

ART. XIV – *Poor Relief in Troutbeck 1640–1836*

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Recent attempts to re-evaluate the Old Poor Law have done little to illuminate the situation in north-west England; nor has any detailed study been made of its operation over a long period in an upland valley of Westmorland. The documentation for Troutbeck is reasonably large and therefore it seems advisable that a detailed local examination is attempted of this evidence to provide a basis for later comparisons and the build up of a wider picture. Recent research has criticised the earlier interpretation of the Old Poor Law as inefficient and repressive, claiming that it helped to bind together a small scale community by affording generous relief.¹ Sufficient evidence survives for Troutbeck to assess the validity of this analysis for an upland township in Westmorland.

In a community in which, in 1574, nearly a quarter of its inhabitants held less than 1-1½ statutory acres, there must always have been some who were on the edge of subsistence.² The economy, however, was predominantly pastoral, and both pasture rights and by-employments would have done something to alleviate their lot. Nevertheless bequests by more prosperous tenants and the provision of loans by the township bear witness both to the existence of need and to its sympathetic recognition. Thus Humphrey Birkhead by his will of 1588 instructed that oats should be made into meal for the poor and 22 yards of linen or harden cloth bought for them by his supervisors.³ Until 1583 little control was exercised over the administration of loans allowed from the chapel stock which in consequence had been subject to 'waste and decay . . . the township not knowing how'.⁴ The system was then carefully regulated. Records were to be kept of all the money lent, and the handing over of part of their tenement as security and the insistence on the production of two guarantors made avoidance of repayment difficult. A similar arrangement seems to have operated in the north-east, but unlike in Troutbeck, where interest was demanded and had to be paid every quarter, no interest was demanded in the Durham parish of Winston.⁵ The system must have been invaluable in helping the small farmer to tide himself over a difficult period and properly administered it did not deplete the township's resources. But it was of little assistance to the orphan, the aged or the impotent.

Good use continued to be made of the loans from the chapel stock in the early 17th century: 38 tenants were borrowing from it in 1629.⁶ It seems possible that the system survived longer here than in the north-east for as late as 1755/6 it was the overseers who bore the expense of going to the Bishop of Chester to see about securing the stock.⁷ But statutory relief began to be available for the inhabitants of the township in the 1630's though it may well have played only a marginal role initially.⁸ The machinery for the implementation of the Poor Law Act of 1601 was in existence in the parish of Windermere, of which the township of Troutbeck formed part,⁹ by at least 1639 when the administration of Borwick's charity was given to the rector, James Wakefield, Christopher Phillipson of Calgarth, and the churchwardens and overseers.¹⁰ Soon after this Troutbeck began to appoint its own overseer.

Accounts were being kept at least as early as 1640 and the following year a poor rate was levied.¹¹ The provisions of the Act of 1662, which exempted Westmorland from the obligation of using the parish as the unit for the assessment of the poor rate, were therefore anticipated in Troutbeck by over two decades. In this, as in many other instances, a statute only sanctioned existing arrangements.¹² The problems of administering poor relief in such a large and scattered parish had already been recognised by 1640: the township of Troutbeck itself was in a valley six miles in length.

The changeover from parish to township control, however, caused some confusion for a considerable length of time and may well have mitigated against the efficient administration of relief. In the 1640's, although the other three townships of the parish – Appleshwaite, Ambleside and Undermilnbeck – all had their own overseer, the payments made between the four overseers suggests a continued joint responsibility for the poor of the parish.¹³ As late as 1728 Benjamin Browne recorded in his diary that he, with Thomas Birkett and George Elleray, was 'setting ye land for the Windermere poor.'¹⁴ Although the justices who, in 1658, ordered the churchwardens and overseers of Windermere to pay weekly pensions to Robert and George Atkinson, both of Troutbeck,¹⁵ were doubtless working under the terms of the Poor Law Act of 1601 and ignoring local developments; their successors in 1727, long after the Act of 1662, ordered the same parish officials to assume joint responsibility with the father for William, the bastard child of Susan Birkett of Troutbeck.¹⁶ Nevertheless it seems likely that the involvement of the parish declined as the 17th century progressed. Borwick's charity, which was still being administered by the parish in 1677¹⁷ was ordered in 1683 to be distributed by the churchwardens and overseers of the three divisions on the advice of the rector and his 24 sidesmen.¹⁸ In 1705 the inhabitants of Troutbeck, Appleshwaite and Undermilnbeck claimed, at the Quarter Sessions, that they had maintained the poor of their own townships for many years and that the bastard Deborah Whetwell was the sole responsibility of the township of Ambleside where she was born.¹⁹ The arguments which preceded cases like this must have hindered the granting of speedy help.

The overseers of Troutbeck, therefore, acquired the main responsibility for the poor of the township in the latter 17th century and retained that control until Troutbeck was absorbed, with 57 other townships, into the Kendal Union in 1836. The participation of the churchwarden, as was generally the case, was largely nominal, a fact underlined by the subsequent addition of the words 'and churchwardens' to the order issued to the overseers by the Kendal Quarter Sessions in 1752.²⁰

The overseers were appointed at the township meeting and their accounts audited by that body at the end of their yearly term of office.²¹ For most of the period the overseers were unpaid officials who were appointed on the basis of the property they held. In accordance with the Act of 1601 they are described as 'substantial householders' but the obligation to serve was probably based on the unit of the five cattle tenement which was held by the majority in the 16th century.²² There is little indication even in the early 18th century of any notable social divide between those receiving and those administering relief. The tenant of Cotesike was an overseer in 1710/11²³ but his successor was receiving relief in 1756/7.²⁴ Those acting as overseers in the 18th century included a carpenter, a shoemaker and a waller.²⁵ And

these craftsmen served side by side with more prosperous tenants like the Brownes.²⁶ Such social closeness was likely to result in sympathetic treatment.²⁷ There was doubtless, as in the case of all voluntary officials, some reluctance to serve: the job was likely to be time-consuming, especially in the latter 18th century, and was even dangerous on occasions.²⁸ Substitutes were sometimes sought²⁹ and accounts occasionally scrappy³⁰ but from surviving records they seem to have been regularly kept³¹ and submitted to the township meeting. Nor was the system entirely inflexible. Although only one overseer was appointed in the 1640's,³² by the early 18th century two had become the norm and three were occasionally appointed. In 1800/1, when there was a sudden increase in relief, the township experimented by using a single overseer for the first six months and another for the remaining part of the year.³³ The experiment, however, was not repeated.

The office remained unpaid until 1810/11 when a salary of £6.10s.0d. was granted to the overseer.³⁴ The vestry seems to have preferred to continue the practice of paying their overseer until 1826 rather than hire a paid assistant overseer in accordance with the Sturges Bourne Act of 1819. In 1826, however, it decided against the practice of paying the overseer in favour of granting a salary to an assistant overseer, provided he was nominated in a general vestry and appointed by a magistrate, as the overseer had been.³⁵ Troutbeck, therefore, unlike many smaller townships,³⁶ was not reluctant to pay for the administration of its poor relief in the early 19th century. Payment was doubtless the key to greater efficiency. A select vestry or poor law committee had been set up by 1823³⁷ and in rural areas this is believed both to have improved the operation of poor relief and facilitated the control of expenditure.³⁸ In the early 19th century the Troutbeck vestry was meeting every two weeks; twice as often as that in Eskdale.³⁹

Some financial help was afforded to the overseers by other officials. In the early 18th century they were receiving payments from the lord's grave in Troutbeck which sometimes contributed nearly as much as the poor rate to their income.⁴⁰ Occasional gifts were also made by the churchwardens, and the constables did not confine their duties to ejecting vagrants from the township. They made payments to poor seamen in 1750 and to a sick vagrant in 1801.⁴¹

There is reason to believe, therefore, that the administrative machinery of the Old Poor Law in Troutbeck was reasonably competent though confusion between the responsibilities of parish and township in the latter 17th century was not conducive to rapid action.

There is no doubt that Troutbeck faced an alarming increase in the burden of its poor relief during this period. As the graph (Fig. 1) shows, however, the steep rise in expenditure comes late in the 18th century. National expenditure on Poor Relief apparently increased threefold 1700–50⁴² and there was a general upward trend in expenditure in the north-east in the early 18th century.⁴³ There is no consistent upward trend, however, in Troutbeck in that period.⁴⁴

Surviving evidence does not suggest that poverty existed on a large scale in Troutbeck in the 17th century. Although the levy of a poor rate in 1641/2 was relatively early for a rural community in the north-west⁴⁵ the scale of the rate was small: 6d. was charged on each five cattle tenement bringing in an income of 36 shillings.⁴⁶ Even this level was not maintained: only 1d. was levied on each tenement in 1646/7.⁴⁷ It must be remembered, however, that the poor rate was initially

regarded merely as a supplement to charity⁴⁸ and some of the poor of Troutbeck were still being maintained by the parish of Windermere at this stage. The size of the poor rate is therefore only a partial indication of the size of the problem, and no overseers' accounts survive from the latter half of the 17th century to indicate the degree of need during that period. Given the availability of loans for the able-bodied the overseers concentrated their attention on children, the sick and the impotent. The lame wife of Thomas Fleming was paid weekly maintenance and given a down payment of 3 shillings in 1641/2.⁴⁹ Single pregnant women had to be looked after if settlement could be established⁵⁰ and the father could not be found. In 1663 the Kendal Quarter Sessions ordered the churchwardens and overseers to maintain Jane Grigge until she was brought 'in bed' and up again. Her child was to be provided for 'in case it live' until further order. The father, as was frequently the case, 'is fled and cannot be apprehended.'⁵¹

There is no doubt that there was a growing number of tenants living on the edge of subsistence in the latter 17th century. The legislation of 1589, prohibiting the building of new cottages on the commons and wastes and ordering four acres of land to accompany every tenement, proved as difficult to enforce in Troutbeck as elsewhere; in 1686 John Cookson was charged before the Quarter Sessions with failing to assign the necessary four acres to the cottage he had built.⁵² Parcelling of tenements left some tenants with holdings for which they paid only 1s.8d. or even as little as 8d. instead of the 6s.8d. which had been usual in the 16th century.⁵³ Developments such as these resulted in 13 of the 50 tenants listed in the Hearth Tax returns of 1669–71 being exempt from payment.⁵⁴ By-employment did not always suffice to provide the small-scale tenant with adequate resources. The bequest made by Miles Wilson in 1665 to the children of the tanner George Birkett suggests a craftsman struggling to survive.⁵⁵

By the early 18th century the township was becoming alarmed by what it regarded as a serious escalation in the number of its able-bodied poor. In 1737 the Troutbeck Jury complained that the parcelling of tenements was 'tending to fill the Town with poor and with ill members to the impoverishment and vexation of ye town.'⁵⁶ They feared that leasing a cottage could 'bring a great charge of poor on the tenants and inhabitants of Troutbeck by setling . . . children and servants and creat a numerous poor.'⁵⁷ There is no doubt that the factors that were intensifying the problem of impoverished able-bodied tenants in the latter 17th century were still operating. Some tenants were paying as little as 2d. rent in 1719⁵⁸ and the attempted purchase by John Cookson of a three acre close in 1735 was rejected by the manorial court on the ground that it left insufficient land for the occupiers of Great House.⁵⁹ Some craftsmen still needed sporadic help.⁶⁰ In 1735/6 it was found necessary to levy two poor rates bringing in more than twice the amount raised in 1710/11.⁶¹ But this increase was not maintained (see Fig. 1) and in 1751/2 only £3.10s.0d. was collected from the rate; less than in 1710/11.⁶² The 'numerous poor' are hardly evident in the records of the overseers and £6.9s.10d. of the £10.19s.1d. raised in 1735/6 was spent on a single individual. A number of irregular payments were now being made indicating that some of the able-bodied had to be helped. In 1736/7 the brother of Robert Otlay was paid 5 shillings and John Dixon received 4s.8d. over a two week period.⁶³ But most of the able-bodied poor were apparently managing to survive without relief.

In the second half of the 18th century Troutbeck, like many other areas,⁶⁴ faced unprecedented increases in the burden of poor relief (see Fig. 1). After a steady rise from the comparatively modest sum of £14 in 1764/5 to £37.16s.0d. in 1789, the poor rate rose unevenly to a peak of £138.12s.0d. in 1800/1 and to another peak of £168.18s.6d. in 1821/2.⁶⁵ It is hardly surprising that the list of arrears lengthened rapidly in the early decades of the 19th century.⁶⁶ Charitable donations were still made but they were now of minor importance. In 1790 Borwick's charity provided a mere £2.17s.6½d.⁶⁷ and the bequest of William Birkett of Middlerigg £2.1s.8d.⁶⁸

It is unlikely that a growth of population was a major factor behind the heavy burden of relief. The overall increase in the population of Westmorland 1750–1801 was only 8%.⁶⁹ Families were often large in Troutbeck but this was probably nothing new in Troutbeck or unusual in the area.⁷⁰ The number who paid the poor rate in 1751/2 was virtually identical to that in 1814: 58, as opposed to 57.⁷¹ The end of partible inheritance doubtless encouraged younger sons, as in the case of the Browne family, to seek employment elsewhere. On the other hand leasing and the parcelling of tenements was likely to increase the population and this fear was certainly being experienced in 1737. Few of these small holders, however, had proved a burden to the overseers in the early 18th century.

Later in the century economic forces made the dependence of this group much more likely, and the number of landless labourers also increased. Troutbeck, in fact, was not immune from the unemployment and underemployment that affected English and Welsh rural society in general from the mid 18th century.⁷²

By the end of the century it was no longer easy to supplement with manual crafts the small income from farming on which many depended. Tanners still needed sporadic help⁷³ and in the mid 19th century their livelihood was to be undermined by the introduction of chemical tanning.⁷⁴ But it was in the once prosperous domestic cloth industry that the change was most evident in the late 18th century, when the spread of machine-operated mills deprived households of an additional income which had once been widely available.⁷⁵ The weaver William Birkett was described as a 'poor farmer' in this period;⁷⁶ and among those exempt from service in the militia in 1801, owing to his poverty, was the tailor James Dixon.⁷⁷ The nearby mills, notably at Staveley, provided work for some but in 1801 Sarah Lancaster had to be lent 4 shillings a week and given 2s.6d. for clothing 'when the mills were stopped.' She was ordered to repay the money 'when times are better'.⁷⁸

By the second half of the 18th century the increasing social divide in Troutbeck not only left a number of poor cottagers vulnerable to economic forces;⁷⁹ it also meant that those, like the Browne family, who had increased their holdings, needed paid labour to help work their farms. Some of this work, provided both by landless labourers and by cottagers, was seasonal and paid by the week or even by the day and at a lower rate if it rained.⁸⁰ The insecurity was already evident in 1756/7 when Robert Cooper 'craved maintenance at sundry times' and had to be provided with a night's lodging.⁸¹ It is very probable that these labourers were affected by the economic crises of the Napoleonic War period. The sudden increases in poor relief in 1795/6 and 1800/1 coincide with these crises and there is another steep rise in expenditure in the early 1820's when the post-war depression is known to have affected pasture areas.⁸² Michael Lancaster was provided with a weekly pension and his house-rent in 1798/9 when 'out of work at different times'⁸³ and in 1800 Miles

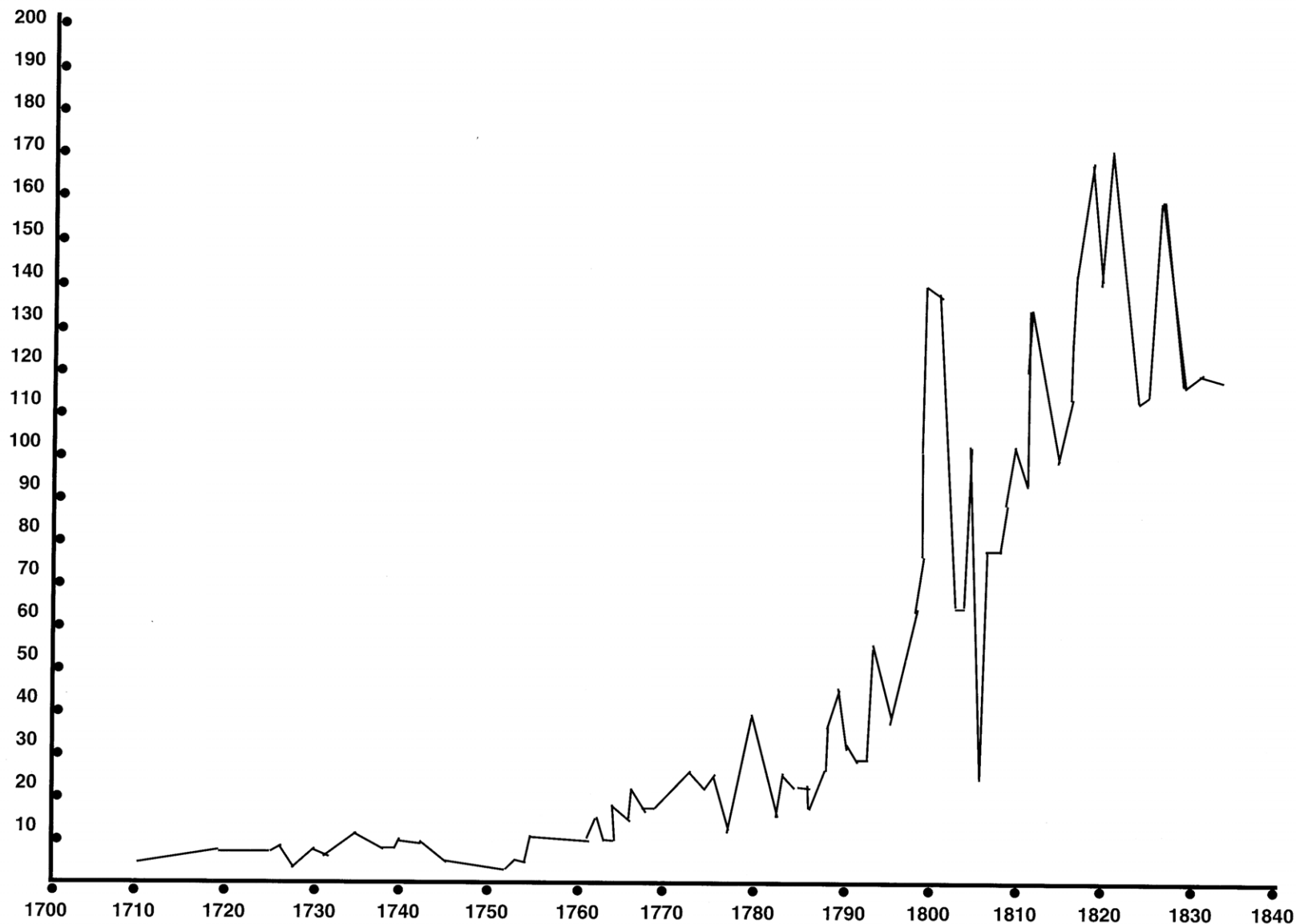


FIG. 1. *Poor Rate Levies 1710-1835.* Note. For 1719/20 and 1727/8 the income from the lord's grave is included. In 1719/20 this accounted for £3.3s.0d. as opposed to an income of £3.8s.7d. from the Poor Rate. In 1727/8 no Poor Rate was levied: the income from the grave was £2.2s.0d. The sudden steep drop in the rate in 1806/7 was due partly to the fact that the overseers received £22.11s.3½d. from their predecessors and £19.11s.6d. from the militia account. The total income for the year was £70.7s.5½d.

Birkett received £1.14s.0d. for 'subsistence at different times.'⁸⁴ The list of those exempt from service in the militia owing to the size of their family and their poverty in 1801 included the names of two labourers: Thomas Line and Thomas Airey.⁸⁵ Female workers also suffered: in 1801 Agnes Mason was granted 2s.6d. for the week of 13 May, she 'saying that she had no work,' and Sarah Braithwaite was given a similar amount for a week's pension.⁸⁶

If the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars seemed to promise a chance to lighten the burden of relief by sending the able-bodied to serve in the forces it sometimes proved an expensive operation. The costs incurred on behalf of William Mounsey, a poor housekeeper who was serving in the navy in 1794/5, amounted to nearly a third of the outlay of the overseers in that year.⁸⁷ Failure to supply the necessary militiamen also rebounded on the overseers: they had to pay a fine of £10.0s.2½d. out of their income of £63 in 1798/9.⁸⁸ The families of those serving in the forces also had to be supported as did those who returned wounded.⁸⁹

The extent to which the increased expenditure on poor relief was due to bigger pensions is difficult to assess. Pensions of a similar size were granted to both men and women in the first and second half of the 18th century.⁹⁰ Moreover the size of pension granted to one individual varied considerably from time to time. It was also determined partly by the extent to which the payment was supplemented by grants in kind⁹¹ and by the payment of house-rent. The scale of pension is sometimes misleading as the fact that it includes the family of the recipient is not always mentioned. Nor is the size of the family often specified. Nevertheless there does seem to have been a trend in Troutbeck, as was generally the case in the north-west,⁹² to spend more per head on the poor in the latter part of the 18th century. It was more usual to grant a pension of 2s.6d. a week to men and 1s.6d. to 2 shillings to women at the end of the century, compared with 1s.9d. for men and 1 shilling for women in the earlier part of the century. In some instances the pensions of the latter half of the century were much more generous. Thomas Hayton, who received a pension of 5 shillings a week may have been regarded with special favour as he had previously boarded paupers and acted as an undertaker. He had to pay 6d. for his rent and firing but that still left him with 4s.6d. a week.⁹³ Some more generous pensions seem to have been granted in the expectation that they would only be temporary and were subsequently reduced. Widow Rigg's pension, originally amounting to 4 shillings a week for the first 27 weeks was gradually reduced to 1 shilling though the latter sum was augmented by the gift of two shifts and 16 carts of peat.⁹⁴ Grants in kind were far more varied at this stage⁹⁵ and doubtless added to expenditure. The setting up of a poor house also involved the overseers in a considerable capital outlay: £27.15s.5d. was spent on 'poor house sundries' in 1799/1800.⁹⁶

The increased expenditure on the poor in the latter 18th and early 19th centuries was therefore due mainly to the problems faced by the able-bodied, and in Troutbeck, as elsewhere⁹⁷ over half of those being relieved at the outset of the 19th century belonged to this category. Between May 1800 and May 1801, 14 people received relief: three children; three women, all of whom were able-bodied; and eight men, five of whom were also in good health and often receiving only sporadic help.⁹⁸ The scale of the problem was not markedly different in 1837 when 16 were afforded relief.⁹⁹ The proportion of the population receiving support had increased only marginally between these two dates: from 4.5 in 1801 to c. 5.3 in 1837.¹⁰⁰

The scant information that has survived concerning the methods of poor relief in the 17th century suggests that the township was prepared to offer assistance which varied according to the degree and nature of the need. For those facing temporary hardship loans were available from the chapel stock¹⁰¹ and those who were indigent were given weekly pensions and clothing.¹⁰² In the early part of the century help was also occasionally given to those outside the township.¹⁰³ Education at the school, which was established in 1637 for the teaching of both boys and girls, was given to poor children from several different sources. The endowment of the school provided free education for three poor scholars;¹⁰⁴ Borwick's Charity helped the teaching of poor children of Troutbeck;¹⁰⁵ and the overseers also paid for pauper children to attend.¹⁰⁶ Despite Oxley's assertion that the obligation to provide apprenticeships, imposed by the Poor Law Act of 1601, was widely forgotten,¹⁰⁷ it is clear that in Troutbeck some attempt was made to implement this duty in the 17th century. Given the limited demand for labour in a township mainly comprising small pasture farms this could not have been easy. But the payment of 6d. to the apprentice William Byrkett in 1642/3 suggests both that training had been found for him locally and that the overseers were keeping a watch on his needs.¹⁰⁸ Nor were the overseers deterred by the paucity of local jobs: in 1640/1 they sent Henry Jackson all the way to London to be apprenticed.¹⁰⁹ Financial help to provide apprenticeships was doubtless given from Borwick's Charity which also aimed to provide children with 'a good and honest trade.'¹¹⁰

In his examination of the Poor Law in north-east England, Rushton has argued that in the course of the 18th century the Poor Law was gradually professionalised and institutionalised.¹¹¹ In Troutbeck, as might be expected by the escalation of the problem in the latter part of the century, it is in that period that these elements are most evident for they were essentially designed to hold down expenditure.

Even the employment of professional medical skills, for which there is little evidence in the earlier part of the century,¹¹² made good economic sense if health could be restored and dependence reduced. The use to which the payments of 5 shillings and 10s.6d. made to Thomas Hayton when he was 'wanting health' were put, is not specified.¹¹³ But Thomas Birket, who had served in the militia, and whose family was dependent on the township, was provided with the skills of Surgeon Atkinson at the substantial cost of £5.1s.9d. in 1800.¹¹⁴ Even the mothers of bastard children were provided with the services of both doctors and nurses. Jane Willan was helped in childbirth by Dr Robinson and by the nurse Sarah Dockray in 1790.¹¹⁵ Great faith was placed in the restorative properties of wine and 19s.6d. was spent on wine for sick paupers in 1816/7. Itch ointment was provided by Dr. Simpson for James Martindale in 1800/1 at a cost of 6d.¹¹⁶

Bureaucratic regulation by the system of tabling the poor was already being practised at the end of the 17th century¹¹⁷ and in Troutbeck the term seems to have covered both agreements made directly with the poor for the level of a year's relief¹¹⁸ and also those made on their behalf by someone prepared to provide that relief for a fixed sum over a set period. Agnes Tyson was paid £6.0s.0d. in 1735/6 for Robert Otley's table. This was to cover 48 weeks at a rate of 2s.6d. per week.¹¹⁹ The precise expenditure was therefore known in advance.

The extent to which the provision of workhouse accommodation was intended to be a deterrent in Troutbeck, as it apparently was in the north-east,¹²⁰ is difficult to

assess. Although only the unit of the parish is mentioned in the Act of 1722 authorising the establishment of workhouses and enabling small or impoverished areas to form unions to assist the process,¹²¹ the township of Ambleside probably had a workhouse by the mid 18th century. In 1759 the Troutbeck authorities agreed to share its running costs in proportion to the number of poor each township housed. This appeared to them to be a better option than running a separate establishment.¹²² The Troutbeck overseers probably sent paupers to the Ambleside workhouse as early as 1753/4 for in that year they gave George Longmire £2.7s.0d. 'for board and attendance at Ambleside.'¹²³ John Vaux, however, was being boarded out in Troutbeck at this stage and helped by relatively generous gifts of clothing.¹²⁴ He was not sent to the Ambleside workhouse until 1759. It seems likely, therefore, that the main motive behind the transfer was financial. If so, it achieved little. The annual cost of his maintenance in Ambleside was £4.12s.0d.: marginally more than the average cost of his board in Troutbeck.¹²⁵

It was probably for this reason that the arrangement with Ambleside was soon abandoned and Troutbeck began, at least as early as 1765, to make a series of contracts with 'undertakers' who undertook to care for the poor either by boarding them in their own houses or elsewhere. This system was doubtless an extension of that of tabling, the contracts being made for a fixed sum enabling the overseers to hold down the level of expenditure to the precise sum agreed. This practice, then, was not an innovation of the 19th century¹²⁶ nor was it purely a metropolitan phenomenon.¹²⁷ The contracts were drawn up at the township meetings, like those involving tabling had probably been,¹²⁸ and were initially for a period of years. In 1765 the yeoman, Abraham Read of Middle Fairbank, Staveley, promised to provide for all the poor entitled to relief and maintenance from the township for three years at a cost of £14 a year, to be paid in four-weekly instalments. He was to pay for any burials but was to have the clothing of those who died. He was to pay five shillings to the overseers towards the fathering of any bastard and any payment made by the father was to be shared between the two parties to the agreement. The overseers thus retained some responsibility for young illegitimate children. Abraham Read promised not only to provide meat, lodging, drink and clothing for the poor, but also employment. Some, at least, of those admitted were expected to be able-bodied: there is no attempt here, as was sometimes the case in the north-east, to restrict entry to the bedridden.¹²⁹ The poor were to be lodged within Abraham Read's own farm premises:¹³⁰ he was in fact operating a small rural workhouse.

It seems likely, however, that the farmhouse, like many others used as small workhouses,¹³¹ soon reverted to its original use. Later contracts were made annually with undertakers in Troutbeck who promised to find premises other than their own in which to house the poor. In 1773 John Dennison, yeoman, in conjunction with the linsey weaver George Wilson, agreed to wash and lodge all the poor brought to Troutbeck and father any illegitimate children born there and to keep them in 'a good dwelling house within the township.' The charge had now risen to £20.18s.0d.¹³² The poor were apparently still lodged in a single building at this stage but by 1779 this practice had been abandoned. Four different undertakers now promised to share responsibility for the poor for a total payment of £19.10s.0d.¹³³ William Brocklebank and George Hayton were each to care for one female pauper; Edward Hird for George Birkett, shoemaker and his family, and William Story for

the rest of the poor 'and all hazard.' In 1781 an undertaker outside Troutbeck was again used – John Hutchison of Kentmere. The cost of the contract had now risen sharply, to £28.15s.0d., and this undertaker seems to have arranged, rather than supplied, accommodation for the needy. In May he negotiated with George Dixon of Townhead for the board, lodging and maintenance of Mary Cookson for five guineas.¹³⁴

Soon after this the overseers set up a small workhouse in Troutbeck. They were buying bedding and furniture for the poor in 1787/8¹³⁵ and in 1788/9 gave £1.11s.6d. 'to a house taken of William Birket for paupers.'¹³⁶ They must still have been equipping the house in 1800 for in this year 'Poor House sundries' absorbed £27.15s.5d. of the £87.5s.4½d. spent by the overseers.¹³⁷ This workhouse seems to have survived until 1834 and can probably be identified as Lowther House. John Strickland was paid 2 shillings for the carriage of goods to Lowther in 1827/8 and the overseers bought peats costing £1.5s.3d. for Lowther in 1831/2.¹³⁸ The house is frequently referred to as a barn in the accounts of the early 19th century and admissions to it were probably controlled by the undertakers. In 1792 John Dennison promised to provide for a certain number of paupers for £27.19s.0d. Since the total poor rate in that year was £28.7s.0d. he must have been dealing with all the poor and the overseers were still negotiating with undertakers in 1815/16.¹³⁹

The greater bureaucratic regulation involved in tabling, and the use of undertakers and workhouses, may well have been inspired by the desire to keep a close watch on expenditure. But looked at in conjunction with other forms of relief offered this does not suggest any lack of humanity. Grants in kind were more varied in the 18th century than previously. The fact that food was sometimes given directly to the poor themselves is probably a reflection of the greater importance of the able-bodied: milk, butter, potatoes, meal and sugar all figure in their grants.¹⁴⁰ Both peat and wood was provided for fuel. In 1788/9 four carts of wood costing 5s.2d., 11 carts of peat from Kirkstone costing 14s.8d., and two carts of peat from John Longmire at 1 shilling were bought for the poor.¹⁴¹ The pension of 1 shilling per week allowed to widow Mason and her grandson was small enough but it was supplemented not only by £1.11s.6d. for house-rent, cloth and clog mending, but also by 18 carts of firewood costing a total of £1.15s.6d.¹⁴²

Despite the escalating poor rate in the later 18th century Troutbeck continued to provide education and apprenticeships for pauper children. This could well, of course, make them less likely to need relief in adulthood. Charitable sources were of considerable help in this respect. Borwick's Charity contributed more than the overseers to the expenses of apprenticing both John Godmond and Thomas Birkett.¹⁴³ In 1792 Michael Benson of High Green gave a bond of £100 to the churchwardens and overseers to ensure that the bastard male child of Elizabeth Thompson, born in Troutbeck, should not become chargeable to the township for his maintenance or education.¹⁴⁴ Mutual help agreed on by neighbouring parishes eased the problem of finding sufficient apprenticeships. The churchwardens and overseers of Kirkby Kendal were allowed, in July 1778, to apprentice William Garnett, aged 11, to George Browne of Townend to be taught husbandry;¹⁴⁵ whereas, in 1780, those of Troutbeck apprenticed Thomas Birkett, aged 14, to John Story, a waller of Applethwaite.¹⁴⁶ Industrial developments also eased the problem. Both the Godmond children and the son of James Martindale were sent to Backbarrow¹⁴⁷ and by the early 19th century

local bobbin mills were also used.¹⁴⁸ The system, as might be expected, was not devoid of difficulties for those who accepted the children. William Garnett absconded overnight in October 1785 and was punished with a month's incarceration in the House of Correction at Kendal.¹⁴⁹ Nor did the children always justify the effort made to train them. William Robinson not only lost his indentures: when employed as a labourer he frequently failed to turn up for work.¹⁵⁰

Although the provision of work for the able-bodied poor is often reckoned to be one of the least successful aspects of the operation of the Old Poor Law¹⁵¹ Troutbeck at least recognised its obligations in this respect in the mid 18th century and in common with many parishes made increasing efforts to find employment for the poor after the 1780's.¹⁵² Prior to this it was probably not a problem of any consequence.¹⁵³ Nor did they initially gain much financial advantage from this. Occasional small payments were made by the overseers for work performed by paupers in the mid 18th century¹⁵⁴ and work was being provided by the Ambleside workhouse.¹⁵⁵ The contract made with Abraham Read in 1765 left him with the responsibility of providing work for the poor¹⁵⁶ from which he would presumably benefit. But this obligation was never subsequently included in the contracts made with undertakers. After the 1780's the overseers provided temporary or piece work for the poor to offset the cost of their upkeep. They were used either to carry out work on behalf of the overseers, such as carrying peat,¹⁵⁷ or provided with work at carding and spinning.¹⁵⁸ But the domestic cloth industry was in decline and both Sarah Lancaster and Mary Martindale were employed in the mill at Staveley at the turn of the century.¹⁵⁹ The importance attached by the overseers to the obligation of finding work for the poor at the beginning of the 19th century is underlined by the fact that the township meeting of 19 July 1801 is described as being held specifically to find work for Mary Martindale and three other paupers.¹⁶⁰ The wages of paupers were making at least a small contribution to the expenses of the overseers in the early 19th century: in 1800 Mary Martindale's wages brought in 10s.4d. and in 1809/10 they received £1.2s.2d. for the work of Cookson Dockeray.¹⁶¹

The methods used to provide for the poor, therefore, suggest a system sufficiently flexible to adjust to changing needs, such as the increase of the able-bodied poor, but also an increasing concern over the growing burden of expenditure which it was hoped could be kept in check by greater bureaucratic regulation and the provision of training and employment.

There seems little doubt that Troutbeck coped with its small burden of poor relief adequately until the mid 18th century. The scale of pensions granted compares favourably with those of north-east England and Cumberland in the 17th century. In the North-East pensions were only 3d.–4d. per week and had only risen to 6d.–1 shilling by the 1700's.¹⁶² In Cumberland the usual pension at the end of the 17th century was 12d. a week and this was later reduced to 6d.¹⁶³ Pensions of 6d. a week were being paid in Troutbeck in the mid 17th century and in 1663 George Birkett was granted a weekly pension of 16d.¹⁶⁴ The occasional appeal made to the justices to rectify the shortcomings of the overseers were probably due to the confusion over where the responsibility for providing relief lay.¹⁶⁵ Severity was reserved for bastard bearers, who were sent to the House of Correction in Kendal and sometimes sentenced to hard labour.¹⁶⁶ They could be forcibly prevented from escaping to another township which might lead to a confrontation over charges.¹⁶⁷ But

Troutbeck took a pride in ensuring that all had a right to subsistence. The grant to George Birkett of 7s.6d. towards his rent and of 6d. to James Akister to sow his garden¹⁶⁸ shows a real appreciation of the comfort and contentment of these old men. In the mid 18th century the township reported that they regarded it as 'a great honour' that no one had needed to beg for the last 30 years. When the wife of Christopher Wilson was forced by her husband's unwarranted refusal to support her, to don her scarlet cloak and beg from door to door with her white bag under her arm, she was 'served handsomely at every house.'¹⁶⁹

But the township was already apprehensive about the growing problem of poverty in 1737¹⁷⁰ and even in the early 18th century the justices had to relax pressure on relatives of limited means ordered to help support those needing relief.¹⁷¹ In the second half of the century the system was clearly under strain and attempts to economise unduly are more evident. The overseers were not only prepared to spend considerable amounts of time and money tracing fathers of illegitimate children¹⁷² but were sometimes found to have unjustly attributed fatherhood to the wrong individual.¹⁷³ There were occasions when those refused relief had to appeal to the justices for help¹⁷⁴ and the payment to Thomas Birkett and his family in 1800/1 was made 'by justice order.'¹⁷⁵ An attempt was made in 1756/7 to impress John Ward as a soldier so that the township should 'be free of him.'¹⁷⁶ There was always a danger that those having settlement in Troutbeck but living elsewhere might be forgotten. George Browne's friend Reginald Braithwaite urged him to persuade the overseer to send help quickly to John Hutchinson who was living in Hawkshead but had settlement in Troutbeck. He stressed that without the help of neighbours in Hawkshead he and his family would already have died and their lives were in imminent danger.¹⁷⁷ The township became involved in lengthy and often acrimonious disputes in this period over rights of settlement and in some cases, like that of William Thompson in 1791, their obligation was proven and the pauper 'thrown on Troutbeck.'¹⁷⁸ Moreover the diary of George Browne indicates that the township could no longer pride itself on the absence of beggars.¹⁷⁹

There were, then, indications that the township was not always meeting its responsibilities towards the poor in the latter 18th century. Nevertheless the overall picture suggests that a real concern for the needy was retained both by individuals and by the authorities. Sympathetic inhabitants helped to provide education for pauper children¹⁸⁰ and George Browne not only made small gifts to beggars in the winter but even took the trouble to record in his diary the exact time of day when the pauper Robert Cowper died.¹⁸¹

There is no reason to believe that the contracts made with undertakers involved the abrogation of their responsibilities by the overseers. The agreement made with William Brocklebank and Thomas Hayton in May 1774 made provision for the overseers or any landowner to enter the house or houses where the paupers were kept to ensure they were maintained, clothed and kept 'in a decent and Christian-like manner.'¹⁸² The inclusion of 'any landowner' may have been made to cover a possible lethargy on the part of the overseers but it implies a very real concern by the community as a whole.

More often than not the township won its battles over rights of settlement. Faced with the claim of Warrington in 1782 that Jane Robinson and her five children aged between nine months and 14 years were the responsibility of Troutbeck, the

overseers were doubtless delighted at her assertion that she had never been within miles of their township.¹⁸³ The claim by Overstaveley that Troutbeck had ‘fraudulently and unjustly’ burdened them with the support of Hannah Watson ‘to the great damage of the inhabitants and evil example to others’ also proved unfounded.¹⁸⁴ If the overseers of Troutbeck occasionally neglected those having settlement in their township but living elsewhere, there are other instances when they showed real concern for these paupers. The efforts made by George Browne, as overseer, to find a resident in Cockermouth to pay the pension of Miles Birkett, a journeyman hatter belonging to Troutbeck but living in Cockermouth, suggest careful thought for the welfare of the young man.¹⁸⁵ Even in the case of Jane Willan, who left and came back to Troutbeck on four separate occasions, bearing a number of illegitimate children, the overseers continued to maintain her when she finally settled at Dufton, visiting her annually.¹⁸⁶

At the beginning of the 19th century a paternalistic attitude towards the needy is still evident. In May 1801 the overseers paid John Dobson’s house-rent of £1.11s.6d. to prevent him having to sell his goods¹⁸⁷ and in 1802 they made a gaol allowance to Miles Hayton who had been imprisoned for assault.¹⁸⁸ Work for the able-bodied was being actively sought at the township meetings¹⁸⁹ and the substantial help offered in 1801 was made by a unanimous agreement.¹⁹⁰ In 1823 the Select Vestry was meeting every two weeks to cope with the problem of poor relief.¹⁹¹

It seems, therefore, that the Old Poor Law, reinforced as it was throughout the period by other forms of charity, served the needy of Troutbeck reasonably well. There were, inevitably, cases of neglect, particularly when the financial strain was heavy in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. But the overseers not only continued to afford the accustomed methods of help at this stage, often on a more generous scale, but were prepared to ease the lot of the growing number of unemployed and underemployed able-bodied poor by the grant of sporadic financial help and the provision of work. Bureaucratic regulation, by contracts with individuals and for all the poor, made for greater financial efficiency. Harshness seems to have been reserved for those trying to claim settlement unjustly and those bearing illegitimate children who were likely to become a burden on the township. There are indications towards the end of the period that some difficulty was being experienced in collecting the poor rate, but the preparedness of the township to pay its overseer even before the Sturges Bourne Act of 1819 and the township meetings being held specifically to deal with the problem of poverty indicate a community still very aware of its responsibilities and anxious to meet them. The evidence from Troutbeck, therefore, reinforces recent research which regards the Old Poor Law not as inefficient and repressive, but as an adaptable system offering on the whole a satisfactory response to the needs of the community.¹⁹²

Notes and References

- ¹ P. Rushton, ‘The Poor Law, the Parish and the Community in North-East England, 1600–1800,’ *Northern History* 25, 135, 151.
- ² W. Farrer and J.F. Curwen, *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale II* (Kendal, 1924), 54–4; A.B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (Liverpool, 1978), 54.

- ³ Lancashire Record Office WRW/K. (hereafter L.R.O.).
- ⁴ Cumbria Record Office (Kendal) hereafter C.R.O. (K) WD/TE 24/23.
- ⁵ P. Rushton, *op. cit.*, 138.
- ⁶ G.H. Joyce, *Some Records of Troutbeck* (n.d., Staveley), 21.
- ⁷ C.R.O. (K) WPR 62/W2. In the north-east, only payments, not loans were being made by the early 18th century (Rushton, *op. cit.*, 139). By the mid 18th century, however, the overseers of Troutbeck were making occasional loans from their own income (*ibid.* WPR 62/W2).
- ⁸ P. Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (Wiltshire Record Society, 1975), 207; and J.P. Huzel, 'The Labourer and the Poor Law, 1750–1850,' in *Agrarian History of England and Wales VI*, 755, both argue that this was generally the case and Borwick's Charity made provision for the relief of both pauper children and the impotent (C.R.O. (K) WD/TE 6/39; 4/XIV/134).
- ⁹ There were three other townships in the parish: Ambleside, Applethwaite and Undermilnbeck.
- ¹⁰ C.R.O. (K) WD/TE 6/39.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* WPR 62/W1.
- ¹² J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 757.
- ¹³ C.R.O. (K) WPR 62/W1.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* WD/TE8/3.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.* WQI/1.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.* WD/TE 2/VI/117.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.* 2/VI/106.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* 23. Although there were four townships belonging to the parish of Windermere, Troutbeck and Ambleside comprised a single division for the financial administration of the parish.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.* WQO/2. They won their case.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.* 24: Poor Rate File.
- ²¹ *Ibid.* 8/1.
- ²² This was the case in 1574 and the initial poor rate was assessed on this basis.
- ²³ C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 1/III/239.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* WD/TE 1/III/239ff.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), 104.
- ²⁸ In 1658 Anthony Cookson and his wife Anne were fined 22 shillings for making a 'great assault' on the overseer Rowland Browne while he was trying to carry out his duties (C.R.O.(K) WQI/1).
- ²⁹ The overseers' account of 1751/2 is recorded as that of Benjamin Birkhead and William Birkett, agents for Mr. Jonathan Birket and Mr. George Browne (*ibid* WD/TE 24/5).
- ³⁰ E.g. 1751/2 (*ibid*).
- ³¹ A continuous series survives from 1726–48 (*ibid.*1/III/241–262) and from 1755–1847 (*ibid.* WPR 62/W2).
- ³² *Ibid.* WPR 62/W1.
- ³³ *Ibid.* 62/W2.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ According to R. Thompson only about half of the Cumberland and Westmorland authorities had an assistant overseer by 1834 and these were mainly the larger ones; the smaller townships being reluctant to pay (The New Poor Law in Cumberland and Westmorland 1834–71 Unpublished Ph.D. thesis Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1976, 18).
- ³⁷ G.H. Joyce, *op. cit.*, 22.
- ³⁸ M. Hall, 'Poor Relief in Eskdale in the early 1800's', *CW2* xcii, 205.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.
- ⁴⁰ C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 1/III/204.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, WPR 62/W2; WD/TE F127.
- ⁴² P. Rushton, *op. cit.*, 142–3.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 142.
- ⁴⁴ There is an increase in the poor rate 1730–6 but by 1744 the level was the same as in 1730 (see Fig. 1.).

- 45 F. Grainger, 'Poor Relief in Cumberland in the 17th and 18th Centuries' *CW2*, xv, 90–6.
- 46 C.R.O. (K) WPR 62/W1.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 G.W. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601–1834*, (Newton Abbot, 1974) 16.
- 49 C.R.O.(K) WPR 62/W1.
- 50 After the Settlement Act of 1662.
- 51 C.R.O.(K) WQI/1. According to K.D.M. Snell, Westmorland had the highest proportion of illegitimate children of any county (*op. cit.*, 35).
- 52 C.R.O.(K) WQI/3.
- 53 C.R.O. D.Lons. 5/11/83.
- 54 W. Farrer and J.F. Curwen, *op. cit.*, II, 56.
- 55 L.R.O. WRW/K.
- 56 C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 2/IV/221.
- 57 *Ibid.* 1/III/347.
- 58 *Ibid.* 2/IV/276.
- 59 *Ibid.* 25/1.
- 60 George Birkett, tanner, received 6d. from the overseers in 1734/5 and 1735/6 (*ibid.* 1/III/251) and Robert Cookson, probably a smith, was paid for catching a fox and given four weeks' maintenance (*ibid.* 1/III/249).
- 61 *Ibid.* 1/III/239, 249, 250.
- 62 *Ibid.* 24/5.
- 63 *Ibid.* 1/III/251.
- 64 J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 760, 766.
- 65 C.R.O.(K) WPR 62/W2.
- 66 *Ibid.* John Rigg was already four assessments in arrears in 1810/11 and by 1828/9 there was a long list of those behind with their payments.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 *Ibid.* WD/TE 22/3. In December 1785 William Birkett had left £50 in trust to be distributed among the needy of Troutbeck.
- 69 J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 863. C.M.L. Bouch and G.P. Jones, however, argue that the higher poor rates at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries were the result of an increase in population. *A short Economic and Social History of the Lake Counties 1500–1830* (Manchester, 1968), 308.
- 70 Some of the tenants certainly had large families: William Birkett, weaver had nine, Matthew Robinson eight and George Birkett, shoemaker, seven children (C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 7/F76).
- 71 *Ibid.* 24/8.
- 72 J.D. Marshall, *The Old Poor Law, 1795–1834* (McMillan, 1985), 35–6.
- 73 In 1753/4 George Birkett, tanner, 'the eminent surgeon', was given 5 shillings by the overseers (C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24).
- 74 A. Lowe, 'The Industrial Landscape', in W. Rollinson (ed.), *The Lake District* (Newton Abbot, 1989), 119.
- 75 The diaries of Benjamin Browne indicate that weaving and spinning was still affording vital additional income to many households in the early 18th century (C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 8/2).
- 76 *Ibid.* 7/F76.
- 77 *Ibid.* 5/XIV/ 215.
- 78 *Ibid.* 24: Poor Day Book.
- 79 A list drawn up in the latter 18th century distinguished between poor householders, poor farmers and farmers 'more substantial (*ibid.* 7/F76)'.
- 80 This applied in particular to the tasks of arable farming. Mary Dawson was hired for haytime and harvest at 2d. per 'fair' day and 1d. for 'softly' days (*ibid.* 20/4). John Dockray in 1773 was promised 10d. a day on fair days but only victuals if it was wet (*ibid.* 11/3).
- 81 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2; 24/5. Robert Cooper had previously had his own household goods (24/5) and he may have been a victim of the cattle plague in Westmorland of 1745–57 (F.W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture 1800–1900* (Kendal, 1912) 200).
- 82 J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 767.
- 83 C.R.O.(K) WPR 62/W2.

- 84 *Ibid.*
- 85 *Ibid.* WD/TE 5/XVI/215.
- 86 *Ibid.* 24.
- 87 *Ibid.* WD/TE 7/F76; WPR 62/W2.
- 88 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- 89 Thomas Birket's family was supported while he served in the militia and in 1800 £5.1s.9d. was spent on a surgeon when he apparently returned wounded (*ibid.*).
- 90 In 1735/6 Margaret Birket was granted 9d. a week for a year; Agnes Moor was given 9d. a week for 41 weeks in 1800; in 1725/6 Edward Newton received 1s.9d. a week (*ibid.* WD/TE 1/III/241); Michael Lancaster was given 1s.8d. weekly in 1798/9 (*ibid.* WPR 62/W2).
- 91 *Vide infra.*
- 92 J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 764.
- 93 C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24: Poor Day Book.
- 94 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- 95 Not only was fuel provided but also food and soap given directly to paupers and medical help afforded (*vide infra*).
- 96 *Ibid.*
- 97 J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 770.
- 98 C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24: Poor Day Book.
- 99 *Ibid.* 4/XIV/243.
- 100 The Census of 1841 has been used to assess the percentage in 1837.
- 101 *Vide supra.*
- 102 C.R.O.(K) WPR 62/W1.
- 103 In 1624 a poor wench from Patterdale died at John Borwick's and was buried in Troutbeck chapelyard (*ibid.* WD/TE 31).
- 104 *Ibid.* 4/XIV/38.
- 105 *Ibid.* 23.
- 106 In November 1699 and 1700 the overseers paid 6 shillings to the schoolmaster Thomas Knott for Thomas Atkinson's learning. He was also provided with a coat and breeches costing 2 shillings and board and lodging (*ibid.* 3/XIII/130).
- 107 G.W. Oxley, *op. cit.*, 74.
- 108 C.R.O.(K) WPR 62/W1.
- 109 *Ibid.*
- 110 *Ibid.* WD/TE 6/39.
- 111 P. Rushton *op. cit.*, 146.
- 112 Rushton maintains that the increase in medical care in the 18th century was evident even in the smallest parishes (*op. cit.*, 146). In Troutbeck the only indication in the early part of the century is the payment of special sums in time of sickness e.g. Jane Leek was given 3 shillings in 1723/4 when she had a fever (C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 1/III/268).
- 113 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- 114 *Ibid.*
- 115 *Ibid.*
- 116 *Ibid.*
- 117 In 1698 George Browne was paid 20 shillings for a 1/2-year's tabling for Ann Coll (*ibid.* WD/TE 9/3).
- 118 *Ibid.* WD/TE 24. In 1710/11 £3.16s.3d. was paid for 1 year's table to 'old smith's wife.'
- 119 *Ibid.* 1/III/250.
- 120 P. Rushton, *op. cit.*, 148.
- 121 G.W. Oxley, *op. cit.*, 22, 37.
- 122 C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24: Poor Rate File.
- 123 *Ibid.*
- 124 *Ibid.*
- 125 The cost of his boarding in Troutbeck varied between £4.4s.0d. and £4.17s.6d.
- 126 R. Thompson *op. cit.*, 26 notes its existence in north and east Cumberland and in some areas of Westmorland in the 19th century.
- 127 This is the assumption of Oxley (*op. cit.*, 100).
- 128 P. Rushton, *op. cit.*, 147.

- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.
- ¹³⁰ C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24: Poor Rate File.
- ¹³¹ G.W. Oxley, *op. cit.*, 97.
- ¹³² C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 1/II/222.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.* 2/IV/156.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 2/IV/157; 1/II/190.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid.* They paid £3.0s.0d. for the rent of Lowther in 1828/9.
- ¹³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.* WD/TE 10/3; 2/VI.108; 8/5; WPR 62/W2.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* WD/TE 5/XVI/71.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 4/XIV/313.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 312.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2. In 1805 there were 140 apprentices working in the textile mill at Backbarrow (J.D. Marshall, *Furness and the Industrial Revolution* (Barrow-in-Furness, 1958), 52). Although Dr. Marshall argues that local people did not allow their children to work there if they could help it (53), the Brighton guardians of the poor found little to criticise when they visited in 1805 (149). The long hours were accepted as usual at the time and several witnesses in 1816 said that they were well-treated (53).
- ¹⁴⁸ In July 1834 Charles Birkett Kirkbride was apprenticed to William Browne of Applethwaite, bobbin turner.
- ¹⁴⁹ C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 8/5.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 2/VI/276.
- ¹⁵¹ G.W. Oxley, *op. cit.*, 102.
- ¹⁵² J.P. Huzel, *op. cit.*, 782.
- ¹⁵³ *Vide supra.*
- ¹⁵⁴ In 1753/4 Thomas Birkett was paid 3 shillings for work (C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24/5).
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 24: Poor Rate File.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Vide supra.*
- ¹⁵⁷ This was done by both male and female paupers, though the latter were only paid 7d. as opposed to 2 shillings a day (C.R.O.(K) WD/TE 24: Poor Rate File).
- ¹⁵⁸ In some cases the material was purchased by the overseers, e.g. a hank of worsted was bought for Jane Willan in 1788/9 (*ibid.* WPR 62/W2); in other instances the paupers were apparently working for others, e.g. Widow Mason, who was paid 12s. 1d. in 1800/1 for 'loss at spinning (*ibid.*)'.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* WD/TE 24: Poor Day Book.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- ¹⁶² P. Rushton, *op. cit.*, 140, 142.
- ¹⁶³ F. Grainger, *op. cit.*, 93.
- ¹⁶⁴ C.R.O.(K) WQI/1.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Vide supra.* Anne Atkinson's appeal to the quarter sessions for relief resulted in an order by the Easter Sessions of 1659 for Troutbeck to pay her 6d. per week (*ibid.*).
- ¹⁶⁶ Jane Grigge was sentenced to hard labour by the quarter sessions in 1664 (*ibid.*).
- ¹⁶⁷ Jennett Johnson was sent to the House of Correction in 1735/6 (*ibid.* WD/TE 1/III/250). She was subsequently boarded out at George Birkett's but in 1739/40 8d. was paid for a staple and rings to secure her (*ibid.* 1/III/253).
- ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* WD/TE 7/F121.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Vide supra.*
- ¹⁷¹ In 1708 the justices had to admit that Agnes Browne and her son, Lancelot Thompson, were 'of indifferent ability' to help towards the maintenance of Agnes' mother (*ibid.* WQO/2). They likewise

had to accept that the limited means of Edward Newton's son and stepson made it impossible for them to contribute more than 1d. and 2d. respectively towards their father's support (*ibid.*).

- 172 In 1798/9 it cost the overseers 14s.8d. to seize William Nixon on Anne Harrison's behalf and £1.0s.8½d. to secure him (*ibid.* WPR 62/W2). The money and effects of the slate gatherer Christopher Godmond were seized from as far away as Torver in 1775 to help support his wife and daughter in Troutbeck (*ibid.* WD/TE 1/II/45).
- 173 Matthew Robinson, charged before the Midsummer Quarter Sessions in 1772 with begetting Margaret Robinson, a single woman, with child, was subsequently discharged (*ibid.* WQI/10).
- 174 In 1752 the overseers were summoned before the justices for refusing relief to Ann Wilson (*ibid.* WD/TE 24: Poor Rate File) and Robert Cooper, who received assistance in 1757–9, had to appeal to the quarter sessions for relief in 1760/1 (*ibid.* WPR 62/W2).
- 175 *Ibid.* WD/TE 24: Poor Day Book).
- 176 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- 177 *Ibid.* WD/TE 3/XII/65.
- 178 *Ibid.* 8/5.
- 179 Payments were made by him to beggars in January 1778 and 1788 (*ibid.*).
- 180 *Vide supra.*
- 181 *Ibid.* 8/5.
- 182 *Ibid.* 24: Poor Rate File.
- 183 *Ibid.* 2/VI/265, 266.
- 184 *Ibid.* WQI/10.
- 185 The pension was to be paid in units of £2.0s.0d. to cover 10 weeks' pay but to be handed over to the journeyman week by week (*ibid.* WD/TE 24: Poor Day Book).
- 186 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- 187 *Ibid.* WD/TE 24: Poor Rate File.
- 188 *Ibid.* WPR 62/W2.
- 189 *Vide supra.*
- 190 *Ibid.* WD/TE 24: Poor Day Book.
- 191 G.H. Joyce *op. cit.*, 22.
- 192 P. Rushton *op. cit.*, 134.