacturing districts, thereby opportunistically implying their ultimate omnipresence unless illegalised, and a point re-emphasised by the assistant commissioners to the Commons' committee in 1838.¹⁸² In contrast to Nottinghamshire, reforming Old Poor-Law administrations were uncommon in this district. Only Hinckley's vestry experimented with the workhouse test in the very early 1830s, allegedly with some success as revealed by its lower proportionate poor rates to other manufacturing parishes. Ironically, hosiery communities with workhouses invariably had workshops with frames, and during recessions a further source of supply into a glutted market. Moreover, the poor-rate in the manufacturing parishes fell disproportionately on the farming community, as evidenced annually by

one modest farmer's rental of £40 being paid alongside a £60 rate bill, a feature which remained despite the 1836 Parish Assessment Act and its principal stipulation that *all* property be rated including workers' cottages.¹⁸³ It was said of other hosiery villages, no doubt with an element of exaggeration, that farmland was unsellable. Although few vocal enthusiasts for the New Poor Law were found in Hinckley parishes, many ratepayers conceded that 'something ought to be done' to reduce relief costs. Some vestries were deeply in debt, especially Earl Shilton, in a situation aggravated by Byzantine accountancy.¹⁸⁴

The Hinckley Union commenced operations early in 1836. Although the town itself elected four Guardians, usually more substantial tradesmen, the Board was dominated by farmers, who saw the reformed system as a means of terminating the manufacturers' previous exploitation of its predecessor. Hosiers were wary of involvement, reflecting former periods of framework knitters' violence, notably in 1811–2, and again in 1825. Nevertheless, the first chairman was a hosier, Slipman, with a reputation as a philanderer, who was shortly manoeuvred out of office by assistant commissioner Stevens;¹⁸⁵ another chaired the Board during 1840–1. Among the Commissioners' first rules issued to Hinckley, was a prohibition of all non-resident relief to able-bodied males, though as an interim measure framework-knitters with large families domiciled in their parish of settlement received relief, be it partly in kind, a common arrangement to stagger New Poor-Law implementation which we encountered in the South.¹⁸⁶ Hinckley inherited several workhouses from its component parishes. Those in some were by this date poor-houses, following conversion into *de facto* apartment blocks.¹⁸⁷ However, the managed 'irregular ... badly situated ... building' in Hinckley town could accommodate around fifty, while the institution at Sapcote – the centre of a recently-dissolved Gilbert Union – housed 150, and in a crisis could accommodate thirty more. Both contained few inmates in 1836, namely 'Idiots ... utterly incapable of taking care of themselves', 'worn down workmen and their wives', some orphans, and thereby no more than 'a refuge' for these people. Both were rented by the Union, facilitating a basic gender divide. Hinckley housed males, and Sapcote females; other classification stipulations were imposed through inexpensive internal modifications. It is not known whether elderly couples were subjected to this arrangement, but the absence of any protest over their separation suggests that most were left where they were. The Board resisted committing itself to the erection of a new workhouse on both grounds of expense and public opinion, despite pressure from the assistant commissioner, though it did agree to increase the deterrent profile of Hinckley's house with the installation of a hand-powered corn mill.¹⁸⁸

That became operative in July 1837 some three months after the depression struck. As we have seen, the first parliamentary inquiry into the New Poor Law commenced in the previous February,¹⁸⁹ which was expected to progress from its initial concentration on the cornlands to examine the hotly contested issue of whether the Act was appropriate for industrial districts. In this context, Hinckley became 'so important an Union' in Commissioner Nicholls' parlance, and quickly reflected in his subsequent close supervision of developments there. Within a fortnight, seven hundred heads of families were unemployed, and many more faced being 'turned off immediately'.¹⁹⁰ Initially, Nicholls' confidence led him to assume that the Commission could depend on the Board's 'exertions ... during this emergency', by which he meant immediate resort to the labour test. Instead, the Guardians introduced outdoor relief to the unemployed, and – on the arrival of 177 adults with 216 children between them under removal orders costing £90 issued at Leicester, who were mostly packed into the two workhouses – the Board sent several members to that city to assess claims of other potential subjects of removal proceedings with Hinckley settlements, to whom they gave tickets entitling them to goods from Leicester retailers. Stevens wrote in 'very strong terms' to Benjamin Law, the pro-New Poor-Law Clerk, for the Guardians' consumption, insisting on their adoption of the labour test with beneficiaries given relief in kind only; Stevens also stressed that as their breach of the rule on non-resident relief was 'entirely illegal', the Union auditor would be obliged to disallow costs so incurred. The exasperated assistant awkwardly concluded that the 'Guardians must not take upon themselves the duties of legislation'. When instructed by Stevens to convene an emergency meeting of the Board, the Clerk appears to have taken upon himself to add the text of Stevens' letter to a printed handbill appointing 18 May. When formally read at the Board, every Guardian 'left the room & refused to act', exclaiming that there was no active magistrate within six miles, the town had no viable police force, and demanding military protection, last deployed in 1825. If Stevens secured a detachment of 25 cavalry through Somerset House's agency, he also concluded that the 'leading' Guardians '*are favourable . . . we are not dealing with a strong opposition, but with weak friends*'. Over the next six weeks, such Guardians who turned up made the retention of the army a condition, in a missive delivered by hand to Somerset House by the Clerk. Changed circumstances forced Stevens to adopt a pragmatic approach.¹⁹¹

It was on his advice that further resort to removal orders by Leicester was headed off by Hinckley's appointment of a temporary relieving officer in the City, who was also to end the ticket system by arranging cartloads

of bread from Hinckley Union contractors, and legalised by the formal suspension of the rule against aid to able-bodied non-residents. These arrangements also facilitated those removed from Leicester to return, thus freeing up space in Hinckley workhouses, in turn permitting the application of the workhouse test to local claimants. Only one accepted, in part because the depression lifted slowly from July. Rumour had it that the hosiers intended to seize this opportunity to cut piece rates, though the outcome remains unclear. On 31 August the temporary official in Leicester was withdrawn, together with non-resident relief to the able-bodied there. On Nicholls' instructions, a diplomatic letter expressing Somerset House's satisfaction over the Hinckley Board's 'highly judicious Conduct . . . in the difficult circumstances' was despatched, the Clerk sycophantically responding with the assertion that the episode had proved the New Poor-Law's 'excellence'.¹⁹² But these events were not a triumph for either the Guardians or the Commission, to be reflected in Hinckley's absence from the laudatory account, published on 17 July in its third annual report, of New Poor-Law performances at Stoke-on-Trent and Nottingham,¹⁹³ where the labour test had been adopted once workhouse accommodation was filled. Instead Hinckley joined Leicester and Blaby as exemplars of 'extremely defective' administrations, principally on the grounds of inadequate workhouse accommodation. This entire episode was recounted by various witnesses to the Commons Poor-Law committee in June 1838.¹⁹⁴

The workhouse issue was also raised by Nicholls, to the effect that experiences elsewhere proved the efficacy of a centrally-sited new house, and it was given a public airing as the depression evaporated during September. All but £1813 of costs totalling £4822 would be paid by three parishes, Hinckley (£2108), Earl Shilton (£696) and Sapcote (£205), with tiny Elmsthorpe contributing a mere £3, but when it was discussed by the Board the question was shelved on a pretext. Further prevarication provoked Stevens to threaten to use the Commission's powers to compel the Union to requisition the former workhouses at Burbage and Earl Shilton; this would entail limited but compulsory capital expenditure on alterations, and more importantly the indefinite running costs of staffing and maintenance. Further arm-twisting followed over several months, and in July 1838 produced a positive response from a miniscule majority of Guardians. Erection commenced in the late spring of 1839; the establishment accommodating 400 was completed in November, though not fully operational until mid-January 1840 with the anticipated reactivation of the non-resident relief rule for able-bodied males.¹⁹⁵

In the event developments pre-empted that expectation. A sudden depression commenced at the end of November 1839, with an unusual

'almost total suspension of all trade' in Leicester; over a hundred claimant household heads were settled in Hinckley Union parishes, and the Leicester Clerk sought confirmation that all 'your acknowledged poor . . . [should] be sent home'. The Commission ordered Steven's incoming replacement Senior to investigate, and he recommended the extension of the rule's suspension for a further three months. Once again, a temporary relieving officer was appointed to deal with these applicants, but this arrangement ceased at the end of March 1840. Then 113 heads were removed; their return coincided with the failure of a major Hinckley hosier, rendering five hundred more heads unemployed. Almost half of the returnees accepted workhouse orders – reflecting their exposure to homelessness – in stark contrast to the refusal of all identical orders offered to the victims of the local bankruptcy. Nevertheless, the new workhouse was almost full, with inmates petitioning for dietary change, namely cheese suppers replaced by porridge to 'warm us and . . . fill us a deal more'. That was rejected,¹⁹⁶ but if more removals were prevented, early signs that the depression would prove ephemeral proved unrealistic. Under heavy pressure from Senior, the Hinckley Board introduced the labour test for the burgeoning numbers of unemployed, namely daily stone-breaking at the workhouse. By July 1840 their numbers exceeded those out of work in 1837. Single men and families with up to two children received workhouse orders, while those with more were subjected to the labour test. Yet there was a huge disparity between the total numbers in the choked workhouse, plus those stone-breaking in its yards – for which they were relieved with volumes of bread and cheese based on family size – and the known number of lay-offs. The only explanation offered was the effectiveness of deterrence which had seen many heads of families secure 'agricultural employment in the neighbourhood', while single men 'probably migrated to other districts' for harvest work. Subsequently, it emerged that the families of many stone-breakers carried on knitting at home; an investigation revealed 'many attempts at imposition' though proving it remained problematic and required 'the utmost vigilance'. Eventually, the Board determined that framework knitters' acceptance of the labour test was conditional on the certificated return of frames to their owners, but it was late October when this was introduced and few stone-breakers remained.¹⁹⁷

This situation reflected a slow revival of the trade, which was initially exploited by hosiers who used stocks in hand to 'force' the unemployed – including those in the stone-yard – back to work at rates 'under the Statement Price'. It was precisely this scenario which saw framework knitters contrast their situations under the Old Poor Law and 'the different position we are under the New', namely that they were 'forced to seek

work' irrespective of the rates offered 'in consequence of having no assistance' in the form of publicly-funded allowances. After a consultation between the Board and a four man stockings' trade union delegation, the majority of Guardians comprising farmers ruled that the hosiers' actions were against the 'spirit' of the New Poor Law, an interpretation communicated to Somerset House for 'advice'. Commissioner Lefevre referred the issue to Chadwick. Stressing that he was ignorant of the 'precise nature' of the Statement, the question for the Hinckley Board was simple. If incomes under the piece-rates on offer were adequate to the procuring of food, clothes and shelter for workers and their families, they were not 'destitute'. The

chief error to be avoided is that of giving partial relief in aid of partial wages, & of thus aiding the manufacturers for a time and then reducing wages and ultimately the price of the commodity at the expense of the ratepayers.

Chadwick theoretically concluded that;

All fractious stoppages of work against a falling market all stoppages of employment of capital only reduce the fund from which wages are paid.¹⁹⁸

On receipt of this advice sent in mid-November 1840, the Hinckley Board calculated that incomes were inadequate, and decided to retain the labour test until January 1841. Once hosiers' stocks were exhausted, they were forced to honour the Statement, enabling the Clerk to represent the outcome as a triumph for the Board. In 1840 only 468 family heads had been relieved in the workhouse, or through stone-breaking in its yard, at an average weekly cost of £81, contrasting vividly with 1837 with the 2073 heads given mostly allowances totalling £238. Rising employment relieved pressure on the workhouse. The Clerk added – adamantly – that the continuation of stone-breaking enabled the stockings to force the hosiers to honour the Statement, while preventing the return to income supplements paid under the Old Poor Law; in late 1840 the labour test had 'restored to the poor the means of independency'. He might have added that the New Poor Law was used against the principal employers.¹⁹⁹

In April 1842 the deepening depression affecting most industrial regions intensified in the East Midlands. Hinckley claimants domiciled in Leicester were now told to apply to that Union's relieving officers, whose expenditure was promptly reimbursed, a procedure forced on the Commission by the depression's depth and universality in manufacturing regions. Nevertheless, Hinckley workhouse filled quickly and the test subjected to a 'severe trial'; that was partially resolved again by restricting

workhouse orders to single men and small families. The reactivation of the labour test for men with larger families followed; the 49 stone-breakers in the yard on 9 April climbed rapidly to just over a hundred by the 23rd and representing 650 people, each of whom received a daily loaf, and eightpence a day in cash paid to fathers. July saw a further round of lay-offs in Hinckley, which drove the numbers of stone-breakers up to 232 with 1253 dependents between them, a 'frightening list' in the Clerk's estimation, 'but it is unavoidable'. Two frameworkers' union representatives were joined by two members of the recently-formed 'Small Allotment Committee', to whom we return, and lavished praise on the Guardians who had 'thrown the shield of protection over us' by providing a 'refuge' in the workhouse and through stone-breaking. Once again 'some of our employers' were 'repeatedly trying to sink us lower in misery', with offers of work at derisory rates; while the value of stone-breakers' relief remained higher than adult male-knitters earning capacity, they would not accept offers of work. These representatives insisted that a return to work on current terms could only be counter-productive; 'hunger would stimulate all to work more hours', leading to over-production and 'rapidly glut up an already overstocked and fickle market'. The new assistant commissioner, Robert Weale, praised the Board's 'steady course' to his superiors, who in turn communicated their congratulations over the Guardians' 'firmness', especially in their rigid adherence to the labour test, though the strategy of forcing the hosiers to observe the Statement was ignored by Somerset House. It was political dynamite.²⁰⁰

That strategy was soon abandoned. Although the fact that Hinckley itself was soon enveloped in a crisis – over uncollected poor rates leading to escalating indebtedness to the Union and court action – may have played a part, in October 1842 stone-breakers' minimal relief was cut by a quarter, rendering it utterly inadequate. This decision was not reported to Somerset House by the Clerk, though his weekly accounts of able-bodied men receiving relief under the labour test reveal significant declines in their numbers. Many opted to accept rates on offer from the hosiers, and returned to work, 'a very very poor thing for the men' in the estimation of a Non-conformist preacher. The Statement was an immediate casualty. The Clerk later informed Weale of stockingers working at reduced rates, which were 'not so severely felt' owing to reduced food prices. Ironically, the end of the Statement in the district gave local knitters a distinct advantage over their counterparts elsewhere; observers spoke of an 'immense trade' by 1843, but at rates which stayed obstinately on a 'starvation scale'. Given the industry's post-war history, framework knitters' outlook could only be bleak; securing incomes below subsistence levels when

demand was buoyant constituted a new experience, while on the evidence of the recent past the sole certainty was another depression at some point in the future.²⁰¹

This was the *precise context* in which James Brooks – a workhouse inmate in 1842 – and who figures in Burchardt's book, revealingly informed MPs on the 1843 select committee on allotments that the prospect of land was '*about the last thing that could inspire hope*' (my emphasis). Brooks also assured his audience that 'even those in the stone yard' were 'anxious . . . to secure . . . the chance of getting a rood'. Brooks calculated that allotment provision for framework knitters 'would equalize the labour by throw[ing] the labour periods [in hosiery] over a greater period of time', by which he meant that the foodstuffs grown would supplement income earned, thus extending the time engaged in working for it. In 1845, his campaigning colleague, Amos Foxon – who also appears in Burchardt's text – represented that the system of renting frames from hosiers locked the knitters into a state of 'thralldom . . . we are as fast as a fly in a spider's web'. Asked by the Commissioner for the inquiry into the industry, Muggeridge – formerly in charge of the Poor Law Commission's migration scheme²⁰² – if he wished to add anything, Foxon determinedly stated that

our wages do not rise with the demand . . . owing to the operation of the New Poor Law. If the poor men only had the stone-yard to go into, to earn bread . . . they would frequently make a stand for advance of wages . . . at present, if we decline to work on account of the the lowness of wages offered . . . we have no alternative but to go into the [work]house, break up our homes and take out families with us. It is my firm opinion, that if we had been permitted [in late 1842] to go into the stone-yard, we should never have been called upon to submit to the late reduction

in piece rates.²⁰³ It was Foxon who contacted James Orange in June 1842. In contrast to Burchardt, Orange was quite clear about the New Poor Law's relevance. He argued that quarter-acre allotments would

carry them through . . . a depression of trade . . . a rood of land constitutes one fourth part of of a poor family's subsistence, and a large family too, they will be enabled to pass over those seasons of . . . pressure, which now bring them to the workhouse . . . another advantage . . . is it . . . will enable them to stop working when there is a depression . . . allotments have the beneficial effect in keeping up the prices [piece rates] and of labour too.²⁰⁴

Nor is Burchardt aware that Brooks was allowed out of the workhouse for the express purpose of attending meetings which led to the foundation of what was originally called the 'Small Allotments Committee', and subsequently renamed the 'Hinckley Labourers' and Artisans' Friend Society', whose rules colleague Foxon later presented to Commissioner Muggeridge. Burchardt suggests that Foxon was a local militant, and the admittedly thin evidence from poor-law administrative records implies both he and Brooks were sometime trade union members; it is also probable that both had at least participated in radical politics, including the latest, namely Chartism.²⁰⁵ The role of politicised inmates also found expression in the 1840 diet petition, drafted by their 'Presiding Chairman', Thomas Perkins.

Burchardt also detects tension between Brooks and Foxon. In fact the pair comprised the representatives of the Hinckley 'small allotment committee' in the joint delegation with James Pratt and Jabez Chaplin of the town's 'framework knitters' committee', to the Board of Guardians on about 30 June 1842, a matter of days after a meeting at the town hall was addressed by Orange, at which he claimed 200 recruits. None of these four were among the knitters' trade union representatives which had met with the Board in 1840, and this organisation seems to have collapsed at least locally since that date. Unlike Brooks and Foxon, who respectively gave evidence in 1843 and 1845, neither Pratt nor Chaplin resurface in the documentation. But it was these men who acknowledged that the Guardians had 'thrown the shield of protection over us' in mid-1842. At that point they promised their new allies 'to prevent the intrusion of wandering [Chartist] demagogues' who would also be denounced 'in our assemblies', presumably a reference to at least the Friend Society.²⁰⁶

This rapprochement followed repeated visits from 'some Chartist agitators from a distance', whom – according to assistant-commissioner Weale – were intent on 'stirring up the poor to revolt by holding large meetings outside the Union workhouse'. The stone-breakers currently in the yard failed to respond, leading Weale to hope that there would be no need for 'recourse to the civil power'. He and the Clerk – who was uniquely also the workhouse governor – detected a division between Chartists domiciled in Hinckley (where they clashed with 'anti- Corn Law Jugglers') and their counterparts in Earl Shilton and Barwell. This probably also reflected the fact that the hosiers – most of whom lived in Hinckley – always gave a preference to stockings domiciled in the town. According to the Clerk, 'our worst characters' lived in these villages and had 'come in large bodies' to those rallies one of which occurred on 13 July. After Foxon's delegation had secured their agreement with the Board, a considerable number of both married and single men from Earl

Shilton marched to the workhouse and took 'possession of the Waiting Hall' while the Guardians convened. This embryonic confrontation was diffused by doles of bread to fathers, and workhouse orders for the bachelors. The former left, as did around forty of the latter after working at the hand-mill for three hours. Order was preserved in the house by a group of inmates and stone-breakers, enabling several refractory inmates to be punished, with two sentenced to prison terms, one of whom – a Chartist and a 'most dangerous character' – was required to find sureties for peaceable behaviour for six months before his release. After a short interval awaiting developments, the Clerk reported a complete absence of the 'organised system of the Chartists' for an entire week, which he interpreted as a triumph: 'we have completely beaten them', and the 'greatest part' of Chartist inmates soon 'left the House'.²⁰⁷

No doubt the Clerk would have been even more effusive once Hinckley appeared to escape without incident during late July and August. Then serious Chartist mobilisations including strikes in other hosiery villages, and especially in Leicester, provoked intervention by the county's new professional police, backed in places by the yeomanry and the regulars. In Leicester a number of prosecutions followed at both the Borough Quarter Sessions and the Assize. At the former, intelligence that only one of those given hard-labour terms of from two weeks to two months had been defended by a lawyer – 'a convincing proof of the bankrupt state of the Chartist's Exchequer' in the estimation of the Blaby Union Clerk – was circulated amongst local poor-law officials to boost confidence.²⁰⁸ Although organised Chartism remained, its subsequent profile in the district remained low, which possibly emboldened the decisions of the hosiers to end the Statement prices in October, and the Guardians to terminate stone-breaking in the following month. The latter decision almost certainly reflected the Board's farming majority's hostility to allotments, though the topic went unmentioned in their Clerk's communications to Somerset House at this juncture, and may also reflect the fact that his compositions were usually carefully orientated towards portraying his own employers in the most favourable light. Indeed, the impression that the Clerk was the driving force in the administration is unmistakable.

If the Board's decision at this critical moment must have infuriated Brooks and Foxon, the former adhered to the much trumpeted view that allotment provision would 'turn [knitters]' . . . attention from politics to things that benefit themselves'. Brooks – who had very recently secured a schoolmaster's post – also informed the 1843 committee that Hinckley allottees abandoned their customary lounging around the market-place, 'talking of the politics of the day', preferring horticulture, and that not

one attended a recent itinerant speaker's Chartist meeting. Two years later, Foxon made no reference to plebeian politicking, though he castigated workers' exploitation by the hosiers, the truck system, the exactions of slum landlords, *and* the Guardians' new policy. This contrast derived from the very different tribunals they appeared before. Campaigners knew that the Tory-dominated select committee was sympathetic to the allotment movement, anxious to mitigate the impact of the New Poor Law, and potentially very influential over the most powerful government since 1834. Orange emphatically rejected the chairman's suggestion that 'land set apart' by legislation might be 'intrusted' to local poor-law administrators: 'Anything connected with the poor law is so distasteful to the public, that no respectable person would associate himself with it.' If the reasoning was hardly music for the ears in Somerset House, it coincided with the Commissioners' consistent attitude to publicly-funded allotments as we have seen, a position endorsed in the committee's report, though without any explicit reference to the Commission. Orange also volunteered that at the hosiery village of Lambley, near Nottingham, allotment provision by the Rector dissolved operatives' political participation, whereupon the chairman asked for – and received – specific clarification. His next question was 'Can you state *any other* effect on the moral character of the people?' (my emphasis). In this context Brooks' parallel claims were both sensible and seductive.²⁰⁹ In the context of the select committee, Burchardt's view that the 'implications' of the allotment movement in the East Midlands, 'was politically more uncertain than the reassuring statements' made by Orange and Brooks, is surely sound.²¹⁰

However, neither man ruled out the ultimate possibility of larger holdings. Although Orange consistently argued that the produce from allotments of a quarter acre would suffice for knitters in employment, he also suggested that those unable to secure work due to poor health or injuries might subsist exclusively on their own produce, but his claim that an acre of land would suffice was unrealistic despite his emphasis on the legendary productivity of heavily-manured land cultivated by 'spade husbandry'.²¹¹ Brooks wanted greater flexibility over acreages, initially adopting the common criteria, variations governed by family size; but he was aware that labour surpluses were the bane of the industry, and if he argued gently that three to four acres were required for a knitter wanting to 'employ his sons', this position paralleled that of the Chartist Land Plan.²¹²

The precise trajectory of allotment provision in the Hinckley Union is difficult to establish. At Burbage, the Revd. Balfour committed some land in 1841; if allotment sizes went unstated, allottees forced into the

workhouse in 1842, were allowed technically-illegal egress to work their land. In Hinckley parish, the evidence suggests that some land (around twenty acres) was obtained in that year, though much of it needed clearance of 'couch'; Foxon wrote to the well-funded manufacturers' relief committee in London, with the Queen as patron, and received a grant adequate for the prolonged cleaning operation by twenty men. But some landlords remained hostile; Hinckley's Lord of the Manor's coupled his refusal to assist by crudely telling the knitters 'to mind their own business' by sticking to their frames.²¹³ Most hosiers were said to be favourable, no doubt for not entirely disinterested reasons, though the bagmen – themselves targeted by a local campaign against truck which saw a score fined – could only have seen allotments as a challenge to their retailing interests.²¹⁴ Farmers, in common with their counterparts elsewhere, disapproved; they contributed disproportionately to the poor rate, and with farm-gate prices again on the decline, the resources of those in Hinckley itself were drained further once the parish's debt to the Union had to be speedily cleared. The land secured in 1842 was rented from distant episcopal landlords. The fact that Lord Howe, one of the county's biggest landowners – his acreage in the Hinckley Union parishes is unclear – became patron of the Hinckley Society, possibly secured some converts. The Society's successful campaign to involve men of sufficient means to underwrite rentals – bourgeois 'gentlemen' rather than gentry – promoted confidence, and they and at least one squire also subscribed to meet the capital costs of horticultural implements for allottees. Foxon said that some sixty to seventy allottees, with up to one and a half roods, occupied the cleared land, but by 1845 more had been hired, which together another witness estimated at between thirty and forty acres, with between 120 and 160 tenants. However, even this extended acreage was inadequate for the two hundred plus applications received in 1842–3, and there must have been more in the interim.²¹⁵ Even in the 1840s, the initial provision of allotments generated suspicion, which was speedily dissipated when sceptics saw the benefits with their own eyes, whereupon demand exceeded supply.²¹⁶ However, as Burchardt emphasises, local societies elsewhere without any land – and little prospect of it – collected their weekly pence from members to secure funds for a down payment on the rent, as subscribers doggedly contributed despite 'starvation wages'.²¹⁷ There is little evidence in the 1840s that any society secured enough land to meet demand even for quarter acres, and it was this situation which forced managers into compromises, among them the prohibition of Sabbath-day toil, presumably the price of securing support from Anglican and Non-conformist clergy, as at Hinckley. Although Orange insisted that allottees were far less likely to apply for poor relief, he was categoric

that 'no agreement must be entered into with any member to relinquish his right to . . . relief'; the Hinckley society added that residents without settlements were as eligible for land as their settled neighbours.²¹⁸

Muggeridge's 1845 thorough investigation was also for parliamentarians' consumption, but by this date few MPs would have entertained statutory intervention aimed at preserving yet another industry suffering from labour surpluses, though some may have considered that workers' intense impoverishment when combined with the number of plebeian witnesses who lambasted the impact of the New Poor Law,²¹⁹ warranted at least some assistance for large families. The Poor Law Commission was anxious to neutralise this universal impulse in agrarian and manufacturing communities. The payment of outdoor relief to men in declining industries stated assistant commissioner Power in 1838, would serve only to encourage them 'to bring up their children in . . . branches of manufacture in which they cannot support themselves or their families'. Power clearly anticipated that the 'changes to the trades are undergoing, principally in consequence of the introduction of machinery' would intensify, and believed that New Poor-Law orthodoxy would *mitigate* the socio-economic impact of that eventuality. The rising generation must seek 'more lucrative employments' now, rather than seek succour in a *cul-de-sac*. The Commission's evidence to the 1838 Commons committee, was concerned to prove the applicability of the New Poor Law to industrial districts, and now it categorically stated that the workhouse test was not the only measure. During depressions, the labour test must be invoked, before workhouse accommodation was full. One expression of that policy had been recurrently adopted at Hinckley, be it after the delay caused by that Board's non-provision of an adequate workhouse, with orders for bachelors and small families, with the labour test imposed on the fathers of larger families.²²⁰

Clearly, the continued lowness of incomes despite full employment for Hinckley Union stockingers and their families which obtained after 1843 during which the allotment movement expanded in several component parishes, must have proved a boon to the tenants. The distinction between the latter and those without land and especially with large families was the most likely reason why Hinckley workhouse was 'usually pretty full' during the mid-1840s. However, rising food prices towards the end of 1846 led to a belated response from the hosiers who agreed – bar one dissentient, the biggest employer Sills – to increased rates from January 1847. The knitters' trade union was re-activated in Hinckley, and Sills' regular workers, comprising 160 household heads, struck. Public sympathies lay with the strikers and was reflected in considerable subscriptions to a local relief fund. The Board of Guardians met a trade

union deputation which stated that the unemployed – including some but not all strikers – would apply for relief in the first week of February. The Board dug out Chadwick's letter of 1840 vintage, and used it to apply for the suspension of the prohibitory outdoor relief-order for able-bodied men and its replacement with the labour test. The Commissioners refused, on the perfectly reasonable grounds that article VI of the 1844 General Order legitimated the activation of the labour test when workhouses were filling rapidly, on the condition that Somerset House was notified within fifteen days for sanction. Weale was also ordered to attend the Hinckley Board, and did so on 11 February. Although he warned the *Guardians* over the 'danger of interfering' in industrial disputes, he also met frameworkers' union representatives, and conceded that the principles embedded in Commissioners' instructions of 1840 could not be breached 'with propriety'. The upshot reflected the solution adopted in 1840, and again – initially – in 1842, namely the demarcations between those subjected to the workhouse and the labour tests. In 1847, subscription-charity funds were targeted on family men faced with the workhouse, enabling all in this category to stay in their homes; 37 men accepted the other test. Sills appears to have shortly capitulated.²²¹ Further accelerations in food prices between March and May, sparked resort to classic food rioting in several parts of the country including Nottingham and adjacent hosiery locations, and unleashed traditional condemnation of grain merchants.²²² At this juncture, with Hinckley workhouse full, while the numbers working at its mill under the labour test exceeded its capacity, and some fifty men were put to work on the highways. Such traditional recourse inevitably incurred the Commissioners' ire,²²³ with the insistence that either stone-breaking be restarted, or if that proved problematic, the Board should hire land for spade husbandry. That irony went unmentioned in the official correspondence; so too did the *Guardians*' response,²²⁴ despite the Clerk's more-or-less dutiful weekly reports of numbers under the labour test, and it was mid-July before any decline was mentioned.²²⁵ The problem recurred in November, and with the workhouse again full, the Board re-hired the old workhouse at Sapcote for three months, at the end of which period the Clerk was referring to 'the late pressure'.²²⁶

Fourteen months later in March 1849 the stockingers struck again; individual *Guardians* successfully negotiated a compromise which included increased piece rates. By the date Weale found the time to visit, the strike was over, and though he re-iterated his previous strictures about involvement in industrial disputes, the Poor Law Commission's successor – the Poor Law Board – merely expressed its pleasure over the end of the strike, and ignored the intervention of some *Guardians*.²²⁷ Although, the

differences between the Board's responses to depressions, between 1839 and 1842, and those of the late forties, may appear of restricted consequence, they also reflect the weakening the central authority's power and capacity to monitor and steer local administrations. On 11 February 1847, Weale had to be in Huntingdon on the 12th; his Hinckley visit was fleeting, a situation repeated in 1849, reflecting the reduction of the corps of assistant commissioners under the Tory government's 1842 Act renewing the Commissioners' remit for five years, and the commensurate huge increase in their districts. If this less rigid policing and reduced expenditure helped its parliamentary passage for Peel, the major Act of 1844 also made General Orders subject to advance parliamentary scrutiny. Although the fifteen-day rule for reporting breaches of prohibitory orders was not new, the circumstances in which it applied were broadened. The Commissioners were prepared to resist Board of Guardians' *formal* resort to highway maintenance in 1847, despite their expiring remit with their imminent replacement by the Poor Law Board; the latter's non-engagement with the issue of the Guardians' intervention on the industrial front in 1849, also reflects a further reduction in the central authority's willingness to intrude.

Although recurrent depressions were important factors, on the case-study evidence derived from Hinckley, the impact of the New Poor Law on the re-genesis of the allotment movement was clearly *the* critical factor behind its timing and its subsequent trajectory: it is unlikely that the situation in other manufacturing districts where the movement succeeded to degrees was radically different, though studies of localities where enduring societies collected their pence to no avail might reveal significant supplementary insights; one Leicestershire example, Oadby, identified by Brooks, was a Chartist centre, and one wonders whether its local landed establishment remained unconvinced of proponents' blandishments about the de-politicisation of allottees.²²⁸ More importantly, the evidence from the depressions, notably the problems of men with large families, the pressure on workhouse accommodation, and the resort to Sapcote, proves that allotment provision in the manufacturing parishes comprised in the Hinckley Union was inadequate, though allottees who took industrial action were cushioned. One result, to degrees encouraged by further industrial changes in the hosiery industry, was the later switch of the 'centre of gravity of the allotment movement' to the Midlands, and particularly the East Midlands. The Duke of Newcastle's lead was also followed by other aristocrats.²²⁹

VII. Allotment provision circa 1845 to 1873: ambiguous territory?

The years from around 1845 to 1873 focuses on what Burchardt describes as 'the decline of the organised allotment movement', though he is cognizant of the paradox whereby the scale of allotment provision increased both geographically and hugely in terms of total numbers. He partly attributes the 'precipitate' decline in organisation to Lord Ashley's 1844 reformulation of the LFS as the 'Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes'. As its title suggests, the society had a broader remit extending especially to housing and it became particularly engrossed in its model-housing projects in London. Although, it had an allotments sub-committee, Burchardt represents it as 'marginalised', while coverage of the issue in its magazine – also renamed – declined dramatically.²³⁰ In fact, his description of Ashley's 'coup' – and a bloodless one at that – generated some opposition, be it delayed and by a circuitous route, notably in his lordship's home county of Dorset, shortly after he took the Chiltern hundreds on acceding to his father's Earldom. Peel's commitment to repealing the Corn Laws also impacted on these events. In May 1846, one of the handful of Whig-protectionist MPs, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, elected for Shaftsbury in an 1845 by-election, directly complained to the Poor Law Commission about the denial of outdoor relief to James Soper, a labourer with six children under working age, earning a weekly nine shillings – somewhat above the county average. Soper's predicament lay in the decimation of his potato patch – more common than allotments in Dorset – by the notorious blight, as were many of Soper's counterparts and allotment holders over the country. Sheridan also discovered that other Dorset labourers earned but seven shillings, though these men also received subsidised wheat from their employers, a tradition which also seems to have originated shortly before the war years.²³¹ However, Sheridan asserted that this wheat was "gristing" . . . wheat unfit for the market', except as chicken feed. Sheridan wrote to *The Times*, thereby triggering another internal Somerset House inquiry into a scandal, and a vigorous debate developed in the press in the ensuing weeks. This sucked in various people among them John Floyer, another very recently-elected protectionist county MP, who claimed – somewhat absurdly – that he had never known Dorset labourers to be in a better condition. This unleashed further communiqués, including the accurate claim of an 'old parish poor house in a decayed and ruinous state' which accommodated over forty homeless people during the preceding winter, including a couple with ten children. One of the most sensible suggestions was that labourers should have allotments in addition to rotating potato patches.²³²

In September the *Dorset County Chronicle* devoted an extended leader to the proposed re-launch of the allotment movement by the 'Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor by the Field Garden Allotment System', scheduled for the 10th at Beaminster. The editorial regretted recent local 'false statements' published in a 'leading London paper', recalled the 1832 foundation of 'several' branches of the LFS, and lamented the subsequent 'desuetude' of some. The substantial attendance surprised the organisers, and the meeting was moved from the town hall to a school. Among those present were veteran campaigners including Captain Scobell and West Kent's Henry Martin. Although William Sparks of Crewkerne (Somerset), who had campaigned in 1832, noted that in his region there were some 800 allotments embraced in some thirty parishes, there was unanimity in the need for more, and some speakers added that sizes might go up to an acre. Martin addressed a subsequent assembly at Crewkerne on 24 October, and two days later a meeting convened in the county town to 'relaunch' the 'Dorchester and Weymouth LFS'. Chaired by the High Sheriff, among the organisers was Henry Frampton, who had orchestrated the prosecution of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The former vicar of Sydling observed that farmers there had successfully opposed allotments in the 1830s. John Floyer MP – an absentee – communicated his opinion that potato patches could not be 'improved upon by any allotment system', suggesting that opposition to allotments came only second to the survival of the Corn Laws in the view of the county's electorate, predominantly farmers, who were ironically not called upon to vote between 1832 and 1852.²³³

Clearly, differences of opinion on the issue were articulated, though the question of poor relief was either eschewed by speakers or ignored by the *Chronicle's* editor, either being possible after the furore in *The Times'* columns. At Dorchester, the Bishop of Salisbury somewhat ominously observed that 'the rich grew richer, [while] the poor grew poorer'.²³⁴ The fact that the actual outcomes of these initiatives in Dorset are obscure, is consistent with Burchardt's observations about Shaftsbury's wider campaign at the expense of the allotment movement from the mid-1840s. But, once again, these 1846 developments in Dorset were triggered by a poor-law related scandal and its still inevitable exploitation by John Walter's *Times*. Moreover, the Commissioners – by then reeling under the crushing condemnation of the Commons select committee on the Andover scandal – subsequently sanctioned the payment of outdoor relief to able-bodied males who had lost the produce from potato patches in Dorset and Somerset.²³⁵

Although the Commission – somewhat belatedly in January 1847 – mounted a survey of the impact of the potato blight, relief to the fathers

of large families appears to have been mainly in the considerable extension of the system of taking some of their pre-working age children into workhouses, as food prices rose.²³⁶ Some allotment providers were prepared to cut, or even waive rents. The Earl of Carnarvon's steward normally collected £80 annually from allottees at Christian Malford. In 1845, when the blight first manifested itself in places, he anticipated having to address the problem, but as 'no remission was tendered or solicited . . . that question is adjourned'. In 1846 it was very different, as 'the calamity has been far more extensive'. As fellow allotment providers, Lords Lansdowne and Crewe, and the Rector, had remitted half their rents

not of the Potato Allotments, but of the portion of each Allotment which was planted with Potatoes. . . . It is a very judicious management meeting the circumstances and no more . . . if the Potato land of which one half is usually planted with Corn or another Crop (original emphasis).

On the Earl's behalf, the Rector's bailiff would

view each Cotter Allotment . . . for these small tenants should know that their Cases had been methodically treated, and not slovened over.²³⁷

The 1837–40 Royal Commission on handloom weavers had supported allotments, but like the preceding Commons select committee on the New Poor Law in 1838, failed to provoke any ministerial parliamentary initiatives while the Whigs remained in office. Indeed, as Dr Richards' revealing study of the former indicates, the political climate was transformed between the early and later 1830s. John Maxwell, MP for Lanarkshire, assisted by John Fielden – whom we have encountered as an anti-New Poor-Law campaigner – secured a Commons select committee into the hand-loom weavers' petitions in 1834, shortly before the Amending Bill was introduced. It reported in 1835 in favour of legislation to mitigate the adverse effects of industrial capitalism in textiles generally, the full effects of machinery in particular, and the spectacular increase in the numbers of especially cotton weavers from the ranks of demobilised servicemen, immigrant Irish and indigenous migrants, which facilitated wage-cutting. The committee was 'decidedly opposed' to the 'sentiment that Parliament cannot and ought not to interfere in cases of this nature', and recommended statutory intervention, including local boards to regulate wages. This flew in the face of all the economic arguments advanced by the Whig leadership during the passage of the New Poor Law, and reiterated *ad infinitum* by the Poor Law Commissioners in their correspondence with every Union in England and Wales, and in their widely-circulated,

propagandist *Annual Reports*. Fielden's Bill providing for wage-fixing was defeated in July 1835, and others to similar effect were rejected in 1836 and 1837. On the first and second occasions, the vote – be it in a thin House – was relatively close, and Melbourne's ministry, having placed the Benthamite MP for Manchester, Poulett Thompson, at the head of the Board of Trade, helped to head off this political pressure by the appointment of eight Commissioners to investigate. Headed by Nassau Senior, the co-author of the 1834 *Poor Law Report*, he sought Chadwick's advice in selecting his staff, which included Muggeridge – Somerset House's former migration administrator – and whom we encountered in a similar role with Hinckley's stockingers in the mid-forties. The fact that the inquiry was allowed – despite its comprehensiveness – to take four years, is a neat exemplar of what constituted the long-grass in very early Victorian politics, whilst the Whigs clung increasingly unsteadily to office.²³⁸

The Commissioners took evidence from handloom weavers' representatives, all of whom called for Fielden's regulatory system, and essentially easy meat for Senior's people. Muggeridge argued that the industries had become a colossal refuge for 'destitute persons' of all descriptions, and for some agricultural labourers the 'only refuge'. 'The weaver', he continued, 'will stand by his loom while it will enable him to exist', fondly recalling the prosperous former times, in hope that they would magically reappear: meanwhile 'most country weavers . . . still bring up their children to the loom', thus prolonging the misery. All the relevant evidence – including the 'power-loom factories' currently being erected at Blackburn – indicated that handloom weaving 'will be speedily superseded altogether'. Muggeridge's colleague Hickson

In considering . . . the wages of the working class, the important question is not what is earned by the man merely, but what are the collective earnings of the whole family.

This constituted the principal reason why weavers 'clung to the trade longer'. If he conceded that in some lines, especially the fancy – themselves vulnerable to the 'caprices of fashion' – to 'some extent the handloom weavers must always continue to exist' to produce articles 'for which it would never pay to erect complicated machinery'. Having made the concession, he promptly challenged its veracity owing to the rapidity of technological innovation in woollens and linen, in the former's case predicting 'a complete revolution . . . [in] a few years'. Even silk was going in the same direction:

the conclusion is irresistible, and . . . there is no real kindness in encouraging hopes that can never be realised.²³⁹

Peel's return to power in 1841, it must be re-emphasised, restored powerful governance, and altered the political climate favourably towards allotments, to the discomfort of the Poor Law Commission. In the prolonged debates in the spring and summer of 1842 over the renewal of the Poor Law Commission, Home Secretary Graham had stated that one principal aim were changes 'to secure diversity of operation where circumstances are different, and . . . prevent diversity where circumstances are identical'. Amusingly, one of the four special assistants charged with the inquiry into landworking women and children – perhaps significantly the only one with an hereditary title, Sir Francis Doyle – cheekily targeted his temporary employers with a remark about 'the fashion among political economists to speak disrespectfully' of allotments.²⁴⁰ MPs across the political spectrum, sought to exploit changed political realities. In March 1843 William Stanton, the new Whig MP for Strood, where the woollen industry was in decline, argued – unsuccessfully – that the Commons agreed a standing order compelling allotment provision in future enclosure Acts, with responsibility devolving on overseers of the poor, and rents paid into parochial poor-law funds. If a subsequent modified proposal also failed, it led to further advocacy of statutory intervention from both Whig and Tory members. The first Bill was introduced by William Busfeild Ferrand, the equally new Tory MP for Knaresborough, and an outspoken opponent of the New Poor Law,²⁴¹ whose proposals trumped anything Cobbett ever advanced. Ferrand not only projected the compulsory enclosure of a twentieth of waste land in every parish – and there were an estimated thirty million such acres in the country – for allotments for the use of the poor, but cottages erected too. Moreover, the costs were to be met from the poor rate, and beneficiaries would be responsible for eventual repayment. Ironically, Ferrand spoke of his scheme only a few days before the Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor published the first instalment of his series of *Letters to the Producers of Wealth*, in the *Northern Star* during April and May 1843 and which effectively launched the Land Plan. But another poor-law statute, which was passed before the main one in 1842, was aimed 'to explain and amend the Acts respecting the Sale of Parish Property; and make further Provision for the Discharge of Debts . . . incurred [illegally] by . . . Parishes', in conformity with a policy we have frequently encountered. In this context, it is perhaps surprising that Graham praised Ferrand's 'generous initiative', though he did so in the full knowledge that his Bill stood no chance.²⁴²

This was the precise context in which the Commons also created the select committee enquiry into the 'Labouring Poor (Allotments of Land)', of which Ferrand was a member, along with Escourt and three other MPs

close to the LFS. The principal legislative outcome was the 1845 General Enclosure Act, which Burchardt represents as a triumph for the allotment movement in its most vigorous phase in the early forties, with its compulsory provision of allotments unless the enclosure commissioners formally recorded the reasons for their inappropriateness. However, he concedes that less than a twentieth of new allotments created between 1845 and 1873 derived from these powers, though their overall numbers in the former year at least trebled by the latter, when an incomplete survey revealed nearly a quarter of a million under one acre.²⁴³ But the initial context was also defined by the hottest political issue in the mid-1840s, namely Peel's decision to repeal the Corn Laws. Many anticipated reducing cereal prices and with it a shrinkage in corn acreages, and its corollary, less demand for agrarian labour. Where that occurred landlords might anticipate greater allotment provision as a protection against falling rents, while farmers who did reduce their cereal acreages might well see more allotments as the means whereby the lid might be kept on rising poor rates. The relevance of the New Poor-Law issue still resonated. In the 1845 debates over the Whig MP for Hertford, W F Cowper's 'Field Gardens Bill', the clause guaranteeing allottees' rents to private landlords from the poor rate was dropped, after MPs from across the political spectrum objected, some of whom specifically referred to the Poor Law Commission's stance. However, Graham – the only MP on the 1837 select committee to vigorously question Hampshire witnesses over whether allotments fully compensated cultivators for their lost poor relief²⁴⁴ – supported the amended Bill: despite his reservations over the measure realising its sponsor's anticipations,

still he thought that the system – all aid from the [poor] rates being withdrawn – might be advantageously brought into the operation.

In a clear rebuke to the Poor Law Commissioners, Peel gruffly volunteered his interest in the benefits to allottees,

rather than the remote tendencies which political economy was disposed to attribute to such a system.

The Bill was nevertheless lost in the Lords.²⁴⁵

John Stuart Mill once observed that allotments were the 'method of making people grow their own poor rate'.²⁴⁶ Burchardt's use of the 1873 agricultural returns permits the creation of an overall framework for his post-1845 third allotment movement; he admits that this thirteen-page survey comprising part IV of the volume, only goes 'towards' an history of it. There is some evidence that both allotment providers and tenants gave up during this period of significant growth given some statistical clarity by

the 1873 survey.²⁴⁷ Before the Royal Commission into the Agricultural Depression in 1893, the elderly land agent Ingram, still responsible for some twenty thousand East Sussex acres, argued that many labourers with 'sufficient garden' attached to cottages, neither needed nor wanted allotments. Recalling 'a good deal of stir . . . about 1842' over allotments when he was commencing his career, he instanced a landowner who let out 45 acres at that time, of which but nine currently remained partly 'held by the village innkeeper', though the population remained stable over these decades. He acknowledged that the 'main' demand for allotments in the 1890s derived from town-dwellers interested in land on the outskirts. His information suggests that there may have been some shift in the geography of allotment provision, between the pre-1850 period and the very late nineteenth-century, and therefore unambiguously outside Burchardt's time frame.²⁴⁸ On the other hand, and as we shall see, agricultural labourers – and especially the unionised minority – from the early seventies, campaigned for political enfranchisement which the leadership perceived as the route for more fundamental land reform, including smallholdings and with it prospective economic emancipation for individuals.

Clearly, the diversification of the LFS's original exclusive focus on allotments by its successor organisation, and the reducing coverage of the topic in its successor journal, effectively removed the movement's evidential base from a nominally national perspective. If an accurate history of the trajectory of allotment provision in the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century is to be constructed, the agencies of local and regional historians require energising for the exploitation of the mass of sources available for this period.

In what provisionally appears to be an unusual survival, the administration book for 'Allotment Gardens' at Rotherfield in East Sussex survives from their inauguration in February 1844 until it appears to have faded away between the late 1890s and 1910. Somebody penned – in a laboured hand – a literate 'brief account' probably in the late 1840s, which reveals that the 'first decisive step' in this enormous parish of almost 15,000 acres and with a population of 3036 in 1841, was taken by Henry Hope Johnstone of Rother House and Rector Gream, who approached the Earl of Abergavenny for 'a portion of his [very extensive] lands'. His lordship revealingly identified a just over six-acre field of 'very wet' pasture, currently let at ten shillings an acre to farmer Leonard; Gream became the tenant, and dominant administrator. Having 'stumped out and numbered' 25 quarter-acre plots, the names of 37 men – twelve were illiterate – who had agreed to the conditions, including rents paid in advance, went into the hat at the Rectory, and 25 allottees were

identified. Three withdrew, either as a result of second thoughts about rental commitments, or more likely once having inspected the plot they had drawn, as nothing could be done before the land was 'drained and this they [the tenants] were not able to do so thoroughly as they might wish'. Clearly, some allotments were more sodden than others, and saving the entire initiative required Johnstone's intervention. Advance rents of between one and four shillings were paid, presumably dictated by what individuals could afford, and Johnstone

paid them at a rate of three pence per rod giving them cash for *some* of their [trenching] work and outsetting a part of their rent for the rest (original emphasis).

The cost absorbed all the rent money, leaving nothing for the payment of other expenses, including hedging, and the Rector's tithe of a princely three shillings. He apparently insisted on its payment, and it would be attractive to attribute this to an archetypally-parsimonious parson, but it needs to be said, as we have seen with other providers, they were concerned to facilitate access, not subsidise the cost of production. This left Johnstone to return to Abergavenny to 'solicit . . . his clemency till another year, which was immediately granted'. If this does not reveal a darker side to elite motivation, the rules certainly do, though older stipulations against receipt of poor relief were redundant by 1844. The regulations stated a 'preference' for settled men rather than mere residents – who were eligible – though the speedy introduction of a new rule that priority was given to labourers over 'tradesmen', suggests that demand was much greater than revealed by the original number of names in the hat. The rules also forbade sub-letting, and whenever potatoes were planted, that part of the plot 'must be sufficiently manured'; consecutive cropping of that root on the same part of the plot was banned, and the proverbial spade husbandry was obligatory for all allottees and their families, except in sickness. Theft from fellow allottees, by the tenant, or any member of his family, together with 'wilful damage', trespass, or encroachment on other tenants' ground, was punishable by immediate and permanent exclusion. The same penalty followed conviction 'of any breach of the law'. Notice of non-renewal of annual leases could be given in any year before 1 August, and after the debacle in the spring of 1844 the payment of individuals' yearly rents of eight shillings was altered to quarterly payments, but still in advance. Any tenant who had not paid the full amount by 11 October, was liable to immediate forfeiture. Defaulters were not permanently barred, but replacement tenants were required to pay the outstanding rent, a rule legitimated as the cost of the 'benefit of Defaulters' improvements'. Finally, allottees were forbidden to work their

land on Sundays, while the tenancies of those who became 'a neglecter of the Sabbath, a drunkard, common swearer or immoral character', were likely to be terminated.²⁴⁹

Very few infringements were recorded. Sam Waller 'gave up' after sowing contrary to the regulations, compounded by 'having reaped [the crop] ... before it was forfeited', while Obed Wilkins was merely 'admonished' after sickness dictated hiring people to harvest, who 'got over the Fences' into other allotments. The annual turnover supports the probability that forfeitures occurred; in only one new year – 1856–7 – is the list of names endorsed 'the same' as its predecessor: however, there is no information on the process of selection of new tenants. The population rose by seventeen per cent between 1841 and 1851, and if it dropped marginally in the 1850s, a further steady increase from the 1861 total of 3413 saw it attain just over 5000 by 1891. The village's attractive Wealden location, plus the nearby station on routes from London, Tunbridge Wells and Brighton, meant that the increases were disproportionately non-working class. Seventeen of the 25 original tenants were still there in 1850, but that fell to ten by 1854, only one of whom survived until 1867. However, there are implications that brothers rotated their plots from year to year, and this strong suggestion of frustrated men is surely confirmed by the 1857 decision to permit each of four plots to be 'taken equally' by two tenants. Several of these were long-standing allottees, while others were not, implying that the sharers were older fellows with reducing family responsibilities and recently-married men. The original four divided plots had increased to eleven by 1861, and if that had reduced to six by 1873, they rose to eight in 1879 and to eleven in 1892, with the latter a certain reflection of the deepening agricultural depression. Another was the three-fold divisions of two plots introduced in 1888. In 1892 the number of tenants had climbed to 38. Ironically and unprecedentedly, two entire plots were vacant in 1879, one for but a year and the other – number two – for several years, suggesting that inadequate drainage endured in some parts of the field. The trajectories of individual plots, suggests that sons took over from fathers or other male relations. Samuel Bellingham, an original tenant, allowed a James Bellingham to have his plot in 1867, but either Samuel – or more likely a son – was in possession in 1869, and finally 'gave up' in 1879. George Holmwood's full quarter-acre was allotted in the mid-1860s, and a Thomas Holmwood took a half-share in 1892. Jesse Izzard, an allottee since the early 1850s, was still there in 1879, when he divided it with James Streatfield, and in the following year Izzard's part was taken by Charles Chandler: neither endured, reflecting the greater volatility found among most but not all sharers. Thomas Turk also assumed a tenancy in the mid-1860s, but

shortly died; his widow then took over – an unusual but not unprecedented case – remaining in possession until the later 1870s, when it passed to John Turk, presumably a son. His mother's tenancy almost certainly reflects special assistance for a widow with a young family, for whom regular outdoor poor relief would have been unlikely. From 1880 John Turk shared number seventeen with W Cornford, an arrangement which unusually endured well into the 1890s.²⁵⁰

Some space was reserved yearly in the administration book for tenants' signatures and marks to comply with the rules; usually no more than a few were entered, perhaps signifying indolence, but more likely resistance. When changes were made to the rules in October 1866, uniquely since 1844 all tenants signed, but thereafter the numbers of signatures gradually dwindled to virtually none. Out went the old stipulation against consecutive potato crops. Revealingly, a system of fines was introduced, respecting drunkenness, fighting, trespassing on neighbours' plots, and breaking hedges or fences, each of which carried shilling fines for the first offence, half-a-crown for the second, and forfeiture for the third. The other offences incurring forfeiture were retained, as was the prohibition of working on the Sabbath. If there was a precedent for stewards dating from 1850 when one was appointed on a yearly stipend of five shillings, from 1866 four were compelled to serve on designation by the Rector, on a rota, whereby two were replaced annually. They were charged with policing, ensuring that land was maintained in 'proper order', collecting fines and reporting rule breaches, with failure to comply with the latter incurring double the penalty paid for breaches by allottees. But there is no record of either fines or forfeiture, imposed on either ordinary tenants or stewards. Further rule amendments followed in 1885, just as demand rose; the number of offences incurring eviction at Michaelmas were increased. Older ones survived, with the exception of misdemeanour being added to conviction for felony, suggesting that some minor offender had litigiously protested over forfeiture following the former. The fact that no rules were relaxed, including Sabbath working and 'Habitual neglect' of Sunday worship, implies that the Revd. Gream's successor seized the opportunity created by the depression and population pressure, to tighten the moral screw on allottees; the revised regulations were published in handbills, and no trespassing signs were erected, but unfortunately the disciplinary record is not to be found in the book.^{250A}

Another documentary category, diaries, is exemplified by that kept by the Revd. John Coker Egerton, curate and subsequently Rector of the notoriously unruly East Sussex parish of Burwash between 1857 and 1887. Installed nepotistically by his uncle, Rector Gould – who had converted some of his glebe to allotments – one of Egerton's first encounters

with the considerable and enduring poverty problem occurred when he attended a

parish meeting about the poor. The idea of lowering the old people's pay was hinted at bec[ause] it is higher than in other unions. I spoke up ag[ain]st it. Went thro' the relief book & didn't find any body to dock; added on a case or two.²⁵¹

Like most of those present, his reverence supported adequate basic pensions for the elderly, but after another meeting 'for . . . discussing . . . meeting the want of employment' where 'Nothing much [was] done', he opined,

it certainly is wonderful how people will help themselves if they can get relief in no other way. It does seem that the only plan is to offer the able-bodied relief in a repulsive form [workhouses]. It may seem hard, but again it seems fairest to all, for it separates between the idle ones, & the willing ones.

Gould, like many of his counterparts, also offered cash prizes for a range of vegetables grown on either allotments or in cottage gardens, presented annually after a dinner; to his uncle's annoyance, these were 'mysterious productions' for Egerton, though he did detect plebeian exhibitors 'brought good appetites' for the 'beef and pudding'. Interestingly, at the event in 1858, 'One man spoke up well & said that if those thrashing machines were done away with all w[ould] be right', although this generosity was compromised by Egerton's public comment that 'they cannot stop . . . machinery . . . however hard it presses . . . the long and the short of it . . . they must submit'. On occasion, he also recorded both the very visible poverty and fear of the workhouse. Hence father of five John Harmer in February 1858: 'hardly any work for last 3 months; fine man, but looks half starved'. At elderly road-worker John Clapson's cottage Egerton found 'no furniture' – presumably pawned or sold – and 'I c[ould] not sit down. He has nevertheless a great horror of "ye House"'. Egerton frequently remonstrated with co-habitees, some with bastard children, including 'a woman named Ellis' on whom he called to privately baptise a new baby: 'I spoke to her most seriously, but as her only refuge on leaving the man w[ould] be to "the house" she prefers living in sin to leaving him'.²⁵²

This period also witnessed a considerable growth in the provincial press, and with it increased competition. Editors responded by expanding their coverage of local news in regular village reports supplied by residents, of whom Egerton was one.²⁵³ Annual vegetable competitions and rent-payment dinners for allotment tenants figure. Examples of the

latter include the fifty labourers convening at the Axe and Saw at Moulton (Lincolnshire) in September 1835, and a scheme run by the Horncastle LFS in February 1836, just as the New Poor Law was being implemented. At Horncastle, the society's agent Perry reiterated the stock claim that in 1830 allottees came forward to protect landowners' property, though he made no reported reference to simultaneous arson and animal maiming in the county; significantly, a number of local speakers, among them the Revd. Massingbred, promised that the scheme was to be expanded. The anniversary dinners of long established schemes were also newsworthy, including Earl Cornwallis's at Cranbrook in 1847, and the pro-allotment 'ladies and gentlemen' at Bearsted in 1848. Provision here may have derived from the LFS, as these parishes were in Henry Martin's sphere of influence. The press also covered new allotment initiatives, among them provision on spare land at Ramsgate by the South-eastern Railway in 1848 for employees 'and others', two years after the completion of the Ashford-Margate line.²⁵⁴

Additional evidential snippets from the press include court cases against thieves who stole growing produce, exemplified by the May 1854 prosecution of a fifteen year-old lass for purloining two cabbages valued at twopence, who was unluckily the 'first offender . . . caught' in a campaign against a wave of depredations by the provider, the Revd. Eadle, who had purchased two fields for the purpose at Bognor. Burchardt addresses the issue of the impact of provision on allottees' characters, and notes the rules against them pilfering from each other; he concludes that the evidence supports the contemporary argument that allotments reduced crime, not least because some providers – notably in the East Midlands – did not discriminate against those with minor criminal records. John Brooks of Hinckley is cited to the effect that among allottees 'every man is the guardian of his neighbour's property', though Burchardt is less sure over other contemporary claims that farmworkers' notorious tendency to filch from their employers increased once the former became allottees. One farming provider insisted to a parliamentary committee that they developed a marked tendency to pilfer straw. If further research, as Burchardt asserts, could address this issue – at the local level – so too could an investigation into theft from allotments by plebeian neighbours without land. At Bognor, Eadle was certain that the offending girl had been 'put on by others', perhaps her parents, who were now faced with costs and a fine totalling 10/6, or see their daughter's imprisonment for fourteen days. Further evidence, as we have seen, also derives from vestry minutes; the 'allotment wardens' made their first minuted appearance at Framfield in 1863, at a debate over how much of the land being purchased to extend the graveyard, should be devoted for additional 'let[ting] . . . for

Cottagers' gardens'. This detail also reveals contemporary juxtapositions of cottage gardens and allotments; new 'gardens' in the vestry clerk's parlance clearly referred to their provision in a block of land, separate from allottees' domestic accommodation.²⁵⁵

Clearly, this brief examination reveals ample potential for further research into allotment provision, including that in towns. At Andover, shortly after an agricultural engineer's premises were sacked by Swing, 108 subscribers responded – including local politicians – with funds used to rent land from eight people, among whom were some municipal politicians and the borough's Whig MP, Ralph Etwall. Although the town was at the centre of a huge parish embracing much farmland, the political implications for candidates contesting similarly-placed parliamentary boroughs are probably of importance, especially after the 1867 Reform Act. The ancient borough of Knaresborough was one where allotment-provision is known to have been an factor; here the electorate shrank by a third between 1832 and 1847, in part owing to the decline in the town's linen industry, though it retained two seats until the Second Reform Act which were invariably contested. The Tories won one seat in 1835, and both in 1841, including the rabid anti-New Poor-Law campaigner Ferrand whom we have encountered. Although Liberal hegemony returned in 1847, in 1852 two Liberals and a Tory each received 113 votes, and on petition the latter was returned – by one vote being disallowed. Although the date when allotments were first provided eludes, these psephological realities dictated resort to all appropriate innovations, and in 1867 it was reported that:

Nearly all the land near Knaresboro' belongs to two rampant Tories, Sir Chas. Slingsby and Mr T. Collins, and most of the working men hold small allotments under them, and they are putting the screw on as tight as they can.

Here, and no doubt in other boroughs, customarily corrupt Victorian politics prior to the 1872 Ballot Act, embraced enfranchised allotment tenants.²⁵⁶

VIII. The age of agrarian trade unionism and the land issue: a southern perspective 1872–1896.

The post-1872 enduring campaigns by agrarian trade unionists essentially brings us into a new epoch of countryside history. Although the remaining quarter century lies unambiguously outside Burchardt's chronology, he supports contemporary views that *existing* allotments most significant contribution was their provision of 'a food supply on which labourers

could draw during a strike'. We have already encountered this argument in the 1840s advanced by East Midland campaigners, though strangely missing from Burchardt's account of them.²⁵⁷ Here, he focuses on Joseph Arch's nominally-national union and if two of the enduring regional unions are mentioned, he makes no reference to the most powerful, namely the Kent and Sussex Labourers Union (KSLU). Founded in 1872 by the youthful Maidstone journalist Alfred Simmons, and assisted by Charles Keen, secretary of the British branch of the federal International Working Man's Association, who shortly secured the secretaryship of the famous Land and Labour League.²⁵⁸ Simmons became the KSLU's first general secretary, a post he was to hold until 1887. The membership peaked in 1879 with some 16,000 men. Its annual demonstration in the spring, with street processions led by bands, followed a rally with speeches from the leaders and their guests, originally held at Maidstone, quickly established itself as a very popular day's holiday for the membership, and was invariably well-supported from the first in 1873. The union's original mouthpiece, the *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, served it well while Simmons remained in its service, and although it turned against him when the union purchased the *Kent and Sussex Times* in 1875, the leadership until the late 1880s effectively controlled one of the county papers. Unions so placed, according to Edward Thompson, secured a 'very crucial' weapon to promote rapid recruitment. If South-eastern farmworkers' wages had drifted upwards in the era of high farming between the 1840s and the early 1870s, seasonal under- and unemployment remained a problem throughout, and with it poor relief – or rather the lack of non-medical assistance which we encountered in Burwash – remained an important issue. Indeed, the campaign against some back-sliding into outdoor relief for the able-bodied, had commenced in 1869 in part driven by the Charity Organisation Society. Simmons covered the activities of several West Kent Unions for his newspaper at this time, and if he disclaimed any advocacy of 'indiscriminate granting of outdoor relief', he attacked the COS-inspired resort to the Liable Persons machinery, whereby sons and daughters of elderly parents could be made to pay for their maintenance. This had been enforced in the courts, and extended to farmworkers, effectively 'denying bread to their [own] children'. In the post-1869 era, economies were also sought through Boards of Guardians' rulings that claimants' incomes were adequate to privately secure medical assistance, or granted it as a loan, especially medical costs incurred in child-birth.²⁵⁹

Farmers used their dominant position on rural Union Boards to discriminate against KSLU members, and as general secretary Simmons made representations over members' specific cases direct to the Poor Law

Board [PLB]. A typical case concerned George Moore's application for a 'midwifery order' in June 1873 to the Ticehurst Union: according to Simmons,

the Relieving Officers reply was "I have not received the certificate from the Guardians for you, but I am to tell you that as you could find the means to go to Maidstone you must find your own doctor" – which means that three months ago the man with a large number of children saved up about 3/- and attended the annual meeting of this Society. . . . This is the specific reason assigned for refusal. The man is very poor and has very low wages. He has had parish doctors on several previous occasions.

The PLB's president personally annotated Simmons' letter instructing Somerset House staff that they 'make it clear to the writer not only why he has made out no case for an enquiry, but what would suffice to justify one'. Simmons letter was copied to the Ticehurst Board – a normal procedure over complaints – and it explained that Moore was in 'receipt of good earnings' through piece rates, and candidly admitted the Guardians believed that Moore

might be able to pay the Midwifery for himself, especially as it was reported he could afford to lose his [day's] work and incur expences in going a long distance to Maidstone.

Ironically, Moore had re-applied on 7 August, presumably in the knowledge that the KSLU had taken up the case, and his daughter was delivered by a medical officer on the 9th. However, the PLB when replying with this information to Simmons at the end of that month, omitted any reference to Moore's attendance at the union's annual demonstration.²⁶⁰

Simmons – and other officers – used such cases in their campaigns, and at rallies the audience were invited to relate local cases of harsh poor-law administration. Among the commonest complaints over non-medical matters, were the elderly's incarceration in workhouses, where they were still usually separated. Simmons repeatedly asserted that most Guardians 'were not guardians of the poor at all, but were guardians of the rich . . . assist[ing] the poor as little as possible . . . by a stringent ordering of "the House"'. Relieving officers were 'one of their greatest enemies'.²⁶¹ In 1877, Simmons was elected to a seat on the Maidstone Board of Guardians, promising that he would not join the ranks of the "Grinders"; he succeeded in persuading colleagues to provide private sleeping accommodation for elderly couples – a long-standing legal option. In December 1878, as the biggest industrial dispute in the KSLU's short history intensified, he attended the annual Poor Law Conference in London,

chaired by the ageing but still doctrinaire Sir Edwin Chadwick. One principal speaker, J D Llewelyn spoke on poor-law administration during depressions, focusing on lock-outs and strikes, and ominously calling for larger workhouses. Simmons complained that South-eastern Guardians refused aid to his members, and several contributors to the debate argued that rigorous welfare administration would discourage resort to strikes. The latter drew a magisterial rebuke from Chadwick:

Capital, as such, has no place at a board of guardians; only . . . a duty . . . to see to the correct administration of the law, which allows only relief in absolute and entire destitution. The guardians have nothing to do beyond that. They have no right to operate on wages.

The Conference proceeded to unanimously pass a motion that the principles enacted in 1834 were 'sufficient to meet any exigencies from strikes or lock-outs'. Nobody in their right mind in the depths of the 1878-9 winter would risk the political implosion inevitable on decisions to erect major extensions to workhouses; during local exigencies, the labour test would suffice.²⁶²

Although reporters were admitted by some local Boards, notably those in cities and industrial regions, the press had no right to attend except where majorities on individual Boards voted in favour, inevitably for political reasons. Principally rural Unions, and Maidstone was one, excluded journalists, reflecting farmers' abhorrence of publicity. Simmons' membership enabled him to publicise proceedings as editor of the KSLU's weekly newspaper. However, a majority on the Maidstone Board ordered their Clerk to seek Somerset House's advice, only to be told that reporters' admission was a matter for Guardians; a precedent prohibited reportage of the details of formal investigations of medical officers' misconduct, but there were none preventing members from making notes on the Board's deliberations. Among the cases publicised by Simmons was the death of a 38 year-old labourer Hawks after a Union doctor's confirmation that he was fit to be moved to the workhouse, where he shortly died. Two days elapsed before his wife was informed. These circumstances were publicised in print, and somebody sent a cutting from Simmons' paper anonymously to the PLB, which launched a formal enquiry by the relevant Inspector. He ruled that the cause of death established through an autopsy, was advanced heart disease, which absolved the medic from any accusation of negligence.²⁶³ Simmons eventually resigned from the Board ostensibly over his failure to prevent its resort to Liable Persons Orders, though the real reason was that he was about to accompany a party of KSLU-sponsored emigrants to New Zealand.²⁶⁴

One early development which confronted the KSLU in 1873, was the issue of women's membership. The union's territory embraced the country's premier hop-growing districts, and if demand for their labour was much more seasonal than their 'almost year-round' activity asserted by Dr Vernon, women – usually assisted by children – were directly engaged by farmers in early summertime hop-tying; during the frantic late summer hop-picking season, entire families worked as entities, often including grandparents, and received tokens for each unit picked and subsequently exchanged for cash once each grower's crop was harvested. Localised strikes were a recurrent feature of hop-harvests, facilitated by weather conditions and labour availability.²⁶⁵ Labour-intensive hop-ground digging – using spades – in February was usually done by men, though many brought older boys and some their wives.²⁶⁶ Victorians' hostile attitudes to women landworkers derived in part from the East Anglian gang-system reported by the 1843 special assistant poor-law commissioners, and more recently re-enforced by the Royal Commission of 1867–70 on women, children and 'young persons' – notably females – working on the land; the report's authors emphasised that the use of gangs comprised women and children had intensified in the eastern counties, and particularly criticised gang-masters. Some southern hop-pickers, notably the notorious temporary migrants from London, and the larger southern towns, were partly organised by gang masters, and to a lesser extent for the fruit harvest, though their activities did not extend to the indigenous population. To degrees, the reinvigorated hostility coalesced with the developing Victorian ideal of the adult-male breadwinner, a position increasingly adopted by trade unions, except in the cotton industry.²⁶⁷ In hops, and to a lesser extent in fruit, women's and child's contributions were critical for farmers. As early as January 1873 the *Messenger* published a letter from a 'hop-tyer of Chart Sutton', asserting it was 'high time for women to talk'; she argued for payments of between one and two pounds per acre rather than the twelve shillings received in 1872:

We know our masters will say that they can't pay it. But let mistress go without a silk dress for once, and give us poor women a chance to get a piece of calico to cover our poor sunburnt half naked and half starved bodies. Let us stick together my girls, so that we can have on clean linen every week.

Other female correspondents believed that demanding a pound per acre was winnable:

our work is never done, for after we have been dragging about the hop garden all day hop-tying, sometimes compelled to carry a child from hill

to hill for hours together, we have to commence work, again and keep on till bed time when we get home. Sometimes I have set up all night washing, where there are five or six children there are several pieces to go through a woman's hands . . . we must stick together like women, and determine to do no more tying until we are better paid for it.²⁶⁸

Initially, KSLU members – aware of the importance of wives' hop-tying earnings for family incomes – recognised the potential for their women to triumph. Within a month the *Messenger* was unequal to the publication of all the letters received from women, though it found the space to brooch the idea of extending the action to fruit-picking. It was in this context that women demanded the right to KSLU membership.²⁶⁹

Farmers' predictably hostile responses to the women's pay campaign included threatened legal action against female 'conspirators', raising cottage rents, and lock-outs, coupled with denigratory allegations that any extra income would be absorbed by their husbands' drinking. If Simmons countered that by noting that the farmers, not their labourers, were publicans' best customers, despite the disparity in numbers, he was un-nerved by the issue of extending membership to women, while pragmatically accepting their right of action over wages. At a public meeting of around 750 at Cobham on 4 March 1873, Simmons responded positively, but tellingly, to female enquiries if he had 'a word' for them:

In the first place women had no right to be in the fields at all. The place for the wife was in the home . . . attending the wants of the family. It seemed that in Kent . . . the men were paid low because now and again the women were kind enough to work for the farmers.

Although he diplomatically argued that the women 'should stand firm and united in their . . . parishes', and 'God speed' in securing higher pay for hop-tying, a stance that at least accommodated women and children's role in the South-eastern agrarian economy, and therefore less rigid than Arch's inflexible view of women's place being in the home, while their offspring went to school. Simmons would resist KSLU membership for women. Several members also wrote in support; 'We want our wives to stop at home to cook . . . and keep our children from rags and dirt'.²⁷⁰

In the spring women began to organise privately, and publicly where planning inter-parochial action to set tying-rates, and in June a women's union was formed at Otford. No more was heard of it, not least because the *Messenger* simply ceased reporting any activity by women, including the outcome of parochial bargaining. The sole exception to this censorship appears to have been the 1875 coverage of a speech by the president of the newly-formed Gravesend Trades' Council, who argued –

with specific reference to hop-tying – that female trade unionism should be supported, and he also instanced the equally newly-inaugurated metropolitan women bookbinders' union with three thousand members. Ironically, both the Liberal and Tory press in the South-east also studiously ignored the women hop-tyers' summer campaign in 1873, though the *Sussex Agricultural Express* belatedly broke ranks when it covered a later civil action in a county court, details from which reveal that in places at least, seventeen shillings per acre was secured, representing nearly half as much again as paid during the previous year.²⁷¹

Fantastically, Simmons had been given what he described as 'the records' of the LFS covering 1836–40. According to him, these revealed that land for 2360 allotments was hired under the Society's auspices and sub-let to labourers in Kent; in 1881, he asserted that there were only three hundred in the whole of Kent.²⁷² Subsequently, he went to Faversham where the recently-deceased Lord Sondes – another LFS enthusiast – was the local provider of allotments in the later 1830s. In the last years of his life, Sondes – a critic of the KSLU since its foundation – had accused Simmons of having been paid privately from colonial governments' funds for promoting emigration, though his lordship declined to present his case to Simmons in public. However, there was 'no trace of' Sondes's allotments on the ground or anybody with 'any knowledge of them' in the early 1880s.²⁷³ Although Simmons attacked Anglican clergymen generally for not using their glebes for allotments, he made no suggestion that they were responsible for withdrawing earlier provision, but those provided by the Revd. Gould disappeared, probably in the early 1860s when Egerton transferred temporarily to a metropolitan parish, and a period not covered by his diary.²⁷⁴ Certainly, employers made threats against their labourers who joined the KSLU, notably to terminate 'treats at cricket matches, harvest homes and gifts at Christmas' – commonly joints of mutton. Several local agricultural societies, including Holmesdale and Thanet, abandoned prizes for ploughing and other competitions in 1873 owing to 'the agricultural labour question'. Edward Hussey, owner of Scotney Castle and the estate in Lamberhurst – a KSLU centre – printed a long list of threats against labourers who joined, and added another 'To those who have small holdings, must expect notice'.²⁷⁵ It is not impossible that farmers persuaded some providers – and most Anglican clergy opposed the union, several outspokenly – to deprive unionist allottees. The *Messenger* and the *Kent and Sussex Times* publicised the names of farmers who sacked unionists, particularly castigating those who also evicted men resident in tied cottages; ignoring members victimised through the termination of allotment tenancies appears to be inconceivable, though insinuations

emerged in 1884 over Kentish farmers' retaliatory elimination of potato patches in the 1870s. However, threats issued to smallholders, as opposed to tenants of tied cottages, probably worked; despite the KSLU's strength at Lamberhurst, unionism deeply divided workers living there. The union press devoted many columns in most weeks to speeches made by Simmons and other officials, and neither they nor the *Messenger* made many, if any references to allotments between 1872 and 1875. The KSLU engaged in a bitter turf war with Arch's National over these years – in West Kent and East Sussex – and although most of the regional press opposed agrarian unionism, the *Tonbridge Free Press* championed the National in this struggle, as did the *Messenger* after Simmons' departure.²⁷⁶

Interestingly, no KSLU branch was ever created in Rotherfield, where we have encountered the modest but successful allotment scheme under the Rectors' auspices; the parish was also conspicuous by its absence of more populous places from the itinerary of the union's district-organiser Nash's 1874 campaign to inaugurate new branches.²⁷⁷ But Rotherfield also lay in turf-war territory; a KSLU branch was established in neighbouring Mayfield in 1873, though it had to be revived in 1876. Further branches were created in adjacent Mark Cross in September 1876, while that at Heathfield was re-established about the same time. These dates also coincided with the period when some Anglican clergymen adopted a more conciliatory tone towards the union, the Revd. Egerton at Burwash being one; Egerton, and a proportion of his South-eastern colleagues also welcomed the mid-1870s development of union processions to church services, and a special service, in part to compete with Non-conformist pastors – whom Simmons once claimed as the union's 'best friends' – but the Anglican establishment at Rotherfield goes unmentioned in various local coverage in the KSLU press.²⁷⁸

The KSLU promoted emigration slightly earlier than its National rival, at first to Australia, and both subsequently extended it to New Zealand and Canada, in the interests of reducing the labour supply, with considerable success. In his speeches promoting emigration Simmons frequently contrasted working conditions, industrial relationships and living standards, between the South-east and the colonies. These contrasts were vividly made in the published details of letters from emigrants to relatives and friends left at home. The union also broadcast the leadership's anticipation of its impact, postulating as early as January 1873 that farmers would have insufficient harvest labour. Emigration was also seen as a punishment for avaricious landlords and parsimonious farmers in general, and the latter's resort to lock-outs in particular. Simmons revelled in their complaints that the KSLU's campaign was 'destroying the backbone of the country', equally delighted that the 'emigration took

the very cream of the labouring people', and fondly emphasised empty cottages.²⁷⁹ Occasional references to the 'simple' matter of acquiring land, with payment made in instalments, spawned predictions that 'many flourishing Kent-labourer-farmers will be heard of in Australia'.²⁸⁰ Subsequent to Simmons' visit to New Zealand in 1879 he wrote a book in which all these contrasts were re-iterated, and more discovered. Emigrants built their own houses from wood freely and cheaply available from clearances while the men still laboured for others, though with the very real prospect of speedily saving enough to buy their own land; some former union members whom Simmons met, had already made the transition, buying cheap land from the colonial government, in stark contrast to the English 'land monopoly'. In this exploitative and monopolistic context, the KSLU identified the reality of realising labourers' latent aspirations for achieving small-farmer status. The New Zealand government came under pressure to exploit this scenario early in 1874 before predicted agrarian unionism was 'broken up', leaving their emigration agents to re-face the previous problem over securing required categories of emigrants.²⁸¹

Some of the National's speakers mentioned allotments, for example at a meeting at Godstone in late 1874, but the issue achieved no prominence in its own newspaper's coverage of its campaigns in southern England in 1873. That did not stop the hostile regional press claiming that the National's un-named 'agitators' invoked biblical passages to 'seduce' their audience into believing that the land was 'common property', before railing against them for 'trying to introduce *our labourers to French communism* (my emphasis)'. In an address to the National's West Kent District in January 1874 at Sevenoaks, Arch supported allotments and more importantly said that the National Agricultural Labourers' Union was going to buy entire farms to establish them. In mid-1875, it split over this issue after Arch was told by a solicitor that trade union law prohibited the use of its funds for the purchase of more than an acre. A faction led by Matthew Vincent left to form the National Farm Labourers' Union, which soon collapsed, though as Dr Dunbabin observed, its 'aspiration rather than performance' was symbolic. Arch also told the Sevenoaks rally that once farmworkers were enfranchised they would force politicians to launch an enquiry into the land question; this preceded Simmons' later addition of votes for his members to his litany. Arch became obsessive in his emphasis on the franchise question; it was the principal topic in his speeches at Tonbridge and Sevenoaks in January 1876. As Tom Eager, a local speaker at a National rally in Lewes at this time asserted, 'By politics you have been placed where you are; and by politics you must pull yourselves up again'.²⁸²

All agrarian unions aimed to maximise recruitment despite fierce opposition. South-eastern farmers and their landlords were genuinely unnerved by the KSLU's early progress, fearing that its 'demands [would] become excessive', while 'strikes actual and prospective alarm all'. Tories perceived the movement to be a contrivance by self-interested 'agitators' and 'demagogues' duping simple men: one backbencher asserted that union officials 'denounced . . . every one in authority from the Queen to the Parish Constable'.²⁸³ Public rallies in the South-east were closely monitored by the police, though Simmons exhibited far less aggression than Joseph Arch.²⁸⁴ The KSLU strongly committed itself to negotiation as opposed to industrial action: its territory was divided into six districts for wage bargaining. Despite this avowed strategy, it was recurrently involved in disputes, in which it is difficult to distinguish between lock-outs orchestrated by employers, and union withdrawals of labour allegedly in response. In these circumstances, the KSLU was unlikely to lobby for favours from employers and others in the form of allotments. However, in 1874–6 the union adopted three new initiatives. The first, the provision of medical assistance through its sick club – the 'provident section' in official parlance – with separate funding and for which members opted to pay a supplementary subscription, was a resounding triumph.²⁸⁵ In some localities, among them West Farleigh, the entire membership of village friendly societies was recruited, much to the chagrin of honorary members, landlords, parsons and farmers, whose paternalism was rendered redundant. Conversely, yet another National attempt to contest East Sussex at Heathfield foundered when potential recruits discovered that it had 'no Sick Fund'.²⁸⁶ Secondly, after pressure from the membership for a pension scheme was rejected on grounds of costs, a separately-financed cottage and land scheme was initiated – almost identical to the Chartist Land Plan – with weekly twopences from subscribers. Once monies adequate to land purchases were received, members' names went into a draw, which the union wildly claimed comprised 'the best means of ridding the country of pauperism'. It was in this connection that Simmons first publicised Lord Sondes' support of the LFS. Although Simmons' scheme originally generated much excitement, it also spawned misunderstandings, not least because by 1878 only five members had triumphed in the draws. Despite the prolonged industrial struggle over the winter of 1878–9, nearly a thousand subscribers were still paying into the land fund, though 200 of them exercised their right under the five-year option to withdraw in 1881. The remaining monies were converted into a less than attractive 'garden-plot' fund in 1882, but its planned endorsement by the next AGM was abandoned, supposedly owing to lack of time.²⁸⁷

Thirdly, in late 1876, the union launched a co-operative supplying food and other necessities, not least because 'eight or ten good large families keep a grocer'. Extortionate prices charged by village retailers had been a source of complaint since their eighteenth-century penetration of the countryside; the issue of tickets by Old Poor-Law officials for food and other household goods exchangeable at these establishments was supplanted after 1834 by farmers using the same system 'whereby ... [shopkeepers] became the farmers "bankers"' and their credit costs were reflected in over-pricing according to the investigators of landworking women and children in the 1840s.²⁸⁸ The KSLU's scheme imploded after a year owing to opposition from village shopkeepers – whose credit facilities were key to many labourers' domestic economy – their wholesalers, and farmers outraged over their loss of free loans. The fact that co-op participants had to pay cash for all transactions constituted another element.²⁸⁹

However, by this date, be it sometime after Arch, Simmons had committed the KSLU to securing the franchise.²⁹⁰ As the union's delegate to TUC conferences, he became involved with land-law and constitutional reformers, and the potential for both increased on the formation of Gladstone's second ministry in April 1880. In 1881 speeches at the KSLU's annual demonstration focused primarily on Jesse Collings' proposals for legislation facilitating extra allotments, and in the following year the all the union's 250 branches petitioned parliament for the Bill. The Allotment Extension Act of 1882 stipulated that charity lands, where not used for recreational purposes, should be made available for allotments. The *Kent and Sussex Times* used the 1868 charitable land survey to provide details of relevant land in the union's territory on a week-by-week basis. If this revealed some 2500 eligible acres in Kent alone, and with union members securing allotments in places, in most communities parochial trustees commonly let land at a 'very low rent' to local farmers, and gave 'curt replies' to labourers' enquiries. For their temerity, several were threatened with dismissal. Appeals to the Charity Commissioners – provided under the Act – allegedly went unacknowledged.²⁹¹

These shortcomings reinforced the leadership's commitment to franchise reform, for example at the 1883 demonstration – in Collings' presence – Simmons argued vehemently that the MP's current proposals for state-funded 'peasant proprietorship', would not eventuate until the enfranchisement of farmworkers transformed political realities. During the ensuing franchise campaign the union held over a thousand meetings, and sent many petitions. The land issue was but one factor; the union demonstration at Rochester in 1884 was entirely devoted to the

franchise. In June, on the Reform Bill reaching the Lords, a massive rally in London – dubbed ‘the battle of the Peers and Peasants’ – contained a five-thousand strong KSLU contingent, with banners mounted symbolically on hop-poles; metropolitan onlookers exclaimed “‘Bravo – hop poles’” as it passed.²⁹² Those who returned to Maidstone for the rescheduled annual demonstration, formed ‘18 sections with banners inscribed for votes . . . assembled with bands all playing different tunes and marched to Finn’s Athletic ground’, for speeches from Simmons and others, noted the diary-keeping governor of the county jail, who had written non-hostile entries on the event since 1875, though in stark contrast to the union press, he confirmed that ‘many got drunk’.²⁹³

The passage of the 1884 Third Reform Act generated much self-congratulation within the KSLU; shortly afterwards, at the TUC’s annual conference, Simmons moved a motion demanding land reform to address the unemployment problem.²⁹⁴ By that autumn the KSLU faced another round of wage reductions by farmers, accompanied by taunts that if their men had not saved some of their harvest earnings ‘they would find the workhouse commons very short’. Union leaders feared that labourers either would not vote, or cast it as their principally Tory employers dictated. At special branch meetings, mock vote castings tried to prove the protection under the Ballot Act. Confidence grew in a forthcoming Liberal landslide, and now the union’s litany included issues over ‘land laws, peasant proprietary, allotments, [and] the robbery of village charities’. One Unitarian preacher from Maidstone somewhat optimistically envisaged that powers recently given to Boards of Guardians in Ireland to provide houses on two-acre plots, would be replicated for the mainland; he then revived the old argument that allottees

would be in a position to demand higher wages for they would not be bound to work for anybody . . . for wages that they could earn when working for themselves (hear hear). Such an arrangement would bring the farmers to their senses.

The ‘hot topic’ at the KSLU’s annual conference in 1885 was the membership’s vote in the anticipated general election, and it was confidently predicted that Simmons would be a candidate. A ‘requisition . . . to test the feelings of the new voters’ distributed in the new St Augustine’s constituency, embracing much of Kent east of Canterbury, was signed by nearly 2000 householders, mainly labourers, which called on Simmons to stand. Once formally adopted, he tried to extend his appeal to farmers, rejecting land nationalisation but in favour of legislation enabling farmers to become owners – while attacking the poor law, focusing again on the Liable Persons clauses. His opponent, Aretas

Akers Douglas, a sitting MP for West Kent, but now fighting a new constituency, was 'part of the "Kentish gang"' orchestrated by Lord Abergavenny, the 'veteran campaign manager' in the former western division. They claimed that Simmons aimed to redistribute land in two and three-acre holdings, and once rebutted gave it out that 'the farmers will close their farms if their labourers do not return a Conservative Government'. Guestling was just one Sussex village which witnessed its 'first political meeting ever heard', while Sedlescombe represented those which experienced their first Liberal on the hustings. The determination of some new electors to participate was revealed by substantial groups of Wealden farmworkers who 'stood on the wet turf for two hours in bitterly cold' mid-November weather for the delayed arrival of Inderwick, fighting the Rye division.²⁹⁵

In places working men – including KSLU elected branch officials – symbolically chaired Liberal rallies, with audiences generally dominated by 'small farmers and labourers'. Several Liberal candidates emphasised – somewhat patronisingly – that the latter were 'not . . . less conversant with public and political affairs than the working classes in towns'. Inderwick, accused by Tories of supporting legislation to force landowners to rent smallholdings to labourers, denied the claim, but not that farmworkers' acquisition of land with 'Government help', namely 'their own freehold . . . that they and their wives could cultivate in their leisure hours (. . . cheers)'. F W Verney, contesting the Tonbridge division, wanted

to give the [agricultural] labourers the opportunity of rising as other people did. That was not asking anything revolutionary. With such soil as . . . in England there was no reason why the peasant holders . . . should not be enormously increased, to the great benefit, not only of themselves, but of the country.

Tories – notably clergymen, and 'a disgrace to the country' – repeatedly said that 'master will know how you vote': at Burwash Egerton publicly 'confounded' Liberal 'politics', and called on the local electorate to 'Frustrate their knavish tricks'. Sturry farmers threatened to dismiss any employee who went to the poll; conversely,

Tory landlords or large tenant farmers . . . rode on horseback by the side of huge farm waggons containing their employees

to polling stations. At least some officials intervened to prevent farmers entering the booths to instruct their labourers in 'the art of voting'. Almost three out of twelve thousand St Augustine electors did not poll; Simmons was defeated by 2200 votes, which he attributed entirely to

intimidation. The KSLU mounted an investigation into all constituencies in its territory, and concluded that intimidation deterred many new electors. Activists in Sussex made identical observations. Some Kent labourers who did vote *were* subsequently sacked.

If nationally the Liberals did benefit in 1885, the fracture of the party over Ireland, saw seven Kent seats uncontested in the June 1886 general election, including four county constituencies, among them St Augustine's. Nationally, Gladstonians failed to stand in 110 constituencies, concentrated to some extent in the South-east. Nevertheless, Arch's National's branches in rural Surrey and Sussex constituencies were all targeted by Liberal organisers, and if the split over Ireland predominated, claims by Tories, for example at Wealden Robertsbridge 'that workers could get an allotment produced laughter and [the] statement . . . "I wish we could"'. Once again, Liberals advanced policies respecting allotment provision, including powers of compulsory purchases of land under the auspices of the Local Government Board; their opponents in the South-east appear largely to have studiously ignored the issue. In Kent, not one Liberal candidate was elected.²⁹⁶ The Liberal *Sussex Advertiser* carried a vigorous post-electoral debate into why the enfranchisement of agricultural labourers had not produced a string of victories in principally countryside constituencies: why does 'as yet "Hodge" . . . [not] know what a great power he is in the political world'? For some workers, a combination of employment and the distance of work-places and homes from polling stations at the height of haymaking was an acknowledged hurdle, and no doubt some employers exploited it. Indeed, thereafter the Tories tried to arrange or engineer summer elections, a strategy worked out by one of their Kent gang. Intimidation remained one obvious element. At an open-air Liberal rally at Ticehurst – with a modest if stable KSLU branch and where the present squire Courthope was a Tory MP – attended principally by labourers, who congregated under the gaze of 'many influential Tories'. After the candidate's address, the chair asked for a show of hands for and against electors' confidence in the speaker; those who complied voted to at least Liberal 'surprise . . . by a small majority' negatively, including the labourer who audibly warned his mates that jobs were a stake. Another non-too subtle foe was identified in the exponential growth of the vigorous Primrose League, in the view of one 'working man' of Crowborough, 'started for the sole purpose of preventing unity among' plebeian electors. It was not only said that 'the Primrose Dames' targeted labourers' wives on whom they bestowed customary philanthropic gifts – 'Primrose pottage' and 'the "dripping list"' were two euphemisms – but they also allegedly enlarged on the consequences of husbands voting Liberal. It is significant

that most of the contributors to the *Advertiser's* columns wrote under pseudonyms, including the Crowborough character, who was nevertheless adamant that if proletarians voted Liberal

with unity . . . working men . . . should be masters of the country [through] the majority in Parliament . . . the consequence would be the land opened up to the[m] . . . every one of us . . . might secure our own little freehold and independence. . . . I want to see a process . . . of levelling upwards.

Another debater delivered a Cobbettite denunciation of parsons' glebes, tithes, to which he added abuse of charitable bequests of land; he concluded with an attack on current land laws which prevent it 'coming into the hands of willing and working cultivators', and with a deliberate but deft juxtaposition of 'the parson's glebe' comprising 'the common land still remaining in the parish', which should be placed under the control of elected 'village councils'. They, rather than Anglican National Schools, would also provide secular education. For final good measure he added superbly, and 'abolish . . . workhouses' – which he rhetorically concluded – would create 'something like Home Rule in England'.²⁹⁷

Following the fierce and enduring struggle over the 1878–9 winter, the early 1880s were not propitious times for the KSLU. Farmers repeatedly reduced wages from the autumn of 1879. Moreover, they revived the traditional practice of wage-settings at parish levels, and on occasions publicised the fact.²⁹⁸ Even a long-term union supporter, the Barming farmer Charles Whitehead, acknowledged that eight years of emigration had removed only 'that abundance of labourers which makes the farmers independent at certain seasons'; securing enough workers was readily accomplished except locally during harvests, not least owing to the inroads made by machinery. From the KSLU's foundation, farmers had responded by threatening members with rapid resort to reaping machines. Simmons was concerned that workers' traditional hostility to new technologies would be re-ignited, and if he made no public reference to the still- notorious precedent of Captain Swing, he emphasised that the union was not against mechanised reaping; there are veiled suggestions that animated discussions went on behind closed doors, and Simmons conceded in front of the 1880 Royal Commission on Agriculture that he was compelled to 'caution' members over their hostile attitude to technology. He also publicly acknowledged that with the spread of firstly threshing machines, later steam ploughs and presently reaping machines, the workers 'three main "extras" had gone', namely the threshing with the flail maintaining employment levels during winters, autumnal ploughing with teams, and the most critical – peak earnings during harvesting.²⁹⁹ With higher levels

of under- and unemployment during the 1880s, the membership began to fall; at times, the leadership sounded desperate, exemplified by the claim that the younger generation knew little of 'the misery and oppression of their fathers . . . which would speedily return if the Union failed to hold its own', while the depression appeared to become chronic. In these circumstances, little resistance was possible; despite their very real problems, farmers at least became more relaxed over industrial relations, somewhat belatedly symbolised by the 1889 restoration of ploughing matches by the Thanet Agricultural Association.³⁰⁰

Women's work on the land also declined; no doubt they seized such opportunities as were locally available, in harvesting corn, picking fruit and hops, and even digging potatoes. But acreages of all four shrunk to degrees in the South-east, notably hops, in part owing to imports. In 1887, there was little work for seasonal migrants, with local reports stressing that 'very few "foreigners" . . . found employment'. Moreover, once buyers' 'rage for good-looking hops . . . bright but not ripe' replaced older demands for the mature variant 'allowed to hang on the vines until . . . quite brown', planters had little option but to try to comply; after miscalculations and adverse weather, the unpicked produce of some gardens was allowed to rot away, with the inevitable result that the aggregate 'earnings of pickers, polepullers, and dryers, have . . . been . . . very small'. According to a parish magazine, at the start of the following winter, 'too many . . . little children . . . show by their pale and hungry looks that there is but scant fare at home', though this was mainly the product of reducing adult male wages, and under- and unemployment; the KSLU further jeopardised its finances by eventually responding to pressure for 'out-of-work' pay. Even after the union press was sold, renamed the *Kent Times* and committed to 'advanced Liberalism', there was little reflection of national campaigns against women's outdoor labour or their support from many trade unions. As realities dictated that such available women and children's work was – in a sense – even more vital for individual families, it is hardly surprising that the KSLU eschewed the issue, while reduced opportunities for employment on the land meant that the women themselves had nothing to fight for, in stark contrast to the gritty campaigns by the Lancashire pit-brow women in the eighties. At Burwash, Egerton in the last few months of his life publicly ruminated on 'Where employment is to come from when hops are gone', and in January 1888 launched an emigration fund. His successor later that year tried to maintain the momentum: 'The separation and scattering of families to distant lands may seem a hard measure', he wrote, 'but it is a hard necessity' in an address continued in a frigid utilitarian style, reminiscent of Malthus, yet with Old Testament undertones:

Emigration . . . is quite a law of the very existence of nations. It was so in old times, it is so in our days. When a country is over-populated in proportion to its extent and means of feeding and supporting itself, emigration . . . is the obvious remedy for relieving the state of congestion.³⁰¹

Such gloomy prognostications were an element in the depressing scenario which formed the backdrop to the disgrace of Simmons, who was convicted of peculation in 1887; it was financial difficulties which forced the sale of the KSLU's newspaper, and subjection to the condition that it paid for union entries at advertising rates in the *Kent Times*. Although the union welcomed the 'Small Holdings and Allotment Bill' introduced under Salisbury's Tory government in that year, it transferred its support to Collings' rival proposal to create small-holdings of up to forty acres, which of course did not stand a chance. The Act gave Rural Sanitary Boards powers to buy land for allotments; as these authorities were simply Poor-Law Boards of Guardians, who literally reconvened in a different guise after dealing with social welfare, the farmers who dominated these countryside administrations remained indifferent to pressure to exercise these powers, notably at Maidstone. Those allotments already provided by the Corporation provided an excuse for inertia. The union accurately claimed that the Act's provisions were 'small and somewhat feeble', and 'too permissive'. With some land being abandoned by farmers and more 'only partially cultivated', last seen during the post-1815 depression and now dubbed "land starving", the union argued that only state provision of smallholdings – 'in order that industrious labourers may have a direct interest in the cultivation of the soil' – could suffice to retain arable land in cultivation, and counter the quickening pace of migration from country to town. A motion to that effect was the main item at the union's 1888 conference. Charles Beale, the new secretary followed the TUC's line in supporting land nationalisation in 1887 after Simmons' departure, though as a Liberal councillor for Maidstone not the socialism promulgated by the New Unionism in 1889. It was in this context that the KSLU showed any concerted enthusiasm for allotments, not least because smallholdings were also hovering over parliamentarians' and some landowners' agendas. The *Kent Times* argued that if substantial landowners were 'to move with the times', they would break-up large farms, in order to offer smallholdings to agricultural labourers. Ironically, it was the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury – not a body with any historical reputation for alacrity – which moved first, with an 'experimental' provision of land for Eastry labourers at an equally uncharacteristic generously low rental. If the outcome of these ecclesiastical worthies'

scheme remains obscure, partly owing to the *Kent Times*' changed relationship with the union, more newsworthy labour issues soon presented themselves. The eight-hour day issue bitterly divided South-eastern trade unionists in 1890, not least because the KSLU knew that it was foreseeably unobtainable for farmworkers. Moreover, as levels of sick pay and the not unrelated increase in meeting the costs of funerals of ageing members and their wives, survival dictated the targeting of other occupational groups. The union had always welcomed general labourers, and at times had around a thousand in this category, but now campaigns to recruit workers engaged in brickmaking, cement extraction, and dockers and others in the transport industry, was also reflected in its new name, the 'London and Southern Counties Labour League'. Ironically, a recruitment drive for agricultural labourers in 1893-4 failed, and the League finally collapsed in 1895.³⁰²

The obdurate Maidstone Rural Sanitary Board had asserted to union representatives that land for labourers was 'not a right, but a charity'. Trade unions were not in the business of soliciting charity. The Sevenoaks Farmers Club in 1875 was informed by an employer that 'Hodge will go to the ploughing match, receive his prize, and a pat on the back, but he will still stick to the Union'.³⁰³ One need look no further for an explanation of why the agrarian unions' did not campaign for allotments from the ranks of traditional providers, in the KSLU's case preferring to try to mobilise its own resources, while the National quickly abandoned even that. Vincent's rival 'National' established a Land Company, which if more ambitious was very similar to the KSLU's, and it too collapsed, be it much more quickly. Although some historians of agrarian unionism have detected members' campaign for allotments from the ranks of traditional providers, as in East Anglia, the detail suggests that the principal aim was to shame existing proprietors into reducing rents.³⁰⁴

IX. An Historical Trajectory? Towards some conclusions.

Historians commonly overlook the fact that many town-dwellers had rural roots, and that for much of the nineteenth century only the biggest cities were at any real remove from the countryside. Two significant points require a mention in this connection. First, many migrants to urban and proto-industrial locations were effectively pushed out of the communities of their birth because local circumstances, often deriving from some permutation emanating from the very real limits of natural resources, effectively blocked any real chance of their commanding a living; as we have seen, some were literally pushed-out by parish

officialdom, and underpinned to degrees by the Old Poor Law in the form of the availability of non-resident relief.³⁰⁵ Secondly, as indicated by the trajectory of food riots – and to degrees that of wholesale co-operatives – the inhabitants of towns and the denizens of smaller manufacturing and mining communities, had a healthy and enduring suspicion of recurrent exploitation by every link in the food-supply industry, from producing farmers, wholesaling merchants, jobbers in various products, manufacturers – notably millers – and retailers, including butchers and especially bakers. And there are suggestions of perennial tensions between shoppers and food retailers, over certainly weights, measures, and probably quality too. The senior magistrate in Birmingham once spoke of the ‘twopenny squabbles of every Market Day’, and on another occasion he reported his Bench’s

alarm at the threats of the Populace, who tho’ *not in a state of positive Riot* have for some days been seizing the stocks at the different potatoe warehouses & retailing them at their own price. (my emphasis)

Admittedly these derive from the 1799–1801 famine, but it is also worth emphasising that the first cite is part of a promise ‘not to harass’ the government with trivia, and the second is belatedly penned details despatched after only what would not have been reported, if these actions had proved ephemeral. They also represent popular perceptions comprising the ‘moral economy’ of the eighteenth-century crowd, first identified by Edward Thompson – still legitimating parallel protests in early twentieth-century England – and they were organic to co-operative initiatives included that created by the KSLU.³⁰⁶

However, from the perspective of intelligent farmworkers, who remained in the countryside like John Clare, the monopoly of land appeared to be a mutually-convenient arrangement between landlords and bigger tenants, and integrated into the unreformed political system. Some historians, among them Jeanette Neeson and Ian Dyke, have – rightly I believe – sensed that Clare through principally his poetry, articulated rural proletarians’ hostile attitudes to the socio-economic and intertwined political realities across much of the countryside.³⁰⁷ These – perhaps ironically – may have been *stronger* in communities in “open” and recently-enclosed parishes, rather than those in which classic tripartite structures had a longer lineage. Of course, in this suggestion – and it cannot be put more strongly – I readily concede the many permutations which have led some historians to introduce varying degrees of both “open” and “close” parishes.³⁰⁸ The desire for ‘labouring peasant’ proprietorship endured – the term was the *Brighton Patriot*’s – not least because a proportion of nineteenth-century agricultural labourers’ parents, or

grandparents, *were* small farmers, not a figment of Cobbett's imagination. George Moore, from Cobbett's East Sussex stronghold of Crowhurst, had had ten children by his first wife, and eight more following his second marriage, when aged fifty; currently seventy, asthmatic, perhaps unsurprisingly ruptured, he wore a parish truss, became bedridden, and was unable to do 'more work or Labour in this World'. A former small owner-occupying farmer, he had paid land and (during the war) income tax, and the poor rate. Subsequently, 'the Misfortunes of the Times' during the agricultural depression, and the number of children he had supported, 'completed my downfall to poverty'. Under the New Poor Law he immediately lost his weekly 4/- relief, and 1/6 cottage rent. Noting that under section 27 the elderly and infirm were entitled to outdoor relief on presentation of evidence, he sought a medical certificate to prove he was 'quite a worn out Man'. He clearly enjoyed presenting himself as the personification of the Malthusian nightmare to the senior Poor Law Commissioner, Frankland Lewis, to whom he wrote in 1835, and I suspect that Moore's entire progeny relayed his experience to their own children.³⁰⁹

Village retailers, beershop keepers and pub proprietors were often of proletarian origins, and in localities not embraced by large estates commonly hired or bought small or modest acreages, while dual-occupancy preserved the businesses of other rural service providers in the nineteenth century. Nor were all landowners determined to have every acre rented by substantial farmers. In the 1830s William Denison, Whig MP for West Surrey from 1832 until his death in 1849, was maintaining the allotments created by his father in about 1790 on his North Riding estate, and had them ploughed by his smaller farming tenants with forty to fifty acres. John Turner, a businessman with interests in tanning and carpet making, and wholesaler of hops, malt and leather, also owned a four hundred-acre farm in Herefordshire, where the intermix of soils rendered the 'value of [adjacent] fields' very differently. He also let land in lots of eight to ten acres to 'encourage . . . industrious men until they became masters, by hard work and frugality'. Lords of Manors with waste land often granted 'parcels' from it for a cottage and substantial gardens for fathers of large families, and similar grants were also made to their longer-serving and faithful servants, though some were encouraged to invest savings by speculative cottage erection, as a source of a *de facto* pensions.³¹⁰ As exemplified at Lamberhurst something from these traditions, was still to be encountered in the South-east in the later 1870s: by 1880 the ageing Earl of Chichester, had restricted allotments for labourers to quarter acres on the curious grounds of the difficulty of securing 'sufficient manure', though whether his provision of land for

market-gardeners in the vicinity of Brighton was a response to demand, and to falling rents for large farms remains unclear. Any residual reflection of his support of the ideals of the Agricultural Employment Institution is undetectable.³¹¹

The burgeoning eighteenth-century poverty problem was the direct product of avaricious substantial landlords, and their increasingly competitive tenants whose profits financed their expanding businesses. Although a multiplicity of factors can be identified behind the survival of significant numbers of smaller-scale agriculturalists, demographic growth proved the principal engine driving proletarianisation of the countryside workforce, including many proto-industrial locations like Hinckley. The Old Poor Law became a central feature of *entire communities* during the war years linking the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially but never exclusively in the main cornlands. The scale of poverty and the means adopted for its relief germinated perceptions of the perceived dependency culture, which assumed a critical importance before 1815; subsequent and enduring intensification drove the issue up the political agenda. From the early 1790s, this also provided the context in which the allotment movement was founded. If the elite despite their quasi-monopolistic control over land and its reinforcement through enclosure, became divided over what could, and should be achieved through allotment provision as a device against poverty, their over-riding concern lay in the preservation of agrarian capitalism during the agricultural depression, in spite of that phenomenon's variable geographic impact.³¹² Whatever the tensions between landlords and larger tenants – and at times they were considerable, not least owing to successive governments' refusal to respond positively to periodic pressure from petitioning movements – the powerful impression remains that it was farmers' hostility, rather than the suspicions of the poor, which severely restricted allotment provision before 1830. There are also implications that pre-1830 providers' strictures against allottees receiving poor relief represented a form of compromise with farming tenants.

Evidence from allotment providers during the 1810–30 period, and they were more numerous than revealed by Burchardt's table, proved that they could reduce poor rate expenditure. However, we have established that both farmers who paid much of the rate and claimants who received assistance, had vested interests in this system. So too did others in local communities, notably the multifarious providers of cottage accommodation for labourers, who were often engaged in rural service industries, innkeepers, retailers and craftsmen, able to invest profits and diversify their interests; although their activities as petty landlords were of greater importance during the depression, because most community members had

less to spend on their products, they also exploited a slowly growing housing crisis before 1815, which became acute afterwards owing to rapid demobilisation and accelerated demographic growth. Such cottage proprietors were able to pressurise parish officers into guaranteeing rent-payments, which commonly transmuted themselves into direct hirings of accommodation by vestries: there are even examples of officers from adjacent communities competing for tenancies in two or more parishes.³¹³ If farmers, often in conjunction with landlords as at Terling and Ticehurst, were willing to economise by adopting the Select Vestry Act from 1819, farmers' refusal to compromise their hegemony over labourers sustained their antipathy to allotments.³¹⁴ We have established that the Swing rebels targeted eroded poor-law benefits, the under- and unemployment generated by machine-threshing, and reduced wages deriving from labour surpluses spawned by demographic growth, often aggravated by less-intensive cultivation, and in places with reduced arable acreages. Farmers sought compensation for costly deals with Swing crowds – which were often broken sooner or later – in reduced tithe demands and some secured rent abatements too. Thereafter, landlords and their allies, the Anglican clergy, became increasingly convinced that they were the real victims of high poor rates, and given the elite's sheer shock *and* the political implications revealed by Swing, a proportion initiated their allotment schemes and/or joined the LFS or its rival Agricultural Employment Institution. The latter's collapse seems to have been caused by the Malthusian nightmare visible across the Irish Sea, rather than farmers' objections. Some communities, again sooner or later after Swing, returned to economising select vestry administrations, and if fuller consultation of vestry minutes might reveal rather more, some authorities did so in conjunction with allotment land procured under the Acts of 1819 and 1831–2.³¹⁵

If the centrality of the Old Poor Law to Swing enabled the Whigs to reform it in accordance with utilitarian doctrine, the impetus to the allotment movement 1830–4 has some parallel with wartime advocacy of a state-sponsored assault on waste lands. There was some organisation, more pamphleteering, much discussion, but restricted provision; even in the 1840s some East Anglian farmers combined to sign public pledges that labourers with allotments would not be hired.³¹⁶ We have chronicled the impact of the new welfare system, its rejuvenation of the allotment movement in the cornlands, with its extension to industrialising communities and to some towns before 1850. The complex interplay between the New Poor-Law's implementation in the Hinckley Union, the problems posed by non-resident claimants, the protracted unavailability of adequate workhouse accommodation, the experiences deriving from especially the

impact of the industrial depression, and adoption of the labour test to uphold the principle of 'less eligibility' has been explored. The possibility of inadequate workhouses due to mass lay-offs, for which there were numerous precedents, was raised in the Commons debates on the Poor Law Bill in 1834, significantly by Whig MPs for industrial towns, notably Poulett Scrope and Mark Philips, respectively sitting for Stroud and Manchester. The latter also added the receipt of regular allowances in-aid-of wages by handloom weavers in cotton, and a party colleague representing Bradford (Yorkshire) added metal-workers. If another Whig, Sir John Willoughby MP for South Staffordshire, which embraced the Potteries, claimed that charitable donations would suffice during industrial recessions, the ministerial response focused on the clause providing for emergency temporary outdoor relief for the able-bodied, which very curiously appears to have satisfied these critics and subsequently those in the Lords.³¹⁷ Perhaps this issue was smothered by other aspects of the proposed roles of workhouses.³¹⁸ In practice the emergency provision was limited to mostly cases arising from individuals being taken ill between the weekly meetings of Boards, leaving the Poor Law Commission to legitimate the labour test after resorting to it in 1836-7.

In 1839 *The Champion* romantically claimed that 'Swing originated Chartism in Kent': was not 'Captain Swing . . . a predial Chartist'? On the eve of its collapse, the *Brighton Patriot* opined emphatically, if not originally, that 'The New Poor Law is the parent of Chartism'; that analysis embraced regional cornland developments which the editor had chronicled for over four years. The dissenting lay preacher, Charles Brooker from Downland Alfriston, founded a local anti-New Poor Law movement in 1837, to become in assistant commissioner Tufnell's vision, 'a sort of minor Stephens in the Eastbourne Union', at the heart of the United Brothers' territory; it is inconceivable that former members were not involved in Brooker's campaign. Brooker took his association into Chartism and he stood as its candidate for Brighton in the 1841 general election. Tellingly, on one occasion he was presented with a sheet of signatures for the Chartists' first national petition, secretly organised by over sixty inmates in Hellingly workhouse. Parallel trajectories can be found elsewhere in cornland England. Dorset labourers, known to have been active during Swing, re-appear as members of the trade unionist thrust in the county which ended with the Tolpuddle Martyrs; the massive campaign by trade unionists across the country in response to the transportation sentences revealed the vigorous national extent of the movement, and bolstered members' confidence. The Martyrs' subsequent pardons were a triumph for trade unionist extra-parliamentary agitation.³¹⁹ Even in Dorset, agrarian unionism was revived in mid-1838, and soon

absorbed into Chartism. A roughly parallel sequence is to be found between the Essex agrarian unionists of 1836, the formation of the 1837 Rawreth Anti-New Poor-Law Association; that too went straight into the Chartist movement in 1838. Some local leaders praised the Old Poor Law for its benevolence. There can be little doubt, that the Land Plan was as much a response to an alternative vision of economic relationships, which preceded Owen, and was re-adopted by some of his disciples; one speaking at Wisbeach in 1838 argued that socialists should aim at the 'establishment of such a system of government as will enable . . . the people . . . to regain what is their own', namely the land held in common. The Land Plan was not a mere political contrivance invented by O'Connor. It attracted support in the South,³²⁰ some from cornland villagers, particularly around Blandford Forum in East Dorset – the Martyrs' territory. Among them was William Loveless, brother of George and James, who had recently emigrated to Canada, and details were sent to them by an excited William. Whatever the ambiguities encountered at Hinckley, one suspects that allotments did not dissolve allottees' conviction in the potential rewards through manhood suffrage, especially after the *Guardians'* *volte face* in the early 1840s. Indeed, one of the leading Leicestershire physical force men in 1847–8, John Sketchley, was from Hinckley, and secretary of the county's Chartists' southern division for ten years. Chartists everywhere argued that righting the wrongs inflicted on the working class by the New Poor Law could be achieved only through manhood suffrage.³²¹

We have encountered how the eventual provision of allotments came into a context whose contours were dictated by the industrial recession and New Poor Law administration. Earlier enquires into the latter, notably the select committee of 1838, and the poor-law related investigation into the handloom weavers in 1840, pushed the allotment issue up some parliamentarians agendas. If the Whigs soldiered on to carry the tricky question of an Irish Poor Law, which stipulated that all relief was restricted to workhouses, it was quickly followed by Melbourne's deepening parliamentary weakness. While his government stumbled on, it would have been surprising if Peel would have supported any Tory statutory initiative on the allotment issue, or in that unlikely event, that the Whigs would not have resisted it. The New Poor Law was the parent of Chartism, and despite its very real threat, the leaders of neither party could afford anything which remotely looked like a concession on the social welfare front aimed at reducing Chartism's manifest populist appeal. Once Peel was in office, during the short autumn Session in 1841, he renewed the Poor Law Commission's remit for a year, and once more parliamentary time was available the next year, it was given a further five,

and, it may be recalled, Home Secretary Graham committed the government to a far less rigid central administration: the original principle of uniformity was replaced by diversity and presented as equally virtuous. In Peel's view, the Commission 'was a breakwater between the Executive Government and an unpopular Poor Law'. These realignments effectively confirmed the marginalisation of Chadwick at Somerset House.³²²

A proportion of members constituting Peel's parliamentary majority had exploited voter hostility to the New Poor Law in the 1841 election; few favoured repeal.³²³ MPs from both parties combined to preserve the remaining Gilbert Unions³²⁴ and there was parallel support for the formal investigations into the New Poor-Law related questions of allotments and the scale of women and children's employment on the land. It is doubtful whether the Whigs would have conceded either. Simultaneously, what proved to be Chartism's second great peak in 1842, passed. More recent historians have been both more sympathetic to the Land Planners' objectives, and equally aware of its success in preserving Chartism itself through the brief economic recovery in the 1843-6 period, which also saw the repeal of the Corn Laws. But there was no relief in hostile press coverage of the New Poor Law during the forties by newspapers at opposite ends of the political spectrum, the *Northern Star* and *The Times*, particularly relishing their exploitation of scandal after scandal long before that at Andover.³²⁵ In 1846 Peel's attempt to block Protectionist Tories' Commons motion for a select committee inquiry into Andover, was significantly supported by the present Whig leader, Lord John Russell. Equally significantly, his parliamentary colleagues were not prepared to let Peel's ministry get away with finally sweeping these disgusting details under the carpet, not least because those revealed in a lengthy Somerset House investigation conducted in public by assistant commissioner Parker, had been splattered over virtually every paper in the United Kingdom, largely through plagiarising the copious accounts appearing in the *Morning Chronicle* and *The Times*. Both had sent reporters down to Andover throughout August and September 1845. Simultaneously, Ralph Etwall, Whig MP for that borough,³²⁶ in concert with the Radical MP Tom Wakley, cunningly entrapped Home Secretary Graham into making statements about Andover just before the end of the 1845 Session. Graham who was thrown completely off balance by the revelation of inmates gnawing bones, ordered the Commission to mount the local enquiry, conducted by Parker. His proceedings in the town began before, but were not completed when that Session ended. Graham's previous utterances were in part responsible for both the Protectionists' securing the committee, and the absence of many Whigs from the chamber for that vote some eight months later. Professor Gash's dismissal

of the Commons' investigation which commenced in late April 1846 as 'unimportant' reveals a characteristic blindness to the issue of the New Poor Law, and too great a devotion to proving Peel's 'allegiance to an older concept than party loyalty . . . service to the state'.³²⁷

The facts revealed by Parker's inquiry, and confirmed by the 1846 select committee, included the sexual exploitation of female inmates by the workhouse governor. His wife was party to a most of the other elements of a brutal institutional regime, among them gaining pecuniary advantages by providing less food than specified in Somerset House' miserable dietaries, with able-bodied male inmates reduced to gnawing the fetid meat from the bones they ground into fertiliser, and ultimately presided over by one of the most rigidly orthodox Union Boards in the country, chaired since its inception by the Revd. Christopher Dodson – who obligingly laid bare his own unpleasant character in response to some of the total of over 25,500 questions asked by MPs between April and August. Some of the more loquacious answers extend to over a page of print. Once again the press had a field day – in fact several months of them – though diluted to degrees by the excitement generated by the debates over the Corn Laws, and Peel's resignation with Russell's succession. One former and the three current Poor Law Commissioners, enabled their interrogators to range over the entire history of their increasingly stretched administration, and facilitated further by Chadwick's settling a number of personal scores with his past and present superiors. After almost four months, the investigation terminated in chaos after one MP was arrested – by 'a policeman of great size and apparent strength' armed with a warrant secured by the now sacked Parker – for issuing a challenge to a duel with a committee colleague. The New Poor Law and its enforcers ranging from the Bashaws of Somerset House, to the lecherous and drunken workhouse governor McDougall – a former sergeant-major – and his utilitarian reverence, had dominated headlines over two successive summers. *The Times* performed an elegant somersault, with its elevation of Chadwick into a hero, and it also paid respect to Etwall, a member of the select committee, and – incidentally – an allotment supporter.³²⁸

In a sense, this outcome was a triumph for the reformed parliamentary system. It proved a considerable embarrassment for members of Peel's former ministry, and ironically for his successor Russell, whose new government had to address the inherited resultant problem. That intensified with each day's proceedings over the first six weeks of his premiership. It also vindicated the Act's opponents of every description, notably those in the re-burgeoning Chartist movement. Its proven economic allies were also returning, namely industrial recession in

concert with rising food prices; the latter were partly fuelled by both the potato blight in Ireland, and its appearance in more virulent form on the mainland, which decimated the produce of many plot-holders and allotment tenants.³²⁹ Recent scholarship has established that Chartism's third major peak which climaxed in 1848 in an international context conditioned by the French Revolution of February 1848, with a recrudescence of understanding between Irish nationalists both at home and in London, last seen between 1795 and 1803,³³⁰ was more dangerous to the British state than previously recognised.³³¹ The Chartists' attempt to march on parliament on 10 April to deliver their third petition to the Palace of Westminster, could have developed into bloodbath; the previous day O'Connor was told by Home Secretary Grey that the march would be 'repressed by force', and that it was not by the army owed much to the scale of middle-class enrolment as special constables. Subsequently well-connected discussants at the Carlton Club concluded to the manifest delight of the elite, that 'the strength of good feeling across the middle classes' had previously been 'very much underrated' in aristocratic circles.³³²

In the event the bourgeoisie's mettle was not confronted by the insurrectionary summer plotted by various Chartist elements over the country, and the movement thereafter came to re-focus on the Land Plan. Its protracted and messy collapse, in part owing to the state's legalistically-orientated intervention, did not eradicate the ideology; indeed, as Dr Chase emphasises, at the Labour Parliament of 1853-4, claims were made that three hundred land societies 'had emerged since the winding up of the Land Plan'. Chase also insists that when these are linked to the 'take-off . . . of the . . . building societies' movement in the 1850s it became a phenomenon,³³³ and he could have added that at least the labour aristocracy was envisioning their route to real-estate ownership. It was said of the latter's growth rendered the volatile East Surrey constituency unwinnable for the Tories in 1852.³³⁴ The Land-Plan supporter, Ernest Jones, who struggled heroically to keep Chartism alive in the 1850s, also became a socialist who campaigned in the 1860s for land nationalisation. Simultaneously, a very different advocate, W T Thornton (1813-86), who served for the East India Company and later at the East Indian Office, was horrified in the later 1840s at the continued scale of poverty in an expanding economy: he refused to resort to Malthusian orthodoxies so beloved by his employers, who justified the rigid application of free-market principles in unconcealed acquiescence in the anticipated starvation of 'surplus' millions of low-caste natives. Instead, he argued for 'a well-organized system of allotments and small holdings . . . to create pride and prudence among the many' Britons who

would benefit.³³⁵ Thornton's rejection of the wage fund theory, so beloved by Edwin Chadwick, also converted J S Mill, and among the latter's propagators of their 'new "theory of wages"' was F B Barton, whose expository series of articles was published by Arch's National Union's organ, the *English Labourers' Chronicle*. The entrepreneurial populist journalist and Chartist, G W M Reynolds through his hugely and enduringly successful – if oft-scurrilous and sometimes pornographic – *Reynold's Newspaper*, and various books, reveals 'the continuity of the Norman Yoke argument' into the 1870s and beyond.³³⁶

But before we re-engage with the era of agrarian trade unionism, a closer look is required at what can be discovered about the characteristics of later Georgian to mid-Victorian rural communities. Political radicalism was injected into many from the era of the first French Revolution, and its subsequent re-invigorations by notably Cobbett and his *Political Register*, was repeatedly evinced. The Revd. Hume, Rector of Meonstoke, who conducted Cobbett's funeral service, observed subsequently that 'I don't know what period he belonged to, but I had the pleasure of burying him': his writings, and especially his *Political Register*, which generated – in Professor Claeys' words – the 'incorporation of artisans and labourers into the process of radicalism that Cobbett was often recalled in mid- and late nineteenth century working-class memoirs'. Cobbett was therefore 'central to the unification of a vast and diverse audience whose first political experience was the reading of the *Register*'. Cobbett's timelessness manifested itself promiscuously: there were even pro-Queen Caroline demonstrations in Sussex villages in 1820. Local Swing leaders were often popular democrats, as were those of the rural protests against the New Poor Law. If some of these men were artisans rather than agricultural labourers, it should be remembered that village communities had considerable cohesion at the working-class level. Many farmworkers looked to their skilled neighbours for leadership, not least because they were better educated. When in 1830 William Blackstone, a 33-year-old illiterate roadworker was told by a passing group of Hampshire machine-breakers, that they were acting on the 'order of Government', he joined them. Challenged by an incredulous judge, Blackstone explained:

My lord, I am no scholar. . . . There were several respectable tradesmen, carpenters, and others in that mob, and when *they told me so I could not but believe them* (my emphasis).

While it is true that other skilled men, notably those who owned their own businesses, advanced the fact that they depended on farmers for much of their income when refusing to join itinerant crowds of rural Luddites, there were a considerable number that had no such qualms.

Likewise, many farmers, including representatives of the grander variant, covertly – and some overtly – supported the protesters.³³⁷

According to an aged labourer in the 1880s, farmers asked their men to conceal weaponry being assembled for an anticipated armed clash with the Tories if they defeated the Reform Bill in 1832: nor were such memories fanciful. In 1830, the Revd. Collingwood who had intervened in ‘three or four parochial insurrections for hours alone & discussing their matters with them’, subsequently rode the twenty miles to Battle to liaise with General Dalbiac in command of a wholly inadequate cavalry detachment. Collingwood failed to secure any military assistance, and on his return to Hawkhurst he learned of widespread plan to extend populist intervention to stopping the collection of ‘the King’s Taxes’. William Cobbett, who got to know of this, probably through his numerous local contacts, excitedly observed, be it privately, that

the labourers and the farmers too, in fact have *forbidden* the collector of the assessed taxes to take any money *out of the parish*. That is it! That’s coming to the point (original emphasis).

Collingwood informed the Home Office that he would ‘go tomorrow & if I see an occasion will arrest some man, & break his head with my Staff’. Unfortunately, he subsequently failed to report what happened, but his next communication was composed in Brighton, where he had clearly fled from the High Weald. Nor was he the only magistrate to flee to an urban sanctuary. Other justices were quite literally terrified, notably clergymen, who were of course, primary targets for Swing, and some demanded special protection. As one of H B Curteis MP’s reliable informants reported:

I am quite satisfied that unless [fiscal] relief is given and directly to Agriculture . . . the lower orders all will be lost. We are now in that State that Govt. *cannot look to the Yeomen for Support. This is a Circumstance never known before*. We do not want more protection [through further manipulation of the Corn Laws] *but we want tax abated on the working Classes so that our produce may be consumed* (my emphasis).

Collingwood’s next communication reported a conversation with a substantial farmer to permanent Home Office under-secretary Phillipps at the very moment that the identities of Grey’s new Cabinet were being announced. In response to his reverence’s observation that

we must not suffer the mob to arrange matters their own way, instead of Parliament . . . the yeoman replied “Parliament has deluded & conned us. It is such conduct as that of Parliament which before now

has led to Civil War". . . . [Collingwood concluded that] If Parliament attempts to delude & mystify them now, or if the new opposition throw factious difficulties in the way of amendment, in my conscience I believe, that we shall have to get our Swords & muskets ready, & prepare for the field.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the incoming government reacted vigorously, and were supported by their predecessors. As Lord Lieutenant, Wellington 'sent all the Hampshire Gentleman out of town' before he surrendered his seals of office, and then followed them down.³³⁸ Irish developments, together with Swing followed by the Reform Bill crises, the multi-faceted opposition to the New Poor Law, and then Chartism, should all in fact be seen as the United Kingdom's experiences in the context of the second and third phases of Revolutionary Europe.

Some of the identities of countryside subscribers to the Land Plan are known.³³⁹ More research into these people and their communities is needed at the local level. Community reconstruction methodology applied to villages with broader archival survivals, can establish many of these facets especially after census-taking became more solidly established and refined. The type of distinction Clare made between intelligent labourers and their duller counterparts, was a valid observation.³⁴⁰ At Burwash, the Revd. Egerton noted that the elder Jack Buss was a 'superior man' within the labouring community, though in his case his reverence added the rider 'if he didn't drink'. These divisions are not necessarily synonymous with others, for example between the educated and the illiterate, or the common contemporary perception between the 'respectable' and the 'rough' proletarians. Similar characterisations could be made of artisans of all hues including the self-employed tradesmen, shopkeepers and alcohol vendors.³⁴¹ Egerton was disliked as an Anglican, and for his pre-eminence as the village 'boss' in his own estimation, because there was no resident squire, but he had a rich miscellany of encounters. First, there was Sam Hezeldon, a literate day-labourer, with a classic burning desire for self-improvement, who waded through Gibbon's multi-volume *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Macauley's *History of England*, and went on to teach reading at the night school. Of 24 year-old Stephen Fielder, an agricultural labourer like his father, Egerton conceded that

under all his rough outside has something quite winning in him. The shrewdness & clear sense of our uneducated men is to me remarkable.

Labourer George Luck was quite capable of taking-on Egerton's utilitarian outlook, as he discovered from a 'long talk on Political Economy': Luck,

from a long-established Burwash kin – in contrast to his reverence – did not have a third-class Oxford degree, though he had a commanding critical grasp of free-market principles.³⁴² Secondly, there were free-thinkers about, among them gardener Buss, whom the Curate encountered soon after his arrival in 1857, among the customarily disrespectful Sunday ‘loungers near the . . . Church’. Buss

was exceedingly rude, profane and blasphemous: professed himself an absolute unbeliever & expressed his conviction that when he died sh[oul]d die like a dog. I reasoned w[ith] him sometime without [as Egerton often did] losing my temper. . . . He was unusually shallow in his *sceptical or rather atheistical arguments*, but very profane (my emphasis).³⁴³

During 1870, in the street at neighbouring Wadhurst, before meeting friends for dinner at an inn, Egerton

had a long discussion w[ith] a violent radical named Jesse Thompsett; who turned out to be a *regular & old accustomed orator*. His abuse of the “bloody” aristocracy was vehement, if not to the point as regards truth (my emphasis).³⁴⁴

On another occasion, he engaged with an outsider, an ‘intelligent mason’ working on Egerton’s national school, and commonly brought in from neighbouring towns for specialist tasks; they ‘talked Trade unions & strikes & about Mason’s Politics’, including a justification of tough picketing during strikes. The mason dismissed the Tory parson’s claim that preventing non-unionists from working was unfair. If he admitted to his diary that he knew little about the topic in 1859, this inter-personal exchange also serves to remind us of incessant interaction between town and countryside, in which labour issues and political ideologies commonly featured; in 1831 at Burwash among the resident Cobbettite master craftsmen, were two shoemakers, a cabinet-maker and a clock-maker.³⁴⁵

Nor, it must be added, were these plebeian radicals without some middle-class support at Burwash. The very prosperous grocer Joseph Sawyer, was among a number of Burwash folk who were in the audience for Cobbett’s lecture in Battle on 16 October 1830; Sawyer subsequently organised a petition in support of Cobbett when on trail for seditious libel in 1831, and attended the hearing in London, although was not called as a defence witnesses in the acquittal.³⁴⁶ Sawyer was still in Burwash in 1839,³⁴⁷ but was eclipsed by the schoolmaster, John Fuller, who arrived from nearby Waldron in 1832. He became a draper and grocer in 1843, served as a parish officer on occasion, helped run friendly societies, and

reported local events on behalf of the Liberal *Sussex Advertiser* from 1847. The a short obituary in its Tory rival, the *Express*, on his death aged 81 in 1892 at a time when complaints were made of disinterest in local public affairs, succinctly summarised his political contribution across over five decades: 'he devoted much time and labour . . . in the Liberal cause'.³⁴⁸

At the village level, social polarisations originating in radical political agitation by labourers, tradesmen and small farmers *before* Swing, and reinforced by their participation in the rising, resulted in recriminatory action which went on for years – and possibly decades. Although there is nothing more than hints of this at Burwash, retaliatory conduct in Hampshire promiscuously manifested itself, including what was allegedly 'the gang headed by parson Cockerton' – 'most inveterate enemies to . . . all honest reformers' in Longparish – who contrived petty criminal prosecutions, and secured guilty verdicts through perjurious evidence; the only observable scruple retained by Cockerton was his absence from the witness box.³⁴⁹ Evidence of radical 'respectable tradesmen' domiciled in villages is not infrequently encountered. They include Robert Bubb of rural Ash in East Kent. A 'secretary to a book club', at Easter 1849 he led a group of fellow tradesmen to Paris and openly admitted that they went to 'Sympathise with the Red Republicans', somewhat belatedly as I assume Bubb referred to the defeat of both left-wing candidates – Ledru-Rollin of Solidarité Républicaine and the socialist François-Vincent Raspail – in the presidential election of 4 November 1848; the former was exiled after the *journée* of May 1849.³⁵⁰ One of the most remarkable personal trajectories, which reveals what might be designated as rural refractions of perceived 'national' developments of the labour movement concerns John Smith of Whitechurch in Dorset. I suspect that Smith was a tradesman, rather than a labourer; in 1868 he applied to join the First International: therein he emphasised that

The principles of the Association were not new to him . . . [as] he had joined the Chartists in 1838, and the Fraternal Democrats in 1846 and thought that any society must be good to which the name Odger was attached.

The Fraternal Democrats were founded by Julian Harney as a form of Chartist Internationale; George Odger, was a committed republican from his Chartist days, and subsequently part of the so-called 'junta' which controlled the London Trades Council. He was also the founding president of the First International. In 1871 he penned an essay on land reform for the *Contemporary Review*.³⁵¹ Conversely, unlike Smith, other countrymen became disillusioned. When canvassed by the Liberals for his

vote in 1885, an ageing farmworker recalled the Reform Bill crises when 'his farmer had been an ardent reformer'.

Everyone believed, then, that if the Bill were passed hunger and misery would be abolished and the poor would come by their own. "But the poor was still poor and there was misery and oppression, and the great people had it all their own way. He had got a roof over his head and a bit of meat in his pot, and it was no good hoping for anything more, and he was never going to take any part in politics again".

W L Burn who cites this poignant admixture of paraphrase and quote perceived it as 'recalcitrant Radicalism'.³⁵²

Egerton was also part of that parochial elite whose personal knowledge of poorer people was sought when welfare matters were discussed; he frequently contributed to decision-making at the parochial level, which the Guardian would support at the Ticehurst Board where most were formally confirmed. On occasion Egerton reprimanded relieving officer Willsher for non-delivery of the 'extras' – usually mutton and wine – ordered by the Union doctor for the sick in general, and the elderly in particular. Egerton probably had an unofficial role in Willsher's eventual enforced resignation, and the utilitarian parson was very aware of the perennial hatred of the mid-Victorian welfare system articulated by plebeians. Populist perceptions of that system spawned during its implementation endured, and one of Egerton's first exposures to examples in the late 1850s occurred when he called

on Mrs Head [and] tried to combat the idea wh[ich] the woman broached that ye Poor Law "Officers" take much of the money wh. sh[ould] go to the poor.

By the 1870s, it was said, the poor had learned ways of subverting rigid utilitarianism. They contrasted the more liberal administrations with the severe policies applied in neighbouring Unions, and developed an adeptness in duping overseers, relieving officers, and Guardians – individually and collectively – a process bolstered by inertia among both the Unions' salaried and unpaid officers. Well might the Ticehurst Board formally minute a January 1873 Somerset House circular ordering rigorous six monthly rather than languid annual reviews of recipients of regular outdoor relief.³⁵³

This evidence from the depths of the Sussex countryside also demonstrates that perceptions – both contemporary and historical – of the isolation of rural communities are mythical. Although the New Poor Law certainly threw plebeians on to the defensive initially, as we have seen in their determination to evade workhouse incarceration by a non-too

subtle juxtapositional posture of deference – the price of securing and preserving employment, including seizing work for wives and children, and conformity to the rules imposed by providers on allottees – and defiance, represented by perennial filching from employers, opportunistic theft of consumables, together with more considered and often organised larceny, and poaching, with the goods unloaded on to black markets which thrived almost universally despite the professionalisation of policing. While men like Hezeldon struggled to make something positive from his history, others exemplified by Thompson – the ageing popular democrat – knew what they wanted politically, while those represented by the visiting mason had experiences revealing what militancy could achieve. As they aged, some former Swing organisers at Burwash boasted of the role they played to Egerton's face, and their accounts of this, and the tales told about the exigencies of the early nineteenth-century agricultural depression, working on the parish farm, and the 'stormy meetings' of the vestry, comprised a populist plebeian cultural which probably proved a counterweight to what Hezeldon extracted from his readings of the likes of Macaulay. This cultural baggage conditioned sectors of Burwash's community, and fertile territory for impregnation by the KSLU and from 1885 votes for the Liberal Party. Some doubtlessly came from the ranks of Burn's 'recalcitrant radicals'.³⁵⁴

Historians have repeatedly noted that politicised workers in the countryside were more likely to be adventurous and migrate or emigrate. One demographic study revealed that a considerable proportion of migrants working in London's newer industries in its burgeoning working-class suburbs came from rural Surrey and Kent, and a marked acceleration of this essentially localised migration in the 1870s is clear from the censuses. If the railways expedited these migratory waves, railway companies also disproportionately recruited agricultural labourers 'for the most junior jobs', but with real promotional opportunities, exemplified by that to better-paid guards following experience gained in marshalling yards. This was also reflected in the repeated financial support for the KSLU from artisan trade unionists in 'Kentish London', and the 1873 breakaway group from the Deptford Advanced Liberal Society to form the Radical Association – with its significant return to an old nomenclature – who according to Professor Crossick 'articulated traditional radical critique of privilege and land'. They also provided experienced campaigners for universal male suffrage by men schooled in Greenwich, a post-1832 parliamentary borough. Among the emigrants from the ranks of the KSLU was the Burwash branch's first secretary, Shearman, known as 'Ladder back' from his upright posture. Egerton encouraged men to emigrate or migrate; he took particular pleasure in

recording those from the latter category who achieved middle-class status. Hezeldon's son went on to secure a post in a London library, while Edward a son of the classic dual-occupationist, publican and haulier William Manwaring, was a very successful 'pickler and jam manufacturer in Peckham' by the age of 43. Shearman consulted his reverence before taking the decision, and if he never returned from New Zealand, one genuinely grateful man travelled from Portsmouth to attend the Rector's funeral.³⁵⁵

The 1853-4 Labour Parliament also came out against emigration without the Cobbettite exception of America.³⁵⁶ From 1872 agrarian trade unionists recognised that among their greatest difficulties was the all too visible over-supply of labour, which further mechanisation of work on the land could only exacerbate; aided by the periodic provision of funding by colonial governments, notably New Zealand's, union leaders including Simmons and Arch, promoted emigration. They were able to tap into members' 'wish to improve their condition by the possession of land', which the Chartist Thomas Cooper had exclaimed was 'taking root in the universal heart of the working classes'; thereafter it became an amorphous ideological ingredient within the labour movement, for which later aspirants to working for ourselves could *certainly* achieve through emigration. But Simmons also initiated the KSLU's land and cottage scheme, and his claims about its eventual termination of South-eastern poverty – however extravagant they sounded given its contemporaneous degree – the strategy emanated from an established tradition and which appeared to become more relevant and increasingly politically-realistic during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It is surely significant that similar advocacies were made at that time in the anti-KSLU press, because the 'thrifty well-conducted labourer seldom rises above a labourer'. Modest and great landlords should provide 'a few small holdings' up to ten acres to encourage upward social mobility.³⁵⁷ This changing context was but beginning in the 1880s, and although it may be an ironic testimony owing to its timing, the fact that almost a thousand members of the KSLU cottage and land scheme maintained their subscriptions through the crises of 1878-9, constitutes a remarkable tribute to their abiding quest for independence, which is *reinforced* by applications for refunds under the five-year rule in 1881, from merely under a quarter of contributors. In 1882 three KSLU branches from north-east Kent, jointly processed to Herne Hill for a church service – a regular, ecumenical form of publicity and show of respectability, cleverly developed by the union since the mid-seventies. One wonders what went through their minds when afterwards they inspected the grave of the self-styled Sir William Courtenay, the leader of the Bossenden Wood

insurrectionists of 1838, killed in the confrontation with the army. Part of his seductive millenarian message was a promise of land redistribution.³⁵⁸

The social welfare system remained a live issue in the decades following 1870; the provisions under it could and were used to intimidate agrarian unionists, and specific grievances included the accommodation of elderly people in workhouses, denials of medical relief to the able-bodied and resort to the Liable Persons provisions. During the 1878–9 dispute, claims were made the striking and locked-out bachelors in receipt of weekly union payments, ‘prefer[red] to go about the country’ posing as vagrants and seeking overnight accommodation in workhouse casual wards, having taken the precaution of hiding belongings and cash before applying each evening. The governor of the West Malling house confirmed that they ‘hid their monies in holes’ in nearby woods, putting ‘a stick in the ground’ to mark the spot. If this was but a part of hostile coverage in the local Tory press, the resultant conflicts between these wanderers and poor-law officials warrants a longer account than is possible here. They simply added to the union’s antipathy to the poor law, reflected in a subsequent commitment to launch a campaign for social welfare reform; that too got overtaken in the fight for the franchise. Nevertheless, Simmons’ Tory castigators in 1878 resorted to the argument – which made some limited historical sense – that ‘in the English poor-law may be found the great safeguard . . . against revolutions’ experienced on the continent.³⁵⁹

It became very clear to Arch, and later Simmons, that securing the vote for the rural working class had the greatest potential. Some KSLU ‘agitators’, not unnaturally reviewed the history of farmworkers, including Swing, and also past proletarian struggles for the vote including Chartism.³⁶⁰ Indeed, some union branches among them Brenchley resorted to the Chartist tradition of torchlight processions during the strike/lock-out in late 1878, though a proposal to march from Maidstone to London was abandoned.³⁶¹ The union survived the industrial disputes in the 1870s, including the most threatening one of 1878–9, and if its membership declined to degrees in the increasingly depressed eighties it did not collapse; its continuance into the mid-1890s reflected both its political campaigning with its dramatic role in the confrontation between the ‘peers and the peasants’ and subsequent contribution to Gladstonian Liberals contesting post-1884 county constituencies. Once the vote was secured, a seventy year-old KSLU member recalled that half a century before his father told him ‘he might live to have a vote’, and then ‘there would be a revolution’. One might wonder how often over that half century the son recalled this prophecy, and if it proved over-optimistic, the prospect of statutorily-assisted access to land – followed by more

radical state intervention – were compelling. Intimidation deployed against the new electors – plus ambiguities over householder qualifications – certainly compromised the turnout of labouring electors. In 1885 a considerable proportion of wealthier people, relied on their stereotyped view of Hodge, and believed that the new voters knew nothing of politics; if some of this was hyperbole, reinforced by wishful thinking, Tory observers were soon undeceived when the mere mention of Gladstone was greeted by ecstatic cheering. Opponents were reduced to Marxist perceptions when accusing Gladstonian candidates of appealing to agricultural labourers' 'covetousness, his class hatred, and his discontent'. If die-hard Tory farmers in the early 1890s might viciously warn plebeian electors that 'the only plot of land they will get is six foot by two', such intimidators must also have reflected on the fact that Salisbury's 1886–92 government, had already acknowledged new psephological realities in their 1887 Act, and reinforced it to degrees by the allotment provisions in the 1888 County Council Act. Tory candidates in the first elections under the latter promised working-class electors that they would implement the appellat procedure over difficulties experienced in securing allotments. Among the last enactments of Salisbury's first ministry was the 1892 Allotments and Smallholdings Act. Farmers then accused the Tory leadership of 'putting political expediency before economic rationality'. Despite statutory limitations, political logic and agrarian economic realities – notably after the Home Rule debate cooled – suggested further Tory concessions on land.³⁶²

In the re-modelled county constituencies, the problem of the anti-democratic behaviour of farmers over their workers' exercise of the franchise was an enduring Liberal problem. In the 1892 general election the Rye division – which incorporated some of Wealden East Sussex – the Tories and their sitting MP Colonel Brookfield, conceded that his re-election 'mainly rests with the wage earners'. His Liberal opponent, G M Ball, formerly a senior officer in Arch's National, and currently 'agent of the Allotment and Small Holdings Association', focused his entire campaign on getting agricultural labourers to the polls. His posters

depicted an old . . . man in a great state of decrepitude working on a heap of stones with the workhouse close by.

Ball's social origins were mocked by the Tories; 'some said' he was 'an agricultural labourer', while others asserted 'he was a Spalding barber';³⁶³ his campaign was attacked for its narrow concentration on the land issue, and ridiculed over repetitive reference to landworkers as 'journeymen farmers'. Ball nevertheless reduced Brookfield's majority by over 700.³⁶⁴

Further expression of the continued centrality of the Poor Law came in the form of Salisbury's determination to keep it out of his proposed County Council Bill, and if he resisted internal pressure for the plural voting system's inclusion, he made it clear to his new Liberal Unionist allies that his motives for both decisions owed nothing to democratic ideology, but to reduce the powers of central government, an argument that 'convinced neither them nor himself'. It was Gladstone's Liberals who abolished plural voting, together with elected Guardians' property qualifications and magistrates' *ex officio* rights. The latter had largely ceased to attend, and there was no 'rush of new candidates' from local working-class politicians except in urban Unions, notably in London's East End.³⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the imagery of Ball's election poster evoked that Victorian image of the penalties of poverty, and it also serves to symbolise the enduring centrality of welfare systems in the complex trajectories of forces generating the Land Reform question in late Victorian England.

Allotments under the 1892 Act were provided in places, among them Burwash, though demand was allegedly weak according to the Tory press, unlikely in a village which had hosted one of the largest Sussex branches of the KSLU. The Great War decimated the youthful male generation; the 72 volunteers who left Burwash on 4 September 1914 had grown to 95 by the end of October. Most joined the fifth division of the Royal Sussex Regiment, sent to the front in France in June 1915, where it sustained very heavy losses. Photographs of the dead and wounded appeared in the local press. In 1917, Flanders brought the war closer: villagers 'distinctly heard' artillery exchanges during July. Stretcher-bearer Edmund Russell gazed at a military cemetery and saw names on crosses of those who were 'once my schoolmates'; he ruminated over ever seeing Burwash 'once more', and 'suppose[d] it was almost lost now with all the lads gone'. Farmers struggled to secure enough workers generally; from the first wartime harvest, cereals were only saved through resort to boys. Later appellants against conscription included 32 year-old Edward Russell 'the only thatcher [left] in the village'. Female labour was sought by farmers, who also took on every elderly man capable of working; potato planting in May 1917 by 'men, women and children' – working collectively – evoked memories of when it was the norm. They proved inadequate to pick entire hop crops expeditiously, and parts were lost. Although it was said in 1918 that only three of the first 72 volunteers survived, the names of sixty men – mostly working class – are inscribed on a fifteen-feet tall war memorial at Burwash.³⁶⁶

This carnage helped resuscitate agrarian trade unionism – the National collapsed in 1896, a year after the London and Southern Counties Labour

League. In July 1918 one of the Courthopes castigated farmers' 'lack of cohesion' when they 'outbid their neighbours' with wages 'above the local rate', while conceding labour shortages and that rates had to be sufficient to attract young able-bodied men 'back to the land'. Trade unionist recruitment campaigns embraced East Sussex, and many other counties, only to be followed in turn by the National Farmers Union, and the Labour Party which established a big branch at Heathfield, the next parish to the west along the Lewes road from Burwash.³⁶⁷ It is surely ironic that while allotments were provided by municipal, district and other local authorities, that land reform on radical – let alone socialist – principles was practically ditched by the Labour Party in the 1930s. In the event the party's 1945 manifesto commitment to nationalise the land proved symbolic; if the leadership emphasised that priority must be given to more important issues, Professor Howkins prefers to emphasise Atlee's government's 'lack of will' which he attributes to the fact that 'Labour after all was the party of the urban working class'. But so too was the bulk of Chartist Land Plan subscribers, which in Howkins' estimation launched the first urban-based assault on land monopoly and with it capitalist agrarian production. Among other failures were the later nineteenth century agrarian trade unionists – who were essentially countrymen – and others who were manifestly not, including the Clouded Hill Communist and Co-operative Society, founded by Newcastle-upon-Tyne anarchists, who advocated intensive agricultural measures on modest plots, notably the spade-husbandry insisted upon by the LFS and the Hinckley Labourers' and Artisans' Friend Society. As Alf Simmons predicted in the early 1870s, the best chance of all would fall to the emigrants who went to the Antipodes, revealed in letters home supercharged with excitement, and exemplified by one former KSLU member who in 1878 – after just a year – had built his own house, and was looking forward with rapture at the prospect of adding to his land through a process redolent of medieval assarting. More Wealden folk emigrated to Canada and Australia in the immediate pre-World War I period in quest of land and independence, some of whom soon found themselves in regiments raised in the Colonies. In places old friends were briefly re-united in European battle-zone encampments.³⁶⁸

Back in 1877, Simmons had bitterly attacked romantic literary and artistic representations of rural labourers'

cottages by every author, every painter, every poet's attempt . . . to depict the contented state of our peasantry . . . depicting pretty little cottages, with the woodbine and the honeysuckle clinging round them with handsome little gardens . . . [which] gave an entirely fictitious glare

to the life of the labouring poor . . . he and his [union] colleagues had passed the thresholds of the doors . . . They discovered . . . the bare floor, the rickety tables, and the empty cupboards inside [which] told quite another story.

But misrepresentation endured. In 1902, L A Lucas MA of Waldron penned a part-historical portrait of this East 'Sussex Arcadia', and if he referred to eighteenth-century 'excitements notably with smugglers and the [1749] Hawkhurst gang', neither Captain Swing nor much more recent agrarian trades unionism came into the same exhilarating category when 'return[ing] to the present', where 'One cannot fail to notice that the . . . farmers and their labourers are a contented race of men'. Did he ask the fellows who cut the hay? One suspects not.³⁶⁹

If Howkins' analysis remains problematic, part of the answer must lie in the visibly accelerating changes in the countryside during the second half of the nineteenth century. The social change briefly mentioned in the context of Rotherfield,³⁷⁰ was representative of many other southern communities where population growth was experienced owing to incoming wealthy commuters, bolstered further by the semi- and fully retired, and their servants. In some places, longer-settled affluent people even speculated by building substantial residences with generous gardens for sale or for rent. Among the latter category at Burwash we might mention the Jarvis family, of whom several generations had been retailers, including butchers with a few acres of pasture who also supplied wholesale carcass markets. Demand, and speculative responses, were naturally reflected in property prices. Even in the 1890s small Wealden farms came on to the market, including freehold Glyndish at Heathfield, with twenty acres of arable, grass and hop-ground, and a further 33 acres of wood, currently let at derisory £20 a year; buildings comprised 'a brick, timber, and tiled farm-house, with oast house, barn, stabling and piggeries'. Its provenance went unstated, but the auction starting price, £500, revealed an ongoing silent revolution: some buyers were successful non-agricultural entrepreneurs, or City of London bankers and stockbrokers; two had been ennobled, and the retired category had arrived before the railways in the 1840s and 1850s. Thereafter wealthy commuters penetrated this Wealden district. Bidding for Glydish ceased at £780, still under the asking price, though it was later sold privately. Among the sellers were no doubt those some of those small owner-occupiers whose precarious survival since the 1870s revealed a customary tenacity, which was partly dissolving in the face of enduring depression and extravagantly uneconomic bids like those revealed at Heathfield's Crown Inn auction. Among the bankrupts at Burwash was the younger John Kemp, 'farmer

and hop grower' in 1883; ironically, his Bough Farm of 37 acres was the same as it had been in the early 1820s, when it was hired by the select vestry to put the unemployed to work.³⁷¹

Cook Farm at Stonegate, near Ticehurst, with only nine acres and described as 'a compact and freehold dairy and poultry farm', fetched £890 in 1894. The only incomer at Burwash with squirearchical ambitions was the very rich temperance-supporting Mr Schroeder. He is encountered in 1885 at an auction of several lots by a Somerset-based firm. He purchased two; the first, ten acres with a farmhouse and four cottages, saw the starting price rise from £1200 to £3050, though the purchase price of the second, of 39 acres, with a farmhouse and the usual buildings, went unreported. The same sale reveals a motivational miscellany. The long-established tenant of the 88 acre Biggs Farm, just over the Ticehurst border, Thomas Gillham, who had another farm in Burwash, seized the chance to secure the freehold for £2500 after bidding commenced at £2000. One of the Button family domiciled at nearby Robertsbridge, and whose probable ancestors had been powerful in Burwash in the 1820s and 1830s, bought the 160-acre Bowman's Farm for £2750, £750 more than the opening bid. These disparate prices suggest that Schroeder's motives were known, but his aspirations were defeated by his premature death at 52.³⁷² Although purchases by outsiders who were not concerned with farming profits – though some employed bailiffs – were a developing phenomena throughout the nineteenth-century, it accelerated towards its end. Others' primary motive was shooting rights, as noted by the exiled anarchist Peter Kropotkin, who observed with some exaggeration that

in the Weald I could walk for twenty miles without crossing anything but heath or woodland, rented as pheasant-shooting grounds to "London gentlemen" as the labourers said.

Social change manifested itself in many forms. A growing number of labourers became upwardly socially mobile on securing the better-paid post of gardener. They, unlike some farmworkers, were not laid-off during spells of inclement winter weather. By the 1890s – following fierce disputes – Wealden horticultural societies divided competitors for prizes into two categories, amateurs and professionals. The former embraced traditional cottage gardeners and allotment tenants, while the latter comprised the full-time employees of both squires and the intruding *nouveau riche*. Some of the latter provided allotments for their 'coachmen and other servants', which provoked further rows as these people – it was said revealingly – had more time on their hands, and were therefore in 'a superior position to the average labourer on the farm'. Proposals to restrict eligibility of the cottager class to agricultural labourers were narrowly

voted down, with the majority preserving the £10 rent maximum criterion, which embraced a proportion of better-paid workers, including full-time gardeners. The latter's continued increase enabled them to seize control of the horticultural club by 1910, and introduce monthly inspections of their responsibilities.³⁷³

Many of these incomers made public commitments 'to support local institutions' which went beyond those concerned with hunting with hounds and competitive shoots; they included donations of additional prizes to the 'Burwash and Burwash Weald Horticultural Society', and membership of local branches of political parties. The former Liberal MP, Thomas Bolton JP, who briefly sat for St Pancras North in 1885-6, became a leading light for Gladstone's party, though he deserted to the Unionists in 1894 – on detecting penetration by 'New Radicalism and Socialism' – for whom he subsequently secured a seat. Somewhat later the chairmanship of Burwash Tories devolved upon Rudyard Kipling. He also patronised the football, but not the golf club. A periodic president of the rifle club, but not a competitor, he occasionally attended the (Anglican) church committee, and initially that for the war memorial. His wife devoted some time as secretary to the Burwash Nursing Association. Together, they sometimes hosted the horticultural-prize fair in their extensive grounds at Bateman's.³⁷⁴ Further change followed the War. In 1920 angry complaints were made against urban middle-class people 'buying up cottages at any price' for their week-end retreats, often converting two into one especially in villages with golf courses, thereby aggravating the problem of securing homes for farmworkers.³⁷⁵

X. A few reflections.

In 1906, my grandfather Edward Wells – an agricultural labourer – then aged 21, secured the superior post of gardener to some millionaire stockbroker with a mansion set in a few acres in Hertfordshire. In 1907, Edward married, and on the following Monday, personally applied to his employer for an extra shilling a week on the grounds of his changed circumstances. Grandad was sacked on the spot. He joined the Metropolitan Police, whose preference for recruits with rural backgrounds, was unachievable. Not the most enthusiastic of constables by all accounts, on his retirement in the late-1930s, his pension and savings enabled him to lease a modest house with an established nursery on a five-acre site at Northolt, literally where West London suburbia petered out and the countryside beckoned. There he produced all manner of vegetables and fruits, with chickens for both eggs and meat, on a commercial scale, in a manner reminiscent of the spade husbandry practised by LFS-allottees and Newcastle anarchists,

conjoined with the chicken cramming which had preserved Wealden small-holders together with some labouring dual-occupationists, well into the late nineteenth century and indeed beyond.³⁷⁶ He 'retired' to his beloved Hertfordshire aged 67 in 1953, but spent the next six years working part-time at a substantial nursery located in the Lea Valley at Harpenden. After his death in 1968, my grandmother told me that if the saddest day in his life was giving up the Northolt establishment, the happiest was the one he took it over. For him, at least in his later middle age, William Lovelace's dream of 'working for ourselves' on the land, was realised. And, as Dr Winstanley has revealed in his superb study of small-farm survival in Lancashire into the twentieth century, there are many similarities between his people's productive and marketing procedures and those of my grandfather's. They were both dependent on meeting 'demand for a range of perishable produce' by a rapidly growing local population, and 'as producer-retailers they were able to secure the profits absorbed elsewhere by wholesalers and retailers'; likewise they used family labour when it was available.³⁷⁷

Paradoxes abound. On the one hand, in some locations where farmers had not greedily encroached broad roadside verges adjacent to their fields, and lesser folk were still allowed to de-pasture beasts on this waste, local authorities capitalised on the survival by demanding rent. At Eastoft in the East Riding, the 'Herbage of the Lanes' in seven locations realised the princely annual sum of £3-7-0 in the early 1870s, presumably subsidising the highway rate. Some of the people who yearly paid between 2/6 and 28/-, were also tenants of 'Eastoft Parish Gardens'. Perhaps unusually, allottees here could sub-let with permission, though only family men were eligible. True, plebeians could earn a few shillings – from the parish constable – for catching moles; this ancient part of what has been dubbed the 'makeshift economy', and a common feature of Old Poor Law overseers of the poor's accounts, until it was stifled by Union auditors, was still worth an annual total of fifty shillings in the 1870s. Eastoft's 'Herbage and R[oa]ld Earth' was still being 'sold' in 1930. On the other hand, the successors of nineteenth-century allotment providers – including the parsimonious Eastoft Parish Councillors – presided over engrossing of land by allottees in the very late nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth.³⁷⁸ Rural depopulation – or the 'rural exodus' allegedly combined with the 'haughty attitude of the labour world' in the *Hull Times* November 1914 parlance – was one key factor.³⁷⁹ In 1888, the Rector of Holme-upon-the-Wolds, in probable response to the 1887 Allotment Act, turned about seventeen acres of glebe into seven plots. In 1948, his successor relet the plots under that year's Agricultural Holdings Act; evictions required a year's notice *and* the consent of the Ministry of

Agriculture. By 1963, one of the original holders, Butler had taken another two plots, while the remaining four were tenanted by a later incomer, Ives. Rents remained essentially nominal, for the land continued in seven plots, and although leases prevented any buildings, both these men had effectively transmuted themselves into pig rearing market gardeners – and tenacious ones at that. In 1963 Rector Jones decided to sell this land under a disposal scheme monitored by the Church Commissioners. Initially, the diocesan registrar believed that as the plots remained technically separately tenanted, they came under the 1887 Act with its prohibition of sub-letting and six-month eviction provision. However, the Rector's Beverley-based solicitor, Dunning, knew his case law, namely a 1951 ruling at Exeter Assizes by Lord Justices Birket and Denning; the former observed that the action – over half an acre – had led them to 'a careful examination of the most complicated legislation over the past 25 years', and ruled against the argument that it was 'rather absurd to involve all the complicated machinery' of the 1948 Act over such a plot. In fact, the Act said nothing as to acreages. Dunning used this to convince the diocesan registrar that the only alternative was to negotiate sale prices with the sitting tenants. These proved protracted, not least owing to Ives' capacity for 'rather lengthy "pig-dealing"', to which he added in

a long letter in which he catalogues all the difficulties connected with this piece of land and troubles with his neighbour.

Unfortunately, the latter went unrecorded. Although Dunning resorted to the threatened imposition of 'proper market rental' or sale to a third party – said to exist – Ives treated the lawyer to an hundred minute harangue, 'so I should know all about the Glebe at Bewholme!!'. The sales at sums considerably lower than the Rector's valuation went through fifteen months after proceedings commenced.³⁸⁰

Jesse Thompsett's "bloody" aristocracy' survived the first concerted attack on inherited wealth, represented by Sir William Harcourt's Liberal budget of 1894, though Queen Victoria had the temerity to remonstrate with Rosebery's Chancellor over his 'dangerous . . . proposals', namely death duties. Professor Dauntton sagely observed that 'Radical fiscal policies provided a convenient justification for the abandonment of ancestral acres, rather than the motivation'.³⁸¹ Prime minister Blair may have presided over the first stage of their political disembowelment, in conformity with the customary compromising English tradition, but relieving their lordships from their anti-democratic constitutional role will enable them to engage full-time in their other orthodox addiction – to avarice. As the late Duke of Devonshire peered down from his ancestral

pile at Chatsworth one frosty morning in the late 1990s, he spotted a large group of women in his deer park. Inquiring of some flunkey what they were doing, his lordship learned that they were protesting against his expansion of open-cast lead mining in the Pennine Hills, and were led by Arthur Scargill's wife. The Duke ordered soup to warm-up the ladies, a task wisely left to his hapless staff.³⁸² But the tradition of doles of soup from the likes of Devonshire, goes back only to the mid-1790s, when after required tuition in the art by a German counterpart – Count Rumford – they became addicted thereafter to this most economical brand of philanthropy.³⁸³ The Devonshire tradition of opportunistic entrepreneurship is much older than their soup, which may be illustrated by a single evidential anecdote in their building a bridge over the Trent at Shardlow on the Leicestershire border south of Derby in the 1760s: if the scale of investment in this solid structure is reflected in the fact that it survived until the great floods of 1947 swept most of it away, the lucrative returns reflected the Duke's imposition of the highest tolls on any comparable facility in the entire country, between its completion and the 1820s.³⁸⁴

Having myself once intruded into a "close" parish in 1974, to live with my mother-in-law – and the former wife of the local schoolmaster, Peter Frankish, notorious for his enduring advocacy of communist principles – in the East Riding Wold village of Langton, I soon learned some of the ropes. The village had been effectively rebuilt in the 1860s, though it is unclear whether the generous allotment provision, preceded that event. Certainly, the Frankishs' allotment supplied sufficient vegetables to render the family totally independent of grocers, despite their five children, and spare produce went to friends and relatives. In the mid-1970s, the old paternalist squire, General Howard-Vyse, from a long line of military men and with a distinguished World War II record, had recently handed over the estate to his son, Richard. He proceeded to kick out most of his substantial farming tenants, and farm much of the land himself, while residing in the biggest farmhouse in the place. 'Young Mr Richard' refused my request to fish in his trout stream with the observation that I 'ought to get back to my university'. Having secured a River Derwent fishing license for a pound from the estate office at the Earls Fitzwilliam's previously rotten borough of Malton – a great landed family and with one of the few aristocrats to personally run an industrial estate in south Yorkshire – I proceeded to the delightful beauty spot at Kirkham Abbey, where I entrapped a healthy five-pound pike. I released this beauty into Howard-Vyse's stream, and I hope the Earl's pike has feasted on the squire's trout ever since.³⁸⁵

In a very different context, namely a university, I was told by the late Dr Tony Smith about his co-author and former head of department at

Reading, the distinguished scholar Professor Arthur Aspinall. He spent much time between the wars, studying in the muniment rooms of many stately homes; invited by some of their owners to dinner – presumably to entertain his host's fellow peers and their wives with some historical anecdotes – and afterwards the men went off for port. Here, Aspinall learned about investments, in exchanges which were probably informed by insider-dealing, and the Professor used this intelligence, retiring – as a millionaire – to the fiscal haven of the Isle of Man, apparently without making a political donation worthy of a life peerage. William Cobbett took great delight in referring to the Duke of Richmond's regal ancestry as 'bastards in high life supported in splendid style out of the public purse'. Richmond was a member of the Cabinet committee which finalised the Poor Law Amendment Bill. On 18 June 1834, Cobbett proposed a 'trifling addition' to the Liable Persons' stipulations, namely

"Provided always, and in the manner aforesaid, that the father and grandfather, of any person on the Pension-list, the Sinecure List, the List of Retired Allowances, the Widows' Pension-list, the Compensation-list, or upon all or any other list of pensions received without services rendered to the public, or in any other way receiving money raised upon the taxes on the poor, shall, if such father or grandfather, mother or grandmother, child or children, be persons of substance, be liable and compellable to yield relief to their relations under all the penalties and forfeitures provided by the Act of Elizabeth",

one of the parts of it which were not scheduled for repeal. Althorp, responding for the government, testily observed that 'those who objected to the pension-list were not doing any thing in support or countenance of it by voting against the hon. Member's Amendment'. This of course was bare-faced lie. Every MP and member of the Lords knew that the landed interest would be a major beneficiary of the proposed statute: and it worked. The dubbing of the Act as the 'Poor Man's Robbery Bill' was thoroughly deserved. The financially-straitened Duke of Bedford candidly admitted, be it privately in 1841, that the previous relief 'system was stopt short just in time ... as the [New] Poor Law came into operation to save the landed property of the kingdom', and its owners from insolvency. Only sixteen members voted for Cobbett's amendment, among them Feargus O'Connor, MP for the County of Cork, the future Chartist and architect of the Land Plan.³⁸⁶ A later Duke of Richmond responsibly deposited his family archive in the West Sussex County Record Office; however, users wanting photocopies, I was reliably informed, have to pay the much higher rate of fifty pence a time (in the early-1980s), with the additional monies destined for the present Duke's

bank account, if no longer the vaults of Goodwood House. One hopes his grace enjoys the returns coming from academic historians whose real incomes have fallen by an estimated quarter since that date, but archives are mostly used by ordinary people; they too remain vulnerable to the landed interest's promiscuous pick-pocketing in the twenty-first century.³⁸⁷

Notes

I owe thanks to the historically-sensitive, Brightonian-Irish folk-musician (and municipal allotment tenant) Roger Leach, for many discussions related to issues addressed in this article.

1. J Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* (Royal Historical Society Studies in History, 2002). Except where indicated all references to Burchardt relate to this volume.
2. J Burchardt, 'Rural social relations 1830-50: opposition to allotments for labourers', *Agricultural History Review*, 45, II (1995). *Idem*, 'Land and the labourers: potato grounds and allotments in nineteenth-century southern England', *Agricultural History*, LXXIV, 2 (2000).
3. J Burchardt, 'Land, labour and politics; Parliament and allotment provision, 1830-1870', in J R Wordie (ed.), *Agriculture and Politics in England, 1815-1939* (2000), pp.98-127, esp.107-14, which is particularly enlightening on the creation of the Commons select committee inquiry into allotments in 1843, various unsuccessful Bills in its wake, and the General Enclosure Act of 1845.
4. D C Barnett, 'Allotments and the problem of rural poverty, 1780-1840', in E L Jones and G E Mingay (eds.), *Land, Labour and Population in the Industrial Revolution* (1967).
5. Burchardt, p.2.
6. Burchardt, p.163, note 123. Ironically his 'Land, labour and politics . . .', pp.106, 116-7, gives a slightly higher profile to the New Poor Law. This is not developed, except for the surprising assertion the Guardians' 'overriding concern was to make it work', and from 'this perspective allotments were at least an irrelevance, and at worst a survival of the pernicious relief-in-aid of labour practices of the pre-1834 era'. In fact many Union Boards wanted at least to manipulate the principles and the objectives of the legislation in accordance with local circumstances, which alternated enormously, and where convenient ditch them entirely; in this process they challenged the P[oor] L[aw] C[ommission], with various degrees of success. See below, pp.113-4 and notes 113, 118.
7. Burchardt, p.71. It might be said in Barnett's defence, that he wrote before the publication of E J Hobsbawm and G Rudé's seminal study, *Captain Swing* (1969, references here are to the 1972 edition, Harmondsworth), and its 24 page listing of individual Swing incidents. This is - unsurprisingly - not comprehensive. Many Swing crowds reconvened on consecutive days, and were also itinerant, crossing parish boundaries. R Wells, 'Social protest, class, conflict and consciousness, in the English countryside 1700-1880', in M Reed and Wells (eds.), *Class, Conflict and Protest in the English Countryside 1700-1880* (1990), pp.165-6; other authors adding significantly to

- Hobsbawm and Rudé's figures, include S Barber, 'Irish migrant labourers in nineteenth-century Lincolnshire', *Saothar*, VIII (1982), pp.16-21, M Clarke, 'Crime in the Sleaford division of Kesteven 1830-38', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, XVIII (1983), pp.17-8, Rex C Russell, *Three Lincolnshire Labourers' Movements*, (Barton-Upon-Humber, 1994), pp.10-39, C Griffin, "'There was no law to punish that offence". Re-assessing "Captain Swing": rural Luddism and rebellion in East Kent', *Southern History*, 22 (2000), pp.131-63, and R Wells, 'Andover antecedents? Hampshire New Poor Law scandals, 1834-1842', *Southern History*, 24 (2002), pp.95-102.
8. R Wells, 'The moral economy of the English countryside', in A Randall and A Charlesworth (eds.), *Moral Economy and Popular Protest; Crowds, Conflict and Authority* (2000), pp.223-7. Wells, 'Andover antecedents...', pp.106-7 and esp. note 43.
 9. M Reed, 'The peasantry of nineteenth-century rural England: a neglected class?', *History Workshop*, 18 (1984); *idem*, 'Nineteenth-century rural England: a case for "Peasant Studies"', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 14, 1 (1986); *idem*, "'Gnawing it out". A new look at economic relations in nineteenth-century rural England', *Rural History*, 1 (1990). Cf. M Winstanley, 'Industrialization and the small farm; family and household economy in nineteenth-century Lancashire', *Past and Present*, 152 (1996), 157-95.
 10. Newcastle's steward, cited by A Howkins, 'From Diggers to Dongas: the land in English radicalism, 1649-2000', *History Workshop Journal*, 54 (2002), p.6. Cf. Wells, 'Moral economy . . .', pp.226-7.
 11. For a succinct recent survey, see Howkins, *op.cit.*, *passim*.
 12. J R Wordie, 'The chronology of English enclosure. 1500-1914', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, XXXVI, 4 (1983). J Chapman and S Seelinger, 'Formal agreements and the enclosure process: the evidence from Hampshire', *Agricultural History Review*, 23, 1 (1995); *idem*, 'Open fields and their disappearance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the evidence from Sussex', *Southern History*, 17 (1995).
 13. Halam, Nottinghamshire, parochial real estate sale application, 10 October 1836, respecting land granted to the parish officers under the 1777 enclosure act, P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], M[inistry of] H[ealth], 12/9524. Great Driffield, 1819 account listing the proprietors and tenants on enclosed land, including that rented by the churchwardens and the overseers, with proceeds going into their respective accounts, E[ast] R[iding] C[ounty] RO. PE. 10/117. B[ritish] P[arliamentary] P[apers], House of Commons, select committee report, 'Labouring Poor (Allotments of Land)', (1843), Vol.VII, Q[uestions] 1997-9, evidence of Sir Henry Fletcher, Waltham-on-Thames. Cf. J M Shaw, 'The Development of the Local Poor Law Acts, 1696-1833, with Particular Reference to the Incorporated Hundreds of East Anglia', (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia, 1989), pp.4-5.
 14. Details of this arrangement in a note in Hessle vestry minutes, 1801-42, ERCRO. PE. 194/T51.
 15. Resolution taken by Eastrington vestry, 23 May 1823, and publicised in hand-written bills, ERCRO. PE. 150/T20. See also below, p.201.
 16. J M Neeson, *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820* (Cambridge, 1993), Ch.1.

17. J D Chambers, 'Enclosure and the labour supply in the industrial revolution', *Economic History Review*, V, 2nd series (1953), pp.325-7. J D Chambers and G E Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880* (1966), Ch. 4.
18. Burchardt, p.9. But cf. G Clark and A Clark, 'Common rights to land in England, 1475-1839', *Journal Economic History*, 61, 4 (2001), *passim*.
19. Burchardt, p.10. Wells, 'Moral economy . . .', pp.223-7. J Humphries, 'Enclosures, common rights, and women; the proletarianisation of families in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries', *Journal of Economic History*, 50 (1990), *passim*. L Shaw-Taylor, 'Parliamentary enclosure and the emergence of an English proletariat', *ibid.*, 61, 3 (2001), *passim*. Cf. A E Neuman, 'The Old Poor Law in East Kent, 1606-1834: a Social and Demographic Study' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent, 1979), pp.239-42.
20. R Wells, 'Tolpuddle in the context of English agrarian labour history', in J Rule (ed.), *British Trade Unionism, 1750-1850: the Formative Years* (1988), pp.101-7. P Sharpe, 'The female labour market in English agriculture during the industrial revolution: expansion or contraction?', *Agricultural History Review*, 47, II (1999), pp.165-5, 180.
21. R Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801* (Gloucester, 1988), Ch.3.
22. M Neuman, 'A suggestion regarding the origin of the Speenhamland plan', *English Historical Review*, 84 (1969). G Body, 'The Administration of the Poor Laws in Dorset, with Special Reference to Agrarian Distress', (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 1966), p.205.
23. Wells, *Wretched Faces* . . . , pp.290-7. Cf. Body, *op.cit.*, pp. 207-10, 220-1.
24. One of the best documented profiles of this mode is evidenced at Terling, Essex. Introduced initially in March 1795 when funded by a voluntary rate, and later that year paid out of the poor rate, as it was when reintroduced 1799-1801, briefly again in 1804 and 1810-3; in the latter crisis, the vestry also made strenuous efforts to get more children into regular employment. Terling vestry minutes, 25 March 1795 and 21 July, 12 August and 14 November 1799, 17 February, 7 April, 8 May, 15 and 29 September, and 15 December 1800, 10 September 1801, 3 December 1804, 25 September 1809, 1 October 1810, 28 October, 16 and 27 November, and 30 December 1811, 6, 13 and 20 January, 3 February, 6 April, 21 September, 10 October and 7 December 1812, 1 February and 1 March 1813, E[ssex] CRO. D/P 299/8/2, 3.
25. Wells, *Wretched Faces* . . . , pp.289-90. Shaw, *op.cit.*, pp.273-6, 283.
26. Wells, *Wretched Faces* . . . , Chs.12, 13. R Wells, 'English society and revolutionary politics in the 1790s: the case for insurrection', in M Philp (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.217-26.
27. 36 Geo.III, c.10. 36 Geo. III, c.23. The latter Act, primarily addressed parishes which had adopted Knatchbull's Act of 1722-3, giving vestries the option of confining relief to workhouse inmates; such vestries - or a magistrate - could order outdoor relief, though in the case of the latter the justice had to state the reason, and the order was restricted to a month; two JPs were needed to renew such orders, on a month-by-month basis. It specifically excluded parishes which had adopted Gilbert's Act. This 1796

- Act did not convey the powers utilitarian critics attributed to it. For the former Act, see Shaw, *op.cit.*, pp.74–5, 285.
28. Anon., *The Connexion between Industry and Property . . . addressed to the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor* (Exeter, 1798), unpaginated, copy in H[ampshire] CRO. Baring Mss. 92M95, F2/14/1. Very rarely this enduring practice was formally minuted by vestries, as at Hampsted: ‘unanimously agreed to fall the price of labour from 9s P week to 8 sh Week’; vestry minutes, 6 February 1846, ECRO, D/P 314/8/3. In 1858 one rural incumbent was informed independently by several people that ‘the farmers are thinking of lowering the wages of the labourers to [a weekly] 10s’. R Wells (ed.), *Victorian Village; the Diaries of the Reverend John Coker Egerton of Burwash 1857–1888* (Gloucester, 1992), p.37.
 29. G R Boyer, ‘Malthus was right after all: poor relief and the birth rate in South-eastern England’, *Journal of Political Economy*, 97 (1989).
 30. The Grainsby farmers wanted to offset the costs of their parish’s ‘Quota to the Cost of building the [new Poor Law] Union workhouse’, by claiming that the costs of erection and subsequent maintenance had been met from the poor rate, and that these properties should be sold under the 1835 Parish Property Act. However, they had mysteriously ‘lost . . . the old Parish Books . . . for some time’ and had no documentary proof of their claims. The device of deliberately destroying or concealing parochial records was so common that it was illegalised by a specific clause in the 1819 Select Vestry Act. Legal case, January 1841, esp. statements by small farmer Taylor and Lord of the Manor Sands, L[incolnshire] CRO, PL.11/119/7. For the 1835 Act, see below pp.120–1. B Liddle, *Bishop’s Waltham. A History* (Chichester, 2002), p.37.
 31. Burchardt, pp.10–2, and cf.71–3.
 32. Burchardt, p.12. J R Poynter, *Society and Pauperism. English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795–1834* (1969), esp. p.xix.
 33. But cf. L Shaw-Taylor, ‘Labourers, common rights and parliamentary enclosure: the evidence of contemporary comment c.1760–1810’, *Past and Present*, 171 (2001). Cow pastures were also viewed suspiciously by landowners outside “close” parishes. The Denisons, major owners near Scarborough, provided both allotments from one to four acres for labourers from around 1790, and later added ‘a large meadow in which they turn out their cows’; asked if he owned the entire parish when giving evidence to a committee of which he was a member, William Joseph Denison replied, ‘Yes – or a should not have’ provided the meadow. BPP. House of Commons, select committee report, ‘Agriculture’, (1833), Vol.V, Q’s.10841–5, 10852–3, and esp. 10856.
 34. Burchardt, pp.15, 25, 34–40.
 35. BPP. House of Commons, select committee report, ‘Poor Law Amendment Act’, (1837–8), Vol. XVII, Qs.26–8, evidence of Revd. Sockett, Petworth; Q.12137, evidence of substantial farmer Lawrence, Sussex coastal plain; Q.17153, evidence farmer Stapley, South Bersted, West Sussex.
 36. A R Wilks, ‘Adjustments to arable farming after the Napoleonic Wars’, *Agricultural History Review*, 28 (1980). Wells, ‘Social protest, class . . .’, pp.128–31. A J Peacock, *Bread or Blood. A Study of the Agrarian Riots in East Anglia* (1965). J E Archer, ‘By a Flash and a Scare’. *Incendiarism, Animal Maiming, and Poaching in East Anglia 1815–1870* (Oxford, 1990), esp. Ch.1. Cf. T Shakesheff, *Rural Conflict, Crime and Protest. Herefordshire, 1800 to 1860* (Woodbridge, 2003), esp. Chs.1 and 7.

37. D Eastwood, 'Rethinking the debates on the poor law in early nineteenth-century England', *Utilitas*, 6 (1994), pp.104–5.
38. The relationship between poor rates and rentals, and the use of the high levels of the former to lower the latter, were rehearsed in the Poor Law Report of 1834; also cited is the reaction of one Essex farmer to the suggestion that his ilk should pay a living wage to all employees: 'it is quite contrary to reason that any person should pay a man for his work sufficient to support a whole family, which in some cases would be 20s. a week'. S G and E O A Checkland (eds.), *The Poor Law Report of 1834* (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp.136–8.
39. *Ibid.*, pp.350–8. J D Marshall, 'The Nottinghamshire reformers and their contribution to the new poor law', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series XIII (1960–1).
40. R Wells, 'Poor-law reform in the rural South-east; the impact of the "Sturges Bourne Acts" during the agricultural depression, 1815–1835', *Southern History*, 23 (2001), esp. pp.88–9. The Chelmsford Petty Sessions, whose jurisdiction included the county town and 31 rural parishes in its hinterland, revealed similar features. Its detailed minutes repeatedly referred to powers bestowed by Sturges Bourne, and used them indiscriminately, notably respecting evictions from parish-owned houses. A tenant at Great Baddow not untypically claimed that he owned the premises, and was summoned. The incumbent also attended the hearing, bearing the Manorial Court Rolls, which revealed 'several admissions' since 1606 'by which the Title of the p[arish] was fully established', with the tenant 'adjudged a trespasser': eviction followed. Danbury parish officers appeared in court against 'several persons to whom they had hired Tenements for refusing to quit or to pay part of the Rents', whereupon the 'Bench recommended the regular Monthly Notices to be given and then apply for other proceedings'. Only two tenants refused to either pay or quit, and the justices again signed ouster orders. Chelmsford Petty Sessions minutes, 22 January, 1 and 22 February, and 22 March 1822, ECRO. P/CM 1/6; copies of formal notices in these cases, P/CP 11.
41. He categorised the pre-1820 years as the 'unlimited period', and that post-1835 as 'The "Commissioners Period"'. John Cunningham, the first Clerk to the Braintree Union, mss. lengthy account of its first five years, with a considerable discussion of the pre-1835 period. ECRO. G/Br/Z1.
42. A new workhouse was built in 1826–7. In 1832, a son J J Strutt, in the vestry drove through a motion that no claimant was to have wages '*made up in any way* from the Rates which is contrary to law & destructive of industry' (original emphasis). The sole concession – be it a humiliating one – was that fathers of large families were to go to the workhouse for their meals; however, under this arrangement, farmers ensured that these men's effectiveness as labourers was not compromised by malnutrition, and the ratepayers met the cost. Employers were enjoined to give 'fair & adequate wages, *not confined by any maximum* but according to the value of [piece] work done' (my emphasis). By 1835, only eighteen able-bodied people regularly received outdoor relief, mostly widows with young children, but including just six fathers. Allotments went unmentioned. Terling vestry minutes, esp. 5, 15 and 29 January 1824, 5 February 1824, 27 February, 27 March and 1 May 1826, 8 October 1827, 2 February and 6 April 1829, 26

- December 1831, 16 January, and 19 March 1832, 15 April 1833, 25 and 30 March 1835, ECRO. D/P, 8/4; 5.
43. Petition, dated 4 August 1822: cf. G Portman, Baughurst, to Melbourne, 30 November 1830, PRO. HO.17/122, pt.ii: 52/7, ff.312-4. For squatter communities in West Surrey, see R Wells, 'Popular protest and social crime: the evidence of criminal gangs in rural southern England 1790-1860', in B Stapleton (ed.), *Conflict and Community in Southern England* (Stroud, 1992), esp. pp.160-70. Cf. R Wells, 'Crime and protest in a country parish: Burwash, 1790-1850', in J Rule and Wells (eds.), *Crime, Protest and Popular Politics in Southern England 1740-1850* (1997), pp. 177-9.
 44. Burchardt, pp.36-7. Crondall vestry minutes, 11 February, 25 March and 22 April 1822, 22 July 1823, and esp. 15 November 1824, Surrey CRO. PSH/CRON/8/1. Stuart's report, re. Norfolk and Suffolk, BPP. 'Poor Law Report', (1834), Vol.XXXVIII, reports from the assistant commissioners, appendix A1, pt.i, pp.378-80.
 45. Carnarvon to his son, Lord Portchester, and Bernard to Carnarvon, 15 November and 8 December 1830, HCRO. 75M91, B24/22: E4/83.
 46. Bernard to Carnarvon, *loc.cit.* Burchardt, pp.1-4, 23-5, 38-9, and esp. 244-51. Reports of the assistant commissioners, Everitt (Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely), Stuart, Chapman (Cornwall, Devon and Somerset), and Ockenden (Dorset and Wiltshire), BPP. *loc.cit.*, pp.378-80, 439-43, 677-8.
 47. They said the same about those who hired land to divide and sub-let to labourers, including the Revd. Austin's proposal to rent sixty acres at Pulborough for allottees, who in aggregate would pay double the rent that the current farming tenants paid. *Brighton Gazette*, 27 June 1833. Lord Kenyon agreed that his farmers should collect allottees' rents, but added "'We must make sure . . . [they] do not charge more than [they] pay'" for the land. BPP. 'Agriculture', (1833), Q's.5772-8, 6097-9, 6101-2, evidence of land-agent Lee. Cf. BPP. House of Commons, select committee report, 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Vol.VIII, Q's.11289-80, 11395-8, 11401-2, evidence of J Hancock, Dorset farmer.
 48. 59 Geo. III, C.12, clauses XII-XVI.
 49. Bernard to Carnarvon, *loc.cit.* Burchardt, *op.cit.*, esp. p.46. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', p.108.
 50. Burchardt, pp.26-7, 114 table 2. For example, a printed notice (1816) analysed a scheme launched in 1811 at Micheldever, since when 32 families 'have been relieved by renting land to them'. Over eleven acres were used, with plots between a quarter and a half acre. Eight families, containing 77 people, would otherwise have required 'constant relief', another seven 'partial relief', and but ten - with only 24 individuals - no relief. The overseers calculated weekly savings of £5-14-6 during the winters: Micheldever notice; Estcourt to Carnarvon, 2 April 1826, HCRO. 92M95, F2/14/3, Baring Mss: 75M91, B24/33, Carnarvon Mss. The Micheldever savings, in terms of families roughly equates with the long-term provider, the Revd. Demainbray's calculation that pre-1834 allotments kept 'about half' of their tenants off the rates; William Miles informed the same committee, that his first experience of allotments derived from Caunton, Nottinghamshire in the early 1820s, after the select vestry purchased land under the 1819 Act. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q.269, Demainbray's evidence; Q's.1823-4, Miles' evidence.

51. Burchardt, pp.34 and cf.71–3, a view curiously attributed to E P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1968 edition), pp.188; cf.521–8. R Wells, *Insurrection: the British Experience, 1795–1803* (Gloucester, 1983), *passim* and esp. Ch.12. Wells, 'The case for insurrection . . .', *op.cit.*, pp.188–226. M Betham-Edwards (ed.), *The Autobiography of Arthur Young* (1898), p.366. Cf. the very different response of the Foxite Duke of Bedford to the problem of aristocratic survival in the age of the French Revolution, as impressively analysed by David Brown, 'Reassessing the influence of the aristocratic improver; the example of the fifth Duke of Bedford (1765–1802)', *Agricultural History Review*, 47, II (1999), pp.182–95.
52. J R Gower to Lord Portchester, 18 and nd. but 19 November 1830, HCRO. 75M91, E26/10, 12. Nor was this apocryphal; see the 1830 threatening letter cited Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', p.99.
53. D Kent and N Townsend, *The Convicts of the Eleanor. Protest in Rural England, New Lives in Australia* (Australia, 2002), esp. p.116. P O Donoghue, 'Opposition to tithe payments in 1830–31', *Studia Hibernia*, 6 (1966), pp.71–93. Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, *Memoirs of the Courts and Cabinets of William IV and Victoria*, 2 Vols. (1861), I, pp.3–5. Under-secretary Home Office, Phillipps, to W Gee, Bishop's Stortford, 4 December 1830, PRO. HO.41/8, pp.353–4. E J Curteis, and H Mascall, to H B Curteis, both 10 November 1830, E[ast]SCRO. AMS. 5995/3/13–4. M Brock, *The Great Reform Act* (1973), pp.187–92, 238–40, 246–67, and esp. Ch.8. Wells, *Insurrection.*, esp. Ch.12. Cf. M I Thomis and P Holt, *Threats of Revolution in Britain 1789–1848* (1977), *passim*. but esp. Ch.4.
54. Prosecutor's brief against Willcocks for arson, Kent Winter Assize, December 1830, PRO. T[reasury] S[olicitor], 11/943/3412. *Herts Mercury*, 27 November 1830. R Quinault, 'The French Revolution of 1830 and parliamentary reform', *History*, 79 (1994). R Wells, 'Mr William Cobbett, Captain Swing and King William IV', *Agricultural History Review*, 45, I (1997). Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', pp.95–102. Wells, 'Social protest . . .', esp. pp.181–8. I Dyke, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture* (Cambridge, 1992), Ch.7.
55. See, Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', pp.105–6, and note 43. Cf. B Reay, *The Last Rising of the Agricultural Labourers; Rural Life and Protest in Nineteenth-century England* (Oxford, 1990), pp.103–9, 176.
56. Wells, 'Moral economy . . .', pp.225–7, and sources cited there.
57. Original emphasis. Steward Baker to Sir Thomas Baring in reply to his request for information, 1 January 1833: cf. assistant poor law commissioner A'Court to Commissioner Lefevre, on Buckingham's scheme, 9 June 1835: HCRO. Baring Mss. 92M95, F2/17/174: PRO. MH.32/2.
58. In Berkshire, the numbers of prisoners led the county authorities to negotiate for accommodation with Reading Corporation, while the jail at Abingdon was choked with rioters – may of whom 'had their heads severely injured, and others many bruises': the premises were dramatically attacked from the outside, leading a town constable to exclaim that he 'never saw such a tumult in Abingdon before'. Berkshire Quarter Sessions minutes, Epiphany, and Abingdon jail surgeon's report, January 1831, Berkshire CRO. Q/50/14, pp.438–9, 442–3. Phillipps to Home Office lawyer, Tallents,

- and Sir Thomas Baring, both 25 December: prosecutor's brief, Berkshire Special Commission, late December 1830, PRO. HO.41/9, pp.195-6: TS.11/849. Hobsbawm and Rudé, *op.cit.*, Ch.13.
59. The documents are in bundles relating to each application, and boxed, PRO. HO.17/series. A crude contemporary index of names, dates, and courts, is available. For the system, see D Hay, 'Property, authority and the criminal law', in *idem et al.*, (eds.), *Albion's Fatal Tree; Crime and Society in Eighteenth-century England*, (1975), *passim*, and V A C Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree. Execution and the English People 1770-1868*, (Oxford, 1994), esp. pp.v-x. This excellent documentation has been used extensively by only one historian of Swing, Jill Chambers, with respect to Buckinghamshire and Hampshire; her approach is primarily genealogical, and colonial records relating to the transportees have also been exploited, to compile copious factual details on arrested activists, not all of whom in the event were prosecuted. Unfortunately, the relevant materials from HO.17 are not integrated into her narrative of events comprising the rising in the two counties; these are based - to the point of plagiarism - exclusively on press reports of both the action and the subsequent trials. J Chambers, *Hampshire Machine Breakers: the Story of the 1830 Riots* (Clifton, Buckinghamshire, 1990), and *idem*, *Buckinghamshire Machine Breakers: the Story of the 1830 Riots* (Lutterworth, 1991). The purpose of this documentation, namely seeking clemency, often gives considerable detail respecting individual protesters personal circumstances: a lengthy extract from a bankrupted Hampshire blacksmith is printed in Wells, 'Moral economy . . .', pp.213-4, note 26. Contributors to these appeals included witnesses of incidents, many of whom became prosecution witnesses, and they often enlarged on the details, usually offering mitigating circumstances in favour of the convict. In a number of cases, *de facto* counter-petitions from others domiciled in the same locality and opposing clemency are also bundled together. (see also above, pp.92-3) For example, in the case of Joseph Carter, sentenced to death for robbery, but commuted by the trial judge to seven years transportation at the Hampshire Special Commission, Sir Thomas Baring supported the incumbent at Wonston, the Revd. Dallas's assertion of Carter's previous good character, adding that his release would have a positive impact on entire communities currently seething with anger over the severity of the sentences, together with the fact that the men's families would have to be supported from the poor rate for years in the future. Similar sentiments were repeatedly advanced, and some - exemplified again by Baring - also wanted to neutralise intense rural politicking by Cobbettites between 1830 and 1834. Conversely, in another case, the local incumbent, the Revd. Makerly claimed that any remission of the seven-year transportation term imposed on James Tassell would have 'the worst possible effect. . . . The poorer inhabitants well know his dogged perseverance & relentless participation in the outrages', while other transportees were far 'less culpable'. In the well-known *cause célèbre* of John Boyes (who had a wife and ten children), the Hampshire small farmer after conviction for 'conspiring to raise wages', became the first transportee to receive a free pardon in 1834; one key intervention was made by Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, and Whig MP for South Hampshire, enclosing a petition in Boyes' favour signed by nearly a thousand of 'the most respectable county

- voters . . . most of them Farmers'. Palmerston observed that making Boyes serve his full term would be politically counter-productive. A different category of political motivation was displayed by the Earl of Egremont, Lord Lieutenant of Sussex, and a Tory paternalist, when asking for the remission of the remaining prison sentences on two West Sussex rioters; as a visiting justice for Petworth jail, Egremont – who had been shocked after being targeted by several Swing pseudonymists – confirmed that both had behaved impeccably since incarceration, and insisted that 'an act of clemency will have a good effect upon the minds and conduct of a numerous peasantry in the neighbourhood where they reside'. Letters to Melbourne from Thomas Boniface, and Dallas, 10 January and 22 February 1831, Egremont, and Baring, 6 April and 1 September 1832, and Palmerston, 10 August 1833: Maberly to the Attorney General, 18 January 1831, PRO. HO.17/ 41; 59; 68. Carnarvon to Portchester, 15 November 1830, re. Egremont, HCRO. 75M91, E4/83. For Boyes, see Hobsbawm and Rudé, *op.cit.*, pp.206, 232, 236, 248, and *Hampshire Telegraph*, 15 and 29 July 1833. Since the 1997 publication of my 'Mr William Cobbett . . .', I have found a stack of papers relating to the famous Swing arson case for which the convicted incendiary Thomas Goodman, was reprieved for his claims to have been encouraged to fire the stacks after hearing Cobbett's lecture at Battle. Some of these derive from mistakes made in getting Goodman's reprieve to Horsham in time; this panicked the king residing in Brighton Pavilion. A courtier told Lord Gooderich in an undated note that William IV 'seems very anxious to lay hold of Cobbett', PRO. HO.17/50, pt.i.
60. BPP. House of Lords, select committee report, 'Poor Law', (1830–1), Vol. VIII. Burchardt, pp.52–3, 178. Labourers Employment Act, 2 and 3 William IV, c.96.
 61. Extant vestry minute books from the north-central Somerset parishes may reveal the outcome of these recommendations. Burgoyne to Richmond, 13 September 1831, W[est] S[ussex] CRO. Goodwood Mss. 636. Letters to Portchester, from Carnarvon, in Cambridge, and Gower, 19 November and 8 December 1830; Gower to Carnarvon, 27 December 1846, HCRO. 75M91, E4/83; E26/14, 114. Although Hobsbawm and Rudé, *op.cit.*, pp.101–2, assert that a handful of minor Swing incidents in Somerset villages close to the Wiltshire and Dorset borders occurred in late November, however, on 12 and 13 September Radstock weavers forcibly stopped their counterparts from working at nearby Paulton in efforts to force wage increases, and identical moves to the same end by miners in the north of the county followed. H and P Coombs (eds.), *Journal of a Somerset Rector 1803–1824* (Bath, 1971), pp.424–5.
 62. Burchardt, pp.12, 21 and esp. 85, where he acknowledges the challenge of emigration advocates, but does not follow it through.
 63. Handbill, printer Mayo, Newbury; extracted from *Political Register*, 14 April 1832. Budd to Carnarvon, 5 May 1832, HCRO. 75M91, B24/22. See also Dyke, *op.cit.*, pp.156, 159, 210–12.
 64. Burchardt, pp.51–2. H J Richardson, AEI secretary, to Richmond, 12 March 1834, WSCRO. Goodwood Mss. 1474.
 65. *The Times*, 15 February 1834. BPP. 'Poor Law Amendment Act', Vol. XVII, Q.16881, Stapley's evidence. Dyke, *op.cit.*, pp.210–2.

66. Chichester to Sanctuary, 14 January, and to Courthope, 24 March and 2 April 1831, Bodleian Library, Ms. Top Sussex, C2, ff.52-7: ESCRO. SAS. Co/C/230. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 28 February 1831. *Sussex Advertiser*, 21 March 1831.
67. Vestry minutes, Burwash, 15 March 1831, and Chiddingly, 7 and 24 November 1831, and 12 April 1832, ESCRO. Par. 284/12/1; 292/12/2.
68. Chichester to Courthope, 2 April 1831, *loc.cit.* W Cameron and M McDougall Maude, *Assisting Emigration to Upper Canada. The Petworth Project 1832-1837* (2000).
69. Burchardt, p.116.
70. *Brighton Gazette*, 16 and 30 May 1833. Richardson to Richmond, 12 March, and Richmond's annotation: LFS prospectus, March 1834, copy in Richmond's papers, WSCRO. Goodwood Mss. 1474. *The Times*, 4 October 1832, 1 and 8 June 1833, 15 February and 14 May 1834.
71. *The Radical Poor Man's Guardian*, 4 January 1834, citing – and no doubt adding the emphasis – the *Morning Herald*.
72. D Eastwood, "‘Amplifying the Province of the Legislature’: the flow of information and the English state in the early nineteenth century", *Historical Research*, 62 (1989), pp.277, 285.
73. Burchardt, pp.74-6. For Spence, see esp. M Chase, *The People's Farm. English Radical Agrarianism, 1775-1840* (Oxford, 1988), esp. pp.29-37.
74. *Kent Herald*, and *Brighton Gazette*, 14 March and 12 December 1833. Wells, 'Poor law reform . . .', pp.80-9.
75. *Brighton Gazette*, 27 June and 5 December 1833. Godalming printed notice, May 1835, PRO. MH.12/12332. Lansdowne to Richmond, 17 July 1831, WSCRO. Goodwood Mss. 635.
76. BPP. appendices to Poor Law Report, (1834), Vol.XXXVIII, Appendix A1, assistant commissioner Maclean's report, Middlesex, Surrey, and West Sussex, pp.575-8. *Hampshire Independent*, 20 January 1834. *Sussex Advertiser*, 20 July 1835.
77. Burgoyne, London, to Wanstead select vestry, and vestry minutes, 27 and 29 August 1831, ECRO. D/P 292/8/17. R Weale, Midhurst, to Richmond, enclosing a printed copy of the Society's figures, 10 April 1834, WSCRO. Goodwood Mss. 669.
78. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's.1959-62, Sir Henry Fletcher's evidence. Clerk, Droxford Union, to the PLC, 5 October 1835, PRO. MH.12/10751. Hambledon vestry minutes, 28 February, and nd c. April 1832, HCRO. 46M69, PV/1. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q's.9237, 10098, 10116-7, Wyatt's evidence.
79. Burchardt, pp.54, 58-9. W Santer, Micheldever, Hampshire, to Sir T Baring, 24 December 1833, HCRO. Baring Mss. 92M95, F2/17/178. Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', p.106.
80. BPP. 'Agriculture', (1833), Q's.5772-8, 6097-9, 6104, Lee's evidence; Q's.11661-7, 11755-65, Driver's evidence. BPP. House of Lords, select committee report, 'State of Agriculture', (1837, though witnesses heard February-June 1836), Vol.V, Q.545, evidence of sometime Bedfordshire farmer Bennett.
81. *Ibid.*, Q.152, Comptroller's evidence. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q.353, Comptroller's evidence; Q's.3624-5, Huntingdonshire farmer Bowyer's evidence.

82. Specifically over the strength of the allotment movement in Somerset from late 1830, despite Swing's mild showing in the county: Burchardt, pp.70-1.
83. Burchardt, p.249, and concealed in Appendix 3.
84. Burchardt, Ch. 2, 'The resurgence of allotment promotion and provision after 1830', esp. pp.54, 58-9, 62, 64-5, 67.
85. Cf. *ibid.*, pp.81, 90-1, 98, 100, 103 (where he concedes in passing 'that, particularly in the early 1830s ... allotments were still a relatively unfamiliar phenomenon'), 129 (where he admits that 'in many counties, it was not, in fact, in 1830 that allotment provision began, but several years after this': my emphasis).
86. Burchardt, 'Rural social relations ...', pp.165-6.
87. Holland to Caroline Fox, 19 December 1800, British Library, Add. Mss.51735. E A Wasson, 'The great Whigs and parliamentary reform, 1809-30', *Journal of British Studies*, 24, 4 (1985), p.445.
88. E A Wrigley, 'Malthus on the prospects of the labouring poor', *Historical Journal*, 31 (1988), *passim*.
89. See esp. P Dunkley, 'Whigs and paupers: the reform of the English poor laws, 1830-34', *Journal of British Studies*, 20, 2 (1981), *passim*. Cf. P Mandler, 'The making of the new poor law *redivivus*', *Past and Present*, 117 (1987), pp.131-57, and *idem*, 'Tories and paupers: Christian political economy and the making of the new poor law', *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), pp.81-103. The standard authority on the debate on social welfare reform is Poynter, *loc.cit.*
90. Checklands, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.93-6, 348. See also below, p.192.
91. *Ibid.*, pp.242-54, 472-5, 484-92.
92. Baring to Melbourne, 11 March 1833 PRO. MH.17/46, pt. ii. For the post-Swing situation in Hampshire, see Wells, 'Andover antecedents ...', pp.102-12, and more generally, Wells, 'Social protest, class ...', pp.167-74, 187-92, R Wells, 'Rural rebels in southern England in the 1830s', in C Emsley and J Walvin (eds.), *Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians, 1760-1860* (1984), pp.136-43, and Archer, 'By a Flash and a Scare ...', pp.94-101.
93. Althorp informed the Commons on 14 May during the protracted committee stages, that the government intended to remove this clause, and could have done so easily during the weeks before the third reading on 1 July; when opponents said it was 'dangerous', Althorp merely said that the PLC's proposed discretionary powers would suffice to 'bring ... this measure gradually into operation'. In the Lords, Richmond spoke in support of Wellington. Hansard, 3rd series (1834), vol.23, cols.971-2; vol.24, cols.427-8, 924-6, 1031-5, 1055-8; vol.25, cols.268-70. A Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law 1832-39* (1978), pp.69-71.
94. Courthope, copy of his return to the Royal Commissioners on the Poor Laws, November 1832, ESCRO. SAS. Co/C/230.
95. For Collingwood, see below, pp.187-8.
96. Hansard, 3rd series (1834), vol.24, cols.431-3, 924-6. 1031-7; vol.25, cols.273-4. Hodges, statements re. crossing High Weald from London to Benenden, penned for the Home Office, 31 October 1830, PRO. HO.52/7, ff.420-3. Grey to William IV, on his first day in office, 23 November 1830, Earl Grey (ed.), *The Reform Act 1832. The Correspondence of Earl Grey ... with King William IV and ... Sir Charles Taylor*, 2 Vols. (1867), I, pp.3-5. Lord John to Lady William Russell, 26 November 1830, G Blakiston (ed.), *Lord William Russell and His Wife 1815-46* (1972), p.225.

97. Darby, and Hawley, to the PLC, 24 November 1834, and 19 May; Thomas to Chadwick, 12 May, and Hawley to Commissioner Nicholls, 10 April, 7 and esp. 19 May 1835, PRO. MH.12/12747; 12854; 12931. Burchardt, esp. pp.128-9.
98. Staggered implementations in individual Unions, often meant that adjacent ones were commonly at different stages, which resulted in equally different relief profiles in neighbouring parishes. This situation was aggravated where Gilbert Union Guardians refused to dissolve – as they were entitled to do under the 1834 Act. In West Sussex, for example, this situation meant that speedy full implementation promoted in the Westhampnett Union at the behest of its chairman, the Duke of Richmond, stood in very stark contrast to the continuation of the Old Poor Law in parishes comprised in the Sutton Gilbert Union, with a thirty mile border between the two. See the map identifying this, and parallel geographical and administrative juxtapositions, in R Wells, 'The Poor Law 1700-1900', in K Leslie and B Short (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Sussex* (Chichester, 1999), p.71.
99. Initially, some assistant commissioners believed that violent opposition might be diffused if existing workhouses were used, as opposed to the immediate erection of one central institution. As assistant Hawley reasoned, the former strategy removed 'the objection of congregating large Masses of dissolute characters. . . . The appearance of *New Prisons* as they are termed starting up throughout the Country, at the bidding of an enactment which is still unpalatable with the many, is avoided'; to the PLC, 9 November 1835, PRO. MH.12/12747.
100. For these disturbances in the South, see N C Edsall, *The Anti-Poor Law Movement, 1834-44* (Manchester, 1971), pp.27-31, 40-1. J Knott, *Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law* (1986), Ch.3. R Wells, 'Resistance to the New Poor Law in the rural South', in Rule and Wells, *op.cit.*, pp.91-125. Cf. A Digby, 'The rural poor law', in D Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century*, (1976), pp.151-2.
101. *Brighton Patriot*, 24 February, 24 March, 7 and 21 April, 12 and 19 May 1835. *Brighton Gazette*, 19 March 1835. Letters to the PLC from Clerk, Battle Union, and Hawley, 24 and 29 July 1835, PRO. MH.12/12747. For the UBI see J Lowerson, 'The aftermath of Swing: anti-poor law movements and rural trade unionism in the south-east of England', in A Charlesworth (ed.), *Rural Social Change and Conflicts since 1500* (Hull, 1983), and Wells, 'Resistance . . .', pp.101-5, and sources cited there.
102. A'Court – who as a Wiltshire magistrate had opposed Swing – thought that Baring's 'apprehensions . . . would alarm me more if I did not believe him to be a timid man & full of recollections of what took place in 1830'. A'Court, Heytesbury, to Col. Mair, Salisbury, 29 November 1830; Baring to Russell, and annotations, 10 October; PLC to Russell, 20 October; A 'Court to Lefevre, 14 October, 7 November, 13 and 20 December; PLC minutes, 20 October 1835, PRO. HO.40/27 (5), ff.378-9; 52/26, ff.80-1: MH.1/3 (unpaginated): 32/2. Cf. Hobsbawm and Rudé, *op.cit.*, pp.243-4. *Brighton Patriot*, 5 May 1835. Dyck, *William Cobbett . . .*, pp.205-12. For the 'Wonston Press', and its proprietor, J Shayler, see his undated [1836] printed rules for new allotments on 'Wonston Glebe', HCRO. Baring Mss, 92M95, F2/14/33.

103. A F J Brown, *Meagre Harvest. The Essex Farm Workers' Struggle against Poverty, 1750-1914*, (Chelmsford, 1990), pp.12-4. Wells, 'Tolpuddle ...', p.125.
104. Wells, 'Resistance ...', pp.106-7.
105. Burchardt, pp.128-9. For East Anglian anti-New Poor Law riots preceding incendiarism, see Archer, *op.cit.*, pp.102-5, and A Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, (1978), pp.218-24.
106. *Brighton Patriot*, 31 March, 28 April, 4 and 25 August, and 29 September 1835.
107. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.1350-5, Gulson's evidence.
108. Assistant commissioner Tufnell, quarterly report, 24 February, to the PLC, 27 January, and to Lefevre, 24 April 1836, PRO. MH.32/69.
109. Lewes was also an ancient borough constituency, with a large number of radical 'greasy self-interested artisans' in assistant commissioner Hawley's derogatory estimation. The fact that the seats of two powerful aristocrats, the Earl of Chichester and Lord Gage, lay in the town's hinterland, proved crucial. Neither, would agree to 'their' parishes going into Lewes, with the result that the former's Stanmer and Falmer went into the largely downland and lightly populated Newhaven Union, while Gage's West Firle and Glynde were embraced by tiny West Firle, leaving his other parish - notoriously unruly Ringmer - to be accommodated by Chailey. These constitute further examples which conflict with Professor Brundage's concept of the New Poor Law enhancing the 'cohesion' of a landed society dominated by the elite. A Brundage, 'The English Poor Law of 1834 and the cohesion of landed society', *Agricultural History*, 48 (1974), *passim*. Cf. Wells, 'Andover antecedents ...', pp.117-8 and notes 77 and 79. Hawley to Nicholls, 18 November 1834, 5 January, 8, 10 and 15 February, 7 and 8 August 1835, 9 January and esp. 7 February 1836, PRO. MH.32/38.
110. See M J Turner, "'Preventing Ourselves from Being Plundered by our Betters": Thomas Perronet Thompson and the Corn Laws', in Wordie (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp.86-7, for a useful, though not a comprehensive list of Radical MPs in 1836 (not all of whom were re-elected in 1837); at least two, Hume and Roebuck, were pro-New Poor Law. D Thompson, 'Who were "the People" in 1842?', in M Chase and I Dyck (eds.), *Living and Learning. Essays in Honour of J F C Harrison* (1996), p.121. For Walter in 1830, see undated Berkshire handbill, reproduced in J Chambers, 'Berkshire machine breakers - Captain Swing and the 1830 riots', *Berkshire Family Historian* (March 2000).
111. Assistant Tufnell recommended some chairmen of Kent Unions, one of whom J M Cramp, had introduced utilitarian principles into Garlinge parish before 1834, and then campaigned against its incorporation in the Thanet Union; subsequently 'completely converted' into a supporter of the new system, he confirmed considerable cuts in expenditure in all component parishes, except ironically his own, to MPs, though his conversion went unmentioned. Conversely, a substantial owner-occupying farmer approached by Sir Francis Baring MP, was 'most anxious not to be called before ... so searching a Tribunal'. Tufnell to Lefevre, 15 March 1836, PRO. MH.32/69: W Simmonds, St Cross, Winchester, to Baring, 13 February 1836, HCRO. Baring Mss. 92M95/F2/19/160. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q's.9878-9, 9511-8, Cramp's evidence.

112. The best account remains, S E Finer, *The Life and Times of Edwin Chadwick* (1952, 1970 edition), Book 6, but cf. A Brundage, 'England's "Prussian Minister": Edwin Chadwick and the Politics of Government Growth, 1832-1854' (Pennsylvania, 1988), pp.115-7. See also below, pp.183-5.
113. Digby, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.107-10. BPP. House of Lords, select committee report, 'The Several Cases Alluded to in Certain Papers respecting the Operation of the Poor Law Amendment Act', (1837-8), Vol. XIX, pp.258-60, evidence of R N Shawe JP, chairman, Woodbridge Union, who blandly observed that his Board 'feel ourselves at liberty to award outdoor relief to able-bodied labourers'. Cf. medical officer Kent, Stowmarket Union, to the PLC, 6 February 1839, PRO. MH.12/11992, and assistant commissioner's return for Norfolk and Suffolk, Union by Union, listing the dates for formal Board resolutions to end all non-medical relief to able-bodied males, and the very few formal orders issued by Somerset House, BPP. House of Commons order, 29 March 1838, for 'Return re. Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Orders issued by the PLC, or Implemented by Poor Law Unions', (1837-8), Vol. XXXVIII.
114. The struggle between the Commission and Petworth, is fully detailed in the interrogations of Rector Sockett, Union chairman John Napper JP, other Guardians, and the relevant assistant commissioner, Hawley, plus supportive documentation in BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q's.1-3135.
115. BPP. 'Several Cases Alluded to', pp.710-3, 1300-1, evidence of assistant commissioner Weale, re. Somerset; pp. 960-1, 969-70, evidence of former Bridgewater Guardian, Baker. BPP. 'PLC, Seventh Annual Report', (1841), Vol. XI, pp.4-5.
116. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q's 13434-7, evidence of Westhampnett Guardian Hayller; Vol. XVIII, Q's.5453, 5525, assistant commissioner for Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, Adey's evidence.
117. *Ibid.*, XVII, Q's.12209-13, Lawrence's evidence; Q's.13625-9, Hayller's evidence; Q.17357, Westhampnett Union Clerk, responding to a written claim by seven farmers, that the only post-1834 wage increases were in response to cereal-price rises. Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', p.149. However, some gentry farmers who were model employers, argued that higher wages must be paid from savings in lowered poor rates; *Brighton Patriot*, 18 and 25 December 1838.
118. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q.24, Sockett's evidence. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q.280, Gulson's evidence. BPP. 'Several Cases Alluded to', pp.78, and 467-8, respectively evidence of assistant commissioners Hall and Kay.
119. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q.14237, evidence of W Cox, Scotsgrove, Buckinghamshire. BPP. Lord's report, 'State of Agriculture', Q's, 724, 732, evidence J Twynam, Whitchurch, Hampshire.
120. BPP. 'Women and children', pp.28-9, 35, 217-8. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.421-2, 1255-7, Gulson's evidence.
121. Provision at the village level varied enormously, from none to that described by curate Cockerton at West Meon, Hampshire, with a population of 750: 100 were members of three clothing clubs; fifteen men were in a provident society, run and subsidised by the Rector, providing fuel and

- clothing: Cockerton also ran a fuel club, which supplied coal and faggots at half cost price. Ninety people were enrolled in what he described as a 'sick agricultural club', probably a parochial friendly society which provided medical assistance. Most intriguingly, a 'Trades' Union Friendly Society' had a membership of 36. Clearly, some men – and probably wives – were members of more than one. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837–8), XVII, Q's.9368–71, Cockerton's evidence.
122. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q.11642, Stares' evidence; cf. Q's.11904–11, evidence of Sussex coastal-plain farmer Freeland.
 123. *Ibid.*, Q's.332, 352, Buckinghamshire farmer Brickwell's evidence; esp. Q's.2850–4, Guildford farmer Smallpiece's evidence; Q's.3752–4, evidence of farmer Morton, Denham; Q's.9357–60, evidence of farmer Neve, Benenden.
 124. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837–8), XVIII, esp. Q's.527–99, 681–2, 702–28, Gulson's evidence; Q.3699, Power's evidence; Q's.5562–3, Adey's evidence. Brundage, *The Making . . .*, p.83.
 125. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q's.2366–9, 2382–4, Cambridgeshire farmer Thurnall's evidence; Q's.3101–5, Smallpiece's evidence; Q's.3796–8, 3888–91, Morton's evidence: cf. Freeland's evidence, *loc.cit.* Gilbert to the PLC with description of planned but aborted Burnham Union, 6 February 1835, PRO. MH.12/380.
 126. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q's.459–60, Brickwell's evidence. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837–8), XVIII, Q's.5838–40, 8479–8508, John Fielden MP's agent Turner's evidence.
 127. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837–8), XVII, Q's.16179, 16264–7, evidence of North Mundham (Sussex) farmer, Chitty. BPP. 'Women and Children', p.248. BPP. House of Commons, select committee report, 'Gilbert Unions', (1844), Vol.X, Q's.2510–1, evidence of G Olliver, Visitor, East Preston (Sussex) Gilbert Union. PLC draft minutes, 1, 2 and 10 January, 30 March, 27 August and 19 October 1846, PRO. MH.2/20; 21; 22.
 128. As Sussex labourer Arnold told MPs in 1837, 'as long as I can get a bit of bread for my family I shall keep them with me'. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837–8), XVII, Q.1831, evidence of Petworth Union vice-chairman Ellis; Q's.12898–902, Arnold's evidence; Q's.13110–2, evidence of Sussex labourer Shawyer. BPP. 'PLC, Fourth Annual Report', (1837–8), Vol. XXVIII, pp.21–2. BPP. 'PLC, Fifth Annual Report', (1839), Vol. XX, pp.3–5. Hollingbourne Union was permitted to provide outdoor flour allowances to one of the largest families of *small* children I have encountered, namely the eight, none of them twins, aged two months to nine years, fathered by Thomas Bigg, but only after potentially costly experiences and therefore *not on the genuinely compassionate grounds* advanced by the Guardians, who allegedly 'fear[ed] the separation from his children will disturb his mind, which has already been once affected'; PLC draft minutes, 19 March 1846, PRO. MH.2/21.
 129. One enthusiastic New Poor-Law administrator, the Clerk to the Driffeld Guardians, favoured the policy, by arguing that given the able-bodied's former 'Habitual dependency' on outdoor relief, assistant commissioner Revans 'cannot be surprized at finding successive generations of parish paupers. It is the duty (as I am sure it will be the object) of the Guardians to

- instil into the minds of the Children who may come into the Workhouse new principles of independence & to teach them to become good subjects & faithful servants'; the Clerk thought that the best relief for men with 'large families sometimes to take one or two of the older children into the workhouse and afterwards send them out to a situation . . . without going back to their parents at the risk of being contaminated by evil example': out-letter book, Clerk to Revans, 23 March 1837, ERCRO. PUD.8/1.
130. The Clerk to the Louth Union volunteered to the PLC in 1837 that 'this seems inevitable for a time, altho' it will ultimately find correction if left by itself by inducing greater prudence and forethought'. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.4808, 4819-21, assistant commissioner Kay's evidence. Cf. BPP. 'Several Cases Alluded to', pp.127-8, Hall's evidence. Copy, Chadwick to Calne Union, 22 April 1835; Clerk, Louth Union to the PLC, 20 December 1837, and draft reply, PRO. MH.12/6738; 13686.
 131. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1837), Q's.2499-3500, 3508-10, evidence farmer Hudson, Newhaven Union; Q.4271, evidence of Clerk, Romford Union.
 132. BPP. 'PLC, Second Annual Report', (1836), Vol.XXIX, pp.18, 58. Assistant Hawley to Horsham Board, 23 July, entered into its minutes, 27 July 1836, WSCRO. WG. 6/1/1.
 133. These were for any 'special Inquiry', requiring the consent of the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and an essential part of the political compromise enabling Peel in 1842 to extend the PLC's remit for five years, by limiting the numbers of assistant commissioners to nine. 5 & 6 Vict. Cap.57, esp. §. II.
 134. Burchardt, esp. pp.55-7, 260, who does not mention the PLC's role, though he does argue that of all the 'useful' parliamentary reports published in the 1840s, this one is the 'most valuable' respecting allotments. The four's territories were: Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Somerset: Kent, Sussex and Surrey: Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincolnshire: Yorkshire and Northumberland. BPP. 'Women and Children', esp. pp.xiii-iv.
 135. K D M Snell, 'Agricultural seasonal unemployment, the standard of living and women's work in the South and East, 1690-1860', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series 34 (1981). *Idem.*, *Annals of the Labouring Poor. Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), Ch.1. N Verdon, *Rural Women Workers in 19th-Century England. Gender, Work and Wages* (2002), esp. pp.22-7, but cf. 102, 106. See also *idem.*, 'The rural labour market in the early nineteenth century: women's and children's employment, family income, and the 1834 Poor Law Report', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series 55, 2 (1981). K Sayer, *Women of the Fields. Representations of Rural Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1996), pp.34-6. Cf. Sharpe, 'Female labour market . . .', esp. pp.164-5, 171-2, 180-1, which argues unconvincingly that demand for female labour on the land was 'limited' both before and after the 1780s, and does not systematically address the issue of the New Poor Law. There is, however, ample evidence from the agricultural depression during the two post-war decades, that securing regular land work for younger lads became increasingly difficult, with the result that adolescent boys' first work experienced was in parish officers' employ on the roads, in quarries and on parish land. Difficulties in securing live-in service appeared first during the

- later years of the war, and worsened after 1815. Wells, 'Social protest . . .', pp.137, 143. Wells, 'Burwash, 1790-1850', pp.175-6, 180-1. Wells, 'Moral economy . . .', pp.239-41.
136. Sayer, *loc.cit.* Verdon, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.63-6. Sharpe, *op.cit.*, p.178.
 137. Verdon, *op.cit.*, pp.16-7, 33, 73, 86-7, 196-7, 218-9. Sharpe, *op.cit.*, pp.175-6. BPP. 'Women and Children', pp.315-6.
 138. *Ibid.*, pp.220-6. Cf. S Banks, 'Nineteenth-century scandal or twentieth-century model? A new look at "Open" and "Close" parishes', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series 40 (1988). See also below, pp.163-5, 174-5.
 139. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q's.12848-9, 12869, Sussex labourer Arnold's evidence.
 140. BPP. 'Women and children', p.17. For Petworth sources, see note 114 above.
 141. Burchardt, pp.38, 41-4, 60. Barnett, *op.cit.*, pp.180-1. Finer, *op.cit.*, pp.86-7.
 142. See also below, pp.151-2. Burchardt, esp. p.221. Brundage, *England's "Prussian Minister"* . . ., p.22. Checklands, *op.cit.*, pp.1-2 (editors' introduction), 293-4. The cites in the text here from the *Report* are also quoted by Barnett, *op.cit.*, p.181.
 143. The Droxford Union's chairman, was the anti-allotment R H Stares, a substantial farmer, though some of his colleagues were providers. For Stares and some of his Boardroom colleagues see below, pp.125-6. Clerk, Droxford, to the PLC, 5 October 1835, and annotation, PRO. MH.12/10751.
 144. Hollingbourne was referred for further substantiation to the 1834 Report. PLC minutes, 15 October 1838, PRO. MH.1/16, pp.44-5. The Commissioners later changed their minds over parish-owned land, on the grounds that it may be required for subsequent parochial 'improvements', notably schools.
 145. PLC minutes, 6 January 1841, *ibid.*, 1/27, p.36.
 146. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', p.vi; Q's.1837, 1841, 1913, 1929, and cf.1870-1, Miles' evidence.
 147. J Broad, 'Housing the rural poor in southern England, 1650-1850', *Agricultural History Review*, 48, II (2000), *passim*, who is also confused, be it for different reasons, over the provisions of the 1835 Act.
 148. For details on the disposal policy in south-east Hampshire, see Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', pp.125-8, 172-3. Leven, in the East Riding, finally disposed of its properties - inherited by the Parish Council in 1894 - in 1965: see correspondence re. sales, and sketch map of four houses on a 1000 square yard central-village site, 1962-5; rent books of various tenants, insurance policies, and various invoices, 1947-65. See also Stamford Bridge, Parish Council file, including correspondence over tenancies and invoices for repairs, 1901-21, ERCRO. PC. 20/13; 22: PC. 23/11. Cf. descriptions of Tetney parish properties, 22 April 1929, and rental accounts, 1897-1977, LCRO. Tetney Par. Co. 3/1; 2; 3.
 149. Burchardt explores this in greater detail in 'Land, labour and politics . . .', pp.109, 115-8, and summarises it in his book, p.115, but cf. p.252 where this legal interpretation is implicitly challenged.
 150. Bishop's Waltham vestry minutes, 21 and 29 November, 6 and 14 December 1832, and 25 March 1861, Hampshire CRO. 30M/77/PV2.
 151. He advocated statutory regulation of farmworkers' wages and corn prices, the latter echoing traditional perceptions of the 'moral economy', for which

- see E P Thompson, 'The "Moral Economy" of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present*, 50 (1971). See also below, pp.145, 171, and esp. notes 222 and 306.
152. The terminology derives from the anticipation of the Act's drafters that big urban parishes would become single-parish Unions; but such petty ambiguities were the repeated source of suits in the senior courts in which actions were taken by the PLC against local authorities, *and vice versa*. A study of this litigious torrent would be helpful.
 153. Ironically, I was alerted to this correspondence by a reference to it in Burchardt's bibliography, p.263: it comprises the only one to PRO. MH.12, [which embraces the massive Somerset House archive], and he fails to cite it in any footnote. Kent to the PLC, 6 February 1839, copying his letter of 28 December 1838 to the chairman: Golding and King to the PLC, 13 April, 5 May, 20 August and 2 November 1840, 2 and 28 January, and 19 February 1841; replies 16 March, 29 May and 20 August, completed forms, 6 and 10 April, and 9 July 1840, 23 January and 2 April 1841, PRO. MH.12/11992. I wish to thank the archivist at the Ipswich RO. for checking the Stowmarket Board's minutes between late December 1838 and early February 1839.
 154. Burchardt, pp.82, 86-7.
 155. For Wayth's radical political activities, see esp. *Maidstone Gazette*, 5 February and 9 July 1833, 3 June, 2 and 9 September 1834.
 156. Wayth became the first Chairman of the Coxheath Union, prior to its incorporation of Maidstone in 1836. Bearsted vestry minutes, 30 July 1834, Centre for Kent Studies (Maidstone), P.18/8/1. *Maidstone Gazette*, 9 September 1834. Tufnell to Lefevre, 21 January 1836, re. Wayth; Droxford doctor Bulbeck to the PLC, 22 October 1834, PRO. MH.12/10751: 32/69. *Hampshire Telegraph*, 13 July 1834. *Sussex Advertiser*, 28 December 1835, 19 and 26 September 1836. Gilbert to Mr and Mrs Lefevre, nd., enclosed by agent Starr, 30 September 1835, H[ouse of] L[ords] RO. Lefevre Mss. SLF/1/4.
 157. Burchardt, esp. pp.41, 60, 62, 88-9, 91-3, 100, 105-6. *Kentish Chronicle*, 5, 12, 19 and esp. 26 May 1835. *Kentish Gazette*, 7 July 1835. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 20 May 1882. See also below, pp.165, 168.
 158. G Howells, 'Emigration and the New Poor Law: the Norfolk emigration fever of 1836', *Rural History*, 11 (2000). Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, pp.100-5, A Redford, *Labour Migration in England, 1800-50*, (2nd edition, 1964, Manchester), pp.105-9, and M E Rose (ed.), *The English Poor Law 1780-1930*, (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp.102, 107-9. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.5003-5, Kay's evidence. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q.5770, evidence of substantial farmer Cooper, Blythburgh. BPP. 'PLC, First Annual Report', (1835), Vol.XXXV, pp.21-3. PLC minutes, 13 November 1835, 16 November 1836 and 17 August 1837, PRO. MH.1/3 (unpaginated); 8, pp.70-1; 12, p.378.
 159. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, p.18. Brundage, *The Making . . .*, pp.151-79; for a different perspective on the 1837-8 select committees, see Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', pp.115-7, 137-59.
 160. Nor the 1838 Lords' select committee, which questioned some witnesses about allotments. BPP. 'Several Cases Alluded to', pp.39-40, evidence of farmer and parish officer, Kingston, of Shalbourne, Berkshire; p.45,

- evidence of Clerk to Hungerford Union; p.258, evidence of chairman, Woodbridge Union, Suffolk.
161. Wells, 'Andover antecedents ...', pp.105-6, 116-36, 225-7. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q's, 3973, 4053-60, 4072-8, former Hambledon assistant overseer Harrison's evidence; Q's, 5062-72, 5533-9, Butler's evidence; Q's 5858-65, evidence of Soberton agricultural labourer, Wild; Q's.7061-9, 8340-1, Stares' evidence; Q.8915, assistant commissioner A'Court's evidence; Q's.9233-8, 10098-117, Wyatt's evidence. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836), Q.11642, Stares' evidence.
 162. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), Vol. XVIII, Q's.8479-8508, 8512, John Fielden's agent Turner's evidence; Q's.11667-8, 11673, evidence of substantial Bedfordshire farmer, Overman. BPP. 'State of Agriculture', (1836) Q's.8180-1, 8356-8, evidence of Duke of Bedford's steward.
 163. Mrs Gilbert figures briefly in Burchardt, pp.70, 157. His figure of her 400 allotments in 1842, suggests a considerable increase on the 124 in 1833, reported in the local press. Her first agent, John Starr - a Cobbettite Radical, a small farmer in his own right, former steward to the deceased Mr Gilbert - was responsible for some publicity. Starr was also an agent for Mrs Gilbert and the Earl of Burlington, in the staggered disposal of land for building purposes in the 1830s and 1840s. Starr had the confidence to write to the Duke of Richmond, denouncing the New Poor Law and praising the United Brothers of Industry: Richmond replied to the effect that the ratepayers "will never allow the interests of the labouring classes to be injured", whereupon Starr delivered a lengthy denunciation of the new Guardians as representing 'the power' of farmworkers' 'Merciless oppressors being increased'. The Duke endorsed this missive as 'not worth answering'. Starr to Richmond, 7 and 10 May 1835, WSCRO. Goodwood Mss.1573. See also, 1844 appeal in Westham settlement case, 1844, ESCRO. QR/E898; BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's.1148-1209, evidence of Jesse Piper, a disabled tailor who had a four-acre smallholding under Mrs Gilbert, and by 1843 he was managing smaller allotments on her behalf. *Brighton Gazette*, 27 June 1833. Note from Starr to Commissioner Lefevre, 30 September 1835, Lefevre Mss. HLRO. SLF/1/4.
 164. See below, pp.177-8.
 165. *Brighton Patriot*, 12 May, 16 June, 7 July and 4 August 1835, 2, 9 and 16 February, and 8 March 1836.
 166. *Ibid.*, 4 April and 20 September 1836.
 167. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1838, 28 May, 11 June and 30 July. Cf. Wells, 'Rural rebels ...', pp.152-3, note 134 and sources cited there. R Wells, 'Southern Chartism', in Rule and Wells, *loc.cit.*, pp.133-7.
 168. Burchardt, pp.95, 100, 105-8, 172-3, 200-6.
 169. Burchardt, pp.202-3. The *Northern Star*, 25 June 1842 and 28 July 1843, did print Leeds clothier and LFS supporter Marshall's eulogy on allotments, and later an account of allotments at Arnold, near Nottingham, on land bought as an investment by a local Friendly Society, for rental by members.
 170. Burchardt, pp.199-210. The citation (my emphasis) is from a longer one in M Chase, "'Wholesome Object Lessons': the Chartist Land Plan in retrospect", *English Historical Review*, CCVIII, (2003), p.59; for a recent and valuable re-assessment of the Land Plan, see *idem*, "'We only wish to work for ourselves': the Chartist Land Plan", in Chase and Dyck, *op.cit.*, pp.133-48.

171. J F C Harrison, 'Chartism in Leicester', in A Briggs (ed.), *Chartist Studies* (1959), p.100.
172. Except where indicated, this evidence underpins the paragraph: BPP. 'Report from the Commissioner . . . into the Condition of the Framework Knitters', (1845), Vol.XV, Q's.1456-62, evidence of 'Sham-knit branch' knitter, Roberts, Leicester; Q's.817-22, evidence of hosier Biggs, Leicester; Q's. 1703-8, evidence of wrought-hose knitter, Cave, Leicester; Q's.4260-4, 4311-6, Hinckley's biggest hosier Sills' evidence; Q's.4334-6, 4375-8, 4390-1, Hinckley hosier, Woodcock's evidence. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.16634-40, 16783-4, evidence of Leicester hosier, Rawson.
173. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', (1845), Q's.3435, 3443, evidence of 'child's sock branch' knitter, and Thurmaston trade-union delegate, Upton. Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.100, 104.
174. While frames had commanded prices of £9 at auction in 1815, they fell to £6 by 1826-7, and to a mere £4 in 1840; thereafter, the price dropped to little more than a pound on occasion. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', Q.533, evidence of Leicester banker, Allen; Q's.1691-3, 1700, Cave's evidence; Q's.4242, relieving officer Vann's evidence; Q's.4280-3, Sills' evidence; Q's.4461-2, evidence of Hinckley frame-smith, Boulton Brooks.
175. Ironically, children's usefulness was inflated by that original stimulus to hosiery knitters' Luddism, the notorious cut ups, namely the partial replacement of entire items produced on the frame, to parts thereof, which were then sewn together; children commenced sewing at six, and by the age of eight they could 'seam' faster than their mothers. Seaming by children and wives was *not* restricted to those of frame-working fathers, a fact reflected in the former's weekly contributions to family budgets of under two shillings in 1838. *Ibid.*, Q's.4243, 4245, Vann's evidence; Q.4499, evidence of Hinckley Non-conformist minister, Salt; Q.4523, medical officer Cotterell's evidence. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.16821-2, 16839, 16853-4, evidence of 'operative' and 'small owner' of frames, John Swain, Burbage.
176. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', Q's.813-4, 821, Bigg's evidence; Q.4446, evidence of Hinckley substantial slum landlord, Smith.
177. *Ibid.*, Q's.4229-31, 4233-7, 4248, Vann's evidence; Q's.4442-6, 4451, Smith's evidence; Q's.4469-74, evidence of Hinckley draper, Grimes; Q's.4493, Salt's evidence; Q's.4507-13, Cotterell's evidence.
178. *Ibid.*, Q.4245, Vann's evidence. P Lane, 'Work on the margins; poor women and the informal economy of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Leicestershire', *Midland History*, 22 (1997), p.95. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, appendix 1, pp.43-5 of 48th report, petition of Leicester clergy, hosiers and others.
179. *Ibid.*, Q's.16720-1, Rawson's evidence. For non-resident relief more generally, see esp. J S Taylor, 'A different kind of Speenhamland', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), which focuses on the North, though the practice was universal: see also R Wells, 'Migration, the law and parochial policy in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century southern England', *Southern History*, 15 (1993), pp.103-7.
180. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', Q's.62-44, evidence glove branch knitter, Smith, Leicester; Q's.1696-8, Cave's evidence; Q.3442, Upton's evidence.

181. Letters to the PLC from, assistant commissioner Hall, 15 January 1836, Hinckley Union Clerk, Benjamin Law, 17 August 1837, and assistant commissioner Senior, 16 December 1839, PRO. MH.12/6443; 6444.
182. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.2088-94, 2166-71, 2180-95, 2348-56, 2448, 16954, 16972-3, 16976-7, 16985, 17012-20, 17061, Hall's evidence; Q's.16436-7, 16441-51, 16602, 16634-40, Rawson's evidence; Leicester petition, *loc.cit.*
183. Framework knitters' homes were mainly excused from poor-law rating, but in 1829, the farmers of Hinckley itself used their numerical supremacy and their landlords' support, to obtain a Local Act, whose principal clause gave the vestry the option of compelling the owners of stockings' cottages to pay the rate. Law to the PLC, and Chadwick, 7 and 27 September 1842; there is a copy of the Local Act in PRO. MH.12/6444; 6445 (fifteen page Act, 10 Geo IV, royal assent, 13 April 1829). BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.405-7, Gulson's evidence; Q's.2042-5, 2066-71, 2310, Hall's evidence; Q.16424, Rawson's evidence; Q's.17001-2, Swain's evidence.
184. *Ibid.*, Q's.16695-704, Rawson's evidence. Hall, and Union auditor, to the PLC, 15 January 1836 and 18 December 1837, PRO. MH.12/6443.
185. Slipman had served a year's imprisonment for 'stupefying' his children's governess with drugs, and then having sex with her. Undated, unsigned note re. Slipman; Stevens to the PLC, 13 and 30 December 1836, and 5 February 1837, PRO. MH.12/6443.
186. Printed list of outdoor relief recipients, 20 February, and PLC draft instructional letter to Hinckley, 16 June 1837, *ibid.* BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q.16934, Hall's evidence.
187. That at Earl Shilton had been converted into nine tenements, while those at Sharnford and Stony Stanton, were respectively turned into four and five 'houses'; undated (but 1838) descriptive list of Hinckley Union workhouses, PRO. MH12/6443.
188. Letters to the PLC from Hall, 25 January, Stevens, 14 December, and Law 28 April 1836, 7 June and 11 October; Hall to Commissioner Nicholls, 15 July 1837, *ibid.*
189. See above, p.125.
190. Law to the PLC, 14 April, and Stevens to Nicholls, 13 May 1837, PRO. MH.12/6443.
191. Original emphasis. Hinckley Union handbill, and Stevens to Nicholls, 11 and 13 May; Union auditor Jarvis, to Stevens and to Edwin Chadwick, 12 and 18 May, and to the PLC, 9 June: letters to the PLC from Law, 7, 15 and 22 June, and Union chairman, 10 June; draft, PLC to Law, 13 June. The county's first assistant commissioner, Hall, was brought back to Leicestershire to help-out Stevens; Hall's notes, 12 June 1837, *ibid.* BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.2180-95, 2448, Hall's evidence; Q.16441, Rawson's evidence.
192. Law to the PLC, 29 June, 6, 13, 20 and 27 July, 3 (and draft reply), 17 and 31 August; Hall to Nicholls, 15 July 1837, PRO. MH.12/6443.
193. The Stoke Guardians, several of whom were major potters, used the new Union to cripple a strike by the powerful National Union of Operative Potters. R Fyson, 'Unionism, class and community in the 1830s: aspects of the National Union of Operative Potters', in Rule (ed.), *British Trade Unionism* . . . , esp. pp.209-17.

194. BPP. 'PLC Third Annual Report', (1837), Vol.XXXI, pp.5-9. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.16428-51, Rawson's evidence; Q's.2180-95, Hall's evidence. Leicester petition, *loc.cit.*
195. Letters to the PLC from Law, 21 (with printed address re. workhouse issue to Union ratepayers) and 28 September, and 27 October 1837, 9 April, 2, 7, 16, 23 and 30 May, 18 June, 2 and 10 July, 17 September, 30 October and 6 November 1838, 2 January, 12 February (and Steven's annotations) and 12 November 1839, with replies, 11 October and 2 November 1837, 21 April and 29 May 1838; Stevens, 27 April and 16 October 1837, 14 July, 17 September and 29 December 1838, and 16 December 1839; auditor, 31 May 1838 (and Steven's annotations): Stevens to Nicholls, and reply, 28 and 29 May 1838, PRO. MH.12/6443; 6444.
196. Petition signed by thirty men, enclosed Law to the PLC, 18 August 1840, seeking 'advice on changing the established dietary at the request of Inmates', and Senior's annotation, PRO. MH.12/6444.
197. Clerk, Leicester Union to Law, 4 December; Law to the PLC, and reply, 11 and 15 December 1839; letters to the PLC from Law, 4 and 30 March, 8 April, 11 June, 3 and 8 July, and 20 October 1840, Senior, 16 December 1839, 30 March, 23 June, 8 and 27 July. Chadwick to Law, 13 June and 10 July, and Law to Senior, 25 June 1840, PRO. MH.12/6444.
198. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', Q's.1694-7, Cave's evidence; Q.3439, Upton's evidence. Law to the PLC, 7 October 1840, and Chadwick's draft reply, PRO. MH.12/6444.
199. Senior to the PLC, 4 and 31 December 1840, and 8 January; Law to the PLC, Senior's annotations, and reply, 10 and 17 February 1841, *ibid.*
200. Mayor of Leicester to the PLC, 11 June; Law to Weale, 28 June and 27 July; Weale to the PLC, 24 June; J Pratt *et al.* to Hinckley Board, 10 June 1842, PRO. MH.12/6444. Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.111-4, 121-2. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', Q.4219, Law's evidence.
201. *Ibid.*, Q's.4383-4, 4393-5, 4399, Woodcock's evidence; Q's.4502-4, Salt's evidence; Q's.4210, 4216, Law's evidence. Letters to the PLC from Law, 19, 26 and 29 September, and 15 October, and Weale, 4 October and 31 December 1842, PRO. MH.12/6444.
202. See above, p.115.
203. BPP. 'Framework Knitters', Q's. 4049, 4053, Foxon's evidence. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's.1471-3, 1490, Brooks' evidence.
204. *Ibid.*, Q.1659, and cf. Q.1706, Orange's evidence.
205. Brooks, had previously been involved in negotiations with the Hinckley Board on behalf of his fellow inmates. Curiously, Burchardt cites *part* of Brook's statement about 'even those in the stone-yard' wanting allotments, possibly without understanding what it was. Burchardt, esp. pp.204-6; see also, BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's.1625, 1646, Orange's evidence; BPP. 'Framework knitters', Q's.4011-2, Foxon's evidence. Weale to the PLC, nd. but 24 July 1842, PRO. MH.12/6444.
206. Pratt *et.al.* to the Board of Guardians, clearly at the latter's insistence, and Law to Weale, 10 and 22 July 1842, PRO. MH.12/6444.
207. According to the *Northern Star*, only Earl Shilton and Burbage in the Union had formally-constituted Chartist Associations, though the paper added that poverty prevented many knitters from paying the entrance fee. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.110, note 7. *Northern Star*, 18 June, 9 and 16 July 1842.

- Law to Weale, and Weale to the PLC, 22 and 24 July 1842, PRO. MH.12/6444. BPP. 'Framework knitters', Q.4432, Hinckley hosier Vernon's evidence.
208. Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.110-6. Blaby Union Clerk to Weale, 28 June 1842, PRO. MH.12/6444.
209. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's.1667-73, 1760-5, Orange's evidence: cf. Q's. 1478, 1520, 1529, Brook's evidence: Q's.1468-70, for his appointment as schoolmaster.
210. Burchardt, p.204.
211. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's. 1674-80, 1702, Orange's evidence.
212. *Ibid.*, Q's.1440-5, Brooks' evidence.
213. *Ibid.*, Q's.1439, 1496, 1603, Brooks' evidence. BPP. 'Framework knitters', Q's.4000-6, Hinckley Union Clerk Law's evidence.
214. *Ibid.*, Q's.4218-20, Law's evidence; Q's.4297-9, Sils' evidence.
215. *Ibid.*, Q.1441, Brooks' evidence; Q's.4000-5, Foxon's evidence; Q.4529, medical officer Cottrell's evidence.
216. BPP. 'Women and Children', pp.331-2, testimony of Northallerton land-agent/farmer and Poor Law Guardian, who supported the allotment-providing incumbent.
217. Burchardt, pp.107, 178 note 3, 207. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q's.1457-8, Brooks' evidence; Q's.1622-3, 1626-7, 1643, 1682, 1693, Orange's evidence.
218. *Ibid.*, Q.1779, rules of Orange's Society. BPP. 'Framework knitters', Q.4012, 'Hinckley Labourers' and Artizans' Friend Society' rules. See also below, p.154.
219. For examples, see BPP. 'Framework knitters', Q's.1466, 1694-5, 3433, respectively Leicester knitters, Roberts, Cave and Sayes; Q's. 1574-6, 3439, 6949, 7215, respectively knitters from Huncote, Thurmaston, Great Glen and Barlestone.
220. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVIII, Q's.65-7, 204, 782-3, Gulson's evidence; Q's.3287-8, Power's evidence.
221. Law to the PLC, 29 January, 19 February, 17 March (and Weale's annotations), and reply 2 February; Weale to the PLC, 25 January and 11 February 1847, PRO. MH.12/6446.
222. Wells, *Wretched Faces* . . . , p.326, and sources cited there. Cf. E Richards, '1847 food riots', in A Charlesworth (ed.), *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900* (1983), pp.108-11, and G Doye, "Throw out your bread, throw out your tommy": the Torquay food riots of 1847', above, pp.62-84. Joseph Sturge, the Birmingham Quaker banker and corn-merchant, former anti-Corn Law Leaguer and leader of the ephemeral Complete Suffrage Movement - 'a kind of middle-class Chartism' in 1842-3 - was one alleged speculator and targeted by name in the Tory press. In fact Sturge was a corrupt speculator in 1832, who had invested £1000 to 'a coalition of corn merchants in various ports' centred on Liverpool, in order to force prices up to open the ports for grain imports at the low token duty under the Corn Laws. This only came to light as his donation was embezzled by a clerk. A Tyrrell, *Joseph Sturge and the Moral Radical Party in Early Victorian Britain* (1987), p.31. M Hovell, *The Chartist Movement* (Manchester, 1918, 3rd edition, introduced by W H Chaloner), pp.240-50, 255-6. See also below, p.177, and note 306.

223. The maintenance of public as opposed to turnpiked roads remained under parish vestries and funded from the highway rate; it comprised an immediately-exploited legal loophole, whereby the unemployed could be put to work by highway surveyors without any reference to Boards of Guardians or Somerset House. Indeed, Union relieving officers often unofficially referred the unemployed on their first claim, to the surveyors, much to the chagrin of the assistant commissioners; 'The Highways rate is . . . indirectly and unfairly converted into a poor rate. . . . The shifts and shufflings of these people to defeat the . . . Law are abominable'. J V Moseley, 'Poor Law Administration in England and Wales 1834 to 1850 with Special Reference to the Problem of Able-bodied Pauperism', (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1975), esp. pp.33-4, 201-5, 216-42. Cf. Wells, 'Resistance . . .', pp.122-4 and sources cited there. Pressure from the PLC convinced Melbourne's government of the need to put control of the roads under the Poor Law Union Boards, and the issue was investigated by a Commons select committee appointed in November 1837 during the short post-general election Session; it heard evidence in the next, on three days in early May 1838. Almost all of it was given by PLC employees, including Chadwick, the lawyer Tidd-Pratt and several assistant commissioners, who all emphasised the threat the current system of highway maintenance posed to New Poor-Law principles and objectives. Some of its critics among committee members seized the chance to quiz the witnesses on various contested aspects of the Law's implementation, exemplified by the Tory MPs for West Cumberland and North Cheshire, respectively Edward Stanley and W Tatton Egerton's queries over the recent and common complaint of the huge geographical size of some Unions. It elicited a curious admission from Chadwick, to the effect that if all the Guardians constituting Boards for such Unions attended every meeting, 'the attendance would be too large for the despatch of business', though he added carefully – and duplicitously – that there was 'no instance . . . [of] the non-attendance of an adequate number' to take decisions. Only one other witness appeared, namely a civil engineer, who argued that such an innovation would professionalise road maintenance. The complexity of the Bill generated a fertile theatre for opponents, many of whom asserted that Union Boards already had too much power, and the Bill proved be another example of legislative proposals that Melbourne's weakening government was unable to drive through the Commons. BPP. 'Bill to Amend Laws Relating to Highways', and four versions of amended Bills, (1837-8), Vol.IV, pp.361ff. BPP. House of Commons, select committee report, 'Highways Act of 4 & 5 William IV, Cap.50', (1837-8), Vol.XXIII, esp. Q's.162-7, Chadwick's evidence; Q's.242-92, surveyor and engineer Dean's evidence. Hansard, 3rd series vol.45, (1839), esp. cols.1319-26; vol.47, cols.499-503.
224. Somerset House recommended that broken stone should be sold to the highway surveyors. As individual Guardians were usually powerful figures in their parochial constituencies, they commonly had the political clout to engineer vestry decisions to offer road-work to the unemployed.
225. Law to the PLC, 6, 16 and 25 May, 1, 14, 19 and 22 June, 7 and 20 July; replies 12 and 28 May 1847, PRO. MH.12/6446.
226. Law to the PLC, 10 and 27 (twice) November, 11 and 14 December 1847, 1 January and 17 March 1848, *ibid*.

227. Curiously, the new Poor Law Board referred this to their secretary George Nicholls, the former Commissioner; he dealt with the issue. Law to the PLB[oard] (and Weale's and Nicholls' annotations), and reply 5 April 1848, *ibid.*
228. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.110, note 7. BPP. 'Allotments of Land', Q.1613, Brooks' evidence.
229. Quote from Burchardt, p.225.
230. Burchardt, pp.217-20
231. R Claridge, *A General View of the Agriculture of . . . Dorset*, (1793), p.22.
232. *The Times*, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20 and 21 September 1846. PLC draft minutes, 11 June 1846, PRO. MH.2/21.
233. Wells, 'Tolpuddle . . .', pp.119-23. *Dorset County Chronicle*, 10 and 17 September, and 29 October 1846. This Dorset resurgence is briefly mentioned by Burchardt, pp.57-8, based exclusively on the *Labourers' Friend*, previously the *Labourers' Friend Magazine*.
234. *Dorset County Chronicle*, 29 October 1846.
235. PLC draft minutes, 8 June, 19 and 26 October and 2 November 1846, PRO. MH.2/22.
236. Boards of Guardians minutes: Ashbourne, 23 January 1847, Derbyshire CRO. C520/CW/1/1: Ticehurst. 6, 13 and 20 May, and 3 June 1847, ESCRO. G10/1a/4: Chelmsford, 5, 12 and 19 January 1847, ECRO. G/Ch/M6. Clerk, Ticehurst, to the PLC, 19 February, 22 (and annotations), and reply 26 May: annual workhouse report, 7 May 1847, PRO. MH.12/13143.
237. Gower to Carnarvon, nd (but October) and 19 November 1845, and 27 December 1846, HCRO. 75M91, E26/75, 78, 85.
238. P Richards, 'The state and early industrial capitalism: the case of the handloom weavers', *Past and Present*, 83 (1979), pp.91-115, *passim*. My understanding of parliamentary realities is partly conditioned by three doctoral theses, whose authors unsurprisingly do not sing from the same song-sheet: rather oddly, none of them reflect the deep and enduring concern of politicians from across the spectrum over social welfare issues. R H Cameron, 'Lord Melbourne's Second Administration and the Opposition 1837-41', (Unpublished PhD. thesis, University of London, 1970). I D C Newbould, 'The Politics of the Cabinets of Grey and Melbourne, and Ministerial Relations with the House of Commons 1830-1841', (Unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Manchester, 1971). P M Gurowich, 'Party and Independence in the Early and Mid-Victorian House of Commons', (Unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1986).
239. Richards, *loc.cit.* BPP. 'Reports with Appendices of the Assistant Commissioners on the Handloom Weavers in Eastern and South-western England, the West Riding of Yorkshire and Germany', (1840), pt.iii, Vol.XXIII, Mugeridge, pp.579-89, 594-8, 601, 603-7. BPP. 'Reports with Appendices of the Assistant Commissioners on the Handloom Weavers. Mr Hickson on the Condition of the Handloom Weavers', (1840), pt.vi, Vol.XXIV, pp.6-7, 12-3, 20-2.
240. Cited, Burchardt, p.260, without any apparent recognition of Doyle's target.
241. During the prolonged debates accompanying the passage of the 1842 Act, Ferrand made many contributions; he attributed the Tory victory to voters' 'detestation' and 'deep rooted hatred' of the New Poor Law, and declaimed

- against the government's proposed retention of the assistant commissioners. He voted against the second reading, and subjected Graham to vigorous interrogation at committee stages. See esp. speeches on 11 February, 17, 20, 27 and 28 June 1842, Hansard, 3rd series (1842), vol.60, cols.295-6; vol.63, cols.433-4, 572-4, 687-8; vol.64, cols.259, 693.
242. 5 & 6 Vict. C.18: 5 & 6 Vict. C.57, royal assents respectively 13 May and 30 July 1842. See also Burchardt, 'Land, labour, politics . . .', pp.107-14, but cf. 121-2, though he seems to be oblivious to both the predominant attitude among the Whigs towards allotments during the legislative inertia in the late 1830s, and to the political ramifications of Melbourne's replacement by Peel. A H Hadfield, *The Chartist Land Company* (Newton Abbot, 1970), pp.16-7.
243. Burchardt, pp.96, 221-7.
244. Especially his interrogation of former Hambledon assistant-overseer Harrison, and presently governor of Bishop's Waltham workhouse, retained by the Droxford Union while its new central institution was erected; BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837-8), XVII, Q's.4053-60.
245. Hansard, 3rd series vol. 82, (1845), cols.1419-28.
246. Cited, F E Green, 'The allotment movement', *Contemporary Review*, 114 (1918), p.90.
247. Burchardt, p.96. Burchardt, 'Land, labour, politics . . .', pp.107-14.
248. BPP. 'First Report of the Royal Commissioners on the Agricultural Depression', (1894, c7400-1), Vol. XVI, pt.i, Q's 3634-7, Ingram's evidence. For allotment retraction, see also below, p.165. Burchardt, table 16, pp.224-5 gives an 1873 figure of 2,782 allotments embracing 519 acres in the whole of Sussex.
249. Rotherfield 'Allotment Garden' administration book, ESCRO. Par.465/16/1. Such records must have been very numerous, though no doubt often passed from incumbent to incumbent, some of whom may have kept them in parish chests. A fragment entitled 'Allotment Rent Audit for April 1867' is all that survives at Etton, listing eleven allottees, two of them women, for plots from one and a half to five and a half roods, at rented at 4/6 per rood. However, more records survive after the passage of the 1887 Allotment and the 1894 Parish Councils Acts. Under the latter the new Councils inherited vestry real estate, including allotments. Under both Acts the Board and subsequently the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, issued model management rules, which included Council sub-committees' responsibilities respecting identifying allottees by lot if necessary. As with Poor Law administration books, private printing firms produced designer volumes for allotment managers' use. South Cave records include model regulations re. Acts from 1887-1907, Allotment Regulations 31 March 1898, and a completed 'Register Of Applications' (marketed by Shaw and Sons of London): correspondence respecting Stamford Bridge reveals that the Parish Council favoured its own housing tenants when allocating allotments in 1921; chairman Pocklington Rural District Council to chairman Stamford Bridge Parish Council, nd and T Dresser to A W Longstaff, 8 March 1921; ERCRO. PE. 52/86: PC. 20/151; 16/29; 41: PC. 23/1.
250. This and the following paragraph are based on Rotherfield administration book, *loc.cit.*, annual lists of allottees, from 1854 with allotment numbers, and specific entries, 17 February 1844, 'Remarks' 1850-1, 1852-3, 10 January 1857, 25 and 26 October 1867, 2 May and 20 June 1885.

- 250^A Such stipulations respecting allottees' conduct and social profiles on schemes administered by Rectors appears to have been widespread and enduring. A Digby, 'The local state', in E J T Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 1850-1914*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2000), II, pp.1426-8.
251. Such parochial committees 'to review the out door Poor Relief List' at least annually, seem to have been common. Hampsted vestry minutes, 5 October 1846, ECRO. D/P 314/8/3. In 1883, and in response to the depression, Egerton attended a similar meeting at the Bell; they 'Reduced a few cases, hard to ye indivi[duals] but really only justice'; Wells, *Victorian Village* . . . , pp.34, 272, 288.
252. *Ibid.*, pp.28-9, 36, 43, 56, 78. Wells, 'Burwash, 1790-1850', pp.182-3, 190-4. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 10 June and 27 October 1838, 11 October 1856.
253. For example, *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 29 May and 12 June 1883, cricket match report, and his chairing of the Burwash Club's dinner; Egerton was a cricket lover, and in September 1882 travelled to Tunbridge Wells to see the Australian touring side dismissed for under 50, though rain ensured a draw; Wells, *Victorian Village* . . . , pp.117, 150, 272, 364.
254. *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 9 and 16 October, 27 November and 4 December 1835, 8 and 22 January, 12 and 26 February, and 1 April 1836. *Lincolnshire Gazette*, 30 October, 6 November, 4 and 11 December 1835. *Leicester Chronicle*, 28 November and 5 December 1835. *Maidstone Gazette*, 21 December 1847, 9 May and 24 October 1848. T Barker, 'Road, rail and cross-channel ferry', in A Armstrong (ed.), *The Economy of Kent 1640-1914* (Woodbridge, 1995), p.141.
255. *Brighton Gazette*, 11 May 1854. Burchardt, pp.187-97. Framfield vestry minutes, 25 March 1863, ESCRO. Par.343/12/2.
256. Andover Allotment Accounts to Michaelmas 1838, undated printed notice, HCRO. 37M85, 12/PL/1. Liberal Party 1867 'Election Reports', cited E Jaggard, 'Small town politics in mid-Victorian Britain', *History*, 89, 1 (2004), pp.24-5. C R Dod, *Electoral Facts 1832-1853 Impartially Stated* (Brighton, 1972 edition, H J Hanham (ed.)), pp.169-70. Cf. P Clark and L Murfin, *The History of Maidstone* (Gloucester, 1995), pp.170, 192, where nineteenth-century allotments are mentioned, without any political consideration of the town's incorporated status or two seat parliamentary constituency.
257. Burchardt, pp.211-3, 229, 236.
258. R Harrison, *Before the Socialists* (1965), p.240. Developments in 1872 generated considerable interest and manoeuvring in long-established metropolitan labour circles. See esp. W Pratt to George Howell, 16 and 20 May, and 4 July 1872, Bishopsgate Institute, London, Howell Mss. in-letters 1872, nos. 33-4, and 39.
259. There are two studies of the KSLU. R Arnold, 'The "Revolt of the Field" in Kent, 1872-1879', *Past and Present*, 64 (1974), pp.71-95, and full chronological coverage in F Carlton, "'A Substantial and Stirling Friend to the Labouring Man". The Kent and Sussex Labourers' Union, 1872-1895', (Unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of Sussex, 1977), and summarised, *idem*, 'The Kent and Sussex Labourers' Union', in Charlesworth, *Atlas* . . . , pp.173-7. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 1 June and 31 August 1872, and 7 November 1874. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 10 June 1876 and 15

- March 1879. E P Thompson, 'Homage to Tom Maguire', in A Briggs and J Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History* (revised edition, 1967), pp.305-6.
260. Simmons to the PLB, 1 August, Stanley's annotations, and draft reply; Ticehurst Clerk to the PLB, 26 August 1873: cf. case revealed in letters to the PLB from Simmons, and Clerk Maidstone Union, 12 and 19 December; PLB to Clerk and Simmons, both 18 December 1873. PRO. MH.12/5207; 13150. Ticehurst Guardians' minutes, 21 August 1873, ESCRO. G10/12/13. Despite the Guardians' apparent capitulation in this case, one might argue that the central board in the later nineteenth century tended to support local Boards which remained committed to utilitarian orthodoxy. In this case, Professor Digby's statement that 'The power of the propertied in the countryside in their control of employment, housing, poor relief and charity, was truly formidable', and bolstered by Petty and Quarter Sessional Benches, which she overlooks as a further ingredient in the maintenance of that power. Digby, *loc.cit.*, pp.1427-8, though cf. 1433.
261. BPP. 'Royal Commission on Agriculture: Minutes of Evidence', Vol.XVII (1881), Qs.59427-32, Simmons' evidence. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 10 June 1876 and 15 March 1879.
262. *The Times*, 12 December 1878. Chadwick, cited by M A Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929* (1981), p.245. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 7 and 14 December 1878.
263. Clerk, Maidstone, to the PLB, and reply, 4 and 13 April; cutting from *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 13 October (no provenance): PLB to Clerk, Maidstone, 22 and 29 October, and replies 26 October and 9 November 1877, PRO. MH.12/5209.
264. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 7 April 1877, 16 March 1878 and 12 September 1885.
265. Verdon, *op.cit.*, pp.67-73, esp. table 2.8. Although she mentions Sussex 'hop work', she also cites the first and second reports of the 1867 Commissioners on the employment of children, young persons, and women to the ambiguous effect that women were 'rarely employed by the farmer'. For hop-pickers' strikes, see *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 28 September 1872. *South Eastern Gazette*, 19 October 1872 and 21 September 1878.
266. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 12 April 1873.
267. Vernon, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.109-14. Cf. Sayer, *op.cit.*, pp.119-20. J Humphries, "'Lurking in the Wings": women in the historiography of the industrial revolution', *Business and Economic History*, 20 (1991). W Seccombe, 'Patriarchy stabilized: the construct of the male bread-winner norm in nineteenth-century Britain', *Social History*, 11 (1986).
268. Arnold, *op.cit.*, p.78, devotes two sentences to this episode. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 25 January, 1 and 8 February 1873.
269. *Ibid.*, 8 and 15 February, 1 and 8 March 1873.
270. Other NALU leaders, anticipated that machine-reaping would eventually reduce women's employment on the land to light jobs during the harvest. Carlton, thesis, p.58, merely cites the 'no rights in the fields' element from Simmons' speech. *South Eastern Gazette*, 12 January 1874. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 15 February, 8 March, 12 and 19 April, 7 and 14 June 1873.
271. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1873 and 29 May 1875. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 13 December 1873. Sayer, *op.cit.*, pp.124-7.

272. Burchardt, table 16, pp.224-5, gives an 1873 total of 4150 allotments in Kent, comprised in 741 acres.
273. BPP. *loc.cit.*, Q's.59303, 59316-7, Simmons' evidence. *The Times*, 14 November 1878. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 2 December 1878 and 20 May 1882. *South Eastern Gazette*, 23 December 1878.
274. Gould was a member of the agricultural society at adjoining Ticehurst (later the Ticehurst Union Agricultural Society) which offered annual prizes for cottage garden and allotment produce, and further awards for the fathers of the largest families who supported them without any poor-relief in each parish. Men from Burwash automatically qualified for the latter annually, and occasionally carried-off horticultural prizes. Wells, *Victorian Village . . .*, p.29. *Tunbridge Wells News*, 13 October 1856. *Sussex Advertiser*, 13 October 1863, 18 October 1864 and 10 October 1865.
275. Hussey was a 'model country gentleman' according to his obituary, who also built new labourers' cottages to replace 'older tenements'. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 15 September 1894 and 18 May 1895. *Tunbridge Wells Gazette*, 13 June 1873 and 9 October 1874. R K I Quisted, *The Isle of Thanet Farming Community. An Agrarian History of Easternmost Kent: Outlines from early Times to 1983* (Wye College, 1996), pp.159-60.
276. Carlton, thesis, pp.62-4. Arnold, *op.cit.*, pp.77-8. Both authors underplay the intensity and duration of this conflict. *The Times*, 10 July 1872. *Labourers Herald*, 18 December 1874. *Tonbridge Free Press*, 25 April 1874 and 16 January 1876. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, esp. 17 July, 18 and 25 September, 18 and 25 December 1875. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 31 May 1882. For divisions at Lamberhurst, see report of Tunbridge Wells Petty Sessions, *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 12 July 1873.
277. This campaign can be traced through the *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 3 January, 7 and 28 February, 14 March, 25 April, 2 and 30 May, 6 and 20 June 1874.
278. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1873, 28 February, 24 April, 2, 9, 16 and 30 May, 6 and 27 June, and 18 July 1874. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 17 September 1875, 7 October 1876 and 1 February 1879. Wells, *Victorian Village . . .*, diary entries, 1 August 1875 and 16 April 1876, pp.161 and note 17, 174 and note 14, and cf. with the tone adopted when the KSLU commenced at Burwash; entries, 22 February and 24 October 1873, pp.135, 141 and note 20.
279. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 27 April, 8 June, 6 July and 5 October 1872, 11 January 1873 and 29 May; for emigrants' letters, see issues of 31 January, 14 February and 7 March 1874, and *Kent and Sussex Times*, 23 September 1876. Arnold, *op.cit.*, p.92. See also, P Horn, 'Agricultural trade unionism and emigration 1872-1881', *Historical Journal*, XV, 1 (1972), pp.92-6, which is principally concerned with the National.
280. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 28 September 1872, 17 and 31 May 1873. Arnold, *op.cit.*, p.80.
281. A Simmons, *Old England and New Zealand* (1879), esp. pp.39-41, 62-7, 80-93. Arnold, *op.cit.*, pp.71, 80-4, 94, and cf. Horn, *op.cit.*, esp. p.88, citing the *Otago Witness*, 28 February 1874.
282. *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 19 July, 2, 16, 23 and 30 August, 13 and 27 September, 4 and 18 October, 8, 22 and 29 November, 13 and 20 December 1873. *South-Eastern Gazette*, 12 January 1874. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 8 July 1873, 22 September and 7 November 1874, and 8 January 1876.

- Tonbridge Free Press, 16 January 1876. P Horn, *Joseph Arch (1926-1919) The Farm Workers Leader* (Kineton, 1971), pp. 113-7. J G O'Leary (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Arch* (1966 edition), pp. 107-8. N Scotland, *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire 1872-1950* (Gloucester, 1991), pp. 48-50. J P D Dunbabin (ed.), *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1974), p. 29; P Horn, 'Agricultural trade unionism in Oxfordshire', in *ibid.*, pp. 112-3.
283. N E Johnson (ed.), *The Diary of Gathorne Hardy, later Lord Cranbrook 1866-1892. Political Selections* (Oxford, 1981), p. 163, entry for 5 July 1872. P Smith, *Disraelian Conservatism and Social Reform* (1967), p. 275.
284. For example, the Wadhurst (Sussex) police-station journal, repeatedly recorded rallies in 1873-4; at the first, the sergeant waited until it dispersed, and 'did not attend the conferencel', namely stipulated liaisons with colleagues on adjacent beats, a situation which recurred on the second occasion 'in consequence of a labourers Union meeting being held in the Yard of the Queens Head Inn': entries 17 and 31 March, 30 June and 25 August 1873, 1 June and 20 July 1874, ESCRO. SPS, 19/1/4.
285. Historians have differing views about what was a later development in craft unions, often adopting sick benefit schemes in the 1860s, as with the General Union of Carpenters and Joiners; G Crossick, *An Artizan Elite in Victorian Society: Kentish London, 1840-1880* (1978), p. 176. Several railway companies provided sick benefits in a calculation principally aimed at deterring trade unionism among their employees, and were imitated by other transport companies, including tramways; they succeeded in retarding unionisation at least. P Bagwell, 'Transport', in C Wrigley (ed.), *A History of British Industrial Relations 1875-1914* (Brighton, 1982), pp. 232-3. Burgess's argument that the considerable funds required for such union schemes were used by full-time officials in 'controlling members' by outmanoeuvring militants, while 'protecting their [own] positions': Simmons certainly came into this category, despite the fact that the KSLU's fund was separate and self-supporting. K Burgess, *The Origins of British Industrial Relations* (1975), p. 309.
286. Arnold, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-5. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 5 September and 3 October 1874, 19 March, 18 June, 16 July, 18 September, 5 and 19 November 1875. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 17 December 1875, 7 January and 28 October 1876, 3 November 1877, 16 October 1880, 1 January and 7 May 1881, 1 April 1882, 6 October 1883 and 3 May 1884. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 3 July 1875. BPP. *loc.cit.*, Q.59169, Simmons' evidence.
287. *Ibid.*, Q's. 59236-62, 59353-5, 61116-7, Simmons' evidence. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 3 September 1875, 4 February, 1 and 8 April, 6 and 20 May, 17 June, 16 September and 28 October 1876, 19 May and 10 November 1877, 20 April 1878, 18 December 1880, 26 March and 7 May 1881, 7, 14 and January, 4 and 11 February, and 25 March 1882, and 12 September 1885.
288. D Walker, *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hertford* (1795), pp. 9, 70. BPP. 'Women and Children', pp. 141-2. Checklands, *op.cit.*, pp. 183-6. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 24 September, 1 and 6 October 1875. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 2 September 1875, 4 February, 1 and 8 April, 6 and 20 May, 9 and 16 September, and 28 October 1876, 19 May 1877, 18 December 1880, 26 March, 7 and 14 May 1881, 7 and 14 January,

- and 11 February 1882, and 12 September 1885. Arnold, *op.cit.*, pp.86–7. Moseley, *op.cit.*, p.136.
289. A National branch attempt to create a co-operative at Sevenoaks in 1873 collapsed; local unionists thereafter argued that further efforts must wait for an anticipated pay rise, and should be distinct from the union. A National local co-operative at Andover came to nothing too; however, the Co-operative movement itself was well established in part of the National's key areas, notably in Oxfordshire, and the CWS leadership strongly supported agrarian trade unionism. *Labourers Union Chronicle*, 8 November 1873. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 28 March 1874, 16 September and 14 October 1876. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 9 September, 28 October and 9 December 1876, 20 January and 3 February and 7 June 1877, 25 March, 13 April and 20 July 1878. Horn, *op.cit.*, pp. 39, 58, 67. M Bee, 'Co-operation in Oxfordshire, 1860–1913', *Southern History*, 20–21 (1998–9), pp.189–215.
290. Although Simmons' first recorded speech focusing on the franchise was delivered at the inaugural branch meeting at Sandhurst in March 1873, copies of the *Messenger* are unavailable for October–December 1872; however, the timing in 1873 followed Simmons' engagement in repeated meetings aimed to create a Federation of agrarian unions – including the National – under the auspices of the London Trades Council between December 1872 and March 1873. In January 1874 he was among fifty union leaders in a private conference with Gladstone on the franchise question, shortly before he lost office. Later that month, Simmons shared a franchise platform with Liberal grandee Sir John Bennett at Cranbrook. In November the *Messenger* anticipated a powerful national franchise campaign, though it was not until 1875 that Simmons regularly spoke on the issue, carefully invoking Gladstone's advice that it should be agitated. By way of contrast, the National's branch at Alton, Hampshire, was petitioning parliament over the franchise as early as January 1873. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 5 April 1873, 24 January, 30 May and 21 November 1874. *Labourers Herald*, 27 November 1874. *The Beehive*, 10 March 1873. *Surrey and Hants News*, 11 January 1873. *South Eastern Gazette*, and *Sussex Advertiser*, 10 and 13 January 1874. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 16 April 1875.
291. Burchardt, briefly refers to Collings, pp.145, 212. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 31 January 1880, 28 February, 14 June, 16 and 23 July, and 25 October 1881, 4 and 11 March, 20 May and 30 September 1882, 11 March and 12 May 1883, and 19 January 1884. See also, J R Fisher, 'Agrarian politics', and J V Beckett, 'Agricultural management and estate management', in Collins (ed.), *op.cit.*, I, pp.345–55, 698.
292. The dust cover of E F Biagini's, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform. Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880*, (Cambridge, 1992), despite its chronological limits, derives from a photograph of the Hyde Park rally, in which one of the KSLU's one hundred banners – 'Will the Lords Defy the Labourers' – figures prominently.
293. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 9 June 1873, 3, 17 and 24 May, 28 June, 5, 12, 19 and 26 July, and 2 August 1884. *Daily Chronicle*, 22 July 1884. P Coltman (ed.), *The Diary of a Prison Governor; James William Newham, 1825–90* (Kent County Council, 1984), pp.186–7, 191, entries 17 and 26 May 1875, and 22 June 1883.

294. Biagini, *op.cit.*, pp.185–6 and note 276.
295. This and the following paragraph are based on, *Kent and Sussex Times*, 13 and 20 December 1884, 3 and 17 January, 14 and 21 March, 9 May, 12 September, 3, 17 and 31 October, 14 November and 5 December 1885, 2 January, 26 June and 10 July 1886, and 29 January 1887. *Sussex Advertiser*, 6 and 13 July, 26 and 28 September, 5 October and 23 November 1885, 7 and 14 July 1886, and 22 August 1887. *Hastings and St. Leonard's Times*, 21 and 28 November, and 5 December 1885. *Canterbury Journal*, 7 and 21 November 1885. *The Times*, 26 October 1885. M Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism: the Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain 1885–1894* (1975), pp.218–9. P Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government. Lord Salisbury's Domestic Statecraft 1881–1902* (1978), pp.154, 188–90. M Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics 1867–1939* (1982), p.10. Smith, *op.cit.*, pp.175–6.
296. Barker, *loc.cit.*
297. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 9 June 1883 and 19 January 1884. *Sussex Advertiser*, 19 and 30 June, 3, 7 and 14 July 1886, 21 February, 7 March and 22 August 1887. Marsh, *op.cit.*, p.207 and note 98.
298. See esp. the report of a meeting of farmers at Limpsfield in the early eighties who agreed reduce current wages of between 2/6 and three shillings to one shilling, with 'piecework cut in proportion', fully reported in the Tory *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 14 October 1882.
299. BPP. *loc.cit.*, Q's.59270–301, 61339–50, Simmons evidence. For the enduring hatred of threshing machines, see above, p.157. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 22 June 1872, 16 August 1873 and 18 July 1874. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 6 August 1875 and 29 July 1876.
300. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 2 October 1880, 26 March 1881 and 9 June 1883. Quisted, *loc.cit.* BPP. 'Royal Commission ... Agriculture', (1881), Vol.XIV, Q's.56507–13, Whitehead's evidence.
301. *Sussex Advertiser*, 26 September 1887. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 17 July 1886 and 29 January 1887. *Kent Times*, 23 July 1887. Wells, *Victorian Village ...*, esp. pp.356–8 and sources cited there. A V John, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Woman Workers at Victorian Coal Mines* (1984 edition), esp. Ch.V.
302. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 3 and 12 December 1887. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 4 December 1886, 22 and 29 January, 26 February, 26 March, 23 April and 23 July 1887. *Kent Times*, 30 July, and 17 December 1887, 11 February, 17 March 1888, and 29 March 1890. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 9 November 1889, 11 January and 20 September 1890, and 14 February 1891. *Maidstone and Kentish Journal*, 11 June 1888. Carlton, thesis, pp.135–9, 152–3, 161–70. Clark and Murfin, *loc.cit.*
303. *South Eastern Gazette*, 3 July 1875, 25 November and 2 December 1878; in the latter year it argued that farmers' attempts to crush the KSLU were counter-productive, first because the rights of workers to organise were legally recognised, and secondly that unions were 'powerless to alter [free market] economic laws'. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 15 July 1882.
304. Scotland, *op.cit.*, pp.33, 48–9, though he juxtaposes allotments and small-holdings. N A D Scotland, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field* (Gloucester, 1980), pp.120–1. Brown, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.71, 192.
305. See above, p.132.
306. Wells, *Wretched Faces ...*, pp.92, 95 and sources cited there. Thompson, 'Moral economy of the crowd ...', *passim*. A J Coles, 'The moral economy

of the crowd; some 20th century food riots', *Journal of British Studies*, XVIII (1978). In 1835, it was said that London's main corn exchange at Mark Lane was dominated by 'quakers [who] have for a length of time had the controul . . . and they can regulate its process accordingly, as they have succeeded in producing a security in the market by the power of their insatiable monopolising spirit', R Huish, *The History of the Private and Public Life of Henry Hunt . . .*, (1835), cited Tyrrell, *op.cit.*, p.28. For the 1801 parliamentary investigation into Mark Lane, see Wells, *op.cit.*, pp.196–201. See also later nineteenth-century press reports of concerted action against allegedly profiteering butchers, where the question was whether they were conspiring against consumers, or rising prices reflected shortages; a movement was launched in colliery villages in the North-east by the women, who 'look upon the entire fraternity of butchers as their natural enemies' (my emphasis). At Wigan, where miners and their wives were also principally involved, it was agreed at a meeting convened by the public crier in the Wesleyan School hall, that any woman who purchased beef at over seven pence the pound 'should forfeit her husbands wages for a week' – subsequently changed to being burned in effigy – action which had succeeded at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Bolton and in the Midlands. At Leigh the chairman, silk-weaver Collier, warned against following action at Birmingham of taking 'the meat from those that purchased it, and afterwards break their windows'; while 550 women assembling at Hindley, also in Lancashire, decided to use a hall without their men-folk – as "more becoming our sex" – who were sent to demonstrate in the market-place. An historically-minded Rochdale retail butcher, who accused wholesalers of withholding to drive-up prices, sagely observed that 'really we are fighting the old battle of free trade over again'. *Wigan Observer*, 19 and 26 July 1871. Cf. J E Cronin, 'Strikes 1870–1914', in Wrigley, *op.cit.*, p.77. See also above, p.145 and note 222.

307. Neeson, integrates cites from Clare's poetry and prose into her analysis, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.3, 5–6, 11–2, 41, 59, 172, 179 and note 79, 284–5, 290, 297, 325 and note 87. Cf. A Howkins and I Dyck, "The Time's Alteration": popular ballads, rural radicalism and William Cobbett', *History Workshop Journal*, 23 (1987), pp.20–38, and Dyck, 'Town and country . . .', pp.84–5.
308. D R Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth-century Britain* (1980), esp. Ch.4.
309. *Brighton Patriot*, 3 March 1835. Moore to Lewis, 23 September 1835, PRO. MH.12/12747.
310. In Buckinghamshire, paper-maker John Dafter's profile was 'a pattern for all poor working men for having devoted his leisure hours to building himself a cottage and enclosing a garden on . . . waste', granted by the Lord of the Manor on the grounds of his family commitments, which virtually ended his need for public assistance while raising twelve children. Unusually, for a paper-maker, Dafter had 'at no time evinced an inflammatory or jacobinical Spirit, but on the contrary has ever been well affected to his King, the Laws, and the Constitution': R Wheeler, and J Kay, both of High Wycombe, to Melbourne enclosing Dafter's and others' petitions, 28 and 29 January 1831; petition of Charles Heath and John Diddams, Bullington, Hampshire, nd. but early 1839, PRO. HO.17/50, pt.i; 91.
311. BPP. 'Agriculture', (1836), Q's.10841–5, 10852–3, Denison's evidence. BPP. 'Amendment Act', (1837–8), XVIII, Q's.8292–6, 8382–91, 8456–63,

- Turner's evidence. BPP. 'Royal Commission . . . Agriculture', Vol. XIV, Q's. 540-565, Chichester's evidence. Cf. Winstanley, *op.cit.*, *passim*.
312. A point made during the parliamentary passage of the New Poor Law, by Althorp – the minister responsible in the Commons – to secure plural voting, with the assertion that owners had 'infinitely more interest in the administration of parochial concerns' than transient tenants; in response Cobbett claimed that territorial magnates 'would not trust the farmers with their own affairs, and their disposal of their own money less they might be tempted to pay the labour out of rent'. Brundage, *The Making . . .*, pp. 61-3, 67, and cf. 73. For Cobbett as a vestryman, see above, p. 90, and Liddle, *op.cit.*, pp. 37, 64, 83, 97-9.
313. Wells, 'Andover antecedents . . .', pp. 107-9. Wells, 'Social protest . . .', pp. 139-45.
314. For Terling, see above p. 92. For Ticehurst, see Wells, 'Poor law reform . . .', pp. 65-73.
315. See above p. 104.
316. Archer, "Flash and a Scare" . . ., p. 64.
317. Hansard, 3rd series, vol. 24 (1834), cols. 344-52, 392, 431.
318. Other workhouse issues included restriction of non-medical relief to the able-bodied to the institutionalised, classification, and the separation of men from wives, and both from their children, exemption of men with more than six under working-age children, their use for the aged, and inevitably, the costs: Scrope also denigrated the visual effect, as the 'whole country must be studded with district workhouses'; *ibid.*, vol. 23, cols. 1320-34; vol. 24, cols. 313-8, 339, 351-2, 385-7, 389-90, 919-20; vol. 25, cols. 262-4, 469.
319. The petition of the 'Managing Officers of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union of Great Britain and Ireland' (my emphasis), with others from the localities, plus letters from various people to Melbourne, including Robert Owen (21 February and 5 March) and William Cobbett (April 1834), are extant. That from George Loveless, dated 15 September 1834, (possibly to the Home Secretary) on his arrival in Van Dieman's Land whereupon he was immediately interrogated by the magistrates, 'threatening me with Punishment urged me to tell them by what signe the "Trades Union" could assemble in bodies all over the Kingdom at once. I know of no such Sign and therefore cannot tell'. He ended by thanking 'God of being Separated from the company' of fellow transportees 'I have been in for the last Seventeen Weeks'. A Richard L (mss torn) also writing to Melbourne while he was still Home Secretary, 4 April 1834, aimed to correct 'the many erroneous reports afloat' including the 'false and imaginary idea that the Trades Unions are of a Political nature there are nothing of Politics allowed to be discussed at our Lodges', which must not be confused with 'Radical Unions'. While some unions did rule against political matters being discussed once lodges formally convened, there is an element of dissembling in this statement, and he concluded his missive by attacking the hypocrisy of the state's non-intervention against freemasons' oaths. PRO. HO.17/42. (See note 59 above respecting this source). See also Marlow, *op.cit.*, esp. Ch. 13. Chase, *Early Trade Unionism . . .*, pp. 162-70, 177-80, esp. 169-70.
320. Crossick, *op.cit.*, pp. 201-3, 208-9, argues that the Land Plan generated a revival of Chartism in Kentish London, though he also asserts that it had no

organisation in Woolwich, Greenwich or Deptford until 1841. Although this is strictly true, his claim that the New Poor Law was not a main bone of contention, is unlikely. Subsequent work by Dr Hastings reveals further – if largely ephemeral – Kentish locations of the movement to those established in my 1997 revised study of Southern Chartism, though he too confirms its weakness; he also adds a contemporary claim that Maidstone alone hosted 146 Land Plan subscribers. P Hastings, ‘Radical movements and workers’ protests to c.1850’, in F Lansberry (ed.), *Government and Politics in Kent, 1640–1914* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp.128–38. Chartist at Chatham, Greenwich and Deptford, survived until the movements bitter end in 1858, and there was something of a revival in Stroud, Tonbridge and Maidstone, together with Sussex locations in the autumn of 1857. Canterbury Chartists briefly revived in February 1858, though a Brighton delegate – active since the late thirties – ‘deeply deplored the apathy of . . . [his fellow] old Chartists’; in his last desperate stand, Ernest Jones even argued that ‘Deputations should be sent into those agricultural districts where no organisation at present exists’. *People’s Paper*, 14 and 28 February, 23 May, 4 June, 11 and 25 July, 5 and 19 September 1857, 6 and 13 February, 13 and 20 March, 10 July and 21 August 1858. Sturge’s Complete Suffrage movement also took root in some small Kent towns, particularly Cranbrook, who organised a petition in 1844; a Tory paper published the names of the 36 men who signed, revealing various tradesmen – some of whom were shopkeepers – George Weller, ‘the old and blind . . . town crier’, two school proprietors, James Barham, ‘the walking postman to Hawkhurst’, and four labourers; two tradesmen were allegedly in receipt of poor relief. *The Nonconformist*, 20 July and 21 December 1842, 18 January, and 25 October 1843, 24 January and 3 April 1844. *Maidstone Journal*, 26 March 1844. See also above, pp.128–9.

321. *Brighton Patriot*, and *The Champion*, 30 July and 20 October 1839. Wells, ‘Rural rebels . . .’, esp. pp.147–55. Wells, ‘Resistance . . .’, esp. pp.117–9. Wells, ‘Southern Chartism’, esp.129–30, 146–8. Brown, *op.cit.*, pp.12–5. Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.119, 123, 134. J Harrison, *The Second Coming. Popular Millenarianism 1780–1850*, (1979), pp.224–5. E Royle, *Robert Owen and the Commencement of the Millennium: a Study of the Harmony Community*, (Manchester, 1998), p.73. P A Pickering, “‘The Hearts of Millions’: Chartism and popular monarchism in the 1840s”, *History*, 88, 2 (2003), pp.234, 238.
322. N Gash, *Sir Robert Peel. The Life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830* (2nd edition, 1986), pp.296–8, 332, and esp. 636 for the cite. Brundage, *England’s “Prussian Minister” . . .*, pp.113–5. Finer, *op.cit.*, Book 4. There are disparities between these latter two authorities over the timing of Chadwick’s loss of influence. The best coverage is now, C Hamblin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick. Britain, 1800–1854* (Cambridge, 1998), Chs.3 and 4, esp. pp.84–95, 121–3
323. For example, in Derbyshire; *Derby Mercury*, 16 and 23 June, 7 and 14 July 1841.
324. For some details of the extra-parliamentary campaign, see *ibid.*, 7 October 1840, 12 October 1842 and 29 March 1843. *Derbyshire Chronicle*, 26 March and 8 October 1842. *Derbyshire Courier*, 15 October 1842.
325. Among the many scandals in the *Northern Star*, the issue for 4 December 1841, exposed the gross neglect of a ruptured nonagenarian man in the

- Fareham workhouse, whose bedding went unchanged for a period sufficient for a fellow inmate to discover 'maggots . . . crawling over his person'. This allegedly occurred during the previous August, and appears to have been belatedly revealed by a local Chartist, or sympathiser. Nothing relating to this episode was minuted by the Union Board, which – as the relevant volume of Somerset House's correspondence is not extant – explains why this later incident, at an institution investigated by the 1837 select committee, was not mentioned in my 'Andover antecedents . . .', (2002).
326. Interestingly, some clemency petitions in the late 1830s were sent to him from non-constituents, rather than through the four MPs elected for the two Hampshire county seats, three of whom were Tories. Col. Hawker to Etwall, with enclosures, 19 March 1839, PRO. HO.17/91. Dod, *op.cit.*, p.137.
 327. Gash, *op.cit.*, pp.581, 713, 715. *The Times*, 18 August to 29 September, *passim*; cf. also issues of 4, 6, 9, 11, 27 and 28 October, and 4 November 1845, and 10 February. 1846.
 328. BPP. House of Commons, select committee report, 'Andover Workhouse Inquiry', (1846), Vol.V, pts.i and ii. *The Times*, esp.10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19 and 21 August 1846. Despite Finer's account of the select committee, and especially Chadwick's and the three present and one former Commissioners' performances, the episode warrants revisiting; first, the profile of the Andover Union administration requires analysis, and secondly this aspect – and the crisis of 1845 – needs to be set in the context of especially Andover Borough parliamentary, Corporate and other local politics, notably the periodic contests between Whigs and Tories for election to the Board of Guardians to represent the town itself.
 329. See above, pp.147, 149.
 330. Probably repeated in 1810–3, and therefore not in 1848 'pressures of a kind . . . the English government had not previously experienced', as asserted by John Saville, 1848. *The British State and the Chartist Movement* (Cambridge, 1990 edition), pp.27–51 and esp. 73. Cf. Wells, *Insurrection . . .*, *passim*.
 331. Saville, *op.cit.*, *passim*. See also the brilliant analysis of metropolitan events in 1848, presented by D Goodway, *London Chartism 1838–48* (1982), esp. pp.61–98, 111–52.
 332. Gower, London, to Carnarvon, 13 April 1848, HCRO. 75M91, E26/110. Gower also asserted that O'Connor visibly shook when told by Commissioner Rowan of the Metropolitan Police, that if he did not agree to abandon the intended procession, he would be arrested for High Treason. Goodway, *op.cit.*, pp.76–7, 92, cites Rowan's note to Grey to the effect that the former 'never saw a man more frightened than' O'Connor was, but not the charge; Goodway does say that that was to have been the charge against the leader of the next procession, but it did not go ahead on 12 June.
 333. Chase, "'We only wish to work" . . .', esp. pp.143–5. *Idem*, 'Out of radicalism: the mid-Victorian freehold land movement', *English Historical Review*, CVI (1991), *passim*.
 334. F E Gillespie, *Labor and Politics in England 1850–1867* (N Carolina, 1927) p.95, note 1.
 335. J Saville, *Ernest Jones: Chartist* (1952), pp.95–7. D E C Eversley, *Social Theories of Fertility and the Malthusian Debate* (reprint, 1975, Westport, Connecticut), pp.129–30. R Wells, 'E P Thompson, Customs in Commons and moral economy', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 21, 2 (1994), esp. pp.284–91.

336. E F Biagini, 'British trade unionism and popular political economy 1860-1880', *Historical Journal*, 30 (1987), p.826. K D Brown, 'Nonconformity and trade unionism: the Sheffield outrages of 1866', in E F Biagini and A J Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism. Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.103-4. F R McWilliam, 'The mysteries of G W M Reynolds: radicalism and melodrama in Victorian Britain', in Chase and Dyck, *op.cit.*, *passim*, esp. pp.192-4.
337. G Claeys, 'The triumph of class-conscious reformism in British politics, 1790-1860', *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), pp.977-8. Wells, 'Rural rebels ...', p.133. Wells, 'Burwash 1790-1850', p.179. Revd. Hume, cited Dyck, *William Cobbett ...*, p.213. Prosecutor's brief, Berkshire Special Commission, late December 1830, including statement of wheelwright and beer-shop proprietor, Barlow, of Basildon, PRO. TS.11/839.
338. Burn, *op.cit.*, p.71, citing G W E Russell, *One Look Back* (1911). Collingwood to Phillips, 15, nd. (probably 16), 19 and 22 November; Revd. Hewlett (re. Ewhurst, and unknown magistrate, both from Tunbridge Wells, 15 and 18 November 1830, PRO. HO.52/8, ff.16-7, 54-5; 52/10, ff.303-6, 448-52. S Selmes, Beckley, to Curteis, 7 November 1830, ESCRO. AMS. 5995/3/8. Cobbett to Stopford, 26 November 1830, Nuffield College, Oxford, Cobbett Collection, IV/54, f.1. Wellington to Peel, and to Melbourne, 21 and 24 November; Brougham, and Melbourne, to Wellington, both 26 November 1830, University of Southampton Library, Wellington Papers, 1/1154, ff.49, 56; 4/1/2/2, ff.23-4. Cf. Wells, 'Mr William Cobbett ...', *passim*.
339. Wells, 'Southern Chartism', p.149.
340. Dyck, 'Town and country ...', esp. pp.94-5.
341. Wells, *Victorian Village ...*, p.59. Among several Burwash tradesmen with dissolute reputations were at least two generations of the blacksmithing Pilbeam family; the elder William, born in 1811, and sometime dual occupationist as a beershop proprietor (during which he repeatedly fined for illegal opening), remained a heavy drinker into his seventies; he occasionally had drunken fights with members of other local dynasties in the same trade, and was also convicted for assaulting the police. In 1885 he was fined for marching into the Methodist Chapel to 'loudly insult members of the congregation ... [told] the minister to come down, as he himself could preach better than that'. During mid-1886 in another alcohol-fuelled altercation in the Bell, he was beaten up by three other small tradesmen, but it was Pilbeam who was charged with being 'drunk and disorderly', though the Petty Sessional chairman acknowledged that he entertained 'no doubt that he was drunk, and had been badly treated'. He went missing on 14 December that year; last seen returning from a pub, his 'very little decomposed' corpse was fished out of a 'large pond' on 21 January, where it had lain 'covered ... with ice ... for several weeks'. Deposition of W Mansfield, 11 June 1842; summary convictions, 17 May 1844, 20 February 1846, 30 December 1870, 25 August 1871, 29 May 1874 (his son for refusing to leave the Bear when so ordered by the licensee), 25 June 1880, 25 September 1885 and 28 May 1886, ESCRO. QR/E. 885; 901; 917; 1053; 1055; 1066; 1091; 1114. *Brighton Gazette*, 8 April 1847. *Sussex Advertiser*, 2 June 1886 and 24 January 1887. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 17 September 1885. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 17 October 1885.

342. Wells, *Victorian Village* . . . , pp.45, 68 and note 10, 71–2, 75, 79. Egerton's obituary, *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 24 March 1888.
343. Wells, *Victorian Village* . . . , p.28. See also Wells, 'Social conflict . . . ', p.198, for further examples of these remarkably common Sunday gatherings, whose members obstructed the passage and insulted churchgoers.
344. Wells, *Victorian Village* . . . , pp.28, 103.
345. *Ibid.*, p.53. Wells, 'Burwash 1790–1850', pp.177–84, 201–2, examines earlier nineteenth-century radicalism in the parish, together with an account as a Swing district epicentre; the Cobbettite presence – including three relatively substantial farmers – is sketched, pp.197–201.
346. *Ibid.*, pp.198–9. See also Wells, 'Mr William Cobbett . . . ', *passim*.
347. He was summoned for non-attendance for jury service in October, and in December gave evidence in a theft case where the victim was ropemaker, potter and brickmaker, Samuel Daw. Michaelmas 1839 list of 35 Quarter Sessions petty jurors all from Burwash; indictment of S Stubberfield, and his examination, 28 December 1839, ESCRO. QR/E/864; 866.
348. Censuses, 1841–91. *Sussex Advertiser*, 31 August 1847, 13 and 27 August 1873, and 3 July 1886. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 19 and 25 March, and 1 April 1892.
349. Petition of Charles Heath, former gamekeeper, and John Diddams, labourer, Bullington, enclosed by Colonel Peter Hawker (former regular soldier, and presently of the North Hants Militia), Longparish, to Ralph Etwall MP, and subsequently to Home Secretary Russell, 19 March and 17 April 1839; Hawker made the allegation against Cockerton in both letters, PRO. HO.17/91. For the historic context in this locality, see Dyke, *William Cobbett* . . . , Chs. 7 and 8, esp. pp.171–84, 194–9, and cf. Wells, 'Rural rebels . . . ', pp.140–3.
350. Bubb's jaunt was locally notorious, but appears to have made the press only through a later court case he brought against a lad for thieving a few yards of fustian from his shop; the incumbent hired a defence lawyer at the Quarter Sessions, who asked Bubb to confirm his atheism and the purpose of his French trip. The chairman pre-emptively concluded his summing up for the jury's edification, thus: "If a man comes to this court who neither believes that he has an immortal soul, nor in a future state, are the lives of her Majesty's subjects to be entrusted to his care? Certainly not". *Reynold's Political Register*, 23 February 1850, p.123, who used the resultant acquittal in a ferocious attack on the county magistracy. G Ellis, 'The revolutions of 1848–9 in France', and R Gildea, '1848 in European collective memory', in R J W Evans and H P von Strandmann, *The Revolutions in Europe 1848–1849* (2000), respectively pp.49–50, and pp.209–10. J Harsin, *Barricades. The War of the Streets in Revolutionary Paris 1830–1848* (2002), p.320.
351. M C Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical History* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.57–8, 214, 232–3. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment* . . . , pp.62, 73, 189–90. H Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (4th edition, Harmondsworth, 1987), pp.48–9, 55, 61.
352. Burn, *op.cit.*, p.71.
353. Wells, *Victorian Village* . . . , pp.78, 121–2 and note 26. Ticehurst Board of Guardians' minutes, 25 January 1873, ESCRO. G10/1a/12. Clerk, Ticehurst, to the PLB, 19 February, 10 March: letters to the PLB from

- Burwash vestry Clerk, Wood, 22 January, and Willsher, 7 March; PLB to Clerk, 6 March; E Honeysett, to Ticehurst Clerk, 15 March, and annotations by PLB staff; PLB to Willsher, 3 May 1871, and his undated resignation, PRO. MH.12/13149; 13150.
354. For petty and organised crime at Burwash, see Wells, 'Burwash 1790-1850', pp.184-227, and for the latter more generally Wells, 'Criminal gangs . . .', pp.135-82. Wells, *Victorian Village* . . ., pp.60, 92, 144 and note 18.
 355. H A Shannon, 'Migration and the growth of London 1841-91, a statistical note', *Economic History Review*, 1st series, 5, 2 (1935). G Steadman Jones, *Outcast London. A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Harmondsworth, 1976 edition), pp.146-7. P S Gupta, 'Railway trade unionism in Britain c.1880-1900', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 19, 3 (1966), pp.126, 136 (table 2). Crossick, *op.cit.* pp.74-5, 130 and note 34, 224. Wells, *Victorian Village* . . ., pp.150 and note 16, Ch.4 notes 7 and 16, pp. 362, 365-8. Dod, *op.cit.*, pp.130-1.
 356. Chase, "We only wish to work" . . .', pp.143-4.
 357. *South Eastern Gazette*, 4 November 1878.
 358. Arnold, *op.cit.*, pp.85-6. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 18 December 1880, 26 March and 7 May 1881, and 8 July 1882.
 359. *South Eastern Gazette*, 11 November 1878.
 360. In the early days an elderly West Kent papermaker - a trade with union roots extending back to the eighteenth century - speaking in favour of the KSLU, noted that in 1830 farmers pocketed most of the tithe rebates exacted from the clergy, granted ostensibly to facilitate higher wages: on another occasion, a Harrietsham member observed that 'we are not meeting in pot houses planning . . . the burning of stacks'. Although the union press rarely reported these topics in speeches, the hostile provincial press on occasion did refer to them, usually in denigratory terms. *Kent Messenger and Maidstone Telegraph*, 11 May 1872 and 12 April 1873. The Sussex press, when reporting a National campaign in the disputed Wealden districts, castigated speakers for their virulence against landlords, Anglican clergy and farmers, and observed that one 'agitator's . . . address consisted of a shallow smattering of history, political economy, and education. The historical portion was confined to agricultural riots, when stack burning and other raids of its kind, the Chartist movement [sic]. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 22 September and 6 October 1874. Dunbabin, *op.cit.*, p.254, suggests that few unionists referred to Swing, but gives an example of Liberal MPs who noted that labour issues were addressed in a "quieter manner" in the 1870s; similar sentiments were made by Liberal candidates in Kent and Sussex.
 361. *South Eastern Gazette*, 4, 9 and 16 November 1878. *The Times*, and *Kent and Sussex Times*, 4 and 9 November 1878.
 362. P F Clark and K Longford, 'Hodge's politics: agricultural labourers and the third reform act in Suffolk', in Harte and Quinault, *loc.cit.*, Ch.6, *passim*. J R Fisher, 'Agrarian politics', in Collins, *op.cit.*, 1, p.326. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 8 March 1890 and 19 January 1891.
 363. The shops of barbers with a working-class clientele were theatres for the transmission of proletarian aspirations; in the 1850s, one recorded that his Mancunian customers still anticipated the day 'when tyrants will again suffer for their arrogance and working men can obtain a comfortable livelihood by the sweat of their brow'. Cited Burn, *op.cit.*, p.71.

364. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 14 February 1891, 7 May, 4 and 24 June, 2, 9, 12, 15 and 22 July 1892.
365. Marsh, *op.cit.*, , pp.115–6, 127, 162–3. B Keith-Lucas, *The English Local Government Franchise: a Short History* (Oxford, 1952), pp.41–3.
366. *Sussex Express*, 17 September and 30 October 1914, 4 and 11 June, 27 August, 1 October and 10 November 1915, 25 February, 6 April, 17 May, 23 June, 15 September and 27 October 1916, 4 May, 13 July, 2 and 9 November 1917, and 20 December 1918.
367. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 8 June 1878. *Sussex Express*, 12 June 1918, 4 and 11 April, and 2 May 1919, 12 March and 14 May 1920.
368. C Griffiths, “‘Red Tape Farm’? Visions of a Socialist agriculture in 1920s and 1930s Britain’, in Wordie, *op.cit.*, pp.199–241. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 22 June 1878, and 20 June 1885. Letter from unionist emigrant (1878), cited R Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s* (Wellington, NZ, 1981), pp.302–3. *Sussex Express*, 9 June 1911, 4 February and 11 December 1913, 8 January 1914, 29 September, 27 October and 17 November 1916.
369. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 3 March 1877. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 24 August 1901 and 10 August 1902.
370. See above, p.155. *South Eastern Gazette*, 5 November 1878.
371. Egerton mentioned speculative purchases of small properties in Burwash in 1858; Wells, *Victorian Village . . .*, p.37. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 3 November and 21 December 1883.
372. Button purchased another lot, namely eighteen acres of Pevensey Marsh (used ‘rather remarkably’ for bullock fattening, rather than sheep) for £1600, which may reveal the enduring transhumance between Wealden and marshland parishes – including Romney Marsh; on the other hand, the price might imply a speculative venture in anticipation of Eastbourne’s continued rapid expansion. *Sussex Advertiser*, 27 July 1885. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 14 June 1890, 18 August 1891, 8 April 1892, 10 and 14 April, and 19 May 1894. B A Holderness and G E Mingay, ‘The South and South-east’, in Collins (ed.), *op.cit.*, I, pp.369–70.
373. *Kent and Sussex Times*, 8 June 1878. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 29 September 1891, 8 April, 7 and 13 May, 10 June and 5 August 1892. *Sussex Express*, 2 May and 6 November 1908, 24 September and 22 October 1909, 26 May, 2 June and 11 August 1911, 12 March, 3 May and 23 August 1912, and 16 May 1919. Kropotkin, cited A Taylor, “‘Pig-Sticking Princes’: royal hunting, moral outrage, and the republican opposition to animal abuse in nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain’, *History*, 89, 1 (2004), p.47.
374. *Sussex Advertiser*, 20 October 1886. *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 28 April, 8 May and 6 October 1894. *Sussex Express*, 24 September 1909, 26 May, 2 and 9 June, and 12 August 1910, 26 June 1912, 31 October 1913, 12 March 1914, 16 May 1919, and 12 November 1920.
375. *Sussex Express*, 22 October 1920.
376. B M Short, “‘The Art and Craft of Chicken Cramming’: poultry in the Weald of Sussex 1850–1950’, *Agricultural History Review*, 30 (1982), *passim*.
377. Winstanley, *op.cit.*, esp. pp.172–3.
378. ‘Eastoft Constable’s Book 1873–90’, though it includes entries up to the 1930s presumably made by Parish Councillors, as the constables before their demise do not appear to have been addicted to bureaucracy, and the volume remains but partly filled. ERCRO. PC. 30/4.

379. Wetwang, churchwarden accounts, including allotment rent receipts 1913, and a cutting from the *Hull Times*, 14 November 1914, ERCRO. PE. 48/48.
380. The principal documentation in a substantial file includes a copy of a sale notice, 11 October 1768, 1888 allotment tenancy conditions and rentals, and correspondence between Dunning, the Rector and the diocesan registrar, August 1963 to October 1964, ERCRO. PC. 54/15.
381. M J Daunton, 'The political economy of death duties: Harcourt's budget of 1894', in N Harte and R Quinault (eds.), *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914* (Manchester, 1996), esp. pp.137-9.
382. The story was told to me by Dennis Skinner MP. This Duke died during the composition of this piece; a brief film clip of the cortege passing through the park was shown on national TV news in May 2004.
383. For soup as a cheaper form of charity for the masses, see Wells, *Wretched Faces* . . . , Ch.12, esp. pp.214-5, and F Redlich, 'Science and charity; Count Rumford and his followers', *International Review of Social History*, XVI (1971).
384. J Heath, *A Look at Shardlow's Past* (Revised edition, 1985, Castle Donington), p.5. Newspaper cuttings, Derby Reference Library, *Derby Evening Telegraph*, esp. 10 March 1947 and 4 March 1954; see also 12 April 1954, 9 November 1956, 19 July 1957. D Cullimore, 'Shardlow - 18th century inland port', in *Waterways in View*, I (Long Eaton, 1947), *passim*.
385. At the head of the stream is a very large artificial pond, with a ancient sluice through which the water feeds the stream; in the mid-eighteenth century it was drained in an attempt to exterminate the pike, with the 'monster of the place', weighing-in at over thirty pounds. R Wells, 'The Yarburghs of Heslington Hall', (BA. history finals dissertation, University of York, 1969), citing the Heslington Hall Mss. then uncatalogued in the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York. G Mee, *Aristocratic Enterprize. The Fitzwilliam Industrial Undertakings* (1975).
386. Hansard, 3rd ser. (1834), vol.24, cols.531-4.
387. *Ibid.*, col.534. Bedford to Lord William Russell, 4 April 1841, Blakiston *op.cit.*, p.444.