

THE BIRMINGHAM, ASTON AND KINGS NORTON BOARDS OF
GUARDIANS, AND THE POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE
POOR LAW, circa 1836-1912.

by

Paul Leslie Tolley, B.A. (Hons.), M.A., A.L.A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of De Montfort University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

October 1994

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of
my grandmother, Ethel Nora Tolley,
and my father, Leslie Edward Tolley.

Abstract

Paul Leslie Tolley. The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians, and the Politics and Administration of the Poor Law, circa 1836-1912.

This thesis is a local comparative study focusing attention upon aspects of the politico-administrative experience of the three Poor Law authorities responsible for the administration of poor relief within the boundaries of the Borough, and after 1889, City of Birmingham, and the bulk of the districts incorporated within the City boundaries under the terms of the Greater Birmingham Act of 1911. A detailed study of the administration and politics of the Poor Law in Birmingham is certainly warranted. In view of the fact that Birmingham, in common with other major urban industrial centres in the Midlands, has received rather less attention from researchers than such areas as the North-east of England and Yorkshire, this study usefully extends the scope of the wider Poor Law historiography. Most importantly Birmingham offers an excellent opportunity to make comparisons between an authority (the Birmingham Board of Guardians), which continued to operate under the terms of a local Act until the early 20th century, and neighbouring Poor Law Unions constituted under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. The long timespan covered by the thesis, from the formation of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in 1836 to the creation of an enlarged Birmingham Union in 1912, was adopted in order to show how the local Poor Law

evolved over time. Although the thesis is a local study, appropriate reference is made throughout to parallels and contrasts with the situation in other localities, and to the development of the Poor Law at the national level.

Having outlined the aims and objectives of the thesis, and the methodology adopted, Chapter 1 also presents a brief overview of the socio-economic, political and administrative context within which the Poor Law in greater Birmingham operated during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. Chapter 2 reviews the administration of the Old Poor Law in Birmingham and environs on the eve of unionization; emphasizing that the scale and sophistication of administration in the Parish of Birmingham clearly distinguished it from that in neighbouring parishes by the 1820s and early 1830s. The chapter also considers the particular difficulties associated with union formation in the vicinity of Birmingham. Chapter 3 focuses upon the characteristics of Board elections, explaining contrasts and similarities between the experience of the three Boards and identifying trends over time. Elections which attracted more interest and controversy than the norm receive particular attention, with the focus upon assessing the impact of party and factional politics, and especially divisive issues, upon their conduct and outcomes. Chapter 4 focuses upon the socio-economic, religious and political characteristics of the men and women who served on the three Boards, identifying contrasts and similarities between their

memberships, and trends over time. In Chapter 5 it is argued that, under the combined impact of restrictive electoral regulations, voter apathy, local factional and party politics and fluctuating attendance levels, the three Boards were essentially elected oligarchies throughout the period under consideration. Chapter 6 considers how the approach of the three Boards to the administration of the Poor Law evolved from the mid-1830s to 1912. Focusing upon particular aspects of policy and episodes in Board history, the chapter assesses the relative significance of financial, humanitarian and other influences upon policy and practice at different times. The greater progressivism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is emphasized, although continuities of policy and approach are also stressed. Chapter 7 focuses upon the evolution of the relationships between the PLC, PLB and LGB and the three Boards of Guardians. It contrasts the largely sound relations which existed between the PLC and PLB and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, with the tense relations which existed between the central authority and the Birmingham Board until the advent of the LGB, with which all three Boards established a constructive relationship. Chapter 8 provides a final synthesis of the key themes, trends and special characteristics identified and discussed in relation to the Poor Law in Birmingham during the period studied.

Contents

	<u>Pages</u>
Dedication	2
Abstract	3
Contents	6
List of Illustrations and Maps	14
Acknowledgments	15
Abbreviations Used in the Text, Chapter Notes and Appendices	16
<u>Chapter 1: Introduction: Birmingham and the New Poor Law</u>	
(1) Aims, Objectives and Methodology	19
(2) Birmingham and its Development During the Period from the Mid-1830s to the Early 20th Century	29
(2a) Birmingham and Environs from circa 1830 to the 1860s	
(i) Trade, Population Growth, Urban Development and Social Conditions	30
(ii) Local Government & Politics from the 1830s to the 1860s	35
(2b) Birmingham and Environs from the 1860s to the Early 20th Century	
(i) Industrialization, Urbanization and Population Growth	41
(ii) Local Government and Politics, circa 1870-1912	44
(iii) The Demise of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians	50
Chapter 1 Notes	52
<u>Chapter 2: The Old Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham and Neighbouring Parishes, and the Arrival of the New Poor Law in the Locality</u>	
(1) Introduction	58
(2) Poor Law Administration in the Parish of Birmingham and the Parishes Incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, on the Eve of the Arrival of the New Poor Law	
(2a) Introduction	59
(2b) Rating and Levels of Expenditure Under the Old Poor Law	61

	<u>Pages</u>
(2c) Parish Workhouse Regimes	64
(2d) Special Provision for Particular Categories of Paupers	70
(2e) The Provision of Outdoor Relief	72
(2f) Parish Employees	76
(2g) Attitudes to the Relief of the Poor on the Eve of the Introduction of the New Poor Law	78
(3) The Establishment of Poor Law Unions in the Vicinity of Birmingham, with Special Reference to the Establishment of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in Late 1836	81
(4) Conclusion	92
Chapter 2 Notes	94
<u>Chapter 3: The Conduct and Nature of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians Elections, c.1836-1912</u>	
(1) Introduction	100
(2) Electoral Procedures	102
(3) The Conduct and Nature of the Elections to the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians During the Period from the Late 1830s to the Early 1890s	105
(3a) The Aston and Kings Norton Guardians Elections of 1836/37	106
(3b) The 1837 and 1840 Birmingham Guardians Elections	117
(3c) Aston and Kings Norton Guardians Elections from 1838 to the Mid-1860s	120
(3d) Birmingham Guardians Elections 1843-70	122
(3e) Aston and Kings Norton Guardians Elections from the Mid-1860s to 1890	127
(3f) Birmingham Guardians Elections 1873-91	132
(4) Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians Elections 1894-1910	136
(5) Conclusion	142
Chapter 3 Notes	149
<u>Chapter 4: The Socio-Economic and Political Background of the Men and Women Serving as Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians, c.1836-1912</u>	
(1) Introduction	154
(2) The Socio-Economic Backgrounds of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians, c.1836-1912	
(2a) Introduction	155
(2b) Birmingham Guardians 1834-73	159

	<u>Pages</u>
(2c) Birmingham Guardians 1873-94	164
(2d) Aston and Kings Norton Guardians 1836-94	166
(2e) Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians 1894-1912	169
(3) The Advent of Women Guardians	173
(4) The Religious Backgrounds of Guardians	178
(5) The Involvement of Members of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians in Local and National Politics from the Mid- 1830s to 1912	
(5a) Introduction	180
(5b) The Mid-1830s to 1894	
(i) Board Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen	182
(ii) Involvement in Wider Local and National Politics	184
(5c) Involvement in Local and National Politics from 1894-1912	188
(6) Conclusion	189
Chapter 4 Notes	193

Chapter 5: The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards
of Guardians: Representative Bodies or Self-
Perpetuating Oligarchies?

(1) Introduction	200
(2) Self-Perpetuating Oligarchies or Representative Bodies?: The Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards of Guardians, from the Mid-1830s to the 1870s	
(2a) The Character of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards from 1836 to the 1870s	204
(2b) The Character of the Birmingham Board from the Mid-1830s to the Early 1870s	212
(3) The Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians from the 1870s to the Early 1890s, and the Impact of Changes to the Electoral Regulations	
(3a) The Character of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards from the Early 1870s to 1894	217
(3b) The Character of the Birmingham Board from the Early 1870s to 1894	222
(4) The Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards of Guardians 1894-1912, and the Impact of the 1894 Local Government Act	
(4a) The Character of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, 1894-1912	226
(4b) The Post-1894 Birmingham Board	230
(5) Conclusion	234
Chapter 5 Notes	237

	<u>Pages</u>
<u>Chapter 6: The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians and the Evolution of Attitudes and Policies, 1836-1912</u>	
(1) Introduction	242
(2) Parsimony and 'Less Eligibility': The Aston and Kings Norton Boards and Poor Law Administration from 1836 to the 1860s	
(2a) The Assumption of Administrative Responsibility and the Development of a Board Ethos	244
(2b) Attitude and Policy Continuity from the Late-1830s to the 1860s	254
(3) The Birmingham Guardians: Attitudes and Policies During the Mid-1830s to 1860s Period	257
(4) Changing Attitudes and Policy Re-alignment: The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards and Poor Law Administration from the Late 1860s to 1912	
(4a) Changing Attitudes and Policies	271
(4b) Expenditure on Workhouses and Specialist Institutions from the Late 1860s to 1912	273
(4c) Attitudes Towards Outdoor Relief, the Relief of the Able-bodied and Vagrants	286
(5) Conclusion	292
Chapter 6 Notes	297
<u>Chapter 7: Harmony and Discord: The Evolving Relationships Between the Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians and the PLC and its Successor Agencies, 1836-1912</u>	
(1) Introduction	308
(2) The Establishment and Maintenance of Good Relations Between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the PLC and PLB, 1836-71	310
(3) Local Autonomy Under Threat: The Relationship Between the Birmingham Guardians and the PLC and PLB from the Mid-1830s to 1871	322
(4) The Perpetuation of Constructive Working Relations Between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the LGB, 1871-1912	340
(5) Co-operation and Consultation: The Relationship Between the Birmingham Guardians and the LGB, 1871-1912	346
(6) Conclusion	356
Chapter 7 Notes	360
<u>Chapter 8: Conclusion</u>	

	<u>Pages</u>
(1) Introduction	369
(2) The PLC and PLB Era	371
(3) The LGB Era from 1871-1912	382
(4) Epilogue	390
Chapter 8 Notes	392

Appendices

Table 1:	The Growth of Population in the Parish, Borough and City of Birmingham, from the Mid-18th Century to 1911	396
Table 2:	Population Growth within the Aston Union from 1831-1911	397
Table 3:	Population Growth within the Kings Norton Union from 1831-1911	398
Table 4:	Birmingham Parish Relief Expenditure for Selected Years from 1676 to 1796	399
Table 5:	Parish of Birmingham: Numbers of Indoor and Outdoor Paupers, and the Amount of Outdoor Relief Dispensed for Selected Years, 1817-1912	400
Table 6:	The Comparative Poor Rates of the Parishes of Birmingham and Kings Norton, 1803-31	402
Table 7:	Harborne Parish Accounts 1834/1835	403
Table 8:	Numbers of Paupers at the Birmingham Infirmary and Numbers of Outpatients, 1825-35	404
Table 9:	Levels of Outdoor Relief Dispensed by the Parish of Northfield, for Selected Periods from November 1831 to March 1834	405
Table 10:	The Men Elected as Guardians for the Parish of Aston in 1837, and the Unelected Vauxhall List	406
Table 11:	Guardians Elected at the 1843 Aston Parish Election and the Number of Votes Received	407
Table 12:	The Men Elected as Guardians for the Parish of Kings Norton in 1845, 1846, 1849 and 1850, and the Number of Votes Received	408
Table 13:	Voting Levels at Contested Aston Parish Elections, 1874-79	409

	<u>Pages</u>
Table 14: Expenses Incurred in the Election of Guardians in the Parish of Aston, 1869-82	410
Table 15: The Results of the Contested Elections in the Kings Norton Union, 1884, 1887 and 1890	411
Table 16: Voting Statistics for Contested Elections to the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians, 1894-1910	412
Table 17: Birmingham Guardians: Occupational Categories 1834-1912 *	417
Table 18: Birmingham Guardians: Shopkeepers (Clothing, Food and Miscellaneous) 1834-1912 *	418
Table 19: Birmingham Guardians: Merchants Sub-sections 1834-1912 *	419
Table 20: Birmingham Guardians: Manufacturers Sub-sections 1834-1912 *	420
Table 21: Aston Guardians: Occupational Categories 1836-1910 *	421
Table 22: Kings Norton Guardians: Occupational Categories 1836-1910 *	422
Table 23: Composition of Birmingham Council for Selected Years, 1865-1905	423
Table 24: Aston Board of Guardians: Continuity and New Guardians 1836-1910 *	424
Table 25: Kings Norton Board of Guardians: Continuity and New Guardians 1836-1910 *	425
Table 26: Attendance Levels at Selected Kings Norton Board Meetings, 1836-70	426
Table 27: Attendance Levels at Selected Aston Board Meetings, 1836-70	428
Table 28: Birmingham Board of Guardians: Continuity and New Guardians 1834-1912 *	431
Table 29: Attendance Levels at Selected Birmingham Board Meetings, from the Mid-1830s to 1873	432
Table 30: Attendance Levels at Selected Kings Norton Board Meetings, 1871-94	434

	<u>Pages</u>
Table 31: Attendance Levels at Selected Aston Board Meetings, 1871-94	436
Table 32: Attendance Record of Members of the Aston Board, April 15th 1881 to April 4th 1882	439
Table 33: Attendance Record of Members of the Kings Norton Board, April-December 1894	440
Table 34: Attendance Levels at Selected Birmingham Board Meetings, 1873-94	441
Table 35: Attendance Levels at Selected Aston Board Meetings, 1895-1912	442
Table 36: Attendance Levels at Selected Kings Norton Board Meetings, 1895-1912	444
Table 37: Attendance Levels at Selected Birmingham Board Meetings, 1895-1912	446
Table 38: The First Aston and Kings Norton Union Rating Precepts, 1836	447
Table 39: Aston Union: Numbers of Indoor and Outdoor Paupers, and the Amount of Outdoor Relief Dispensed for Selected Years, 1837-1907	448
Table 40: Kings Norton Union: Numbers of Indoor and Outdoor Paupers, and the Amount of Outdoor Relief Dispensed for Selected Years, 1837-98	450
Table 41: Out Poor Relieved by the Birmingham Guardians During the Week Ended December 23rd 1837	451
Table 42: A Comparison of New Cases Applying for Relief During the Periods August 26th to December 31st in 1845 and 1846	452
Table 43: Attendance of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians at West Midland District Conferences, for Selected Years 1876-1911	453
Table 44: Frequency of Visits by Assistant Commissioners to the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, and the Parish of Birmingham, During Selected Periods from 1837-46	454
Table 45: Comparative Populations and Poor Law Expenditure in the Parishes of Birmingham and Aston, During the Years Ended Lady day 1837, 1838 and 1840; and in the Wolverhampton	455

	<u>Pages</u>
and Dudley Unions, and all Seven Manufacturing Unions in Mr Weale's District, During the Year Ended Lady day 1840	
Table 46: Comparative Populations and Poor Law Expenditure in the Parishes of Aston and Birmingham During 1855	456
Chronology	457
<u>Bibliography</u>	
Primary Sources	460
Secondary Sources	470

NB: Tables marked * are in the form of graphs.

List of Illustrations and Maps

	<u>Pages</u>
1. Poor Law Authority Boundaries in the Birmingham Area, 1836-1912.	17
2. Birmingham Borough & City Boundaries, 1838-1931.	18
3. The 'Old' Birmingham Workhouse, Lichfield Street.	66
4. The 'New' Birmingham Workhouse, Western Road (Birmingham Heath).	262
5. Highcroft Hospital (formerly Aston Union Workhouse) and the Erdington Cottage Homes, in 1950.	276
6. Kings Norton Union Workhouse, Selly Oak, c.1910.	277
7. Kings Norton Union Infirmary, Selly Oak, c.1910.	277
8. Cottage Homes, Marston Green.	278
9. New Infirmary, Birmingham Workhouse, 1888.	283

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge the advice and support of Professor David Thoms (first supervisor), during the period of research for this thesis from 1990 onwards, and especially over recent months during preparation of the final version. Thanks are also due to Professor Wray Vamplew (second supervisor) for his comments upon an earlier draft, and to Dr. Martin Davis, who was supervisor during the early stages of the research. Grateful thanks are extended to the staffs of the Archives, Local Studies and History, and Social Sciences Departments at Birmingham Reference Library, the Public Record Office, Kew, and of the various other libraries and record offices visited, for all their help. In addition, the author would like to give special thanks to Mr John McMullan for his assistance with the graphs included in the appendices, and to Mrs G.M.Tolley for all her support and patience throughout the period of study.

Abbreviations Used in the Text, Chapter Notes and Appendices

(A)	-	Afternoon
A.	-	Aston
A. Min.	-	Aston Guardians Minutes
Ann. Rep.	-	Annual Report
B.	-	Birmingham
B. Min.	-	Birmingham Guardians Minutes
BRL	-	Birmingham Reference Library
C.C.	-	County Council
Comm.	-	Committee
D.Post	-	Birmingham Daily Post
Gaz.	-	(Aris's) Birmingham Gazette
HO	-	Home Office
Jnl.	-	Birmingham Journal
J.P.	-	Justice of the Peace
K.N.	-	Kings Norton
K.N. Min.	-	Kings Norton Guardians Minutes
LGB	-	Local Government Board
(M)	-	Morning
MH	-	Ministry of Health
Mer.	-	Birmingham Mercury
Min.	-	Minutes
M.P.	-	Member of Parliament
PLC	-	Poor Law Commission
PLB	-	Poor Law Board
P.L.O.Jnl.	-	Poor Law Officers' Journal
PRO	-	Public Record Office
Proc.	-	Proceedings
Q or (Q)	-	Quarterly
U.D.C.	-	Urban District Council
VCH	-	Victoria County History
Warks.	-	Warwickshire

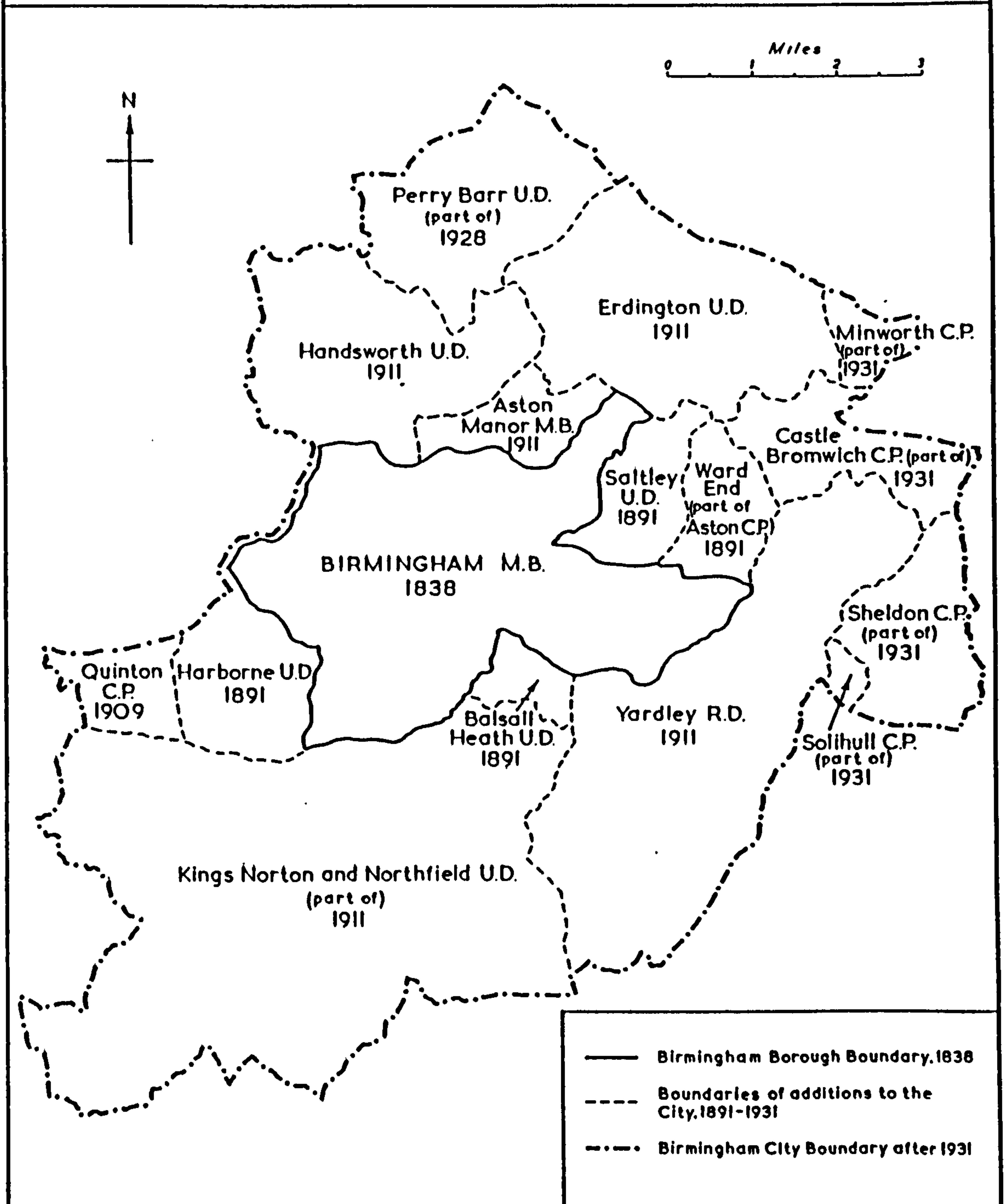
1. Poor Law Authority Boundaries in the Birmingham Area, 1836-1912.



— Union boundaries.
 - - - Parish or district boundaries.
 [Stippled pattern] Birmingham Union, 1912.
 [Cross-hatched pattern] Borough of Birmingham, 1838.

(BRL: B. Min. 21.7.09; VCH, Warks., 7, p.1; Birmingham Extension Order 1911. Poor Law Area Map.)

BOROUGH & CITY BOUNDARIES 1838-1931



2. Birmingham Borough & City Boundaries, 1838-1931.

(VCH, Warks., 7, p.2.)

Chapter 1 Introduction: Birmingham and the New Poor Law

(1) Aims, Objectives and Methodology

This thesis is a local comparative study, focusing attention upon aspects of the politico-administrative experience of three neighbouring Poor Law authorities: the Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians. The timespan selected for the thesis covers the entire period of existence of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. Declared in 1836, the Aston and Kings Norton Unions ceased to exist in 1912, when the constituent districts were transferred to the jurisdiction of a newly constituted Birmingham Union or other neighbouring unions. Although it is a long timespan to cover, it was adopted so that the thesis could demonstrate how the character of the New Poor Law as manifested in Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton evolved over time.

Though the emphasis is always upon the three local Boards, throughout the thesis appropriate reference is made to parallels or contrasts between them and Poor Law authorities elsewhere, and the study is set against the background of the evolutionary development of the Poor Law at the national level. Appropriate reference is also made to the wider local context.

In comparison to other parts of the country, greater Birmingham has received comparatively scant attention from

writers on the New Poor Law. (1) The intention of this study is to rectify this situation, by furnishing a detailed analysis of aspects of Poor Law administration and politics in Birmingham and environs, and hence to constitute a useful addition to the wider national Poor Law historiography.

Regardless of the fact that historians may not have devoted as much attention to the administration and politics of the New Poor Law in Birmingham and environs, as they have to other areas, it may well be asked, does Birmingham's Poor Law history warrant a more detailed comparative study? In the opinion of the author the answer is undoubtedly yes, and for a number of compelling reasons.

At the most fundamental level, given that Birmingham was throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries one of Britain's foremost urban industrial centres, a study focused upon its Poor Law history can certainly be justified. When it is remembered that comparatively few Poor Law studies have focused upon major urban industrial centres in the Midlands, such a study is even more important in terms of balance in the Poor Law historiography. (2)

That a local Act Poor Law authority, the Birmingham Board of Guardians, continued to administer the Poor Law in Birmingham throughout the 1836-1912 period, and that the jurisdictions of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards overlapped with the post-1838

Birmingham municipal boundaries, and from 1889 city boundaries, further justifies a detailed comparative study of greater Birmingham's Poor Law history.

Until 1912, the civil Parish of Birmingham continued to operate a separate poor relief system under the terms of a local Guardians Act of 1831, which had superseded an earlier local Act of 1783. Birmingham's 1831 local Act was not overridden by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, under the terms of which the other Poor Law authorities in the district were established. (3) The Aston Union, declared in October 1836, was responsible for the administration of poor relief in the Parishes of Aston, Curdworth, Sutton Coldfield and Wishaw, and the Hamlet of Minworth until 1912. Whilst the Kings Norton Union, declared in November 1836, was responsible for Poor Law administration in the Parishes of Beoley, Edgbaston, Harborne, Kings Norton and Northfield during the same period. Responsibility for Poor Law administration in sizeable portions of the post-1838 Borough of Birmingham was therefore vested in both the Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians. From 1838-91 the areas within the Aston Union which formed part of the Borough were: the districts of Deritend and Bordesley, and Duddeston and Nechells, which also continued to form part of the Parish of Aston. As far as the Kings Norton Union was concerned, the Parish of Edgbaston was in a similar position. After the enlargement of the City of Birmingham in 1891, Balsall Heath and Harborne (both included within the Kings

Norton Union), and Saltley and Little Bromwich (which fell within the boundaries of the Aston Union), were similarly affected. (4) [SEE MAPS 1 & 2]

As studies focused upon Chester, Coventry, Exeter, Liverpool, London, Norwich, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Southampton and the West Riding of Yorkshire have shown, all existing Poor Law jurisdictions were not superseded in 1834. (5) In 1842, 32 local Act bodies continued to exercise their powers, and the demise, or curtailment of the autonomy of, such authorities, was a very gradual process. (6) The Birmingham Board of Guardians, as an important example of urban Poor Law authorities which retained their pre-1834 Poor Law Amendment Act identity and powers, is particularly worthy of study. Throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century it retained its special constitutional position under the terms of its local Act, in spite of increasing central government control. That such bodies continued to exist after 1834, bolsters the 'continuity thesis' propounded by Michael Rose and other writers, who have emphasized the continuities between the Old and the New Poor Law. To such writers, as Philip Harling remarks, the 1834 Act 'hardly marked a calendar event in an early Victorian "revolution in government"'. (7)

This study aims to identify and analyse the principal differences, and any similarities, between the politico-administrative experience of the atypical Birmingham Board and

the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, with their more orthodox origins. The study is focused most particularly upon electoral politics, Board membership characteristics, attitudes, policies, and relationships with central government. At a more generalised level it also aims to highlight similarities and dissimilarities with the wider national scene.

Over recent decades numerous local studies, and general monographs on the 19th century Poor Law, have demonstrated that, whilst the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act did initiate a process whereby greater standardization of practice and an increasing degree of central control over Poor Law affairs at the local level was achieved, there was never a uniform Poor Law system nationwide. Local situations and discretion remained of major significance in determining attitudes and policies. The power equation was finely balanced between the central Poor Law agency and boards of guardians. Although the central authority - the Poor Law Commission (PLC) from 1834 to 1847, the Poor Law Board (PLB) from 1847 to 1871, and the Local Government Board (LGB) from 1871 to 1919 - regularly issued general and specific regulatory Orders, and otherwise made every effort through the medium of continuous streams of correspondence and visits by their Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors to impose their will upon the localities; at the local level the men (and later women) who served as Guardians, as far as they were able, made decisions and modified the impact of directives to suit their perceptions of the needs of

their particular districts. Such was certainly true of the Birmingham Board, partly, but not only, because of the greater scope for manoeuvre it enjoyed under the terms of the local Act. Like other boards of guardians, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, though from the beginning subject to maximum central influence and in their case not antagonistic towards it, also exercised their own discretion in the implementation of policy, as far as possible pursuing a course deemed by them to be most appropriate to their locality. (8)

Under the terms of the 1831 local Act, the Birmingham Board was undoubtedly in a stronger position vis-a-vis the central Poor Law authority than the majority of boards. However, from the early 1840s onwards the Birmingham Guardians, like similar bodies elsewhere, were subject to increasingly frequent intervention in their affairs by the PLC and PLB and their representatives. By the early 1850s the PLB had attained a large measure of ascendancy over the Board, although the Guardians continued to resist further encroachment upon their domain. Whilst such general Orders as the 1842 Outdoor Labour Test Order and the 1847 Consolidated Order did not apply to the Parish of Birmingham, specific Orders issued to the Birmingham Board from 1844 onwards, and culminating in three Orders issued in early 1850, effectively brought it more firmly under the control of the central body, though the local Act continued in force. (9)

Regardless of the special circumstances of Poor Law administration in the Parish of Birmingham; the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians all, at various times, experienced similar difficulties to those encountered by boards elsewhere, and national trends within the Poor Law service affected the local scene. Thus, for instance, whilst the traumas of the 'Hungry Forties' did not perhaps hit Birmingham as severely as some other places, nonetheless there was extra strain upon the Birmingham Parish relief system, in particular, at the time. During the course of the 19th century, the major changes within the Poor Law service - increasing bureaucratization, specialization, and professionalization - were as evident in relation to the Parish of Birmingham, and the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, as elsewhere. Furthermore, the particular problems and characteristics of the urban Poor Law scene, identified by researchers such as Ashforth, Fraser, Rose and Wood, are manifested throughout the Poor Law history of the Parish of Birmingham and the two Unions. Prior to the 1860s, financial limitations and constraints were just as evident in Aston and Birmingham as Sunderland; changes in the settlement laws during the 1840s caused problems in Birmingham and Bradford; and in Birmingham and Aston party politics impinged as firmly upon the Poor Law scene as in places like Leeds, Leicester and Salford. Whilst, from the 1870s onwards, Birmingham and Kings Norton, in particular, were at the forefront of the development of new

policies for the care and education of children, and the care and treatment of the sick and other categories of paupers. (10)

Sources

The primary sources utilized as the basis for this thesis can be grouped into a number of categories. Firstly, there are the sources held in the Birmingham Reference Library, Archives Department. Pre-eminent amongst these are the complete runs of the Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians Minutes. Other important sources in the Archives Department include the volumes of PLC, PLB and LGB Orders and letters relating to these three Unions, the Birmingham Overseers Minutes, and other miscellaneous Parish records. A second group of sources are the relevant volumes within the Ministry of Health MH 9, MH 12, MH 32, MH 33 and MH 34 series, and certain Home Office (HO) papers, preserved at the Public Record Office, Kew. (11) Sources available within the Local Studies and History, and Social Sciences Departments at Birmingham Reference Library, form a third group. Material within this category includes local newspapers, contemporary documents produced by the three Poor Law authorities and individuals, the census, Poor Law Conference reports, and directories. Parliamentary papers, including PLC, PLB and LGB annual reports, form a fourth category. A fifth category comprises material consulted in other archive repositories, including the Library of the London School of Economics and Political

Science, the Modern Records Centre at Warwick University and the British Library Newspaper Library.

Amongst secondary sources consulted, local history books and journals were vital in providing necessary background information on the history and development of Birmingham. To enable this study of aspects of the politico-administrative experience of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians to be set properly into the national context, a wide range of monograph, journal, thesis and other secondary source literature on the Poor Law and 19th and early 20th century Britain was consulted.

Thesis Arrangement

Following this section on the aims, objectives and methodology of the thesis, the remainder of this introductory chapter is devoted to a necessarily brief outline of the socio-economic, political and administrative context, within which the Poor Law operated in greater Birmingham during the period under consideration. Chapter 2 reviews the administration of the Old Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham and the neighbouring parishes subsequently incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, in addition to focusing upon the local unionization process. Chapters 3 to 7 consider aspects of the politico-administrative experience of the Birmingham, Aston and

Kings Norton Boards of Guardians during the period from circa 1836-1912, relating this to the wider local and national scene.

Chapter 3 reviews the nature and conduct of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians elections from the mid-1830s to the early 20th century. In Chapter 4 attention is focused upon the socio-economic, religious and political backgrounds of the men and women who served on the three Boards. Thereafter, Chapter 5 assesses to what extent the Boards could be deemed to be self-perpetuating oligarchies, rather than representative elected bodies. Chapter 6 examines how the approach of the memberships of the three Boards to the administration of the Poor Law evolved over time. The relative significance of financial, humanitarian and other influences upon policies, at various times, is assessed. Contrasts in the evolving relationships between the three authorities and the PLC, PLB and LGB and their representatives, are highlighted and explained in Chapter 7. Finally, the Conclusion draws together all the main strands of the thesis, highlighting important themes and trends.

References appear in numerical sequence at the end of the relevant chapters. Maps and illustrations are incorporated at the most appropriate points within the thesis. The list of illustrations and maps included in the preliminaries, is designed to aid the location of this supplementary material. For ease of use it was decided to include all statistical

tables, other tabular material and graphs, in strict numerical order, amongst the appendices. A brief chronology is also included amongst the appendices. All appendices are listed in the Contents section at the commencement of the thesis. Finally, there is a comprehensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

(2) Birmingham and its Development During the Period from the Mid-1830s to the Early 20th Century

During the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, greater Birmingham witnessed momentous socio-economic, political and administrative change. Before proceeding to the main body of the thesis, and the consideration of aspects of the politico-administrative experience of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians, during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912, it is necessary to have an appreciation of this dynamic background. The Poor Law did not operate in a vacuum, wider local societal, as well as national forces, interacted to shape the distinct identity of Poor Law administration in the Parish of Birmingham, and the Aston and Kings Norton Unions.

The remainder of this chapter will provide a necessarily brief overview of the principal socio-economic characteristics of greater Birmingham, demographic trends, political developments, and changes to the structure of local government,

during the period from the mid-1830s to the early 20th century. Reference to local government change and the wider political scene is particularly vital, as this enables local Poor Law politics and administration to be set properly into context.

In order to highlight significant changes over time more effectively, the period from the mid-1830s to the 1860s is focused upon in Section (2a), whilst Section (2b) is concerned with the period from the 1870s to around 1912.

(2a) Birmingham and Environs from circa 1830 to the 1860s

(i) Trade, Population Growth, Urban Development and Social Conditions

Economically, throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century, greater Birmingham had all the advantages of a widely diversified economic structure, not overly dependent upon one or two major industries, as was the case in some of the great northern industrial towns. (12) As, during the course of the 19th century, certain industries declined, others took their place, and commercial activity in general continued to expand. However, this did not prevent economic downturns from affecting the local economy and causing social distress; for example, the prolonged economic slumps of the late 1830s and 1840s did affect the town, though perhaps less dramatically than in some other places.

During the 19th century Birmingham continued to grow in importance, and consolidated its position as one of the country's leading industrial and commercial centres. The town's regional ascendancy, confirmed by the development of the canal network in the 18th century, was further strengthened with the advent of the railways from the late 1830s onwards. By this time Birmingham was the principal financial and trading centre of the West Midlands, and a centre of social and political activity. There was a substantial increase in the town's population during the course of the 19th century. Until around mid-century population growth continued to be most rapid in the Parish of Birmingham, and the parts of the Aston Union encompassed within the 1838 Borough boundaries. The population of Deritend and Bordesley, and Duddeston and Nechells in particular, mushroomed during these years. (13) [SEE TABLES 1, 2 & 3]

A great number of trades were represented in Birmingham and adjoining districts by the mid-19th century. The gun trade, the origins of which went back to the early 1690s and beyond, remained one of the town's staple industries. Another local trade which continued to grow in importance from 1800 onwards, was the 'jewellery' trade with its many sub-divisions. Both trades were characterised by small scale units and increasing specialization, and by mid-century both were centred upon particular districts within the town. Established in Birmingham since the mid-18th century, the brass trade was

another staple industry, which became increasingly specialized after 1800. The manufacture of iron and steel products also continued to be of importance. By the 1860s, the steel-pen trade, in particular, had developed into one of the town's major industries. Whilst the manufacture of metal buttons declined in the early 19th century, the button trade continued to be important until later in the century, based upon the production of pearl and other varieties of buttons. Other important trades included the long-established leather trade, and the glass trade. Those specializing in the production of such miscellaneous items as japanned-ware, brushes and umbrellas, were also much in evidence. Birmingham was undoubtedly a major industrial centre by the 1830s, but its commercial activities were much broader than this. Banking had become established in the town during the latter part of the 18th century, factors and merchants dealing in locally produced commodities (and those from further afield) thrived, and the retail sector continued to expand. From the 18th century onwards professional men such as surgeons, physicians and lawyers, were increasingly attracted to the developing town.

(14)

The industrial development of Birmingham, and rapid increase of population, brought in their wake serious social problems. Although Birmingham was described as 'perhaps one of the most healthy of our large towns ...', during the 1830s and 1840s, it certainly had its environmental health problems. (15) Living

conditions might not have been as bad as in some other urban communities, but the overcrowded slum areas of the town with their insanitary courts and back-to-back houses encouraged the spread of disease, whilst the poor also had to contend with dangerous and unhealthy conditions at work. Death rates in the Parish of Birmingham averaged 26.51 per 1,000 during the 1851-60 period, as against 22.24 per 1,000 nationally. By mid-century, although the Birmingham Street Commissioners had carried out some valuable environmental improvements there was plenty of scope for more to be done. Little, however, was achieved in the town until the Chamberlain era. (16)

There was a great contrast between the heavily industrialized and urbanized Parish of Birmingham and the districts which constituted the bulk of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions after 1836. Aston Union, with a total area of 29,960 acres, did include the increasingly industrialized and urbanized districts of Duddeston, Nechells, Deritend and Bordesley, and parts of Aston Manor. But the other areas encompassed within the Union boundaries - the remainder of the Parish of Aston (including Erdington), the Parishes of Curdworth, Sutton Coldfield and Wishaw, and the Hamlet of Minworth - remained predominantly rural in character. Death rates in the Parish of Aston averaged 21 per 1,000 during the 1851-60 period. (17)

For the most part, the parishes included within the Kings Norton Union, to the south and west of Birmingham, with a total

area of 27,950 acres, also retained their overwhelmingly rural character. Farming was the mainstay of the local economy, although in the Parishes of Kings Norton, Harborne and Northfield domestic nail-making provided alternative employment for the labouring population, though to a lessening extent with the advent of machine production by the 1830s. In contrast to its neighbours, from the beginning of the 19th century the Parish of Edgbaston witnessed the development, by the Calthorpe family, of an exclusive residential suburb for the manufacturers and entrepreneurs of Birmingham. Urbanization was also underway in the Balsall Heath district of the Parish of Kings Norton by the 1830s. At Smethwick, which was linked to Harborne until later in the 19th century, industrial activity was steadily increasing. Average death rates during the 1851-60 period varied from parish to parish, standing, for example, at 14.9 per 1,000 in Edgbaston, and 17 per 1,000 at Kings Norton. (18)

In view of the differences between the economic structure, social conditions and population levels in the Parish of Birmingham and the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, it is reasonable to expect that there would always be greater pressure upon the relief system in the Parish of Birmingham, but most especially during periods of economic dislocation.

(ii) Local Government & Politics from the 1830s to the 1860s

One of the great industrial cities of 19th century Britain, with a reputation for both technological skill and political progressiveness, 19th century Birmingham was a very different entity to the City of Birmingham of the late 20th century. Through an accelerating process of industrialization and urbanization, surrounding districts were gradually absorbed into a greater Birmingham, but administratively the bulk of the modern city remained outside the boundaries of Birmingham until the early 20th century, although the process of accretion did begin during the 1830s.

During the 1830s a number of momentous politico-administrative changes took place in Birmingham. Greater Birmingham witnessed not only the creation of Poor Law unions under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, but, in the wake of the 1832 Reform Act, the election of Birmingham's first M.P.s. Under the provisions of the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act, Birmingham also secured a Charter of Incorporation and a Town Council in 1838. Prior to the 1830s Birmingham was simply a parish in Warwickshire, 2,996 acres in extent, and with no other formal status. However, in 1832, following the enactment of the Great Reform Bill - the campaign for which had been championed in the town by the Birmingham Political Union - Birmingham became a Parliamentary Borough with the power to elect two M.P.s. When the Borough boundaries were drawn, they

took account of the growth of population both within the Parish of Birmingham and in its immediate vicinity. Hence the new boundaries encompassed, in addition to the Parish of Birmingham, the Deritend, Bordesley, and Duddeston and Nechells districts of the Parish of Aston, and the entire Parish of Edgbaston. Six years later, in 1838, after a prolonged and acrimonious debate between the town's 'Liberal-Radical' and Tory factions, Birmingham received its Charter and became a Municipal Borough. For reasons of administrative convenience the boundaries of the newly Chartered Borough corresponded to those of the Parliamentary Borough, thereby establishing an enlarged identity for the town. (19) [SEE MAPS 1 & 2]

Before the Charter, local government in Birmingham was in the hands of unelected bodies. Manorial officers continued to exercise their powers through a Court Leet, presided over by a Low Bailiff and a High Bailiff, and county magistrates administered justice in the town. Meanwhile, responsibility for lighting, highways, sewerage and sanitation was vested in a self-elected body, the Birmingham Street Commissioners. Having obtained Parliamentary representation for Birmingham, and the election of two of their leaders as M.P.s, the town's 'Liberal-Radicals' turned their attention to the reform of this archaic local government structure. (20)

At public meetings in March and October 1837, 'Liberal-Radical' leaders championed and secured support for a Charter,

but from the outset local Tories, concerned to retain their influential position in town affairs, opposed the idea. Demonstrating the links between Poor Law politics and wider town affairs, a number of the leading figures promoting the Charter were also Birmingham Guardians, including Philip Henry Muntz, R.K.Douglas, George Edmonds and William Scholefield. Strong support for the Charter was provided by the 'Birmingham Journal', which was edited by R.K.Douglas. By the end of 1837 a petition in favour of the Charter had been submitted to the Privy Council, but intense debate continued to rage between its 'Liberal-Radical' promoters and Tory opponents. Whilst opponents of the Charter, who included David Malins (subsequently a leading Guardian and councillor), argued that it would be detrimental to the interests of the town, and that elections each year would be a nuisance, its supporters emphasized the need for representative local government. (21)

Eventually, with a majority of the town's inhabitants in favour of the Charter, and despite controversy surrounding the representativeness of rival petitions, it was secured. Amongst those signing petitions in support of the Charter were 68 Birmingham Guardians, and 13 of the 18 Aston Parish Guardians. Following detailed investigations and favourable reports by two government inspectors, the Privy Council recommended the granting of a Charter, and it was finally granted on October 31st 1838. (22) At the subsequent Council elections in December 1838, the 'Liberal-Radicals' achieved an overwhelming

victory. Amongst the 48 councillors elected to represent the 13 wards of the new Municipal Borough there was not a single Tory. From amongst the councillors, 16 men were chosen as aldermen, and William Scholefield became the first mayor. Perhaps not surprisingly, partisan appointments were made to senior Council offices, including the appointment of R.K. Douglas as Registrar and George Edmonds as Clerk of the Peace. (23)

Until 1852 the powers of the Council were severely constrained, its room for manoeuvre restricted by the survival of conflicting administrative jurisdictions in the town. Furthermore, the legality of the Charter remained in doubt until 1842, when it was confirmed by statute, and the Council found itself unable to levy a Borough rate until 1840. Alongside the Council, the Street Commissioners for Birmingham, Deritend and Bordesley, and Duddeston and Nechells, and the Surveyors of Highways for Deritend, Bordesley, and Edgbaston, as well as the various Poor Law authorities, all continued to exercise their powers within the Borough boundaries until 1852. The conflicting interests and outlooks of these bodies effectively stalemated the government of the town, contributing in no small part to the evident delay in progress with necessary environmental improvements. An unelected self-perpetuating oligarchy, originally constituted under the terms of a local Act of 1769, amended by subsequent Acts, the Birmingham Street Commissioners retained responsibility for

public sanitation, highways, street lighting, the regulation of railway development in the town, controlling industrial pollution, markets and other matters, until their demise at the end of 1851. Dominated by Whig and Tory interests, the body was a constant thorn in the side of the overwhelmingly Liberal Council. However, in spite of their limitations, the Street Commissioners did continue a tradition of undertaking large-scale capital projects during the 1840s. In contrast, although during the latter half of the 1840s the Council erected a Borough Gaol and a Borough Lunatic Asylum, and opened the town's first public baths in 1851, it was not until the Chamberlain era that it embarked upon an ambitious programme of town improvements. (24)

From its inception, the Council had sought to attain a position whereby it was the only local government body in the town (apart from the Board of Guardians), but until the late 1840s attempts to achieve this end were unsuccessful in the face of strong resistance from the Birmingham Street Commissioners. However, in the wake of the 1848 Public Health Act and a report on the sanitary condition of the town in 1849, which raised the spectre of central government direction of local public health measures, the Council and the Commissioners reached an understanding. Under the terms of the 1851 Birmingham Improvement Act, with the demise of the Street Commissioners and Surveyors, the Council finally achieved administrative hegemony within the Borough. However, although

it now had the necessary authority as a local board of health to carry out environmental improvements, the Council did not proceed with any haste to effect change. It was not until the 1870s, under the leadership of Joseph Chamberlain, that large-scale improvements in the town were set in train by the Corporation. (25)

During the 1850s and 1860s (though to a gradually lessening extent) a powerful 'Economist' faction dominated local politics. Throughout the 1850s the 'Economy' party, led by Joseph Allday and other leaders of the Birmingham Ratepayers' Association, who had first secured control of the Birmingham Board of Guardians in 1849, extended their influence over Council affairs. Believing that the Commissioners had pursued extravagant policies, they championed the cause of their fellow ratepayers by striving to maintain a tight grip upon Council spending. From 1853 onwards the screws were tightened on expenditure, and in 1855 the Borough rate was reduced from 1s.3d to 10d in the pound, before a revaluation of property in the Borough had been completed. In 1855 a new Improvement Bill, favoured by some members of the Council, was defeated by the ratepayers led by Allday and his associates. 'Economists' now exercised complete dominance over important committees, and during the years 1855-57 imposed a 'Policy of retrenchment' in relation to public works. However, following the visit to Birmingham of Queen Victoria in 1858, civic pride stimulated interest in such projects as street widening, public baths and

libraries. With a change in public opinion, the feeling grew that the Council should do more, and with the election of increasingly progressive members, though 'Economist' influences remained, more constructive policies were adopted during the 1860s. After the 1859 election progressive members became more influential, and Joseph Allday withdrew from politics. A new Improvement Act was obtained in 1861, and policies for the provision of parks, better sewerage and other improvements were pursued. The changes in the municipal sphere were reflected in the Poor Law field. (26)

(2b) Birmingham and Environs from the 1860s to the Early 20th Century

(i) Industrialization, Urbanization and Population Growth

From the 1860s and 1870s onwards a process of land use change and re-development in Birmingham's inner core, and the increasing industrialization and urbanization of adjoining districts, gradually brought about a considerable reduction in the population of central Birmingham, as well as massive changes in the character of neighbouring areas. As the number of public buildings, commercial premises and shops in the central district mushroomed, the number of houses there gradually fell. By the turn of the century population density in all central districts had declined markedly, and a city of suburbs was well established. (27)

Within the Aston Union, under the combined impact of industrial expansion and urban development in such districts as Saltley, Witton, Aston Manor and parts of Erdington, the rate of population growth accelerated rapidly from the 1860s onwards. By the early 20th century the Borough of Aston Manor, with an area of 943 acres, was almost entirely built up, 'covered with factories and business premises, most of them built in a rapid spurt of expansion between 1851 and 1881 ...'. Erdington, with an area of 4,550 acres, grew steadily during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, with increasing residential development occurring after the opening of the Sutton railway line in 1862, and the population trebling between 1891 and 1908. (28) Sutton Coldfield, however, retained its character as a distinct small town throughout the period, in spite of the arrival of the railway and the increasing development of adjacent districts; and Curdworth, Minworth and Wishaw remained overwhelmingly rural in character. [SEE TABLE 2]

The Kings Norton Union also experienced rapid urbanization and population increase during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Increasing industrial development in some districts, improved public transport and rising incomes, encouraged the rapid spread of terraced housing, as well as the erection of more prestigious dwellings, in districts such as Selly Oak, Stirchley, Moseley and Kings Heath. The population of the Kings Norton and Northfield Urban District increased by

200% between 1881 and 1901, and registered an estimated increase from 22,000 in 1895 to 46,000 by 1898. However, areas furthest from the city (parts of the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, and Beoley) remained predominantly agricultural. (29) [SEE TABLE 3]

At the end of the 19th century a wide range of trades were still represented in Birmingham and neighbouring districts. However, some of those which had predominated earlier in the century had considerably declined in importance, whilst some new industries were very much in the ascendant. The metal trades remained of major importance, but from the 1870s onwards the traditional gun trade was in decline, as old methods increasingly gave way to factory production, and foreign competition took its toll. Around the turn of the century, the growth of new industries such as the manufacture of bicycles, electrical apparatus and motor cars, led to the development of large factories on the urban fringe. (30)

As far as social conditions were concerned, although the centre of the city was transformed by the Corporation Street scheme, the very poor continued to live in slum property within the Parish of Birmingham. In 1913, 200,000 people lived in back-to-back housing in Birmingham, with 51-76% of houses of this type in six of the worst wards. During the years 1881-85 the death rate was 20.7 per 1,000, 1.3% above the national average, and it remained at 20.5 per 1,000 in 1899. Within the

Aston Union there were the old inner districts with poor living conditions, but on the other hand there were the prosperous districts such as Erdington, which by the early 1900s was the healthiest Urban District in greater Birmingham, with a death rate as low as 8.72 per 1,000. The newly urbanized districts of the Kings Norton Union around the turn of the century were distinguished by a general affluence. Death rates for the Urban District of Kings Norton and Northfield were comparatively low, running at only about half the average in the 33 largest towns in the country in 1898. Bearing in mind the different socio-economic backgrounds of the Parish of Birmingham and the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, it was inevitable that the burden of poverty would be greater upon Birmingham than its neighbours. (31)

(ii) Local Government and Politics, circa 1870-1912

From the late 1860s onwards Birmingham politics, and the town itself, were transformed under the influence of the philosophy of the 'Civic Gospel', Joseph Chamberlain, and enhanced party political organization. During the late 1860s and 1870s, the Liberals were able to secure dominance of local government in the town through the adoption of the 'caucus' system. This dominance was so marked, that it induced the Conservative leader of the time to remark that if a man was called a Conservative he was disqualified from serving on the Council or Board of Guardians. Joseph Chamberlain, first elected as a

councillor in 1869, initiated a veritable revolution in municipal government during his term as mayor from 1873-76. The Council, under Chamberlain's leadership, dispensed with its old 'Economist' stance and put the philosophy of the 'Civic Gospel', preached by a group of prominent local Nonconformist ministers, into practice. After Chamberlain's departure for national politics, the spirit of the 'Civic Gospel' continued to dominate all sectors of local politics and administration (including the Poor Law) throughout the remainder of the 19th century and into the 20th century. (32)

The three major initiatives of Joseph Chamberlain's mayoralty were the municipalization of gas and water, and the launch of the Corporation Street scheme. These initiatives transformed the appearance of the town centre, greatly improved sanitary conditions, and facilitated the provision of more cultural and leisure amenities for its residents. However, slum areas continued to exist within the central district into the 20th century. (33)

As the stagnation of the mid-century period was dispelled under the impact of the Chamberlain revolution, the authority, scale of operations and prestige of the Council increased dramatically. An impressive new Council House was erected during the 1870s, the Council's powers were consolidated by an Act of 1883 and a sophisticated committee system developed. After 1891, with the addition of Saltley, Balsall Heath and

Harborne to the city, the membership of the Council increased from 64 to 72, rising to 120 under the terms of the 1911 Greater Birmingham Act. An increasing array of recreational and cultural amenities were opened under municipal auspices. By 1905 the Council's ambitious plans to obtain Welsh water for Birmingham had come to fruition, and by 1911 the city's tramways were under complete municipal control. (34)

Birmingham's municipal boundaries did not alter in form from the 1830s until 1891, in spite of the accelerating pace of urbanization and industrial development in the surrounding districts. However, under the 1888 County Councils Act Birmingham became a County Borough, and administrative change did take place in neighbouring districts during the period. Local Boards of Health were established in districts such as Aston Manor, Balsall Heath and Harborne during the 1860s. Whilst Sutton Coldfield became a Municipal Borough in 1886, having previously been governed by a 'Warden and Society' under the terms of a Royal Charter of 1527. (35)

By the 1880s Birmingham's boundaries were certainly not the natural ones, demographic and employment patterns clearly demonstrating this fact. In 1885, the Redistribution Act, which gave Birmingham seven single-member constituencies, extended the area of the Parliamentary Borough to include Harborne, Balsall Heath, Saltley and Little Bromwich. Thereafter moves were made by the Council to secure an

expansion of the Municipal Borough and, after 1889, City boundaries. However, Birmingham's neighbours were largely antipathetic to the Council's overtures. At Aston, and elsewhere, a strong sense of local pride and independence, reinforced by concern about the high poor rate in the Parish of Birmingham, quelled enthusiasm for unification. Furthermore, the County Councils were disinclined to lose populous districts with comparatively high rateable values. Eventually though, Balsall Heath, Harborne, and Saltley and Little Bromwich, did agree to amalgamate with Birmingham in 1891. (36) [SEE MAP 2]

Pressure for the creation of a Greater Birmingham gathered new momentum from 1906 onwards. Whilst, initially, neighbouring local authorities strongly opposed the Greater Birmingham scheme put forward by the City Council, ultimately they were unable to deny its logic and the benefits it would bring, and their opposition was overcome. Amalgamation certainly made sense from a purely administrative point of view, and from the socio-economic perspective existing boundaries were meaningless. Of workers employed in Birmingham, for example, 54% resided in the districts affected by the Greater Birmingham scheme. However, there was a clear conflict of interest between sections of the middle classes residing in the suburbs, who feared higher rates, and working men who felt that boundary changes would bring many benefits, including cheaper transport. (37)

Giving extra momentum to the Greater Birmingham proposals, in 1909, following a request from the Parish of Quinton for amalgamation with Birmingham, its absorption was authorized by the LGB and Act of Parliament. In spite of this the local authorities under threat of amalgamation with Birmingham - the Borough of Aston Manor, the Urban Districts of Erdington, Handsworth, Kings Norton and Northfield, and the Rural District of Yardley - continued to oppose the scheme. Though each of them participated, with varying degrees of willingness, in negotiations with Birmingham Council about differential rating arrangements in the event that they should agree to absorption, ultimately no agreements were reached. Leading figures in Aston Manor, which had been raised from the status of Urban District to Municipal Borough in November 1903, were particularly strongly opposed to the amalgamation proposals. Whilst Erdington Urban District Council, noted for its economy, most feared the financial implications of amalgamation. In the case of Kings Norton and Northfield, the administrative problems faced by the District Council were becoming ever greater, and opinion was not totally against municipal incorporation for the most populous areas. The district's financial importance to Worcestershire County Council, however, meant that it strongly opposed amalgamation. Inconclusive ratepayers polls held by Erdington U.D.C., Kings Norton and Northfield U.D.C. and Aston Manor resolved nothing, although they did indicate that there was a sizeable measure of support

for the unification proposals amongst the public in the affected districts. (38)

The threatened authorities mounted a strong and unified opposition at the December 1909 LGB inquiry into the extension proposals, but the inquiry report was favourable to the Greater Birmingham scheme, and an enabling Bill was subsequently introduced into Parliament. Initially all of the affected authorities actively lobbied against the Bill, but one by one, after further negotiations with Birmingham about differential rating and other issues, they withdrew their opposition. By the end of 1910 only Handsworth U.D.C. and Worcestershire C.C. still opposed unification. Handsworth only withdrew its opposition following the return of pro-annexation candidates at the local elections in March 1911. Opposition by Worcestershire C.C. was neutralised after Birmingham had given an undertaking with respect to the loss of rateable value to be sustained by the County, and Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Subsequently the Bill received the Royal Assent on June 3rd 1911. (39) Under the terms of the 1911 Greater Birmingham Act, the City of Birmingham assumed control over the erstwhile Borough of Aston Manor, the Urban Districts of Erdington, Handsworth, and Kings Norton and Northfield, and the Rural District of Yardley. The area of the City was increased to 43,601 acres, with a rateable value of £4,270,221, and according to the 1911 Census a population of 840,202. (40) [SEE MAP 2]

(iii) The Demise of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians

Under the terms of the Greater Birmingham Act, the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians were superseded by a newly constituted Birmingham Board, which assumed its powers at the beginning of April 1912. To link the re-organization of Poor Law jurisdictions with the wider Greater Birmingham scheme was viewed as both logical and desirable by its promoters, and the majority of the members of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards accepted this by 1909. Though during most of their history each Board had strongly asserted its independence, by the late 19th century the inconvenience of several Poor Law authorities operating across the existing Birmingham Borough boundaries had increasingly been recognised, and co-operation between the three authorities had become more marked. Amalgamation offered the prospect of a more evenly spread rating burden, and rationalization of relief practices. (41)

The newly established Birmingham Union became the largest Poor Law authority in the country, with regard to population and rateable value, but it did not incorporate all of the districts previously within the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. Upon the dissolution of the Aston Union, Sutton Coldfield became part of the Tamworth Union, whilst the Parishes of Castle Bromwich, Curdworth, Water Orton and Wishaw, and the

Hamlet of Minworth, became part of the Meriden Union. From the Kings Norton Union the Parish of Beoley and the newly constituted Parish of Wythall, formerly part of the Parish of Kings Norton, were incorporated into the Bromsgrove Union. At the same time, however, responsibility for Yardley was transferred from the Solihull Board to the Birmingham Board.

(42) [SEE MAP 1]

Chapter 1 Notes

- (1) The following have focused upon the Poor Law in Birmingham: A.G.Parton & M.H.Matthews, The returns of Poor Law out-relief - a source for the local historian. Local Historian, 16 (1) Feb.1984, pp.25-31; P.L.Tolley, Poor Relief and the Urban Poor. The Birmingham Guardians and the Administration of Indoor Relief in the Parish of Birmingham, during the early New Poor Law Era, c.1830-1860. C.N.A.A. M.A. Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic, 1987; C.Upton & J.Fellows, Birmingham and its Workhouses. The Birmingham Historian, No.4, Spring/Summer 1989, pp.13-16.
- (2) Studies of the Poor Law in major urban centres in the Midlands include: P.Searby, The Relief of the Poor in Coventry, 1830-1863. Historical Journal, 20 (2) Jun.1977, pp.345-61; K.Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, 1836-1871. Ph.D. University of Leicester, 1988.
- (3) Birmingham Reference Library (BRL): 23 Geo.III, Cap.liv, 1783; BRL: 1 & 2 Wm.IV, Cap.lxvii, 1831. The Parishes of St. Philip's, St. Martin's and St.George's were combined into a single Parish of Birmingham for poor relief purposes. (M.McNaulty, Some Aspects of the History of the Administration of the Poor Laws in Birmingham between 1730 and 1834. M.A. University of Birmingham, 1942, p.6).
- (4) BRL: Aston Union Minutes, vols.1-60; BRL: Kings Norton Union Minutes, vols.1-43; C.A.Carter, The Guardians of the Poor, in J.H.Muirhead (ed.), Birmingham Institutions: lectures given at the University, 1911, p.454; W.Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, 1885, p.246. See also pp.36 & 47.
- (5) See R.H.Crocker, The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change: Southampton, 1870-1895. Albion, 19 (1) Spring 1987, pp.19-44; W.J.Forsythe, Paupers and Policy Makers in Exeter 1830-1860. Rep. Trans. Devon. Ass. Advmt. Sci., 117, Dec.1985, pp.151-60; M.D.Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law in the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions and the Chester Local Act Incorporation, 1834-71. M.A. University of Wales, 1969; P.Horn, Aspects of Oxfordshire Poor Relief: The 1830s. Cake & Cockhorse, 8, 1980, p.59; S.Kelly, Select Vestry of Liverpool and the Administration of the Poor Law, 1821-1871. M.A. University of Liverpool, 1971; R.A.Lewis, William Day and the Poor Law Commissioners. University of Birmingham Historical Journal, IX, 1964, pp.163-95; M.E.Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire (1820-1855). Ph.D. University of Oxford, 1965; P.Ryan, Politics and relief: East London unions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in M.E.Rose (ed.), The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914, 1985, p.140; Searby, The Relief of the Poor in Coventry; L.Shaw, Aspects of Poor Relief in Norwich 1825-1875. Ph.D. University of East Anglia, 1980;

V.J.Walsh, Old and New Poor Law in Shropshire, 1820-1870.
Midland History, 2 (4) Autumn 1974, pp.225-43.

(6) 8th Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales, 1842, p.18. See also Ch.7, pp.322-40.

(7) See P.Harling, The Power of Persuasion: Central Authority, Local Bureaucracy and the New Poor Law. English Historical Review, 107, Jan.1992, pp.30-31; O.MacDonagh, The Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government. A Reappraisal. Historical Journal, 1 (1) 1958, pp.52-67; E.C.Midwinter, Social Administration in Lancashire 1830-1860: Poor Law, Public Health and Police, Part II, 1969; M.E.Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

(8) See eg. M.A.Crowther, The Workhouse System 1834-1929: The history of an English social institution, 1983; P.Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties' and the New Poor Law: a Case Study. Historical Journal, XVII (2) 1974, pp.329-46; O.MacDonagh, Early Victorian Government 1830-1870, 1977, pp.108-12; M.E.Rose, The Allowance System under the New Poor Law. Economic History Review, 2nd Series, 29 (3) 1966, pp.607-20. See also Ch.7, pp.308-09 & Ch.8, pp.369 & 379-80.

(9) See M.E.Rose, The English Poor Law 1780-1930, 1971, p.145; BRL: Birmingham Orders, 1837-62, Orders 4.1.44, 24.7.47, 16.1.50 & 23.2.50. Rules and regulations and outdoor and labour relief Orders were issued to the Birmingham Board in January 1850, and an accounting practices Order in February 1850. See also Ch.7, pp.322-40.

(10) See D.Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, 1976, pp.128-48; D.Ashforth, Settlement and removal in urban areas: Bradford, 1834-71, in M.E.Rose (ed.), The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914, pp.58-91; Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties'; D.Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, pp.111-27; D.Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds 1833-1855. Thoresby Society Publications, Part 53, 1970, pp.23-49; D.Fraser, Urban Politics in Victorian England: The structure of politics in Victorian cities, 1979, Ch.3; P.Wood, Finance and the urban poor law: Sunderland Union, 1836-1914, in M.E.Rose (ed.), The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914, pp.20-56; K.M.Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union.

(11) The MH 12 series of correspondence between the Boards of Guardians and the PLC, PLB and LGB ends at 1896, later volumes having been destroyed.

(12) See Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix A, Reports: No.23, Report from C.P.Villiers, p.32a; A.Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1968, p.186; E.Hopkins, Birmingham: The First

Manufacturing Town in the World 1760-1840, 1989, p.53; V.Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, 1983, pp.64-65.

(13) A.Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II: Borough and City, 1865-1938, 1952, p.135; British Association for the Advancement of Science, Birmingham and its Regional Setting: a scientific survey, 1970, pp.213-14 & 219-20; V.Skipp, A History of Greater Birmingham - down to 1830, 1980, pp.64-67; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.26-37 & 75; J.Zuckerman & G.Eley, Birmingham Heritage, 1979, pp.87-89, 103-06 & 108.

(14) G.C.Allen, The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country, 1860-1927, 1966, pp.14, 17-19, 33-36, 38 & 49-63; British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, pp.175-76, 178-82 & 214-16; Hopkins, Birmingham, pp.40-53 & 93 & Ch.4; W.Hutton, An History of Birmingham, 1783, pp. 329-32; Skipp, A History of Greater Birmingham, pp.50 & 55; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.39-61; Zuckerman & Eley, Birmingham Heritage, pp.93-97.

(15) C.Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I: Manor and Borough to 1865, 1952, p.367.

(16) British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, pp.220-21; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.367-69; T.P.Heslop, The Medical Aspects of Birmingham, in, S.Timmins (ed.), The Resources, Products, and Industrial History of Birmingham and the Midland Hardware District, 1865, pp.689-700; W.B.Stevens (ed.), Victoria County History: A History of the County of Warwick, Vol.7: The City of Birmingham, 1964, pp.339-41.

(17) BRL: A. Min., 20.12.36; 13th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1847, p.258; Heslop, The Medical Aspects of Birmingham, p.693; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.83-86. See also p.31.

(18) 13th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1847, p.260; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix B1, Answers to Rural Queries, pp.586a/b, 3, 11-13; D.Cannadine, Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967, 1980, Part 2; Heslop, The Medical Aspects of Birmingham, p.693; J.Morris Jones, Bygone Balsall Heath: a brief introduction to the historical geography of the district, 1979, p.4; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.79-82 & 86.

(19) Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.15 & 23-24; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.1-3.

(20) J.T.Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham; with A Sketch of the Earlier Government of the Town, Vol.I, 1878, pp.96-97; Skipp, A History of Greater Birmingham, p.74.

(21) Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.104-25; R.K.Dent, Old and New Birmingham: a history of the

town and its people, 1878-80, p.480; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.219-25. See also Ch.4, pp.184-87.

(22) Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.126-43; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.225-30; T.Lloyd Renshaw, Birmingham: its Rise and Progress: a short history, 1932, pp.111-12.

(23) Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.143-61 & 359-67; Dent, Old and New Birmingham, p.480; C.Flick, The Birmingham Political Union and the Movements for Reform in Britain 1830-1839, 1978, p.164; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.235-37; Lloyd Renshaw, Birmingham: its Rise and Progress, p.112; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, p.24.

(24) British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, pp.216-19; Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.I, Ch.XI-III; R.K.Dent, The Making of Birmingham: Being a History of the Rise and Growth of the Midland Metropolis, 1894, p.386; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.254-82 & 319-46; J.A.Langford, Modern Birmingham and its Institutions: a chronicle of local events, from 1841 to 1871, Vol.I, 1873, pp.7-8 & 41; Lloyd Renshaw, Birmingham: its Rise and Progress, pp.105 & 112-15; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, pp.302-03; Skipp, A History of Greater Birmingham, pp.75-6; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.15, 23, 92-94, 96-100, 105-06; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.320, 324-26, 335 & 341.

(25) Dent, The Making of Birmingham, pp.386-88; Dent, Old and New Birmingham, pp.498-99; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.346-62; Langford, Modern Birmingham and its Institutions, Vol.1, pp.41-42; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.15 & 100-01.

(26) Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.185-86 & 208-17; J.T.Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham; with A Sketch of the Earlier Government of the Town, Vol.II, 1885, pp.43 & 45; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.409-36; E.P.Hennock, Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900. Historical Journal, VI (2) 1963, pp.217-20; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.101-04. See also Ch.3, pp.123-24, Ch.4, p.185 & Ch.6, pp.261 & 263.

(27) British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, pp.214, 217 & 222-25; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.11-16, 135-38 & 140; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.63-64.

(28) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.139 & 145-46.

(29) Gazette 22.4.98; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.136-40 & 147-48; British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, p.224.

- (30) D.W.Bailey & D.A.Nie, English Gunmakers: The Birmingham and Provincial Gun Trade in the 18th and 19th Century, 1978, pp.22-23; British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, pp.222-24 & 227; E.Cadbury, M.C.Matheson & G.Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City, 1906, Appendix 1.
- (31) Gaz. 22.4.98; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.76, 86 & 147; Carter, The Guardians of the Poor, pp.456-60; C.A.Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.III (1885-1899), 1902, pp.127-28. See also p.45.
- (32) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.67-71 & 164-175; Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.184, 189-206 & 220-31; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, p.442; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.153-61.
- (33) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.18-20 & 72-87; Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.217-19 & 222-31; British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, pp.225-26; Hennock, Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government, pp.221 & 223; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.168-75. See also p.43.
- (34) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.18, 88-97, 108, 111-14 & 116-26; Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.232-33.
- (35) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.89; N.G.Evans & M.Gardner, Holy Trinity Sutton Coldfield, 1987, p.6; Morris Jones, Bygone Balsall Heath, p.4; D.Wright, An Account of Harborne from earliest times to 1891, 1981, p.31.
- (36) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.89 & 141-43; C.Gill & C.G.Robertson, A Short History of Birmingham from its Origin to the Present Day, 1938, p.71; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.2-3.
- (37) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.143 et. seq.; Gill & Robertson, A Short History of Birmingham, pp.71-73.
- (38) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.144-50; VCH, Warks., 7, p.336; C.A.Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV (1900-1915), 1923, pp.27-29 & 33-34.
- (39) The Times, 17.2.11, 17.5.11 & 5.6.11; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.150-55; Gill & Robertson, History of Birmingham, p.72; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, pp.35-43.
- (40) The Times, 10.11.11; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.2-3; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, p.31.
- (41) BRL: Birmingham Guardians Minutes 21.7.09; The Times, 27.5.11; Carter, The Guardians of the Poor, p.455; Vince,

History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, p.38. See also Ch.6, pp.284-86 & Ch.8, p.390.

(42) BRL: B. Min. 16.2.10 & 1.4.12; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.268; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, p.32.

Chapter 2: The Old Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham and Neighbouring Parishes, and the Arrival of the New Poor Law in the Locality

(1) Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the administration of the Old Poor Law in Birmingham and the neighbouring parishes subsequently incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, with the focus primarily upon the situation on the eve of unionization in 1836. Fundamental differences between Poor Law administration in the Parish of Birmingham and surrounding parishes are highlighted and explained. By the 1820s and early 1830s, relief administration in Birmingham operated on a much larger scale and in a far more sophisticated manner than elsewhere; a local Act regulated the administration of relief in the Parish, and there was already a high level of specialized provision for such groups as children and the sick.

The chapter also focuses attention upon the establishment of Poor Law unions in the vicinity of Birmingham, and in particular upon the processes associated with the formation of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. In reviewing the unionization process, the role of Assistant Commissioners Richard Earle and Robert Weale, and the incidence of opposition to unionization, receive special attention. For unionization to proceed reasonably smoothly, as demonstrated by events

elsewhere, it was necessary for the PLC to gain the support of at least a section of the local landed and commercial elite. This was achieved in the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, though influential individuals did offer some resistance. (1)

(2) Poor Law Administration in the Parish of Birmingham and the Parishes Incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, on the Eve of the Arrival of the New Poor Law

(2a) Introduction

Prior to the enactment of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, the Poor Law in England and Wales was largely administered on a parochial basis. However, from the late 17th century onwards, parishes in towns such as Plymouth and Norwich united under the terms of local Acts to administer relief jointly. After the passing of Gilbert's Act in 1782, in various parts of the country incorporations of urban and rural parishes were established for the same purpose. Overseers and churchwardens managed Poor Law affairs in each parish, subject to varying levels of control by the parish vestry. In the case of local Act or Gilbert incorporations and parishes, guardians, or their equivalent, assumed these responsibilities. (2)

In the vicinity of Birmingham, Overseers and Churchwardens were responsible for the administration of poor relief in the parishes incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in

1836. Thus, for example, by the early 1830s, two Churchwardens and four Overseers administered relief in the Parish of Kings Norton, whilst at Edgbaston there was a Select Vestry. (3)

From 1783 onwards, the Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham was administered under the terms of a local Act. Under the Act, a Board of 108 elected Guardians, together with the Overseers and Churchwardens, were charged with the administration of relief to the poor within a consolidated Parish of Birmingham. To qualify for election as a Guardian, candidates were required to be assessed to the poor rate for property worth at least £20 per annum, whilst only those ratepayers paying at least £10 a year in rates were entitled to vote at elections. (4)

By the late 1820s the need was felt for a new local Act which would bestow greater powers upon the Board of Guardians, particularly with regard to the sale of Parish property and the provision of a new workhouse. After prolonged discussions, the Guardians and Overseers successfully secured the passing of a carefully drafted Bill, which became law in September 1831. The 1831 Guardians Act remained as the basis upon which the administration of the Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham rested throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century. Under the terms of the 1831 Act administrative powers were vested in 108 triennially elected Guardians of the Poor, the 12 Overseers appointed annually by the magistrates, and the

Churchwardens. By the early 1830s various committees oversaw many aspects of the work of the Board of Guardians. (5)

(2b) Rating and Levels of Expenditure Under the Old Poor Law

Reflecting the growth of Birmingham and wider national trends, by the early 1830s Poor Law expenditure in the town had risen considerably from the levels recorded during the late 17th century and early 18th century. Throughout the 18th century, the Birmingham Overseers, like their counterparts elsewhere, had sought to restrain relief expenditure. However, increasing industrialization and population growth brought in their wake vastly increased social problems. Though Birmingham possessed an advantage over many other places in that a great variety of trades developed in the town, with one sector or another of the local economy generally in a depressed state, there was constant pressure upon the relief system. Increased rate burdens inevitably gave rise to complaints about the high cost of maintaining the poor, but, as Birmingham's first historian, the bookseller William Hutton, emphasized at the time, the massive increases in relief expenditure had to be put into the context of 'the increase of manufactures, of population, and of property.' (6) [SEE TABLE 4]

Throughout the period of the French and Napoleonic Wars from the 1790s to 1815, and the immediate post-war period, there was heavy pressure on the Parish relief system and the Board's

resources were severely stretched. As a consequence, poor rates were levied more frequently, and the Guardians and Overseers, obliged to raise ever larger amounts from the rates, sought to extend rating to more properties. After 1819, with the enactment of a statute introducing compound rates, they were able to spread the rate burden to smaller properties valued at under £6 per annum. (7)

During the early 1820s, with increased revenue and an upturn in trade, the relief system was under less pressure. In 1822, the Guardians and Overseers published a report which showed that amongst other improvements, the amount of Parish debts had been reduced from £8,420 at Lady Day 1821, to £2,698 at Lady Day 1822. It was also remarked that the Overseers were 'now enabled to settle their accounts quarterly ...', and current debts were mainly those of the previous quarter. Statistics of those in receipt of relief showed a healthy reduction on the circumstances pertaining the previous year. [SEE TABLE 5] Improvements in the collection of the poor rate, and the more equitable spread of the rating burden, received particular attention. As a consequence of the Act permitting overseers to collect rates from the landlords of small houses, a considerable increase in the rateable value of the Parish had been effected, the amount of rate levied rising from £1,700 to £4,041. To improve methods of collection, twelve 'standing overseers' to collect the rates had been appointed at Lady day 1821. A reduction in the annual expenditure on settlement

cases was credited to a new system whereby the Guardians sought to resolve disputes without recourse to legal proceedings. (8)

Under the terms of the 1831 local Act, the Overseers retained their rating responsibilities; the Vestry Clerk reporting to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in 1832 that new rates were demanded 'as often as the necessities of the parish require ...', and that they were approved by the magistrates when it had been established that the previous rates had been collected. The level of rate demands was 'regulated by a general survey and valuation ...' agreed by the Guardians and Overseers. According to the Vestry Clerk, about 19% of the rates levied had traditionally not been collected, the deficiency arising from 'voids, compositions to landlords, and by the rates on small properties under £6 a year hitherto not being collected ...'. C.P. Villiers, who visited Birmingham on behalf of the Royal Commission, reported that annual Parish expenditure exceeded £55,000 by the early 1830s. Parish accounts were audited at intervals by a committee of the Guardians and published annually, arrangements deemed most satisfactory by the Vestry Clerk. Such a complacent attitude was, however, rudely overturned in the mid-1840s, when, as the PLC had suspected, it became apparent that the Guardians had not exercised sufficient control over their accounts. (9)

Mirroring the experience of the Parish of Birmingham, Poor Law expenditure in neighbouring parishes also increased .

steadily during the 18th century, though, bearing in mind the differences in the populations and numbers of paupers involved, not to anything like the same levels. Thus, in the case of Northfield, expenditure increased from around £100 in 1711 to an average of £1,300 annually during the period from 1800-34. However, though there was a great difference between poor rate levels in the Parishes of Birmingham and Kings Norton, in 1821 and 1831, in terms of expense per head of population both Parishes were in a comparable position. (10) [SEE TABLE 6]

Local parishes, most notably Harborne, made strenuous efforts during the early 1830s to reduce relief expenditure and hence the rate burden. Thus, for example, whilst during the year ended March 1834 there were four poor rate levies at Harborne, there was only one during the year ended March 1835, and by that date the amount of arrears had been greatly reduced. (11) [SEE TABLE 7]

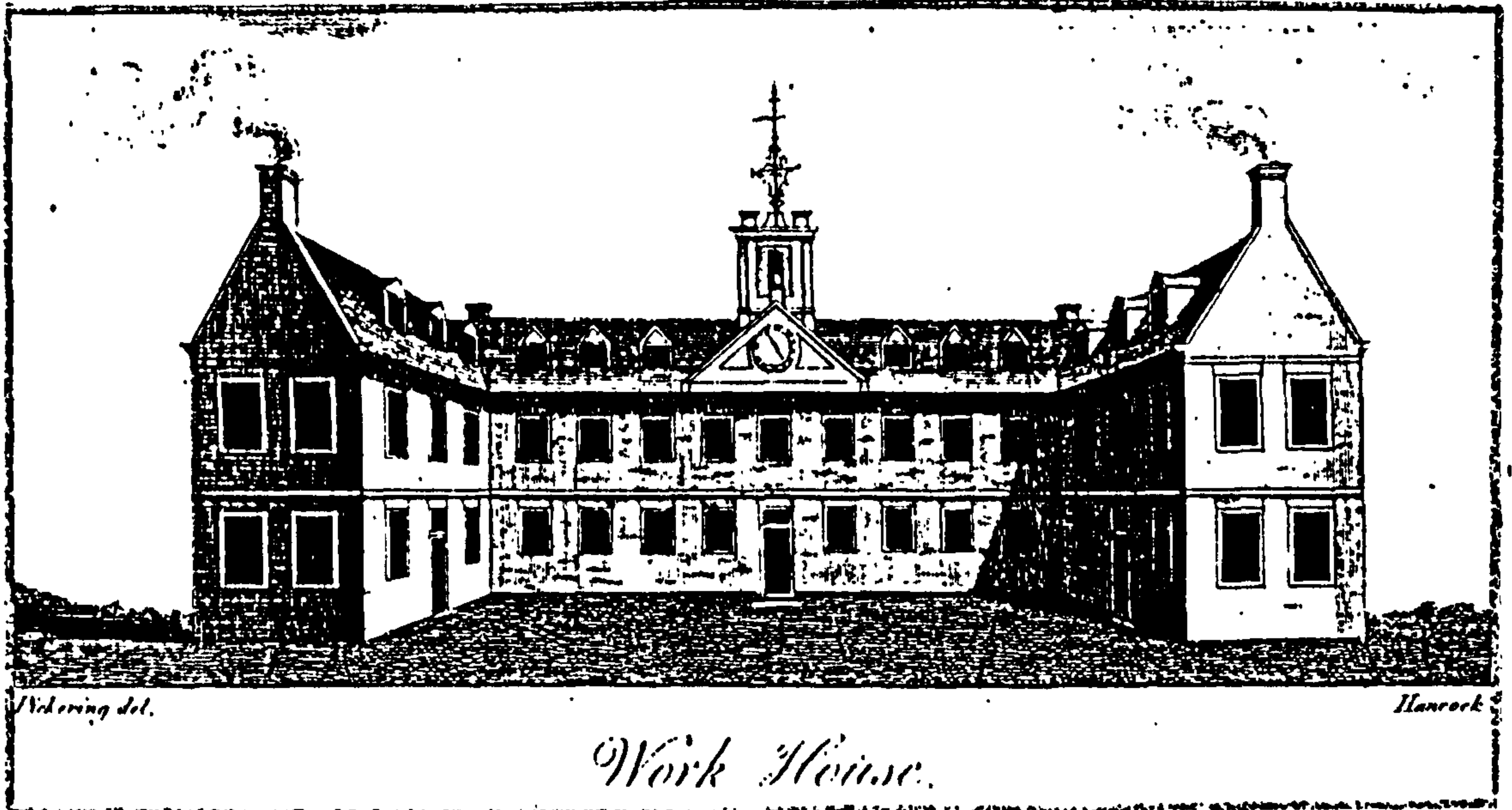
(2c) Parish Workhouses and Workhouse Regimes

By the late 18th century and certainly by the 1830s, Birmingham and the majority of the parishes incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in 1836 possessed their own workhouse or poorhouse. However, reflecting the demographic differences between Birmingham and its neighbours, their establishments were on a much more modest scale than the Birmingham Workhouse.

Birmingham's first Workhouse, situated in Lichfield Street, was erected during 1733/34, and subsequently extended by the addition of an 'infirmery' wing in 1766, and a second wing, designated 'a place for labour', in 1779. (12) [SEE FIGURE 3]

In 1782, against a background of increasing pressure on the Parish relief system and the perceived inadequacy of the existing Workhouse, the Overseers issued a pamphlet which championed their view that the answer to rising poor rate levies and the increasing burden of pauperism, was to reduce levels of outdoor relief and build a larger workhouse. The 'undeserving' who 'squander that money which was intended for the support of their families, in excessive drinking, ...' and who had 'no scruples of pride or delicacy with regard to receiving relief from the parish, ...' would be less keen to seek relief if it meant admission to the workhouse. Employment there would improve the morals and economic usefulness of inmates, and deter applications for relief. The cost of 'building another workhouse, upon a scale proportionately large to our exigency and the size of the town, ...' was felt to be fully justified in the long-term, because of the savings in relief expenditure envisaged. To support their arguments, the Overseers published extracts from letters from Poor Law authorities in Liverpool, St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and Nantwich, which extolled the virtues of their new workhouses.

(13)



3. The 'Old' Birmingham Workhouse, Lichfield Street.
(BRL: Local Studies & History Department.)



Hutton, however, disagreed with the Overseers, arguing that the erection of a new workhouse was neither necessary nor desirable. He commented that the existing workhouse had only been 'crowded a few weeks', and asserted that by employing paupers at the workhouse the town's trades would 'be deprived of their most useful hands'. Arguments that in the long-term the rate levies would be reduced, did not convince him. His fear was that 'The more we tax the inhabitants, the sooner they will leave us, and carry off the trades.' (14)

In the event, though the 1783 Act, 'for providing a proper Workhouse, within the Parish of Birmingham, ... and for better regulating the Poor ...', was secured, a new workhouse was not subsequently built. Although a site was selected on Birmingham Heath in 1783, and there was renewed interest in re-building during the early 1790s, in 1812 and during the 1830s, the old Workhouse survived until the 1850s. (15)

Amongst the parishes incorporated into the Aston Union in 1836, the Parish of Aston possessed the largest workhouse. Located in the centre of Erdington, and erected in 1735, it subsequently became the Union Workhouse. Elsewhere, at Sutton Coldfield the Corporation had built a workhouse in 1737, whilst Curdworth, Minworth and Wishaw also had small workhouses or poorhouses in 1836. Within the Kings Norton Union, the Parishes of Edgbaston, Harborne, Kings Norton and Northfield

all had workhouses. The Parish of Northfield, for instance, had possessed a workhouse since about 1785. (16)

The number of inmates at the Birmingham Workhouse, normally in the 4-500 range by the 1830s, was far greater than in any other local workhouse or poorhouse. [SEE TABLE 5] At the Northfield Workhouse, in June 1830, for example, there were only 28 inmates, whilst at the Harborne Workhouse in March 1835, there were only 23 inmates. (17)

As far as the regime at the Birmingham Workhouse was concerned, the inmates were treated humanely, but most were expected to do some form of task work. During the 18th century, the Overseers and Guardians set the able-bodied inmates to various employments, including the 'manufacture of packthread' and corn grinding. However, according to Hutton, none of these schemes had the desired effect of reducing the rate burden. (18) By the early 1820s some women were employed in cloth weaving, and a handful of boys and men 'in making and mending shoes.' The grinding of wheat was well established at the Workhouse by the mid to late 1820s, and some paupers were 'sent out to different trades ...'. Men and women were also employed at the Parish farm, and men were engaged in sand wheeling at the Key hill sand mine. (19)

In 1832, the Vestry Clerk reported to the Royal Commission:
able-bodied men are employed at steel crank-mills, and grind

corn for the consumption of the workhouse; others repair shoes; some boys and girls go out to work in the manufactories at weekly wages, others perform the domestic duties of the house, and some women go out to nurse the sick out-poor.

As to dietary allowances for different categories of inmates, it was reported that there was 'no distinction in the quality of the fare, but the able-bodied inmates, who are kept in employment, are allowed a larger proportion of food than the aged and impotent.' Paupers at the Workhouse were fully classified, with the provision of 'separate wards and yards for the males and females.' (20)

Although the Workhouse regime was generally humane and the house comparatively well administered, periodic enquiries, as in 1818 and 1825, were held by the Guardians following allegations of mis-management lodged against the governor or other officers. In 1818, investigations into the management of the Workhouse and Asylum, following revelations about irregularities and negligence on the part of the governor, induced the Guardians to adopt new rules and regulations, and to appoint eight regulatory committees: the House, Law, Asylum, Key hill, Clerks Office, Garden, Collecting Book and Poor Law Defaulters Committees. (21)

At the much smaller workhouses and poorhouses run by neighbouring parishes, rules and regulations were perhaps less precisely defined, but inmates were usually required to perform some labour. Thus, for example, during the early 19th century,

men and women at the Northfield Workhouse were employed in nail-making, and women in making clothes, mostly for Workhouse use. (22)

(2d) Special Provision for Particular Categories of Paupers

The Parish of Birmingham, from at least the late 18th century onwards, was notable for its relative progressiveness in terms of the special provision made for particular categories of paupers. Long before special provision became the norm under the late 19th century Poor Law, the Parish of Birmingham was providing for the specialized care of both children and the sick. Not only had the Parish authorities erected an infirmary adjoining the Workhouse in 1766, they had also opened a separate institution for the care of child paupers in 1797. (23)

Influenced by humanitarian sentiments and a desire to prepare the children in their care for useful adult lives free from reliance upon poor relief, the Overseers and Guardians adapted premises in Summer Lane, a mile from the Workhouse, for the purposes of a separate 'Asylum for the Infant Poor'. Children at the Asylum were provided with a basic education and given industrial training, and then apprenticed or sent out to service. (24) By July 1798, the Asylum Committee was confidently claiming that the institution was 'calculated not only to promote Economy in the Parochial Revenue, but to

preserve the Health and Morals, to educate and train up the Infant Poor in Habits of Industry and Usefulness.' (25)

From 1797 onwards the Birmingham Guardians continued to maintain the vast majority of child paupers at the Asylum for Infant Poor; additions were made to the buildings in 1817, and the Board continued to express satisfaction with the education, industrial training, and general treatment they received there. (26) [SEE TABLE 5] In August 1832, the Vestry Clerk reported to the Royal Commission that there were 286 children aged 'from four years old and upwards' maintained at the Asylum, with the older children 'employed on the premises in heading pins and working lace.' Echoing the sentiments of the Guardians, in his report to the Royal Commission, C.P.Villiers was also unstinting in his praise for the Asylum. (27)

The substantial provision made for the sick poor, centred upon the Workhouse Infirmary, also demonstrates the commitment of the Birmingham Guardians and Overseers to meeting the special needs of particular categories of paupers. This commitment was sustained into the New Poor Law era, and culminated in the erection of a large independent Infirmary adjoining the new Workhouse in the 1880s. Statistics clearly indicate the scale of provision by the 1820s. [SEE TABLE 8] By the early 1830s, medical relief provision in Birmingham had assumed the form it was to retain during the early New Poor Law era. Medical men tended to the needs of the poor at the

Infirmary and in the six medical relief districts, whilst at the Workhouse there was a resident medical officer. A Medical Committee had been appointed for the first time in 1825, and some lunatic cases were sent to asylums. (28)

Contrasting with the provision made by their populous neighbour, the parishes incorporated within the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in 1836, housed children and the sick in their general mixed workhouses, and children were apprenticed to local craftsmen or farmers as soon as possible. However, by the 1830s, as in places such as Aberdare, these parishes provided outdoor medical relief for the poor, paid subscriptions to voluntary hospitals, and sent some pauper lunatics to asylums. (29)

(2e) The Provision of Outdoor Relief

Under the Old Poor Law, as in other areas, a high percentage of paupers were not relieved by the Parish of Birmingham and its neighbours at their respective workhouses. Instead they received outdoor relief, sometimes, in the case of able-bodied men in particular, subject to the performance of some form of parish labour. Thus, in 1816, against a background of severe trade depression, men were set to work on the highways by the Birmingham Street Commissioners. (30) By 1822 the Parish of Birmingham was providing employment for large numbers of able-bodied male paupers in receipt of outdoor relief, with an

Employment Committee, established in 1819, coordinating activities. Men were employed grinding corn at the 'Parish mills', in the manufacture of flax, at the 'sand cliffs at Hockley' and in farm work on land at Birmingham Heath. In the opinion of the Board, such tasks were calculated 'not only to give employment to the industrious and well disposed, but to deter and drive away the more idle and profligate ...'. (31) Ten years later, able-bodied men in receipt of outdoor relief were still employed in sand wheeling, as well as in breaking stones. (32) Elsewhere, the Parish of Northfield, for example, found work for able-bodied paupers on local farms and the highways. (33)

By the early 1830s, the sheer numbers in receipt of regular outdoor relief from the Parish of Birmingham, and the sophistication of the administrative apparatus for dealing with applicants, clearly distinguished the Parish from its neighbours. [SEE TABLE 5] In 1832, the Vestry Clerk reported to the Royal Commission that:

The relieving Overseers see those paupers who are able to attend every week; the visitors are constantly employed in visiting the poor at their own houses, and there are also periodical call-overs, when every pauper must attend before the Overseers, and produce all his children.

Indicating that at least a proportion of those in receipt of out relief were able-bodied and in employment, it was stated that it was the duty of the visitors to 'inquire of their employers what are their earnings, and to get information

generally as to the real necessities of the applicants for relief.' When dealing with elderly applicants, enquiries were made to ascertain if they had families who might be able to support them, though it was averred that there were 'very few instances in Birmingham where persons reduced to pauperism have children able to maintain them.' (34)

According to the Vestry Clerk a very balanced approach was adopted by the Parish authorities towards the granting of relief to able-bodied men. Although they were keen to avoid any imposition, they were fully aware of their humanitarian responsibilities. In relation to 'Persons claiming Relief on account of temporary Want of Employment ...', it was stated:

some instances have been found where the "men" have struck for wages, and have applied for temporary relief, which in such cases is always administered with great caution. No doubt some workmen might have made a provision against stoppage of work, but I think of late years there has been much less opportunity for so doing than formerly. The previous character of the applicant is always considered, but the Overseers of Birmingham have always been unwilling to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children by withholding relief when distress really exists. (35)

As to the provision of allowances or 'regular Relief out of the Workhouse' to able-bodied men in employment, and their families, the Vestry Clerk denied that any 'such system ever ... prevailed in this parish or its immediate neighbourhood.' There was, however, a policy of assisting men 'by maintaining in the "Asylum" such of their children as they are not able to support, or by furnishing them with parish labour ...'. (36)

In the Parish of Kings Norton, according to the evidence presented to the Royal Commission by Paul Moon James, a former Overseer, the Overseers always endeavoured to avoid giving allowances to labourers, and adhered to a system of relief scales for various types of cases. Emphasis was also placed upon the desirability of assessing the character of relief applicants, Mr James commenting that if an applicant was 'of good character, he is pitied; if of bad, he is likely to be [verbally] abused for it. In either case, he is not suffered to starve.' (37)

Birmingham, as a major centre of commerce and industry, acted as a magnet to non-parishioners seeking employment, a matter which naturally had its implications for relief administration in the Parish. Thus, the Vestry Clerk reported in 1832:

The Irish and Scotch poor are very numerous and were it not that we promptly remove all who become chargeable, I have no doubt they would greatly increase, and from their hardy and reckless habits of living would monopolize the whole of the employment of mere labourers, and thus throw English labourers upon the parish.

Following the enactment of the 1846 Poor Removal Act, the Parish experienced considerable difficulties in coping with large numbers of newly irremovable non-settled poor. (38)

Amongst Birmingham's neighbours, the Parish of Harborne, keen to reduce relief expenditure during the early 1830s, focused much attention upon outdoor relief practices, and succeeded in achieving substantial cutbacks. Thus, whilst during the year

ended March 25th 1834 the Parish made cash payments to the out poor totalling £603, during the year ended March 25th 1835 this figure was reduced to £394. Similarly, whilst in July 1834 there were 63 cases receiving out relief from the Parish, by March 25th 1835 this number had been reduced to 18. (39) Contrasting with Harborne, out relief expenditure levels for the Parish of Northfield remained fairly constant during the early 1830s. (40) [SEE TABLE 9]

(2f) Parish Employees

The contrast between the scale and sophistication of the Poor Law infrastructure in the Parish of Birmingham and neighbouring parishes is particularly evident in relation to the numbers of staff employed. By the 1820s and early 1830s the Birmingham Guardians employed a comparatively large complement of officers, in addition to which there were numerous pauper servants at the Workhouse and Asylum for Infant Poor. Duties of the various Birmingham officers were stipulated in the 'Rules and Regulations' of 1818, subsequently revised in 1822. (41)

At the Birmingham Workhouse the principal officers were the governor and matron, who by 1828 received a joint salary of £200 per annum, plus board and lodging. During the 1830s, the governor and matron received £250 per annum, in view of the fact that the governor, Thomas Alcock, also performed the

duties of House Clerk. As to the spiritual needs of the Workhouse inmates, by the latter half of the 1820s and early 1830s clergymen were engaged to fulfil chaplaincy duties. In 1828 and 1831, the Reverend Edward Burn received a salary of £25 per annum for conducting 'Divine Service on Thurs. Evenings &c', whilst the Reverend D.N.Walton received a salary of £30 per annum for conducting 'Divine Service on Sunday mornings, & ... visit[ing] the Sick poor in the House when requested.' (42)

The senior officers at the Asylum for Infant Poor were the governor and matron. Samuel and Ann Brueton, in these posts in 1817, with a joint salary of £50 per annum, continued in the same capacity until 1836; their joint salary having risen to £80 per annum, plus board and lodging, by 1828. (43) To operate the extensive medical relief system centred upon the Workhouse Infirmary, by the late 1820s the Parish of Birmingham employed six 'Surgeons to the Town Infirmary', as well as a 'House Apothecary' or 'Resident Medical Officer'. (44)

Other senior officers employed by the Birmingham Guardians and Overseers during the early 19th century, were the cashier, the Vestry Clerk, the 'Visitors of the Out Poor' and the twelve 'Collectors of Poor Levies'. In 1828 the cashier was earning £250 per annum, whilst the Vestry Clerk, who was responsible for 'ascertaining parish settlements', earned £200 per annum. By 1828, the two 'Visitors of the Out Poor' (re-styled relieving officers in 1841), who were employed in

'administering relief'; received salaries of £105 each per annum. The twelve collectors received £12.10.0 each a quarter in 1818. (45)

In contrast to the Parish of Birmingham, reflecting the much more modest scale of operations, neighbouring parishes incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in 1836, employed few paid officers at the beginning of the 1830s. Where workhouses existed there was usually a governor and/or matron, and some parishes such as Harborne and Northfield engaged a parish surgeon, but again reflecting the differences in the scale of operations between Birmingham and its neighbours, salaries were much lower. Thus, for example, during 1834 the Northfield 'Governess' received £7.10.0 for half a year's salary, whilst the Harborne 'governess' received £38.7.5½ for 'three quarters of a year's salary and bill'. (46)

(2g) Attitudes to the Relief of the Poor on the Eve of the Introduction of the New Poor Law

From the answers supplied by the Parishes of Birmingham and Kings Norton to the 1832 Royal Commission's 'Town Queries' and 'Rural Queries' respectively, it is evident that local administrators did not subscribe to some of the more doctrinaire views expounded by the framers of the Royal Commission report. In general, the Birmingham and Kings Norton responses to the 'Queries' indicate relatively liberal views

sympathetic to the poor. Mr James, in the Kings Norton answers, went so far as to state: 'The Labourers are industrious, and are good workmen; better taught, and therefore better workmen; good husbands, kind fathers, and loyal subjects, except when goaded by poverty into discontent.' As to the question about the agricultural disturbances of 1830/31, the inclusion of which reflected the widespread apprehension amongst the ruling classes about a breakdown in the fabric of society and the role of the Poor Law in exacerbating such a situation, Mr James simply stated that 'No fires or riots occurred in this Parish.' (47)

Comments in the Birmingham and Kings Norton answers as to the extent of the influence exerted by the magistracy over local Poor Law affairs, and the extent of allowances to able-bodied men in employment, are clearly at variance with the views propounded by the Royal Commission and the promoters of the Poor Law Amendment Act. As far as the Birmingham magistracy was concerned, the Vestry Clerk remarked: 'The Magistrates ... seldom interfere in the disposal of parochial relief otherwise than by recommendation ...'. Indicative of a decidedly humanitarian approach to the relief of the poor, regarding the removal of magistrates' powers to order relief when paupers refused to enter a workhouse, he also stated:

numerous cases may happen where it would operate most cruelly to compel poor persons asking relief to go into a workhouse (one perhaps badly managed), at the dictum of an Overseer from whose fiat there should be no appeal. (48)

With respect to relief afforded to women with illegitimate children, the Birmingham and Kings Norton answers both reveal evidence of a humanitarian approach. Thus the view was expressed in the Kings Norton answers that such women did not benefit overmuch from parish relief, and that major changes to the Bastardy Laws were not required. It was also remarked that: 'The Bastardy Laws do not promote illicit intercourse; this is promoted by poverty, that prevents marriage; also by want of education.' (49) In the Birmingham answers it was stated that approximately 350 bastards were currently chargeable to the Parish, with average payments to mothers amounting to about £1,500 per annum, of which around £900 was 'received' from putative fathers. Allowances were normally between 1/6d and 2/6d a week, which, it was remarked, did 'not generally repay the mother for the keeping of the child.' Demonstrating humanitarian sentiments, the Vestry Clerk added:

We never seek punishment of the mother for the first offence. I think punishment for such offences injudicious; I cannot point out any good it ever effected. I know it always depraves the morals of young women who have been subjected to it.

However, the importance of enforcing 'constant and regular payment from the fathers ...' was stressed. (50)

Humanitarian views on settlement and removal matters were expressed in the Kings Norton and Birmingham answers, with both calling for the simplification of the Laws of Settlement. In the Kings Norton answers, Mr James commented that 'birth and

residence for some given period, would meet nearly all cases.', and that 'Where a man has laboured in the days of his strength, there should he be relieved in old age and infirmity.'

Evincing a traditional paternalistic/humanitarian outlook, he also stated:

Until Labourers are degraded by abject misery, they do not apply willingly for Relief; their first application is for employment, or during hard winters; at these times the Poor Laws are the only link which binds them to society. Without them the Labourer would become a desperate plunderer and a bad subject. (51)

Overall, the Birmingham and Kings Norton answers to the Royal Commissions' 'Queries', exude a desire to maintain the status quo. The Parish authorities preferred to deal with any problems in their own way, and whilst some changes in the law might be warranted, these ought not to unduly upset the local equilibrium. Undue outside intervention and unionization with other parishes were not seen as desirable. (52)

(3) The Establishment of Poor Law Unions in the Vicinity of Birmingham, with Special Reference to the Establishment of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in Late 1836

The unionization of parishes throughout England and Wales followed a broadly similar pattern, although the process was more protracted in some areas than others because of particular local complications. Parishes were formed into unions focused upon a market town or other major population centre, following consultations between the Assistant Commissioner assigned

responsibility for the district concerned, local elites, and the Commissioners in London. Orders establishing the unions and detailing rules and regulations to be observed in the administration of the relief system were issued by the PLC, guardians were elected, and in due course officers were appointed and the actual process of administering the New Poor Law in each locality began. (53) The formation of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions followed the standard pattern, and did not arouse the fierce opposition of local communities which was such a marked feature of the introduction of the New Poor Law in parts of the industrial North of England. (54) However, there were particular local factors which delayed a swifter imposition of the New Poor Law in the vicinity of Birmingham.

In 1836, two major obstacles impeded the formation of unions in the immediate vicinity of Birmingham. Firstly, the fact that the Birmingham Board of Guardians were determined and able, without infringing the terms of the Poor Law Amendment Act, to continue to administer a separate relief system under the terms of the local Act of 1831, limited room for manouevre. Secondly, there was opposition amongst local elites in some parishes around Birmingham to unionization with their neighbours. Thus the Aston and Kings Norton Unions were amongst the last unions to be formed in the region, because of the inherent difficulties in deciding upon natural centres for the parishes around Birmingham, and because of the perceived need to obtain some degree of co-operation from local elites.

It was not until November 1836 that the Aston Board of Guardians embarked upon its duties, and December 1836 before the Kings Norton Board assumed its powers. (55)

During 1836, Assistant Commissioner Richard Earle, having established unions in Northamptonshire and neighbouring counties during 1835, formed unions throughout Warwickshire, amongst them the Meriden Union, where he secured the dissolution of a Gilbert incorporation. Concurrently, Robert Weale was establishing unions in Worcestershire, having previously concentrated upon the West Country and Gloucestershire. (56) By the autumn of 1836 many unions in the region around Birmingham were exercising their powers, and the PLC was keen to complete the unionization of the Birmingham area, before directing full attention to the industrial North of England. (57)

From the commencement of their operations, the PLC and Assistant Commissioners found it both necessary and desirable to accommodate the interests of local elites when deciding upon the composition of unions, in order to ensure that there was the maximum chance of success with regard to the adoption of policies championed by the Commissioners. Thus, in the parishes around Birmingham, Assistant Commissioners Earle and Weale worked hard to court allies prior to the formation of workable unions. With the Parish of Birmingham, the natural centre for a union, determined and able to continue to operate

its own relief system, the designation of unions around Birmingham was particularly problematical. Ultimately, as in other areas where the PLC were unable to induce Gilbert or local Act authorities to dissolve themselves (for example at Chester and Shrewsbury), it was necessary to combine neighbouring parishes into unions which had as their focus centres other than the truly natural one of Birmingham, taking into account the views of local elites. The Aston and Kings Norton Unions were both somewhat artificial creations, the result of a complex of geographical and socio-political factors. (58) [SEE MAP 1]

Whilst Richard Earle was primarily responsible for the establishment of unions in the immediate vicinity of Birmingham, there was an overlap of jurisdictions with Robert Weale's district to the south of the town, which caused extra difficulties in the designation of union boundaries. From the beginning the two Assistant Commissioners were under no delusions about the problems associated with establishing unions in the area.

In April 1836, Robert Weale commented, in a letter to George Nicholls, upon the difficulties associated with the 'formation of a Union at Birmingham ...'. Whilst, by the beginning of August, he was writing again, to say that having visited the Birmingham Workhouse and Asylum, and considered whether it was advisable to try to incorporate the Parish into a new union,

both he and Mr Earle felt that 'without entering at all into the consideration of the ... Local Act ...', 'Birmingham with its immense population should remain alone ...'. He added that: 'till Mr Earle can obtain information as to the constitution of the present Board and from experience judge of its merit they should not be interfered with.' The two men had abandoned the idea of combining Aston and Edgbaston with Birmingham, in view of

the impossibility of giving to those Parishes such a number of Guardians as to enable them in a Board to cope with Birmingham, and the necessity which such a junction would create of building a new Workhouse added to the immense population we should have brought together ...'

A few days later, Mr Earle wrote to the Commissioners as to 'the best mode of dealing with the various parishes in the neighbourhood of Birmingham.' (59)

Subsequently, the Aston Union, and the neighbouring West Bromwich Union, were declared on October 12th 1836, after Mr Earle had forwarded to the PLC final statements relating to their composition. On October 22nd, an Order was issued which detailed the regulations for the governance of the Aston Board's affairs. The details relating to the composition of the proposed Kings Norton Union were not forwarded to the PLC until October 25th, so that Union was not declared until November 16th. Amongst other local unions formed by Mr Earle, and declared during November, were the Walsall and Lichfield Unions. (60)

Initial opposition to unionization amongst local elites stemmed from two main causes; the belief in particular parishes that their existing relief system was efficient and that unionization might adversely affect the well-being of the parish and its ratepayers, and the more generalized antagonism towards the New Poor Law and the PLC. Opposition was of a passive kind, involving petitions and letters to the Commissioners; the violence which greeted the arrival of the New Poor Law in certain areas of the industrial North of England was not manifested at the unionization stage or later. Furthermore, it is evident from letters sent to the PLC prior to unionization, by individuals such as H.Botfield Thomason, 'Visitor' for the Parish of Harborne, and C.W.Firchild, a Northfield Overseer, and the Assistant Commissioners, and from the policies subsequently pursued by the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, that those opposing unionization or simply luke-warm about the prospect, were at least matched by those who supported the introduction of the new regime. (61)

Overall, Mr Earle experienced more difficulty in forming the Kings Norton Union than the Aston Union. The Parish of Aston was a reasonable compromise as a centre for a union, and sufficient support amongst local elites was forthcoming. However, it was only at a relatively late stage that it was decided to centre a union upon the Parish of Kings Norton. With the initial possibility that Birmingham might be linked with other local parishes, Mr Earle had proposed in early 1836

that Kings Norton should form part of the Solihull Union. Such an arrangement was, however, opposed by local interests, and a deputation led by the Parish Overseers went to London to see the PLC to request that Kings Norton be made a 'central Board'. Eventually, it was agreed by Mr Earle and the PLC that a union centred upon the Parish of Kings Norton should be formed; to include the Parishes of Edgbaston, Harborne, Northfield and Beoley, as well as Kings Norton. This was, however, only agreed upon after lengthy consultations between Messrs. Earle and Weale, the latter having intended to include some of these parishes in the Bromsgrove Union. (62)

The formation of the Kings Norton Union was essentially the product of a compromise between Messrs. Earle and Weale, and local interests. After prolonged discussions with local elites during the summer of 1836, Mr Earle became convinced of the 'expediency' of the formation of a union centred upon Kings Norton, in order to gain support from those not essentially hostile to the implementation of the New Poor Law. Thus, in his letter to Edwin Chadwick accompanying the tabular statement on the proposed Union, in October, he commented:

Without the instrumentality of a friendly Board of Guardians little can be effected, with one adverse to the measure the fulfilment of the prophecies of our opponents is easily secured, and failure follows, because success is neither aimed at or wished.

He emphasized that by compromise

we shall secure to our measures a fair trial in districts, where it must always be remembered, that the evils of mal-

administration have not been severely felt, & therefore the Rate-payers are not disposed to place themselves unreservedly in the hands of the Commissioners.

His remarks about the desirability of compromise with local elites and 'concession in matters not essential to the introduction of the new System ...', in the prospect of achieving support for 'further changes' in the longer-term, reflect the approach he adopted elsewhere, and clearly have a wider applicability to the unionization strategy adopted by the PLC and Assistant Commissioners. (63)

Amongst the parishes eventually incorporated into the Kings Norton Union, Edgbaston posed a particular problem for Mr Earle, as he explained in a September 1836 letter to Commissioner Lefevre. At a fundamental level, whilst it was theoretically desirable to combine Edgbaston with the Parish of Birmingham, in view of the latter's already large population and continued growth, the lack of 'Workhouse room to spare', and the ever present complication of the Birmingham Guardians Act, Mr Earle argued (with reference to earlier correspondence with George Nicholls), that such a course was not feasible. To compound Mr Earle's difficulties, strong opposition to a combination with Birmingham had been registered at an Edgbaston Vestry meeting attended by 'principal' local men, including Lord Calthorpe's agent Mr Bedford, 'W.Ledsam & several other friends & acquaintances of Mr Nicholls ...'. However, according to Mr Earle, he had been well received, and those in attendance were not against unionization per se. The Edgbaston

Vestry had in fact acquiesced to a proposal, to which Mr Earle was keen to gain Commissioner Lefevre's support, for the incorporation of Edgbaston into a union which would also comprise the Parishes of Harborne and Smethwick, Kings Norton, Northfield and possibly Beoley. The difficulty with this proposal was that Robert Weale intended to include some of these parishes in the Bromsgrove Union, which was due to be declared shortly. (64)

Stressing the advantages of the proposed alternative union, Mr Earle stated that although the population of the area in 1831 was only 15,000, the Commissioners were 'legislating for posterity & I see no reason why in the course of 20 years this District should not present a population of 50 or 60000.' As to workhouse accommodation, he believed that the Harborne and Kings Norton Workhouses 'would suffice' for the time-being. Echoing the sentiments of his subsequent letter to Edwin Chadwick formally proposing the Kings Norton Union, Mr Earle also remarked: 'My views are strongly in favour of making friends, wherever cooperation can be procured by a sacrifice involving no principle.' (65)

As subsequent correspondence and the formation of the Kings Norton Union demonstrates, Mr Earle's arguments evidently convinced the Commissioners. However, there was initially some slight tension between Messrs. Weale and Earle, occasioned by the modifications the former was required to make in his plans

for the Bromsgrove Union. During September, Mr Weale commented that some 'influential Persons will be disappointed, if the plan of which they have expressed their approbation be changed.' However, in a letter to Commissioner Lefevre, Mr Earle, whilst expressing his regret that he had caused any extra inconvenience to Mr Weale and the hope that any misconceptions on the part of prominent local individuals might quickly be rectified, remarked that he had 'some reason to think, that there are parties, both in Harborne & K.Norton, to whom the alteration will not be disagreeable ...'. (66)

Opposition to unionization by groups of local ratepayers opposed to the New Poor Law, is well illustrated in the case of the Parish of Harborne. In October 1836, fifty Harborne ratepayers signed a petition to the Commissioners, rejecting unionization with neighbouring parishes. Heading the list of signatories was Thomas Attwood, Radical M.P. for Birmingham, who also wrote a covering letter. As a noted opponent of the Poor Law Amendment Act, and a Harborne ratepayer, it is not surprising that he spearheaded Parish opposition to unionization. Seeking to convey an impression of a parish where the ratepayers were willing and able to meet the minimal demands of their own poor, and where paupers were treated humanely but firmly, the petition affirmed that: 'Our Parish is at present prosperous and perfectly contented. Our Poor Rates are paid cheerfully, and without difficulty by the Rate Payers, and they amount to only Ten Pence in the pound per annum.'

Harborne's Workhouse was described as 'excellent' and 'in good repair', with only eleven 'poor persons' currently 'resident, and comfortably maintained' therein, whilst it was 'capable of containing five times a greater number.' It was stressed that only a 'few poor persons' were at present in receipt of Parish relief, and the view expressed that it was right that they should be relieved in their own parish, where they were not 'removed from their friends and relations, and from the care of Neighbours interested in their Welfare.' The petitioners asserted that under such circumstances, they were 'unwilling to incur any expence (sic.) whatever in the building or maintaining of any New Workhouse, which may be necessary, in the contemplated Union of the Parishes around us.' In conclusion, the petitioners, claiming to represent the opinion of 'nearly the whole of the Rate Payers ..., and of the other Inhabitants ...', requested the Commissioners not to unionize Harborne, or to 'force upon us any other of the Provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act.' (67)

Such a stance was not, however, likely to divert the Commissioners from their purpose, and unionization went ahead. Responding to the petition, the Commissioners stated that it was their 'Duty ... to carry into effect the Provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act, by uniting Parishes for the better management and relief of the Poor ...'. The Commissioners added that as far as Harborne was concerned they could

not perceive any grounds which would induce them to pursue

towards it a different course to that which has been so beneficially adopted in regard to the greater number of Parishes in England & Wales.

However, seeking to allay the 'groundless' misapprehensions of the petitioners, the Commissioners remarked that there was no necessity for building a new Union Workhouse or for enlarging the Harborne or Kings Norton Workhouses. (68)

(4) Conclusion

As has been shown, by the late 18th century the scale and sophistication of the poor relief system in the Parish of Birmingham, diverged materially from that of neighbouring parishes subsequently incorporated into the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. After 1783 the relief system in the Parish of Birmingham was administered by a Board of Guardians, constituted under the terms of a local Act, whilst in other parishes the Overseers and Churchwardens continued to be responsible for the relief of the poor. Though most local parishes possessed workhouses before the arrival of the New Poor Law, the Birmingham Workhouse was by far the largest and most sophisticated. In addition, from 1797 onwards the Parish of Birmingham maintained a separate Asylum for Infant Poor, as well as an Infirmary. The numbers relieved, and the amounts of relief dispensed and rates collected, by the Parish of Birmingham, were far in excess of anything encountered in neighbouring parishes. Reflecting the difference in the scale of operations, a much larger complement of staff was employed

by the Birmingham Guardians, than by neighbouring parishes. This vast difference in the scale and sophistication of Poor Law operations in Birmingham, mirrored the differences between Birmingham and its neighbours in terms of population, and urban and industrial development. (69)

The fact that the poor relief system in the Parish of Birmingham operated under the terms of the 1831 local Guardians Act, severely restricted the Poor Law Commissioners' room for manoeuvre in 1836, when it came to the unionization of parishes in the vicinity of Birmingham. Unable, under existing circumstances, to subsume the Parish of Birmingham into a new union, the Commissioners were forced, as at Chester and Shrewsbury, to concede ground and form somewhat artificial unions of the parishes surrounding the town. It was not until 1912 that the union jurisdictions established in 1836 were swept away, with the unification of the Parish of Birmingham and the major part of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. Reflecting experience elsewhere, the unionization process in the vicinity of Birmingham necessitated the exercise of considerable diplomatic skill on the part of Assistant Commissioners, who made every effort to accommodate the interests of local elites, hoping thereby to achieve a smooth transition from the Old to the New Poor Law. (70)

Chapter 2 Notes

- (1) See A.Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law: The politics of inquiry, enactment and implementation, 1978, Ch.V; N.C.Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement 1834-44, 1971; J.Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law, 1986.
- (2) See 10th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1844, pp.52 & 110; J.J.Bagley & A.J.Bagley, The English Poor Law, 1968, pp.30-31; G.Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, in connexion with the Legislation and other circumstances affecting the condition of the people, Vol.II, 1854, pp.89-97; Rose, The English Poor Law, pp.26-28.
- (3) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, p.586c/d, 33, 43/44; VCH, Warks., 7, p.335.
- (4) BRL: 23 Geo.III, Cap.liv, 1783; BRL: An Abstract of the Act 23 George III. C54, 1801.
- (5) BRL: B. Min. 30.9.28, 3.3.29, 20.3.29, 19.5.29, 7.9.30, 5.10.30, 9.2.31, 15.2.31, 22.2.31 & 13.4.31; BRL: 1 & 2 Wm.IV, Cap.lxvii, 1831; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix B2, Answers to Town Queries, p.239f, 1-2, 5, 7; Gaz. 7.2.31.
- (6) Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, p.71; Dent, The Making of Birmingham, p.107; Hutton, An History of Birmingham, pp.221-24.
- (7) Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.151-52; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, pp.93 & 247.
- (8) J.A.Langford, A Century of Birmingham Life: or a chronicle of local events, from 1741 to 1841, Vol.2, 1868, pp.447-50.
- (9) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix A, Report from C.P.Villiers, p.31a & Town Queries, pp.239f/i/k, 10/11, 13, 50-51, 55-57 & 63/64. See also Ch.7, pp.327-28 & 333-34.
- (10) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, p.586a & Town Queries, p.239f; R.P.Hastings, Discovering Northfield, 1966, p.39.
- (11) BRL: List of Paupers Receiving Weekly Pay from the Parish of Harborne, In the County of Stafford; And a General Statement of Accounts for the Year ending March 25, 1834, p.3; BRL: List of Paupers Receiving Weekly Pay From the Parish of Harborne, ... March 25, 1835, p.3. See also pp.75-76.
- (12) Dent, The Making of Birmingham, p.75; Hutton, An History of Birmingham, pp.216-17; McNaulty, Some Aspects of the History of the Administration of the Poor Laws in Birmingham, pp.21-24.

(13) BRL: The Present Situation of the Town of Birmingham, Respecting its Poor, Considered. With, a Proposal for Building a New Workhouse; Addressed to the Inhabitants, by the Overseers of the Poor, 1782.

(14) Hutton, An History of Birmingham, pp.361-69.

(15) BRL: 23 Geo.III, Cap.liv, 1783; BRL: An Abstract of the Act 23 George III. C54, 1801; BRL: A Bill Proposed to be Passed into an Act, to Repeal an Act Passed in the Twenty-Third Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George The Third, 1791; BRL: B. Min. 10.11.12, 26.2.34, 31.12.38, 13.2.39, 22.4.39, 28.5.39, 2.7.39 & 8.7.39; Gaz. 24.2.1783 & 21.4.1783; McNaulty, Some Aspects of the History of the Administration of the Poor Law in Birmingham, pp.26-28. See also Ch.6, pp.257-61.

(16) M.J.Arkininstall & P.C.Baird, Erdington past and present, 1982, p.11; Hastings, Discovering Northfield, p.40; D.V.Jones, The Story of Erdington: From Sleepy Hamlet to Thriving Suburb, 1985, pp.37 & 39; D.V.Jones, The Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield: A Commemorative History, 1984, p.61; A.H.Saxton, Bygone Erdington: A brief record, with Photographs of Men, Places, and Events in the Village, 1928, p.180; Upton & Fellows, Birmingham and its Workhouses, pp.14-15; VCH, Warks., 7, p.335.

(17) BRL: List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne ..., 1835, p.6; Hastings, Discovering Northfield, p.42.

(18) BRL: Articles of Agreement, Birmingham, June 17th 1789; Dent, The Making of Birmingham, pp.107 & 198-99; F.M.Eden, The State of the Poor: A History of the Labouring Classes in England, with Parochial Reports, 1797, pp.325-26; Hutton, History of Birmingham, pp.363-64.

(19) BRL: B. Min. 25.1.25, 19.7.25 & 26.1.30; Langford, A Century of Birmingham Life, Vol.2, pp.447-48.

(20) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239g, 16-19.

(21) BRL: B. Min. 21.4.18, 2.6.18, 22.5.22, 10.5.25 & 25.10.25; BRL: Plain Truth; or, A Correct Statement of the Late Events Relative to the Birmingham Workhouse. By H.W.S., 1818; BRL: Regulations for Conducting the Affairs of the Birmingham Workhouse, 1822.

(22) Hastings, Discovering Northfield, p.41.

(23) See also p.65 & Ch.6, pp.271-72 & 275-84.

(24) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239g, 24; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, p.150.

- (25) Langford, A Century of Birmingham Life, Vol.2, p.80.
- (26) BRL: B. Min. 28.10.17 & 2.6.18; Langford, A Century of Birmingham Life, Vol.2, p.448.
- (27) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix A, Report from C.P.Villiers, p.7a & Town Queries, p.239g, 24.
- (28) BRL: B. Min. 19.7.25, 7.10.34 & 15.10.34; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239f, 13; L.D.Smith, Duddeston Hall and the 'Trade in Lunacy' 1835-65. The Birmingham Historian, No.8, 1992, pp.16-22. See also pp.65 & 77 & Ch.6, pp.269 & 281-83.
- (29) BRL: List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne ..., 1834, p.4; A.C.Davies, The Old Poor Law in an Industrializing Parish: Aberdare, 1818-36. Welsh History Review, 8, 1976/77, pp.295-96; Hastings, Discovering Northfield, pp.40-41. See also p.78.
- (30) Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, p.150.
- (31) Langford, A Century of Birmingham Life, Vol.2, pp.447-48. See also p.68.
- (32) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239h, 30 & 34-35 & Appendix A, Report from C.P.Villiers, pp.31a & 33a.
- (33) Hastings, Discovering Northfield, p.41.
- (34) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239g, 25-28.
- (35) Ibid., p.239g, 29.
- (36) Ibid., p.239h/i, 30, 32 & 44.
- (37) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, p.586b/d, 21, 24-26 & 39/40.
- (38) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239i, 42/43. See also Ch.6, pp.266-68.
- (39) BRL: List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne ..., 1834, pp.4 & 7-8; BRL: List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne ..., 1835, pp.4 & 7.
- (40) BRL: Parish of Northfield Workhouse Accounts 1814-34; Hastings, Discovering Northfield, pp.40-41.
- (41) BRL: B. Min. 2.6.18 & 22.5.22; BRL: Regulations Birmingham Workhouse, 1822. See also p.69.

- (42) BRL: B. Min. 17.5.25, 20.5.28, 30.6.29, 27.4.30, 13.4.31 & 16.11.31.
- (43) BRL: B. Min. 28.10.17, 27.10.18, 30.1.27, 20.5.28 & 5.10.36.
- (44) BRL: B. Min. 13.5.28, 20.5.28, 3.6.28 & 24.6.28; Pigot and Co's Commercial Directories of Birmingham, Worcester, and their Environs, 1830, p.73.
- (45) BRL: B. Min. 27.10.18 & 20.5.28; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239f, 9. See also p.62 & Ch.6, pp.265-66.
- (46) Public Record Office (PRO): MH 12/13232, letter C.Barker to PLC, 29.9.34; PRO: MH 12/14039, letter Mrs Rose to PLC, 29.4.35; BRL: Parish of Northfield Workhouse Accounts 1814-34; BRL: List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne ..., 1834, p.4; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix A, Report from C.P.Villiers, p.31a; Hastings, Discovering Northfield, pp.40-41. See also p.72.
- (47) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, pp.586c/e, 37 & 53 & Town Queries, pp.239f-k.
- (48) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, p.586e, 43 & Town Queries, pp.239h/i, 30-31, 44-45 & 47-48. See also pp.73-74.
- (49) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, p.586e, 47 & 49.
- (50) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239k, 58-60.
- (51) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, p.586e, 51 & Town Queries, p.239k, 61-62.
- (52) Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Rural Queries, pp.586a-e & Town Queries, pp.239f-k. See also pp.90-92.
- (53) See Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.36-7; Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, Vol.II, pp.306-22; S. & B.Webb, English Poor Law History, Part II: The Last Hundred Years, Vol.I, 1929, pp.112-6.
- (54) See R.Boyson, The New Poor Law in North-East Lancashire, 1834-71. Lancashire & Cheshire Antiq. Society Transactions, 70 (for 1960) 1962, pp.35-56; Crowther, The Workhouse System, p.44 et.seq.; Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds 1833-1855; Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law; Midwinter, Social Administration, pp.20-25; D.Roberts, Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State, 1960, p.273 et.seq.; M.E.Rose, The Anti-Poor Law Movement in

the North of England. Northern History, 1, 1966, pp.70-91; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, Chs.2 & 3; M.E.Rose, The Relief of Poverty, 1834-1914, 1972, pp.9-11.

(55) Under the terms of the Poor Law Amendment Act, the PLC did not have the power to dissolve local Act or Gilbert incorporations without the consent of two thirds of the guardians on existing boards. (Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law, p.54; Lewis, William Day, p.172). See also Ch.1, pp.20-22 & Ch.7, p.322.

(56) PRO: MH 33/2 & MH33/7; 1st Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1835, Appendix D:2; 3rd Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1837, Appendix C, 1, p.196.

(57) Gaz. 25.4.36, 23.5.36, 6.6.36, 13.6.36, 20.6.36, 27.6.36, 4.7.36, 25.7.36, 1.8.36, 15.8.36, 22.8.36, 26.9.36, 17.10.36, 24.10.36 & 31.10.36.

(58) 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, pp.4-5; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, Ch.V; Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law, pp.54-60; Lewis, William Day, pp.172-74; Walsh, Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire, pp.225-26 & 232-33.

(59) PRO: MH 12/13286, letter R.Weale to G.Nicholls, 3.8.36; PRO: MH 33/2, letter R.Earle to PLC, 6.8.36; PRO: MH 33/7, letter R.Weale to G.Nicholls, 19.4.36.

(60) PRO: MH 12/14057, Order 10.1.84; PRO: MH 33/2; BRL: Aston Orders, 1836-57, Orders 12.10.36 & 22.10.36.

(61) PRO: MH 12/14039, letters Mr Thomason to PLC, 29.8.34, 4.10.34 & 7.11.34, & letter Mr Firchild to PLC, 10.11.34; Boyson, The New Poor Law in North-East Lancashire; Crowther, The Workhouse System, p.44 et.seq., Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement; Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law; Midwinter, Social Administration in Lancashire, pp.20-25; Rose, The Anti-Poor Law Movement.

(62) Birmingham Journal 10.12.36.

(63) PRO: MH 12/14039, letter R.Earle to E.Chadwick, 25.10.36; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, pp.110-13.

(64) PRO: MH 32/21, letter R.Earle to J.S.Lefevre, 11.9.36. George Nicholls, who was engaged in canal management and banking before becoming a Poor Law Commissioner, had strong business links with Birmingham. He was manager of the Birmingham branch of the Bank of England prior to his appointment. (PRO: MH 12/14039, letter P.M.James to G.Nicholls, 12.5.35; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, p.78; J.D.Marshall, The Nottinghamshire Reformers and Their

Contribution to the New Poor Law. Economic History Review, 2nd Series XIII, 1961, p.393). See also p.87.

(65) Ibid.

(66) Ibid., letter R.Earle to J.S.Lefevre, 25.9.36.

(67) PRO: MH 12/14039, Harborne ratepayers' memorial to PLC, 10.10.36 & letter T.Attwood to PLC, 2.11.36. See also pp.64 & 75-76.

(68) Ibid., letter PLC to T.Attwood, 16.11.36.

(69) See pp.59-81.

(70) See pp.81-92 & Ch.1, pp.50-51.

Chapter 3: The Conduct and Nature of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians Elections, c.1836-1912

(1) Introduction

Over recent decades writers on the New Poor Law have focused particular attention upon Poor Law politics, using the term in its widest sense. Many studies have concentrated upon the political forces, which, together with socio-economic factors, shaped the development of Poor Law policy and administration during the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Studies in this category include detailed analyses of the origins, background and opposition to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and the introduction of the New Poor Law, the development of administrative policy vis-a-vis specific groups such as vagrants and the sick, and particular issues such as Poor Law finance and settlement and removal. (1) A second group of studies has focused primarily upon the Poor Law as a political institution in its own right. These studies have been principally concerned with the Poor Law electoral system, the involvement of party politics in the Poor Law sphere, and the background of people elected as guardians. (2) Neither category of study is mutually exclusive, and both are concerned with relationships between boards of guardians and the PLC, PLB and LGB. Many studies, whilst concentrating upon Poor Law administration, also necessarily refer to the electoral system and party political influences at work within the Poor Law.

Nonetheless it is useful to distinguish between these two complementary strands in the study of Poor Law politics.

This chapter aims to examine the nature and conduct of elections to the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians during the period from the mid-1830s to the early 20th century, highlighting special characteristics and trends over time. The intention is to identify to what extent party politics impinged upon elections, to assess levels of ratepayer interest and to illustrate how particular issues raised the tempo at some elections. During the period the majority of elections to the three Boards were not held in a highly charged party political atmosphere, though there were notable exceptions. Furthermore, particular elections were dominated by specific issues of concern, with political parties, factions and individuals, aggressively campaigning to win the support of the ratepayers. In view of the significant changes which were made to the regulations governing the elections to the three Boards from the 1870s onwards, the chapter assesses how far elections during the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century differed from those of earlier decades.

Throughout the chapter, Board elections are discussed in the context of wider local and national developments. Poor Law politics in Birmingham, as elsewhere, were influenced by a whole range of local and national factors. Wider local political rivalries, central government policies and attitudes

towards them, and more generalised societal change, in combination with particular controversies relating to the administration of the Poor Law in the locality, all played their part in determining the conduct and outcome of elections. In discussing the characteristics of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board elections, parallels and contrasts with the experience of boards in other places are referred to as appropriate.

(2) Electoral Procedures

Until the elections of December 1894 (the first to be held under the terms of the 1894 Local Government Act), the electoral regulations governing Birmingham Board elections differed from those applicable to the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. As for elections to other New Poor Law unions, the annual, and from 1884 triennial, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians elections were conducted according to regulations issued by the PLC at the time of unionization, and subsequently modified by the Commissioners and their successors when deemed appropriate. (3) Prior to 1894, the triennial Birmingham Guardians elections were, however, conducted according to regulations stipulated by the 1831 local Act, later subject to modifications approved by the LGB. (4)

The electoral regulations issued to the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, like those issued to other unions, stipulated

the number of Guardians allocated to each parish or other sub-district, the duration of office, the qualifications for Guardians and voters, voting scales and the procedures to be followed during elections. Until the alterations of the latter part of the 19th century, the Aston Board comprised 25 elected Guardians, plus a number of ex-officio Guardians. Aston Parish returned 18 Guardians, Sutton Coldfield four Guardians, and Curdworth, Minworth and Wishaw one each. Within the Kings Norton Union, which had 20 elected Guardians (prior to the modifications to the electoral system of the 1880s and 1890s), the Parishes of Kings Norton, Edgbaston and Harborne returned five Guardians each, Northfield three Guardians and Beoley two Guardians. To be elected as an Aston or Kings Norton Guardian, nominees had to be rated in respect of property valued at £25 or more per annum. Voters, who could be either ratepayers or owners of property or both, were required to have been assessed to the poor rate for at least one year and to be up-to-date with their payments. Under the 1836 electoral regulations, a system of plural voting, related to the amount of assessment paid, allowed ratepayers up to three votes (six from 1845) and property owners up to six votes. Property owners could vote by proxy. Initially Churchwardens and Overseers were responsible for conducting elections, but from the early 1840s onwards this role was assumed by the Clerk to the Guardians. When contested elections were to occur, the regulations required voting papers to be left at the homes of voters and collected on the day of election. (5)

Triennial elections to the Birmingham Board were conducted in line with procedures outlined in the 1831 local Act, just as elections to other similar boards were conducted under the terms of their respective local Acts. As in the case of the Aston and Kings Norton elections, voters were to be given adequate notice of forthcoming elections and made aware of the electoral regulations, through the local press or other means. Candidates for election as one of the 108 (60 after 1873) elected Guardians, had to be ratepayers assessed to the poor rate at not less than £20 per annum. All ratepayers who had been assessed to the poor rate in respect of property valued at £12 or more per annum; for over six months, and who had paid all amounts due, were entitled to vote at a specially convened electoral meeting. Votes were registered by submitting to the chairman of the meeting - on separate 'pieces of Paper or Tickets' - the names, residence and occupation of up to 108 candidates. After the meeting, the votes were counted and the result declared at a subsequent meeting. (6)

Significant adjustments to the electoral regulations applicable to all three Boards were made prior to 1894. Under the terms of an 1873 LGB Order, the number of Birmingham Guardians was reduced to 60, whilst Orders confirmed by Act of Parliament in 1883 and 1891, modified the electoral procedures. LGB Orders issued in 1884 and 1886 instituted triennial elections to the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, divided some parishes into electoral wards and re-distributed Guardians. In

1892 an LGB general Order reduced the qualification to serve as a guardian on all boards, to an assessment to the poor rate of not less than £5 per annum. (7)

Whilst significant alterations to electoral procedures, both locally inspired and central government imposed, occurred prior to 1894, it was the Local Government Act of 1894 which fundamentally changed the Poor Law electoral system. The Act abolished plural voting, proxies and property qualifications. J.P.s ceased to serve as ex-officio Guardians and voting by secret ballot was adopted for the first time. Birmingham Board elections were now conducted under the same regulations as those of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards; the number of Birmingham Guardians was reduced drastically to 36, and the Parish was divided into electoral wards. (8)

(3) The Conduct and Nature of the Elections to the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians During the Period from the Late 1830s to the Early 1890s

A majority of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board elections during the period from the late 1830s to the early 1890s did not attract much interest, though some were attended with a great deal of party political and factional activity and controversy, which on occasion generated a corresponding upsurge of interest on the part of the electorate. At some elections wider party political and factional struggles induced

rival groups to campaign vigorously for control of the Boards, fully recognising their importance as local power-bases. Sometimes particularly controversial Board policies generated heightened interest in elections. Local perceptions of the policies championed by the central Poor Law authority, and wider national political and societal factors, also played their part in determining the atmosphere surrounding elections.

(3a) The Aston and Kings Norton Guardians Elections of 1836/37

When considering the events surrounding the 1836 and 1837 Aston and Kings Norton Board elections, the political controversy and social turmoil which accompanied the introduction of the New Poor Law, especially in the North of England, needs to be kept firmly in mind. During 1835/36, against a favourable economic background, as increasing numbers of unions were declared in the South and Midlands, local elites essentially convinced of the benefits to be gained from the new dispensation secured control of Boards. Elections, as at Poole, might witness contests between local political factions, but they did not generate the same degree of passion associated with some of the early elections in the North. There was some discontent amongst the labouring classes as the new regime came into operation in the South and Midlands, and prominent opponents of the New Poor Law inveighed against it in 'The Times' and elsewhere, but the real challenge to the imposition of the New Poor Law and the authority of the PLC did not come

until the beginning of 1837 when the Commissioners turned their attention to the industrial North. (9)

The fact that the PLC's northern offensive coincided with the onset of a prolonged economic depression, compounded the antagonism of local communities to the new Law. In some areas the Commissioners were met with extremely determined opposition from virtually all sections of society, with local elites championing campaigns against the imposition of the new regime. When elections to the boards of guardians of newly declared unions in the West Riding of Yorkshire took place at the beginning of 1837, they were held in an atmosphere of intense acrimony. There were electoral boycotts and determined campaigns to elect opponents of the New Poor Law, and violent disturbances occurred at Huddersfield and Bradford as the PLC endeavoured to impose its authority. (10)

Though the first Aston and Kings Norton Board elections did not occasion such turmoil, they were both conducted in a highly charged political atmosphere, most especially in the Parishes of Aston and Kings Norton. At the Aston Union election, held on November 7th 1836, a contest in the Parish of Aston resulted, as the partisan 'Journal' declared, in 15 of the 18 seats going to men included on the 'popular list'. As far as the 'Journal' was concerned, all seats would have gone to the 'popular list' if three of their candidates had not either been falsely disqualified for non-payment of rates, or defeated by

candidates returned with the assistance of the votes of allegedly unqualified electors. (11)

In the case of the Parish of Kings Norton, according to the admittedly biased testimony of the 'Journal', the Tory magistrates rendered a contest necessary. At the instigation of the Overseers and Churchwardens, a vestry meeting had selected two Tories, two Whigs and a neutral as candidates for the office of Guardian, hoping thereby to prevent a contest, but the local magistrates (all Tories) subsequently promoted four alternative lists of candidates. Adopting the moral high ground, by asserting that the magistrates had unnecessarily 'destroyed the peace of the parish, by plunging it into a severe contest ...', the 'Journal' exhorted its readers to ensure that they cast their votes, preferably in support of 'liberal candidates'. Ultimately the candidates approved at the vestry meeting were returned. (12)

Little controversy appears to have surrounded the 1837 Kings Norton Union elections, although three of the Harborne representatives were not re-nominated. As at least one of the men re-elected to represent the Parish was a supporter of the New Poor Law and the PLC, it appears that the pro-New Poor Law faction, who supported the stringent relief policies adopted by the Board of Guardians, had gained the upper hand. (13)

Contrasting with the Kings Norton Board elections, however, the 1837 election in the Parish of Aston was attended with a tremendous flurry of political activity, and characterised by an atmosphere of intense acrimony. As in 1836, local Tories and 'Liberal-Radicals' promoted rival lists of candidates, and employed all means at their disposal to forward their cause. Under circumstances similar to those pertaining in places such as Leeds, Leicester and Poole, opposing factions were locked in a struggle for control of the Board of Guardians, as part of a more generalised political struggle within the Parish of Aston and neighbouring Birmingham. (14) Set against the backcloth of the confrontation over the introduction of the New Poor Law in the North of England, and the continuing debate over the role of the PLC, the local factors combined to make for a particularly explosive contest, which gave the beleaguered Commissioners much cause for concern and induced them to intervene to maintain order.

As early as February 1837, the Commissioners were alerted to the possibility of difficulties at the forthcoming election, when three of the Aston Overseers applied for more time to organize it, in the light of their experience at the November 1836 election and the prospect of an even more keenly fought contest this time. Mr Earle advised the PLC to accede to the request, commenting, significantly, that:

A contest is certain, & I apprehend much dissatisfaction will arise, in case the return made by the Parochial Officers is considered to be incorrect by reason of the want of time

allowed to them for collecting examining & deciding on the Voting Papers. (15)

Acting upon this advice the Commissioners issued an Order postponing the election for six days until April 5th. (16)

By the beginning of March campaigning had gone into full swing. At a Vauxhall, Birmingham, meeting convened by the Tory Churchwardens (John Brearley Payn and John Smallwood) and three existing Aston Tory Guardians, on March 2nd, 18 Tory candidates, including the Churchwardens, were nominated as Aston Parish Guardians. Subsequently, 45 property owners and ratepayers in the Parish formally declared their approval of the candidates. Thereafter, the 'Vauxhall list', and its instigators, became the target of violent criticism by 'Radicals'. The 'Journal' was particularly vehement in its attack upon the Churchwardens, who, as returning officers, it was stressed, ought not to be associated with the return of a particular set of candidates. (17)

Complementing their local campaigning, thirteen of the 'Liberal' Aston Parish Guardians sent a memorial to the PLC, in which they complained that the Churchwardens, as returning officers, were 'using undue influence' to try to 'overwhelm the Liberal votes' at the ensuing election. They contrasted their support for the New Poor Law, with what they claimed were the efforts of the Churchwardens and their allies to subvert the law. To ensure a fair election, the PLC were requested to

exclude the Churchwardens from any involvement with the return, as well as to provide an assurance that the scrutiny would be open to all candidates. (18)

Although the Churchwardens denied that they were acting in a prejudicial manner, admitting no conflict between their varied roles as returning officers, voters and electoral candidates, it cannot be doubted that they were determined to facilitate the return of a majority of Tory Guardians. (19) A letter from the Union Clerk to the PLC stated, for example, that one of the Churchwardens had put pressure upon him to impose an earlier deadline for the receipt of nominations than the regulations demanded. The Clerk requested guidance, commenting that he had been 'placed in a very awkward position their (sic.) being two opponent parties in the parish the Churchwardens party being opposed by that class of politicians who call themselves Liberals.' (20) Another letter from two of the Aston Overseers to the PLC, also reveals a difference of opinion with the Churchwardens about whether leaseholders had separate votes, and the maximum number of votes to which owners of extensive property were entitled. These letters, and a letter from Isaac Aaron (one of the prime movers behind the 'Liberal' campaign) to the PLC, indicate that the Churchwardens were attempting to manipulate the electoral regulations to secure enhanced voting rights for Tory supporters. (21)

In his letter, Isaac Aaron, although undoubtedly writing with the intention of discrediting the Churchwardens, raised genuine issues of concern. He emphasized how unsatisfactory it was that the Churchwardens were able to 'sit in judgment as returning officers ...' as well as to stand as candidates. Reference was also made to what Mr Aaron termed the Churchwardens' 'Schemes for increasing the Votes of their party, ... by allowing the large Landholders (such as Lord Bradford) to give such a Number of Proxies for six votes each to different persons, as they would be entitled to give for their whole property ...'. The plea that the Overseers should be empowered to conduct the election alone, and that there should be an open scrutiny of the votes was repeated. (22)

As Mr Aaron's letter to the PLC, and a letter addressed to 'Fellow Parishioners' by 'A Rate-payer' (which appeared in the local press at the end of March, and was probably also written by Mr Aaron), reveal, party political dispute in the Parish of Aston was, as in Bradford and Poole, compounded by tensions between urban and rural interests. In the public letter, the writer condemned the 'Vauxhall list' not simply because of its 'extreme Tory' bias, but because although the town districts paid 'more than two-thirds of the Poor-rates ...' and contained over 'five-sixths of the whole population of the parish ...', thirteen of the recommended candidates lived in the agricultural districts and were 'completely identified with the country interest.' It was stressed that, as the Parish was

united with four wholly 'agricultural parishes' which returned seven Guardians, if a majority of Tory Guardians with a clear rural bias were returned at the election, the interests of the urban areas in the Union, which bore the brunt of the poor rate burden, would not be properly safeguarded. (23)

Demonstrating the apprehension amongst the 'Reformers' that the Tory faction, through the offices of the Churchwardens, might successfully manage to manipulate the outcome of the election, the message to 'Fellow Parishioners' was included in the 'Journal' twice; on the second occasion with extra information about voting rights and procedures, designed to encourage potential supporters to register their votes. A message to the Aston ratepayers, signed 'A Friend to the Church', exhorting them not to give 'a premature pledge' of support to the 'Vauxhall list', also appeared in the 'Gazette'. No effort was spared by the 'Liberal' faction to counter the influence of the Churchwardens, who, like local officials at elections in places such as Leeds, Poole and Salford during the 1830s and thereafter, were evidently not averse to the employment of dubious methods to influence the outcome of the election. (24)

When the election was held on April 5th, it resulted in a complete victory for the 'Reformers', all 18 seats going to their candidates. However, the result was challenged by the Tories, and Assistant Commissioner Earle found it necessary to

intervene to confirm the validity of the return. Although the Churchwardens and two of the Overseers had refused to sign the return, Mr Earle endorsed it on the grounds that the signatures of the other two Overseers were sufficient to validate it. His decisive intervention in favour of the result clearly demonstrates the importance attached to the election by the Commissioners, anxious to avoid further adverse publicity. Though not wishing to be seen as partisan, the Commissioners and Mr Earle were determined to ensure that the pro-New Poor Law faction, once elected, retained power. (25)

The 'Journal' characteristically delighted in the outcome of the election, emphasizing the differences in levels of support for candidates on the 'Reform list' and those on the 'Tory list', and stressing that the Tories' defeat was their own fault, as they had not been prepared to work with the 'Liberal-Radical' Guardians, who it was claimed had favoured the re-election of the old board in order to avoid unnecessarily disturbing the Parish again so soon after the 1836 election. [SEE TABLE 10] Much was made of the failure of the Churchwardens to have the result nullified, as a consequence of Mr Earle's ruling; and the fact that Mr Earle had also rejected claims that some of those who had supported the 'Reform' candidates were ineligible to vote as they had failed to meet all parochial rate demands. It was pointed out that whilst electors were required to have been assessed to all parochial rates for at least twelve months, and to have paid all rates

over six months old, in the Parish of Aston the only rate covering the whole Parish was the Church rate, which had not been assessed since 1835. The Highway Rates for Bordesley and Deritend, and Duddeston and Nechells, did not apply to the entire Parish, and in any case the most recent assessments were not yet six months old. An anonymous statement appended to the 'Journal's' election report, presumably written by one or both of the Overseers who had endorsed the result, justified their actions, and sought to further bolster the validity of the return by stressing that the election had been conducted in full accordance with the electoral regulations. (26)

Though the newly elected Aston Board was able to set about its business with renewed vigour, and the 'Liberal-Radical' faction maintained a comfortable hold over its affairs in succeeding years, despite the activities of the Reverend Bedford, the controversy surrounding the Aston Parish election did not dissipate for some months. The Tories made an unsuccessful appeal against the result to the Court of King's Bench, and submitted a memorial, signed by 81 ratepayers, to the PLC. Again underlining the tensions between urban and rural interests, the memorial, as well as reiterating the complaints about the legality of the 1837 return, argued that in view of the fact that most of the 18 Aston Parish Guardians resided in urbanized parts of the Parish, the agricultural districts were not properly represented on the Board. To rectify a situation under which 'the small occupiers' resident

in the two most urbanized hamlets were 'permitted to vote for the whole body of Guardians ...', and to ensure that in future 'some regard may be manifested for the feelings and interest of the larger rate payers ...', it was suggested that each hamlet should elect its own representatives, allocated according to the amount paid to the poor rate. (27)

Following the advice of Mr Earle, the Commissioners responded to the memorial by stating that the PLC had no power to assign Guardians to hamlets within parishes, but that their concern would be kept in mind should any change in the law be proposed. Regret was also expressed that despite the extra time allowed to conduct the election, the Overseers and Churchwardens had been unable to agree on the return. Commenting confidentially to the Commissioners on the wider implications of the controversy, Mr Earle referred to the 'serious inconvenience' which might have arisen at the Aston election, and could happen elsewhere, if returning officers signed returns validating the election of rival sets of candidates. To avoid such a situation, he advised that in future a majority of the parish officers should be required to sign the return, and urged the PLC to seek powers to divide large parishes into districts for the election of Guardians. As far as the Parish of Aston was concerned, he felt that 'The power of the Town hamlets ... to return all the Gns. (sic.) must inevitably continue to cause well grounded dissatisfaction in the agricultural portions of it.' (28)

The decisive action taken by Assistant Commissioner Earle and the PLC to counteract the divisive atmosphere surrounding the Aston Parish election, and to uphold the result in favour of the 'Liberal-Radicals', was conditioned by a number of considerations. Whilst the PLC wished, for wider political reasons, to be seen to be acting in an even-handed manner, it was always desirable to ensure that allies of the New Poor Law retained control of boards, particularly those such as Aston, which the Commissioners were keen to promote as model unions. Bearing in mind the avowed anti-New Poor Law stance of local Tories, not to mention wider national considerations, a Tory victory would not have been a welcome prospect for the PLC in 1837. Beset by opposition to the introduction of the New Poor Law in the North of England, the PLC also had to contend with the House of Commons Select Committee enquiries into the operation of the new Law. It was undoubtedly in the PLC's interest to see a comfortable 'Liberal-Radical' victory, hence the response to events before, during and after the election.

(29)

(3b) The 1837 and 1840 Birmingham Guardians Elections

The 1837 and 1840 Birmingham Guardians elections were as highly politicised as the 1837 Aston Parish election. At these elections 'Liberal-Radical' and Tory factions, as at Leeds, Leicester and elsewhere, recognised the Board of Guardians as

an important local power-base in the context of the wider political battle for dominance in the town. (30)

At the 1837 election, four rival lists of candidates were issued: a 'Tory List', two alternative lists from the 'Reform' faction, designated the 'Blue List' and the 'Green List', and a 'White List'. The existence of alternative 'Reform' lists drew angry criticism from one anonymous writer, who claimed that the 'Green List' was simply a means of 'dividing the Liberal votes, to enable the Tory party to return their friends.' Arguments put forward to justify its existence, namely that some of those on the 'Blue List' were 'disqualified by their assessment', by their 'bodily infirmities' or 'numerous private engagements', were dismissed. It was pointed out that of thirteen unqualified candidates on the 'Blue List', eleven were also on the 'Green List'. (31)

After the poll, the subsequent declaration meeting witnessed considerable discord, reminiscent of the controversy surrounding the Aston result. There was dissent about the eligibility of some of the elected candidates, and R.K. Douglas challenged the Chairman's right 'to sit in judgment on the qualification of the candidates.' Ultimately the meeting passed two resolutions by 'large majorities'; the first of which affirmed that individuals who paid compound rates for property assessed at not less than £20 per annum were entitled to be elected as Guardians, and the second that the chairman of

a declaration meeting did not have 'the right ... to act in a judicial capacity as to the qualifications of those gentlemen who have a majority of votes.' Of those elected, many were included on more than one list, but more candidates from the 'Blue List' than any of the others were elected, thereby ensuring 'Liberal-Radical' dominance of the Board. However, the highest number of votes accorded any of the elected candidates was 858, somewhat less than the number of votes received by a majority of elected candidates at the 1840 election. (32)

In 1840, there were three alternative lists of candidates: a 'white' or 'house list' adopted by the Conservatives, a 'blue' or 'reform list', and a 'green list'. The election witnessed greater ratepayer interest than the 1837 election, with around 1,670 registering their votes, compared to less than 1,000 in 1837. However, the greatest difference between the two elections was the result. Despite the 'Journal's' efforts to encourage voters to support the 'Blue List', the 1840 election witnessed a dramatic reversal in political fortunes, with the Conservatives gaining control of the Board by a very substantial majority. Of the 108 newly elected Guardians, all but four were included on the 'white or Tory list', though, as even the 'Gazette' admitted, the candidates with the most votes were included on the 'white' and 'blue' lists. The four elected candidates who had only appeared on the 'blue or Liberal list', were returned because three of the men 'proposed

by the conservatives [had not] been properly assessed in the levy-book, and the fourth [had not been] legally described in the returns.' Of men included on the 'green' list only, John Cadbury received the highest number of votes. At the national level 'The Times' reported the overwhelming Tory victory, emphasizing the contrast with the situation in 1837 and expressing the view that this augured well for Tory support at the next Parliamentary election. (33)

The 'Conservative' victory in 1840, was - it is reasonable to assume - the outcome of a combination of factors, including the rising cost of relief as a result of economic depression and social dislocation, the repercussions of the 1839 Chartist riots in the town, and reaction to the efforts of the 'Liberal-Radical' dominated Town Council to assert its authority following the incorporation of the Borough. According to the 'Journal', the Tories had also made every effort to ensure that the rating arrears of some of their supporters were paid. However, in view of 'Liberal-Radical' control of the Council, as even the 'Journal' acknowledged, their supporters may simply have been apathetic in registering their votes because of the new focus of political activity in the town. (34)

(3c) Aston and Kings Norton Guardians Elections from 1838 to the Mid-1860s

Aston Union elections from 1838 to the early 1860s did not generate anywhere near the same amount of interest as the 1837 election. Only one contested election occurred in the Parish of Aston from 1838 to 1862, and none in the other parishes. Similarly, Kings Norton Union elections during the same period were largely mundane affairs, although there were contested elections in the Parish of Kings Norton in 1845, 1846, 1849 and 1850, the Parish of Northfield in 1845 and 1850, the Parish of Beoley in 1850 and the Parish of Harborne in 1858. Elections in other places, for instance the Bradford, Gateshead and Sunderland Unions, were also subject to fluctuating levels of interest from year to year, and district to district. (35)

A number of related factors account for the lack of interest displayed at Aston Union elections in the years immediately after 1837. In 1837 the Union had only recently been established, and, against a background of national controversy about the introduction of the New Poor Law, rival political factions were keen to secure control of an important local power-base. However, in subsequent years, despite some opposition to the implementation of aspects of New Poor Law policy, local political elites lost interest in contesting Guardians elections. They were preoccupied by other matters, including the campaigns for and against the Birmingham Charter, the Borough Council's efforts to assert its authority, the Chartist agitations and the repeal of the Corn Laws. During the decades following the establishment of the Aston Union,

ratepayers, believing that the men in control of the Board exercised a restraint upon relief expenditure which was beneficial to their interests, were content to maintain the status quo. When a contested election did occur in the Parish of Aston, in 1843, the voting figures reveal a distinct decline in interest from the heights of 1837. (36) [SEE TABLES 10 & 11]

Whilst Kings Norton Union elections during the same period were hardly more spectacular than the Aston elections, there was a higher incidence of contests in some of the constituent parishes. However, when contests occurred, most commonly in the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, levels of interest were not particularly high. There were not usually many candidates and the number of votes registered was not large, although it has to be remembered that the populations and numbers eligible to vote in these Parishes were much lower than in the Parishes of Aston and Birmingham. [SEE TABLE 12] Any controversy surrounding elections was minimal, in comparison to the atmosphere engendered by the 1837 Aston Parish election. (37)

(3d) Birmingham Guardians Elections 1843-70

The Birmingham Guardians elections of 1843, 1846, 1849, 1852 and 1855, offer a valuable illustration of how ratepayer perceptions, and the activities of organized ratepayers' groups determined electoral outcomes. When, as in 1843, 1846 and

1852, existing Guardians were perceived to be protecting ratepayers' interests adequately, they were not challenged. However, when, as in 1849 and 1855, they were perceived to be shirking such responsibilities, campaigns led by determined individuals were successful in dislodging them.

In complete contrast to the bitterly contested elections of 1837 and 1840, the 1843 and 1846 elections witnessed minimal interest. There was an absence of politically inspired lists and few votes were registered. At the 1843 election only 149 voters handed in voting lists, whilst in 1846 only 16 of the men returned had not served on the previous Board. As to the lack of interest in 1843, the 'Gazette' remarked:

The result of this election may be considered to afford conclusive evidence of the favourable opinion entertained by the rate-payers generally of the former body of Guardians, the majority of the gentlemen elected having been in office during the last three years.

Such an assessment is equally applicable to other Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton elections during the period. (38)

If the 1843 and 1846 elections aroused little interest, the opposite was the case in 1849, when a specific issue, the cost of the proposed new workhouse to be erected at Birmingham Heath, generated a great flurry of activity. Ratepayers, concerned that the plans of the architect Samuel Hemming, which were favoured by the retiring Board, would saddle the Parish with massive debts, were induced to support a campaign

orchestrated by a Ratepayers' Committee, led by the 'Economist' Joseph Allday, aimed at ousting the majority of existing Guardians. At the election a comparatively high turnout of 1,900 ratepayers produced a Board which it was felt would be more economical than its predecessor. Though the scrutiny of votes was not completed until 10pm on April 2nd, Mr Allday, as returning officer, by scheduling a declaration meeting for 9am the next morning, prevented the retiring Board from holding a meeting at 10am, at which according to the 'Birmingham Mercury' its members had intended

putting the finishing stroke to their celebrated new workhouse job, thereby entailing upon the ratepayers a heavy burden for the erection of a costly building, and at the same time serving a favoured architect. (39)

Quite apart from its importance in determining the future direction of Board policies, the result of the 1849 Guardians election also had a wider significance in the context of local politics. It was symptomatic of a mid-century tendency for the restricted Birmingham electorate to support 'Economy' as an overriding priority in all sectors of local government, and heralded an era of 'Economist' domination, which reached its peak during the 1850s. (40)

Though in 1852 many of those serving on the retiring Board were re-elected on a low turnout, either because, as Joseph Allday remarked, 'they possessed the confidence of the ratepayers' or because electors were simply indifferent, the 1855 election witnessed another vigorous campaign by opponents of

the existing Board. (41) At the 1855 election, the result was again influenced decisively by the Ratepayers' Committee led by Joseph Allday and his allies. Reflecting wider local and nationwide anti-centralist sentiment, the main theme of their campaign on this occasion was the need to defend the local autonomy enjoyed by the Guardians under the terms of the 1831 local Act, in the face of increasing PLB influence. (42)

At a well attended meeting in March 1855, called to endorse the list of candidates promoted by the Ratepayers' Committee, strong views were expressed about the PLB and its efforts to further extend its influence over the Birmingham Board's affairs. Michael Maher, Chairman of the Committee, stated that he was motivated by a 'desire to continue to the borough a local self-government in respect of their poor, unbiassed (sic.) and uncontrolled further than necessary, by the General Poor-law Board.' Without the Committee's initiative, with the 'generality of ratepayers appearing insensible or apathetic to their rights and interests ...', members of the existing Board would have produced 'a house list' consisting of current members, 'the affairs of the parish would have been entrusted to a mere handful, ...' and as a consequence of the neglect of parish business there 'would have been no alternative but to ask the Poor Law Commissioners to come and do for Birmingham that which Birmingham had hitherto done for itself ...'. Councillor Allday criticised the PLB for its 'unnecessary and vexatious interference in local government of the poor...', and

for the harshness of some of its policies. He urged fellow ratepayers to elect Guardians who would set equal store by the 'economical management of the public money ...' and 'humane treatment of the poor ...', and who would be 'sufficiently bold and determined ...' to prevent the 'power of the Poor-law Board becoming predominant in the borough ...'. (43) As in 1849 the 'Ratepayers List' triumphed, but, in common with other elections, only a small number of ratepayers, on this occasion 301, bothered to register their votes. Despite this, Mr Allday was able to claim a victory for that 'great principle which should be dear to the men of Birmingham: namely, local representative government.' (44)

Party political influences were more prominent at the 1858 election, with the re-appearance of 'white' and 'blue' lists. As at previous and subsequent elections, those perceived to be fulfilling their obligations to the ratepayers were re-elected; the 'Journal's' editor remarking: 'none who have taken an active part in the business of the Board ... have been excluded.' (45) A substantial number of Guardians who had served on the previous Board were also returned in 1861. At this election, and the 1864 and 1870 elections, there was comparatively little ratepayer interest. In 1861, even the candidate who topped the poll received a mere 98 votes, whilst in 1870 the candidate who headed the poll only received 238 votes. By way of contrast, at the more keenly contested 1867 election 32 candidates received over 1,000 votes each. (46)

The extra interest shown at the 1867 election was generated by concern about expenditure levels and current debate about the need to reform the Board's electoral regulations and reduce the number of Guardians, but other factors are also likely to have played a part. With the decline of the influence of the 'Economist' faction in local politics, and the national and local resurgence and development of party political organization, control of the Board of Guardians was seen as desirable by rival political factions. Furthermore, the fact that the election coincided with a period of intense political activity, associated with the passage of the 2nd Reform Bill, would also account for some of the heightened interest. (47)

(3e) Aston and Kings Norton Guardians Elections from the Mid-1860s to 1890

During the period from the mid-1860s to the early 1880s, when the Aston and Kings Norton Unions both changed to a system of triennial elections, contests became a regular feature of the annual Board elections. Within the Aston Union, contested elections occurred in the Parish of Aston on twelve occasions between 1863 and 1883, and in the Parish of Sutton Coldfield on five occasions, but not in any of the smaller parishes. In the Kings Norton Union, contested elections occurred on eight occasions between 1867 and 1883 in the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, though none occurred in the other three parishes. (48)

Although contests were common in some parishes, this did not mean that they generated a great upsurge of ratepayer interest. As the Aston Guardians regularly pointed out in support of their contention that the frequency of elections should be reduced, few ratepayers bothered to register their votes at contested elections. [SEE TABLE 13] Provided their interests were adequately protected, as during earlier years, they were largely indifferent to Board politics. (49)

The contested elections which occurred so frequently in some parishes during the period from the mid-1860s to the early 1880s, were largely the product of party political rivalries and personal ambition. However, the decision of both Boards to erect new workhouses during the late 1860s and early 1870s, and the national preoccupation with the perceived need to impose tighter restrictions upon the granting of relief, particularly outdoor relief, encouraged ratepayers' groups to promote candidates committed to the continuation of stringent relief regulations, and to keeping Board expenditure under control. (50) This did not, however, mean that ratepayers' groups were keen to see contests if they could be avoided, as the background to the 1882 Aston Union election demonstrates.

At a March 1882 meeting convened by the 'Aston Ratepayers' Union', speakers emphasized the undesirability of another prospective electoral contest in the Parish of Aston. The chairman of the meeting stated that whilst the expense of such

a contest would be about £700, 'It was clear from the nominations that the general policy of the old Board was not objected to, as the majority of the members were nominated all round.' As the number of nominees had already been reduced, they would be 'fighting an expensive contest over one or two names.' Another Ratepayers' Union spokesman criticised the Liberal Association for nominating its own candidates, whereby 'for the first time in a large number of years, politics had been indirectly introduced into the question of the election of Guardians.' He asserted that 'Parochial matters, ... ought to be, above all other matters, non-political.', and expressed his concern that the Liberals' action would encourage rival nominations from the Conservative Association the following year. Although keen to avoid a contest, it was stressed that the Ratepayers' Union was determined to retain the Guardian William Graham on its list, despite objections from some Liberals. In order to achieve a compromise (the Liberal Association having nominated 18 candidates, and the Ratepayers' Union five alternatives), the meeting, signalling its approval of the 'policy' of the retiring Board, resolved to endorse the nomination of 13 existing Guardians and 'that a sufficient number of the new candidates for election may be withdrawn to avert an expensive and useless contest.' Ultimately a compromise was reached, and a contest was avoided. (51)

From the late 1870s onwards, concerned about the cost and effort entailed in conducting almost annually contested

elections in the Parish of Aston, elections which usually resulted in the return of the same men year after year, and at a time when other boards such as the Gateshead Board were doing likewise, the Aston Guardians made repeated approaches to the LGB for a change to triennial elections, and the division of the Parish into wards. [SEE TABLE 14] Although an 1878 ratepayers' poll on the subject of triennial elections produced a negative result, in October 1883 an Order was issued which divided the Parish into wards, and, following another favourable triennial elections poll, in February 1884 the LGB issued a further Order which instituted triennial elections.

(52) Similarly concerned about the amount of expenditure and effort associated with the holding of almost annually contested elections in the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, after the 1883 election (at which there was once again a contest in both parishes), the Kings Norton Board also approached the LGB regarding a change to triennial elections. Subsequently, having secured a majority in favour from a ratepayers' poll, under the terms of a January 1884 Order triennial elections to the Kings Norton Board were instituted. Two years later, under the terms of a November 1886 Order, the Parishes of Harborne and Smethwick, and Kings Norton, were divided into wards. (53)

After the transfer to a system of triennial elections and the division of the Parish of Aston into wards, the character of Aston Board elections changed markedly. There were no contests in any wards or parishes at the 1884, 1887 or 1890 elections.

The Aston Guardians had for the present attained their goal of avoiding expensive and time-consuming contested elections, and as a corollary a high degree of continuity in Board membership was maintained. (54)

In contrast, contested elections did occur within the Kings Norton Union in 1884, 1887 and 1890. At the 1884 election, contests again took place in the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, and, whilst allowing for population increase, the number of votes registered at Kings Norton appear particularly large in comparison with earlier years, indicating that there was more interest than normal. (55) [SEE TABLES 12 & 15] Politically inspired protests about the Kings Norton result, also reveal that party politics played an important role during the election campaign.

The agent of one of the rejected candidates argued that a polling paper signed Joseph Chamberlain should not have been accepted, as it was 'a deliberate forgery ...'. Of a rather more serious nature, a second protest lodged on behalf of five of the rejected candidates, claimed that the election had 'not been conducted according to the provisions of the Poor Law Act.' It was alleged that there had been

wholesale intimidation of voters, non delivery of voting papers and non collection of voting papers of a large number of voters due in some instances to the distributors and collectors being in an unfit state to perform their work.

Additionally it was claimed that there had been 'an organised defacement and interference with a large number of voting papers ... since their distribution.' Such serious allegations could not be overlooked, and an investigation was conducted by the LGB. However, the allegations were unsubstantiated and the matter was quietly dropped. (56)

At the 1887 Kings Norton election, contests occurred in the Moseley Ward of the Parish of Kings Norton and in the Parish of Northfield. In 1890 there was again a contest at Moseley, and contests at Edgbaston and in the Harborne Ward. That there was quite considerable interest at the Moseley election is evident from the voting statistics, which were substantially higher than in 1887. (57) [SEE TABLE 15]

(3f) Birmingham Guardians Elections 1873-91

Party political influences were of paramount importance in determining the outcome of Birmingham Guardians elections during the 1870s and 1880s, with confrontation in the early 1870s later giving way to compromise. Against a background of more generalised confrontation in town politics between Liberals and Conservatives, the 1873 election (at which for the first time only 60 Guardians were elected), attracted a relatively high level of interest from political factions and ratepayers. Rival lists of candidates comprised a 'Conservative and Publicans' list', a 'Ratepayers' list', a

'ratepayers' amended list' and a 'Roman Catholic list'. As predicted in the local press, electors displayed a clear preference for the 'Conservative and Publican's list', with the election of 47 men included on it, and only 14 from the 'Ratepayers' list'. Indicative of a relatively high turnout, the candidate who topped the poll received 1,037 votes. (58)

That political passions were much to the fore during the electoral campaign is evident from comments made at the declaration meeting. One of the defeated candidates, Stephen Tonks, remarked 'that it appeared from the returns that their Conservative friends had stolen a march upon them.' and that 'His Liberal friends had not done the thing in a spirited manner, or perhaps the result would have been different.' However, George Shelley, one of the elected candidates, expressed regret

that the business of the parish and that election had been so mixed up with politics. He thought the principle of introducing politics was a bad one, for it had been the means of throwing out twenty or thirty of the best men who ever sat at the Board. (59)

As in 1873, party politics played a prominent role at the 1876 Birmingham election. However, on this occasion the Liberals gained a majority on the Board, with only eight members from the old Board re-elected. Voting levels were higher than in 1873, with 3,400 voters registering their preferences and the candidate who headed the poll receiving 1,892 votes. At the declaration meeting party political

feelings impinged upon the proceedings, in exchanges about how the newspapers had obtained reports of a 'Great Liberal Victory' prior to the declaration of the results, and particular delight was expressed at the defeat of the Conservative chairman of the old Board, Thomas S.Fallows. (60)

At the 1879 election, although rival lists of candidates were produced by the Liberals and Conservatives, the political rhetoric associated with the two previous elections was largely absent from the campaign. Complementing the relative lack of interest on the part of local political factions, the voting figures were also much lower. Of those elected, 41 members, with votes ranging from 345 to 414, were nominated by the Liberal Association and had sat on the old Board, whilst the remaining 19, with votes ranging from 209 to 217, were nominated by the Conservative Association. Overall only 2,273 votes were registered, for a total of 83 candidates. As the proceedings at the declaration meeting indicate, there was a new willingness amongst Liberals and Conservatives to work together in administering the relief system. (61)

In 1882, a new spirit of co-operation between local Liberals and Conservatives, at least in relation to Poor Law affairs, resulted in a joint list of candidates prepared by members of the retiring Board. Reflecting the state of local politics, it was agreed that the Conservatives would have 20 representatives on the new Board, and the Liberals 40 members. As might

reasonably have been expected, bearing in mind the electoral compromise, the turnout was low; of 18,000 eligible voters, only 3-400 bothered to vote. The election resulted in the return of the entire joint list. (62)

Joint lists of candidates were again promoted, and successfully returned, at the 1885 and 1888 elections, which were conducted according to modified electoral regulations. In 1885, the 60 elected candidates comprised the joint list promoted by Liberals and Conservatives on the old Board, the Ratepayers' Association, and the 'Association for Promoting the election of Women as Guardians'. It was reported that although other lists containing some alternative candidates were circulated 'by the Roman Catholics, and the Jews ...', and two independent candidates made 'special efforts' to have themselves elected, these actions served only to 'give the Liberal candidates a higher place on the voting-list without interfering with the return of the joint list as a whole.' Included on the new Board were '31 members representing the Liberals, 15 representing the Conservatives, 10 representing the Ratepayers' Association, and 3 ladies.', which translated, according to the 'Birmingham Post', into a Board 'composed of 38 Liberals and 22 Conservatives.' Ratepayer interest at both elections was again low. The candidates who topped the polls only received 640 votes in 1885 and 661 votes in 1888, and in 1888 only 800 from a total of 18,000 voters registered their preferences. (63)

Conducted according to regulations recently modified again, the 1891 election witnessed the return of a largely unopposed joint list. However, a contested election for three seats was 'rendered necessary by technical informalities in two of the nominations ...' and the withdrawal of one candidate. Ten men were nominated, but the candidates proposed by the 'joint committee of the Board' were all elected. Co-operation between mainstream political parties ensured that once again approved candidates were returned. (64)

(4) Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians
Elections 1894-1910

Under the terms of the 1894 Local Government Act the regulations governing the elections to all three Boards were radically changed. However, whilst post-1894 elections were conducted in a different manner to those of earlier decades, they also shared many characteristics.

The December 1894 Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board elections, as the first to be conducted under the terms of the 1894 Act, predictably attracted party political interest, and, reflecting wider local and national efforts to gain greater influence in local government, for the first time there were some 'labour' candidates. By early December, candidates had been selected by the Birmingham Trades Council, to 'represent

the labour interest ...' at contests in a number of wards in the Aston Union and the Parish of Birmingham. (65)

Within the Parish of Birmingham, echoing the pre-1894 situation, in the main 'joint Ward Committees' agreed upon preferred candidates. Under such circumstances, the 'Gazette' bemoaned the fact that contests would take place in many wards because of the nomination of Trades Council and independent candidates. When the deadline for nominations expired, 61 candidates had been nominated for the 36 Birmingham seats, 46 for the 32 Aston seats, and 41 for the 28 Kings Norton seats, although, as at later elections, some subsequently withdrew. After nine Birmingham candidates, six Aston candidates (plus one disqualification), and three Kings Norton candidates withdrew, contests were scheduled to take place in eight Birmingham wards; in the Bordesley, Duddeston, Nechells and Saltley wards, the Parish of Erdington and at Minworth within the Aston Union; and the Edgbaston, St.Martin's, Selly Oak, Moseley, Kings Heath and Stirchley wards, and the Parishes of Balsall Heath and Harborne within the Kings Norton Union. (66)

Contrasting with the strong support expressed for particular candidates at ward meetings prior to the elections, as at previous polls, comparatively few electors bothered to vote in the contested Birmingham wards. In Market Hall Ward, 811 electors from a total of 4,615 exercised the vote; in All Saint's, 865 out of 6,850; in Rotton Park, 747 out of 6,155; in

Ladywood, 1,061 out of 5,497; in St.Bartholomew's, 595 out of 1,859; in St.Mary's, 764 out of 2,726; and in St.George's, 492 out of 4,409. Following established patterns, the candidates supported by 'political associations' were elected in every ward, whilst, as the 'Gazette' pointed out, 'the trades union candidates ..., with the single exception of Mr T.E.Smith, who was also the Liberal Unionist nominee, recorded comparatively small numbers.' Amongst the elected candidates were 21 who had served on the expiring Board. Within the Aston Union polling was also slack. From a total of over 8,000 Bordesley ward electors, only 698 registered their votes; whilst in Saltley only 921 from a total of nearly 5,000 voters registered their preferences. (67) [SEE TABLE 16]

At the 1898, 1901, 1904, 1907 and 1910 elections to the three Boards, the number of contests and levels of interest continued to fluctuate. Thus, at the 1898 Aston Union election, contests occurred in the Nechells and Saltley wards, and the Parishes of Erdington, Sutton Coldfield and Water Orton. Untypically it was reported that at Nechells and Saltley 'the polling was remarkably good for such an election, and the near margins were most noticeable.' In 1901 there were contests in the Bordesley and St.Mary's & St.Stephen's wards, the First and Second Wards of the Parish of Aston Manor and the Parish of Erdington. (68) [SEE TABLE 16]

Whilst contests only occurred in the Parishes of Erdington and Castle Bromwich in 1904, the 1907 Aston Union election witnessed contests in a large number of districts: the Nechells and Saltley wards, the six wards of the Parish of Aston Manor, at Castle Bromwich and at Minworth. At Saltley, and in Aston Manor, 'Labour party' candidates opposed several established Conservative Guardians (including Alderman Alfred Taylor, Mayor of the Borough of Aston), and in the Brook Ward, William Upton, a leading Liberal Unionist. According to the 'Gazette', particularly 'strenuous efforts were made by the Socialist party to obtain a victory for their nominee ...' in the Brook Ward, which was described as a 'stronghold of Socialism'. Ultimately, however, in each of the Aston Manor wards 'only a fifth of the electorate ...' voted, and the result was 'a complete rout of the Socialist(s)'. In contrast, at Saltley the two Socialist candidates were elected. At the final Aston Board election in 1910, contests occurred in the Duddeston ward, and in five Aston Manor wards, where 'Socialists' opposed the retiring members. Reporting on the electoral outcome in the Aston Manor wards, the 'Gazette' remarked somewhat bitingly that:

There was very little interest taken in the ... contests from the fact that the opposition to the retiring members was of a vexatious character, instigated by the Social Democratic Party and the Independent Labour Party.' (69) [SEE TABLE 16]

In 1898 Kings Norton Union witnessed contests in the Parishes of Balsall Heath and Harborne, and the Edgbaston, St.Martin's, Selly Oak, Kings Norton and Kings Heath wards. At Kings Heath,

765 out of a total of 1,231 electors cast their vote. There were three contests in 1901, in the St.Martin's ward and the Parishes of Harborne and Balsall Heath, but in 1904 there was only one contest, in the Parish of Harborne, and in 1907 there were no contests. The final Kings Norton Union election in 1910, spawned contests in the Moseley ward, and in the Parish of Quinton, newly transferred from the Stourbridge Union following the Parish's amalgamation with the City of Birmingham. According to the 'Gazette', 'Exceptional interest' was displayed in the Quinton election, with both candidates reportedly 'well supplied with workers.' (70) [SEE TABLE 16]

Contests only occurred in two of the twelve Birmingham wards in 1898, Ladywood and St.Bartholomew's; the Ladywood candidates including a Trades Council nominee. Ladywood had 5,550 voters and St.Bartholomew's 1,963, but it was reported that only 'slight interest' was taken in the contests. In 1901 there was another contest in St.Bartholomew's ward, but although 1,800 people were entitled to vote, again 'only a small proportion were sufficiently interested to exercise their right.' Commenting upon the 1907 Birmingham election, at which five wards were contested, the 'Gazette' once more referred to the lack of interest displayed by the electorate. Thus, in the St.Stephen's ward, where there had been 'little or no evidence that an election was taking place.', only about 400 out of a total of 3,500 electors voted. However, in the St.Thomas's

ward a re-count was necessary, and the final result left two candidates with an equal number of votes. (71) [SEE TABLE 16]

There were contests in four Birmingham wards in 1910, with one independent, John Watts, nominated to represent each. However, as usual, according to the 'Gazette' 'Very little interest was taken in the elections ...'. [SEE TABLE 16] Following the election, the Guardians passed a resolution (subsequently supported by the Kings Norton Board, after a similar situation had only been avoided by the withdrawal of some nominations at the recent Union election), calling for an amendment to the electoral regulations, to prevent a candidate contesting more than one ward or parish at an election. (72)

Where contests occurred during the years after 1894, bearing in mind the size of the potential electorate in these areas, the voting statistics indicate the continuance of a fairly low level of interest amongst electors, and certainly do not point to any tangible upsurge of interest in Poor Law elections from the preceding period. [SEE TABLE 16] However, the often low turnout did not prevent individuals such as Mr Watts from vigorously seeking election. As at elections prior to the enactment of the Local Government Act, no contests took place in most wards and parishes at each of the elections after 1894, either because only the required number of candidates had been registered or some candidates had withdrawn. In view of the fact that a majority of wards and parishes were uncontested at

elections, and that in those that were the same men and women tended to be re-elected, continuity of membership remained a notable characteristic of the three Boards of Guardians after 1894. (73)

(5) Conclusion

This chapter has identified the main characteristics of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians elections during the period from the mid-1830s to the early 20th century, showing how the electoral process evolved over time. Although, reflecting the fact that this is a local comparative study, the emphasis has been upon the identification and analysis of characteristics and trends relating to the elections to the three Boards, appropriate reference has been made to elections elsewhere. The chapter has shown that in Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton, as in other places, party and factional politics played a major role in the electoral process. It has highlighted the fact that whilst a majority of elections attracted little political controversy, and did not rouse voters from their habitual apathy, some, for a variety of reasons, attracted a high level of party political and factional activity. In considering why some elections witnessed an upsurge of interest the chapter has sought to give due weight to the wider local and national forces which, in conjunction with specifically Poor Law related factors, influenced the nature of elections.

The 1837 Aston Guardians election, conducted in a highly charged political atmosphere, is a particularly notable example of the controversial elections which occurred in some localities during the formative years of the New Poor Law, and therefore received special attention in the present analysis. It has many of the ingredients of such elections identified by other writers. Against the background of the national controversy over the introduction of the New Poor Law and the role of the PLC, local Tories and 'Liberal-Radicals', locked in conflict over a wide range of issues from Church rates to the merits of further political reform, were keen to secure control of another source of local power and influence, as well as to direct relief policies in the Union as they saw fit. Allied to the ideological disputes between the Tories and 'Liberal-Radicals', was the conflict of interests between urban (mainly 'Liberal-Radical') and rural (mainly Tory) factions within the Parish of Aston, and on a wider scale within the Union as a whole. Into this arena the PLC, as elsewhere, had to venture carefully. On this occasion the Commissioners were successful in ensuring that those favourable to their viewpoint, once elected, remained in power. (74)

Against the background of the wider struggle for dominance in Birmingham between rival Tory and 'Liberal-Radical' factions, the 1837 and 1840 Birmingham Guardians elections were also attended with a great deal of political activity. At the 1837 election, the 'Liberal-Radicals' were eager to dominate such a

useful local power-base as the Board of Guardians, whilst in 1840 they were perhaps less interested, having secured control of the newly created Town Council. On the other hand, the Tories were particularly keen to secure a compensatory local power-base in 1840. With the 'Liberal-Radicals' preoccupied by Council affairs, and against a background of reaction to the recent Chartist disturbances, economic depression and increased pressure on the relief system, the Tories consequently achieved a resounding victory in 1840. (75)

During the 1838-47 period, despite continued opposition to the New Poor Law and the Poor Law Commissioners in some parts of the country, and a feeling of unease at the national level about the role of the PLC (culminating in its demise in the wake of the Andover Workhouse scandal), the administration of the Poor Law was not, apart from the activities of the Reverend Bedford, a source of great controversy in the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. This remained the case during the less politically volatile 1850s, and into the 1860s, and is reflected in the relative dearth of contested elections before the latter half of the 1860s. Even when contests did occur, as at the 1843 Aston Parish election, the turnout tended to be low. Furthermore, on occasion, insufficient candidates were nominated to represent some parishes. As long as they felt their interests were sufficiently protected by the Guardians, ratepayers were unlikely to be roused from their all-pervasive apathy. Whilst the attention of local party political and

factional elites was focused upon municipal affairs in neighbouring Birmingham, and such issues as the repeal of the Corn Laws. (76)

A high proportion of Birmingham Board elections during the 1843-70 period were, like the elections to the two Unions, relatively low key. As long as ratepayers felt their interests were being looked after by existing Guardians, they were not disposed to upset the status quo. Turnouts were low, and there was minimal party political and factional campaign activity. However, as happened in 1849 and 1855, when electors became convinced that their interests were not being properly protected, vigorous campaigns masterminded by determined ratepayers' leaders resulted in the overthrow of those currently in authority. On these occasions particular issues, which also influenced elections in other towns, were largely responsible for raising the tempo of campaigning and producing dramatic results. In 1849 it was concern about the cost of the new workhouse project; whilst in 1855 it was the role of the PLB in Parish affairs. At a time when the PLB was tightening its hold over the Birmingham Board, the 'Economists' cleverly exploited fears about the consequences of the loss of local autonomy under the 1831 local Act. The promotion of 'Economy' and anti-centralization sentiments, constituted a virtually unbeatable electoral combination in the climate of the day. (77)

Significant alterations to the regulations governing elections to all three Boards took place during the last thirty years of the 19th century. As a reaction to the increasing number of contested elections in some parishes within the Aston and Kings Norton Unions from the latter part of the 1860s onwards, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, considering such elections to be both unnecessary and expensive, campaigned for, and achieved, a transfer to triennial elections and the division of some parishes into wards during the 1880s. Meanwhile the Birmingham Board, recognising the desirability of the simplification of its cumbersome electoral system, in 1873 secured a reduction in the number of Guardians, and subsequently changes to electoral procedures. Under the terms of the 1894 Local Government Act the electoral regulations applicable to all three Boards were radically altered; with the Birmingham regulations for the first time conforming to those in force elsewhere. (78)

The locally inspired pre-1894 changes to the electoral regulations, had their most dramatic impact upon the conduct of the Aston Union elections. In contrast to those held during the period from the mid-1860s to the early 1880s, there were no contests at the 1884, 1887 and 1890 Aston Union elections. By securing changes to the electoral system, established Guardians had (either intentionally or otherwise) strengthened their hold on power. (79)

As far as the Birmingham elections from 1873-91 are concerned, party political influences were paramount in determining the outcome of each. However, whilst in 1873 and 1876 local Liberals and Conservatives fought aggressive campaigns to secure control of the Board, by the 1880s they were prepared to support joint lists of candidates, which ensured a large measure of Board membership continuity. (80)

Undoubtedly the 1894 elections did in many respects mark the end of an era. Conducted according to radically altered electoral regulations, the Aston and Kings Norton elections in particular witnessed the return of a large number of new Guardians, and 'labour' candidates were promoted in Birmingham and Aston. However, at this election and at subsequent triennial elections held between 1898 and 1910, the candidates of the mainstream political parties and established Guardians continued to be the most successful. In keeping with earlier periods the electorate was largely apathetic and turnouts remained relatively low. (81)

Reflecting the national picture, the forces of continuity remained remarkably resilient throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. Though in many ways the Boards became increasingly progressive during the latter part of the 19th century, each retained its essentially oligarchical character. As Chapters 4 and 5 show, high levels of Board membership continuity were a feature of the Boards from the mid-1830s to

1912, and the electoral system tended to bolster this characteristic. Electoral pacts and voter apathy enabled cliques to continue to control Board affairs, whilst changing electoral regulations did not hinder, and sometimes even encouraged, the perpetuation of such domination. (82)

Chapter 3 Notes

(1) See eg. Ashforth, Settlement and removal in urban areas; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law; Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement; P.Mandler, The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus. Past and Present, No.117, Nov.1987, pp.131-57; Rose, The Anti-Poor Law Movement in the North of England; R.Vorspan, Vagrancy and the New Poor Law in late-Victorian and Edwardian England. English Historical Review, 92 (362) Jan.1977, pp.59-81; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law.

(2) See A.Brundage, Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System, 1834-94. Albion, 7 (3) Fall 1975, pp.201-15; M.J.Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration in the Borough of Poole 1835-c.1845. Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society Proceedings, 108 (for 1986) 1987, pp.19-25; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, Urban Politics, Ch.3; Ryan, Politics and relief: East London unions.

(3) BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 12.10.36; PRO: MH 12/14057, Order 10.1.84.

(4) BRL: 1 & 2 Wm.IV, Cap.lxxvii, 1831.

(5) BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Orders 12.10.36, 16.1.45 & 27.1.45; BRL: Aston & K.N. Min. vols.; 7th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1841, pp.19-20 & 78-84; 8th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1842, p.18; Gaz. 13.3.37, 20.3.37, 12.3.38, 19.3.38, 11.3.39, 18.3.39, 2.3.40 & 9.3.40; Jnl. 18.3.37, 17.3.38 & 16.3.39.

(6) BRL: 1 & 2 Wm.IV, Cap.lxxvii, 1831; BRL: B. Min. 25.3.37; Gaz. 13.3.37, 2.3.40, 16.3.40, 23.3.40, 13.3.43, 20.3.43, 16.3.46, 23.3.46, 19.3.55; Jnl. 28.1.37, 21.3.40, 24.3.49 & 19.3.64; 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, p.6; 10th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1844, pp.53, 64 & 112.

(7) BRL: B. Orders 1863-77, Order 10.3.73; BRL: B. Orders 1878-86, Order 5.5.83; BRL: B. Orders, 1887-95, Order 31.1.91; BRL: 46 & 47 Vict., Ch.lxxxii, 1883; BRL: 54 Vict., Ch.ii, 1891; BRL: A. Orders, 1858-89, Order 14.2.84; BRL: A. Orders, 1890-97, Order 26.11.92; PRO: MH 12/14057, Order 10.1.84; PRO: MH 12/14062, Order 24.11.86; Brundage, Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System, p.210; Webbs, English Poor Law History, Part II, pp.232-33. See also pp.130 & Ch.5, pp.219-25.

(8) See P.F.Aschrott, The English Poor Law System Past and Present, 1902, pp.214-17; Brundage, Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System, pp.212-13; Ryan, Politics and relief: East London unions, pp.141-42; Webbs, English Poor Law History, Part II, pp.232-33.

(9) See Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, Chs.V & VI; Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement; Flame, The Politics of Poor

Law Administration, pp.19-20; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law; Midwinter, Social Administration, Part II.

(10) See Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, pp.148-54; Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law; Midwinter, Social Administration, pp.20-25.

(11) Jnl. 12.11.36; BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 12.10.36.

(12) Jnl. 10.12.36; BRL: K.N. Min., Vol.1, 1836.

(13) BRL: K.N. Min. 25.3.37. See also Ch.6, pp.250 & 252-53.

(14) See Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, Urban Politics; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.266-80.

(15) PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Aston Overseers to Mr Earle, 14.2.37 & letter Mr Earle to E.Chadwick, 18.2.37

(16) Jnl. 18.3.37; Gaz. 20.3.37.

(17) Gaz. 20.3.37 & 27.3.37; Jnl. 4.3.37.

(18) PRO: MH 12/13232, memorial to PLC, 10.3.37.

(19) Ibid., letter PLC to Churchwardens, 15.3.37 & letters Churchwardens to PLC, 3.4.37 & 4.4.37; Jnl. 11.3.37.

(20) PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Pearson to PLC, 10.3.37.

(21) Ibid., letter Overseers to PLC, 12.3.37 & letter Isaac Aaron to PLC, 21.3.37.

(22) Ibid., letter Isaac Aaron to PLC, 21.3.37.

(23) Gaz. 27.3.37; Jnl. 25.3.37; D.Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford c.1834-1871: A study of the relief of poverty in mid-nineteenth century Bradford. Ph.D. University of Bradford, 1979; Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration.

(24) Gaz. 27.3.37; Jnl. 1.4.37; Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds, pp.44-48; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution, pp.122-27; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.134-36.

(25) BRL: A. Min. 11.4.37; Jnl. 15.4.37.

(26) Jnl. 15.4.37.

- (27) PRO: MH 12/13232, memorial & covering letter Isaac Marshall to PLC, 3.10.37. See also Ch.5, pp.210-12.
- (28) Ibid., letter Mr Earle to PLC, 16.10.37 & letter PLC to Isaac Marshall, 24.10.37.
- (29) See also Ch.7, pp.310, 312-13 & 323-24.
- (30) See Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, Urban Politics; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.266-80.
- (31) Jnl. 25.3.37.
- (32) BRL: B. Min. 25.3.37; Gaz. 10.4.37; Jnl. 8.4.37.
- (33) Gaz. 30.3.40 & 6.4.40; Jnl. 21.3.40, 28.3.40 & 4.4.40; The Times, 7.4.40. John Cadbury, tea dealer and grocer, and founder of Cadbury's, received only 25 votes.
- (34) Jnl. 28.3.40. See also Ch.1, pp.37-39.
- (35) BRL: K.N. Min. 14.4.45, 12.5.45, 13.4.46, 23.4.49, 24.4.50 & 28.4.58; Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, pp.100-06; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, p.34; P.A.Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union 1834-1930. M.Litt. University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1975, pp.49-50 & 119.
- (36) BRL: A. Min. 28.3.43; Jnl. 15.4.37. See also Ch.1, pp.36-39.
- (37) PRO: MH 12/14040, letters R.Docker to PLC, 22.4.45 & 1.5.45 & letters PLC to Mr Docker, 26.4.45 & 9.5.45; BRL: K.N. Min. 14.4.45, 12.5.45, 13.4.46, 23.4.49, 24.4.50 & 28.4.58.
- (38) BRL: B. Min. 14.4.46; Gaz. 27.3.43 & 6.4.46.
- (39) Birmingham Mercury, 7.4.49; Jnl. 24.3.49, 31.3.49 & 7.4.49. See also Ch.4, p.185 & Ch.6, p.260.
- (40) See also Ch.1, pp.40-41.
- (41) Jnl. 27.3.52; Mer. 3.4.52; Gaz. 5.4.52.
- (42) See also Ch.7, pp.338-40.
- (43) Jnl. 24.3.55; Mer. 24.3.55.
- (44) Mer. 31.3.55; Gaz. 2.4.55.
- (45) Jnl. 3.4.58.

- (46) Jnl. 30.3.61; Gaz. 30.3.64; Birmingham Daily Post, 4.4.67 & 2.4.70.
- (47) Gaz. 27.3.67, 28.3.67, 30.3.67, 4.4.67 & 6.4.67; D.Post, 1.4.67 & 4.4.67; Jnl. 23.3.67 & 6.4.67. See also Ch.1, pp.40-41 & Ch.5, p.223.
- (48) BRL: A. Min. 21.4.63, 18.4.65, 17.4.66, 7.4.68, 20.4.69, 19.4.70, 18.4.71, 9.4.72, 22.4.73, 21.4.74, 20.4.75, 18.4.76, 17.4.77, 16.4.78, 22.4.79 & 20.4.80; BRL: K.N. Min. 17.4.67, 29.4.68, 28.4.69, 23.4.73, 22.4.74, 21.4.75, 19.4.76, 18.4.77, 17.4.78, 16.4.79, 28.4.80, 27.4.81, 26.4.82 & 25.4.83; Jnl. 7.4.66.
- (49) BRL: A. Min. 12.3.78, 24.2.80. See also Ch.5, pp.218.
- (50) See also Ch.6, pp.271, 274 & 287-90.
- (51) D.Post, 31.3.82.
- (52) PRO: MH 12/13254, letter Mr Lumby to LGB, 3.1.84 & letter LGB to Mr Lumby, 16.2.84; BRL: A. Min. 8.5.77, 22.5.77, 23.10.77, 5.2.78, 12.2.78, 26.2.78, 5.3.78, 24.2.80, 11.7.82, 20.3.83, 12.6.83, 10.7.83, 7.8.83, 21.8.83, 16.10.83, 27.11.83, 1.1.84, 8.1.84, 22.1.84 & 19.2.84; BRL: A. Orders, 1858-89, Orders 20.11.83 & 14.2.84; 14th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1884-85, p.xlv; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, p.36. See also Ch.5, pp.219-20.
- (53) PRO: MH 12/14057, Order 10.1.84 & covering letter, 12.1.84; PRO: MH 12/14062, Order 24.11.86 & covering letter, 27.11.86; BRL: K.N. Min. 25.4.83, 9.5.83, 5.12.83, 16.1.84 & 15.12.86. See also Ch.5, p.221.
- (54) BRL: A. Min. 22.4.84, 19.4.87 & 22.4.90. See also Ch.5, p.220.
- (55) BRL: K.N.Min. 23.4.84, 20.4.87 & 23.4.90.
- (56) BRL: K.N. Min.. 23.4.84, 3.12.84 & 14.1.85.
- (57) BRL: K.N. Min. 20.4.87 & 23.4.90; Birmingham Daily Mail, 9.4.90.
- (58) D.Post, 3.4.73 & 5.4.73. See also Ch.1, p.44.
- (59) Ibid., 5.4.73.
- (60) Ibid., 1.4.76.
- (61) Ibid., 29.3.79.
- (62) Ibid., 27.3.82, 28.3.82 & 31.3.82.

- (63) Ibid., 1.4.85, 3.4.85 & 2.4.88; Gaz. 2.4.88. See also p.104 & Ch.5, p.224.
- (64) D.Post, 27.3.91. See also Ch.5, pp.225-26.
- (65) Gaz. 3.12.94. See also p.105.
- (66) BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95; BRL: K.N. Min. 2.1.95; Gaz. 4.12.94, 5.12.94, 6.12.94, 8.12.94 & 18.12.94.
- (67) Gaz. 13.12.94, 15.12.94 & 19.12.94. See also Ch.5, p.231.
- (68) BRL: A. Min. 19.4.98, 16.4.01; Gaz. 5.4.98 & 26.3.01. See also Ch.5, p.228.
- (69) BRL: A. Min. 19.4.04, 16.4.07 & 19.4.10; Gaz. 30.3.04, 26.3.07, 2.4.10 & 5.4.10.
- (70) BRL: K.N. Min. 20.4.98, 18.4.04, 17.4.07 & 27.4.10; Gaz. 5.4.98, 6.4.98, 26.3.01, 2.4.10 & 5.4.10; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, pp.28-29. See Ch.1, p.48.
- (71) Gaz. 5.4.98, 26.3.01 & 26.3.07. See also Ch.5, pp.233.
- (72) BRL: B. Min. 20.4.10; BRL: K.N. Min. 13.4.10, 27.4.10 & 13.7.10; Gaz. 2.4.10 & 5.4.10. See also Ch.5, p.233.
- (73) See Ch.5, pp.231-32.
- (74) See eg. Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement; Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds. See pp.109-17.
- (75) See pp.117-20 & Ch.1, pp.36-38.
- (76) See pp.120-22 & Ch.5, pp.210-12.
- (77) See Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, Urban Politics, Ch.3. See pp.122-27, Ch.1, pp.40-41, Ch.6, p.260 & Ch.7, pp.338-40.
- (78) See pp.104-05 & 127-31 & Ch.5, pp.219-25.
- (79) See pp.130-31 & Ch.5, p.220.
- (80) See pp.132-36 & Ch.5, p.222.
- (81) See pp.105 & 136-42 & Ch.5, pp.226-29 & 231-32.
- (82) See Ch.4, pp.155-73 & 175-76, Ch.5 & Ch.6, pp.272-92.

Chapter 4: The Socio-Economic and Political Background of the
Men and Women Serving as Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton
Guardians, c.1836-1912

(1) Introduction

Having reviewed the nature and conduct of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Board of Guardians elections in Chapter 3, this chapter focuses attention upon the occupational, social status, religious and political characteristics of the men and women who served on the three Boards during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. The chapter aims to identify significant trends and continuities over time, and to highlight contrasts and similarities between the backgrounds of Guardians serving on the Birmingham Board and the two Union Boards. Although the focus is upon the membership of the three Boards, local experience is set against the backdrop of wider national developments, with reference made to other boards.

It is not possible within the scope of this chapter to consider the backgrounds of large numbers of individuals in any great depth. However, reference is made, by way of illustration, to the careers and backgrounds of particular Guardians. These individuals were largely chosen because of their prominence in Board and wider local government affairs, and the plentifulness of information about their backgrounds. Although some might be considered atypical, because for

instance they became M.P.s, overall there is no reason to assume that they were unrepresentative of the individuals who served on the Boards.

(2) The Socio-Economic Backgrounds of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians, c.1836-1912

(2a) Introduction

The graphs of Guardians' occupational categories associated with this chapter reveal some significant trends over time. [SEE TABLES 17-22] However, it needs to be borne in mind that the statistics relate only to Guardians elected at annual or triennial elections. In view of this, it could be argued that they do not provide a totally comprehensive picture of Board memberships, because they were never static between elections.

Although many Guardians served for lengthy periods on successive boards, it was not unusual for there to be a fairly considerable membership turnover between elections, especially in the case of the Birmingham Board prior to 1894. Its large membership and the triennial electoral system conspired to increase the level of membership change between elections. Vacancies might arise immediately after elections if newly elected Guardians were found to be ineligible for office, or simply refused to serve; and mid-term vacancies arose as Guardians died, resigned, or became ineligible to serve because

they ceased to be ratepayers. (1) Conversely, before 1884, the membership of the annually elected Aston and Kings Norton Boards did not tend to change much between elections, in consequence of the shorter term of office and the fact that there were far fewer Guardians. High levels of continuity were maintained after 1884 in the case of the triennially elected Aston and Kings Norton Boards, and they also characterised the much reduced Birmingham Board after 1894. (2)

Apart from some reservations about the representativeness of the individuals elected at the triennial Birmingham elections, there is no reason to assume that those selected as Guardians between elections were from radically different backgrounds, and of course many were subsequently elected at full elections. (3) Thus, overall the graphs upon which the current analysis rests, can be taken as adequately representative of Board memberships throughout the period.

However, when interpreting the occupational data, certain other limitations also need to be borne in mind. The fact that contemporaneous occupational descriptors derived from electoral returns and newspapers, judiciously supplemented with details from directories, are largely retained as the basis for the graphs may be productive of some distortions in the statistics, but it was deemed preferable to utilize original descriptions to preserve authenticity. One difficulty with this approach is that, because of varying occupational descriptors, individuals

elected on successive occasions may in some instances be included under different categories. This is particularly important in relation to the ambiguous term of 'gentleman', and where such broad terminology as 'manufacturer', 'merchant' and 'factor' is employed in original sources. That some occupations assigned to particular categories might just as easily have been included elsewhere, is another limitation of the graphs. Such occupations as brickmaker, surveyor or auctioneer, chemist, jeweller and shoemaker, all pose such categorization difficulties.

Unfortunately, most especially in relation to the Aston and Birmingham Boards during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, occupational data is unavailable for all Guardians. Consequently, although the analysis of membership trends is possible from the occupational information which is available, it must always be remembered that the presence of varying numbers of 'unknowns' does to some extent lessen the impact of the conclusions which can be drawn from the statistics. (4)

Although the graphs for the Birmingham Board cover the entire 1834-1912 period, and those for the Aston and Kings Norton Boards the period from 1836-1910, the full timespan is split into blocks in the following analysis. In this way contrasts and similarities between the three Boards, and the wider

national scene, and long-term trends, can be identified more effectively.

Where it is available, information about the place of residence of Guardians has been utilized in the following analysis as a supplementary indicator of social status. Whilst occupational terms may conceal vast differences in levels of wealth and status, place of residence is often a clear indicator of socio-economic status. Thus Guardians residing in salubrious suburban districts, most notably Edgbaston, or beyond the boundaries of greater Birmingham, were clearly representative of local socio-economic elites. (5)

It is perhaps unsurprising to find that, as elsewhere, the occupational backgrounds of individuals elected to the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912, reflected the principal features of the local economy. Throughout the period, the memberships of the three Boards provide a microcosm of greater Birmingham's prosperous 'middle classes'. In the case of the Birmingham Board, this meant the manufacturers, skilled craftsmen, professional men, merchants, shopkeepers and others engaged in commercial activities, who all in their various capacities contributed to the continued prosperity of the town. Such a pattern of Board membership is similar to that identified for other urban centres, including Bradford, Chester, Coventry, Gateshead, Leicester and Sunderland. (6)

As far as the Aston and Kings Norton Boards are concerned, membership patterns reflect the importance of agricultural as well as urban industrial interests. This equates to the situation pertaining in other predominantly or semi-rural unions, such as the Great Boughton Union in Cheshire and the Caistor Union in Lincolnshire. (7) However, as the 19th century progressed, under the impact of increasing urbanization and industrialization, the Aston and Kings Norton Unions became far less typical of rural or semi-rural unions, and this is reflected in Board membership patterns.

(2b) Birmingham Guardians 1834-73

It is clear from the statistical evidence that, as in other urban centres, men from a shopkeeping, merchant or miscellaneous commercial background formed a sizeable proportion of the membership of the Birmingham Board throughout the 1834-73 period, during which the Board had 108 elected members. Shopkeepers, generally noted for their predilection for 'economy' and 'self-help', formed a solid contingent on successive Boards, with over 30 men falling within this general category in 1840, 1846, 1861, 1867 and 1870, and over 40 in 1864. As far as the clothing, food and miscellaneous sub-categories are concerned, the proportion falling within the former designation remained relatively constant at around 10 to 15, whilst the numbers within the second category tended to increase to an equivalent level by the end of the period.

Numbers within the miscellaneous shopkeeping group fluctuated, but by the 1860s averaged about 10. Within the sub-categories, as might be expected, some lines of business were more strongly represented than others, for example drapers, grocers and ironmongers. [SEE TABLES 17 & 18]

Men from a merchant or miscellaneous commercial background were also well represented on successive Boards elected from 1834-70. During this period the minimum number of Guardians within this broad category was 21, whilst in 1849 and 1852 their number exceeded 30. As to the proportions within the various sub-categories, there is some evidence of evolutionary change. Whilst at the 1834 and 1837 elections the banking, commodity dealers and merchants category was numerically the most significant, during the 1840-64 period men from a broadly based catering trade background were usually in the majority, most significantly so in 1849, 1852 and 1855. By the 1860s a rough comparability in numbers had been established between the building trade and property, banking, commodity dealers and merchants, and catering trade categories. [SEE TABLE 19]

Changes in the composition of the overall merchants and miscellaneous commercial category are, it is reasonable to assume, linked to the changing character of Board politics. In 1837, the 'Liberal-Radicals', who included a number of wealthy individuals from the banking, commodity dealers and merchants category, were in the ascendant, whilst in 1849 and during the

1850s with the 'Economist' faction in control of the Board, a majority of Guardians came from a more modest background. (8)

If around 40-50% of Birmingham Guardians during the 1834-73 period were accounted for by the combined shopkeeping and merchant and miscellaneous commercial categories, an equal proportion came from a broadly based manufacturing, metal trades and skilled craftsman background. During this era, most important contemporary Birmingham trades are to be found represented amongst the membership of the Board. (9) [SEE TABLES 17 & 20]

A number of trends are discernible from the manufacturing, metal trades and skilled craftsman category statistics for this period. Over 50 Guardians elected in 1834, 1837 and 1843 were from this broad occupational grouping, with numbers in other years ranging from as low as 29 in 1864 to 48 in 1840 and 1867. To some extent, as with the merchant and miscellaneous commercial category, variations in numbers may be linked with changes in Board politics, and wider politico-administrative developments in Birmingham during the period. However, decreases in the numbers of Guardians from particular occupational backgrounds may to some degree reflect changing manufacturing patterns. Thus, for example, the declining number of Guardians designated as button makers may reflect the decline of sections of the trade by mid-century. (10) [SEE TABLE 20]

Variations in the numbers of Guardians assigned to each sub-category, to a certain extent, also reflect the fact that some occupations were more strongly represented in Birmingham than others. However, some of the occupational sub-categories are far more specialized than others. Thus it is only to be expected that fewer Guardians would fall within the japanning, gun and paper trade categories, than say within the much broader jewellery, iron and other metal trades, and miscellaneous manufacturing trades categories. (11) [SEE TABLE 20]

Perhaps more significantly, bearing in mind electoral qualifications and business commitments, some occupations would be more likely to support a greater proportion of men able by reason of income, time and inclination, to become Guardians. This is also true of those included within the shopkeeping and merchant and miscellaneous commercial categories, ranging from grocers and innkeepers to bankers and merchants. As far as inclination to serve as a Guardian was concerned, many businessmen were deterred from serving, or resigned once elected, because of the onerous nature of the duties connected with the office if performed conscientiously. This fact was highlighted in 1842 by Assistant Commissioner Weale. In one of his reports on the Poor Law in Birmingham, he expressed regret that because of the pressures of business many men 'admirably qualified' for office were forced to retire as Guardians or simply decline nominations. On the other hand, especially

during the earlier decades of the New Poor Law era, there were always large numbers of Guardians who did not attend to their responsibilities assiduously. (12)

Throughout the 1834-73 period, whilst the majority of Birmingham Guardians came from a shopkeeping, business, manufacturing or craft background, there were always some 'gentlemen' and 'professional' men serving on the Board. Men from a loosely termed 'professional' background formed a small proportion of the membership; the maximum number recorded for this category, ten in 1846, represented only around 9% of the total number of Guardians. A diverse assortment of occupations are included within this category, ranging from physicians and surgeons to lawyers, accountants and chemists. Whilst it can be argued that at this time some of these occupations ought not to be designated as professions, for the sake of comparability with later periods it was deemed desirable to designate them as such. (13) Most, if not all, of the Guardians described as 'gentlemen', had apparently achieved that status through their industrial or commercial activities, reflecting wider trends in the social mobility of 19th century industrial Britain. (14) By the 1830s the Parish of Birmingham was overwhelmingly urbanized, and dominated economically and politically by industrial and commercial interests, so it is not really surprising that no farmers were elected as Guardians during the period. Another group poorly represented on the Birmingham Board at this time were clergymen. None were elected at

triennial elections during the 1830s and 1840s, but from 1852 to 1867 there was always at least one clergyman elected to the Board. (15) [SEE TABLE 17]

(2c) Birmingham Guardians 1873-94

During the 1873-94 period (with 60 Guardians now elected at triennial elections) the proportion of members of successive Boards who fell within each of the broad occupational categories remained roughly comparable to the 1834-73 period. However, men from a shopkeeping, merchant or miscellaneous commercial background, ranging from 16 in 1885 and 1888, to 28 in 1876, now tended to constitute the second largest category of Guardians. Men from a manufacturing, metal trades or craft background, ranging from 18 in 1888 and 1891, to 28 in 1873 and 1876, now generally formed the largest single category. Unfortunately, the greater proportion of Guardians at the close of this period for whom occupations have not been ascertained, may to some extent distort the statistics. (16) [SEE TABLE 17]

Throughout the period the balance between the shopkeepers and merchants and miscellaneous commercial occupations fluctuated somewhat, but within the shopkeeping category there were always more Guardians involved in the food sector than in clothing or other sectors. Under the broad merchants and miscellaneous commercial designation, whilst numbers within most sub-categories remained roughly comparable from 1873 onwards; the

numbers of bankers, commodity dealers and merchants declined considerably, reflecting the less localised nature of banking and other business activities. (17) [SEE TABLES 18 & 19] Of the sub-categories within the manufacturing, metal trades and craftsman grouping, the brass trade, iron and other metal trades, the jewellery trade and the leather trade maintained consistent representation. However, the japanning and paper trades were unrepresented. As in the earlier period, a significant number of occupations fall within the general miscellaneous manufacturing designation. (18) [SEE TABLE 20]

The numbers of 'professional' men included amongst the membership of the Birmingham Board during the 1873-94 period hardly increased, but in view of the overall reduction in the number of Guardians a significant proportional increase was registered. By 1888 and 1891 they constituted almost one sixth of Board membership. During the 1879-94 period several 'gentlemen' served on the Board, but no clergymen were elected. From 1882 onwards, women Guardians formed a new and significant component of the membership, although numerically they remained only a small fraction of the total. (19) [SEE TABLE 17]

Place of residence information for members of the Birmingham Board during the 1834-94 period, where it can be ascertained from the electoral returns, is generally a business address, although in the case of shopkeepers and others running small family businesses, this was also likely to have been where a

Guardian lived. All addresses do not, however, relate to a place of business. Thus, the 1843 electoral returns show that at least nine Guardians resided in Edgbaston, seven in Handsworth, one in Aston, one at Harborne and two at Moseley. Similarly the 1873 electoral returns show that at least five Guardians lived at Edgbaston, five in the Handsworth area, two in the Moseley and Balsall Heath area, one at Hall Green and one at Solihull. In 1882, at least four Guardians lived in Edgbaston, two at Solihull and one at Sutton Coldfield. Many other Guardians, in keeping with their social standing, undoubtedly lived in the more desirable districts around Birmingham from the 1830s onwards, and simply possessed businesses in the centre of town, but the scope of this study does not permit further detailed enquiry. (20)

(2d) Aston and Kings Norton Guardians 1836-94

There were major differences between the occupational backgrounds of the much smaller memberships of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the Birmingham Board throughout the 1836-94 period. These differences largely reflected the contrasts between the economic geography of the areas concerned. In contrast to the Birmingham Board, it is only to be expected that in view of the considerable rural hinterlands within the Aston and Kings Norton Unions a sizeable proportion of Guardians would be from a farming background. (21)

The diverse occupational backgrounds of members of the Aston Board during the 1836-94 period, reflect the economic diversity of the districts encompassed within the Aston Union. At a much simplified level, on the one hand there were the Guardians from a manufacturing, craft, shopkeeping or merchant background, who represented the urban industrial heartland of the Parish of Aston, and on the other the farmers, 'gentlemen' and some innkeepers, who represented the more rural districts. Dominance of the Union's affairs by the urban interest, particularly during its early years, is reflected in the preponderance of Guardians from a manufacturing, craft, shopkeeping or commercial background during the late 1830s and 1840s. Thereafter, until the early 1870s, men from such a background were certainly in the majority, and taking into consideration the larger proportion of 'unknown' occupations at elections from 1873 onwards, it is likely that this situation remained constant. From 1873-90, either all or a majority of those Guardians falling within the 'unknown' category were Aston Parish representatives, and hence more likely to be from an industrial or commercial background. (22) [SEE TABLE 21]

Throughout the 1836-94 period, the 'professional' men - including solicitors, chemists and surgeons - and clergymen elected to the Aston Board, were not numerically significant. [SEE TABLE 21] However, some clergymen served as ex-officio Guardians and Board chairmen, as did the Sutton solicitor Thomas Holbeche. (23)

At all Aston Board elections from 1836-90 there were some farmers elected. Together with the 'gentlemen', who were often (though not always) involved in farming, they constituted a significant part of the membership throughout the period. As might reasonably be expected, the majority of farmers were elected to represent the smaller rural parishes and Sutton Coldfield, but some also represented the Parish of Aston. (24)
[SEE TABLE 21]

Where places of residence are given in electoral returns for the Aston Board, they are mostly business addresses. However, many shopkeepers and others such as innkeepers undoubtedly lived at their place of business, and it is reasonable to deduce that around 90% of the Guardians resided within the parishes they represented. From the early years of the Union, some of the Aston Parish representatives resided in the more salubrious surroundings of Erdington. (25)

The occupational backgrounds of Kings Norton Guardians during the 1836-94 period also reflect the urban/rural split within the Kings Norton Union. Mirroring the largely rural character of much of the Union throughout this period, a large proportion of Guardians were from a farming background. As well as those described as farmers, some Guardians described as 'gentlemen' were involved in farming, though this category also includes men from a manufacturing background. (26) Farmers and 'gentlemen' together formed a majority of those elected to the

Kings Norton Board on many occasions. During the later 1840s and 1850s especially, farmers constituted the largest single occupational group on the Board. [SEE TABLE 22]

Those Guardians from a manufacturing, craft, shopkeeping or commercial background elected to successive Boards, were representative of the developing communities based around the various villages and pockets of industrial activity within the Union, although some (such as George Elkington) had businesses in Birmingham, and simply resided within its boundaries. (27) The numbers of Guardians from a manufacturing or craft background remained relatively constant throughout the period, but the numbers of men from a shopkeeping or commercial background tended to increase from the 1850s onwards. Amongst the smattering of 'professional' men elected to the Board at various times were solicitors, medical men and accountants. (28) At 16 of the elections held between 1839 and 1857, at least one clergyman was elected to the Board, but it was only after 1887 that they were again regularly elected. [SEE TABLE 22]

The vast majority of men and women elected to serve on the Kings Norton Board during the 1836-94 period, resided within the parishes or wards they represented. However, some did live in other parishes within the Union. (29)

(2e) Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians 1894-1912

From 1894-1912, in terms of its occupational breakdown, the membership of the Birmingham Board (now reduced to 36 elected Guardians, plus any co-opted members), remained largely static. After 1894 the shopkeeping, merchants and miscellaneous commercial and manufacturing and metal trades categories remained numerically the most significant. In 1894, the numbers falling within both broad categories were equal, but thereafter there were always more shopkeepers and others engaged in commercial activity than individuals engaged in manufacturing. Throughout the period, of Guardians included within the shopkeeping category, none were engaged in the clothing trade, and overall numbers were less significant than for the merchants and miscellaneous commercial grouping. Of Guardians from a manufacturing background, apart from those included within the miscellaneous sub-category, most came from a jewellery or metal trades background. [SEE TABLES 17-20]

As far as 'professional' men are concerned, bearing in mind the further reduction in the number of Guardians, their numbers remained comparable to those registered during the 1873-94 period. Until 1912 there were still no clergymen elected to the Birmingham Board, which was in marked contrast to the Kings Norton Board. At least one 'gentleman' served on the Board throughout the period. Proportionately the number of women Guardians became more significant. Unfortunately, as with the 1885, 1888 and 1891 statistics, the number of 'unknowns' does compromise the analysis to some extent. (30) [SEE TABLE 17]

The men and women elected to serve as Birmingham Guardians during the 1894-1912 period, like many of their predecessors, tended not to reside within the actual boundaries of the Parish of Birmingham. Of the 36 Guardians serving at the beginning of 1901, at least 13 resided in Edgbaston, whilst four lived at Moseley, one at Solihull, and one at Sutton Coldfield. Following the 1904 election, a minimum of 13 Guardians resided in Edgbaston, three in Moseley, five at Handsworth and one each at Solihull, Sutton Coldfield and Kings Heath. Guardians serving in 1907/08, included at least 11 living in Edgbaston, three at Moseley, four at Handsworth and one each at Erdington, Kings Norton, Kings Heath, Sutton and Solihull. Similarly, in 1910/11, 11 Guardians lived at Edgbaston, three at Moseley, four at Handsworth, two each at Kings Norton and Sutton, and one each at Harborne, Balsall Heath and Olton. (31) In terms of occupational background and place of residence, it is clear that, as in places such as Gateshead, 'middle class' dominance of the Board's affairs continued. (32)

After 1894 the enlarged memberships of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards became more diverse. Although the number of 'unknown' occupations distorts the picture somewhat, at each Aston Board election from 1894-1910 the greatest proportion of Guardians came from a shopkeeping or commercial background. Whilst the numbers of 'professional' men remained roughly comparable to earlier years, the numbers of men from a farming or manufacturing background dwindled away, although some of the

'unknowns' and 'gentlemen' may have been farmers or manufacturers. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not the Aston Board included any 'working men' after 1894, but some of the 'unknowns' may have been, and 'Labour' candidates were elected in 1907 and 1910. (33) [SEE TABLE 21]

A number of men and women elected to represent the various Aston wards after 1894, resided in suburban Erdington, Sutton Coldfield or other socially desirable districts outside the Union boundaries, such as Handsworth and Solihull. As in earlier years, Sutton Coldfield and the other less populous Parishes continued to be represented by more affluent local residents. (34)

With few 'unknowns' amongst the Guardians elected after 1894, it is possible to build up a clear picture of the occupational breakdown of the membership of the Kings Norton Board during the final decades of its existence. Throughout this period relatively constant numbers of men from shopkeeping, commercial or industrial backgrounds were elected, and at least two 'professional' men and two clergymen served on each Board. In common with the Aston Board, reflecting rapid urbanization, there was a marked decline in the number of farmers elected, but the numbers of 'gentlemen' remained high. Amongst the Guardians elected in 1894, 1898 and 1901, there was at least one 'working man', George Talliss, a 'foreman bricklayer'. (35) [SEE TABLE 22]

During the 1894-1912 period, men and women elected as Kings Norton Guardians did not necessarily reside within the districts they represented. A number resided in Edgbaston and Moseley, but represented other areas. Most did, however, reside within the Union boundaries, although a few lived further afield at places such as Solihull and Warwick. (36)

Broadly speaking, in terms of occupational backgrounds, the Birmingham Board elected in 1912 was very similar to its immediate predecessors, reflecting the degree of membership continuity with its precursors. Whilst the 11 'unknowns' probably included men from shopkeeping, commercial or manufacturing backgrounds, there were now as many women Guardians as male shopkeepers, merchants and others engaged in commercial activities. Amongst the remaining Guardians there were still only four 'professional' men, but the Board now included a clergyman, two farmers and three 'gentlemen'. (37)

[SEE TABLE 17] As far as place of residence was concerned, many Board members continued to live in socially desirable areas. (38)

(3) The Advent of Women Guardians

A change of considerable significance as far as the attitudes and policies of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards were concerned, came with the election of women Guardians from

the early 1880s onwards. Although, reflecting the national picture, the numbers of women serving on each of the Boards remained comparatively small into the early 20th century, like women guardians elsewhere they played an active part in Board affairs. (39)

Nationally, in 1884 there were only 44 women guardians, and their numbers did not increase greatly until after 1894. (40) Even following the passing of the 1894 Local Government Act, which made it easier for women to be elected to boards, by 1905, as the Women's Local Government Society pointed out, of the 24,310 guardians in England and Wales, only 1,033 were women, whilst of the 3,300 Rural District Councillors only 109 were women. On about half of the 138 boards of guardians which were to see elections in early 1905, there were no women serving. (41)

Women were first elected to the Birmingham Board in 1882, and to the Kings Norton Board in 1883, and during the next thirty years there were always at least two women serving on each Board. However, although a woman was elected to the Aston Board for the first time in 1884, none were elected from 1887 until 1894. Thereafter their numbers did increase to levels comparable with the Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards. [SEE TABLES 17, 21 & 22]

The two women elected to the Birmingham Board in 1882, Eliza Ashford (described as a 'manufacturer') and Caroline Perry, who were both widows, were promoted on the successful joint list by the Liberals. (42) Establishing a pattern of continuity of service for women Guardians, Mrs Ashford was subsequently re-elected at the 1885 election, together with Miss Hannah Cadbury and Miss Fanny Shelton, all of whom appeared on the triumphant joint list, their candidature having been supported by the 'Association for Promoting the election of Women as Guardians'. Hannah Cadbury and Fanny Shelton were subsequently re-elected in 1888, 1891 and 1894, and although Eliza Ashford was not a candidate in 1888, she was re-elected in 1891, 1894 and 1898. (43) Eliza Rollason, the third woman Guardian elected in 1888, was elected to the Aston Board in 1894. (44)

Miss Agatha Stacey and Elizabeth James, a widow, were the first women elected to the Kings Norton Board in 1883. They were returned in uncontested Edgbaston seats. Both women were re-elected in 1884 and 1887, and Miss Stacey, also re-elected in 1890, became well known regionally and nationally for her zeal and commitment in pressing for improved care of such groups as the 'feeble-minded'. (45) Harriet Parkes, elected in 1884 as one of the Sutton Guardians, was the first woman to serve on the Aston Board. (46)

After 1894 the number of women elected to each of the Boards increased, but the maximum of six, achieved at the 1910 Aston

and Birmingham elections, was never exceeded. This parallels the situation in the North-East of England. (47) [SEE TABLES 17, 21 & 22]

Continuing the pre-1894 trend, and as was the case with significant numbers of male Guardians, after 1894 the same women tended to be re-elected at successive elections. Thus, for example, amongst the female Aston Guardians, Mrs Anne Smith, Mrs Margaret Anne Eddowes and Miss Harriet Parkes were elected at every election from 1898 to 1910, Mrs Leah F. Madeley was elected from 1904 to 1910, and the Socialist Mrs Mary Williams in 1907 and 1910. (48) Ten women who had previously served on the Union and old Birmingham Boards, were amongst the twelve women elected to the enlarged Birmingham Board in 1912. (49)

As far as the attitudes of male Guardians towards women serving on the three Boards are concerned, the evidence points to a general acceptance of the value of their work. However, it is plain that their contribution was expected to be largely confined to a 'caring' role. Leading local politicians, such as George Dixon, actively promoted the election of women Guardians from the early 1880s onwards, and prominent men serving on the Boards publicly lauded the contribution of their fellow women Guardians. Thus, in 1883, the Birmingham Guardian F.C. Clayton, commended the involvement of the only 'lady' serving on the Board in the management of the Cottage Homes.

(50) Whilst in 1898, the Chairman of the Aston Board, James Evans, commented that 'there was no question as to the desirability of lady ... members on Boards ...', they 'could render efficient and good service, particularly in the house, in the infirmary, and in the schools ...'. (51)

Similarly, at an 1898 meeting held in support of the candidature of Mrs Anne Thomson as a Birmingham Guardian, Henry J.Manton, a former Board chairman, stated that: 'there was more than sufficient work for six women on the Birmingham Board, and in his opinion their help was most valuable, especially on the Workhouse Management and Marston Green Homes Committees.' His sentiments were echoed by Alderman Dr.Barratt, another former Board chairman, who stated that he had always supported the election of women Guardians, 'and his experience was that there was work for women which could not be done by men, even medical men.' (52) In 1910, at another election meeting called in support of three erstwhile female members of the Birmingham Board, Mr Manton referred to their 'excellent work' and remarked that it 'would be really discreditable ...' if any of the women serving on the retiring Board were not re-elected. On the same occasion the Guardian Mr W.J.Watson, remarked that 'there was very much work in connection with the operations of a Board of Guardians which ladies were far better qualified than men to do.' Whilst another Guardian, Francis Webb, said that 'he and his male colleagues ... had the greatest

admiration for the work which the lady members had done, and work which the men could not do.' (53)

Public support for women Guardians by their male colleagues, and such praise as that afforded by Inspector Murray Browne in 1895 for the way in which 'lady guardians' invariably devoted considerable attention to enquiring into the background of recipients of outdoor relief, does not, however, represent the full picture. (54) Male guardians in Birmingham and elsewhere, as Patricia Hollis has shown, whilst sanctioning female involvement in certain areas of Poor Law work, did not surrender their overall dominance of board affairs, and openly criticised them on occasion. Thus at the 1893 West Midland District Conference in 1893, a male member of the Birmingham Board, whilst praising one of the women members, stated that another was '"quite unsuitable" and "adds more to the cost of the parish than anyone else".' (55) As far as the membership of important committees was concerned, women Guardians serving on the three Boards were appointed to such 'caring' committees as the House, Infirmary and Cottage Homes Committees, but not to the Finance Committee. (56)

(4) The Religious Backgrounds of Guardians

When considering the principal characteristics of the men and women elected to serve on the three Boards, it is important to remember their religious backgrounds. Whilst religion may not

have been a significant influence upon every Guardian, it was important to many, and certainly affected their attitudes towards the fulfilment of the duties and responsibilities of office. On a wider plane it has to be recalled that Nonconformists, especially Unitarians and Quakers, were particularly prominent in municipal affairs, and that from the late 1860s onwards religious influences became very important in Birmingham politics, with the ascendancy of the 'Civic Gospel' after the period of strict 'Economist' control. (57)

As far as the religious background of the membership of the Birmingham Board was concerned, as in other sectors of local government in the town by the late 1830s, there was little restriction on men of different creeds seeking election, provided they were of sufficient socio-economic standing. By the 1830s Nonconformists were as well represented on the Board as Anglicans, Poor Law politics serving as another forum within which the town's political and religious factions could vie for power. Quakers (including members of the Cadbury and Lloyd families), as at Sunderland, served on successive Birmingham Boards from the early 19th century onwards. (58) Although no clergymen were returned at triennial elections from 1834 until 1852, in 1855, 1861 and 1864 the clergymen elected to the Board included two Roman Catholic priests, as well as Anglicans and Nonconformists. (59) If all Christian denominations were represented on the Board by mid-century, from the 1840s onwards there were also a handful of Jewish Guardians, some of whom

(such as Simon Kings Marks, an upholsterer and cabinet maker) served for lengthy periods. (60)

From 1836 onwards the Aston and Kings Norton Boards comprised both Anglican and Nonconformist members, including elected and ex-officio clerical Guardians. Most prominent amongst the early clerical Guardians on the Aston Board was the Reverend William Riland Bedford, rector of Sutton Coldfield, who was an ex-officio Guardian from 1836 until his death in 1843. (61) His son, the Reverend William Kirkpatrick Riland Bedford, rector of Sutton Coldfield from 1850-92, was chairman of the Aston Board from 1874-77. He was succeeded as chairman by another Anglican clergyman, the Reverend Edward H.Kittoe, who held office until 1882. (62) The Reverend George Astbury, first elected as a Smethwick Guardian in 1890, was chairman of the Kings Norton Board from 1902-04. (63) One Anglican cleric, the Reverend H.C.Millward, had to relinquish his position as an Aston Guardian when he was selected as the Erdington Workhouse chaplain in 1872. (64)

(5) The Involvement of Members of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians in Local and National Politics from the Mid-1830s to 1912

(5a) Introduction

In keeping with patterns identified in relation to other localities, the politics of Poor Law administration in the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, and the Parish of Birmingham, closely dovetailed with the wider local and national political scene throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. As in other towns such as Gateshead and Sunderland, many Guardians were active in municipal politics, and some progressed to the national political stage. Involvement in Poor Law politics and administration was sometimes merely a stepping stone for those aspiring to higher public office, but in many cases it was an integral part of long-term participation in the various facets of local government and politics. (65)

Whilst many members, or erstwhile members, of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards attained prominence in other sectors of local government, the office of Guardian itself conferred upon individuals a considerable degree of prestige and influence in the local community. The office brought with it not only responsibility for the administration of the Union or Parish relief system, rating and assessment, but, as a result of government legislation, responsibilities relating to the registration of births, marriages and deaths; public health; the payment of school fees, after 1855; and school attendance, after 1876. In some districts encompassed within the boundaries of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, until the 1860s (and in some instances 1894), the Aston and Kings Norton Boards were the only local government bodies in operation,

discounting parish vestries. Although from 1838 onwards the Town Council gradually became the paramount administrative body in Birmingham, the importance of the Birmingham Board of Guardians continued. (66)

(5b) The Mid-1830s to 1894

(i) Board Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

As Board chairmen, vice-chairmen and/or chairmen of important committees, Guardians serving on the three Boards, in common with their counterparts in other localities, attained a high level of prominence in local society. However, reflecting the importance of such positions, as happened in the case of the Atcham and Warminster Boards and elsewhere, individuals already prominent in other sectors of local government and society, tended to become Board chairmen or vice-chairmen, or at least committee chairmen. (67)

Reflecting national patterns, many of the Aston Board chairmen during the 1836-94 period, and some of the Kings Norton Board chairmen, were ex-officio Guardians. In addition, also mirroring national trends, a number of the chairmen of the Union Boards served long tenures of office. (68) The first four Aston Board chairmen, whose combined tenure of office lasted from 1836-70, were all ex-officio Guardians; whilst from 1870-94 only two elected Guardians served as chairman. William

Fowler, a prominent local surveyor, was the first elected Guardian to be chosen as chairman of the Aston Board; holding the office from 1870-74, when he ceased to be an elected Guardian. (69) Contrasting with the Aston Board, there were only two ex-officio chairmen of the Kings Norton Board during the 1836-94 period, both members of the Mynors family. Of the later Kings Norton Board chairmen, John Rutter, a Harborne Guardian, farmer and land agent, held the office from 1872-89. (70)

Vice-chairmen of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards were always elected Guardians during the 1836-94 period. In view of the fact that it returned 18 of the 25 elected Guardians allocated to the Aston Union prior to 1894, vice-chairmen of the Aston Board were also always Aston Parish Guardians. (71) Representatives of the Parishes of Edgbaston, Harborne, Kings Norton and Northfield all served as Kings Norton vice-chairman during the 1836-94 period. (72)

In contrast to the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Birmingham Board were not formally elected on an annual basis, until after the January 16th 1850 rules and regulations Order issued to the Parish of Birmingham came into force. Prior to the election of the 1849 Board, the irregular Board meetings were chaired by ad hoc chairmen. However, there was a tendency for particular Guardians to chair the majority of meetings at various times. Thus, for example,

from 1841-47 (when he ceased to be a Guardian) most meetings were chaired by the Tory carrier John Shackel. (73) Other men prominent in wider local government and politics during the early to mid-19th century, such as James James, Henry Knight (Borough Treasurer from 1839-52), George Edmonds and David Malins, also chaired Board meetings. However, they could exert as much, if not more, influence through their chairmanship or membership of standing or special committees. (74) After 1850, Guardians who were also prominent in municipal politics tended to be chosen as Board chairmen.

(ii) Involvement in Wider Local and National Politics

From 1838 onwards, many Birmingham Guardians were active in municipal politics as councillors and aldermen, whilst some attained the office of mayor. Clearly demonstrating the 'Liberal-Radical' dominance in Birmingham politics during the 1830s, the all Liberal Town Council returned at the first municipal elections in December 1838, included 26 councillors who had been elected as Birmingham Guardians in 1837. Furthermore, 12 of the men chosen as aldermen were also Guardians elected in 1837, and two other Guardians were amongst those selected to replace the men elevated to the status of alderman. (75) In April 1864, amongst the men elected as Birmingham Guardians were two aldermen and seven councillors, prompting the 'Journal' to remark: 'The recently elected Board

... will compare favourably with any of our local bodies for the respectability and good standing of its members.' (76)

Underlining the continuance of strong connections between municipal and Poor Law politics, successive Board chairmen and vice-chairmen from the 1850s onwards were either already aldermen or councillors, or subsequently aspired to such office. Thus Alderman Joseph Allday, leader of the town's powerful 'Economist' faction during the 1850s, was chairman of the Birmingham Board from 1855-57. His successor as chairman, from 1857-64, was Alderman Thomas Lloyd. Amongst subsequent chairmen were Alderman George Baker J.P., Alderman Dr. Alfred Barratt and Alderman William Brinsley. (77)

Birmingham Guardians who became mayor during the 1838-84 period, included William Scholefield in 1838, P.H.Muntz in 1839 and 1840, Thomas Lloyd in 1859, George Dixon in 1866 and George Baker in 1876. (78)

The election of a totally 'Liberal-Radical' Town Council in 1838, ensured that the majority of the 25 town magistrates appointed in 1839, and men appointed to senior municipal offices, were of the same political persuasion. Amongst the magistrates were 17 current or erstwhile members of the Birmingham Board. In later years other Birmingham Guardians became magistrates. (79)

Until the demise of the Birmingham Street Commissioners in 1851, members and former members of the Birmingham Board also served as Commissioners. During the 1840s, Richard T. Cadbury, John Shackel, David Malins and James James were amongst former or current Guardians serving as Street Commissioners. (80)

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, members of the Birmingham Board, in particular, were closely involved with the major socio-political movements of the time. Amongst the 'Liberal-Radical' members of the Board were leaders of the Birmingham Political Union, some of whom, including R.K. Douglas, became involved in Chartist activities during the late 1830s. Members or former members of the Birmingham Board, such as Joshua and William Scholefield, were also associated with the Anti-Corn Law campaign. (81)

Members of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards also served on other local government bodies. Thus Aston Guardians served on the Duddeston and Nechells Board of Surveyors during the 1840s, and later on the Aston Local Board of Health. Whilst Kings Norton Guardians served, for example, on the Harborne Local Board of Health during the 1860s. (82)

At the national political level, several men who had served as Birmingham Guardians were elected as M.P.s for Birmingham or elsewhere. Thomas Attwood, banker, 'Liberal-Radical' politician, founder of the Birmingham Political Union in 1829,

and champion of currency reform, who served as one of Birmingham's two M.P.s from 1832-39, was elected to the Birmingham Board in 1828 and 1837. Father and son, Joshua and William Scholefield (members of a wealthy merchant family), also served as Guardians prior to their election as Liberal M.P.s for Birmingham. Joshua Scholefield, an M.P. from 1832 until his death in 1844, was a Guardian during the period from 1817 to the late 1830s, whilst William, an M.P. from 1847-67, was elected as a Guardian in 1837 and 1840. The careers of the brothers George Frederick Muntz and Philip Henry Muntz, followed a similar pattern. Elected as a Guardian at the 1831, 1834 and 1837 elections, G.F.Muntz was a Liberal M.P. for Birmingham from 1840 until his death in 1857, whilst P.H.Muntz, elected as a Guardian in 1837 and 1840, became one of Birmingham's three M.P.s (all of whom were Liberal) in 1868, following the enactment of the 2nd Reform Bill. (83)

George Dixon, well known for his involvement with educational reform, elected as a Guardian in 1849, 1852, 1861 and 1867, was M.P. for Birmingham from 1867-76, and M.P. for the Edgbaston constituency from 1885 until his death in 1898. (84) The Conservative banker Richard Spooner, a business associate of Thomas Attwood, elected as a Guardian in 1828, was M.P. for Birmingham from 1844-47, before becoming M.P. for North Warwickshire from 1847-64. (85) Samuel Beale, elected as a Guardian in 1834 and 1837, became M.P. for Derby from 1857-65. (86)

After election as M.P.s, these men retained a keen interest in Poor Law affairs, particularly as far as they affected Birmingham. Thomas Attwood strongly opposed the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, and played a prominent role in the opposition to the incorporation of the Parish of Harborne into the Kings Norton Union in 1836. A later instance of involvement with Poor Law issues, is the support provided by William Scholefield and G.F.Muntz in 1854, for the Birmingham Guardians' petition to Parliament against the continuation of the PLB. (87)

Amongst the Aston Guardians, John Benjamin Stone J.P., ex-officio chairman of the Aston Board from 1882-87, who had also served as Sutton Coldfield's first mayor from 1886-90, was Conservative M.P. for East Birmingham from 1895-1909. (88)

(5c) Involvement in Local and National Politics from 1894-1912

In continuation of earlier patterns, during the 1894-1912 period many members of the three Boards were active in local municipal politics. Henry J.Sayer, chairman of the Birmingham Board from 1902-05, was Lord Mayor of Birmingham in 1906 and 1907. Amongst other Board chairman during this period, H.J.Manton, chairman from 1895-97, was a councillor from 1881-90 and again from 1904 onwards, whilst Frank Jukes, chairman from 1909-13, was a councillor in 1911. (89)

Amongst the chairmen of the Aston Board from 1895-1912, were Councillor Alfred Taylor and Alderman Alfred H. James, the last chairman. Guardians who were also members of Erdington District Council included William J. Adams J.P., chairman of the Board from 1896-98, Alderman Thomas O. Williams, chairman of the Board from 1906-08 and Dr. William Donovan. (90)

Kings Norton Board chairmen during the 1890s and early 20th century, included Alderman Thomas Stratton Fallows, J.P., chairman from 1889 until his death in 1902. Following his death, as was the case with the Birmingham and Aston Boards, chairmen and vice-chairmen usually served for two years, whilst the vice-chairmen succeeded to the chairmanship. Subsequent Kings Norton Union chairmen included Alderman Thomas Richard Bayliss, J.P., chairman of Kings Norton District Council from 1894-98, and Thomas Abraham Bayliss, J.P.. (91)

(6) Conclusion

This chapter has considered the principal socio-economic and political characteristics of the men and women elected as Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912, drawing attention to parallels with developments elsewhere. An awareness of Guardians' backgrounds is essential to any understanding of their evolving attitudes towards the relief of the poor, changing perceptions of how best to accommodate the interests of both ratepayers and

paupers, and relations with the central Poor Law agency. Themes developed in Chapters 6 and 7 are thus set firmly into context by this chapter.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1912, as elsewhere, the membership of the three Boards remained essentially representative of local socio-economic elites. There was undoubtedly evolution in membership profiles by the latter part of the 19th century, but there was also considerable continuity. Occupationally, politically, and in terms of place of residence, members of all three Boards continued to be drawn from a broad swathe of the industrial, shopkeeping, commercial and professional 'middle classes', and in the case of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, albeit to a much reduced extent after 1894, rural elites.

At the close of the period, the Birmingham Board continued to be dominated by a 'middle class' business and professional elite, and remained very much an integral part of the wider politico-administrative scene. There was never any challenge to urban 'middle class' domination of the Board from rural landowning and farming interests, and even during the early 1900s 'working class' representatives did not succeed in making much headway on the Board. Guardians' occupations continued to be largely of a relatively high social status, as did their places of residence, whilst politically Liberalism and Conservatism remained in the ascendant. Not surprisingly,

in view of the degree of overlap between municipal and Poor Law politics, the socio-economic backgrounds of Guardians and members of the Council continued to be very similar. (92) [See Tables 17 & 23] There was undoubted diversity amongst the Guardians at various times, but whether they were 'Liberal-Radicals', 'Economists', Gladstonian Liberals, Conservatives, 'independents', small shopkeepers, bankers, innkeepers, manufacturers, Anglicans, Nonconformists or Jews, each with their individual outlooks, their aim to administer the relief system with the interests of the ratepayers (ignored at their peril) firmly in mind, though not to the negation of humanitarian considerations, acted as a unifying link between them.

The Aston and Kings Norton Boards, like the Birmingham Board, were also thoroughly representative of local socio-economic elites throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. A considerable socio-economic gulf separated the membership of both Boards from the clientele served by the Poor Law. With the majority of Guardians coming from a small business or farming background prior to 1894, the principles of 'economy' and deterrence of the 'undeserving' would naturally be to the fore. After 1894 the number of farmer Guardians was hardly significant, but they were not replaced by large numbers of 'working class' members. Whilst there were now some Guardians who were not 'middle class' in terms of their occupational background or place of residence, of whom some were Trades

Council or 'Labour' representatives, overall their numbers were not significant. Spatial separation within greater Birmingham, and occupational backgrounds, still set the majority of Guardians clearly apart from the poor, although, as in the case of the Birmingham Board, attitudes towards the relief of the poor had softened. (93)

One of the most significant differences between the membership of the three Boards during the pre-1894 and post-1894 periods, was the fact that women Guardians were now well established on each of the Boards. Though praise from male colleagues cannot be taken at face value, it does seem that by the end of the period both sexes worked amicably enough together to administer the local Poor Law in a manner which in their opinion most effectively balanced the needs of paupers and ratepayers.

Chapter 4 Notes

- (1) See eg. BRL: B. Min. 6.7.58(Q) & 5.4.59(Q)).
- (2) See Ch.3, pp.141-42 & 147-48 & Ch.5, pp.204-06, 218-19, 228 & 231-32.
- (3) Of seven men selected as replacement Birmingham Guardians in July 1850, four were subsequently elected at full elections. (BRL: B. Min. 2.7.50(Q); Jnl. 27.3.52 & 3.4.58; Mer. 31.3.55). See also Ch.5, p.214.
- (4) See pp.164, 167 & 170-73.
- (5) See pp.165-66, 168-69 & 171-73 & Ch.1, pp.34 & 42.
- (6) Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, pp.86-88 & 365-66; Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law, pp.411-12; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.9, 33 & 84; Searby, The Relief of the Poor in Coventry, pp.347-8; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.45 & 47; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.50, 123-24, 207, 352 & XXIII-VI; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, p.25. See also Ch.1, pp.31-32.
- (7) Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law, pp.413-15; C.Rawding, The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834-65: A Case Study of Caistor Poor Law Union. Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, Vol.22, 1987, pp.15 & 22.
- (8) Amongst Guardians elected in 1837 were Thomas Attwood, and 11 men described as merchants. (BRL: B. Min. 25.3.37).
- (9) See also Ch.1, pp.31-32.
- (10) See also Ch.1, p.32.
- (11) See also Ch.1, pp.31-32.
- (12) PRO: MH 12/13286, R.Weale report, 17.1.42. See also pp.155-56, Ch.3, p.104 & Ch.5, pp.215-17.
- (13) The 'professional' men elected to the Board in 1846 were an architect, an attorney, a chemist, an optician, a solicitor, two accountants, two surgeons and a dentist. (Gaz. 6.4.46).
- (14) William Guest, described as a 'gentleman' in 1846, was described as a gilt toy maker in 1834, 1837, 1840 and 1843. William Hawkesford described as a baker in 1849, was described as a 'gentleman' in 1855. (BRL: B. Min. 25.3.34, 25.3.37, 25.3.40 & 25.3.43; Gaz. 6.4.46; Mer. 7.4.49 & 31.3.55).
- (15) See also pp.179.

(16) See also Ch.3, p.104 & Ch.5, pp.223.

(17) See eg. D.F.MacDonald, The Age of Transition: Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, 1967, Ch.6; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, p.61.

(18) In the 1873 and 1876 electoral returns as many as 15 men were simply described as 'manufacturers' (D.Post 5.4.73 & 1.4.76).

(19) See also pp.173-78.

(20) BRL: B. Min. 25.3.43; D.Post 5.4.73 & 27.3.82. See also Ch.1, p.34.

(21) See also Ch.1, pp.33-34.

(22) BRL: A. Min. 22.4.73, 21.4.74, 20.4.75, 18.4.76, 17.4.77, 16.4.78, 22.4.79, 20.4.80, 19.4.81, 18.4.82, 17.4.83, 22.4.84, 19.4.87 & 22.4.90.

(23) See BRL: A. Min. 11.4.37, 30.3.41, 20.4.41, 13.4.47, 8.4.57, 18.4.71 & 19.4.87. See also p.180.

(24) William Jenkins, a Water Orton farmer, was elected as one of the Aston Parish Guardians from 1836-40 and in 1847. Charles Truman, an Aston Parish Guardian elected from 1844-61, was described as a pawnbroker until 1856, but as a 'gentleman' from 1857 onwards. (BRL: A. Min. 11.4.37, 3.4.38, 2.4.39, 31.3.40, 26.3.44, 15.4.45, 14.4.46, 13.4.47, 18.4.48, 17.4.49, 2.4.50, 8.4.51, 20.4.52, 12.4.53, 18.4.54, 18.4.55, 16.4.56, 8.4.57, 7.4.58, 6.4.59, 4.4.60 & 3.4.61).

(25) In 1838 at least two Aston Guardians resided at Erdington, this number rising to three in 1841, six in 1848 and three in 1864. (BRL: A. Min. 3.4.38, 30.3.41, 18.4.48 & 19.4.64).

(26) The Kings Norton Parish Guardian Edwin John Green, was described in 1884 as a 'gentleman', but in 1887 as a manufacturer. (BRL: K.N. Min. 23.4.84 & 20.4.87). See also Ch.1, pp.33-34.

(27) George R.Elkington, gilder and silversmith, had his business in Birmingham but resided at Northfield, which he represented from 1845-49. (BRL: K.N. Min. 14.4.45, 13.4.46, 12.4.47, 24.4.48 & 23.4.49).

(28) See eg. BRL: K.N. Min. 12.4.47, 19.4.65, 18.4.66, 17.4.67, 28.4.69, 27.4.70, 26.4.71, 24.4.72, 23.4.73, 21.4.75 & 19.4.76.

(29) In 1858 and 1860 Sampson Hanbury, elected to represent Harborne, resided in neighbouring Edgbaston. From 1861-64 Edmund Page was elected to represent Harborne, but resided at Selly Oak, in the Parish of Northfield, which he subsequently

represented from 1865-70. (BRL: K.N. Min. 28.4.58, 25.4.60, 24.4.61, 23.4.62, 22.4.63, 20.4.64, 19.4.65, 18.4.66, 17.4.67, 29.4.68, 28.4.69 & 27.4.70).

(30) See also pp.165, 172 & 175-76.

(31) Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, with its Suburbs, 1901, pp.969-70, 1905, pp.1044-45, 1908, p.1101 & 1911, p.1140.

(32) See Manders, The Administration of the Poor law in the Gateshead Union, pp.84-87.

(33) In 1907 and 1910, the 'Socialists' John Beard and Mrs Mary Williams were elected to represent Saltley. (BRL: A. Min. 19.4.10; Gaz. 26.3.07). Some Trades Council candidates representing the 'labour interest' were elected in 1894. (BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95; Gaz. 3.12.94). See also Ch.3, pp.136-37 & 139 & Ch.5, p.227.

(34) BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95, 19.4.98, 16.4.01, 19.4.04, 16.4.07 & 19.4.10.

(35) BRL: K.N. Min. 2.1.95 & 20.4.98; Gaz. 6.12.94; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1902, p.985.

(36) BRL: K.N. Min. 2.1.95, 20.4.98, 18.4.04, 17.4.07 & 27.4.10; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1902, pp.984-85.

(37) BRL B. Min. 1.4.12.

(38) Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1913, p.1163.

(39) See Aschrott, The English Poor Law System, pp.221-22; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.77-78; P.Hollis, Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914, 1987, Chs.4 & 5; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.86-87; Webb, English Poor Law History, Part II, p.234; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.209-10.

(40) Aschrott, The English Poor Law System, p.221; Webbs, English Poor Law History, Part II, p.234.

(41) Poor Law Officers' Journal, 3.2.05, p.112.

(42) D.Post, 27.3.82 & 31.3.82; Hollis, Ladies Elect, p.223.

(43) BRL: B. Min. 2.1.95, 20.4.98; D.Post, 3.4.85, 2.4.88 & 27.3.91. Hannah Cadbury was a member of the Cadbury's chocolate-making family. See also Ch.3, p.135.

(44) BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95; D.Post, 2.4.88; Saxton, Bygone Erdington, p.224. See also Ch.5, pp.228-29.

- (45) BRL: K.N. Min. 25.4.83, 23.4.84, 20.4.87 & 23.4.90; Hollis, Ladies Elect, pp.213, 221, 269, 277 & 282.
- (46) BRL: A. Min. 22.4.84.
- (47) BRL: A. Min. 19.4.10; BRL: B. Min. 20.4.10; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.86-87; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.209-10; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, p.41.
- (48) BRL: A. Min. 19.4.98, 16.4.01, 19.4.04, 16.4.07 & 19.4.10. See also Ch.5, pp.228 & 231-32.
- (49) BRL: B. Min. 1.4.12.
- (50) BRL: On the Education of Pauper Children in Cottage Homes, F.C.Clayton. Paper read at the West Midland Poor Law Conference, Birmingham, May 1883, p.8; Hollis, Ladies Elect, p.223.
- (51) Gaz. 20.4.98.
- (52) Gaz. 1.4.98.
- (53) Ibid., 1.4.10.
- (54) 25th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1895-96, p.175.
- (55) Hollis, Ladies Elect, p.213.
- (56) See BRL: A. Min. vols.41-60; BRL: B. Min. vols.48-79; BRL: K.N. Min. vols.22-43.
- (57) See Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.188, 195-206 & 222; Fraser, Urban Politics, p.174 & Ch.12. See also Ch.1, pp.44-45.
- (58) BRL: B. Min. 29.1.22, 25.10.25, 1.4.28, 25.3.34 & 25.3.37; Mer. 31.3.55; Jnl. 3.4.58 & 30.3.61; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, p.51; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, p.25. See also pp.185-86.
- (59) Jnl. 27.3.52, 3.4.58, 30.3.61 & 16.4.64; Mer. 24.3.55 & 31.3.55; D.Post, 4.4.67. See also pp.163-64.
- (60) Gaz. 7.4.49; Mer. 7.4.49 & 31.3.55; Jnl. 27.3.52, 3.4.58 & 30.3.61; Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, Birmingham Jewry 1749-1914, Vol.1, 1980, pp.25-26. S.K.Marks was elected from 1849-61.
- (61) Evans & Gardner, Holy Trinity Sutton Coldfield, p.18; A.MacFarlane, Holy Trinity Parish Church, Sutton Coldfield, in R.Lea (ed.), Scenes from Sutton's Past: a closer look at

aspects of the History of Sutton Coldfield, 1989, p.65. See also Ch.5, pp.210-12.

(62) BRL: A. Min. 21.4.74, 20.4.75, 18.4.76, 17.4.77, 18.4.78, 22.4.79, 20.4.80, 19.4.81 & 18.4.82; Evans & Gardner, Holy Trinity, pp.16 & 18; Jones, The Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield, p.85; MacFarlane, Holy Trinity Parish Church, pp.65-66.

(63) BRL: K.N. Min. 23.4.90, 18.6.02 & 18.4.04.

(64) BRL: A. Min. 24.12.72.

(65) See Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, pp.88-90 & 366-67; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.51, 122 & 207-08; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, p.41-42. See also Ch.3.

(66) See Brundage, Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System, p.205; J.M.Coleman, Guardians' Minute Books. History, Vol.48, 1963, p.183; F.Duke, Pauper Education, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, p.82; M.W.Flinn, Medical Services under the New Poor Law, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, pp.51-53; R.M.Gutchen, Local Improvements and Centralization in Nineteenth-Century England. Historical Journal, IV (1), 1961, pp.87-88. See also Ch.1, p.46 & Ch.5, p.220.

(67) Walsh, Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire, p.242; B.Watkin, The Warminster Workhouses: Illustrations of the Old and New Poor Law. Hatchers Review, 3, 1986, pp.68-69.

(68) See eg. I.Anstruther, The Scandal of the Andover Workhouse, 1984, pp.78 & 152; C.A.Buchanan, John Bowen and the Bridgwater Scandal. Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society Transactions, 131 (for 1987) 1988, p.182; N.Land, Victorian Workhouse: A Study of the Bromsgrove Union Workhouse 1836-1901, 1990, pp.49-50; N.McCord, The Implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act on Tyneside. International Review of Social History, 14 (1) 1969, p.97; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.145-46.

(69) BRL: A. Min. vols.1-40. See also Ch.6, pp.286-89.

(70) BRL: K.N. Min. vols.1-33.

(71) BRL: A. Min. vols.1-40. See also Ch.3, p.103.

(72) BRL: K.N. Min. vols.1-33.

(73) BRL: B. Min. 25.3.40 & 29.9.47; BRL: B.Orders, 1837-62, Orders 16.1.50 & 20.7.50.

(74) BRL: B. Min. vols.2-4; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.334; Dent, The Making of Birmingham, p.349; Fraser,

Urban Politics, pp.253-54; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.235, 237 & 439; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, pp.179 & 184. See also p.186, Ch.1, pp.37-38, Ch.6, pp.265-66 & Ch.7, p.328.

(75) BRL: B. Min. 25.3.37; Gaz. 31.12.38; Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.154-56; Dent, Old and New Birmingham, p.624; Lloyd Renshaw, Birmingham: its Rise and Progress, p.112. See also Ch.1, pp.37-38.

(76) Jnl. 16.4.64.

(77) BRL: B. Min. 11.4.55(A), 8.4.57(A), 17.4.61(A), 15.4.63(A), 10.4.67(A), 8.4.85 & 4.5.87; Gaz. 31.3.64; Jnl. 22.12.49 & 2.4.64; Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.II, 1885, pp.16-17; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, pp.173-74; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, p.11. See also p.177, Ch.1, pp.40-41 & Ch.5, p.223.

(78) BRL: B. Min. vols.2-51; Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.19.

(79) BRL: B. Min. vols.2 & 3; Jnl. 9.2.39; Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.267-68; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.147-48 & 150; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, pp.235-37. See also Ch.1, pp.37-38.

(80) BRL: B.Min. vols.2-4; Gaz. 13.3.43, 12.2.44 & 9.9.44; Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I, p.343. R.T.Cadbury was a draper, and father of the founder of Cadbury's.

(81) BRL: B. Min. vols.2-4; Gaz. 4.2.39 & 22.12.45; Jnl. 9.2.39; Flick, The Birmingham Political Union; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.245-46.

(82) BRL: A. Min. vols.2-41; BRL: K.N. Min. 20.4.64; Gaz. 13.4.40; Jnl. 26.3.64; Saxton, Bygone Erdington, p.58. See also Ch.1, pp.38 & 46.

(83) BRL: B. Min. 28.10.17, 29.1.22, 1.4.28, 29.3.31, 25.3.34, 25.3.37 & 25.3.40; Gaz. 2.8.41, 8.7.44, 13.9.47 & 13.7.65; Jnl. 25.1.40; Briggs, Victorian Cities, pp.187 & 190; Dent, The Making of Birmingham, pp.348, 366, 380-81, 509 & 512; Dent, Old and New Birmingham, p.461; S.Lloyd, The Lloyds of Birmingham: with some account of the founding of Lloyds Bank, 1907, p.71; B.Marsden, ABC of Small Heath and Bordesley Green: past and present, 1987, p.35; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, pp.174, 185 & 187; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, pp.15-22, 62-63 & 161.

(84) Mer. 7.4.49; Jnl. 27.3.52 & 30.3.61; D.Post, 4.4.67; Briggs, Victorian Cities, p.191; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.273-74; D.Judd, Radical Joe: A Life of Joseph Chamberlain,

1977, pp.39-40, 43, 46, 48-50, 74-75; Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham, p.177; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.III, p.377.

(85) BRL: B. Min. 1.4.28; Gaz. 8.7.44, 15.7.44, 5.7.47 & 16.8.47; Fraser, Urban Politics, p.212; Lloyd, The Lloyds of Birmingham, p.71.

(86) BRL: B. Min. 25.3.34 & 25.3.37; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, p.175.

(87) BRL: B. Min. 5.7.54 & 19.7.54. See also Ch.2, pp.90-92.

(88) BRL: A. Min. 18.4.82, 17.4.83, 22.4.84 & 19.4.87; Arkinstall & Baird, Erdington past & present, p.16; Jones, The Story of Erdington, pp.43 & 74; Jones, The Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield, pp.97-98 & 180.

(89) BRL: B. Min. 1.5.95, 23.4.02, 19.4.05, 21.4.09 & 16.4.13; Gaz. 1.1.07; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, pp.9, 13-14 & 16.

(90) BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95, 16.4.95, 11.8.96, 19.4.98, 16.4.01, 19.4.04, 26.6.06, 28.4.08, 19.4.10 & 26.3.12; Arkinstall & Baird, Erdington past & present, p.24; Jones, The Story of Erdington, p.73; Saxton, Bygone Erdington, pp.53, 58, 68 & 84.

(91) BRL: K.N. Min. 20.2.89, 28.5.02, 18.6.02, 18.4.04, 9.5.06, 17.4.07, 10.2.09, 14.7.09 & 27.4.10; BRL: B. Min. 20.4.04; Gaz. 22.4.98 & 18.4.07; Everson's Moseley, Kings Heath and Balsall Heath Directory and Year-Book, 1896, p.55.

(92) Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, pp.128-29; Briggs, Victorian Cities, p.235.

(93) See also Ch.6.

Chapter 5: The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians: Representative Bodies or Self-Perpetuating Oligarchies?

(1) Introduction

'Oligarchy' is defined as 'Government by the few; a form of government in which the power is confined to a few persons or families, also, the body of persons composing such a government.', and as 'a regime run by an elite of wealthy people in their own interests.' (1) Building upon the basis of the discussion of the Poor Law electoral system in operation in the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, and the Parish of Birmingham, in Chapter 3, and of Guardians backgrounds in Chapter 4, it is argued in this chapter that although they were ostensibly representative elective bodies, the three Boards, like many of their counterparts elsewhere, especially prior to the enactment of the 1894 Local Government Act, were essentially elected oligarchies. To describe these boards as elected oligarchies is justified on a number of counts.

Although boards of guardians always possessed a majority elected component, mirroring the situation in relation to Parliamentary and municipal elections, until later in the 19th century only a small minority of the adult population were eligible to vote at Poor Law elections, or to serve as guardians. Rating qualifications debarred the vast majority

from any involvement with the administration of the Poor Law. Admittedly, during the mid to late 19th century, with rising standards of living, more people did become eligible to vote at board elections and to serve as guardians, but it was not until the early 1890s that electoral regulations were significantly liberalised. The nationwide reduction of the voting qualification to a £5 assessment in 1892, and most significantly the 1894 Local Government Act, which swept away property qualifications, plural voting, proxies and ex-officio guardians, fundamentally changed the ground rules of Poor Law politics. In spite of the changes wrought by the 1894 Act, however, continuity with earlier decades remained. The socio-economic composition of boards did not suddenly alter (although more women were elected), and to some extent the facility for boards to co-opt members substituted for the loss of ex-officio guardians. (2)

In view of the restrictive nature of the Poor Law electoral system, especially coupled with generalised voter apathy, it is reasonable to expect high levels of board membership continuity, and for the most part this is borne out by the example of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards. The degree to which continuity of membership is sustained from election to election, is a primary indicator of the tendency towards oligarchy inherent in any governing body. Whilst changes in membership do not necessarily produce major shifts in policy or outlook, as those with similar attitudes may

replace those not re-elected, large-scale discontinuities in membership often signify wider change. (3) This chapter focuses particular attention upon levels of continuity amongst the membership of the three Boards from one election to the next, throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1912.

High levels of board membership continuity and noticeable discontinuities cannot simply be accounted for with reference to the electoral regulations. As shown in Chapter 3, local factional and party politics, in combination with voter perceptions, played a vital role in determining the outcome of elections to the three Boards, and in particular the Birmingham Board. In keeping with the situation in other localities, rival elite groups vied for control of the Boards as part of wider political struggles, especially during the early New Poor Law era. If such elite groups, who were in any case naturally inclined to champion the interests of their fellow ratepayers, retained the goodwill of the electors, they could perpetuate their hold on power. One particular factional group might dominate the Board, or agreements might be reached between rival groupings to work together, but in either eventuality oligarchical control resulted.

Guardians' attendance levels are a further important indicator of oligarchical tendencies. Although a set number of guardians were elected to serve on boards, as other writers have shown, this did not mean that they (or the ex-officio

guardians) all attended meetings on a regular basis. Attendance levels at board and committee meetings fluctuated considerably, and were particularly poor during the early New Poor Law era. Often, only when decisions about such matters as the appointment of senior officers, salary increases or capital expenditure were to be made, were attendances high. With attendance levels generally low, board affairs were normally dominated by a hard core of active guardians who regularly attended board and committee meetings, assisted by the union clerk. (4) Over time there were considerable variations in the attendance levels of Guardians elected to the Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards, thereby further enhancing oligarchical tendencies.

Whilst cohesive elite groups could and did secure control of the affairs of boards of guardians, this is not to say that they were never challenged by 'outsiders'. There were often 'mavericks' or 'independents' serving on boards, who consistently challenged majority positions. Furthermore, at various periods in their history, most boards would be likely to witness disputes between opposing factional groups over particular issues and policies. There was through time a considerable degree of cohesion amongst the membership of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, and to a lesser extent the Birmingham Board, but dissent was never totally absent. Throughout the period of study, the Boards demonstrated varying degrees of homogeneity. At times one particular faction or

political grouping dominated Board proceedings, whilst at others rival groupings co-operated in the administration of the relief system, or clashed over particularly divisive policy issues and decisions or wider political concerns, and effectively stalemated operations. Similarly, at various times there were vocal minorities or individual 'mavericks' who opposed some or all of the policies pursued by the majority.

(2) Self-Perpetuating Oligarchies or Representative Bodies?:

The Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards of Guardians,
from the Mid-1830s to the 1870s

(2a) The Character of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards from
1836 to the 1870s

Against a background coloured by the restrictive electoral system, at the majority of Aston and Kings Norton Board elections from 1836 until the 1870s a comparative lack of interest by political factions, and voter apathy, served to ensure that high levels of Board membership continuity were sustained. Ratepayers in most parishes were apparently content to see the return of the same nominated candidates year after year, often without a contest occurring. (5) [SEE TABLES 24 & 25]

At the 1837 elections, which followed so soon after the inaugural elections in late 1836, there were only a few changes

to the membership of both Boards. Though, following an extremely acrimonious election, those that did occur on the Aston Board were significant in terms of its political balance.

(6) From 1838 onwards, Board membership patterns remained relatively constant. Some elections witnessed a greater turnover of members than others, but newcomers were generally in the minority. The majority of Aston Guardians elected at each election, had either served on the previous Board or they had been re-elected after a short break in service. In the case of the Kings Norton Board, although newcomers did outnumber established members in 1839 and 1845, in other years the situation was reversed. Most men re-elected after a break in service had previously represented the same parishes, and, as elsewhere, some Guardians served for many years. (7) [SEE TABLES 24 & 25]

Lack of interest in Poor Law elections was particularly acute in the smaller Aston Union parishes. During the period no contested elections occurred at Curdworth, Minworth or Wishaw, and none in the Parish of Sutton Coldfield until 1863. On some occasions, as in some West Riding parishes, nominations were not received, so sitting Guardians remained in office.

Parishes within the Kings Norton Union also, on occasion, failed to nominate any, or a sufficient number of, candidates.

(8) In 1867, as at the majority of Aston Union elections prior to the 1870s, only 25 nominations were received, so all candidates were elected unopposed. The new Board included only

three new members, who took the places of men who had not been re-nominated. (9) At several Kings Norton Union elections nominated candidates 'refused to serve', because of lack of time or inclination to assume the onerous responsibilities of office. (10)

Some of the men elected to the Aston and Kings Norton Boards during the period were more assiduous in fulfilling their responsibilities than others. The tendency towards oligarchy, already inherent in the electoral system, was thereby significantly enhanced. Regular attenders at meetings could to a very considerable extent dictate the direction of Board policy.

Attendance levels at Kings Norton Board meetings during the late 1830s, 1840s and 1850s were consistently low. After the initial flurry of activity following the establishment of the Union, attendances at weekly Board meetings were normally in single figures until the 1840s. On more than one occasion a quorum was not achieved. From the 1840s onwards attendance levels did improve somewhat, but attendances by more than half of the Board's membership were far from the rule. As for other boards, large attendances were often only recorded when important issues or decisions were addressed, and ex-officio Guardians, with the exception of Board chairmen, were most irregular in their attendance. (11) [SEE TABLE 26]

Although attendance levels at Aston Board meetings tended to be higher than for the Kings Norton Board, it has to be remembered that the latter had fewer elected Guardians. After the first few months of intense activity following unionization, attendances averaged around half the elected membership. In common with the Kings Norton and other boards, when particularly important matters were under consideration large turnouts were recorded, but attendances by ex-officio members were generally poor. During the late 1860s overall attendance levels tended to increase, indicative of a greater interest in the Board's work. (12) [SEE TABLE 27]

Throughout the period, the electoral process and Guardians' attendance levels made it relatively easy for a clique of active Guardians to dominate the affairs of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. This reflects the situation pertaining in such places as Gateshead and Sunderland. (13) In the case of the Aston Union, during its formative years the Aston Parish led 'Liberal-Radical' faction retained a firm hold over Board policies, although their authority was challenged on occasion, most notably by the Reverend Bedford. By the early 1860s, this situation had evolved into one where a group of active Guardians, together with the indomitable Union Clerk, Enoch Pearson, held sway over the Board's affairs. This is clearly illustrated with reference to the Grice affair.

In the autumn of 1861, revelations about the conduct of the Workhouse master and matron, John and Susannah Grice, resulted in their resignation, before a projected enquiry by Inspector Weale could be held. Appointed in October 1860, Mr and Mrs Grice had only served for a year before serious allegations of misconduct induced the Guardians to investigate their management of the House, and subsequently to report the circumstances to the PLB. Already dissatisfied by Mr Grice's conduct, following detailed investigations into allegations of drunkenness and mistreatment of Workhouse inmates, the Guardians became convinced that strong action was necessary.

(14)

Having been made aware of the accusations against Mr Grice, the PLB wrote to him for an explanation. In his response, Mr Grice not only refuted the allegations against him, but countered with his own against the Guardians and some of his fellow officers. He portrayed the Board as a corrupt oligarchy exercising dictatorial powers, aided and abetted by senior officers; and requested the PLB to hold a thorough enquiry. Mr Grice cleverly accused the Guardians of such abuses as the improper use of Workhouse stores for their own purposes, which were well calculated to draw the attention of the PLB. To underscore the atmosphere of intrigue and conspiracy which he argued pervaded the Board's affairs, particular emphasis was placed upon the influence wielded by the Clerk, Mr Pearson, who he accused of persecution, and the close business ties between

Mr Pearson and the vice-chairman. In addition to his condemnation of the Clerk '(who is sole Master of everything), and advises the Guardians to be lenient in one matter and vindictive in another.', Mr Grice made a determined effort to discredit the testimony of other officers who had spoken against him during the Guardians' enquiries. (15)

Ultimately, however, Mr Grice's efforts to defy his accusers were unsuccessful. Inspector Weale was unconvinced by his counter-allegations, believing that they had 'evidently been made vindictively.', and when, amid further revelations about his conduct, Mr Grice resigned (though he remained defiant to the last), the need for a full PLB enquiry was obviated. (16)

The Grice affair is significant, not only as a good example of the type of misconduct senior Board officers were sometimes guilty of, and how this was dealt with by the Aston Guardians and the PLB, but also because it raises intriguing questions about the management of the affairs of the Aston Board at mid-century. Although Mr Grice was certainly guilty of misconduct, and his accusations against the Guardians and Mr Pearson would have been difficult to verify, it should not be assumed that they were totally unfounded. Bearing in mind the nature of the electoral system, Board attendance levels, the general tenor of the way the Board operated, and the background and attitudes of its members, it is reasonable to assume that what he said did contain an element of truth. (17)

Whilst the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, like other boards, were effectively dominated by cliques, there were always some Guardians ready to challenge the will of the dominant group. This was most notably the case during the formative years of the Aston Board, when the Reverend Bedford was a vociferous critic of its policies, and of the New Poor Law. Having, as one of the local magistrates, become an ex-officio Guardian, the Reverend was an unsuccessful candidate for the chairmanship at the first Board meeting. Thereafter, until his death in 1843, he waged a campaign of opposition to Board and PLC policies. His most dramatic intervention was the submission, in May 1838, of a petition to the House of Lords, in which he made a number of serious allegations about the administration of relief in the Union. In response, a committee appointed by the Guardians adeptly countered each of his charges, and roundly criticised him for involvement in anti-Board activities. (18)

Allegations that a blind man 'had been set to work on the Corn Mill ...', that the mill was 'more laborious than the Treadmill ...' at Warwick Prison, and that the Workhouse dietary table was inferior to that of the prison, were categorically refuted. The contention that one relieving officer for the whole Union was insufficient was dismissed outright, and it was denied that the bastardy clauses of the 1834 Act were having a 'demoralizing' effect. As to the alleged non-employment of a schoolmaster or chaplain, it was pointed out that the services of a part-time schoolmaster and

full-time schoolmistress had been engaged, and that religious guidance to Workhouse inmates had been afforded by two clergymen gratuitously since the formation of the Union, whilst paupers were also permitted to attend the parish church on Sunday. (19)

Throughout the report the Reverend's integrity and commitment as a Guardian were questioned. He was criticised for having a poor attendance record at meetings, for leaving early when he did attend, and for endeavouring to thwart the Board in its efforts to administer the relief system in line with the principles embodied in the Poor Law Amendment Act. The Reverend was reproached for not airing his complaints to the Board before petitioning the Lords, and accused of involvement with other anti-Board activities calculated 'to excite discontent and turbulence among the class whom the Law is intended to protect, to improve, and to benefit.' Special reference was made to an article and letters signed by the Reverend which appeared in the Tory 'Birmingham Advertiser', and to an 'abusive and inflammatory hand-bill' printed by its proprietor, with the Reverend's alleged connivance. (20)

Copies of the committee's report, together with a counter petition, were forwarded to the House of Lords, the PLC and Assistant Commissioner Earle. (21) Against a background of hostility to the New Poor Law, the Commissioners and Mr Earle were well aware of the potentially damaging implications of the

Reverend's allegations, both for the Guardians and the image of the PLC and the New Poor Law in general. Writing to the Commissioners in August 1838, Mr Earle recommended that the Guardians should be firmly supported. Underlining the significance of the affair to the PLC, he commented: 'The importance of Mr Bedford's petition arises chiefly from the locality of the Aston Union, & from the publicity which he has given to the charges ...'. (22) Acting upon Mr Earle's advice, the Guardians were assured of the Commissioners' full support, but in the event, the Lords Select Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act did not consider the Reverend's petition. (23) However, the Reverend Bedford continued to oppose Board and PLC policies. During 1839 he opposed the implementation of a PLC Order prohibiting outdoor relief to able-bodied paupers in the Union, whilst in 1842 he opposed the Bill for the continuance of the PLC. (24)

(2b) The Character of the Birmingham Board from the Mid-1830s to the Early 1870s

Membership continuity trends for the Birmingham Board, during the period from the mid-1830s to the early 1870s, differ quite noticeably from those for the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. In part this can be ascribed to the differences between their respective electoral regulations and constitutions. The fact that the Birmingham Board had a far larger complement of Guardians, and that it was subject to triennial elections,

undoubtedly predisposed it to a greater turnover of members between elections than was the case with the Union Boards. However, these factors were compounded by the impact of the struggles between opposing political factions in Birmingham, and specific issues of contention at particular elections. (25)
[SEE TABLES 24, 25 & 28]

In Birmingham, as in other major urban centres such as Leeds, Leicester and Salford, local politics impinged to a considerable extent upon the administration of the Poor Law. The Poor Law was not only the focus of ongoing national debate, it was also viewed as an additional arena for political battles between rival factions and parties vying for power and influence in local society. Allied to this, specific issues galvanised local factional groups and political parties, and the wider electorate, into action at some elections, sometimes producing a wholesale change in Board membership. (26)

Owing to a number of contributory factors, in 1840 the Conservatives achieved a resounding electoral victory over the previously dominant 'Liberal-Radical' faction. That this constituted a major discontinuity, is reflected in the fact that of the Guardians elected, 83 had not been selected in 1837, whilst 65 of them had not been elected in 1828, 1831 or 1834 either. At the 1849 and 1855 elections, when attention was focused upon the cost of the proposed new workhouse and the threat posed to local autonomy by the PLB respectively, and

factions antagonistic to those on the previous Boards triumphed, large numbers of new members were elected. There were 89 men returned as Guardians in 1849 who had not been elected to the 1846 Board, 85 of whom had not previously been elected at a triennial election. Six years later in 1855, 76 men who had not been elected to the 1852 Board were returned, 70 of whom had not been chosen at earlier elections. (27) [SEE TABLE 28]

Whilst there was a very significant membership turnover at some elections, at others change was less dramatic, and there were always at least a handful of men re-elected after a break in service. Even so, usually around half of the men elected on each occasion had not previously been elected at triennial elections. [SEE TABLE 28] However, it has to be recognised that substantial numbers of these men were chosen as replacement members at mid-term meetings of the Board. (28) Furthermore, many had previously served as Overseers and Churchwardens, and hence acted as ex-officio Guardians. In 1864, as the 'Journal' pointed out, of 30 newly elected men, most had previously served as Overseers. (29)

The tendency towards oligarchy was underscored throughout this period by the endorsement of lists of candidates by political factions and retiring Boards. Highlighting this in 1867, the 'Journal', reporting on ratepayers' meetings and the

more open choice of candidates on this occasion, made reference to 'self-elected bodies'. (30)

As far as attendance levels at Birmingham Board meetings were concerned, with an elected membership of 108 prior to 1873, plus the Overseers and Churchwardens, potentially large numbers of Guardians could be present at all meetings, but in practice the large Board membership tended to militate against almost complete, let alone full, attendances. Underlining the somewhat unwieldy nature of the Birmingham Board, the 'Journal' pointed out in 1864, that, by the time triennial elections occurred, there could be approaching 150 members including Overseers and Churchwardens, whereas the Manchester Board only had 15 Guardians. (31)

In practice an evolving core of active Guardians dominated Board affairs throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1873. They regularly attended Board meetings, and sat on key committees. Only when major decisions were to be made, or particularly important issues discussed, was there likely to be a very high attendance. Attendances at the irregularly convened Board meetings prior to 1849 did not normally exceed 60, and sometimes attendance fell to around 20 or even lower. After 1849, when weekly Board meetings were instituted, attendance patterns did not radically change, there were still some exceptionally high and some particularly low attendances. (32) [SEE TABLE 29]

There was generally a high attendance at the first meeting of a newly elected Board. (33) Similarly, quarterly meetings, at which committee reports and accounts were received until the late 1840s, also attracted some large attendances, as in April 1839. (34) High attendance levels were also recorded when important appointments were made, or contracts awarded. (35)

Following the 1849 'Economist' victory, a series of well attended meetings took place, at which important decisions were taken and policies reviewed. On April 9th, with 83 Guardians present, a number of statistical returns were requested and the future of the new Workhouse plans considered. A meeting attended by 72 Guardians on April 16th, agreed to hold weekly Board meetings and proceeded to appoint a chairman, vice-chairman and committees. Plans endorsed by the old Board for the erection of the new Workhouse were rejected by 78 votes to 2, at a meeting on April 18th attended by 85 Guardians. At a meeting on April 24th 1849, with 51 Guardians present, statistical returns relating to the costs associated with the out relief stations and the medical department, were received. Statistics relating to the numbers, salaries and duties of the officers and servants at the Workhouse and Asylum, and out relief cases, were also requested. Subsequently, on April 25th, at a meeting with 69 Guardians present, it was decided to re-advertise for plans for the erection of the new Workhouse. (36)

Poor attendance levels at meetings were periodically highlighted. Thus, in November 1847, a letter written by the Guardian Ralph Heaton, in which he criticised attendances at Board and committee meetings, appeared in the 'Gazette'. (37)

The ongoing antagonism between the rival 'Liberal-Radical' and Tory factions on successive Boards, during the 1830s and 1840s, is well illustrated by the proceedings at a meeting on September 12th 1838, attended by 64 Guardians. At the meeting, the prominent Tory, David Malins, accused 'Liberal-Radical' Guardians of illegally convening two 'secret meetings' to discuss Parish business, with a view to subverting the process of open decision-making. In retaliation, leading 'Liberal-Radicals' argued that the Tories were much more prone to such proceedings, and denied that their own gatherings had been called with the intention of undermining the authority of the Board as a whole; they had simply been exercising the right to discuss issues of concern to their 'party', with the added intention of saving time at Board meetings by avoiding unnecessary speeches. (38)

(3) The Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians from the 1870s to the Early 1890s, and the Impact of Changes to the Electoral Regulations

(3a) The Character of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards from the Early 1870s to 1894

The period from the early 1870s to 1894 was notable for the continuance of high levels of membership continuity on the Aston and Kings Norton Boards; which parallels the situation in Sunderland. (39) Major factors promoting the maintenance of continuity were the support for established Guardians by local ratepayers' associations, and generalised voter apathy. In 1876, for instance, although there were 42 nominations to the 18 Aston Parish seats on the Aston Board, the men elected were all supported by the Aston Ratepayers' Association, and 15 had served on the previous Board. After the election it was reported that 'little interest was taken ... by the ratepayers, large numbers of whom returned their voting papers without filling them up.' (40) A combination of indifference and general satisfaction with Board administration, meant that large-scale discontinuities in membership were less likely.

At Aston Union elections from 1870-90, usually a large majority of those returned had been elected at the previous annual or triennial election. Furthermore, mid-term replacement Guardians were likely to be returned at the next poll; whilst, as in earlier years, some of the changes at particular elections were of members who had served on previous Boards, and long tenures of office were not uncommon. In 1878 there was no change at all in the Board's composition. The highest numbers of previously unelected members were returned at the 1874 and 1887 elections. (41) [SEE TABLE 24] As in earlier decades, there continued to be occasions when no

nominations, or insufficient nominations, were received for the smaller Aston Union parishes, and contests only ever occurred in the Parishes of Aston and Sutton. (42)

The membership of the Kings Norton Board was equally static. From 1870 to the early 1880s, overall there was a greater degree of continuity than during earlier decades, and some Guardians served for very long periods. Only in 1881, 1884, 1887 and 1890, did the number of completely new Guardians exceed five, with a maximum of nine in 1890. (43) [SEE TABLE 25] Although contests were frequent in the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, there were occasions when candidates refused to serve, sometimes to avoid contested elections. (44)

After 1884 changes to the electoral regulations applicable to both Unions served to compound the pre-existing factors favourable to the maintenance of the status quo and oligarchical control. Increasingly irritated by the almost annual incidence of contested elections in the Parish of Aston, and to a lesser extent the Parish of Sutton Coldfield, in 1877, 1880 and 1882, the Aston Board forwarded memorials to the LGB pressing for a change to triennial elections, and for the division of the Parish of Aston into electoral wards. Great stress was placed upon the increasing expense and effort entailed in conducting contested elections, and it was argued that as contests tended to result in the re-election of the same candidates year after year, they were largely unnecessary

and did not bring any 'public benefit'. [SEE TABLE 14] It was suggested that rules governing the nomination of candidates should be revised in order to curtail the number of contests, and contended that triennial elections would allow 'time for undue feelings giving rise to vexatious nominations to subside.' Echoing the stance of the Southampton Board in 1877 (when it secured the repeal of part of its local Act restricting guardians to a two year term of office), though to some extent contradicting their other arguments, the Aston Board also emphasized that yearly terms of office did not allow Guardians sufficient time to gain experience before they faced possible electoral defeat. This was extremely detrimental to the administration of the relief system, more especially in view of the extra educational and sanitary responsibilities now imposed upon boards of guardians. (45)

Although the Aston Board stressed the expense and other disadvantages associated with contested elections, in seeking to reduce the frequency of elections and avoid contests, existing Board members also effectively sought to maintain a firmer hold on office by limiting the opportunities open to others to challenge them. Having achieved the transfer to a three year term of office (after the second union-wide triennial elections poll had endorsed such a change), and the division of the Parish of Aston into wards, it is particularly noteworthy that there were no Aston contests from 1884-94. (46)

Subsequent to the 1883 elections, at which contests again occurred in the Parishes of Kings Norton and Northfield, the Kings Norton Board also sought and secured (after a mandate for change had been obtained from a special ratepayers' poll), a transfer to triennial elections. However, it was not until the 1887 election that two Parishes, Harborne and Kings Norton, were divided into wards, and that alterations in the representation of the Parishes of Beoley, Harborne and Kings Norton took effect. (47)

As to attendance levels at meetings of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards during the period, these fluctuated in a similar manner to earlier years, but, reflecting experience in such places as Southampton, meetings tended to be better attended overall. (48) Continuing the trend of earlier decades, however, few ex-officio Guardians attended Board meetings on a regular basis. (49) [SEE TABLES 26, 27, 30 & 31]

The attendances of individual Guardians could vary widely. Whilst some members were very conscientious, others attended less frequently, whether from lack of time owing to business commitments, indifference, ill health or other reasons. (50) [SEE TABLES 32 & 33] Under such circumstances, and bearing in mind the longer terms of office of post-1884 Boards, it was if anything easier for the active members to dominate business.

(3b) The Character of the Birmingham Board from the Early 1870s to 1894

Trends in membership continuity for the Birmingham Board from 1873-91, as in the years prior to the reduction to 60 Guardians, were somewhat at variance with those of the Union Boards, largely owing to the wider political struggles in the town. In 1873 and 1876, reflecting the intense party political activity surrounding the elections as part of the conflict raging between local Liberals and Conservatives at the time, relatively few Guardians elected to the previous Boards were re-elected, whilst significant numbers of previously unelected men were returned. At the 1876 election, with the rejection of the old Conservative dominated Board, a total of 54 Guardians not elected in 1873 were returned, including 10 members of earlier Boards. However, at elections from 1879-91 established Guardians outnumbered new members, largely as the result of agreements between the town's Liberal and Conservative Associations to promote joint lists of candidates, lists which were endorsed by an apathetic electorate. (51) [SEE TABLE 28]

Whilst party political compromises, coupled with voter apathy and indifference, served to encourage Board membership continuity and hence oligarchical tendencies, changes to the electoral regulations also played a part. From at least the late 1860s, members of the Birmingham Board devoted serious attention to achieving alterations to the cumbersome electoral

regulations and a reduction in the number of Guardians. In view of the lack of commitment to the fulfilment of their duties demonstrated by many Guardians, it became accepted that numbers ought to be reduced. At the 1867 election, the Guardian George Baker argued that it was pointless to have so many Guardians, because 'some thirty or forty at the outside manage the business of the parish. The rest of the Guardians appear only on extraordinary occasions, and not unfrequently only to embarrass those who are zealously engaged in their work.' (52) However, although the newly elected Board appointed a special committee to consider electoral changes, and memorialised the PLB on the matter, nothing changed until 1873. (53)

At the beginning of 1873, efforts to secure a reduction in the number of Guardians and a change in the mode of election were revived, in the hope of having such alterations in place for the forthcoming election. Although some Guardians expressed concern about the implications of allowing the LGB more scope for involvement in the Board's constitutional affairs, it was decided to apply for the issue of an Order reducing the number of Guardians to 60, provided that 'the Local Act will in no other particular be altered.' (54) Upon receipt of this application the LGB swiftly issued an Order, under the terms of the 1868 Poor Law Amendment Act, which authorized such a reduction from the 1873 election onwards. (55)

The reduction in the number of Guardians served to rationalize the administrative machinery of the Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham, but the corollary of this was that power was now de jure concentrated in fewer hands, whilst prior to 1873 a dominant minority of active Guardians only enjoyed de facto control of Board affairs. In contrast to the effects of the 1873 reduction in the number of Guardians, further modifications to the electoral regulations in 1883, including an increase in the time allowed for election meetings, if anything tended to counterbalance oligarchical tendencies. (56)

Commentators still felt that the electoral procedures were in need of further simplification and improvement at the time of the 1885 election, however, and some Guardians expressed concern about the propensity to oligarchy inherent in the system. Bearing in mind that the political activity traditionally surrounding Birmingham Guardians elections had been drastically curtailed by the pact between the Liberals and Conservatives, in 1882 and 1885, the Board's leanings towards oligarchy were perhaps now more readily apparent. Mr W.J. Watson, speaking for the Ratepayers' Association at the declaration meeting, went so far as to say that

he thought the system of voting a very bad one. Sixty or a hundred persons, by a little organisation, and with the expenditure of a little money, could manage to return almost any set of candidates they chose. He should like to see a system which would enable the ratepayers to make their own selection of candidates without any difficulty. The presiding officer ought to supply every voter with a list of the candidates. (57)

In view of the concern expressed at the meeting, the new Board subsequently requested the Guardians William Price and Henry J. Manton to produce a report on the subject. Their report advocated the production of an official list of candidates at each election, which would make it easier for voters to register support for those not included on lists promoted by particular parties. That only 700 out of a potential 18,000 voters had taken part in the 1885 election, was viewed as a major justification for change. Foreshadowing the national changes of 1892-94, it was suggested that qualifications for voters and Guardians should be the same as at municipal elections, and that the Parish should be divided into wards. (58)

Despite this interest in further modification of the electoral regulations, no changes took place prior to the 1888 election, and at the declaration meeting reference was again made to the shortcomings of the electoral system and the fact that only 600 ratepayers had voted. (59) Prior to the 1891 election, however, the electoral regulations were modified again. Under revised rules, when contests occurred, voting papers listing all nominated candidates were to be produced by the Clerk and used for voting. (60)

At the last old style election in 1891, a majority of Guardians were returned unopposed, whilst the three elected in a supplementary contest were predictably the candidates

proposed by a 'joint committee of the Board'. (61) Thus, during the years prior to 1894, a combination of political party manouevrings and voter apathy ensured higher levels of Board membership continuity, a prerequisite for oligarchical control of policy.

As to attendance levels at Birmingham Board meetings during the 1873-94 period, these were mostly in the 30 to 45 range. Sometimes fewer members were present, whilst on certain occasions, as in earlier decades, larger numbers attended. [SEE TABLE 34] Overall, bearing in mind the nature of the electoral system, the most active members continued to be able to direct policy in much the same way as their earlier counterparts. (62)

(4) The Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards of Guardians 1894-1912, and the Impact of the 1894 Local Government Act

(4a) The Character of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, 1894-1912

Considerable changes to the membership of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards resulted from the first elections under the terms of the 1894 Local Government Act, held in December 1894. The membership of each of the newly elected Boards included the greatest number of completely new Guardians since the 1836 elections. Of the 32 members of the enlarged Aston Board, 24 were first time Guardians, whilst of the 28 members of the

enlarged Kings Norton Board, 18 were elected for the first time. A number of factors related to the impact of the 1894 Act account for this outcome. Some long-established Guardians simply decided that in view of the major upheaval in the electoral system they would not seek re-election, and left the field open to new blood. (63) Additionally, the abolition of plural voting and property qualifications for candidates, meant that former Guardians were more likely to be defeated by alternative nominees in some districts. However, the increased number of Guardians allocated to each Board also meant that there was an inbuilt predisposition towards a rise in new members, not necessarily to the disadvantage of established representatives. Consequently the Aston Board elected in 1894 still included eight established members, and the Kings Norton Board ten former members. [SEE TABLES 24 & 25]

Amongst the new members of the Aston Board were some advocates of more radical policies. These included Charles C.Cooke, a future Board chairman, selected as a Trades Council candidate for the Bordesley Ward. At a December ward meeting, one of his promoters remarked that as Mr Cooke lived in the ward he 'knew the wants of the poorer class of people.' Simeon Doggett, another Guardian elected in 1894, commented at the same meeting that Mr Cooke would 'make a good guardian; he certainly would not imitate the example of those gentlemen who offered poor people the House so as to get rid of the applicant altogether ...'. (64)

At Aston and Kings Norton Board elections after 1894, the underlying characteristic of the maintenance of high levels of membership continuity, a characteristic also noted in relation to the Gateshead and Sunderland Boards, was re-asserted. There was no pronounced difference between the proportion of membership changes at elections from 1898 to 1910, and the three triennial elections prior to 1894. [SEE TABLES 24 & 25] Moreover, after 1894, 64% of Aston Guardians were elected to serve more than three years, as opposed to 44% during the 1836-94 period, whilst the equivalent figures for the Kings Norton Guardians were 63% and 36%. (65)

As at elections before 1894, no contests took place in the majority of wards and parishes at elections during the 1894-1912 period, either because only the required number of candidates had been registered, or some candidates had withdrawn. Occasionally no nominations or an insufficient number were received for some wards and parishes. After 1894, when insufficient nominations were received, the sitting Guardian simply continued in office. In a continuation of earlier trends, replacement Guardians elected mid-term tended to be re-elected at full Board elections. (66)

Overall, ratepayers continued to prefer 'tried and tested' Guardians rather than newcomers, and on occasion challengers were rebuked in the local press for causing contests. (67) Demonstrating the continued strength of influential ratepayers'

groups, Guardians who failed to secure their support were still liable to be unseated. Thus, after a meeting of the Erdington Ratepayers' Association in March 1898, at which it was decided that 'a strong effort' should be made to 'prevent the return' of Eliza Rollason, 'her past actions not being approved by a large number of the ratepayers ...', she was not re-elected at the subsequent election. (68)

Whilst high levels of Board membership continuity may have been sustained after 1894, this does not necessarily mean that the Boards were characterised by unity of opinion. Against a background of generally high attendance levels at the fortnightly Aston Board and fortnightly (later monthly) Kings Norton Board meetings during the 1895-1912 period, and bearing in mind the varied political persuasions of those elected to the Boards, this cannot be assumed. (69) [SEE TABLES 35 & 36] Under such circumstances dominance by a particular clique was perhaps less likely.

In spite of these contrary indications, however, during the final years of the Union Boards their respective memberships did tend to form cohesive elites; varied opinions and divisions over particular issues not generally leading to any serious discord. Nonetheless, reminiscent of the Reverend Bedford, there were 'maverick' Guardians, like the Edgbaston Guardian Lieutenant-General Phelps, who did on occasion provoke an atmosphere of heightened tension at Board meetings. At the

first meeting of the Kings Norton Board elected in 1901, there was for instance some acrimony surrounding the General's conduct with regard to the Balsall Heath election. He was accused, by some other Guardians, of nominating candidates who issued posters 'charging the Board, amongst other things, with extravagance, and placing dead paupers in the infirmary dust-bin.' On the same occasion, the General also disagreed with many of his colleagues about the wisdom of carrying out work at the Cottage Homes based on plans prepared by the Homes Superintendent. General Phelps believed a professional architect should have been engaged, but his fellow Guardians, undoubtedly conscious of the saving they were making, did not agree. (70)

Six years later, in April 1907, General Phelps was again at the centre of controversy, on this occasion over whether an amendment proposed by the General at a Board meeting (held in camera) the previous April, relating to the appointment of the vice-chairman, should have been entered in the Minutes. Although the courts dismissed the General's allegation that the Clerk and the Board had acted undemocratically by not recording it, the General continued to insist upon the validity of his claims in the press. (71)

(4b) The Post-1894 Birmingham Board

Unlike the Aston and Kings Norton Boards elected in 1894, the reduced membership of the 1894 Birmingham Board included a majority of established members. Of the 36 Guardians elected, only 15 had not been selected in 1891. [SEE TABLE 28] However, at the last meeting of the retiring Board, this did not prevent expressions of regret at the loss of so many former members on the new Board. (72)

Replicating the situation at the majority of earlier Birmingham elections, only a minority of the electorate bothered to vote in the wards where contests occurred. Those who did not vote were presumably either indifferent to Poor Law affairs or satisfied with the status quo, whilst those who did clearly preferred to support established mainstream candidates endorsed by the local political associations and promoted at ward meetings. Allied to the influence of political loyalties, they were apparently convinced by arguments that it was preferable to retain experienced representatives wherever possible. (73) Under such circumstances, the appeal by George East (promoted as a 'Labour' candidate in the All Saint's ward), for 'working men' who for 'the first time ... had the power to vote for election of Guardians, ... to use this power in their own interests.', was ignored. (74)

A considerable degree of Board membership continuity was, as in the case of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, sustained at elections after 1894. [SEE TABLE 28] The percentage of

Guardians elected at more than one election significantly increased, from 42% during the 1836-94 period, to 65%. Furthermore, in common with the two Unions, Guardians elected to fill mid-term vacancies were regularly re-elected at the next triennial election. (75)

One important difference between the Birmingham Board and the Union Boards, was that in 1901, 1907 and 1910 it took advantage of its powers of co-optation. Although the numbers of co-opted Guardians was small, and the individuals concerned were experienced Board members, their co-optation does, however, have implications for the survival of oligarchical tendencies. (76) [SEE TABLE 28]

From 1895-1912 attendance levels at Birmingham Board meetings, held either fortnightly or monthly, were, like those of the Union Boards, generally high. (77) [SEE TABLE 37] Large attendances did not, however, mean that meetings were likely to be characterised by a high level of animosity between rival factions, on the contrary the members of successive Boards, like their Aston and Kings Norton counterparts, tended to form a cohesive elite. (78) There were inevitably differences of outlook amongst members, but overall they co-operated closely. The independent Guardian John Watts, elected in 1907 and 1910, was, however, at the centre of controversy on several occasions.

At the 1907 St.Thomas's ward election Mr Watts received an equal number of votes to another candidate, Richard Hemming, a Guardian since 1898. When the returning officer declared the latter to be elected, Mr Watts challenged the decision, attending for the first meeting of the Board (though not entering the boardroom) and appealing to the High Court, which subsequently decreed that Mr Hemming had not been 'duly elected', thereby permitting Mr Watts to take his place. (79) In 1910, Mr Watts was again at the centre of electoral controversy when he was nominated for re-election in the St.Thomas's ward, as well as to contest three other wards. Fellow Guardians and outside commentators were extremely critical of him for causing 'Unnecessary Contests' and wasting ratepayers' money. (80) Following his re-election, he was involved in acrimonious exchanges with other Guardians over his candidature for membership of a number of committees. (81)

After the demise of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, the first election to the enlarged Birmingham Board in 1912, following established patterns, resulted in the return of a large number of members who had served on the three expired Boards. Of the 52 Guardians elected to the new Board, only 13 had not been elected to the 1910 Boards, and of these several had represented Yardley on the Solihull Board. [SEE TABLE 28] The new Board included 17 members of the 1910 Birmingham Board, 10 members of the 1910 Aston Board and 12 members of the 1910

Kings Norton Board. Thus Board membership continuity patterns were sustained throughout the period under consideration. (82)

(5) Conclusion

From the evidence available, it is reasonable to conclude that throughout the period from the mid-1830s to 1912 the Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards were in effect elected oligarchies. They were neither self-elected bodies like the Birmingham Street Commissioners, nor representative bodies in the late 20th century sense. However, bearing in mind the restrictive electoral regulations in force for most of this era, members were, like M.P.s and councillors of the period, essentially representative of their electorates. (83)

One major distinguishing feature of oligarchical bodies, long-term continuity of membership, was to a differing extent displayed by all three Boards. From 1836 onwards, high levels of membership continuity were certainly sustained by the Aston and Kings Norton Boards from one election to the next. As far as the Birmingham Board was concerned, whilst there was less continuity of membership from election to election during the fifty years from 1834 to the mid-1880s, the triennial electoral cycle, the Board's much larger membership, and other factors peculiar to the Parish of Birmingham need to be taken into account when drawing comparisons. Furthermore, by the late

1880s membership patterns were much more similar to those of the Union Boards. [SEE TABLES 24, 25 & 28]

A number of related factors account for the high levels of Board membership continuity noted. Paramount amongst these are: the restrictive nature of the electoral system in operation; the amount of interest displayed by political parties or factions at election time; voter indifference and/or satisfaction with the status quo; the willingness of individuals to take on the onerous responsibilities associated with the office of Guardian; and the social and political standing of particular individuals. When all of these factors are taken into account it is perhaps not surprising that so many men, and from the 1880s some women, represented their parish or ward for many years.

Paradoxically, the discontinuities in the membership of the Birmingham Board which are such a feature of its electoral history until the mid-1870s, and the evident discontinuity in the membership of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards in 1894, can also be accounted for with reference to some of the factors responsible for sustaining continuity. The activities of political parties, factions and influential individuals, coupled with the incidence of particularly divisive issues at certain elections, and the degree of interest generated amongst the electorate, produced major changes in the composition of the Birmingham Board on a number of occasions prior to the

1880s. In 1894 the modified electoral regulations were largely responsible for the apparent discontinuity in the membership of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. (84) [SEE TABLES 24, 25 & 28]

Although a restricted membership displaying high levels of continuity, the product of a combination of inter-linking factors, certainly serves as a prerequisite to the development of oligarchical control, varying degrees of participation by, and co-operation between, members of a body in its activities, ultimately determines whether or not an elected oligarchy results. In the case of the Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards, the generally low attendance levels at their meetings during the early New Poor Law era certainly strengthened their oligarchical tendencies. During later decades, although attendance levels tended to increase, Board members generally constituted cohesive elites, which easily quashed any opposition to the majority will.

Minorities or individual 'mavericks' did on occasion challenge majority views, as in the case of the Reverend Bedford, but overall they were not able to overturn policies. Policies evolved gradually to meet changing circumstances, as attitudes amongst the majority of Board members altered over time under the impact of the broad societal and governmental changes of the 19th century. This theme of gradual attitudinal and policy change is explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 Notes

- (1) Oxford English Dictionary, Vol.X, 1989, pp.774-75;
B.Strauss, American Democracy Through Ancient Greek Eyes.
History Today, 44 (4) Apr.1994, p.33.
- (2) See Brundage, Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System;
Ryan, Politics and Relief: East London unions, pp.141-42;
T.Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union in Victorian
Times based on a study of original documents, 1992, pp.7-8 &
18; Webbs, English Poor Law History, Part II, pp.232-33; Ch.3,
pp.102-05 & Ch.4, pp.169-73.
- (3) See also pp.226-27, Ch.6, pp.272 & 280 & Ch.8, pp.386 &
388.
- (4) See eg. A.Brundage, The English Poor Law of 1834 and the
Cohesion of Agricultural Society. Agricultural History, 48 (3)
Jul.1974, p.413; E.O.Cockburn, The Cerne Abbas Union Workhouse
1835-1838. Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society
Proceedings, 94 (for 1972) 1973, p.90; Crowther, The Workhouse
System, pp.75-76; E.C.Midwinter, State Intervention at the
Local Level: The New Poor Law in Lancashire. Historical
Journal, 10 (1) 1967, p.108; W.Proctor, Poor Law Administration
in Preston Union, 1838-1848. Lancashire & Cheshire Historical
Society Transactions, 117 (for 1965) 1966, pp.149-52; Thompson,
The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.45-46 & 52; Wood, The
Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.48-49 & 353.
- (5) See also Ch.3, pp.121-22 & 128.
- (6) BRL: A. Min. 11.4.37. See Ch.3, pp.109-17.
- (7) See eg. Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law,
pp.415 & 417; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding
of Yorkshire, p.139.
- (8) BRL: A. Min. 18.4.48, 2.4.50, 8.4.51, 8.4.57, 7.4.58 &
4.4.60; BRL: K.N. Min. 16.4.41, 23.4.49, 20.4.53, 20.4.64 &
18.4.66; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of
Yorkshire, pp.138-39. See also Ch.3, p.121.
- (9) Jnl. 30.3.67.
- (10) BRL: K.N.Min. 13.4.46, 12.4.47, 27.4.59, 25.4.60, 29.4.68
& 28.4.69. See also Ch.4, p.162.
- (11) See eg. BRL: K.N. Min. 7.8.40; A.Digby, Pauper Palaces,
1978, p.78; Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties', p.341; McCord, The
Implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, p.97;
Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead
Union, p.37; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding
of Yorkshire, pp.144-45 & 148-49; Thomas, Poor Relief in
Merthyr Tydfil Union, pp.22 & 24.

(12) See eg. BRL: A. Min. 9.7.39 & 21.12.47.

(13) Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.37-38; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.119 & 125-26.

(14) BRL: A. Min. 3.10.60, 6.2.61, 17.4.61, 16.10.61, 23.10.61, 5.11.61 & 12.11.61.

(15) PRO: MH 12/13238, letter Mr Pearson to PLB, 12.11.61, letter PLB to Mr Pearson, 22.11.61, letter PLB to Mr Grice, 22.11.61 & letter Mr Grice to PLB, 23.11.61.

(16) BRL: A. Min. 3.12.61, 10.12.61, 17.12.61, 24.12.61, 14.1.62; PRO: MH 12/13238, letter John Smith to PLB, 29.11.61, letters Mr Pearson to PLB, 4.12.61, 5.12.61 & 12.12.61, letters PLB to Mr Pearson, 10.12.61 & 21.12.61, notes by Mr Weale on Mr Pearson's letters, comments by Mr Weale on Mr Grice's letter, 27.11.61, letters PLB to Mr Weale, Mr Grice and Mr Pearson, 30.11.61.

(17) See also Ch.3, pp.102-03, Ch.4, pp.167-68 & 191 & Ch.6, pp.244-56 & 293-94.

(18) BRL: A. Min. 8.11.36, 5.6.38, 12.6.38 & 26.6.38; Jnl. 12.11.36. See also Ch.4, p.180.

(19) BRL: A. Min. 26.6.38. See also Ch.6, pp.245-48 & 250-51 & Ch.7, pp.312-13.

(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid., 26.6.38 & 31.7.38; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Gammon to PLC, 31.7.38, petition, & letter PLC to Mr Gammon, 7.8.38.

(22) PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Earle to E.Chadwick, 9.8.38. See also PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Earle to E.Chadwick, 25.5.38.

(23) BRL: A. Min. 28.8.38; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter PLC to Mr Pearson, 24.8.38.

(24) BRL: A. Min. 30.4.39, 28.5.39, 29.10.39 & 17.5.42. See also Ch.7, p.328.

(25) See also Ch.3, pp.102-04.

(26) See Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, pp.100-06; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, Urban Politics, Ch.3; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.266-80. See also Ch.3, pp.117-20 & 122-27.

- (27) See also Ch.3, pp.119-20 & 123-26.
- (28) See eg. BRL: B. Min. 9.10.55(Q) & 3.4.60(Q); Jnl. 6.4.39. See also Ch.4, p.156.
- (29) Jnl. 16.4.64.
- (30) Ibid., 23.3.67.
- (31) Ibid., 16.4.64.
- (32) BRL: B. Min. 16.4.49; BRL: B. Orders 1837-62, Order 16.1.50.
- (33) See eg. Jnl. 7.4.55 & 13.4.67; Mer. 7.4.55.
- (34) Jnl. 6.4.39.
- (35) See eg. BRL: B. Min. 1.3.37 & 3.10.38; Jnl. 4.3.37 & 6.10.38; Gaz. 17.9.63.
- (36) BRL: B. Min. 9.4.49, 16.4.49, 18.4.49, 24.4.49 & 25.4.49; Jnl. 28.4.49. See also Ch.6, p.260.
- (37) Gaz. 1.11.47. See also p.215 & Ch.4, p.162-63.
- (38) BRL: B. Min. 12.9.38; Jnl. 15.9.38; Gaz. 17.9.38.
- (39) Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, p.206.
- (40) BRL: A. Min. 18.4.76; D.Post, 17.4.76.
- (41) See BRL: A. Min. vols.15-41. See also p.205.
- (42) See BRL: A. Min. 22.4.73, 20.4.75 & 20.4.80; PRO: MH 12/13243, letter Mr Lumby to LGB, 2.4.73, letter LGB to Mr Lumby, 9.4.73, letter Mr Lumby to J.J.Henley, 2.4.73, Order 2.5.73 & covering letter, 5.5.73; Gaz. 28.5.73.
- (43) See BRL: K.N. Min. vols.12-33.
- (44) BRL: K.N. Min. 22.4.74 & 26.4.82. See also Ch.3, p.127.
- (45) BRL: A. Min. 24.4.77, 8.5.77, 22.5.77, 12.3.78, 26.3.78, 20.1.80, 3.2.80, 24.2.80, 23.3.80, 30.3.80, 20.4.80, 13.6.82 & 11.7.82; Crocker, The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change, p.24. See also Ch.3, pp.129-30 & Ch.4, p.181.
- (46) BRL: A. Min. 25.7.82, 6.2.83, 6.3.83, 20.3.83, 12.6.83, 10.7.83, 7.8.83, 21.8.83, 16.10.83, 27.11.83, 1.1.84, 8.1.84, 22.1.84, 5.2.84 & 19.2.84; BRL: A. Orders 1858-89, Orders 20.11.83 & 14.2.84; PRO: MH 12/13254, letters Mr Lumby to LGB,

3.1.84 & 23.1.84 & letter LGB to Mr Lumby, 16.2.84. See also Ch.3, pp.130-31.

(47) BRL: K.N. Min. 25.4.83, 9.5.83, 5.12.83, 16.1.84, 5.11.84, 19.11.84, 31.12.84, 11.3.85, 6.5.85, 20.5.85, 17.6.85, 3.11.86, 17.11.86 & 15.12.86; PRO: MH 12/14057, Order 10.1.84 & covering letter LGB to Mr Docker, 12.1.84; PRO: MH 12/14062, Order 24.11.86 & covering letter LGB to E.Docker, 27.11.86. See also Ch.3, p.130.

(48) Crocker, The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change, p.25.

(49) See BRL: K.N. Min. vols.12-33.

(50) See BRL: A. Min. 4.4.82; BRL: K.N. Min. 1.7.91, 15.7.91 & 29.7.91; Gaz. 27.12.94.

(51) See also pp.212-14 & Ch.3, pp.132-36.

(52) D.Post, 1.4.67. See also Jnl. 23.3.67.

(53) BRL: B. Min. 3.7.67(A) & 17.7.67(A). See also D.Post, 4.4.67 & Jnl. 13.4.67.

(54) PRO: MH 12/13320, letter Mr Coulton to LGB, 24.2.73 & letter LGB to Mr Coulton, 28.2.73; BRL: B. Min. 22.1.73 & 5.3.73. See also Ch.7, p.347.

(55) BRL: B. Min. 19.3.73; BRL: B. Orders, 1863-77, Order 10.3.73.

(56) BRL: B. Orders 1878-86, Order 5.5.83; BRL: 46 & 47 Vict., Ch.lxxxii, 1883. See also Ch.3, p.104 & Ch.7, p.347-48.

(57) D.Post, 3.4.85. See also Ch.3, pp.134-35.

(58) BRL: B. Min. 29.4.85; BRL: Parish of Birmingham. Report of Messrs. Price and Manton Re Election of Guardians. March 1886, pp.3, 6-8 & 11. See also Ch.3, pp.104-05 & 135.

(59) D.Post 2.4.88.

(60) BRL: B. Orders 1887-95, Order 31.1.91; BRL: 54 Vict., Ch.ii, 1891. See also Ch.3, p.104 & Ch.7, p.347-48.

(61) D.Post 27.3.91. See also Ch.3, p.136.

(62) See also pp.215-17.

(63) See Gaz. 28.12.94.

(64) Gaz. 13.12.94. See also Ch.6, p.291.

- (65) BRL: A. Min. vols.1-58 & K.N. Min. vols.1-43; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1902, pp.984-85; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.82-85; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.206-08. See also pp.218-19.
- (66) See BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95, 22.1.95, 19.2.95, 5.3.95, 16.4.95, 19.4.98, 10.4.00 & 16.4.01; BRL: K.N. Min. 2.1.95, 20.4.98, 18.4.04 & 27.4.10. See also Ch.3, pp.137-40.
- (67) See Gaz. 25.3.01.
- (68) BRL: A. Min. 19.4.98; Gaz. 26.3.98. See also Ch.4, p.175.
- (69) Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1895-12. See also Ch.3, p.139.
- (70) Gaz. 25.4.01.
- (71) Gaz. 18.4.07 & 23.4.07.
- (72) Gaz. 20.12.94.
- (73) Gaz. 8.12.94 & 13.12.94. See also Ch.3, pp.136-38.
- (74) Gaz. 15.12.94.
- (75) See BRL: B. Min. 19.4.05, 17.4.07, 18.12.07, 19.2.08 & 20.4.10.
- (76) BRL: B. Min. 17.4.01, 17.4.07 & 20.4.10; Gaz. 18.4.01, 18.4.07 & 21.4.10.
- (77) Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1895-1912. See also p.229.
- (78) See also pp.229-30.
- (79) BRL: B. Min. 17.7.07; Gaz. 28.3.07 & 18.4.07; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1908, p.1101. See also Ch.3, pp.140-41.
- (80) Gaz. 1.4.10 & 2.4.10. See also Ch.3; p.141.
- (81) Gaz. 21.4.10.
- (82) BRL: B. Min. 1.4.12. See also Ch.1, pp.50-51.
- (83) See also Ch.1, pp.36 & 38-39, Ch.3, pp.102-05 & Ch.4.
- (84) See also Ch.3, pp.117-20, 122-27 & 132-34.

Chapter 6: The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians and the Evolution of Attitudes and Policies, 1836-1912

(1) Introduction

Developing from the discussion of the electoral system in Chapter 3, Guardians backgrounds in Chapter 4, and the question of whether the Boards were effectively elected oligarchies rather than representative bodies in Chapter 5, this chapter focuses upon the approach of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards to the administration of the Poor Law from 1836 until amalgamation in 1912. The chapter seeks to demonstrate how Board policies evolved over time, and to identify the influences which shaped the thinking of Guardians.

Within the confines of this chapter, and the thesis as a whole, it is not possible to consider in detail all aspects of policy and attitude change in relation to the three Boards. Thus the chapter concentrates upon the identification and analysis of major themes and trends over time. To illustrate these, reference is made to specific aspects of policy and particular episodes in the history of the three Boards. The intention is to interrelate the earlier discussions on the electoral system, the composition of the Boards and their essentially oligarchical nature, with references to the broader changes in 19th century society, governmental and specifically

local factors, which fostered characteristic attitudes and the adoption and modification of particular policies.

Throughout the period under scrutiny, to a lesser or greater extent, Board members were influenced by a set of fundamental considerations common to their counterparts elsewhere. Whilst acknowledging the difficulty of arriving at 'generalizations' about attitudes towards the poor, David Roberts has defined four 'dominant' attitudes held by Poor Law administrators and philanthropists during the Victorian era. These he defines as 'a humane concern that no one suffer extreme destitution ...', 'a strong wish that taxes be as low as possible.', 'a desire to control and discipline the wayward among the poor and an ardent hope that the poor might be reformed, thereby lessening poverty.' These four major 'forces' certainly influenced the approach of the memberships of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards towards the fulfilment of their responsibilities.

(1)

Considerations of 'economy' and 'efficiency', and a desire to protect the interests of the ratepayers always had a strong influence upon the Guardians. However, humanitarian concern for the 'deserving' poor was just as pervasive; parsimony and humanity went hand in hand, even during periods characterised by heightened stringency in the administration of the relief system. Similarly, enthusiasm for measures to discipline and control the 'undeserving', were counterbalanced by eagerness to

educate the young to fit them for useful adult lives. Overall, the members of the three Boards shared the moral views towards poverty of the majority of their contemporaries from the same social strata.

(2) Parsimony and 'Less Eligibility': The Aston and Kings Norton Boards and Poor Law Administration from 1836 to the 1860s

(2a) The Assumption of Administrative Responsibility and the Development of a Board Ethos

Following unionization, like their counterparts elsewhere, the newly elected Aston and Kings Norton Boards faced many important decisions. Whilst the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act had established the ground rules for future poor relief administration, and the PLC and its Assistant Commissioners subsequently proceeded, with varying degrees of success, to direct and guide local administrators in the implementation of relief policies, a considerable degree of discretion rested with guardians. Their zeal in implementing the New Poor Law varied from place to place. In the case of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, the election in 1836/37 of a majority of Guardians willing to implement policies advocated by the PLC, ensured that both set about their task with eagerness. Successive Boards continued to adhere to PLC and PLB orthodoxies, in contrast to some boards. Furthermore, the

Aston Union, in particular, came to be seen by the PLC and PLB as a 'model union'. As well as adhering to the principles of 'less eligibility' and the 'workhouse test', the Aston Board was noted for its 'economical' administration. (2) Whilst 'less eligibility' and 'economy' were paramount considerations for both Boards, the Guardians did display humanity and foresight in their policies.

Administrative infrastructures and practices approved by the PLC, were swiftly instituted during the Boards' formative months. Most senior officers were soon appointed, the indoor and outdoor relief systems were rationalized, and medical, rate collection and registration districts were established with little delay. At their first Board meeting on November 8th 1836, the Aston Guardians discussed the appointment of a number of senior officers, workhouse provision and rating matters. The Kings Norton Guardians, at their first meeting on December 13th 1836, appointed a clerk and treasurer, and considered the appointment of other senior officers, rating arrangements and workhouse provision. (3)

Unlike some boards, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards quickly appointed most of their senior officers, although, as elsewhere, some appointments were delayed. (4) By the end of November 1836, the Aston Board had appointed a clerk, a relieving officer and an auditor. Already demonstrating their credentials as the protectors of the public purse, the

Guardians awarded the clerk a salary of £150 per annum, but emphasized that should he be appointed as Superintendent Registrar 'his emoluments' for this post 'would be taken into consideration with the view of giving him not more than an adequate remuneration for his whole time.' Similarly, the decision to appoint one relieving officer was undoubtedly influenced by motives of 'economy'. (5) Having already appointed a clerk, at the beginning of January 1837 the Kings Norton Board appointed a relieving officer and an auditor; the decisions to employ one relieving officer and only to advertise in the 'Gazette', clearly indicative of an eagerness to minimise expenses. (6)

By the time of the 1837 elections both Boards had appointed medical officers, decided (in common with some other boards) to retain the services of existing masters and matrons, and given consideration to the appointment of registration officers and collectors. However, neither had yet appointed salaried chaplains, schoolteachers or porters. (7)

Upon unionization, although the Poor Law Amendment Act had said little about medical provision, the PLC required boards to define medical districts and appoint medical officers. (8) In March 1837 the Aston Board established seven medical districts and appointed a medical officer to each, with salaries related to district populations, and responsibility for vaccinations. Reciprocal medical arrangements were subsequently made with the

Parish of Birmingham for non-resident sick poor. (9) By early March 1837, the Kings Norton Board had also designated six medical districts and appointed nine medical men, who were paid a fixed sum for each case attended, with separate fees for vaccinations. In March 1838, however, the districts were revised so that they coincided with parish boundaries, and salaries were assigned to each post. These alterations were not simply calculated to clarify jurisdictions, but to lower costs by the employment of fewer medical men. (10)

Under the terms of the 1836 Act for Registering Births, Deaths and Marriages in England, boards of guardians were required to divide their unions into registration districts. In parts of the industrial North the appointment of registrars was particularly controversial, as this duty coincided with the establishment of Poor Law Unions. However, in the Birmingham area the appointment of registrars was far less contentious. By February 1837 the Aston Union had been divided into four registration districts, and four registrars had been appointed. Whilst, by June 1837, the Kings Norton Board had appointed registrars for three approved districts. (11)

Having previously relied upon the gratuitous services of local clergymen to fulfil the duties of Workhouse chaplain, despite pressure from Mr Earle, it was August 1838, in the aftermath of the Reverend Bedford's petition, before the Aston Board appointed a salaried chaplain. Most probably the delay

was occasioned by the preoccupation with 'economy', although there may, as elsewhere, have been sectarian pressures at work. Somewhat untypically a salary of £30 per annum was awarded, rather than the £20 per annum originally proposed, but more characteristically this salary was not increased until 1871.

(12) The Kings Norton Board had appointed its Workhouse chaplain by December 1837. However, neither Board appointed full-time schoolteachers until early 1838, when both elected a schoolmistress. (13) During the spring of 1838, the Aston Board also appointed a Workhouse porter, but it was not until the summer of 1839 that the Kings Norton Board made a similar appointment. By appointing a man 'acquainted with the business of a Tailor and his Wife ...' as porter and cook, at the respective salaries of £20 and £10 per annum plus board, the Board again demonstrated its determination to keep costs to a minimum. (14)

Upon their assumption of authority, both Boards displayed eagerness to reform the relief system with due regard to the principles of 'less eligibility' and the 'workhouse test', and to achieve reductions in relief expenditure. As part of the rationalization process, the Boards, as elsewhere, reviewed existing workhouse provision and practices, proceeding to alter existing buildings or erect new workhouses as deemed necessary.

The Aston Board decided to retain the Erdington Workhouse, the largest and most adaptable, as the Union Workhouse, and in

keeping with PLC policy other parish workhouses and poorhouses were subsequently disposed of as soon as possible. (15)

Desirous of obtaining the freehold of the Erdington Workhouse, the Guardians pressurized the Parish of Aston to transfer it to Union control. However, this was rejected by the Parish vestry, at the instigation of the Churchwardens and others opposed to the 'Liberal-Radical' majority on the Aston Board. As elsewhere, parish officials were able to obstruct the full extension of union authority. (16)

After the return of the 'Liberal-Radical' dominated Board in 1837, PLC approval for alterations to the Erdington Workhouse was secured, and the Guardians advertised for tenders. Demonstrating its concern to keep costs to an absolute minimum, the Board decided not to erect stables, chose the lowest tender, required the contractor to carry out any work which later appeared necessary (even when this had not originally been specified), and decided that a surveyor would only be engaged as required. Having obtained a loan of £950 towards the cost of the alterations, by the autumn of 1838 they were largely complete. (17) Sutton, Curdworth and Minworth Workhouses were also disposed of by the end of 1838, although Wishaw poorhouse remained unsold until 1846. Sale proceeds were utilized in various ways; the utilization of the Sutton sale money, however, giving rise to some dispute between the Board as a whole and the Sutton Guardians. (18)

Although the Kings Norton Board initially decided to retain the Kings Norton and Harborne Workhouses, it was subsequently decided that the former would be sufficient for the purposes of a Union Workhouse. At the end of March 1837 the Board accepted a tender of £1,249 for alterations to the building, and having secured the necessary loans, the work was largely complete by late 1837/early 1838, when rules and regulations and a dietary table were adopted, and paupers transferred from other workhouses. Unwanted workhouses were subsequently sold. (19)

Strict workhouse regimes were instituted swiftly by both Boards, even before the completion of building alterations. As to the employment of the inmates of the Erdington Workhouse, for instance, in December 1836 the governor was directed to enquire 'if old rope can be procured for the Paupers to pick.', and oakum picking was subsequently instigated at the Workhouse. By the spring of 1838 a corn mill was also in operation there. (20) During January 1837, the Kings Norton Guardians applied to the PLC for 'the rules for the regulation of Workhouses ...', whilst in March 1837, keen to ensure (like Unions in Northamptonshire) that families met their obligations, they directed the Kings Norton Overseers to initiate proceedings against the sons of a Workhouse inmate 'to compel them to support her.' (21)

A major element in the enforcement of the principle of 'less eligibility', was the institution of strictly regulated

workhouse dietaries. Although the PLC did not wish to be accused of encouraging inadequate provision, it was recommended in the First Annual Report that 'The diet of the paupers shall be so regulated as in no case to exceed, in quantity and quality of food, the ordinary diet of the able-bodied labourers living within the same district.' In spite of its monotony, however, workhouse fare was in some respects superior to that available to the average poor person. (22)

The attitude of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards towards their workhouse dietaries shows that humanitarian sentiments were not completely submerged by the demands of 'economy' and 'less eligibility'. In February 1837 the Kings Norton Board adopted the PLC's recommended dietary no.1, but the inmates received an additional 'half a pound of potatoes daily.' (23) Almost certainly influenced by the adverse criticism in the Reverend Bedford's petition, in mid-1838 the Aston Guardians amended their existing dietary. (24) Although noted for its strict adherence to the principle of 'less eligibility' and obsession with 'economy', unlike some boards, the Aston Board provided special Christmas fare from the late 1830s onwards, as did the Kings Norton Board. Royal occasions, such as the coronation of Queen Victoria and the christening of the Prince of Wales, also prompted a display of largesse. (25)

As far as the award of contracts for the supply of goods and services were concerned, from the outset, like their

counterparts elsewhere, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards tended to opt for the lowest tenders. However, this did not mean that they were prepared to accept sub-standard or adulterated supplies; the paramount concern was always to obtain value for money. (26)

In common with other unions in the South and Midlands, soon after unionization the Boards moved to curtail levels of out relief expenditure, eagerly adopting PLC prescriptions to achieve this end. Prior to the relieving officer's assumption of his responsibilities at the beginning of January 1837, the Aston Board instituted a 'general call over' of paupers, and demonstrating its determination to enforce a stricter regime some cases were 'discontinued'. Further evidence of hardening attitudes and a determination to introduce a more punitive relief system, include the decision to offer 'Army and Navy Pensioners' relief in kind only, and the issuing of warrants for the apprehension of 15 fathers of illegitimate children reported to be in arrears with their payments to parishes. (27)

The Kings Norton Board was equally enthusiastic in imposing greater stringency upon the relief system. After the relieving officer had assumed his responsibilities, during February and March 1837 stricter relief regulations were applied in all parishes, allowances to some paupers were discontinued, and others were directed to be admitted to the Workhouse. Other decisions at this time included the initiation of proceedings

against a man for removing a sick pauper into the Parish of Harborne and leaving him 'unprovided for'; the recommendation to the Parish of Beoley to appeal against the removal of a woman from the Parish of Tanworth; and action in relation to bastardy cases. (28)

Whilst guardians' views on the need to protect ratepayers' interests tended to ensure that 'economy' and 'less eligibility' were the guiding principles during the early New Poor Law era, fundamental financial realities were a major constraint upon policy. Under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act the parish was retained as the basic unit for rating purposes, and full union chargeability was not introduced until 1865. Against a background of intra-union friction about the amounts individual parishes were expected to contribute, union finances were commonly shaky. Even if boards were willing, for instance, to provide new workhouses or other facilities, their room for manoeuvre was restricted by lack of financial resources and control. (29)

Upon unionization, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards swiftly issued rate precepts to constituent parishes, and proceeded to make arrangements for rate collection. [SEE TABLE 38] By March 1837 the Kings Norton Board had appointed collectors for three rating districts, and although, prior to the 1837 elections, Tory Guardians obstructed the appointment of collectors by the Aston Board, by May 1837 four had been appointed. (30) Despite

these arrangements and property revaluations, however, throughout the late 1830s and 1840s both Unions experienced recurrent difficulties in ensuring that constituent parishes met their financial obligations promptly. These difficulties were compounded, as elsewhere, by collectors failing to fulfil their duties satisfactorily. (31)

(2b) Attitude and Policy Continuity from the Late 1830s to the 1860s

The policies and practices established by the Aston and Kings Norton Boards during the years immediately following unionization remained as the standard pattern until the 1860s, with only gradual change occurring as the result of pressure from the central Poor Law agency or local necessity. Attitudes towards the provision of relief were only very gradually modified. 'Economy' continued to be a paramount concern, as exemplified by the decision not to replace the Kings Norton Workhouse porter and cook when they resigned in 1843. (32)

During the 1840s the Aston Board approved alterations and additions to their Workhouse, including provision of a new infirmary and vagrant wards, but sometimes only after prompting from the PLC or PLB. It was not until the mid-1860s that the Board became convinced of the necessity for a new Workhouse, although additional premises had been purchased during the 1850s and early 1860s for offices and other purposes. (33)

Throughout the 1840s only minor alterations were carried out at the Kings Norton Workhouse, and a plan to build an extension to include a 'Mill Room' and extra 'Bed Rooms' was abandoned, presumably because of lack of finance. However, the Kings Norton Board borrowed £700 to 'alter and enlarge' the Workhouse in 1850, whilst in 1863 it was authorized to spend £323 on alterations and drainage, and at the end of 1867, £385 on new vagrant wards. (34)

Some of the harshest aspects of the Workhouse regime were relaxed by the Kings Norton Board during the 1840s. Thus, whilst in January 1839 it had been resolved that women with illegitimate children should 'be kept in a separate Ward and employed in picking Oakum.', in November 1840 it was resolved that they should cease to wear clothing which distinguished them from other paupers. (35)

There was a gradual evolution of Workhouse dietary tables, sometimes simply to meet changing circumstances, as in the case of a revised Aston dietary of March 1847, which permitted the substitution of peas or rice for potatoes at dinner two days a week, as a result of the shortage of potatoes. However, humanitarian considerations clearly prompted other changes. During May 1844 the Kings Norton Board applied to the PLC for a dietary alteration permitting the supply of 'roast meat' to Workhouse children three times a week, because of their susceptibility to scrofula. Two years later the Board sought

permission to allow old and infirm paupers 1½oz of tea per week instead of 1oz, and 5oz of butter per week. (36) In 1867 the Kings Norton Workhouse master was directed to give extra tea to women 'washing the workhouse clothing ... when in his judgment the condition of the clothes rendered it necessary.' (37) When provisions were not up to standard the Boards continued to complain to contractors. (38)

Strict outdoor relief policies were maintained by both Boards throughout the period. The 1841 Prohibitory Order applied to the Unions, and levels of expenditure were closely monitored. [SEE TABLES 39 & 40] However, against a background of trade depression and workhouse overcrowding, during the late 1830s and 1840s, regulations were relaxed on occasion. Demonstrating that the Kings Norton Guardians were not unsympathetic to the poor, in January 1839, against the background of economic dislocation, a resolution was passed calling for the PLC to moderate the Order forbidding outdoor relief to able-bodied men and their families in the Parish of Harborne. Whilst, for example, in April 1845 the PLC approved the temporary provision, by the Kings Norton Board, of out relief to two able-bodied men because of their inability to work during inclement weather. (39)

(3) The Birmingham Guardians: Attitudes and Policies During the
Mid-1830s to 1860s Period

During the PLC and PLB era the anomolous constitutional framework within which the Birmingham Parish relief system operated, financial limitations, and the attitudes and beliefs held by members of the elites who dominated Parish affairs, conspired to ensure contradictions in policy direction. Zealous efforts to reform the Parish relief system were counterbalanced by inaction and resistance to change, in a situation where the 1831 local Act remained in force but the PLC and PLB gradually increased their influence from the early 1840s onwards. (40) The effects of the various influences upon the policies and practices of the Birmingham Board during this period are well demonstrated in relation to the long debate over the erection of a new workhouse, and changes in out relief administration.

From the 1780s onwards periodic consideration was given to the provision of a new Birmingham workhouse, but it was not until the late 1840s that a scheme came to fruition. Successive Boards were reluctant to incur the great expense associated with the provision of a new institution. During the 1830s particularly earnest consideration was given to the matter. In February 1839 a special committee was established, but although it condemned the existing Workhouse and Asylum for Infant Poor on the grounds of delapidation, unhealthiness and

general inadequacy, and referred to the eligibility of Parish land at Birmingham Heath, the only result of its endeavours was authorization for minor Workhouse alterations. (41)

Throughout the late 1830s and early 1840s the Board's precarious financial position was not conducive to major expenditure on a new workhouse. Increased pressure on relief resources made it necessary to impose rates more frequently, whilst challenges to the legality of rating valuations compounded rate arrears problems. (42) However, paralleling developments in places such as Merthyr Tydfil (where there was no workhouse until 1853), under the impact of a series of reports from Assistant Commissioners which exposed the failings of the existing Workhouse, and increasing PLC influence, the Guardians were eventually manoeuvred into action. (43)

At the end of 1843, recognising the administrative and cost benefits, the Board resolved that it was desirable to erect a new workhouse which could accommodate adults and children. Thereafter, controversy raged over whether it was preferable to retain the present workhouse site or to build on Parish land at Birmingham Heath, away from the centre of town. Opponents of plans to retain the existing site focused upon its confined nature and insalubrity. Whilst its promoters emphasized its greater convenience for the poor and the Guardians, that extra land was available for expansion, and that the Infirmary (described as a great boon to the poor) would be lost if the

Workhouse was re-located. They also stressed the alleged unhealthiness of the Birmingham Heath site because of its close proximity to the canal and poor drainage, and sought to harness fears about centralization. Both sides were careful to balance evidence of their humanity with concern for the cost to the ratepayers. Ultimately, in September 1846, the ratepayers endorsed Board plans to erect a new workhouse for adults only, on the present Lichfield Street site. (44)

However, in 1847, following an exhaustive enquiry and an unfavourable report from Assistant Commissioner Austin, the Board's plans were rejected by the PLC, on the grounds that the site was unhealthy and too small to permit the erection of adequate facilities. The option of purchasing extra land was also dismissed, the Commissioners arguing that a site sufficiently large for a workhouse adequate for Parish needs could not be obtained in Lichfield Street, except at a cost which would entail 'a totally unnecessary expenditure on the part of the ratepayers.' As far as the ratepayers' meeting which had confirmed the Board's plans was concerned, it was asserted that Mr Austin had discovered that some of those present were not eligible to vote. (45)

Although distasteful to the advocates of the Lichfield Street site, annoyed by PLC intervention, it was necessary for the Board to re-assess its options, and after further consideration of the suitability of the Birmingham Heath site it was

eventually decided, in July 1848, to erect a new workhouse there. Thereafter, having obtained a mandate to proceed from the ratepayers, plans submitted by the architect Samuel Hemming were selected. However, they were not destined to be implemented. As the result of the ratepayer backlash at the 1849 election, the new 'Economist' dominated Board swiftly rejected them as too costly and re-advertised for fresh plans, the cost of which was not to exceed £25,000. By the end of 1849 an alternative plan had been selected and approved by the PLB, and in early 1850 the lowest tender for erecting the Workhouse was accepted. (46)

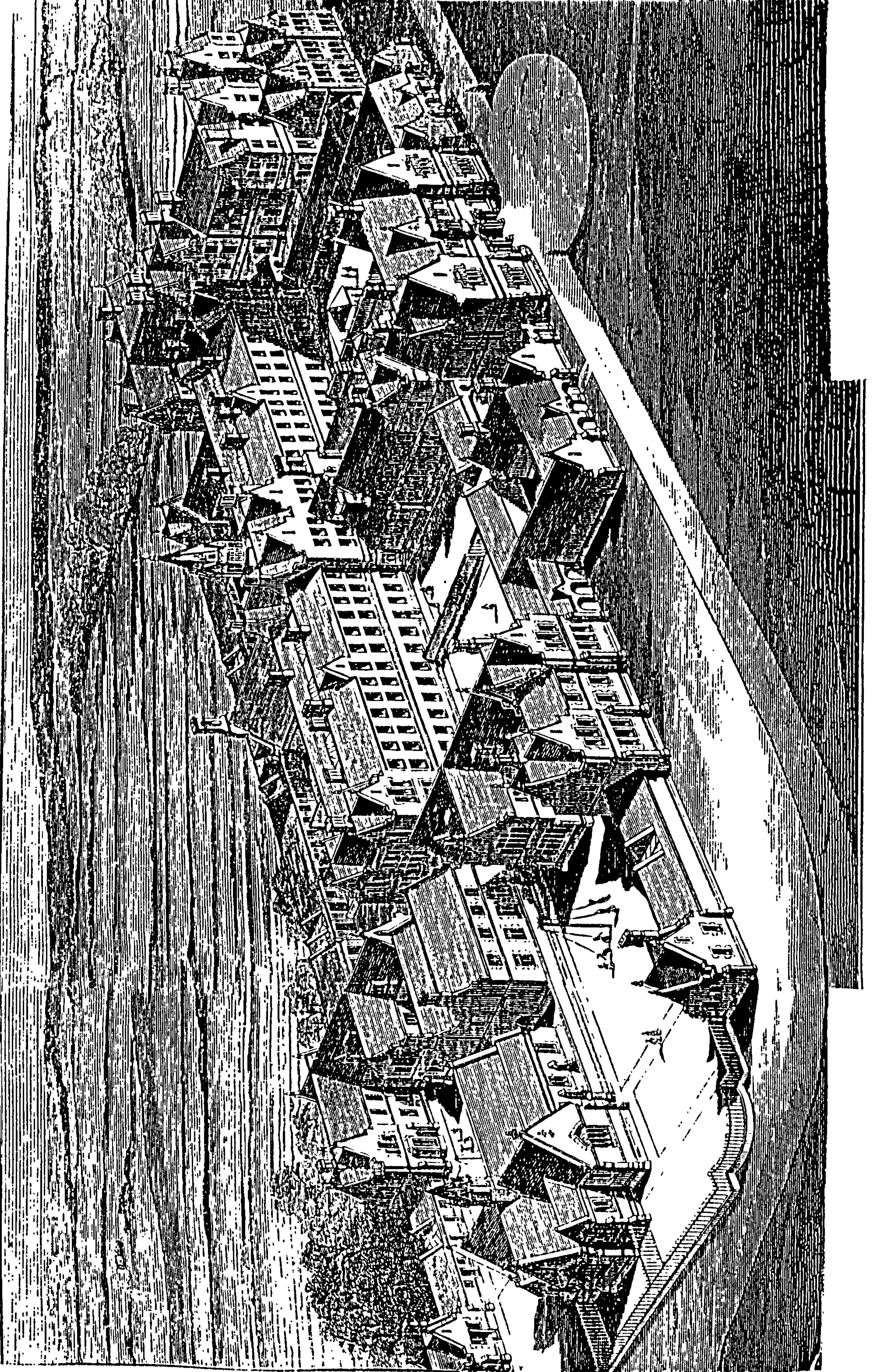
For the 'Economists', as for other Guardians, there was always a conflict between the imperative of expenditure restraint and the desire to improve facilities for the poor. Comments by Frederic Dee, chairman of the Board, on the occasion of the Workhouse cornerstone laying ceremony in September 1850, although perhaps somewhat hyperbolic, do indicate that the leaders of the 1849 Board were not mere slaves to 'economy'. Thus Mr Dee referred to the need to ameliorate and improve 'the condition of the poor', expressing the commonly held view that this could best be achieved through 'education and moral and industrial training' of the children of the poor. At the new Workhouse it was intended that the children 'would be fitted for any duty in life to which ... they might be called ...'. As to the old and infirm, Mr Dee remarked that 'aged couples' forced to spend their last days at

the Workhouse 'would find separate accommodation provided ...'.

(47) The pride expressed in the facilities at the new Workhouse at the time of its opening in 1852, also reflects the contradictions between financial and other considerations. (48)
[SEE FIGURE 4]

During the 1850s Board finances remained shaky, in spite of the efforts of the 'Economists' to reduce expenditure and increase efficiency, and successive Boards, subject to internal discord over finances, also came under attack from ratepayers groups and the local press for their handling of Parish affairs. (49) Against such a background, Guardians and ratepayers remained divided over the expense entailed in the erection of the new Workhouse. Proceeds from the sale of the old Workhouse, the Asylum and other property were insufficient to meet the escalating cost of its completion, and that of the new board-room and offices in the town centre, thus necessitating extensive borrowing during the early 1850s. Concern over this expense undoubtedly contributed to the victory of Joseph Allday and his hard-line 'Economist' allies at the 1855 Board elections. (50)

With the gradual slackening of 'Economist' control, during the late 1850s and 1860s a number of major Workhouse alterations were effected. These included the enlargement of the infectious wards and improvements to the accommodation for male infirm paupers. (51) During the 1860s, reflecting



BIRMINGHAM NEW WORKHOUSE.—MR. J. J. BATEMAN, ARCHITECT.

4. The 'New' Birmingham Workhouse, Western Road (Birmingham Heath). (BRL: Local Studies & History Department.)

national trends, the provision of detached facilities for children increasingly became a priority, amid concern expressed by medical officers about child health and overcrowding, and by Guardians about the adverse moral effects of the Workhouse environment. Thus separate facilities for infants, and a new boys school, were provided during the late 1860s. (52)

Throughout the PLC and PLB era, the large-scale provision of outdoor relief to the 'able-bodied' and 'non-able-bodied' alike, remained a feature of the Parish relief system. In common with their counterparts in other urban industrial areas, the Guardians recognised that it was impracticable (even if they wished to do so) to enforce the 'workhouse test' to the extent advocated by the PLC, in view of fluctuating trade conditions and the consequent socio-economic distress. (53) Successive Boards endeavoured to balance humanitarian considerations with financial realities, but this proved particularly difficult at times, especially during the late 1830s and 1840s. Genuine concern for the plight of unemployed workers, mingled with fears about the town's economic prosperity, had to be squared with the fact that the Parish's financial resources were severely stretched.

As in other urban industrial areas, the poor trade conditions of the late 1830s and 1840s had a major impact in Birmingham, although the town was more fortunate than many industrial centres in that its economy was widely based. The socio-

'economic distress associated with the prolonged trade slump placed considerable strain on the relief system, and from 1846 onwards this was compounded by the alterations to the settlement laws and the Irish influxes. (54)

Against the background of the hard economic climate of the late 1830s, by 1840 the electorate favoured the imposition of more stringent relief regulations and the 'economy' imperative was increasingly to the fore. The Tory victory at the 1840 Guardians election was in part a reaction to the perceived failure of the old 'Liberal-Radical' dominated Board to introduce greater stringency in the administration of relief. (55)

During the term of office of the 1837 Board, particular stress was placed upon meeting the relief needs of unemployed workers and their families. Thus in June 1837, the Board asserted its determination to relieve 'parishioners who are deprived of employment by the present commercial distress, and are consequently subjected to great and unmerited sufferings ...'. (56) Concern for the 'deserving' poor also induced the Guardians, in early 1838, to assist a town Relief Fund established by public subscription, with the distribution of food. As in Coventry and Carlisle, such funds could to some extent reduce the pressure on the Poor Law at times of acute economic distress. (57)

In February 1838, the Guardian Henry Knight produced a report which advocated greater stringency in the administration of outdoor relief, but also stressed the need to ensure that temporarily unemployed industrial workers received adequate relief. As far as the classification of relief applicants was concerned, he was particularly unhappy with the division of the 'casual poor' into two groups: permanent cases with 'tickets', and temporary cases in receipt of out relief owing to the 'bad state of trade, or other casualty ...', which were 'without tickets'. He argued that the ticketed class received a disproportionate amount of relief, as this class included many single women and widows but far fewer families than the non-ticketed class, amongst which large families preponderated. [SEE TABLE 41] To give greater assistance to 'the victims of bad trade ...', Knight proposed new casual poor classifications. Additionally, he advocated improved visiting of the out poor and emphasized that 'satisfactory investigation, and systematic report, should precede relief - certainly money relief ...'. Overall, however, Knight was convinced that Birmingham's population, which was 'by no means debased by a spirit of pauperism...', thoroughly deserved assistance when required. (58)

Despite concern about the increasing numbers of relief applicants and relief expenditure, it was not until after the election of the Tory dominated Board in 1840, that wholesale alterations in relief practices were effected. From Lady day

1841, the Parish was divided into four relief districts, with relief stations, and a relieving officer responsible for each. A Relief Committee, with 24 members, was established to examine the relieving officers' reports and accounts, and approve relief payments to applicants. (59) Commending the new relief scheme to the Board, Henry Knight remarked that 'while it would be the means of affording prompt relief to the destitute and deserving poor, [it] would at the same time most effectually protect the rate-payers from imposition.' (60) Subsequent Relief Committee reports during 1841, which highlighted reduced expenditure levels in spite of the large numbers in receipt of relief, also claimed that the 'deserving' poor were properly assisted, whilst the 'undeserving' were deterred from making relief applications, thereby benefiting the ratepayers. (61) [SEE TABLE 5]

Although during the mid-1840s the Relief Committee continued to express satisfaction with the administration of outdoor relief, the numbers of recipients and expenditure levels continued to fluctuate, in a climate of continued socio-economic distress. By 1847 the pressure on the relief system had increased considerably, the numbers of relief applicants and expenditure rising significantly under the impact of a renewal in the severity of the trade depression, the mass Irish migrations to Britain, and changes in the settlement and removal laws. (62) [SEE TABLE 5]

The 1846 Poor Removal Act, which conferred irremovable status after five years residence in a parish, resulted in urban Poor Law authorities such as Birmingham and Bradford becoming, actually or potentially, responsible for the relief of large numbers of previously removable non-settled poor. Although Acts of 1847 and 1848 placed the cost of relieving the irremovable poor on the common fund of unions, this did not assist a single parish authority such as Birmingham. (63) [SEE TABLE 42] Prior to 1846, the Birmingham Board (like its counterparts elsewhere) had expended much time, energy and money upon settlement and removal matters. (64) However, as the Guardians averred, the change in the law had not simplified things; it had merely 'created additional annoyance to the Poor, and more costly consequences to the Rate Payers ...'. In early 1847 therefore, the Board decided to petition Parliament expressing their concern. (65) Compounding the problems caused by the changes in the settlement laws, the Irish influx to Britain, although it had less of an impact in Birmingham than in Liverpool and some other towns, placed an additional strain on the Parish's resources. Out relief was dispensed to large numbers of Irish, and many were housed in a Workhouse annex during 1847. (66)

During the early 1850s, against a more stable economic background and improved employment conditions in Birmingham, numbers in receipt of out relief and amounts dispensed tended to stabilise. However, as in early 1855, a spell of severe

winter weather and the attendant unemployment amongst the labouring poor, could greatly increase the pressure on the relief system. (67) After 1855 the numbers relieved and expenditure levels increased, the Clerk to the Guardians claiming in 1860 that much of this increase was accounted for by the irremovable poor. [SEE TABLE 5] Whilst he expressed the view that in towns such as Birmingham the 1846 Act had 'been prejudicial to the interests of the ratepayers, by preventing the removal of non-settled poor, and thereby increasing the amount expended both in in-door and out-door relief.', echoing Mr James' words in 1832, he nonetheless also commented that workers who had contributed their skills and labour to the benefit of a community for a number of years, rightly deserved relief from it if they became 'worn out, or through misfortune or sickness, chargeable.' (68)

As reference to the new workhouse debate and outdoor relief policies reveals, despite the continued preoccupation of the Guardians and ratepayers groups with controlling expenditure, humanitarian considerations were never completely overshadowed, even during the period of 'Economist' dominance. Humanitarian considerations were of course firmly linked to reformative and curative objectives. This is most clearly demonstrated in relation to the long-standing tradition of providing specialist facilities and care for children and the sick.

Throughout the PLC and PLB era the Birmingham Board ensured that education and industrial training remained an important component of the regime at the Asylum for Infant Poor, and subsequently the Children's Department and Schools at the new Workhouse. The Guardians remained consistent in the belief that it was 'their duty to the Rate payers, to see that the children are properly educated to fit them to become useful members of society, instead of perpetual paupers ...'. (69) By later standards perhaps provision was far from ideal, but it was comparable with the best on offer elsewhere; when improvements were called for these were considered thoroughly, and advantage was taken of incentives such as the grants towards teachers' salaries, aimed at improving the quality of teaching, from the late 1840s onwards. (70)

Sick paupers, meanwhile, had access to medical care in the Infirmary at the old and new Workhouses, which, if not up to later standards certainly compared favourably with provision in other places; and to outdoor medical relief. (71) In addition, the Guardians subscribed to local hospitals. They were, for instance, subscribing to four major voluntary hospitals in the town in 1863. (72)

In relation to the relief of able-bodied paupers, although there was the inevitable emphasis upon deterrence, this did not mean that the Guardians were prepared to countenance unnecessarily harsh treatment. Thus, for example, in January

1845, concern was expressed about allegations that the superintendent of the corn mills had 'caused them to be screwed up so tight that they could scarcely be worked ...'. Whilst in October 1846, during discussions about the relative merits of 'circular-mills' and 'crank-mills' for grinding corn, Guardians emphasized that it was vital to properly distinguish between those 'physically able' to work on the latter and those who were not. One Guardian objected to 'asthmatical persons' doing such work at all. (73)

Alterations to the dietary tables in force at Parish institutions and the emphasis placed upon maintaining the quality of goods supplied, as in the case of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, also demonstrate the influence of humanitarian as well as purely practical considerations. Thus in late 1845 (in view of the shortage of potatoes), carrots, turnips and rice were substituted at some meals, whilst in May 1847 a special dietary table described as 'liberal' was adopted for 'Irish Casual Poor' cases at the Workhouse annex. Special fare was provided at Christmas-time, and on royal occasions such as the visit of Queen Victoria to Birmingham in June 1858. (74)

The religious toleration displayed by the Birmingham Board from at least the mid-1830s, in contrast to some other authorities, is another manifestation of the influence of humanitarian considerations. By the mid-1840s, for instance,

the Board permitted Catholic priests to have access to particular children in their care. Undoubtedly the diverse religious backgrounds of the Guardians had a beneficial effect upon policy in this respect. (75)

(4) Changing Attitudes and Policy Re-alignment: The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards and Poor Law Administration from the Late 1860s to 1912

(4a) Changing Attitudes and Policies

From the late 1860s onwards, the policies espoused by the central Poor Law authority and adopted by boards of guardians gradually changed, as attitudes towards the relief of the poor continued to evolve. During the latter part of the 19th century an increasing emphasis was placed upon the provision of specialized institutional treatment for particular categories of 'deserving' paupers, especially in more populous unions. Particular interest was taken in improved care of the sick, elderly and infirm, children, and groups such as the 'feeble-minded' and epileptics. At the same time, traditionally held views about the need to ensure that the 'undeserving' poor did not take advantage of the relief system, acquired renewed vitality with the campaign to tighten up outdoor relief practices from the early 1870s onwards, and the recurrent concern expressed about the vagrancy problem.

This period saw the Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards at the forefront of new initiatives, reflecting the changing attitudes of their memberships. Both were, for instance, amongst the first Boards to establish Cottage Homes, and both possessed large modern infirmaries distinct from the workhouse by the turn of the century. Although the Aston Board lagged behind somewhat, after 1894 it also became more progressive. During the first decade of the 20th century the three authorities co-operated in the establishment of a 'Colony' for epileptics and the 'feeble-minded'. Each of the Boards regularly sent deputations to national and regional Poor Law conferences from the 1870s onwards, thereby ensuring access to the latest ideas. [SEE TABLE 43] By the early 1900s, members of all three Boards were playing a leading role at the West Midland District Conferences; presiding over the proceedings, contributing papers and taking an active part in discussions. (76)

Whilst the Boards adopted new ideas to improve conditions for particular categories of paupers, the fundamental objective of balancing the requirements of the 'deserving' poor with the deterrence and reformation of the 'undeserving', in the interests of the ratepayers, remained at the heart of Board philosophies. As the chairman of the Birmingham Board, Stephen Gateley, remarked in 1898, guardians should always aim to 'do a real kindness to the poor by preventing them and their children becoming pauperised, while at the same time protecting the interests of the ratepayers.' (77) In 1910, with amalgamation

looming, and in the wake of the publication of the Majority and Minority Reports of the 1905-09 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, the chairmen of all three Boards were anxious to emphasize their achievements, especially with regard to provision for the 'deserving'. Thus the Kings Norton Board chairman, Frederick Barlow, commented that his Board had 'long since' adopted many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, namely

cottage homes and boarding-out of children, receiving wards to avoid children being sent direct to the "house", an infirmary with up-to-date appliances for the sick and infirm, and, lastly, the co-operation with Birmingham and Aston in acquiring the Monyhull Colony for epileptics and feeble-minded

However, it was made clear that the protection of ratepayers interests still remained a priority. (78)

(4b) Expenditure on Workhouses and Specialist Institutions from the Late 1860s to 1912

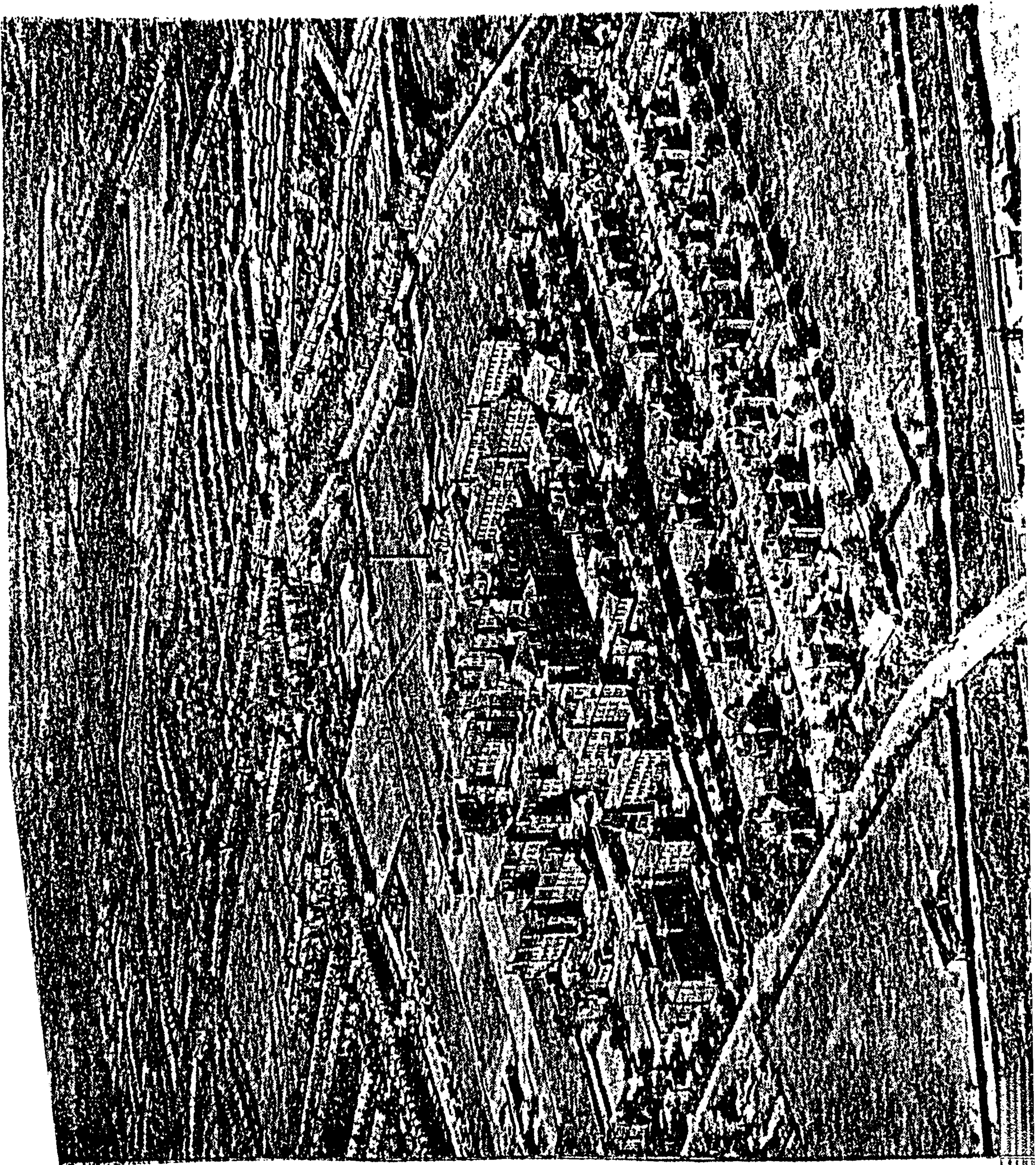
The Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards all demonstrated a greater readiness to embark upon major capital projects from the late 1860s onwards; their willingness to expend large sums on institutional provision influenced, as elsewhere, by a number of factors. Union chargeability, rating changes and the easing of regulations governing loans, enabled unions to raise the finance more easily. At the same time public concern about Poor Law institutions and the care and

treatment of particular categories of paupers, together with governmental pressure for improved standards of provision, encouraged the adoption of more progressive policies. In the case of Birmingham, and to some extent the two Unions, the election of Guardians imbued with the ideas of the 'Civic Gospel' also favoured expenditure on prestigious new institutions. Additionally the deterrent, curative and reformatory possibilities of new institutions could promise future savings for the ratepayers if, in the long-term, numbers receiving relief were reduced. (79)

During the latter part of the 1860s and early 1870s, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, recognising the inadequacy of their existing workhouses, concentrated upon the erection of replacements. The Aston Board decided during the autumn of 1864 that rather than incur expenses estimated at 'about £8310' for alterations to the old workhouse, it was preferable, as Inspector Weale advised, to erect a totally new workhouse. Thereafter, land was purchased in Erdington, and during the 1865-73 period a new workhouse was built at an estimated cost of £43,000. (80) Having also decided to erect a new larger workhouse, at the beginning of 1869 the Kings Norton Board were authorized to borrow £21,700 to purchase land at Selly Oak and build a new institution. Further amounts were borrowed in connection with the completion of the project during the early 1870s, a total of £27,750 having been spent by mid-1872. (81)

After the completion of their new workhouses, against a background of overcrowding and population increase, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards both continued to improve and expand facilities during the ensuing decades. (82) [SEE FIGURES 5 & 6] Having already erected a new workhouse during the 1850s, the Birmingham Board also spent large sums on alterations and improvements to the institution throughout the 1860s to early 1900s period. (83) However, reflecting changing national policies, from the 1870s onwards attention was increasingly focused upon the provision of completely separate facilities for children and the sick.

In 1877 the Birmingham Board decided, in common with other boards during the same period, to establish Cottage Homes to accommodate children well away from the contaminating effects of the Workhouse. Having obtained LGB approval, land was purchased in a rural setting at Marston Green, well outside the boundaries of Birmingham, and building commenced. First opened in 1880, it was estimated that £41,856 had been spent on the Cottage Homes by Lady day 1882. (84) [SEE FIGURE 8] As to the strategy behind the decision to establish Cottage Homes, and the regime in operation, the Guardian Mr F.C. Clayton, in a paper to the 1883 West Midland Poor Law Conference, emphasized that the overriding aim of the Homes was 'to make the domestic life as much like ordinary Cottage Life as possible.' Every effort was made to ensure the appointment of suitable people as 'Foster Parents', and with a strong emphasis placed upon

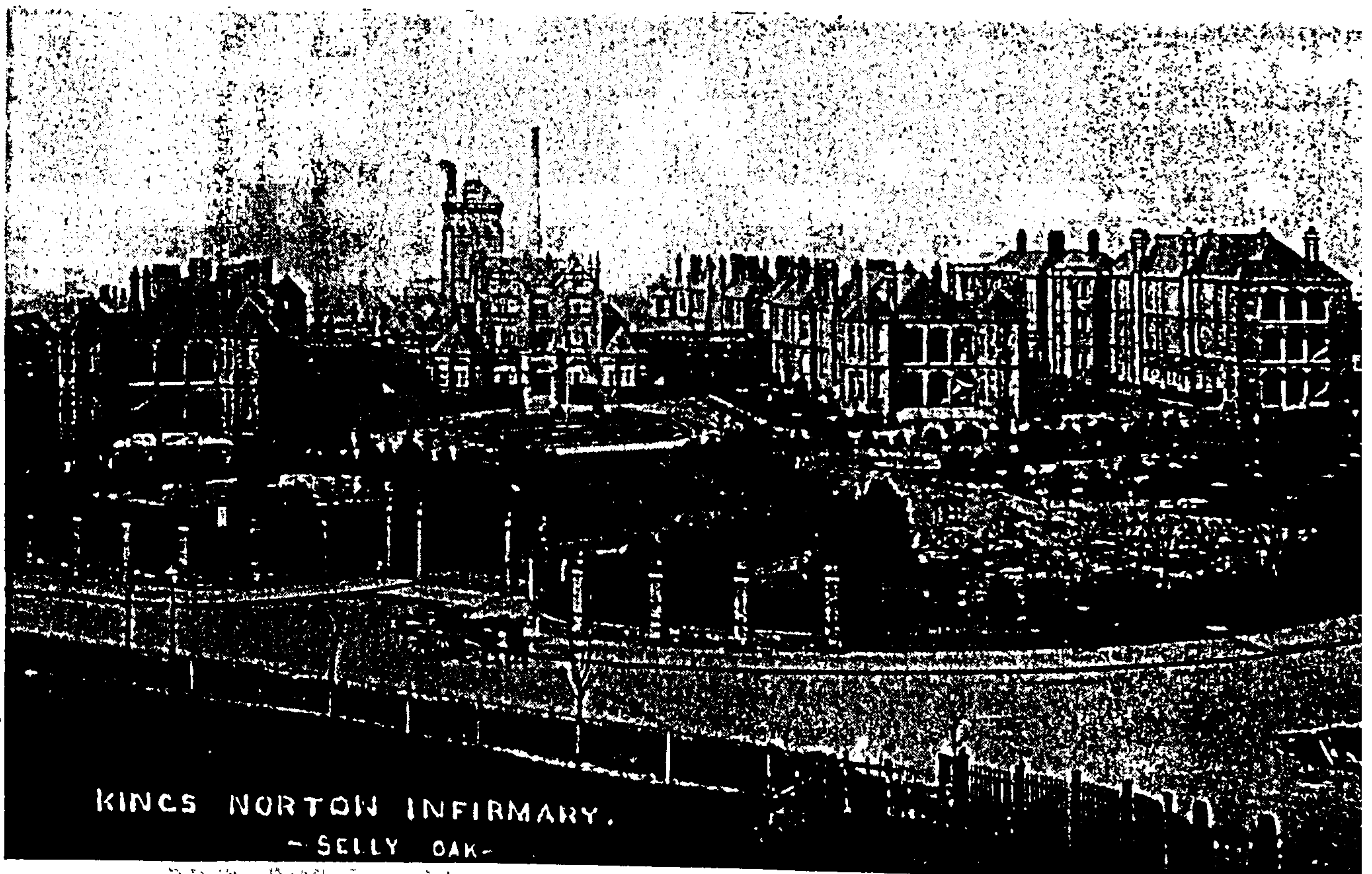


5. Highcroft Hospital (formerly Aston Union Workhouse)
and the Erdington Cottage Homes, in 1950.

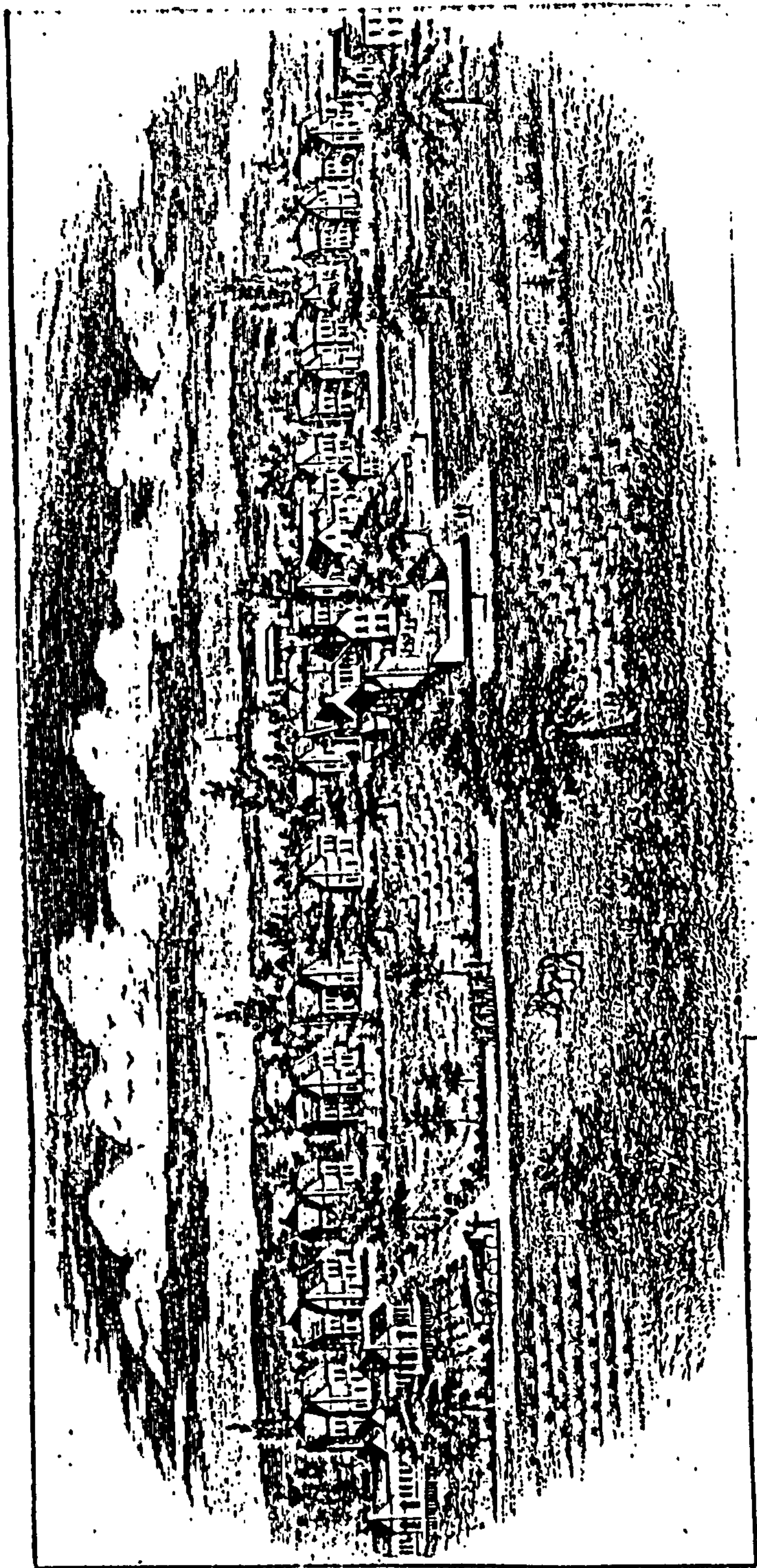
(BRL: Local Studies & History Department.)



6. Kings Norton
Union Workhouse,
Selly Oak, c.1910.
(G.Dowling, B.Giles
& C.Hayfield,
Selly Oak Past
and Present: A
Photographic
Survey of a
Birmingham Suburb,
1987, p.19.)



7. Kings Norton Union Infirmary, Selly Oak, c.1910.
(G.Dowling, B.Giles & C.Hayfield, Selly Oak Past and
Present: A Photographic Survey of a Birmingham Suburb,
1987, p.19.)



COTTAGE HOMES, MARSTON GREEN.

8. Cottage Homes, Marston Green.

(BRL: Local Studies & History Department.)

industrial training, the 'Fathers' were required to possess particular skills. A flexible dietary was in operation, and there was much less regimentation than at the Workhouse. (85)

Mr Clayton asserted that the Homes provided an environment which was beneficial to the children in terms of their physical, mental and moral development, and (with reference to comments by LGB Inspectors) avowed that such Homes were superior to other forms of child care provision. The Homes offered pure air, 'Good and Sufficient Food', 'Regular Medical Supervision', 'Bathing, Drilling, and Gymnastic Exercises', and suitable outdoor work on the land for all fit children. Boys and girls received 'regular schooling', they were involved with the house work, and boys were taught a trade. As to girls sent out from the Homes into domestic service, Mr Clayton claimed that demand was 'far in excess of the supply.' Strong emphasis was placed upon the useful lives led by children when they were 'sent out into the world ...' from the Homes. One major problem at the Homes, however, was that a high proportion of children were only transient residents. (86)

Improvements to the Cottage Homes continued to be made into the early 1900s, and the regulations for their management were modified when deemed appropriate. (87) The regime continued to meet with general approval from the LGB and the local middle classes. A letter in the 'Gazette' in 1898, for example, referred to the 'vast amount of good done in the "homes" for

the friendless and helpless children of Birmingham and its vicinity ...'. (88)

Undoubtedly influenced by the example of the Marston Green Homes, and desirous of separating the children from the contamination of the Workhouse environment, at the beginning of 1884 the Kings Norton Board decided to erect its own Cottage Homes at Shenley Fields, in the Parish of Northfield. Opened in the summer of 1887, the Homes continued to be expanded and improved into the early 1900s, and aspects of the regime modified from time to time. (89)

With its continued predilection for 'economy', however, the Aston Board lagged behind in its provision for child paupers. It was not until 1893 that the Aston Guardians submitted proposals to the LGB for the erection of Cottage Homes on a site adjoining the Workhouse. Although the LGB advised the Board to find another site 'in the open country altogether dissociated from the Workhouse ...', and argued that in view of the Union's size and rate of population growth, the site was not large enough for sufficient provision to be made for future extension, it agreed not to veto the Board's plans. (90)

Dogged by controversy from the beginning, though the land had been purchased by 1895, the building plans were not finally approved until 1897 and the Homes were not formally opened until 1900. (91) Once opened, however, leading Guardians were

quick to express pride and satisfaction in the Homes. (92) [SEE FIGURE 5]

Cottage Homes were the flagships of the child care strategies adopted by all three Boards by 1900, but, reflecting the practices of other boards, other initiatives to meet the special needs of child paupers were also put into effect. From the 1870s onwards all three authorities boarded-out some children. (93) During the early 1900s, the Birmingham and Aston Boards also established separate institutions to cater for older children and the 'ins and outs'. (94) Additionally, the Boards became involved with child emigration, and, extending earlier practice, subscribed and sent some children to specialized institutions not under their direct control, for example the 'Exmouth' training ship. (95)

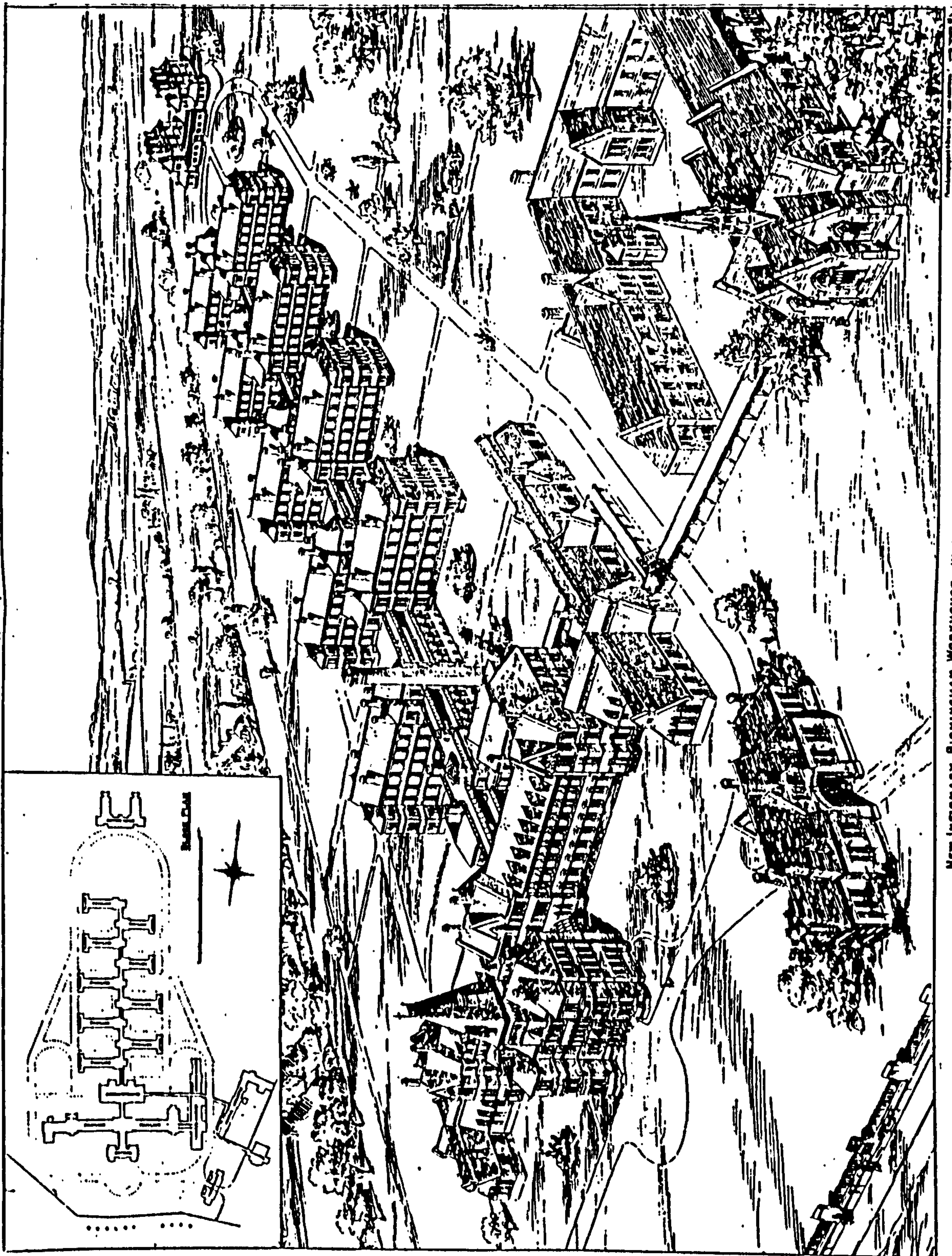
Following the example of the metropolitan Poor Law authorities (spurred into action by the 1867 Metropolitan Poor Act), many urban Poor Law authorities in the provinces, with the encouragement of the LGB, established separate infirmaries and generally improved standards of care for the sick during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries. (96) The Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards were no exception, both expending considerable sums on the erection and fitting out of large independent infirmaries. Such provision was also considered by the Aston Board during 1907/08, but plans were

abandoned in view of impending amalgamation with the Parish of Birmingham and the Kings Norton Union. (97)

Long committed to the provision of comparatively extensive medical care for the poor, from a variety of altruistic and more practical motives (as comments made in a paper presented at the 1883 West Midland District Conference by the Guardian Dr.Hickinbotham reveal), the Birmingham Guardians had recognised by the mid-1880s that the existing infirmary accommodation at the Workhouse was inadequate and overcrowded, and, with LGB encouragement, decided to build a new infirmary on an adjoining site. (98) Built and furnished at a cost of around £89,000, the new Infirmary was formally opened on January 9th 1889. One of the largest hospitals in the country, with accommodation for around 1,700 patients, further expenditure on alterations and additions was incurred throughout the pre-1912 period, and it became a model for other authorities to emulate. Although certainly the product of humanitarian concerns, the Infirmary, financed by loans from the Corporation of Birmingham, was also undoubtedly another symbol of civic pride. (99) [SEE FIGURE 9]

The Kings Norton Board had also perceived the need to erect a separate infirmary by the mid-1890s, in view of the 'extreme pressure' on space at the Selly Oak Workhouse. Land adjoining the Workhouse was acquired, and during the 1895-1900 period the Guardians were authorized to spend over £53,000 on the new

THE BUILDING NEWS, FEB. 3, 1888.



NEW INFIRMARY BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE, W H WARD, ARCHT.

9. New Infirmary, Birmingham Workhouse, 1888.

(BRL: Local Studies & History Department.)

institution. (100) As the project progressed costs spiralled, to the intense annoyance of some Guardians and ratepayers, but when it opened in February 1900 it was one of the most well equipped Poor Law infirmaries in the country, and additions continued to be made thereafter. (101) [SEE FIGURE 7]

During the first decade of the 20th century, the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards embarked upon a major joint venture. Against a background of national concern about the 'mentally defective', in 1904 the three Boards decided to co-operate in the provision of a special institution to cater for chargeable epileptics and 'feebleminded persons', such action having been advocated as early as 1898 by the chairman of the Birmingham Board, Stephen Gateley. (102) Following lengthy consultations with the LGB, in March 1905, a Joint Committee of the Boards was established to proceed with the project. (103)

In April 1905 the initiative received critical acclaim in the 'Poor Law Officers' Journal'. It was stated that the joint body was the 'first combination in the country to deal with feeble-minded persons as well as sane epileptics.' Stress was placed upon the Guardians' desire to move away from the use of terms such as 'workhouse' and 'pauper' in relation to the new institution. To further emphasize the enlightened nature of the scheme, a passage from a report by the Joint Committee Clerk, Mr R.J.Curtis, was also quoted. The passage stressed the desirability of separating different types of cases, and,

especially as far as the young were concerned, providing 'such instruction and attention as may best be calculated to improve, if improvement is possible, and, if not, to render ... [patients] lives as comfortable and as useful as possible.' However, the 'Journal' also commented more soberly that the Committee believed that the project would in addition to proving 'of inestimable value to the patients ...' not impose 'an undue burden upon the ratepayers.' (104)

A paper presented at the 1905 West Midland Poor Law Conference by the Birmingham Guardian Henry J. Manton, reveals something of the more authoritarian overtones of the project. Describing the 'mentally and physically defective' as a 'real danger to society', Mr Manton advocated legislation to strengthen the powers of detention of the 'feeble-minded' in special institutions, and the Conference concurred. However, during the discussion which followed the paper, the former Kings Norton chairman, the Reverend Astbury, did emphasize the more humanitarian intentions of the Birmingham scheme. (105)

Having purchased the Monyhull estate, in the Parish of Kings Norton, to establish a 'colony' for epileptics and the 'feeble-minded', and accepted a tender of £20,775 for the erection of buildings, during October 1906 the LGB authorized the Joint Committee to proceed with the project at a cost not exceeding £30,000. (106) By 1911 the 'colony' was fully operational, and

the regime reported to be having a beneficial influence upon the 'inhabitants'. (107)

(4c) Attitudes Towards Outdoor Relief, the Relief of the Able-bodied and Vagrants

Although from the 1870s onwards the three Boards devoted considerable attention to the improvement of institutional facilities for children, the sick, and other categories of indoor poor, much attention was also directed towards the relief of able-bodied adult paupers and vagrants. Reflecting nationwide concerns, there was continual discussion about the need to differentiate between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' cases, with periodic efforts made to 'tighten up' relief practices, particularly in relation to the relief of able-bodied male paupers and vagrants.

During the early 1880s, following the Poplar model, the Birmingham Board established a separate Test-house to deal more effectively with the large numbers of able-bodied paupers claiming relief. Initially intended to accommodate able-bodied male paupers only, it was subsequently altered and enlarged to provide accommodation for able-bodied female paupers as well. (108)

Members of the three Boards shared the widespread anxiety about rising levels of vagrancy during this period. Touching

upon the subject in 1873, William Fowler, chairman of the Aston Board, emphasized both the humanitarian and disciplinary aspects of his Board's vagrancy policies. (109) From 1883 onwards the Kings Norton Board participated in the Worcestershire Vagrancy Scheme. (110) In 1898 the chairman of the Birmingham Board, Stephen Gateley, whilst expressing support for 'ticket' schemes for 'bona-fide workmen, travelling in search of work ...', also remarked that 'Lazy loafers and persons of bad or indifferent character should be rigorously dealt with.' (111) During a discussion on a paper about vagrancy at the 1905 West Midland Poor Law Conference, William Brown, chairman of the Aston Board, expressed his opinion that whilst the 'habitual tramp was beyond reclamation ...', their children should be placed in 'special homes or colonies ...' in an effort to eradicate the vagrancy problem. (112)

Influenced by current debate, the three Boards gave serious consideration to the establishment of a 'farm colony' for able-bodied paupers during 1905, and a joint deputation even visited the Poplar Farm Colony. However, further consideration of the matter was subsequently postponed. Comments by members of the Birmingham Board at this time, demonstrate that attitudes towards the able-bodied poor still followed well trodden paths. (113)

From the 1870s onwards, Board members and election candidates placed great emphasis upon the need to distinguish between

'deserving' and 'undeserving' cases, when dispensing outdoor relief. This was fully in keeping with the nationwide preoccupation, inspired and sustained by the efforts of the Charity Organization Society, and assumed as LGB policy, with 'tightening up' relief regulations. The improvement of institutional facilities for particular categories of paupers went hand in hand with efforts to ensure that the 'undeserving' did not abuse the relief system.

Throughout the 1870s to 1912 period, the three Boards recurrently reviewed their outdoor relief administration practices. Population growth, most especially within the two Unions, necessitated the creation of more relief districts and the appointment of extra relieving officers to cope with increased demand. However, the objective of attaining greater efficiency and effectiveness in discriminating between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' cases, with due regard to ratepayer interests and public opinion, acted as the principal spur to action. (114)

The combination of influences at work upon Guardians are reflected in their public utterances. In 1873, for instance, William Fowler, chairman of the Aston Board, evinced strong humanitarian sentiments with regard to the relief of the 'deserving' poor, but he also stressed the need to deter the 'undeserving'. He dismissed the argument that out relief should be abolished altogether, believing this to be

impracticable, and proudly referred to the Aston Board's record in keeping 'the scale of expenditure in poor relief generally, and in out-door relief particularly ...' at comparatively low levels. [SEE TABLES 5, 39 & 40] In the dispensation of relief, Mr Fowler placed great stress upon the need to properly distinguish between 'unworthy' or 'idle' applicants who would willingly accept any form of relief, and those who delayed seeking Parish assistance 'till the period of urgent necessity ...' arrived, and who, if denied outdoor relief but offered the 'house test', would 'sooner die than become inmates of a Workhouse.' To deny out relief to the able-bodied 'for want of work, or to supplement insufficient wages.' was desirable, as this served to 'prevent idleness and demoralisation from spreading like a pestilence through the land.' However, it was 'simply a crime for a Board of Guardians, where relief is obviously needed, to offer the house, not really as a test of destitution, but in the hope of staving off the application ...'. The correct balance between meeting the needs of the 'deserving' poor and protecting ratepayers' interests had to be maintained. (115)

At the first meeting of the 1876 Kings Norton Board, whilst members expressed themselves to be broadly in favour of greater restriction of outdoor relief, nonetheless it was emphasized that the 'deserving' should not be harshly treated. Whilst the chairman, John Rutter, commented that 'Some people got into such a chronic state of applying for assistance that they

thought they were entitled to it, and did not make an effort towards obtaining their own subsistence.', vice-chairman David Archer feared that if outdoor relief was 'discontinued [completely], it would break up many small homes where the head of the family was ill or temporarily out of employment.' The Guardians should not pursue policies calculated to 'pauperise ... children, ... and break up family and social ties.' (116)

Prior to the 1894 Board elections, candidates were particularly at pains to emphasize the desirability of ensuring that the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' received differential treatment, especially when it came to decisions about outdoor relief. An integral part of the debate, as ever, was the need to balance the interests of the ratepayers with those of the poor. Thus, John Bladon asserted that during 18 years on the Birmingham Board whilst he had always sought to be 'considerate to the poor', he had also 'tried to be faithful and honest to the ratepayers.', and did not approve of the giving of out relief to the 'drunken or idle man who would leave his children in the streets to starve ...'. In similar vein, Councillor Parkes, elected as a Birmingham Guardian in 1894, stated that the Guardians should not afford 'indiscriminate' out relief and thereby 'pauperise ... the community and considerably increase the rates ...', but that at the same time they should 'guard against harshness ...'. (117)

Another Birmingham Guardian, Mr E.A. Page, stated that he was 'prepared to support a wise extension of out-relief ...' in the belief that 'it would be more economical in the long run than ... breaking up the homes of the deserving poor and driving them into the "house" ...'. Other Guardians, reflecting the popular mood of the time, stressed the desirability of special consideration for particular categories of 'deserving' paupers, such as widows with families and the elderly, when dispensing outdoor relief or accommodating them in the Workhouse. The Birmingham Guardian W.B. Smith contended that it was cheaper to provide outdoor relief than indoor relief, but that the Guardians were careful to ensure that the 'undeserving' were dealt with severely. (118)

During a Bordesley ward meeting, Mr C.C. Cooke criticised the retiring Aston Board for its failure to distinguish between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' at the Workhouse, and advocated 'a more generous system of relief.' (119) That members of the retiring Board did not see things from the same perspective, is evident from their response to comments by the vice-chairman, Edward Bosworth, at their final meeting. Mr Bosworth was applauded when he expressed the hope that 'the new Board would not be too much inclined to outdoor relief.' (120)

Speaking at the 1907 West Midland District Conference, Henry J. Manton emphasized the need to apply Christian ideals to the administration of the Poor Law. With regard to the elderly, he

advised guardians to adopt 'a most sympathetic attitude' to old age pensions, and stressed that the 'respectable' who were unable to remain in the community should be maintained in 'fitting conditions' at workhouses, fully distinguished from the 'vicious'. (121) At the first meeting of the newly elected 1910 Kings Norton Board, the chairman, Frederick Barlow, remarking upon the 40% increase in the amount of outdoor relief dispensed by the Board over the past five years, returned to the familiar theme of ensuring that the interests of ratepayers were properly balanced with those of paupers. (122)

(5) Conclusion

This chapter has investigated how the attitudes and policies of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians evolved from the mid-1830s to 1912. As well as highlighting changes of direction and emphasis, and the factors encouraging this process, the chapter has, however, also indicated that there was a considerable degree of continuity. With regard to the balance between the fundamental humanitarian, cost control, disciplinary and reformatory motives which informed Guardians' attitudes and lay behind the policies they adopted, although in many ways there was greater enlightenment at the close of the period, the evidence shows that old deterrent ideas had not been entirely banished by the increasing progressivism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (123) Perhaps this is not surprising when many of the themes and attitudes associated

with Poor Law thinking still have an impact upon social policy today.

With respect to parallels between the experience of the three Boards and their counterparts elsewhere, whilst there was much common ground, there were particular idiosyncracies, the product of local factors. As elsewhere, although the broad societal and governmental changes which took place during the course of the 19th century were of major importance in relation to Board attitude and policy change, local factors were of equal significance. Guardians could not afford to forego the goodwill of their fellow ratepayers in determining policies. Attitude change amongst the members of Boards, and hence the policies they pursued, bore a very close relationship to the changing attitudes and perceptions of the ratepayers who elected them. Elite groups were only able to maintain control of the Boards if their attitudes and policies were in keeping with and acceptable to the restricted Poor Law electorate. Bearing in mind that Guardians were essentially representative members of this restricted electorate their views reflected those of wider local 'middle class' society. (124)

During the first thirty years of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards' existence, the Guardians essentially adhered to PLC and PLB orthodoxy. Against a background of limited financial resources, through the pursuit of deterrent and 'economy' policies the Boards sought to restrict expenditure and hence

the burden upon the ratepayers who they represented. However, humanitarian considerations did serve to moderate policies.

The conflicting demands of cost control and humanity, combined with the desire to discipline and reform the poor, strongly influenced the policies pursued by the Birmingham Board during the PLC and PLB era. Added to these influences, fears about centralization, and party political and factional imperatives, had an important impact. Guardians' attitudes and Board policy towards the erection of a new workhouse during this period, were certainly influenced by an amalgam of these forces. Whilst most Guardians recognised by the 1830s that a new workhouse was required, against a background of heavy demand upon finite financial resources and fearing the expense involved, they procrastinated for years, before eventually deciding, from a combination of humanitarian and expenditure restraint motives, to build on the existing site. Only through the intervention of the PLC was it finally decided to re-locate the workhouse. Even after building plans had been adopted, a ratepayers' revolt caused another re-think and the adoption of a cheaper plan, and during the early 1850s concern about the state of Parish finances continued to plague the project. The intertwined strands of humanity and parsimony are particularly evident in relation to the outdoor relief policies adopted by the Board during this period. On the one hand Guardians had a strong desire to assist the temporarily unemployed worker, but on the other they were keen to restrict relief expenditure in

the interests of the ratepayers. A determination to discipline and reform the poor is evidenced in all facets of relief administration, and is particularly noticeable in relation to child care.

From the late 1860s onwards the approach of the members of the three Boards to the administration of the relief system gradually changed, under the influence of the broad societal changes taking place during this period, government pressure, and essentially local forces. Of particular note, through a combination of a lessening of fundamental financial constraints, changing public opinion, governmental encouragement and civic pride, there was a greater readiness to embark upon ambitious capital projects to provide better facilities for the poor. New workhouses were provided initially, whilst from the 1870s onwards the Boards were increasingly convinced of the desirability of specialized institutions for particular categories of paupers. The Birmingham Board, upholding a tradition extending back to the late 18th century, and the Kings Norton Board, were amongst the foremost advocates of separate well-equipped facilities for children and the sick. During the first decade of the 20th century all three Boards co-operated in the provision of advanced institutional care for the 'feeble-minded' and epileptics. Involvement with Poor Law conferences and organized visits to their institutions, helped to disseminate their progressive ideas to others. (125) At the same time,

Guardians' attitudes and Board policies also reflected the nationwide resurgence of interest in the deterrence and control of certain categories of the pauper host during the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century. Like their counterparts elsewhere, Guardians were concerned about increasing vagrancy levels, and whilst they wished to improve outdoor relief for the 'deserving', much consideration was given to the deterrence of 'undeserving' relief applicants.

Having, in this chapter, considered the attitudes of, and policies pursued by, the Guardians serving on the three Boards, Chapter 7 proceeds to a consideration of the relationships between the Boards and the central Poor Law authority, which played such an important part in influencing the direction of policy throughout the period studied.

Chapter 6 Notes

- (1) D.Roberts, Dealing with the Poor in Victorian England. Rice University Studies, 67 (1) 1981, pp.58-59 & 70.
- (2) See also Ch.7, pp.308-10.
- (3) BRL: A. Min. 8.11.36; BRL: K.N. Min. 13.12.36.
- (4) See Crowther, The Workhouse System, p.129; Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement, pp.91, 93-98 & 114-15.
- (5) BRL: A. Min. 8.11.36, 29.11.36 & 13.12.36; Gaz. 21.11.36; Jnl. 19.11.36; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Pearson to PLC, 1.12.36 & letter PLC to Mr Pearson, 8.12.36. See also Ch.7, p.314.
- (6) BRL: K.N. Min. 13.12.36 & 4.1.37; PRO: MH 12/14039, letter Mr Docker to PLC, 27.12.36 & letter PLC to Mr Docker, 6.1.37; Gaz. 19.12.36.
- (7) See BRL: A. Min. 18.9.38, 2.10.38 & 16.10.38; BRL: K.N. Min. 10.2.37; Brundage, The English Poor Law of 1834, p.412; Crowther, The Workhouse System, p.116; Harling, The Power of Persuasion, p.36; Midwinter, Social Administration, p.40.
- (8) See Flinn, Medical Services under the New Poor Law, p.48; D.Fraser, Introduction, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, p.4; S.Heydon, The provision of medical care for the poor in Leicester in the 1830s. Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society Transactions, 55, 1981, pp.67-68; S.A.Morrill, Poor Law in Hereford, 1836-1851. Woolhope Naturalists Field Club Transactions, 41, 1974, p.249; Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, Vol.II, p.315; Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union, p.43.
- (9) BRL: A. Min. 8.11.36, 14.3.37, 21.3.37, 28.3.37, 4.4.37 & 11.4.37; Gaz. 20.3.37; Jnl. 18.3.37.
- (10) BRL: K.N. Min. 13.1.37, 20.1.37, 3.2.37, 17.2.37, 24.2.37, 3.3.37 & 16.3.38; PRO: MH 32/85, report Mar.1839; Gaz. 23.1.37, 30.1.37, 6.2.37 & 27.2.37.
- (11) BRL: A. Min. 13.12.36, 20.12.37 & 27.12.36; BRL: K.N. Min. 10.3.37, 9.6.37, 16.6.37, 19.6.37 & 23.6.37; Gaz. 28.11.36, 23.1.37, 30.1.37, 6.2.37 & 12.6.37; Jnl. 21.1.37; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, pp.152-53; Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement, pp.67 & 91; Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law, pp.150-61; Rose, The Anti-Poor Law Movement, p.85; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.107-12.
- (12) BRL: A. Min. 18.4.37, 26.6.38, 17.7.38, 24.7.38, 31.7.38, 7.8.38, 14.8.38, 16.10.38, 25.3.62 & 26.5.72; PRO: MH 9/1,

p.579; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter R.Earle to E.Chadwick, 25.5.38; PRO: MH 32/21, Q. Summary of Unions visited 30.6.38; Jnl. 11.8.38; 7th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1841, p.19; Boyson, The New Poor Law in North-East Lancashire, p.50; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.128-29; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds, pp.41-42; Lewis, William Day, p.179; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, p.52. See also Ch.5, pp.210-11.

(13) BRL: A. Min. 18.4.37, 17.4.38, 1.5.38 & 26.6.38; BRL: K.N. Min. 8.12.37 & 2.3.38. See also Ch.5, pp.210-11.

(14) BRL: A. Min. 17.4.38, 1.5.38 & 16.10.38; BRL: K.N. Min. 2.8.39 & 30.8.39.

(15) BRL: A. Min. 8.11.36, 15.11.36, 20.12.36 & 27.12.36; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Pearson to PLC, 26.12.36, notes Mr Earle, 30.12.36 & letter PLC to Mr Pearson, 6.1.37. See also Ch.2, p.67.

(16) BRL: A. Min. 27.12.36, 21.3.37 & 28.3.37; Gaz. 20.3.37; Jnl. 11.2.37 & 18.3.37; Midwinter, Social Administration, pp.30 & 33-35; Midwinter, State Intervention, pp.107-09. See also Ch.3, pp.109-17.

(17) BRL: A. Min. 18.4.37, 2.5.37, 9.5.37, 30.5.37, 6.6.37, 4.7.37, 3.10.37, 2.10.38, 11.12.38 & 18.12.38; BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 25.8.37; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Pearson to PLC, 10.5.37 & letter A.W.Savage to PLC, 12.5.37; PRO: MH 34/1, p.22; 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, p.197; Jnl. 20.5.37. The loan was obtained from the Exchequer Loan Commissioners.

(18) BRL: A. Min. 20.12.36, 18.4.37, 23.5.37, 30.5.37, 13.6.37, 20.6.37, 27.6.37, 11.7.37, 18.7.37, 25.7.37, 22.8.37, 5.12.37, 26.12.37, 2.1.38, 30.1.38, 20.3.38, 29.5.38, 26.6.38, 14.8.38, 9.10.38, 23.10.38, 27.11.38, 4.12.38, 8.1.39, 29.1.39 & 17.2.46; 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, p.199; Gaz. 5.6.37.

(19) BRL: K.N. Min. 13.12.36, 4.1.37, 13.1.37, 20.1.37, 27.1.37, 3.3.37, 17.3.37, 31.3.37, 5.5.37, 12.5.37, 19.5.37, 23.6.37, 21.7.37, 4.8.37, 18.8.37, 22.9.37, 3.11.37, 10.11.37, 1.12.37 & 8.12.37; PRO: MH 12/14039, letters Mr Docker to PLC, 4.3.37, 13.3.37, 16.6.38 & 17.12.40, letters PLC to Mr Docker, 7.3.37, 16.3.37, 20.3.37 & 28.12.40, letter Mr Savage to PLC, 16.3.37; PRO: MH 32/21, Q. report, 1.1.38; PRO: MH 34/2, p.67; 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, p.198; Gaz. 6.3.37, 13.3.37, 14.8.37 & 4.9.37; Hastings, Discovering Northfield, p.42.

(20) BRL: A. Min. 20.12.36. See BRL: A. Min. 14.3.37, 15.8.37, 5.9.37, 19.9.37, 17.10.37, 28.11.37, 16.4.39, 20.12.42 & 2.11.47; Gaz. 19.3.38. See also Ch.5, p.210.

(21) BRL: K.N. Min. 27.1.37 & 10.3.37; 2nd Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1836, p.413.

(22) 1st Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1835, p.98. See Buchanan, John Bowen, p.186; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.213-15; A.Digby, The Rural Poor Law, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, p.161; Fraser, Introduction, The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, pp.18-19; Morrill, Poor Law in Hereford, p.247, J.A.Perkins, Unmarried Mothers and The Poor Law in Lincolnshire, 1800-1850. Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 20, 1985, p.27; D.Roberts, How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law? Historical Journal, 6 (1) 1963, p.103.

(23) BRL: K.N. Min. 3.2.37. See 2nd Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1836, pp.63-66. See also pp.255-56.

(24) BRL: A. Min. 24.4.38, 29.5.38, 26.6.38 & 10.7.38; BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 6.7.38; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Mr Pearson to PLC, 2.6.38 & letter PLC to Mr Pearson, 26.6.38. See also Ch.5, p.210.

(25) BRL: A. Min. 19.6.38, 11.12.38, 17.12.39, 15.12.40, 14.12.41, 4.1.42, 6.12.42, 16.12.45, 3.12.61, 12.12.65 & 8.12.68; BRL: K.N. Min. 14.12.38, 20.12.39, 17.12.41, 5.12.49 & 22.12.69; Anstruther, The Scandal of the Andover Workhouse, pp.112, 120 & 151; Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties', pp.331 & 335; Morrill, Poor Law in Hereford, p.248; Watkin, The Warminster Workhouses, p.72.

(26) BRL: A. Min. 13.12.36, 20.12.36, 27.12.36, 21.3.37, 30.5.37, 6.6.37 & 31.7.38; BRL: K.N. Min. 13.1.37, 27.1.37 & 10.2.37; Gaz. 19.12.36, 26.12.36, 23.1.37, 30.1.37, 6.2.37 & 13.3.37; Jnl. 31.12.36; Land, Victorian Workhouse, p.17; Perkins, Unmarried Mothers, p.27.

(27) BRL: A. Min. 13.12.36, 20.12.36, 28.12.36, 30.12.36 & 3.1.37.

(28) BRL: K.N. Min. 4.1.37, 20.1.37, 27.1.37, 3.2.37, 17.2.37, 24.2.37, 17.3.37 & 25.3.37. See also p.255.

(29) See Ashforth, Settlement and removal in urban areas, p.78; Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, pp.141-43; M.Caplan, The New Poor Law and the Struggle for Union Chargeability. International Review of Social History, 23 (2) 1978, pp.267-300; Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration, p.21; Lewis, William Day, pp.179-80; M.MacKinnon, English Poor Law Policy and the Crusade Against Out relief. Journal of Economic History, XLVII (3) Sept.1987, pp.613-14; Morrill, Poor Law in Hereford, pp.250-1; Proctor, Poor Law Administration in Preston Union, pp.150-1; Rawding, The Poor Law Amendment Act, p.19; M.E.Rose, Introduction: the poor and the city, 1834-1914, in M.E.Rose (ed.), The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914, pp.7-8 & 10; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.159-63; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, pp.25-28, 30, 33 & 45.

(30) BRL: A. Min. 8.11.36, 15.11.36, 14.3.37, 28.3.37, 4.4.37, 11.4.37, 25.4.37, 2.5.37, 9.5.37 & 16.5.37; BRL: K.N. Min. 13.12.36, 23.12.36, 3.2.37, 24.2.37, 10.3.37 & 12.5.37; PRO: MH 12/13232, letter Revd. Bedford to PLC, 28.3.37, note Mr Earle, 2.4.37, letter PLC to Revd. Bedford, 6.4.37, letter Revd. Bedford, Isaac Marshall etc. to PLC, 5.4.37 & letter PLC to Mr Marshall, 6.4.37; Gaz. 6.3.37; Jnl. 1.4.37, 29.4.37 & 6.5.37.

(31) BRL: A. Min. 4.4.37, 11.4.37, 20.6.37, 27.6.37, 15.8.37, 22.8.37, 24.10.37, 26.6.38 & 1.1.39; BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Orders 19.9.37, 19.10.37 & 8.2.45; BRL: K.N. Min. 14.12.38, 4.1.39, 1.3.39, 8.3.39, 15.3.39, 22.3.39, 5.4.39, 26.4.39, 2.8.39, 21.5.41, 4.6.41, 10.9.41, 15.7.42, 15.4.44, 13.5.44, 11.10.47 & 19.9.55; Jnl. 17.3.38 & 14.7.38; Gaz. 19.3.38, 8.7.39 & 18.5.40; Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, p.142; Proctor, Poor Law Administration in Preston Union, p.151; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, pp.27-28.

(32) BRL: K.N. Min. 30.6.43 & 21.8.43; PRO: MH 12/14040, letter Mr Docker to PLC, 20.9.43, letter Mr Austin to PLC, 7.10.43 & letter PLC to Mr Docker, 12.10.43.

(33) BRL: A. Min. 15.12.40, 2.3.41, 16.3.41, 30.3.41, 13.4.41, 4.5.41, 18.5.41, 7.9.41, 16.7.44 & 22.9.63; BRL: A. Orders 1858-89, Order 6.3.65; PRO: MH 34/1, p.22; 9th Ann. Rep. of the PLB, 1856, pp.9 & 121; Gaz. 21.2.48. See also p.274 & Ch.7, p.318.

(34) BRL: K.N. Min. 28.2.40, 15.7.42, 29.7.42, 12.8.42, 9.9.42, 23.9.42, 17.2.45, 2.10.67 & 16.10.67; PRO: MH 34/2, p.67.

(35) BRL: K.N. Min. 11.1.39 & 20.11.40.

(36) BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 31.3.47; BRL: K.N. Min. 27.5.44 & 11.5.46.

(37) BRL: K.N. Min. 2.10.67.

(38) Ibid. 28.4.45.

(39) See BRL: K.N. Min. 4.1.39, 18.11.42, 16.12.42, 30.12.42, 27.1.43, 24.3.43 & 14.4.45; BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 2.8.41.

(40) See also Ch.7, pp.322-40.

(41) BRL: B. Min. 26.2.34, 5.1.36, 31.12.38, 13.2.39, 22.4.39, 28.5.39, 2.7.39 & 8.7.39; Jnl. 16.2.39 & 27.4.39; Gaz. 10.6.39 & 24.8.46. See also Ch.2, pp.65-67.

(42) BRL: B. Min. 4.2.34, 4.7.37, 16.2.38 & 12.9.38; BRL: Birmingham Overseers Minutes, 1839-45, 25.1.39, 29.1.39, 19.11.41 & 21.1.45; PRO: MH 12/13286, letter D.Malins etc. to PLC, 10.7.40 & R.Weale report, 7.11.40; Jnl. 17.6.37, 24.6.37,

8.7.37, 1.9.38, 2.2.39, 21.3.40, 18.4.40 & 30.3.44; Gaz. 19.3.38, 15.7.39, 28.10.39, 18.11.39, 13.7.40, 21.12.40, 3.5.41, 13.2.43, 25.12.43, 22.7.44, 10.8.46 & 16.8.47.

(43) PRO: MH 12/13286, R.Weale report, 17.1.42; PRO: MH 12/13287, R.Weale & A.Power report, 27.12.42; PRO: MH 32/7, Q. report, 30.6.46; T.D.Jones, Poor Law Administration in Merthyr Tydfil Union 1834-1894. Morgannwg, VII, 1964, pp.41 & 52-53; Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union, pp.8, 33 & 73-82.

(44) BRL: B. Min. 8.8.43, 27.12.43, 2.2.44, 17.4.44, 26.6.46 & 14.8.46; Jnl. 30.12.43, 2.3.44 & 16.3.44; Gaz. 1.1.44, 8.12.45, 22.6.46, 29.6.46, 27.7.46, 3.8.46, 10.8.46, 17.8.46, 24.8.46, 7.9.46 & 14.9.46; Dent, The Making of Birmingham, pp.431-32; Langford, Modern Birmingham, Vol.1, pp.39-42 & 57.

(45) BRL: B. Min. 17.9.47; PRO: MH 12/13291, Mr Austin report, 31.7.47 & letter PLC to Guardians, 27.8.47; Gaz. 5.4.47 & 20.9.47.

(46) BRL: B. Min. 1.2.48, 6.6.48, 14.7.48, 7.9.48, 9.2.49, 21.2.49, 9.4.49, 18.4.49, 25.4.49, 1.5.49 & 29.1.50(A); BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Order 10.12.49; PRO: MH 34/1, p.119; Gaz. 4.10.47, 1.11.47 & 7.2.48; Jnl. 14.4.49, 21.4.49, 28.4.49 & 7.7.49; Dent, The Making of Birmingham, p.432; Langford, Modern Birmingham, Vol.1, pp.60-61 & 67. See also Ch.3, pp.123-24 & Ch.5, p.216.

(47) BRL: B. Min. 9.9.50; Gaz. 16.9.50.

(48) Mer. 13.3.52.

(49) See Jnl. 19.1.50, 26.1.50, 2.2.50, 7.9.50, 14.9.50 & 21.9.50.

(50) PRO: MH 34/1, p.119; BRL: B. Min. 18.5.53(A), 26.10.53(A) & 14.11.53; BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 13.3.51, 29.3.51, 17.10.51, 3.1.52, 26.2.52, 13.5.53, 6.10.53 & 3.12.53; Jnl. 7.9.50; Gaz. 10.1.53, 31.1.53, 7.2.53 & 28.2.53. Under 1849, 1852 and 1853 Orders, the Guardians were authorized to spend a total of £42,500 on the erection of the new Workhouse. The cost of erecting the board-room and offices was a further £6,300. See also Ch.3, pp.124-26.

(51) BRL: B. Min. 7.7.58(A), 4.8.58(A), 11.8.58(A), 8.9.58(A), 10.11.58(M) & 2.2.59(A); BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Order 8.10.61; BRL: B. Orders, 1863-77, Orders 14.4.63 & 15.1.67; PRO: MH 34/1, p.119; 19th Ann. Rep. of the PLB, 1866-67, p.383.

(52) BRL: B. Min. 6.4.69(Q); BRL: B. Orders, 1863-77, 15.1.67; PRO: MH 34/1, p.119; Gaz. 17.9.63, 13.4.65 & 27.3.69; Jnl. 2.4.64; D.Baker, Workhouses in the Potteries, 198?, pp.24 & 35; Duke, Pauper Education, p.74.

- (53) See Boyson, The New Poor Law in North-East Lancashire, pp.43-45; Midwinter, Social Administration, pp.49-52; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, p.32.
- (54) See Lloyd Renshaw, Birmingham: its Rise and Progress, p.114; The Times, 30.6.40. See also Ch.1, pp.25 & 30-32.
- (55) See also Ch.3, p.120.
- (56) Jnl. 17.6.37.
- (57) BRL: B. Min. 16.2.38 & 21.2.38; Gaz. 22.1.38; Jnl. 20.1.38, 27.1.38 & 3.2.38; Searby, The Relief of the Poor in Coventry, pp.358-60; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, p.93; R.N.Thompson, The Working of the Poor Law Amendment Act in Cumbria, 1836-1871. Northern History, XV, 1979, pp.123-24.
- (58) BRL: Observations on the Relief of Cases of Out-door Poor, in the Parish of Birmingham, Henry Knight, 1838, pp.3-11; BRL: B. Min. 13.2.38. See also Ch.4, p.184.
- (59) BRL: B. Min. 5.1.41, 13.1.41, 2.2.41, 6.4.41 & 13.5.41; BRL: Rules and Regulations of the Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of Birmingham, 1841, pp.5-6 & 11. See also Ch.3, pp.119-20.
- (60) Gaz. 11.1.41.
- (61) BRL: B. Min. 6.7.41 & 12.10.41.
- (62) BRL: B. Min. 2.1.44, 2.4.44, 13.10.46, 5.1.47, 27.4.47 & 11.11.47; Gaz. 19.10.46.
- (63) See Ashforth, Settlement and removal in urban areas, pp.78-80; Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, pp.144 & 146; Caplan, The New Poor Law and the Struggle for Union Chargeability, pp.273-78; Rose, The English Poor Law, pp.192-93 & 199-203; M.E.Rose, Settlement, Removal and the New Poor Law, in D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, pp.29 & 40-41.
- (64) See BRL: B. Min. 30.9.28, 8.7.34, 5.1.36, 2.1.38 & 18.7.38.
- (65) BRL: B. Min. 5.1.47 & 15.2.47; Gaz. 21.9.46, 21.12.46, 22.2.47 & 1.3.47.
- (66) BRL: B. Min. 10.5.47; PRO: MH 12/13291, Mr Weale report, 31.7.47; Select Committee on Poor Removal, Minutes of Evidence, 12.3.55, p.2; Ashforth, Settlement and removal in urban areas, p.77; Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, pp.140 & 144-45; Midwinter, Social Administration, p.50; Proctor, Poor Law Administration in Preston Union, pp.163-64

(67) BRL: B. Min. 14.3.55 & 11.7.55(A); Select Committee on Poor Removal, 1855, Minutes of Evidence, 12.3.55, pp.2-3; Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, Minutes of Evidence, 12.6.60, pp.57 & 65; PRO: MH 32/87, letter R.Weale to M.T.Baines, 8.11.49.

(68) Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, Minutes of Evidence, 12.6.60, pp.56-58 & 60-62. See also Ch.2, pp.80-81.

(69) BRL: B. Min. 18.4.48. See also p.260-61 & 263 & Ch.2, pp.70-71.

(70) See M.Caplan, The Poor Law in Nottinghamshire, 1836-71. Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire, LXXIV, 1970, pp.95-97; Digby, Pauper Palaces, pp.188-93; Duke, Pauper Education, pp.67-68, 74-76 & 84-85; Fraser, Introduction, The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, pp.6-7; Jones, Poor Law Administration in Merthyr Tydfil Union, pp.46-48 & 54-55; Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union, pp.62-72 & 94-99. See also pp.275 & 278-80

(71) See 10th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1844, p.130; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.160-61; Flinn, Medical Services under the New Poor Law, pp.55-56; Heslop, The Medical Aspects of Birmingham, pp.701-02; R.Richardson, Middlesex Hospital Outpatients Wing/The Strand Union Workhouse. History Today, Vol.43, Sept.1993, pp.62-63. See also pp.281-83 & Ch.2, pp.71-72.

(72) Gaz. 17.9.63.

(73) Gaz. 13.1.45 & 19.10.46.

(74) BRL: B. Min. 23.12.45, 10.5.47, 9.6.58(A) & 16.6.58(A); Gaz. 17.5.47. See also pp.251-52 & 255-56 & Ch.8, pp.378-79.

(75) BRL: B. Min. 7.10.45 & 23.12.45; PRO: MH 12/13290, letter Revd. Ivers to PLC, 20.5.46; Gaz. 6.10.45, 13.10.45 & 29.12.45; J.M.Feheney, The Poor Law Board August Order, 1859: A Case Study of Protestant-Catholic Conflict. Recusant History, 17, 1984-85, pp.84-91. See also Ch.4, pp.179-80.

(76) Reports of the Poor Law District Conferences Held During the Year 1883, pp.1, 4-35 & 73-92 & 1887, pp.47-48; Proceedings of the Central and District Poor Law Conferences, 1899-00, p.1, 1900-01, p.1, 1901-02, p.1, 1902-03, p.79, 1903-04, p.85, 1905-06, pp.viii & 6-28, 1906-07, pp.viii & 8-30, 1907-08, pp.3 & 20-39 & 1909-10, pp.viii & 47-75.

(77) Gaz. 21.4.98.

(78) Gaz. 14.4.10, 20.4.10, 21.4.10 & 28.4.10.

(79) See also Ch.1, pp.44-45 & Ch.4, p.179.

(80) BRL: A. Min. 27.9.64, 11.10.64, 21.3.65, 3.10.65, 17.10.65, 31.10.65, 26.12.65, 13.3.66, 1.5.66, 27.10.68, 17.11.68, 12.1.69, 16.3.69, 13.4.69, 22.11.70 & 9.7.72; BRL: A. Orders, 1858-89, Order 6.3.65; PRO: MH 12/13243, Orders 6.8.73 & 25.11.73 & covering letter, 25.11.73; PRO: MH34/1, p.22.

(81) PRO: PRO: MH 12/14045, Order 22.1.69 & covering letter, 29.1.69; PRO: MH 34/2, p.67; Upton & Fellows, Birmingham and its Workhouses, p.15.

(82) BRL: A. Min. 18.1.81, 12.4.81, 28.6.81, 12.10.09, 26.10.09, 23.11.09 & 1.2.10; BRL: K.N. Min. 28.11.00; BRL: Kings Norton House Committee Minutes, 1883-88, 11.7.88; BRL: Kings Norton Letters 1900-01, LGB letter 4.5.01 & Order 13.12.01; PRO: MH 32/101, H.Jenner-Fust reports, 27.1.88, 3.2.89, 8.2.90 & 7.2.91; PRO: MH 34/1, p.23; PRO: MH 34/2, p.67; PRO: MH 34/4, pp.21-22 & 31; PRO: MH 34/5, p.155; PRO: MH 34/8, p.19; PRO: MH 34/9, p.180; 13th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1883-84, pp.26 & 271; 18th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1888-89, pp.xci & 373-74; 19th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1889-90, pp.lx & lxxxv; Gaz. 4.4.01, 17.4.01 & 24.4.01.

(83) BRL: B. Min. 15.6.98; BRL: B. Orders, 1863-77, Order 18.10.76; BRL: B. Orders, 1878-86, Order 28.7.79; BRL: Birmingham Letters, 1889-90, LGB letters 30.10.89 & 18.12.89; BRL: B. Orders, 1897-1903, Order 13.1.98; BRL: B. Orders, 1903-1912, Orders 26.8.09, 19.2.10 & 8.10.10; PRO: MH 34/1, p.119; PRO: MH 34/4, pp.68-69; PRO: MH 34/8, p.77; 13th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1883-84, p.268; 14th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1884-85, p.xxxii; 28th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1898-99, p.lxxxiv. See also pp.259-63.

(84) BRL: On the Education of Pauper Children in Cottage Homes, 1883, pp.2-3 & 9; BRL: B. Orders, 1878-86, Orders 28.7.79 & 27.7.83; PRO: MH 34/1, pp.120-21; Reports of the Poor Law Conferences, 1883, pp.73-92; 8th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1878-79, p.lxiv; 13th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1883-84, p.xliv; 18th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1888-89, p.xci; VCH, Warks., 7, p.324; Duke, Pauper Education, p.80.

(85) BRL: On the Education of Pauper Children in Cottage Homes, 1883, pp.4-7.

(86) Ibid., pp.10-16. See also p.281.

(87) BRL: B. Min. 22.3.82, 16.12.03 & 19.7.11; BRL: B. Orders, 1897-1903, Orders 13.1.98 & 12.10.01; BRL: B. Orders 1903-1912, Orders 15.10.06 & 2.12.11; BRL: B. Letters 1887-88, LGB letter 11.1.88 & Order 29.10.88; BRL: B. Letters, 1911-12, LGB letter 23.10.11; PRO: MH 34/4, p.69; PRO: MH 34/8, pp.76-77.

(88) Gaz. 28.3.98. See also Ch.7, pp.352 & 354.

(89) BRL: K.N. Min. 5.12.83, 30.1.84, 24.9.84, 10.3.86, 20.4.87, 26.2.90 & 24.4.01; BRL: K.N. House Comm. Min. 1883-88, 4.9.84; BRL: K.N. Letters, 1900-01, Order 11.5.01; PRO: MH 12/14057, letter LGB to Mr E.Docker, 31.1.84; PRO: MH 12/14074, letter E.Docker to LGB, 25.1.95, letter LGB to E.Docker, 21.2.95 & K.N. Union Cottage Homes, 6th Report, 26.6.95; PRO: MH 32/101, H.Jenner-Fust reports, 27.1.88, 3.2.89 & 7.2.91; PRO: MH 34/5, pp.155, 162 & 164; PRO: MH 34/9, p.180; 18th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1888-89, p.xci.

(90) BRL: Aston Letters, 1892-95, LGB letter 28.11.93.

(91) BRL: A. Min. 16.10.94 & 14.8.00; BRL: A. Letters, 1892-95, Order 12.3.95, covering letter 16.3.95 & LGB letter 17.12.95; BRL: A. Letters, 1896-97, LGB letter 7.10.97; BRL: A. Letters, 1898-1900, LGB letters 24.7.99 & 29.7.99; BRL: A. Orders, 1898-1903, Order 3.2.98 & covering letter 9.2.98; PRO: MH 34/4, p.22; 24th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1894-95, p.26; 27th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1897-98, p.lxxxii; Gaz. 4.4.98; Saxton, Bygone Erdington, p.58.

(92) Gaz. 4.4.01 & 17.4.01.

(93) See BRL: B. Min. 14.11.83; BRL: B. Letters, 1870-71, PLB/LGB letters 6.9.70 & 14.11.71; BRL: A. Min. 14.9.80, 20.9.92, 6.3.06 & 26.3.12; BRL: A. Letters, 1908-09, LGB letter 7.7.08; BRL: K.N. Min. 10.5.71, 24.5.71 & 29.12.75.

(94) BRL: B. Min. 1.5.01 & 18.3.03; BRL: B. Orders, 1903-1912, Order 24.4.06; BRL: B. Letters, 1905-06, LGB letter 14.11.05; BRL: B. Letters, 1906-08, LGB letter 4.2.07; BRL: A. Min. 22.12.08; BRL: A. Orders 1904-11, Order 28.12.05; PRO: MH 34/8, pp.19 & 76-77.

(95) BRL: B. Min. 25.6.84, 20.8.84, 16.2.10, 20.7.10 & 21.6.11; BRL: B. Letters, 1887-88, LGB letter 23.4.88; BRL B. Letters 1889-90, LGB letter 12.7.90; BRL: B. Letters, 1903-04, LGB letter 11.5.04; BRL: B. Letters, 1905-06, LGB letter 4.4.06; BRL: A. Min. 16.3.86, 11.5.86, 1.5.88, 2.12.02, 23.12.02, 22.9.03, 4.10.04, 15.10.07 & 19.12.11; BRL: A. Letters, 1896-97, LGB letter 25.8.97; BRL: A. Letters, 1906-07, LGB letter 29.10.07; BRL: A. Letters, 1910-11, LGB letter 21.12.10; P.L.O. Jnl. 28.4.05, p.413; Gaz. 11.4.07.

(96) PRO: MH 32/101, H.Jenner-Fust report, 8.2.90; 19th Ann. Rep. of the PLB, 1866-67, pp.15-18; 20th Ann. Rep. of the PLB, 1867-68, pp.17-19; 19th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1889-90, p.lx; 27th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1897-98, p.lxxxii; Crowther, The Workhouse System, p.162; Flinn, Medical Services under the New Poor Law, pp.64-66; MacDonagh, Early Victorian Government, pp.119-20; Rose, The Relief of Poverty, pp.38-39.

(97) BRL: A. Min. 12.10.09; BRL: A. Orders, 1904-11, Orders 24.4.07 & 10.2.10, & covering letter 12.2.10; BRL: A. Letters,

1908-09, LGB letters 5.11.08, 22.11.09 & 16.12.09; PRO: MH 34/8, p.19; Gaz. 10.4.07 & 17.4.07.

(98) PRO: MH 32/101, H.Jenner-Fust report, 27.1.88; BRL: B. Min. 13.5.85 & 18.8.86; Reports of the Poor Law Conferences 1883, p.5; Gaz. 1.4.87; G.W.Hearn, Dudley Road Hospital 1887-1987, 1987, pp.12-13. See also p.269, Ch.2, pp.70-72 & Ch.7, pp.352-53.

(99) PRO: MH 32/101, H.Jenner-Fust report, 3.2.89; PRO: MH 34/4, p.68-69; PRO: MH 34/8, pp.76-77; BRL: B. Orders, 1887-95, Orders 12.3.87 & 22.5.91; BRL: B. Letters, 1889-90, LGB letters 7.11.89 & 18.12.89; BRL: B. Orders, 1897-1903, Orders 13.1.98 & 12.11.01; BRL: B. Letters, 1903-04, LGB letter 24.11.03; Gaz. 10.1.89; Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.265; Hearn, Dudley Road Hospital, pp.15-17 & 22.

(100) BRL: K.N. Min. 27.4.98; BRL: K.N. Letters, 1900-01, Order 17.1.00 & LGB letter 23.1.00; PRO: MH 12/14074, Orders 16.5.95 & Nov.1896, & covering letters, 22.5.95 & 24.11.96, & Mr Murray Browne report, 4.2.95; PRO: MH 34/5, pp.162 & 164; 24th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1894-95, p.26.

(101) BRL: Kings Norton Order 13.2.00; PRO: MH 34/9, p.180; Gaz. 31.3.98 & 14.4.98.

(102) BRL: B. Min. 16.3.04, 20.4.04, 20.7.04 & 21.12.04; Gaz. 21.4.98; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.63-64; K.Woodroffe, The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1905-09. International Review of Social History, 22, 1977, p.148.

(103) BRL: B. Min. 4.4.05; BRL: A. Orders, 1904-11, Order 27.3.05 & covering letter 29.3.05; BRL: A. Letters, 1903-05, LGB letters 24.11.04, 15.3.05 & 31.3.05; BRL: B. Letters, 1904-05, LGB letters 29.3.05 & 31.3.05.

(104) P.L.O.Jnl. 14.4.05, p.360.

(105) Ibid., 5.5.05, p.431; Proc. of the Poor Law Conferences, 1905-06, pp.6-28.

(106) BRL: B. Min. 21.6.05, 4.7.06, 21.11.06 & 18.9.07; BRL: K.N. Min. 22.11.05; BRL: B. Orders, 1903-1912, Orders 21.6.06 & 18.10.06; PRO: MH 34/8, pp.19 & 76-77; PRO: MH 34/9, p.180; Gaz. 1.1.07.

(107) The Official Reports of Poor Law Conferences, 1911-12, p.66.

(108) BRL: B. Min. 15.12.80; BRL: B. Orders, 1887-95, Order 11.2.87; PRO MH 34/1, p.120; VCH, Warks., 7, p.323; Crowther, The Workhouse System, p.74; T.Novak, Poverty and the State: An Historical Sociology, 1988, pp.93-94; Ryan, Politics and

relief: East London unions, pp.143 & 147. See also Ch.7, p.354.

(109) BRL: The Poor Law and its Administration in the Aston Union, William Fowler, 1873, p.8.

(110) BRL: K.N. Min. 6.12.82, 20.12.82, 25.4.83, 23.5.83, 4.7.83 & 20.5.91.

(111) Gaz. 21.4.98.

(112) P.L.O.Jnl. 5.5.05, p.431.

(113) BRL: B. Min. 19.4.05, 21.6.05 & 19.7.05; P.L.O.Jnl. 27.1.05, p.89 & 24.3.05, p.297.

(114) In 1898 the Kings Norton Board adopted new rules and regulations for the administration of outdoor relief, whilst in 1896 and 1904 the number of relieving officers was increased to 3 and 5 respectively. Aston Union had 3 relieving officers from 1878 and 5 from 1905. Amongst changes in 1883, the Birmingham Board appointed a superintendent of out relief and a cross visitor. (BRL: K.N. Min. 17.8.98, 14.9.98, 23.3.04, 13.4.04, 11.5.04, 8.6.04 & 24.7.04; BRL: A. Min. 9.4.78, 11.6.78, 16.5.05, 20.6.05 & 25.7.05; BRL: B. Min. 9.7.83 & 5.9.83; PRO: MH 9/1, pp.592 & 598; PRO: MH 9/9, p.722).

(115) BRL: The Poor Law and its Administration in the Aston Union, 1873, pp.3-8 & 14-15.

(116) D.Post, 20.4.76.

(117) Gaz. 8.12.94.

(118) Ibid., 13.12.94.

(119) Ibid., 13.12.94. See also Ch.5, p.227.

(120) Ibid., 28.12.94.

(121) Proc. of the Poor Law Conferences, 1907-08, pp.22, 30 & 32.

(122) Gaz. 28.4.10.

(123) See also p.243.

(124) See also Chs.3-5.

(125) In 1883 and 1911, arrangements were made for delegates to the West Midland District Conference to visit Birmingham Parish institutions. (Reports of the Poor Law Conferences, 1883, p.101; Reports of Poor Law Conferences, 1911-12, p.66).

Chapter 7: Harmony and Discord: The Evolving Relationships
Between the Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards of
Guardians and the PLC and its Successor Agencies, 1836-1912

(1) Introduction

The tenor of relations between the central Poor Law agency and boards of guardians were of fundamental importance in determining the way in which the Poor Law was administered in each locality. Whilst the PLC and its successor agencies did not preside over a monolithic New Poor Law, they were vested with far-reaching powers under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and later amending legislation, and from the early days of the new dispensation, although lacking full coercive powers, sought to direct and influence the policies pursued by boards of guardians through the means of a copious correspondence, the issuing of Orders and visits by their representatives. However, as other researchers have shown, boards soon became aware that they possessed considerable latitude in the determination of their own policies. Under such circumstances there was plenty of scope for the development of a wide spectrum of different types of relationships between the central agency and particular authorities. At different periods in their history, depending upon the composition of their membership (and bearing in mind that all boards interpreted policies to suit their own circumstances), boards which pursued largely orthodox policies

established constructive working relations with central government. On the other hand, when controlled by guardians antagonistic towards the central agency, tense relationships might be sustained for lengthy periods. (1)

This chapter reviews the evolution of the relationships between the PLC, PLB and LGB, and the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards, during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. Whilst the two Union Boards largely maintained sound relations with the central agency throughout the period, relations between it and the Birmingham Board remained strained until the LGB era. Earlier chapters have already considered various aspects of their relationships, reflecting the importance of the relationship between the central agency and local administrators to the way the New Poor Law functioned in each locality. (2) In focusing upon how relationships evolved, this chapter identifies and explains significant differences between the experience of the two Union Boards and the Birmingham Board.

Under the New Poor Law, much of the responsibility for ensuring that local administration was broadly in line with central government directives and policies, rested with the Assistant Commissioners (under the PLC) and the Poor Law Inspectors (under the PLB and LGB). Their duties were extremely onerous, necessitating the appointment of men of considerable ability for their proper execution. By the

beginning of 1836, 21 Assistant Commissioners had been appointed, amongst them Richard Earle and Robert Weale. (3) Reflecting the significant role that they played, much attention is devoted in the following analysis to the relationships between successive Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors and the Aston, Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards.

(2) The Establishment and Maintenance of Good Relations Between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the PLC and PLB, 1836-71

Amicable relations between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the PLC were quickly established upon unionization, and thereafter relationships with the central Poor Law authority remained on a sound footing throughout the 19th century and early 20th century. In view of its declared and actual adherence to orthodox policies of efficiency, 'economy' and 'less eligibility', the Aston Union in particular was recognised by the central Poor Law agency as something of a 'model union'. Successive Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors enjoyed good relations with both Boards, but the special rapport between Richard Earle and the Aston Board was never equalled. (4)

Periodic visits by Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors were of major importance for the maintenance of central influence in this as in any other locality. Whilst the PLC and

PLB could deluge boards with directives and a copious correspondence, compliance was another matter, hence the significance attached to the visits and reports of their representatives. Consistent with normal practice, Mr Earle visited the Aston and Kings Norton Unions frequently during their formative months, offering advice and monitoring their activities. Following his departure, regular visits from successive Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors continued. However, their regularity tended to fluctuate (with extra visits occurring when particular issues demanded more attention), and with fewer Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors, and larger districts, after 1840, it was inevitable that visits would be somewhat less frequent than during the immediate post-unionization period. (5) [SEE TABLE 44]

Quarterly district reports, special reports focused upon particular issues of concern, and reports specifically concerned with the Aston and Kings Norton Unions, produced by successive Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors for the PLC and PLB, together with general correspondence, offer a valuable insight into evolving central government perceptions of the performance of the two Boards. The themes explored in the reports, and the judgments made, reflect wider national debates and concerns, and the anxieties of the central Poor Law authority at particular times.

Comments about the Aston and Kings Norton Unions in reports and letters written by Mr Earle, during his period of responsibility for the two Unions from late 1836 to mid-1838, and the responses he received, reflect the PLC's anxiety to demonstrate that the New Poor Law was operating satisfactorily in the Birmingham area. Thus, in a February 1837 report focused upon union progress, and in particular upon the state of workhouse accommodation and 'the disposition of the Guardians to carry out either voluntarily or through the authority of the Commissioners the main principle of the P.L. Amendment Act.', Mr Earle stressed the spirit of co-operation evinced by the Aston Board. However, whilst expressing confidence that the present Board would 'act firmly with the able bodied, & after some experience ... get rid of all but the aged & infirm.', he also expressed concern that 'this useful Board may undergo extensive change next Lady Day.' As to the Kings Norton Board, Mr Earle was equally confident that it would adhere to the Commissioners' policies, and remarked that it had 'commenced well.' (6)

During 1837/38 Mr Earle's quarterly reports continued to contain favourable comments about both Unions. In January 1838 Mr Earle reported that both were operating under effective relief regulations, and particularly emphasized his satisfaction with the policies adopted by the Aston Board. He remarked that the Aston Guardians attended 'most diligently', that the Workhouse had been 'much enlarged', that corn mills

had been erected and oakum picking introduced, that the 'out-relief list' was 'most carefully watched', and that outdoor relief expenditure was £100 less for the current quarter than the previous quarter. (7)

April and June 1838 quarterly reports stated that the workhouse test was operating effectively in the Aston Union, and that although during the Lady day quarter, against a background of severe weather, an increase of £12 in out relief expenditure had been recorded, the figures for the previous quarter had been 'very low'. (8) A special report in June 1838, designed to show that the introduction of the New Poor Law was beneficial to 'populous and manufacturing Districts ...', favourably contrasted relief expenditure levels and administrative practices in the Parish of Aston with those of the Parish of Birmingham. Stressing the similarities between the composition of the population and the trades represented in the parishes, Mr Earle argued that differences in expenditure levels were attributable to the more stringent though not 'oppressive System' of relief operated by the Aston Board. Mr Earle's report received special attention in the 1838 PLC annual report, the Commissioners keen to emphasize the contrast between relief administration in the Aston Union and the ununionized Parish of Birmingham. (9) [SEE TABLE 45]

Mr Earle's January 1838 quarterly report, however, reveals somewhat less satisfaction with the outdoor relief policies

pursued by the Kings Norton Board. Thus in relation to the Parish of Harborne especially, Mr Earle commented that whilst the chairman assured him 'that the order totally prohibiting ... [outdoor] Relief, except in sickness, has been implicitly obeyed, ... it appeared ... from an examination of the Books that perhaps age & infirmity had occasionally been treated as sickness.' (10)

Reports and correspondence, together with references in the Board Minutes, reveal the key advisory and mediatory role that Mr Earle fulfilled; a role maintained by his successors. From the outset neither Board hesitated in seeking advice from him on policy matters, and he made every effort to accommodate their wishes with the priorities of the PLC. Following the formation of the Aston Union, Mr Earle's role in mediating between the PLC and the Guardians is well illustrated in relation to the salary allotted the newly appointed Union Clerk. He recommended the Commissioners to approve a salary of £150 per annum because the Clerk was to devote his whole time to the Union, and perform the duties of Vestry Clerk. Similarly, when, in June 1838, the Kings Norton Board proposed to increase the salary of their Clerk from £70 to £120 per annum, Mr Earle advised the Board that an increase to £100 was quite sufficient, and persuaded the PLC to endorse the change. (11)

During the formative years of the Aston Union, two episodes in particular served to cement good relations between the PLC and the Aston Board. The stance adopted by Mr Earle and the Commissioners at the time of the contentious 1837 election, strengthened the PLC's influence over the policies pursued by the Board's 'Liberal-Radical' majority. Whilst the support afforded the Board in its efforts to counter the charges levelled by the Reverend Bedford in his 1838 Lords petition consolidated the relationship. (12) The extent to which Mr Earle had secured the confidence and accord of the Aston Board by the summer of 1838 is clear from the exchange of letters between them upon the announcement of his departure for Ireland, as one of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners. Much regret was expressed on both sides at the severance of their connection, and Mr Earle was fulsome in his praise for the Board's administration. For their part, the Guardians modestly asserted that they were simply endeavouring 'to carry into effect the benevolent intentions of the New Poor Law, with an equal regard to the comfort of the Poor and the resources of the Rate-Payers.' (13)

Robert Weale, who assumed responsibility for the Aston and Kings Norton Unions after Mr Earle's departure, retained his connection with them until his retirement in 1867 at the age of 69, with the exception of a spell during the 1840s when other Assistant Commissioners, including Alfred Austin and Alfred Power, held responsibility. (14) A Sussex solicitor, appointed

as an Assistant Commissioner in July 1835, Robert Weale seems to have been one of the most hard-working and efficient, well able to cope with the pressures of the job. During his initial period of service, his ability to counteract damaging criticism of the New Poor Law and the PLC had been tested to the utmost by the 'Bridgwater Scandal'. His assumption of responsibility for the strategically important unions in Staffordshire and around Birmingham, which the Commissioners were keen to see operating effectively, was a recognition of his ability in combatting opposition to PLC policies, in the case of the Aston Union spearheaded by the Reverend Bedford. (15)

Though the Boards continued to enjoy sound working relations with Mr Weale and other Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors, the special rapport which had existed between the Aston Guardians and Mr Earle was absent. Relations were far more formalised, reflecting the different characters of the men concerned and changed circumstances. Although regret was expressed when Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors moved on, resolutions and correspondence did not display the same level of warmth demonstrated at the departure of Mr Earle. (16)

Complementing the directives issued by the PLC and PLB, and general correspondence, Mr Weale and other Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors continued to monitor the activities of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, to tender advice, and generally to encourage the maintenance of policies

broadly in line with PLC and PLB orthodoxy. Issues referred to in reports and at meetings attended by Mr Weale and his colleagues, reflect the special concerns of the central agency at particular times, and the evolution of national Poor Law policy.

Thus in early 1839 particular attention was focused upon non-resident relief. At a Kings Norton Board meeting in March, Mr Weale drew attention to 'the several cases of non resident Paupers receiving Relief contrary to the 5th Rule of the Orders of Relief of the Poor Law Comrs. (sic.).' As a consequence the Guardians ordered the relieving officer to inform people in receipt of such relief that it would be discontinued after March 25th. In his subsequent quarterly report, which devoted considerable attention to non-resident relief, Mr Weale stated that the Kings Norton Board had withdrawn all such relief at his 'suggestion', and that he intended to 'draw the attention' of the Aston Board to its three remaining cases on his next visit. (17)

During 1843 Alfred Austin expressed some dissatisfaction with outdoor relief administration in the Aston and Kings Norton Unions. Thus in September 1843 he remarked of the Aston Union: 'I believe management very good except in ... respect of outdoor relief.' Whilst of the Kings Norton Union, in December 1843, he commented: 'I strongly suspect that the prohibitory order is constantly evaded if not set at defiance; but it is

difficult to get at the facts. In other respects management not very good.' (18)

In the spring of 1847, attention focused upon the inadequate provision for vagrants made by the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. Attending a meeting of the Aston Board on March 30th, Mr Weale urged the Guardians to provide separate vagrant wards and institute a task of work. Both recommendations were adopted. Similarly, following a visit to the Kings Norton Workhouse, on the same day, amongst other failings reported to the PLC, Mr Weale referred to the absence of separate wards and compulsory task work for vagrants. Having been contacted by the PLC, the Board referred the matter to the House Committee for further consideration. (19)

Ongoing PLC and PLB concern about the quality of officers employed by boards of guardians is clearly reflected in reports by Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors, their involvement with periodic enquiries into staff conduct, and general correspondence between the PLC and PLB and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. Thus, in quarterly reports during 1838 both Mr Earle and Mr Weale expressed dissatisfaction about the capabilities of the Kings Norton Workhouse master. Ultimately, partly as a result of their criticisms, he resigned at the end of the year. (20)

During the late 1830s and 1840s the PLC and Assistant Commissioners were involved with disciplinary procedures against a number of Aston and Kings Norton officers; on some occasions finding it necessary to bring pressure upon Guardians to adopt a particular course of action. This was certainly the case with the dismissal of the first Aston relieving officer, Thomas Martin.

After an enquiry carried out by Mr Weale into the relieving officer's accounts and general conduct had discovered clear evidence of financial irregularities, and in view of the fact that he had previously been 'admonished' for 'his irregular habits', the PLC called for his removal from office in June 1839. Despite the proven allegations against him, however, as the sureties were prepared to make good the losses sustained, and as Mr Martin had in their opinion always 'strictly discharged the duties of his office towards the poor.', a majority of Guardians endorsed his retention. In response the Commissioners asserted their authority and informed the Guardians that an Order of dismissal would be issued forthwith. Reluctantly the Guardians advised Mr Martin to resign in order to avoid 'the serious penalties which must follow a dismissal ...'; although the Board chairman also wrote to the PLC expressing regret that he could not remain in office. The Commissioners accepted Mr Martin's resignation - as under similar circumstances they accepted the resignation of a relieving officer in the Castle Ward Union in 1838 - but

requested the Guardians to elect a replacement 'as early as practicable ...'. (21)

When Mr Martin's successor, Thomas Paine, resigned in 1846, also in the wake of the discovery of financial irregularities, the PLC displayed annoyance after the Aston Board announced the appointment of a replacement without first reporting the circumstances surrounding the resignation. To underline its authority, and in view of the fact that the new relieving officer was only 23 years old, the PLC delayed the endorsement of his appointment for some months. (22)

The first two relieving officers employed by the Kings Norton Guardians also left their service as the result of alleged financial misconduct. In the case of the first of these officers, Thomas Evetts, there was close co-operation between the Board and the PLC. When, in 1840, the Guardians discovered irregularities in his accounts they promptly informed the Commissioners. After consultations with Mr Weale, the PLC issued an Order of dismissal, and Mr Weale attended for the appointment of a new relieving officer. However, in 1843, when Mr Evett's successor also left the Board's service as the result of allegations of financial irregularities, and the Board proceeded to appoint a replacement without immediately informing the PLC (apparently wishing to play down the significance of the matter), as with the Paine affair, the Commissioners asserted their authority and asked for more

details. Although the PLC accepted the Board's explanation that delay had been occasioned by further investigation of the relieving officer's accounts, the Guardians were told to ensure that in future all changes in officers were reported as soon as possible. (23)

Against a background of increasing bureaucracy, during the 1850s and 1860s the PLB closely monitored the Boards' staffing policies, sanctioning and overturning decisions according to strict bureaucratic regulations. Thus in 1866, when the Kings Norton Guardians requested the chaplain to resign, because he stated that he was unable to fulfil his responsibilities at the Workhouse personally, the PLB endorsed their decision. However, when the Board proposed to award a gratuity of £20 to the widow of the Workhouse master in November 1858, the PLB vetoed the idea because this would contravene the terms of the 1847 Consolidated Order. (24)

During 1861, with national educational policies under scrutiny, Mr Weale was required to report on the state of workhouse schools in his district. In his report he stated that children sent out to service or as apprentices from the Aston and Kings Norton Workhouses, had mostly 'turned out well'. (25)

At a time when public attention was focused upon the failings of Poor Law institutions, in 1866, following a visit to the

Aston Workhouse by Mr Weale, during which he had discovered wheat stored in the 'Receiving Ward', the Guardians were obliged to confirm to the PLB that it was to be removed and that it would not be placed there in future. (26)

(3) Local Autonomy Under Threat: The Relationship Between the Birmingham Guardians and the PLC and PLB from the Mid-1830s to 1871

Following the unionization of neighbouring parishes in 1836, the Birmingham Board continued to function under the terms of the 1831 local Act, and prior to 1840 had very little contact with the PLC. In 1836 the Commissioners had deemed it inexpedient to interfere with the Parish (although Mr Weale was critical of aspects of Poor Law administration), whilst during the late 1830s they were preoccupied with events elsewhere. Furthermore, with the PLC's powers vis-a-vis local Act parishes and incorporations severely constrained until the early 1840s, the Birmingham Board had no need to pay much heed to the Commissioners. (27) Consequently existing practices tended to be perpetuated.

After 1840, however, the PLC embarked upon a determined policy to extend its influence in the Parish, as part of an overall strategy to assert authority over local Act parishes and incorporations. Through a subtle combination of advice and cajoling by the PLC and PLB and their agents, by 1850 the

Birmingham Guardians were no longer able to conduct their affairs without reference to PLB directives and advice. During the 1840s Assistant Commissioner Weale and his colleagues, in keeping with the approach adopted towards similar bodies elsewhere, visited Birmingham regularly, and reported at length on Poor Law administration in the Parish. (28) As the PLC and subsequently the PLB gradually increased their influence over the affairs of the Birmingham Board, major changes in administrative practices were progressively introduced by the Guardians. However, the increasingly influential role of the PLC and PLB spawned considerable antagonism amongst Guardians keen to maintain local autonomy. Further encroachment upon the Board's authority was strenuously resisted, and relations between the Guardians and the PLB remained tense until the advent of the LGB heralded a period of greater co-operation.

In 1840, Mr Weale produced two reports which adversely contrasted relief administration in the Parish of Birmingham with that of the Aston and other local unions. Two years later he produced a further report which referred to administrative improvements achieved in Birmingham, and highlighted matters which still gave him cause for concern. (29)

Robert Weale's June 1840 'Report on the comparative State of pauperism in the parishes of Birmingham & Aston', which echoed Mr Earle's 1838 report, was intended to demonstrate 'that the principles of the Poor Law Amendment [Act] were applicable to

manufacturing districts ...', and that Poor Law administration in places such as Birmingham ought to conform to 'one common system'. Mr Weale argued that the favourable contrast between the Aston and Birmingham relief statistics was the result of 'a more effective system of management ...'. [SEE TABLE 45] The argument that a decrease in pauperism might be expected in Aston Parish because a large proportion of its population was engaged in agriculture, was rejected with reference to a comparison of relief expenditure in the Parish and in the 'purely agricultural' parishes within the Union. Birmingham's Guardians were particularly condemned for their failure to prevent the town becoming 'a great centre or place of refuge for mendicants and vagrants who infest the surrounding country ...'. (30)

Again stressing that the New Poor Law was beneficial to 'manufacturing & populous districts', Mr Weale's November 1840 'Report on the administration of Relief in the Parish of Birmingham', adversely contrasted it with administration in other manufacturing unions in the district (in particular Wolverhampton and Dudley) referred to in an earlier report. Pointing to the comparatively high cost of relief in the Parish of Birmingham, Mr Weale argued persuasively for the extension of PLC influence over its affairs. [SEE TABLE 45] Mr Weale highlighted, amongst other things, that there were no outdoor relief rules and regulations, and that the Overseers retained a primary role with regard to outdoor relief dispensation. He

also argued that the duties of Board committees should be better defined, and that the way contracts were awarded should be improved. Amongst 'abuses' identified at the Workhouse, Mr Weale focused particular attention upon the practice of giving gratuities to pauper inmates. Reference was also made to poor sanitation at the Workhouse. The report presented a dire picture of the Parish's financial position. Whilst a new valuation had recently been completed and a new rate was in prospect, Mr Weale did not believe that this would swiftly improve the situation in view of the heavy demands upon Parish resources. However, Mr Weale was gratified that his offer of assistance in the preparation of new rules and regulations had been accepted by the Guardians. (31)

Following the presentation of Mr Weale's June 1840 report to Parliament, local speculation that the PLC was about to impose its writ over the Parish increased. The 'Journal' in particular devoted considerable attention to the matter, expressing strong disapproval of Mr Weale's activities, and emphasizing the strength of Board and wider local opposition to the PLC. As far as the acceptance of Mr Weale's 'assistance' with the framing of rules and regulations was concerned, the 'Journal' scornfully accused leading Tory Guardians of displaying undue deference, more especially as some of them had recently met with the Commissioners in London. (32) At the national level, the possible introduction of the New Poor Law into Birmingham drew the attention of 'The Times'. It

characteristically villified 'the three irresponsible despots of Somerset-house, and ... their prying adulator, Mr Weale ...' for attempting to introduce 'the detestable New Poor Law Bill' into Birmingham.', and stressed that the efforts to 'deprive the ratepayers of the local government of the parish ...' would be strongly resisted. (33) During December 1840, the 'Journal' and 'The Times' both reported at length upon the opposition expressed at a meeting of the Town Council to the imposition of the New Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham. Speakers referred to the harshness of PLC policies and the introduction of the New Poor Law in Manchester, and, with the exception of four of those present (described by 'The Times' as 'genuine hack Whigs'), members endorsed a resolution which affirmed the principle of local self-government and committed the Council to opposing the introduction of the New Poor Law into the Parish. (34)

Although 1840 did not ultimately witness the imposition of direct PLC control over Board affairs, the year was a watershed. During the course of the 1840s, Robert Weale and other Assistant Commissioners continued to spearhead efforts to extend PLC and PLB influence in the Parish of Birmingham, and correspondence between the central agency and the Guardians mushroomed.

In January 1842 Mr Weale forwarded another report on relief administration in the Parish of Birmingham to the

Commissioners, balancing some praise for the Guardians with further criticism. Although he had not been involved with their drafting, Mr Weale expressed satisfaction that 'the Rules and Regulations voluntarily adopted by the Board ...' were 'mainly taken' from those issued to Unions over which PLC 'superintendence' directly extended. He also felt that considerable improvements had been made in the administration of outdoor relief, perceiving the influence of PLC policies behind the changes introduced by the Guardians in 1841. However, Mr Weale feared that the improvements might not be sustained if there was a significant change in Board membership at the 1843 elections. Mr Weale continued to be dissatisfied with the state of the Workhouse, and the continuance of the granting of gratuities to paupers. Additionally, despite improved accounting practices, he felt that further changes were necessary to increase efficiency and prevent abuses. (35)

Responding to the report, the Commissioners expressed satisfaction that the regulations adopted by the Birmingham Board were based upon their rules, but cautioned Mr Weale not to 'overlook' the fact that they had not been submitted for PLC approval. (36)

A further report on relief administration in the Parish, produced by Mr Weale and Alfred Power, in December 1842, focused upon the Guardians' powers under the terms of the local Act, the inadequacy of the Workhouse and Asylum, and the lack of action by the Guardians to remedy the situation. It also

referred again to the new rules and regulations, gratuities, and the need for improvements to accounting practices, as well as praising the Guardians for achieving reductions in relief expenditure following the adoption of revised regulations. (37)

During the early 1840s, Guardians such as Henry Knight argued that by reforming its own affairs, for example by the adoption of new rules and regulations and re-organizing the administration of outdoor relief, the Board could best contain the 'interference' of the PLC. Others, such as the Tory David Malins, were quite openly supportive of PLC interventions on particular issues, for instance the dismissal of the Workhouse governor in 1844. However, a majority of active Guardians continued to be strident in their opposition to the PLC. The renewal and strengthening of the powers of the PLC was opposed, as it was by the Coventry Board (also operating under a local Act), during 1841/42. Whilst in 1843, having been informed that PLC sanction was required for their new rules and regulations, the Board delayed submitting them for approval, despite recurrent prompting by the PLC and Mr Weale. (38)

In January 1844, disregarding the wishes of the Guardians, and paralleling the experience of the Coventry and Exeter local Act Boards, the PLC issued an Order which stipulated revised rules and regulations for the governance of the Workhouse and Asylum. This Order heralded the commencement of a new era of increasing intervention in all aspects of Parish affairs, and

not surprisingly its imposition heightened the antagonism between the Board and the Commissioners. Issued against the background of a major Workhouse scandal, the Guardians were ultimately unable to challenge its validity. (39)

Following the PLC's receipt of an anonymous letter which contained serious allegations relating to the maltreatment of paupers by the Workhouse governor, Mr Hirst, the Commissioners had seized an excellent opportunity to assert their authority, and despatched Mr Weale to conduct an enquiry during late 1843. Having completed a very detailed investigation, Mr Weale had reported to the PLC that there was evidence to support the veracity of the charges against Mr Hirst. Thereafter, the PLC issued Orders for the dismissal of the governor and matron, accompanied by the rules and regulations Order. As the 'Journal' had predicted at the conclusion of the enquiry, the affair acted as a catalyst to the imposition of greater PLC control over Parish affairs. (40)

Upon receipt of the Orders, great resentment was expressed by a majority of Guardians, who felt that their powers under the local Act were seriously under threat. Already irritated by the PLC enquiry, as a consequence the Board resolved to retain the services of the Hirsts pending further enquiries into their conduct and the Board's legal position. Determined to enforce their newly asserted right to dismiss Board officers, and perceiving that the whole question of the extension of their

remit was under threat, however, the Commissioners proceeded against Mr Hirst for 'disobedience' of the order of dismissal. (41) Subsequently, in February 1844, the Guardians were forced to capitulate, recognising that 'confidence' could not be retained in Mr Hirst, in view of further evidence against him. The Commissioners were well satisfied with this outcome, but the dispute over the rules and regulations was not so swiftly resolved; the Guardians continuing to question the authority of the PLC to issue them under the terms of the Poor Law Amendment Act. (42)

In the wake of the Hirst scandal and the imposition of the Commissioners' rules and regulations, active debate continued amongst the Guardians and in the local press about the merits of greater PLC involvement in Parish affairs. The PLC having already adopted a more interventionist policy, it was feared that Sir James Graham's Poor Law Amendment Bill would further enhance its powers vis-a-vis local Act parishes and incorporations such as Birmingham. Petitions to Parliament protesting against any extension of PLC powers over the Parish were adopted by the Guardians, the Municipal Council and ratepayers' meetings. During May 1844 speakers at a public meeting, including Guardians, the Birmingham M.P.s Joshua Scholefield and G.F.Muntz, and the well known opponents of the New Poor Law, Richard Oastler and the Reverend G.S.Bull, argued eloquently in defence of such local powers as existed in the

Parish of Birmingham, and condemned the whole ethos of the New Poor Law. (43)

Despite the opposition of the Guardians, the PLC persevered in its efforts to enforce its newly imposed rules and regulations, its position greatly strengthened by the 1844 Poor Law Amendment Act. Particular attention was devoted to staffing matters. During early 1844, Mr Weale proceeded with investigations into the duties of various Board officers. Whilst from mid-1844 onwards, Assistant Commissioners Weale and Austin pressurized the new Workhouse governor to enforce the PLC's rules and regulations, even if contradicted by the Guardians. (44) Following an investigation by Mr Weale into the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of the Workhouse chaplain in July 1844 (because of his alleged failure to perform his duties 'efficiently'), the Commissioners endorsed the Guardians' stance, but it was stressed that PLC approval was required for the new chaplain. He had already been appointed by the Guardians, determined to assert their independence. (45) In late 1844 changes to the Parish medical relief system (including the appointment of six additional district medical officers) were initiated, following an enquiry by Mr Weale into a case of inadequate attendance upon an outdoor pauper. The PLC, whilst excusing the medical officer concerned, had insisted that 'the whole system of Medical relief in the Parish ... [needed to] be placed on a more satisfactory footing than at present ...'. (46) Illustrative

of the continued desire of the Guardians to maintain their independence, during July 1845 annoyance was expressed about PLC enquiries relative to allegations that the Workhouse governor had mistreated paupers. A Guardian who had informed the PLC about the allegations was strongly reprimanded by the Board, more especially as the charges had not been 'substantiated'. (47)

The agreement of the Guardians during the summer of 1845 to carry out a wholesale staffing review, in close consultation with Assistant Commissioner Austin, represented another major advance in PLC influence; the Guardians effectively accepting that the authority of the PLC could not be denied, at least as far as staffing matters were concerned. It was recognised that a revision of the appointments and duties of Board officers and servants was necessary, in view of the fact that, following the appointment of a district auditor under the terms of the 1844 Poor Law Amendment Act, appointments had to be made by the Board (and not by committees) and approved by the PLC, before salaries could be paid legally. (48)

That the recommendations of the Finance and Audit Committee, which carried out the review, largely mirrored Mr Austin's 'Observations', demonstrates that it had been strongly influenced by his views. Both stressed the need to formalise many appointments, and for the revision of the responsibilities of the 'Vestry Clerk', treasurer, House Clerk, 'Levy Clerk' and

assistant overseers for collecting the rates. Special attention was devoted to the means by which the Guardians could ensure greater control over Board finances. Mr Austin was particularly concerned about the lack of safeguards against the misappropriation of Board funds, more especially because the income from rates and other sources exceeded £60,000 a year. Amongst other recommendations, it was agreed that the 'Vestry Clerk' should be re-appointed as assistant overseer responsible for removals, and that the treasurer, Mr J.Y. Welch, should be appointed as Clerk to the Guardians, though Mr Austin expressed disquiet about the power Mr Welch had long exercised over the Guardians' finances. Mr Austin also emphasized that the payment of gratuities to Workhouse inmates (reputed to have amounted to around £200 annually) and to Asylum inmates, should be permanently discontinued. (49)

As a result of the review, where necessary appointments and salaries were formally confirmed by the Board and the PLC; the new posts of Clerk, assistant Clerk and assistant overseer for removals were approved; the number of rate collectors was reduced from nine to six (but not four as recommended by Mr Austin); assistant overseers responsible for making out the rate and collecting books, and to act as surveyor and valuer of new or altered property, and an independent treasurer, were appointed; and it was agreed that in future pauper servants would not receive 'money gratuity' but 'extra rations of Meat Dinner and Beer...'. When questioned as to the role of the PLC

in approving Board appointments, Mr Austin, drawing an analogy with Oxford (where a similar situation pertained), stressed that the powers of the Guardians under the local Act had not been overridden, but that the PLC simply intended to ensure that the Guardians exercised such powers properly. (50)

From 1845 onwards, the influence of the PLC and PLB over the affairs of the Birmingham Guardians continued to be extended on almost every front, through the medium of the increasing volume of correspondence and continuing visits by Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors. One major indication of the consolidation of the position of the PLC and PLB vis-a-vis the Parish, was the growing number of specific and general Orders applicable to it. Those issued to the Parish during 1845 included an Audit District Order, and two Orders relating to apprenticeship arrangements, which were also a by-product of the 1844 Act. (51) In 1847, although the July Consolidated Order was not applied to the Parish, an important Order issued to the Guardians in March regulated accounting practices. Though accounts procedures had been modified in 1845, the failure of the Guardians to exercise enough control over their finances had been revealed in 1846, when the Clerk, Mr Welch, resigned hurriedly and was subsequently committed for trial on charges of embezzlement. Despite the changes instituted by the 1847 Order, however, in 1849 his successor was also found to have embezzled Parish funds. (52)

Comments by Mr Weale in a July 1847 report, reveal that during the dying days of the PLC, the strategy pursued in dealings with the recalcitrant Birmingham Board in order to induce greater conformity with official policies, relied as much upon gentle insidious persuasion as the issue of directives and hectoring. Thus, referring to the new Workhouse issue, he remarked:

I do not think it desirable till the question of building a new Workhouse is settled that any suggestion should be made by the Commissioners as to any alterations in the existing buildings, or to the mode of management. I can by my own suggestions do more than would be effected by a more direct communication. I have paid ten visits to this Parish since my last Report, and I will continue a watchful superintendence. The active Guardians feel that there are many defects in the Local Act - and it will be more satisfactory that suggestions for its improvement should emanate from the Guardians than from the Commissioners.

Whilst Mr Weale was always assiduous in his efforts to extend PLC and PLB influence in Birmingham, he perceived that this end could be best accomplished by accommodation with allies on the Board of Guardians rather than by unnecessary confrontation.

(53) Michael Rose has referred to the development of a similar approach by Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors towards Boards in the West Riding of Yorkshire. (54)

Through a combination of judicious advice and the issue of Orders, the central Poor Law agency continued to increase its influence over Parish affairs. When the Asylum governor and matron resigned in 1847, in line with the advice of Mr Weale the posts of governor and schoolmaster were separated. (55)

Board agreement to participate in the scheme initiated in 1846, whereby the salaries of schoolteachers and medical officers were subsidised by Parliamentary grant, was also secured after some delay. (56) In November 1849, consonant with the wishes of the Guardians, Orders were issued which altered the Workhouse and Asylum dietaries. (57) The PLC's decisive intervention in the new Workhouse saga in 1847, however, most clearly underlined the extent to which the central Poor Law agency was now able to influence the policies and practices of the Birmingham Board. (58)

At the beginning of 1850, the issue to the Birmingham Board of rules and regulations, outdoor and labour relief, and accounting procedures Orders, though issued with the consent of the Guardians, served to confirm the position of ascendancy now attained by the PLB. It was now firmly established that the Guardians were required to consult, and defer to the judgment of, the PLB, and subsequently the LGB, on a wide range of matters, including staffing issues and relief policy formulation, although they still retained their constitution under the terms of the 1831 local Act. This situation was paralleled by the experience of such other local Act boards as Bristol, Exeter and Southampton during the 1850s. (59)

From the early 1850s onwards, a clear manifestation of the PLB's greatly increased role in Board affairs was the regularity with which Mr Weale, and other Inspectors, presided

over enquiries into the conduct of officers and other matters. (60) The Workhouse master, William Ogden, was the subject of two official enquiries into alleged mistreatment of paupers in 1853 and 1855. Though acquitted in 1853, Mr Ogden continued to be the subject of recurrent allegations, and after the second enquiry he and his wife were required to resign as master and matron by the PLB. (61) On a number of occasions the Guardians consulted the PLB about unsatisfactory relieving officers, sometimes recommending that they be dismissed following internal enquiries, and on others requesting the PLB to institute official enquiries, as a result of which some officers resigned rather than face dismissal. One relieving officer, William Endean, was the subject of official enquiries into his treatment of paupers in 1855 and 1857. Although acquitted on these occasions, he resigned with three other relieving officers in the autumn of 1861, pending the completion of another enquiry into allegations that they had all neglected to visit relief cases adequately, and that Mr Endean had fathered a pauper's child. (62)

The number of Orders issued to the Birmingham Guardians during the 1850s and 1860s is also indicative of the extent of the influence now enjoyed by the PLB. They included Orders lifting surcharges imposed by the auditor upon officers and Guardians because of 'illegal' expenditure, the 1868 Creed Register Order, and an 1860 Order (issued to a number of unions and parishes operating under local Acts), which related to the

appointment of medical officers under the terms of the 1858 Medical Act. (63)

During the 1850s and 1860s the Guardians sought and received advice and assistance from the PLB at times of particularly heavy pressure upon the relief system. Thus, for example, Mr Weale advised the Guardians on measures to cope with the increased numbers of relief applicants and general distress during the spell of severe weather at the beginning of 1855, and the PLB endorsed the action taken by the Board. Though some Guardians remained loath to seek PLB endorsement for initiatives, applications were made for the issue of some special Orders authorizing action to meet extra pressures. In mid-1860 the PLB issued an Order approving a 'task of work' for casual paupers at the Workhouse, and Orders issued during the winter of 1861/62 authorized the Guardians to establish district relief committees, and to hire plots of land where paupers could be employed by the Parish. (64)

Although there is plenty of evidence of co-operation between the Board and the PLB during the 1850s and 1860s, not least over the erection of the new Workhouse, the reporting of appointments and other staffing matters, and the adoption of new rules and regulations, nonetheless relations between the two parties remained tense. By the early 1850s the PLB was able to wield considerable influence, but as the 1831 local Act remained in force the Guardians continued to enjoy a greater

freedom of manouevre than boards constituted under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, and resistance to further encroachments did not abate. Guardians and other commentators continued to criticise the role of the PLB and its officials in Parish affairs, and elections during the 1850s were certainly characterised by strong expressions of anti-centralist sentiment. The tradition of petitions against proposed changes affecting the autonomy of the Guardians, and continuation of the PLB, was also maintained. (65)

Anti-centralist feeling was much in evidence in March 1852, when Joseph Allday and other leading Guardians expressed great resentment at the PLB insistence that the cost of opening the new Workhouse for public inspection should be met by the Guardians personally. Mr Allday complained of the 'despotic authority' being exercised by the central agency, and described the PLB as a 'very serious tax on the country' and its Inspectors as 'of no use'. He condemned the harshness of PLB regulations, and exhorted the Guardians 'not [to] quietly submit to order after order issued for the purpose of bringing in the Poor-law Board to control the whole of the government of the parish.' A resolution critical of the PLB and expressing the determination of the Guardians to uphold their powers under the local Act was passed by the Board. (66) After the 1852 election, the Guardian Joseph Corbett referred to the need for the adoption of measures to prevent the 'further encroachment' of the PLB. (67)

In 1856 a section of the Guardians were annoyed by a report produced by Mr Weale, which, as in 1840, adversely contrasted levels of relief expenditure and administration in the Parish of Birmingham with that of the Parish of Aston. [SEE TABLE 46] Guardians opposed to increasing PLB influence, including the chairman Alderman Allday, Michael Maher and Joseph Corbett, reiterated condemnation of its policies (especially the 'prohibitory order' which was in force in Aston), and again described the PLB as an unnecessary burden on the nation. They contended that Mr Weale had deliberately compared Aston with Birmingham to present the latter in the worst possible light, flagrantly ignoring the fact that the Parish of Birmingham had very high concentrations of impoverished poor, whilst the Parish of Aston was unionized with agricultural parishes and hamlets, and had its own extensive rural hinterland. It was inferred that the relief policies of neighbouring parishes placed extra burdens upon Birmingham's resources. (68)

(4) The Perpetuation of Constructive Working Relations Between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the LGB, 1871-1912

The essentially sound working relationships which existed between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the PLC and PLB and their representatives, were replicated during the LGB era. As with other boards, the LGB sought to guide and assist the Aston and Kings Norton Guardians in their administration of the

local relief system by means of a copious correspondence and the issue of regulatory and facilitating Orders, whilst Inspectors continued to monitor Board activities and offer advice. (69)

To encourage good practice, the LGB and District Inspectors regularly despatched to the Aston and Kings Norton Guardians (in common with other boards), circulars on aspects of relief policy, staffing matters and other topics of relevance to their work, as well as official returns relating to levels of pauperism and expenditure. Additionally they were kept apprised of the provisions of relevant new legislation. Annual reports continued to be utilized as a vehicle for promoting officially endorsed policies, and highlighting the successes (and failings) of Poor Law administrators nationally. (70)

During the LGB era the value to the central agency of regular Union visits by Inspectors continued to be fully recognised. New District Inspectors, such as Mr T.L.Murray Browne in 1892, wasted little time in informing Boards of their intention to pay them a visit, and newly completed institutional facilities tended to be inspected swiftly. Thus, for example, during the first half of 1890, Inspectors Herbert Jenner-Fust and Joseph J.Henley visited new wards at the Aston Workhouse. (71)

When they attended Board meetings, often following visits to Union institutions, Inspectors tendered a mixture of

encouragement and advice to their audience. Though the Aston and Kings Norton Boards were not antagonistic towards the LGB, Inspectors anxious to further policies advocated by the central agency, as in their dealings with other boards, tended to temper any criticisms and exhortations to action with some praise for their endeavours. By cultivating the goodwill of the Guardians compliance was much more likely to be achieved. Thus the cleanliness and 'order' at Board institutions was often remarked upon, and Board successes in reducing the numbers in receipt of outdoor relief were acknowledged. (72) In January 1891, for example, Mr Jenner-Fust praised the Aston Guardians for achieving a decrease in the number of cases on outdoor relief, commenting that 'the increased attention that had been paid to the matter had borne fruit ...'. That such praise was echoed in a subsequent report to the LGB on pauperism within his district, demonstrates the extent of Mr Jenner-Fust's satisfaction with the Aston Board. It was stated in the report that: 'Aston has the lowest proportion of paupers to population in a union county where the average proportion is much below that of the country generally.' (73)

Inspectors, representing official LGB policy, offered advice and guidance to the Boards on a whole array of matters, ranging from fire safety, hygiene, and the need for improved care of the sick, to the need for the appointment of extra officers, and pauper employment. Thus, in relation to the care of the sick, in December 1875, Mr Henley urged the Kings Norton

Guardians to make extra provision for 'cases of Infectious disease'. At another Kings Norton Board meeting in March 1885, Mr Jenner-Fust expressed concern about the 'danger of infection' posed by the ability of inmates of the vagrant wards to pass clothes directly to the laundry, and enjoined the Guardians to 'pay strict attention to the cases of ringworm ... in the House as if it was allowed to spread it might be very serious.' (74) On the subject of pauper employment, in September 1890 Mr Henley suggested to the Kings Norton Guardians that they 'should consider ... employing some of the able bodied women now in receipt of out door relief to do menial work in the Workhouse.' This was already the practice at Merthyr Tydfil. (75)

Addressing the Aston and Kings Norton Boards in early 1898, Inspector Murray Browne turned his attention to staffing policies. Thus at a meeting of the Aston Board in March, reflecting greater LGB interest in the standards of nursing at workhouses, he recommended 'the desirability of increasing the staff of nurses in the sick Wards, and of doing away with the pauper wardsmen ...'. Whilst in April, during an address to the Kings Norton Guardians, he referred to the 'continued increase' in the Union's population, and urged the Board to recognise that it 'was one of the greatest ... in the Country and [that] this ... should be taken into consideration in dealing with all matters connected with the administration and especially that of the staff.' (76)

As during the PLC and PLB era, the Guardians were able to exercise their discretion in acting upon the advice of Inspectors. Following visits to the Aston Workhouse by Inspector Jenner-Fust in January 1891, for instance, the Guardians adopted some, but not all, of his recommendations. Though the Board adopted recommendations on the keeping of records of relatives supporting paupers, it was decided not to make suggested alterations to the ventilation of the schools. Later in 1891, however, Mr Jenner-Fust did secure the agreement of the Aston Guardians to the appointment of an assistant master, in view of the master's prolonged illness, and (as part of his involvement with the Board's re-organization of the responsibilities of its outdoor relief officers) to the issue of a Special Order relating to the appointment and duties of a superintendent of outdoor relief. (77)

Similarly, in 1877, after Inspector Henley had informed the Kings Norton Guardians that the LGB considered plans for the erection of new 'Tramp Wards ... on the Cellular System ...' to be 'of a rather too expensive character ...', the Board consented to alterations. (78) However, at the beginning of 1895, when the LGB recommended the appointment of a night nurse for the Kings Norton Workhouse, the Guardians replied that although they recognised the 'necessity' for such an officer, as there was no additional accommodation available for extra staff, an appointment would have to await the completion of the new infirmary. Reluctantly the LGB acquiesced. (79)

For their part, Boards continued to solicit advice from the LGB and Inspectors. Thus, in November 1875, the Kings Norton Board sought advice on whether or not to allow the master's new wife to reside in the Workhouse, fearing that to permit this might undermine the matron's position. Subsequently Mr Henley suggested the creation of a post of assistant matron to solve the difficulty, and the Board, with LGB approval, appointed the master's wife as matron with a salary of £20 per annum, and the former matron as assistant matron, her salary to remain at £30 per annum. (80)

When Inspectors were transferred to other districts or retired, as during the PLC and PLB era, the Boards, observing the normal courtesies, passed resolutions expressing regret at their departure and thanking them for their assistance. Following the sudden death of Inspector Murray Browne in March 1900, the Kings Norton Board sent their condolences to his family. (81)

Aspects of administration which came in for criticism by Inspectors at Board meetings, or in reports to the LGB, ranged from the relatively mundane to more serious matters. Thus at one extreme, following a visit to the Aston Workhouse in early 1888, Mr Jenner-Fust informed the Aston Board that the boys' beds 'had not been properly made, but simply covered up and made to look tidy.' (82) Of somewhat more importance, in February 1898, following a visit by Inspector Murray Browne to

the Aston Workhouse, the Guardians were asked by the LGB to explain why one of the dayrooms had been occupied by beds whilst another was closed. At the beginning of 1895 Mr Murray Browne had expressed similar concern about overcrowding, and the use of dayrooms as dormitories, at the Kings Norton Workhouse. (83) In July 1890, subsequent to a visit to the Kings Norton Workhouse Infirmary, Mr Jenner-Fust observed to the Guardians that the dispensary key ought to be in the keeping of the Medical Officer (currently nurses had free access to it), and that medicine should not be given 'upon verbal directions'. (84) More seriously, in early 1911, having recently visited the Aston Workhouse, Inspector E.B.Wethered reported a number of concerns to the LGB. Mr Wethered was particularly dissatisfied about the care of old and infirm women, believing that insufficient and unsatisfactory officers were employed to supervise such cases (with night attendance seen as particularly inadequate), but he was also concerned about aspects of sanitation and health, in particular the extent of rat infestations. (85)

(5) Co-operation and Consultation: The Relationship Between the Birmingham Guardians and the LGB, 1871-1912

From the early 1870s onwards, successive Birmingham Boards displayed a greater willingness to co-operate with the central Poor Law agency in the administration of the Parish relief system. This change of approach was partly conditioned by the

fact that the Guardians now had to deal with the more assertive LGB. In this regard it has to be borne in mind that other remaining local Act boards came much more firmly under LGB control during the 1870s. Amongst them the former Coventry and Exeter local Act authorities became union boards, whilst the Shrewsbury incorporation was amalgamated with the Atcham Union. (86) However, the more co-operative stance adopted by the Birmingham Guardians also reflects the fact that the policies and approach of the LGB and the Birmingham Board were now far more in tune. A relationship which had once been fraught with tension was now essentially characterised by constructive co-operation. The new spirit of harmony is evident at many levels, from the reception given to Inspectors when they visited Parish institutions or attended Board meetings, to the relative ease with which Orders were sought to facilitate expenditure upon large-scale capital projects and policy changes, as well as alterations in the Board's constitution.

A new willingness to co-operate with the central agency was demonstrated in 1873, when the Board requested the LGB to authorize a reduction in the number of Guardians, and to reduce the quorum for committee meetings; and again in 1878, when minor modifications to the 1831 local Act relating to voting procedures at Board meetings were secured. Gone was the old suspicion and antipathy; when regulations were recognised to be in need of alteration the Guardians were now fully prepared to liaise with the LGB. In 1883 and 1891 the Guardians had few

qualms about requesting the LGB to facilitate further modifications to the electoral regulations. (87)

Under circumstances where Board and LGB policies were much more closely in line, co-operation replaced confrontation. During the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century, the Birmingham Board, in the vanguard of authorities developing innovative policies to deal with particular categories of paupers, had little hesitation in applying to the LGB for Orders to assist with the achievement of its goals. To enable the Board to proceed with such large-scale capital projects as the erection of the Cottage Homes, the new Infirmary and the Monymhull Colony, a succession of Orders were sought and successfully obtained. (88) At a more mundane level, regulations relating to such matters as the appointment, salaries, dismissal and conditions of employment of staff, were adhered to diligently. (89)

Although a much more constructive relationship developed between the Birmingham Board and the LGB than had previously existed with the PLC and PLB, this did not mean that there was always harmony. Thus, at the beginning of the LGB era, during late 1872 and early 1873, there was a dispute over the correct response to misconduct on the part of the Clerk, William Thompson. The episode is significant, as it reveals that at this time a majority of active Board members were still keen to maintain maximum local autonomy. However, it is also

interesting for other reasons: it provides a good illustration of the sort of misconduct senior officers might be guilty of, it reveals much about the type of relationship which existed between senior officers and their employers, and it highlights tensions within the Board.

Appointed as Clerk in March 1869, William Thompson was suspended from his duties in October 1872 (after he had attended a committee meeting in a drunken state), and the Board requested the LGB to institute an enquiry into his conduct. A section of the Guardians, however, felt that he should be given another chance and petitioned the LGB for the removal or qualification of his suspension, to afford him 'the chance of redeeming his conduct and character.' For its part the LGB was not prepared to accede to such pleas, in view of the fact that Mr Thompson had admitted the specific charges against him, and had been guilty of previous lapses of a similar nature. Though the planned enquiry was abandoned, the LGB called for his resignation and the appointment of a replacement. In response, at the beginning of December, Guardians opposed to Mr Thompson's removal from office, exploiting traditional Board antipathy towards central control, secured endorsement of a motion putting his suspension into abeyance for six months, and his resignation was not accepted. Subsequently, in January 1873, following the resignation of the Board chairman Joseph Downing (who felt that such a move was not in accordance with the 'law'), the Guardians went one step further and endorsed

the re-instatement of Mr Thompson. An LGB letter which stressed that he could not continue as Clerk, was simply referred to a special committee. With the LGB and the Guardians stalemated over the affair, the central agency thereafter issued an Order dismissing him as 'unfit' for office, and requiring the Guardians to appoint a new Clerk.

(90)

Though the Guardians reacted to the Order by endorsing a motion which stated that the LGB's dismissal of the Clerk, in direct opposition to their wishes, raised the whole question of 'whether the administration of the Poor laws in this Parish shall be conducted by the Rate Payers' representatives or by a central authority over which the Parishioners have no control ...', ultimately they were forced to capitulate. By late January, having sent a deputation to the LGB to discuss the issue, the Guardians had to acknowledge that Mr Thompson could not remain in office, and advertised for a replacement. The episode served to underline the authoritative position now attained by the LGB in relation to staffing matters, and Parish affairs in general. (91)

Subsequent instances of misconduct by senior Birmingham officers, did not give rise to the same sort of friction between the Guardians and the LGB. When William Coulton, Mr Thompson's successor, was suspended from his duties in late 1879, suspected of financial irregularities, the Board readily

reported the circumstances to the central agency. Thereafter, under threat of an official enquiry, Mr Coulton resigned in February 1880, to the complete satisfaction of the LGB and the Guardians. (92) Following an enquiry conducted by Inspector Henley 'as to the visitation of Pauper Lunatics by the District Medical Officers ...', during 1884, when the LGB directed that four of them should resign, the Guardians fully supported this decision. Similarly, in 1886, when an enquiry conducted by Inspectors Henley and Dr.F.J.Mouat concluded that the Workhouse Medical Officer, Mr A.B.Simpson, had flouted the directions of the Guardians in relation to the containment of outbreaks of puerperal fever at the Workhouse, the Guardians did not oppose his dismissal by the LGB. (93)

In their dealings with the Birmingham Board, as with the Aston and Kings Norton Guardians and boards elsewhere, the LGB and its Inspectors always sought to promote and encourage the adoption and continuation of policies which accorded with central government conceptions of how the Poor Law should be functioning in each locality. To this end, praise for the Board's policies and administration was mingled with criticism and exhortations to action as deemed appropriate. For their part, the Guardians generally accepted advice and constructive criticism with good grace, and by the early 1880s relations between the Birmingham Board and LGB Inspectors were far more amicable than they had been with Mr Weale.

During the 1880s, Inspectors Henley and Jenner-Fust regularly praised the work of the Guardians, not only when addressing Board meetings, but in their reports to the LGB and in evidence to Parliamentary select committees. Thus, addressing the Guardians in March 1882, Mr Henley 'congratulated the Board upon the large amount of useful work which it ... [had] done during its term of office.' Whilst in August 1884, he spoke to the Guardians of 'the great improvements made in the Workhouse during the past 10 years ...', singling out for special mention 'the complete classification', and 'the efficient nursing & medical attendance for the sick.' To further boost morale and encourage continued zeal, he expressed his opinion that 'The Parish was not only doing more work than it did 10 years ago but it was doing it more economically and more efficiently.' In March 1885, Mr Henley re-affirmed to the Board his general satisfaction with the Workhouse and the 'condition of the Inmates', once more remarking upon the improved 'nursing of the sick.' At a September 1886 Board meeting, Mr Jenner-Fust expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness and 'good order' at the Workhouse, Test-house and Cottage Homes. (94)

However, praise for the Board's administration and policies was tempered by expressions of concern on particular issues. Hence in March 1882, Mr Henley, in drawing attention to an increase in outdoor relief, urged the Guardians to 'use every endeavour to lessen it if possible.' Despite his praise for the Workhouse, in March 1885, Mr Henley felt that it was

'inadequate for the wants of the town.' Referring to the Guardians' 'efforts ... to meet the great pressure upon them ...', he criticised the policy of sending old men to the Test-house, as this interfered with the discipline necessary for its normal inmates. The Board was also criticised for mixing sick people with 'Imbeciles' at the Workhouse, and encouraged to consider the removal of such groups to new facilities or a separate institution. In March 1887, on the occasion of the laying of the memorial stone of the new Infirmary, Mr Henley took the opportunity to emphasize the necessity for the building, and to praise the Guardians for taking action. (95)

Reports furnished by Mr Jenner-Fust to the LGB, on the state of pauperism and administration within his district during the late 1880s and early 1890s, reveal general satisfaction with the policies and administration of the Birmingham Board. Thus, in his report for 1887, Mr Jenner-Fust stated that 'a marked diminution' in the number of outdoor relief cases in the Parish was not only the product of an 'improvement in trade' but the result of 'good administration'. Referring to the new Birmingham Infirmary in his report for 1888, he commented: 'It is impossible to speak too highly of the minute care and attention to details which have been displayed by the Guardians while this enormous building was in course of erection.' In his reports for 1889 and 1890 Mr Jenner-Fust emphasized the reduction in the numbers in receipt of outdoor and indoor relief in Birmingham. Whilst in his report for 1891 he

stressed that Birmingham was the only place in Warwickshire where numbers in the Workhouse exceeded those receiving outdoor relief. (96)

Giving evidence to the 1888 House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Law Relief, Mr Henley also praised the Birmingham Board. Thus he referred to reductions in the numbers receiving outdoor relief as the result of the new regulations adopted by the Board, claimed that the Test-house had had a beneficial effect in reducing the numbers of able-bodied applicants, and expressed satisfaction with child care at the Cottage Homes. (97)

By the early 1900s relations between the Birmingham Board and the LGB and its Inspectors were radically different from those which had existed between the Board and the PLC and its agents. This is underlined by remarks made by Inspector Nicholas Herbert, during an address to the Board in December 1905. In acknowledging the Guardians' 'cordial welcome', Mr Herbert referred to 'the good relations which had always existed ...' between the LGB and the Guardians, adding that 'There was no reason why those relations should not continue, for they both had the same object at heart, the good, efficient, and economical administration of the poor law.' Shared objectives and viewpoints had replaced mutual antagonism and suspicion. (98)

Inspectors continued to praise and encourage the Guardians in the fulfilment of their responsibilities, as in October 1908, when Mr Herbert acknowledged the efforts of the Board, in conjunction with the City Council, the Distress Committee and the 'City Aid Society', in coping with the pressure attendant upon increased levels of local unemployment. (99) However, when deemed requisite, praise and encouragement continued to be accompanied by expressions of concern. During his address to the Board in December 1905, whilst referring to increased pauperism in the Parish of Birmingham, Mr Herbert was careful to emphasize that the Board devoted 'a great deal of attention to relief matters.', and to favourably compare levels of pauperism in the Parish with the situation in Liverpool and Manchester. On the same occasion, however, he also expressed concern about the increased numbers of men in the Workhouse, and the lack of employment provided for them. Mr Herbert suggested that the Board 'might take a lesson from the labour colonies abroad ...', adding that he would be pleased to assist any committee appointed to consider the matter. (100)

That the Guardians did not always take particular note of Inspectors' criticisms, is demonstrated by their sluggishness in responding to requests from the LGB during 1911 for reactions to two reports. In June 1911, the LGB forwarded to the Guardians a copy of a report by Dr. Needham (one of the Commissioners in Lunacy), relating to a recent inspection of the facilities for 'imbeciles' at the Workhouse, requesting

'observations' on criticisms made; but in August, no response having been forthcoming, the Board was re-contacted on the subject. Under similar circumstances, in May, September and November 1911, the LGB enquired about the Guardians' reaction to reports produced by Inspectors Wethered and Dr. Fuller, on the management of the Cottage Homes. (101)

(6) Conclusion

During the PLC and PLB era, the largely constructive relations which existed between the central Poor Law agency and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, contrasted markedly with the tense (at times even hostile) relationship between the Birmingham Board and central government. This contrast is attributable to a combination of factors. At a fundamental level the fact that the Aston and Kings Norton Unions were formed under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, whilst poor relief in the Parish of Birmingham continued to be administered under the terms of the local Act of 1831, meant that the Birmingham Guardians continued to enjoy a greater degree of freedom in relation to policy formulation and execution than the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. When the PLC increasingly began to challenge the autonomy of the Birmingham Board from 1840 onwards, as part of its drive to assert its influence over local Act parishes and incorporations, tension was unavoidable as the Guardians tenaciously held on to their cherished independence.

In the case of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, the election of a majority of Guardians largely receptive to PLC policies during the formative years of the two Unions, together with the establishment of a good rapport between Assistant Commissioner Earle and the Boards (especially the Aston Board), served to lay strong foundations for long-term constructive relationships with the PLC, PLB and LGB. For the most part, both Boards continued to adhere to policies advocated by the central Poor Law authority, subject to the exercise of the usual local discretion. When deemed necessary, as in their dealings with other boards, the PLC and PLB and their representatives criticised aspects of Board administration and policy, and minor differences of opinion did occur (for example over the removal from office of Aston's relieving officer in 1839), but overall relationships remained amicable. The Aston Board in particular, was valued by the PLC and PLB as something of a model authority, in view of its strict and economical administration. (102)

From 1840 onwards the PLC made a concerted effort to assert its influence over the affairs of the Birmingham Board, and by the early 1850s the PLB had achieved a large measure of ascendancy. Major milestones along the route towards the attainment of this position, were the imposition of the 1844 rules and regulations Order in the wake of the Hirst affair, involvement with the 1845 staffing review, the 1847 new workhouse judgment, and the issue of the three 1850 Orders.

The visits and reports of Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors, and the official enquiries over which they presided, from the early 1840s onwards, played a vital role in furthering the influence of the PLC and PLB. In conjunction with the ever-increasing volume of official correspondence and Orders, they ensured that by 1850 the Birmingham Board could not avoid a large measure of central direction. Nonetheless, Poor Law administration in the Parish of Birmingham continued to be conducted under the terms of the 1831 local Act, and the Guardians maintained their resistance to unwelcome intrusions into their affairs. Throughout the PLC and PLB era, active Guardians fiercely defended Board prerogatives under the local Act, against a background of a more generalised defence of the principle of local self-government in Birmingham and other urban communities. (103)

After 1871, sound working relations continued to exist between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the LGB and its representatives. As during the earlier years of the New Poor Law, the LGB and Inspectors praised and encouraged the Guardians in their endeavours, and expressed concern about particular matters when deemed appropriate. Though the Boards did not always adopt the line advocated by the LGB or its Inspectors, as for example over the siting of the Erdington Cottage Homes, Board policies were generally in line with those promoted by the central agency. (104)

As far as the Birmingham Board is concerned, relations with the LGB stand in marked contrast to the tense relationships which had existed with the PLC and PLB. In spite of occasional tension, for instance over the Thompson affair at the beginning of the LGB era, co-existence and co-operation replaced antipathy and suspicion, as Board policies increasingly accorded with those of the central agency. A new spirit of harmony was evident at all levels, from the reception visiting Inspectors received, to the willingness with which LGB assistance was sought in connection with alterations to the Board's constitution and the provision of new institutional facilities. During the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, as one of the foremost progressive Poor Law authorities, the Birmingham Board recognised the LGB as a facilitator of its policies rather than as a threat to local government prerogatives. Inspectors, although on occasion critical of aspects of Board administration, generally expressed satisfaction with the work of the Birmingham Guardians, and for their part the Guardians no longer despised Inspectors as unwelcome intruders. (105)

Chapter 7 Notes

(1) See W.Apfel & P.Dunkley, English rural society and the New Poor Law: Bedfordshire, 1834-47. Social History, 10 (1) Jan.1985, p.67; Ashforth, Settlement and removal in urban areas, p.77; Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, pp.131-33; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.45-53; Digby, Pauper Palaces, pp.54 & 229-32; Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties'; D.Fraser, The Evolution of the British Welfare State: a History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution, 1984, pp.51-54; Fraser, Introduction, The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century, pp.12 & 17-19; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution, pp.117-22; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds, pp.36-44; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.75-85; Harling, The Power of Persuasion; G.Himmelfarb, The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age, 1984, p.168; MacDonagh, Early Victorian Government, pp.107-10; M.E.MacKinnon, Poverty and Policy: The English Poor Law 1860-1910. Ph.D. Nuffield College, 1984, p.10; Midwinter, Social Administration, pp.44-49; Midwinter, State Intervention at the Local Level, p.110; Proctor, Poor Law Administration in Preston Union, pp.158-63; Roberts, Dealing with the Poor, p.57; Rose, The Anti-Poor Law Movement, pp.81-91; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.169-78; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.292-303. See also Ch.1, pp.23-24.

(2) See eg. Ch.3, pp.109-17, Ch.5, pp.210-12 & Ch.6, pp.259-60, 282 & 284-85.

(3) See 1st Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1835, p.12; Ashforth, The Urban Poor Law, p.130; Aschrott, The English Poor Law System, pp.206-09; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, pp.81-89; Crowther, The Workhouse System, pp.36-37 & 114-15; Lewis, William Day, p.163; McCord, The Implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, pp.90, 93-96 & 98-103.

(4) See also pp.323-24 & 340, Ch.2, Section 3 & Ch.6, pp.244-45.

(5) See Digby, Pauper Palaces, p.77; Digby, The Rural Poor Law, p.157; Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties', p.342; G.B.A.M.Finlayson, England in the Eighteen Thirties: Decade of Reform, 1969, p.63; Lewis, William Day, p.183; Midwinter, Social Administration, pp.46-48; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.124-26.

(6) PRO: MH 32/21, Mr Earle report to E.Chadwick, 11.2.37. See also Ch.3, pp.109-17.

(7) Ibid., Q. report, 1.1.38.

(8) Ibid., Q. reports, 1.4.38 & 30.6.38. See also Ch.6, pp.252 & 256.

- (9) PRO: MH 12/13232, Mr Earle report to E.Chadwick, 23.6.38; 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, pp.17 & 26-28.
- (10) PRO: MH 32/21, Q. report, 1.1.38.
- (11) BRL: A. Min. 15.11.36, 13.12.36, 27.12.36, 14.3.37, 28.3.37 & 4.4.37; BRL: K.N. Min. 13.12.36, 10.2.37 & 21.4.37; PRO: MH 12/13232, notes Mr Earle to PLC, 3.12.36, letter PLC to Mr Pearson, 8.12.36, letter PLC to Mr Earle, 14.12.36 & letter Mr Earle to PLC, 17.12.36; PRO: MH 12/14039, letter Mr Docker to PLC, 18.6.38, note Mr Earle to PLC, 2.7.38 & letter PLC to Mr Docker, 6.7.38. See also Ch.6, pp.245-46.
- (12) See also Ch.3, pp.109-17 & Ch.5, pp.210-12.
- (13) BRL: A. Min. 28.8.38, 4.9.38 & 11.9.38.
- (14) See PRO: MH 12/14039, letter Mr Power to PLC, 5.1.41; PRO: MH 12/14040, letter Mr Docker to PLC, 12.1.46; PRO: MH 32/7, letter Mr Austin to PLC, 15.2.47 & letter E.Chadwick to Mr Austin, 23.2.47; PRO: MH 32/29, letter E.Chadwick to Mr Gulson, 10.12.46; PRO: MH 32/31, letter E.Chadwick to Mr Graves, 10.12.46, letter Mr Graves to PLC, 6.12.46, letter E.Chadwick to Mr Graves, 4.3.47 & letter Mr Graves to PLC, 12.3.47; PRO: MH 32/64; PRO: MH 32/85; PRO: MH 32/87, letter PLC to Mr Weale, 4.3.47; PRO: MH 32/89, letter Mr Weale to PLB, 24.10.67, letter Mr Weale to Boards in his district, 1.11.67 & letter PLB to Mr Weale, 2.11.67; BRL: A. Min. 15.3.42 & 16.3.47; BRL: K.N. Min. 18.9.40.
- (15) See PRO: MH 32/87, letters Mr Weale's son to PLB, 9.1.48 & 12.2.48, letter Mr Weale to PLB, 29.2.48, letter PLB to Mr Weale, 1.3.48 & Mr Weale report and statement of miles travelled from 1835-48, 30.6.48; PRO: HO 73/52, Bridgwater Union report, 6.12.37 & 'Facts Connected with the Medical Relief of the Poor in the Bridgwater Union' (1837); Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Poor Law Amendment Act, Report (Lord Wharnecliffe) 1837-38; Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law, pp.85-90; Buchanan, John Bowen, pp.181-82 & 185-94. See also Ch.2, pp.83-85 & Ch.5, pp.210-12.
- (16) BRL: A. Min. 15.3.42, 16.3.47 & 30.3.47; BRL: K.N. Min. 18.9.40.
- (17) BRL: K.N. Min. 1.3.39; PRO: MH 32/85, Q. report, 31.3.39.
- (18) PRO: MH 32/7, Q. reports, 30.9.43 & 31.12.43.
- (19) BRL: A. Min. 30.3.47, 13.4.47, 27.4.47 & 4.5.47; BRL: A. Orders, 1836-57, Order 9.6.47; BRL: K.N. Min. 12.4.47. See also Ch.6, p.254.

- (20) BRL: K.N. Min. 14.12.38; PRO: MH 32/21, Q. report, 30.6.38; PRO: MH 32/85, Q. report, 31.12.38; 7th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1841, p.18.
- (21) BRL: A. Min. 29.5.38, 12.6.38, 17.7.38, 24.7.38, 31.7.38, 6.11.38, 15.1.39, 11.6.39, 18.6.39 & 25.6.39; PRO: MH 12/13233, letter Mr Webster to PLC, 25.6.39, letter Mr Martin to Guardians, 24.6.39 & letter PLC to Mr Pearson, 28.6.39; PRO: MH 32/85, letters Mr Weale to Mr Lefevre, 6.6.39 & 16.6.39; McCord, *The Implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act*, pp.98-99.
- (22) BRL: A. Min. 9.7.39, 17.2.46, 10.3.46, 24.3.46 & 31.3.46; PRO: MH 12/13234, letters Mr Pearson to PLC, 19.2.46, 2.4.46 & 30.4.46, letters PLC to Mr Pearson, 11.4.46, 8.5.46 & 2.11.46, letter PLC to Clerk, Gainsborough Union, 11.4.46, letter Clerk, Gainsborough Union to PLC, 13.4.46, form of appointment, 30.4.46 & notes Mr Austin & PLC, 4.5.46, 6.5.46 & 21.9.46; Gaz. 16.3.46.
- (23) BRL: K.N. Min. 28.2.40, 13.7.40, 17.7.40, 7.8.40, 11.8.43, 21.8.43 & 4.9.43; PRO: MH 12/14039, letters Mr Docker to PLC and Mr Weale, 20.7.40, note Robert Weale to PLC, 22.7.40, letters PLC to Mr Docker, 24.7.40 & 4.9.40 & letter Mr Docker to PLC, 29.8.40; PRO: MH 12/14040, letters Mr Docker to PLC, 26.8.43 & 20.9.43 & letters PLC to Mr Docker, 2.9.43 & 26.9.43.
- (24) BRL: K.N. Min. 24.11.58, 8.12.58, 24.1.66, 7.2.66, 21.2.66 & 7.3.66.
- (25) PRO: MH 32/89, R.Weale report, 28.9.61; Duke, *Pauper Education*, pp.78-79.
- (26) BRL: A. Min. 24.7.66. See also Ch.6, pp.273-74 & 281.
- (27) PRO: MH 12/13286, letter Mr Weale to PLC, 3.8.36; 4th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1838, pp.4-5; Ashforth, *The Urban Poor Law*, p.128; Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law*, pp.154-56; Handley, *Local Administration of the Poor Law*, p.54; Shaw, *Aspects of Poor Relief in Norwich*, p.108. See also Ch.1, pp.20-22 & Ch.2, pp.82-90.
- (28) See 8th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1842, pp.18-20; 10th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1844, pp.52-136; Forsythe, *Paupers and Policy Makers in Exeter*, pp.154 & 156-59; Searby, *The Relief of the Poor in Coventry*, pp.346 & 351-54; Shaw, *Aspects of Poor Relief in Norwich*, pp.130-31; Walsh, *Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire*, p.233.
- (29) PRO: MH 12/13286, R.Weale reports, 7.11.40 & 17.1.42; Jnl. 14.11.40.

- (30) PRO: MH 12/13286, R.Weale report, 7.11.40; PRO: MH 32/86, R.Weale report, 31.7.40; PRO: MH 33/7; Gaz. 9.11.40; Jnl. 14.11.40. See also p.313.
- (31) PRO: MH 32/86, R.Weale report, 31.7.40; PRO: MH 12/13286, R.Weale report, 7.11.40 & copy resolution Mr Malins to PLC, 21.10.40; BRL: B. Min. 21.10.40. See also Ch.6, p.258.
- (32) BRL: B. Min. 2.11.40; Jnl. 24.10.40, 31.10.40, 7.11.40, 14.11.40 & 21.11.40; Gaz. 9.11.40.
- (33) The Times, 9.11.40.
- (34) Jnl. 5.12.40; The Times, 3.12.40.
- (35) PRO: MH 12/13286, R.Weale report, 17.1.42; BRL: Rules and Regulations Parish of Birmingham, 1841. See also Ch.6, pp.265-66.
- (36) PRO: MH 12/13286, letter PLC to Mr Weale, 1.2.42.
- (37) PRO: MH 12/13287, A.Power & R.Weale report 27.12.42, Gaz. 28.8.43, 4.9.43, 11.9.43 & 18.9.43.
- (38) BRL: B. Min. 18.5.42, 13.6.42 & 20.6.42; Gaz. 22.2.41, 23.5.42, 20.6.42, 27.6.42, 20.2.43, 27.2.43, 8.5.43, 10.7.43, 14.8.43 & 27.11.43; PRO: MH 12/13288, letter Mr Malins to Mr Weale, 3.2.44; Jnl. 24.10.40 & 9.1.41; Searby, *The Relief of the Poor in Coventry*, pp.353-54. See also Ch.6, pp.265-66.
- (39) BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Order 4.1.44; Forsythe, *Paupers and Policy Makers in Exeter*, p.158; Searby, *The Relief of the Poor in Coventry*, p.354.
- (40) BRL: B. Min. 2.1.44; PRO MH 12/13288, letters Mr W.W.Bynner to E.Chadwick, 6.1.44 & 7.1.44; Gaz. 27.6.42, 27.11.43, 11.12.43, 8.1.44 & 15.1.44; Jnl. 2.12.43, 9.12.43, 16.12.43, 6.1.44 & 13.1.44. Mr Hirst was accused of confining paupers (without proper authorization) in degrading and filthy conditions in the 'Black hole', of placing other paupers in the 'Tramp Room' and the insane wards as 'punishment', and of drinking 'spirits to an excess daily.'
- (41) BRL: B. Min. 10.1.44 & 15.1.44; PRO MH 12/13288, letter Mr Weale to PLC, 12.1.44, 'Midland Counties Herald' extract, 11.1.44, letter PLC to Mr Weale, 15.1.44, letter PLC to Mr Bynner, 19.1.44, letter Mr Bynner to E.Chadwick, 20.1.44 & copies of Minutes, 10.1.44 & 15.1.44; Gaz. 15.1.44 & 22.1.44; Jnl. 6.1.44, 13.1.44 & 20.1.44.
- (42) BRL: B. Min. 2.2.44 & 7.2.44; PRO: MH 12/13288, letter Mr Weale to PLC, 6.2.44, letter Mr Malins to Mr Weale, 3.2.44 & letter Mr Weale to PLC, 9.2.44; Gaz. 12.2.44, 19.2.44 & 1.4.44; Jnl. 30.3.44.

- (43) BRL: B. Min. 27.3.44; Gaz. 15.1.44, 22.1.44, 5.2.44, 1.4.44, 22.4.44, 13.5.44 & 20.5.44; Jnl. 24.2.44 & 30.3.44; Langford, Modern Birmingham, Vol.1, p.43.
- (44) Gaz. 8.1.44, 22.1.44, 20.5.44 & 12.8.44; Jnl. 6.1.44 & 20.1.44; BRL: B. Min. 15.7.44 & 8.10.44.
- (45) BRL: B. Min. 15.7.44, 6.8.44 & 8.10.44; Gaz. 22.7.44, 29.7.44 & 12.8.44.
- (46) BRL: B. Min. 8.10.44, 18.12.44 & 23.12.44; Gaz. 30.12.44.
- (47) BRL: B. Min. 8.7.45.
- (48) Ibid., 25.6.45; Gaz. 30.9.44 & 18.8.45. See also pp.334.
- (49) BRL: B. Min. 8.7.45, 31.7.45 & 14.8.45. See also p.334.
- (50) Ibid., 14.8.45, 21.8.45, 4.9.45, 18.9.45, 30.9.45 & 7.10.45; BRL: B. Ov. Min., 1845-49, 6.10.45 & 7.10.45; Gaz. 18.8.45, 22.9.45 & 17.11.45.
- (51) BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 29.1.45, 22.8.45, 8.11.45 & 10.2.47; BRL: B. Min. 30.9.45; Gaz. 30.9.44 & 8.12.45; Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, Vol.II, pp.384-85; Webbs, English Poor Law History, Part II, p.294.
- (52) BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 11.3.47 & 24.7.47; PRO: MH 12/13290, letter Mr Grace to PLC, 14.3.46, copy Board Minutes, 13.3.46, letter Mr Shackel to Mr Austin, 20.3.46, letter Mr Welch to Guardians, 13.3.46 & letter PLC to Mr Grace, 25.3.46; PRO: MH 12/13293, letters Mr Corder to PLB, 28.8.49 & 29.8.49, report by special committee of Guardians, 27.7.49 & letter PLB to Mr Corder, 8.9.49; Gaz. 30.3.46, 20.4.46, 4.5.46, 1.6.46, 8.6.46, 15.6.46, 22.6.46 & 13.7.46; Jnl. 24.11.49 & 8.12.49.
- (53) PRO: MH 12/13291, R.Weale report, 31.7.47.
- (54) Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.179-80.
- (55) BRL: B. Min. 20.4.47, 3.8.47, 26.8.47 & 1.2.48; Gaz. 9.8.47, 16.8.47, 6.9.47 & 20.9.47.
- (56) See BRL: B. Min. 2.5.48 & 24.11.48; Gaz. 8.3.47 & 22.3.47; PRO: MH 12/13291, statement of medical officers' and teachers' salaries, Q. ended Lady-day 1847, 3.8.47. See also Ch.6, p.269.
- (57) BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 16.11.49; Jnl. 14.7.49.
- (58) See also Ch.6, pp.259-60.

(59) BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 16.1.50 & 23.2.50; PRO: MH 12/13293, letter Mr Corder to PLB, 10.8.49; Jnl. 14.7.49; 9th Ann. Rep. of the PLB, 1856, p.10; Crocker, The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change, pp.33 & 36; Forsythe, Paupers and Policy Makers in Exeter, p.158.

(60) See eg. BRL: B. Min. 18.5.53(A); BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 11.6.53; Jnl. 21.9.50.

(61) BRL: B. Min. 21.9.53(A), 28.9.53(A), 5.10.53(A), 19.10.53(M), 26.10.53(A), 2.11.53(A), 1.3.54(A), 5.7.54(A), 6.6.55(A), 11.7.55(A), 18.7.55(M), 25.7.55(A), 1.8.55(A), 8.8.55(A), 22.8.55(A) & 29.8.55(A); PRO MH 12/13299, letter Mr Corder to PLB, 22.9.53, Minutes extracts, 16.9.53, letter Mr Ogden to Guardians, Sept.1853, note Mr Weale, 24.9.53 & letter PLB to Guardians, 27.9.53; PRO: MH 12/13302, letter Mr Corder to PLB, 24.3.55; Gaz. 26.9.53; Jnl. 24.3.55.

(62) BRL: B. Min. 22.3.54(A), 29.3.54(M), 3.5.54, 7.6.54, 30.11.59(A), 7.12.59(A) & 14.12.59(A); BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 28.3.54, 7.6.55, 24.4.57 & 21.8.61; PRO: MH 12/13300, letters Mr Corder to PLB, 12.2.54, 24.2.54 & 2.3.54, copies Board and committee resolutions/evidence, 30.11.53, 15.2.54, 20.2.54, 22.2.54, 27.2.54 & 1.3.54, letters PLB to Mr Corder, 21.2.54, 28.2.54 & 28.3.54, notes Mr Weale & PLB, 26.2.54, 6.3.54, 17.3.54 & 20.3.54, extracts Mer. 18.2.54, inquest findings, 10.2.54, enquiry reports, 16.3.54, 17.3.54 & 18.3.54; letter PLB to Mr Rogers, 28.3.54 & letter PLB to Mr Facey, 28.3.54; PRO: MH 12/13302, R.Weale report, 27.3.55; PRO: MH 12/13308, letters Mr Corder to PLB, 7.12.59 & 14.12.59, copies Board resolutions, 7.12.59, enquiry report, 1.12.59, extract D.Post, 8.12.59, notes Mr Weale & PLB, 9.12.59, 10.12.59 & 12.12.59, letters PLB to Mr Corder, 13.12.59 & 21.12.59 & letter PLB to Mr Wood, 13.12.59; Gaz. 29.1.55, 5.2.55, 12.2.55, 19.2.55, 21.9.61, 28.9.61, 5.10.61 & 12.10.61; Jnl. 7.4.55; Mer. 7.4.55.

(63) See BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 22.8.55, 10.11.55, 28.3.56, 29.11.56, 8.6.57, 10.11.57, 2.6.59 & 9.2.60; 21st Ann. Rep. of the PLB, 1868-69, pp.69-72.

(64) BRL: B. Orders, 1837-62, Orders 23.8.60; 6.12.61, 10.12.61, 17.2.62 & 27.9.62; BRL: B. Min. 23.10.61(M), 13.11.61(M) & 4.12.61(M); PRO: MH 12/13302, letter Mr Corder to PLB and forms, 19.2.55, notes Mr Weale & PLB, 20-22.2.55 & letter PLB to Mr Corder, 24.2.55; Gaz. 12.2.55, 19.2.55, 26.2.55, 16.11.61, 23.11.61, 30.11.61 & 28.12.61. See also Ch.6, pp.267-68.

(65) In 1852 the Board forwarded resolutions to the Government and the PLB 'in reference to the powers and conduct of the Poor Law Board.', and corresponded with other local Act parishes about the preservation of their special 'rights'. (BRL: B. Min.

- 31.3.52(A)). See also p.328, Ch.3, pp.125-26, Ch.4, p.188 & Ch.6, pp.259-63.
- (66) Mer. 20.3.52. See also Ch.3, pp.125-26.
- (67) Gaz. 5.4.52.
- (68) BRL: B. Min. 16.4.56(A); Gaz. 21.4.56, 28.4.56 & 5.5.56. See also pp.323-24.
- (69) See also pp.310-11 & Ch.6, p.280.
- (70) See BRL: A. Min. 15.10.72, 15.10.89, 9.8.92, 20.9.92, 7.11.99 & 19.11.01; BRL: K.N. Min. 1.7.91, 15.7.91, 23.9.91 & 9.10.07.
- (71) BRL: A. Min. 14.1.90, 6.5.90 & 19.4.92.
- (72) See BRL: A. Min. 10.1.88 & 13.1.91; BRL: K.N. Min. 11.3.85, 16.7.90 & 24.9.90.
- (73) BRL: A. Min. 13.1.91; PRO: MH 32/101, H.Jenner Fust report, Feb.1892.
- (74) BRL: A. Min. 13.1.91 & 6.10.91; BRL: K.N. Min. 1.12.75, 11.3.85 & 24.9.90. See also Ch.6, p.281.
- (75) BRL: K.N. Min. 24.9.90; Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union, pp.111 & 113.
- (76) BRL: A. Min. 15.3.98; BRL: K.N. Min. 27.4.98; 27th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1897-98, pp.xci & 27-31.
- (77) BRL: A. Min. 13.1.91, 27.1.91, 24.2.91, 6.10.91 & 3.11.91; PRO: MH 12/13263, letters Mr North to LGB, 9.9.91, 23.9.91, 4.11.91 & 30.12.91, note Mr Jenner-Fust to LGB, 6.10.91, letters LGB to Mr North, 20.10.91, 16.11.91 & 14.1.92 & draft Orders, Oct. & Nov. 1891.
- (78) BRL: K.N. Min. 4.4.77 & 2.5.77.
- (79) PRO: MH 12/14074, letter E.Dockers to LGB, 12.1.95, notes Mr Murray Browne & LGB, 15.1.95, 17.1.95, 20.3.96, 23.3.96, 12.10.96, 16.10.96, 17.10.96 & 28.10.96 & letter LGB to E.Dockers, 20.2.95. See also p.346.
- (80) BRL: K.N. Min. 17.11.75, 1.12.75, 15.12.75, 29.12.75, 12.1.76 & 26.1.76; PRO: MH 9/9, p.711; PRO: MH 12/14048, appointment forms, 6.1.76 & letter LGB to R.Dockers, 22.1.76.
- (81) BRL: A. Min. 12.1.92, 5.4.92 & 19.4.92; BRL: K.N. Min. 28.3.00 & 11.4.00.
- (82) BRL: A. Min. 10.1.88.

- (83) BRL: A. Letters 1898-1900, LGB letter 3.2.98; PRO: MH 12/14074, Mr Murray Browne report, 4.2.95.
- (84) BRL: K.N. Min. 16.7.90.
- (85) BRL: A. Min. 14.3.11 & 11.4.11; BRL: A. Letters, 1910-11, LGB letters 7.3.11 & 24.4.11.
- (86) See 1st Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1871-72, p.xvii; 3rd Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1873-74, p.xxxvii; 8th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1878-79, p.lxiv; Walsh, Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire, pp.235 & 237-38.
- (87) See Ch.3, p.104 & Ch.5, pp.223-25; BRL: B. Orders, 1863-77, Order 8.8.73; BRL: B. Orders, 1878-86, Order 17.4.78; BRL: B. Letters, 1878, LGB letters 5.3.78, 23.3.78, 2.4.78 & 20.4.78; BRL: 41 & 42 Vict., Ch.civ, 1878; 8th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1878-79, p.lxix.
- (88) See Ch.6, pp.272-75 & 278-86.
- (89) See eg. PRO: MH 12/13333, letter W.Bowen to LGB, 8.4.80. See also p.351.
- (90) BRL: B. Min. 22.9.69, 28.10.72, 30.10.72, 13.11.72, 27.11.72, 11.12.72, 23.12.72, 1.1.73 & 8.1.73; BRL: B. Orders, 1863-77, Order 7.1.73; PRO: MH 12/13333, notes, Feb.1880.
- (91) BRL: B. Min. 8.1.73, 22.1.73, 5.2.73, 19.2.73 & 5.3.73.
- (92) Ibid., 19.2.73; BRL: B. Letters, 1879-80, LGB letter 10.12.79; PRO: MH 12/13333, letters Mr Bowen to LGB, 16.1.80 & 26.2.80, special committee report, 14.1.80, letter LGB to Mr Coulton, 23.1.80, letter LGB to Guardians, 23.1.80 & letters LGB to Mr Henley, 23.1.80 & 21.2.80; The Times, 4.12.79.
- (93) BRL: B. Min. 19.9.83, 28.11.83, 25.6.84, 9.7.84, 20.8.84, 9.12.85, 15.6.86, 23.6.86 & 4.8.86; BRL: B. Orders, 1878-86, Orders 31.7.84, 11.8.84, 3.5.86 & 2.8.86; BRL: Copies of Evidence taken by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, at Sworn Inquiry held on the 16th and 17th days of February 1886, to inquire into Charges made by the Birmingham Board of Guardians against Mr A.B.Simpson, Medical Officer of Birmingham Workhouse. And Report of Inspectors founded thereon. LGB 21st June 1886.
- (94) BRL: B. Min. 22.3.82, 20.8.84, 18.3.85 & 15.9.86.
- (95) Ibid., 22.3.82, 18.3.85; Gaz. 1.4.87. See also Ch.6, p.282.
- (96) PRO: MH 32/101, Mr Jenner-Fust reports, 27.1.88, 3.2.89, 8.2.90, 7.2.91 & Feb.92; 18th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1888-89, pp.lxv & 110-12; 19th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1889-90, p.lx.

(97) House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Law Relief, Minutes of Evidence, 23.4.88, pp.41-43, 47-49 & 56-57. See also Ch.6, p.286.

(98) BRL: B. Min. 6.12.05.

(99) Ibid., 21.10.08.

(100) Ibid., 6.12.05. See also Ch.6, p.287.

(101) BRL: B. Letters, 1910-11, LGB letter 17.5.11; BRL: B. Letters, 1911-12, LGB letters 1.6.11, 28.8.11, 16.9.11 & 9.11.11 & Dr.Needham report 25.5.11.

(102) See pp.310-22 & Ch.6, pp.244-56.

(103) See pp.322-40 & Ch.6, pp.258-60.

(104) See pp.340-46 & Ch.6, p.280.

(105) See pp.346-56 & Ch.6, pp.275 & 281-85..

Chapter 8: Conclusion

(1) Introduction

This thesis has centred around a comparative analysis of aspects of the politico-administrative experience of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians, during the period from the mid-1830s to 1912. Where appropriate discussion has been placed within the wider national context. The study complements and extends the work of other writers, who, over recent decades, have built up a picture of a New Poor Law which was characterised by diversity rather than monolithic conformity, the product of a complex interaction and compromise between centrally inspired efforts to achieve greater standardization and conformity, and local efforts to maintain local prerogatives. (1) It also demonstrates the importance of maintaining a balance, as argued by Harling, between the 'continuity thesis' and the 'revolution in government' approach, when analysing how the Poor Law evolved in a particular locality. (2)

The concluding chapter draws together the various strands of the thesis, highlighting key themes, trends and special characteristics discussed throughout the study. In keeping with the comparative imperative of the thesis, the focus is upon the identification and explanation of the major contrasts and similarities between the politico-administrative experience

of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards. Allied to this, the chapter assesses to what extent the characteristics and experiences of the three local Boards mirrored national trends and developments, identifying special features which distinguished them from their counterparts elsewhere. It is stressed that, as elsewhere, local influences and the broader societal and governmental changes of the 19th century coalesced in determining the character of Poor Law administration in the locality at any particular time, and in bringing about evolutionary change.

Although the thesis has centred upon developmental issues, there were nonetheless important continuities during the period under review. This chapter provides a final overview of the extent to which the Boards, their attitudes and policies, and their relationships with central government, had been transformed by the beginning of the 20th century.

Though the Conclusion (in keeping with the approach adopted in other chapters), makes a distinction between the PLC and PLB era and the LGB years, in relation to the discussion of trends and changing characteristics, this is not intended to imply that sudden change occurred with the establishment of the LGB. The advent of the LGB, however, remains a useful and well established marker between two contrasting periods. In the local context contrasts between the Birmingham Board, and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, were certainly more marked

during the PLC and PLB period than during the LGB era, even though some fundamental reasons for such differences remained until 1912.

(2) The PLC and PLB Era

Special local circumstances, in combination with the variable impact of the wider societal changes taking place at the time, conspired to ensure that there would be important differences between the approach, and history, of the Birmingham Board and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, during the early New Poor Law era. The essential geographic, socio-economic, demographic and politico-administrative differences between the areas over which each authority held jurisdiction all impacted upon Poor Law administration. (3) Whilst, at the most immediate level, the fact that after 1836 the Birmingham Board retained a very different constitutional/legal position vis-a-vis the PLC and PLB to that of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards was of major significance. The continuance of its powers under the 1831 local Act afforded the Birmingham Board (albeit to a gradually lessening extent from the 1840s onwards), greater scope for manoeuvre in the formulation and implementation of policy than the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, which were subject to the full authority of the PLC and its successors from their inception. (4)

This study has shown that the Poor Law in Birmingham was in every sense politicised. Political parties and factions vying for supremacy in local society, fully recognised the Boards of Guardians as important local power-bases. Particularly during the PLC and PLB period local factional politics played a major, if fluctuating, role at Birmingham Board elections and in Board affairs. To a lesser degree the same was true of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. The extent to which Guardians and ex-Guardians were involved in other spheres of local and even national politics, also demonstrates just how integral the Poor Law was to the wider political arena. Poor Law administration in the greater Birmingham area, as has been demonstrated in relation to other towns and urban communities such as Gateshead, Leeds, Leicester, Poole and Salford, was not an isolated sector of public affairs; the Boards of Guardians were one amongst a number of foci of political attention. As in Bradford, Leicester and Sunderland, leading local figures served on the Boards, most especially the Birmingham Board, demonstrating (as Rose has argued in relation to the West Riding of Yorkshire), the importance of the office of guardian in major urban centres. (5)

Wider confrontation between rival political factions vying for dominance in local society during the mid to late 1830s certainly had an impact upon the elections to all three local Boards in 1836/37. As in such places as Bradford, Gateshead and Poole, the first Aston and Kings Norton Board elections

attracted considerable attention, with rival factions keen to dominate a newly created source of power and influence, and to place their stamp upon local Poor Law administration. (6)

However, it was the 1837 election in the Parish of Aston which attracted the greatest amount of interest and controversy. In all respects, the election is a classic example of the type of controversial elections experienced in other urban and semi-urban communities during the formative years of the New Poor Law. It is, moreover, of particular significance in the wider national context, in that it demonstrates how the PLC was able, in certain circumstances, to exert influence to secure the election of men favourable to its dispensations. (7)

The intense political activity which surrounded the 1837 and 1840 Birmingham Board elections was a manifestation of the wider struggle for dominance between the town's rival 'Liberal-Radical', Whig and Tory factions. In 1837, the 'Liberal-Radicals', keen to control such a useful local power-base as the Board of Guardians, sought and achieved majority representation. However, in 1840, with the 'Liberal-Radicals' firmly in control of the Town Council, the Tories, reminiscent of circumstances in Leicester and Leeds, were much more eager to secure dominance of a compensatory local power-base. (8)

After the initial flurry of post-unionization activity, with factional attention directed elsewhere, and with cliques who were perceived to be protecting ratepayers interests firmly in

control of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards, the Union elections from the late 1830s to the 1860s generally attracted only minimal interest. This situation is similar to that which pertained in places such as Bradford and Leicester by the 1850s. (9) In contrast, a number of Birmingham Board elections during the 1843-70 period attracted considerable factional attention. (10)

During the late 1840s-1860s period the 'economy' imperative dominated public administration in Birmingham, and Poor Law issues were of major importance in propelling the 'Economist' faction into a dominant position in local politics, and for sustaining their prominent role in Birmingham affairs. Exploitation of ratepayers' concerns about levels of Poor Law expenditure, most notably in relation to the provision of the new Workhouse, played a major part in enabling the 'Economist' faction to secure and maintain paramountcy in Birmingham politics and administration during the late 1840s and 1850s. (11) At a time when anti-centralization sentiments were especially prevalent, both at the local and national level, the 'Economists' were able to gain extra strength at election-time (as the anti-new workhouse faction did in Sheffield during the 1850s), by adeptly harnessing antagonism towards the central Poor Law agency. (12)

Although the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards could not be judged to be democratic representative bodies in the

late 20th century sense, they cannot be likened to self-elected oligarchies in the mould of the Birmingham Street Commissioners. (13) This is not to deny that they displayed characteristics typical of oligarchical bodies: restrictions upon membership and upon those able to participate in their selection; high levels of membership continuity; dominance by the most active members; and a preoccupation with the protection of the interests of a particular section of the community. Throughout the PLC and PLB era the Boards were essentially elected oligarchies, answerable to and representative of their fellow ratepayers. Compounding the effects of restrictive electoral regulations, in the case of Aston and Kings Norton the lack of electoral contests (until the mid-1860s) and voter apathy, encouraged high levels of membership continuity, whilst generally low attendance levels at meetings enabled cliques of active Guardians, as at Gateshead and Sunderland and in the West Riding of Yorkshire, to dominate Board affairs. (14) Though the Birmingham Board exhibited less continuity of membership, it too, was essentially an elected oligarchy since the generally low attendance levels at meetings, and the reluctance of individuals to take on the onerous responsibilities associated with the office of Guardian, enabled a core of enthusiastic members to dominate Board affairs. (15)

This thesis has shown that the attitudes of, and policies pursued by, the men and women who served on the Aston, Kings

Norton and Birmingham Boards, reflected the widely held attitudes and assumptions of the age. During the PLC and PLB era, the Guardians, drawn from the ranks of the local industrial, shopkeeping, commercial and farming classes, were thoroughly imbued with the contemporary 'laissez-faire', 'self-help' ideals which underpinned the New Poor Law and government thinking in general. (16) In the determination of policy, they were, like their counterparts elsewhere, actuated by the four 'dominant attitudes' or 'forces' identified by David Roberts. Namely 'a humanitarianism toward the poor, a parsimony about taxes, a desire for social control, and a belief in individual reform ...'. (17)

The Boards shared a desire to protect the interests of fellow ratepayers, and to counterbalance the provision of adequate relief for those deemed to be 'deserving' with the deterrence of those judged to be 'undeserving'. However, there were important differences between the approach and ethos of the Birmingham Board and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards during the early New Poor Law era. These differences, which make the Birmingham Board so significant in the national context, were the product of a combination of factors. Bearing in mind the great divergence between Birmingham and surrounding districts in terms of population, urban and industrial development, the sheer scale of Poor Law operations in the Parish of Birmingham, and the special constitutional/legal position of the Birmingham Board, contrasts in policies and general approach were much

more likely to exist. Complementing these factors, and of major significance, was the strong humanitarian tradition and sense of local pride maintained by the town's socio-economic and political elites, from amongst whom the Birmingham Guardians were drawn. (18)

From the late 1830s onwards, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards essentially maintained policies and practices broadly in line with PLC and PLB prescriptions, subject to the exercise of the usual local discretion in their implementation. Against the familiar backdrop of limited financial resources, and with a majority of Guardians continuing to come from a small business or farming background, the Boards pursued policies strongly influenced by 'laissez-faire' ideology, the principle of 'less eligibility' and the cost control imperative; well calculated to retain the support of voters fearful of increased rating burdens. (19) In view of its adherence to orthodox policies and its reputation for 'economy', the Aston Union was promoted by the central Poor Law agency as something of a 'model union'. The PLC and PLB found it to be a particularly serviceable example when it came to promoting the applicability and benefits of their policies in the urban industrial context, favourably comparing it with the Parish of Birmingham on a number of occasions. (20)

Against the background of the fundamental financial constraints which characterised the Poor Law and wider local

government at the time, and fluctuating pressure upon the relief system, cost control considerations had just as much bearing upon the policies pursued by successive Birmingham Boards as upon their counterparts in other localities. However, the impact of the cost control imperative was moderated to a considerable extent, even at the height of the ascendancy of the 'Economist' faction during the 1850s, by the inherent humanitarianism of influential Guardians. Men such as the Quakers R.T.Cadbury and John Cadbury during the 1830s, Henry Knight during the 1830s and early 1840s, Thomas Lloyd during the early 1860s, and Joseph Allday (who, despite his leadership of the 'Economist' faction during the 1850s, did not neglect humanitarian considerations), ensured that the administration of the Poor Law in the Parish of Birmingham continued to be tempered by a genuine concern for the 'deserving' poor. (21)

Thus the re-organization of the Parish relief system in the 1840s was carefully designed to balance the needs of the 'deserving' poor with those of 'economy' in public administration. (22) Similarly, though, like their counterparts elsewhere, the Birmingham Guardians were not averse to the acceptance of the lowest tenders for the supply of goods and services, their desire to secure the provision of unadulterated foods to paupers, offers another example of the liberalism which distinguished Birmingham from the stereotyped

image of the Poor Law as a necessarily harsh and insensitive instrument for controlling the public purse. (23)

In their child care policies the Birmingham Guardians certainly appear to have been motivated by a genuine humanitarian concern for the children in their care, and a desire, through the medium of education and industrial training, to ensure that they were adequately fitted for useful adult lives, free from dependence upon poor relief. (24) They undoubtedly adhered to the belief that 'poverty could be lessened by teaching the children of the poor useful skills and by inculcating into them a sound morality and a pious religion ...'. (25) Commitment to extensive infirmary and outdoor medical relief provision of a relatively high standard for the period, was similarly influenced by humanitarian and curative motives. (26) The unflagging attention of the Birmingham Guardians to the needs of children and the sick during the PLC and PLB years, was conditioned by the traditions established during the late 18th century, and contrasts markedly with the overall lack of concern displayed by other authorities, such as the Merthyr Tydfil Board, until the 1870s. (27) Even with regard to able-bodied Workhouse inmates, though they were expected to perform task work, the Guardians were not prepared to tolerate unnecessary harshness. (28)

As this thesis, and other local studies have demonstrated, the New Poor Law was never a monolith. Despite extensive

regulatory powers, the PLC and its successor agencies were unable to coerce boards of guardians into conformity. However, through persuasion, advice and encouragement they did exert a powerful influence upon board policies, and progressively achieved greater standardization of practice nationwide. Nevertheless, the extent of their influence varied from place to place and over time. Even where guardians broadly favourable to New Poor Law dispensations gained and maintained control of boards, local practicalities and imperatives modified the implementation of centrally inspired policies.

(29)

Following unionization, Guardians largely favourable to the New Poor Law and the policies advocated by the Commissioners, secured, and subsequently maintained, control of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards. Consequently, as was the case with unions in Bedfordshire, generally constructive working relationships were sustained with the PLC and PLB, and their representatives.

(30) This was in marked contrast to the tension which characterised relations between the Birmingham Board and the PLC and PLB.

After 1836 the Birmingham Guardians continued to preside over a separate parish relief system under the terms of the 1831 local Act, but from the beginning the PLC was anxious to extend its influence over the affairs of the Birmingham Board. That Poor Law administration in such a major urban centre as

and nationally, for example in the West Riding of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and at Chester and Gateshead. (33) Against a background of strained relations between the central agency and the Birmingham Guardians, contrasts between the approach and practices of the Birmingham Board and the Aston and Kings Norton Boards were perpetuated.

(3) The LGB Era from 1871-1912

From the late 1860s onwards the central Poor Law agency adopted a more interventionist stance. In response to this and other factors, many boards of guardians progressively improved institutional provision for the poor, not only with regard to the general mixed workhouses, but increasingly by the establishment of separate facilities to cater for the special needs of particular categories of paupers such as the sick, children, epileptics and the mentally deficient. By contrast, however, there were also major continuities between earlier decades and the late 19th century and early 20th century period. For the most part boards continued to be dominated by elites drawn from the middle ranks of society, and some traditional attitudes towards the poor remained influential.

(34)

The dichotomy between change and continuity which characterised the LGB era is well illustrated in relation to the politico-administrative experience of the Birmingham, Aston

Birmingham should not be directly subject to its authority, was particularly galling to the PLC. Therefore, from 1840 onwards, against a background of legal judgments and legislation which strengthened its position, the central Poor Law agency and its representatives directed considerable energy towards the extension of its influence in Birmingham. (31) Whilst other local Act authorities in places such as Coventry, Exeter, Norwich, Plymouth and Southampton were also the focus of increasing attention by the PLC and PLB at this time, the intensity with which the central agency focused upon Birmingham and the degree of acrimony which was generated between it and local administrators is especially notable. (32)

By the early 1850s the PLB was able to exert considerable influence over the affairs of the Birmingham Board, but such an ascendancy had only been achieved in the face of determined opposition from active Guardians. Drawn from the ranks of the town's socio-economic and political elites, and thoroughly imbued with a characteristic spirit of independence engendered by their business backgrounds and pride in the town and its achievements, these men persistently resisted the encroachments of the central Poor Law agency. Furthermore, with the support of ratepayers' groups, leading Guardians continued to express particularly vociferous opposition to what were seen as unwelcome central government intrusions during the 1850s. Such a militant reaction was fully in accord with wider anti-centralist feeling at around mid-century, both in Birmingham

and Kings Norton Boards. As to differences between the Birmingham Board and its neighbouring authorities, under the impact of legislation, changes in government policy and attitude change amongst Board memberships, they gradually came to share far more characteristics than during the mid-1830s-1860s period.

By 1912 the whole ethos of the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards had changed radically, and constructive relations were firmly established between each of the Boards and the central Poor Law agency. Reflecting significant changes in the composition of Board memberships (encouraged by liberalization of the electoral system) and the broad societal changes which occurred during the 19th century, Guardians' attitudes and policies were far more progressive than during the early New Poor Law era. The Aston and Kings Norton Boards, in common with the Birmingham Board, were now fully committed to the provision of specialized facilities and care for particular categories of paupers. Thus, though the Webbs and others condemned the Poor Law as antiquated and inefficient, and called for its break-up and the substitution of more specialized services, in Birmingham, as indeed in other places, the Poor Law had already assumed a very different persona from the one traditionally associated with it during the 19th century. (35)

Juxtaposed with these changes, however, noticeable electoral, Board membership, and attitude and policy continuities with earlier decades remained. An uneasy balance still had to be maintained between the fundamental humanitarian, cost control, disciplinary, reformatory and curative motivations which informed Board policies. Guardians remained committed to the protection of the interests of their fellow ratepayers, whilst striving to meet the needs of the 'deserving' poor. In the determination of policy, Guardians were as ill-advised as ever to ignore the interests of their electorates. (36)

As a result of the far more liberal electoral regulations introduced by the 1894 Local Government Act, board membership profiles after 1894 registered some noticeable changes at the national level, as it became easier for more women, and men from lower social status backgrounds, to be elected as guardians. At the local level, the 1894 Aston and Kings Norton Board elections witnessed the greatest turnover of Guardians since unionization, whilst, after 1894, some 'working men' and 'labour' representatives served on the Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards. Reflecting the accelerating pace of urbanization, the number of farmers elected to the Aston and Kings Norton Boards was much reduced. (37) Of particular significance, after 1894 the number of women elected to the three Boards increased, and although they continued to be primarily associated with 'caring' work, they achieved a

greater prominence in Board affairs, regularly representing the Boards at conferences for instance. (38)

Despite its undoubted importance in relation to board membership profiles and the future development of the Poor Law, the 1894 Act did not, as Inspector Murray Browne pointed out with reference to the 1894 elections in his district, change everything at a stroke. (39) At the local level, in spite of the modified electoral regulations and significant changes in Board membership profiles by 1912, the tendency towards oligarchical control displayed by the Aston, Kings Norton and Birmingham Boards during the early New Poor Law era had not been entirely overridden. (40)

Throughout the 1870s to 1894 period, restrictive electoral regulations, support for established Guardians by ratepayers' associations, and voter apathy, had conspired to ensure the continuance of high levels of membership continuity on successive Aston and Kings Norton Boards. As far as the Birmingham Board was concerned, although the 1873 and 1876 elections had been fiercely contested (against the background of wider political struggles between local Conservatives and Liberals), the reduction in the number of Guardians in 1873 and the promotion of joint lists of candidates by rival political factions, had ensured that by the late 1880s membership continuity patterns were much more similar to those of the two Union Boards. Under such circumstances, and with attendance

levels by individual Guardians subject to variation, cliques of active Guardians, as at Gateshead, had continued to dominate the affairs of each of the Boards. (41)

From 1894-1912, against a background in which some of the erstwhile characteristics of the electoral process re-asserted themselves, continuity of membership remained a characteristic feature of all three Boards, and Guardians continued to be drawn very largely from local 'middle class' socio-economic and political elites. Under these circumstances cliques were able to maintain control of the Boards and easily quash any opposition from 'maverick' members. (42) Studies focused upon Gateshead, Sunderland and East London, have identified situations which were in some respects akin to the Birmingham experience. (43)

Prior to 1894, and to some extent thereafter, the Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards were, for a variety of reasons, more open to the adoption of innovative policies than the Aston Board. Differences of approach between the three Boards are particularly evident in relation to the relative willingness of each to countenance the expenditure of large sums of money upon the provision of specialized facilities for particular categories of paupers. (44)

Throughout the LGB era successive Birmingham Boards continued to improve facilities at the Parish Workhouse, but by the 1870s

attention was increasingly focused upon the provision of completely independent institutions to meet the needs of particular client groups, such as the sick and children, more effectively. As elsewhere, the willingness of the Birmingham Board to contemplate such large-scale capital projects was influenced by central government policy, the greater ease with which finance could now be raised, humanitarian considerations and public opinion. In the case of the Birmingham Guardians, however, there was a special determination to uphold the humanitarian traditions established by their late 18th century and early 19th century predecessors, personified by the Asylum for Infant Poor and the old Workhouse Infirmary. These deep-seated traditions were reinforced by the spirit of the 'Civic Gospel' and Chamberlainite civic pride, which now informed the thinking of leading Guardians. Under such circumstances the Birmingham Board was propelled into the vanguard of Poor Law authorities developing progressive policies. (45)

By the beginning of the LGB era, the Aston and Kings Norton Boards had deemed the time right to emulate Birmingham in the erection of large modern and well classified workhouses. They were also destined to follow the example of the Birmingham Board in the provision of specialized institutions. (46) During the period from the mid-1880s to the early 1900s, the Kings Norton Board proceeded - against a background of accelerating urbanization, population growth, local government re-organization, and a desire on the part of local elites (from

amongst whom the Guardians were principally drawn) to raise the status of their districts - to establish separate specialized institutions in the Birmingham mould. (47)

Of the three local Boards, Aston tended to lag behind its neighbours in the adoption of new policies. Old obsessions with cost control and 'less eligibility' were much more difficult to overcome in the case of the Aston Board. Symptomatic of its less progressive stance, in contrast to the Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards, only one female Guardian served on the Aston Board before 1894. It was not until post-1894, that the Board, with an infusion of new members (including some women), demonstrated a greater readiness to adopt more progressive policies, and even then its record was less impressive than that of the Birmingham and Kings Norton Boards. (48)

Old preoccupations with the deterrence of the 'undeserving' and the philosophy of 'self-help', continued to assert their influence upon the thinking and approach of all three Boards during the LGB era. Whilst workhouse improvements and the establishment of specialized institutions, were manifestations of the determination of the Guardians to improve conditions for groups and individuals deemed to be 'deserving', such developments were accompanied by more vigorous efforts to prevent the 'undeserving' from abusing the relief system. Under the impact of contemporary social welfare thinking and

aspects of LGB policy, there was, as has been shown in relation to Southampton, East London and the North-East of England, a renewed focus upon the importance of maintaining proper distinctions between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' in the dispensation of relief, especially outdoor relief.

Guardians were as anxious as ever to retain the goodwill of voters, who, whilst they endorsed better treatment for the 'deserving', were disinclined to support indiscriminate relief. (49)

As during the PLC and PLB era, the state of relations between the Boards and the central Poor Law agency continued to have a significant bearing upon the policies each pursued. Although more assertive in its dealings with boards of guardians, the LGB still needed to gain a measure of willing compliance for the implementation of approved policies. After 1871, sound working relations were maintained between the Aston and Kings Norton Boards and the LGB, and its representatives, although the Guardians continued to exercise their discretion in adopting LGB recommendations. (50)

In contrast to the PLC and PLB years, the Birmingham Board also developed a much more constructive relationship with the LGB. Though, at the commencement of the LGB era, a majority of active Guardians were still eager to maintain maximum local autonomy, pragmatism increasingly ensured that relations between the Birmingham Board and the LGB were characterised by

a willingness to co-operate rather than a latent suspicion and antipathy. Guardians keen to pursue more progressive policies, now recognised the LGB as a facilitator rather than as a threat to local self-determination; whilst the LGB perceived the Board as an ally in its efforts to improve standards nationally. (51)

(4) Epilogue

With regard to the unification of the three authorities in 1912, a prospect so utterly inconceivable for much of the 19th century, this was achieved relatively smoothly, albeit after a lengthy process of consultation. By the latter part of the first decade of the 20th century, with inter-Board co-operation quite commonplace, the members of the three Boards had recognised that they shared a commonality of interest. It was accepted by most Guardians that, as with the creation of a Greater Birmingham in 1911, old and increasingly artificial divisions between jurisdictions were inappropriate for the future. Moreover, the Birmingham Board, committed to the furtherance of enlightened policies, had long since ceased to be antagonistic to the central Poor Law agency, and was eager to be subsumed into an enlarged Birmingham Union with all the prospects for future development it offered. For their part the Aston and Kings Norton Boards were largely reconciled to the fact that, with the exception of Sutton Coldfield and the outlying rural parishes, the future of the districts over which they held jurisdiction undoubtedly lay with Birmingham. In the

final analysis, through the election of some of their number to the re-constituted Birmingham Board, influence upon the future direction of policy was maintained. (52)

Further study of the Birmingham Board during the 1912-30 period is warranted, in order to gauge the extent of continuity or divergence between the policies and attitudes of the defunct bodies and the new Board. On a broader level, bearing in mind the relative dearth of local studies of the final decades of the New Poor Law (a period which witnessed great strains upon the relief system nationally), an analysis of the situation pertaining in Birmingham would be a useful addition to the Poor Law historiography. (53)

Chapter 8 Notes

- (1) See eg. Digby, Pauper Palaces; Midwinter, Social Administration, Part II; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union.
- (2) Harling, The Power of Persuasion.
- (3) See Ch.1, pp.30-41.
- (4) See Ch.1, pp.20-24 & Ch.2, pp.60-61 & 82-90.
- (5) See Ch.3, pp.107-20 & 122-27, Ch.4, pp.180-88 & Ch.5, pp.213-14 & 217; Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, pp.88-89; Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds; Fraser, Urban Politics, Ch.3; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, p.138; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.46 & 266-80; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.51 & 122.
- (6) See Ch.1, pp.36-38 & Ch.3, pp.107-08; Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, p.100; Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration, pp.19-20; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.7-8.
- (7) See Ch.3, pp.109-17.
- (8) See Ch.1, pp.36-38, Ch.3, pp.117-20 & Ch.5, p.213; Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds, p.36; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.57 & 73; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.266-68.
- (9) See Ch.3, pp.120-22 & Ch.5, pp.204-06; Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford, pp.100-06 & 378-79; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, pp.311-12.
- (10) See Ch.3, pp.122-27 & Ch.5, pp.213-14.
- (11) See Ch.1, pp.40-41, Ch.3, pp.123-24 & Ch.6, pp.260-61.
- (12) See Ch.3, pp.125-26 & Ch.7, p.339; Fraser, The Poor Law as a Political Institution, pp.119-22; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.78-85.
- (13) See Ch.1, pp.36 & 38-39 & Ch.5; Fraser, Urban Politics, pp.91 & 101-02; Skipp, A History of Greater Birmingham, pp.75-76; VCH Warks., 7, p.324.
- (14) See also Ch.3, pp.102-04 & 121-22 & Ch.5, pp.204-12; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.9-10; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West

Riding of Yorkshire, pp.139 & 148-49; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.48-53 & 118-26.

(15) See Ch.4, pp.162-63 & Ch.5, pp.212-17.

(16) See Ch.6, pp.243-71.

(17) Roberts, Dealing with the Poor, p.70.

(18) See Ch.1, pp.20-24 & 30-34, Ch.2, pp.60-61 & Ch.4, pp.158-66 & 180-88.

(19) See Ch.4, pp.166-69 & Ch.6, pp.244-56.

(20) See Ch.6, pp.244-45 & Ch.7, pp.310, 313, 323-24 & 340.

(21) See Ch.3, pp.125-26, Ch.4, pp.179 & 185-86, Ch.6, pp.257-71 & Ch.7, pp.339-40.

(22) See Ch.6, pp.263-66.

(23) See eg. BRL: B. Min. 12.2.50, 20.8.51, 8.9.52(A), 7.7.58(M), 14.7.58(M), 21.7.58(M) & 4.8.58(M). See also Ch.6, pp.260 & 270.

(24) See Ch.6, pp.260 & 268-69.

(25) Roberts, Dealing with the Poor, p.67.

(26) See Ch.6, pp.268-69.

(27) See Ch.2, pp.70-72; Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union, Ch.6 & pp.92-111.

(28) See Ch.6, pp.269-70.

(29) See Ch.1, pp.22-24 & Ch.7, pp.308-09; Digby, Pauper Palaces; Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties'; Harling, The Power of Persuasion; Jones, Poor Law Administration in Merthyr Tydfil Union; Midwinter, Social Administration, Part II; Proctor, Poor Law Administration in Preston Union; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire; Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union; Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union.

(30) See p.377, Ch.3, pp.107-17, Ch.5, pp.207 & 210-12, Ch.6, pp.244-56 & Ch.7, pp.310-22; Apfel & Dunkley, English rural society, p.67.

(31) See Ch.6, pp.258-60 & Ch.7, pp.322-38.

(32) See 10th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1844, pp.52-74 & 92-136; Forsythe, Paupers and Policy Makers in Exeter; Searby, The

Relief of the Poor in Coventry; Shaw, Aspects of Poor Relief in Norwich, Ch.5.

(33) See Ch.3, pp.125-26 & Ch.7, pp.322-40; Boyson, The New Poor Law in North-East Lancashire, p.54; Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law, p.200-01; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.40-41; Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire, pp.175-78.

(34) See Ch.4, pp.164-73 & 190-92 & Ch.6, pp.271-92.

(35) See Ch.3, p.105, Ch.4, pp.169-78, Ch.5, pp.226-27, Ch.6, pp.271-86 & Ch.7, pp.340-56.

(36) See Ch.3, pp.136-42, Ch.4, pp.169-73 & 190-92, Ch.5, pp.228 & 231-34 & Ch.6, pp.272-73 & 286-92.

(37) See Ch.3, p.139, Ch.4, pp.170-72 & 175-76 & Ch.5, pp.201 & 226-27.

(38) See Ch.4, pp.170 & 175-78; Proc. of the Poor Law Conferences, 1900-01, p.2 & 1903-04, p.86.

(39) 25th Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1895-96, pp.lxi & 175.

(40) See Ch.5, pp.204-12, 214-17 & 228-34.

(41) See Ch.3, pp.128-36 & Ch.5, pp.217-26; Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.37-38.

(42) See Ch.3, pp.136-42, Ch.4, pp.169-73 & 188-92 & Ch.5, pp.228-34.

(43) See Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, pp.83-85; Ryan, Politics and relief: East London unions; Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union, pp.206-08; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, p.41.

(44) See Ch.6, pp.272-86.

(45) See Ch.1, pp.44-45, Ch.2, pp.70-72, Ch.4, p.179 & Ch.6, pp.268-69, 273-75 & 278-86.

(46) See Ch.6, p.274.

(47) See Ch.1, pp.42-43 & 47, Ch.4, pp.191-92 & Ch.6, pp.280, 282 & 284.

(48) See Ch.4, pp.174-75, Ch.5, p.227 & Ch.6, pp.272 & 280-82.

(49) See Ch.6, pp.272-73 & 286-92; Crocker, The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change; K.Gregson, Poor law and organized

charity: the relief of exceptional distress in north-east England, 1870-1910, in M.E.Rose (ed.), The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914, pp.94-131; Ryan, Politics and relief: East London unions; Wood, Finance and the urban poor law, pp.39-40.

(50) See Ch.7, pp.340-46.

(51) See Ch.6, pp.275 & 278-86 & Ch.7, pp.346-56.

(52) See Ch.1, pp.50-51, Ch.5, pp.233-34 & Ch.6, pp.284-86; BRL: A.Min. 12.11.07, 26.11.07, 6.7.09, 16.11.09, 23.11.09, 7.6.10, 20.6.11, 25.7.11 & 30.1.12; BRL: B.Min. 17.5.05, 19.6.07, 21.7.09, 17.11.09 & 16.2.10; BRL: K.N. Min. 10.5.05, 24.5.05, 10.2.09, 14.7.09, 8.6.10 & 2.8.11.

(53) One local study of the Poor Law during the 1920s is B.J.Elliott, The Last Five Years of the Sheffield Guardians. Hunter Archaeological Society Transactions, 10, 1973, pp.132-37.

APPENDICES

TABLE 1: The Growth of Population in the Parish, Borough and City of Birmingham, from the Mid-18th Century to 1911

Year	Population		
	Parish of Birmingham	Borough of Birmingham	Environs of Birmingham later incorporated
1731	23,000		
1801	60,822		
1811	70,209		
1821	85,416		
1831	110,914		
1841	133,215	177,922	19,000
1851	173,951	233,841	32,000
1861	212,621	296,076	55,000
1871	231,015	343,787	91,000
1881	246,353	400,774	145,000
1891	245,503	478,113	156,000
1901	245,216	522,204	238,000
1911	225,447	525,833	314,000

[BRL: B.Min. 21.7.09; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix A, Report from C.P.Villiers, p.32a; 13th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1847, p.258; British Association, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, p.175; B.R.Mitchell & P.Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics, 1962, p.24; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, p.248; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.9 & 14; Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV, p.31.]

TABLE 2: Population Growth within the Aston Union from 1831-1911

Year	Population								
	Aston Manor	Aston Parish within the Borough of Birmingham	Parish of Erdington	Aston Parish Total	Curdworth	Minworth	Sutton Coldfield	Wishaw	Aston Union
1831	946	27,383	2,059	32,118	293	324	3,684	216	36,635
1841	2,896	38,098	2,579	45,718					50,928
1851	6,426	49,621	2,776	61,281					66,851
1861	16,337	70,548	3,906	94,995	330	319	4,661	216	100,522
1871	33,948	95,330	4,883	139,998	328	367	5,938	189	146,808
1881	53,842	131,661	7,158	201,305			7,737		209,869
1891	68,639	169,658	9,630	249,282					258,886
1901	77,326	201,562	16,368	296,721	419	688	14,264	171	
1911	75,029	219,082	32,331	329,798					

[BRL: A. Min. 20.12.36, 19.9.60, 9.4.78 & 11.7.82; BRL: B. Min. 21.7.09; PRO: MH 9/1, p.592; PRO: MH 32/101, H. Jenner-Fust report, Feb.1892; 3rd Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1837, p.272; 13th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1847, p.258; Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.I, p.295; Evans & Gardner, Holy Trinity, p.6; Jones, The Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield, p.178; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, pp.248-49; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.14, 16 & 18.]

TABLE 3: Population Growth within the Kings Norton Union from 1831-1911

Year	Population						
	Parish of Edgbaston	Parish of Harborne	Parish of Kings Norton*	Parish of Northfield	Beoley	Balsall Heath	Kings Norton Union
1831	3,954	4,227S	3,977	1,870	673		14,701
1841	6,609	1,637H	5,500	2,201			21,674
1851	9,269	2,350H	7,759	2,460			30,871
1861	12,907	16,996S 3,617H	13,634	3,130			
1871	17,442	22,263S 5,105H	21,845 4,356#	4,609 2,854+		13,615	
1881	22,760	31,509S 6,433H	34,071 7,208#	7,190 5,089+		22,734	96,143
1891	24,436	44,105S 7,935H	48,331	9,907	643	30,581	127,422
1901	26,486	64,650S 10,113H	74,617	20,767	565	38,827	
1911	26,398	13,902H	89,044	31,395		39,884	

[Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix B1, Answers to Rural Queries, p.586a; BRL: A. Min. 19.9.60; BRL: B. Min. 21.7.09; BRL: K.N. Min. 17.8.98; PRO: MH 12/14074, Mr Murray Browne report, 4.2.95; PRO: MH 32/104, letter Mr Peel to LGB, 3.12.69; 3rd Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1837, p.274; 13th Ann. Rep. of the PLC, 1847, p.260; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, p.248; VCH, Warks., 7, pp.14 & 16; J.W.Willis Bund (ed.), The Victoria History of the County of Worcester, Vol.3, 1913, pp.179 & 194. Key: * = Includes Balsall Heath; S = Harborne and Smethwick; H = Harborne; # = Moseley and Kings Heath; + = Selly Oak]

TABLE 4

Birmingham Parish Relief Expenditure for Selected Years from 1676 to 1796

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount Disbursed</u>
1676	£328.17.7
1680	£342.11.2½
1690	£396.15.2½
1700	£661.7.4½
1710	£960.8.8½
1720	£950.14.0
1740	£938.0.6
1750	£1,167.16.6
1760	£3,221.18.7
1770	£5,125.13.2¼
1773	£6,378.0.0
1780	£9,910.4.11¾
1786	£11,132.0.0
1796	£24,050.0.0

[Hutton, History of Birmingham, pp.222-24; Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham, p.247.]

TABLE 5: Parish of Birmingham: Numbers of Indoor and Outdoor Paupers, and the Amount of Outdoor Relief Dispensed for Selected Years, 1817-1912

Year	Indoor Poor		Outdoor Cases	Amount of Outdoor Relief (Calendar Year)
	Workhouse (Average)	Children's Facility (Average)		
1817		430(3a)		
1820	552(4)			
1821	596(1a) 478(4)	405(1a)	3,785a	
1822	455(1a)	324(1a)	2,605a	
1825	376(2)	176(2a)		
1827	458		2,900	£17,675.17.0 $\frac{3}{4}$
1828	409	237(4a)	3,177	18,848.2.0 $\frac{1}{2}$
1829	426	353(4a)	3,309	20,053.11.3 $\frac{1}{2}$
1830	491		3,567	22,565.9.2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1831	469		3,701	23,058.15.5 $\frac{1}{2}$
1832	433	286(3a)	3,752	23,764.4.4 $\frac{1}{2}$
1833	465	266(2a)	4,454	27,117.15.2
1834	377	241(1a)	3,999	23,333.15.8 $\frac{3}{4}$
1835	365	235(1a)	3,740	27,522.3.1 $\frac{1}{2}$
1836	363	232(1a)	3,409	22,445.5.11 $\frac{1}{2}$
1837	380	190(1a)	2,796	17,666.4.11 $\frac{1}{2}$
1838	481	315	3,156	21,775.12.0
1839	416	279(3/4)	2,926	22,033.13.9
1840	443	350	2,704	20,891.10.5
1841	493	359(1)	2,614	18,313.16.2
	512*			
1842	472	351(2-4)	2,384	15,948.19.5
1843	521	395	2,716	18,750.8.6
1844	524	369	2,566	16,780.7.9
1845	530	341	3,040	20,470.18.9
1846	528	282(2-4)	2,305	10,981.17.7(2-4)
1847		351(1,3-4)	2,701(1)	16,839.1.4 $\frac{1}{4}$ (1-3)
1848		427(1,4)		
1851	363*			13,668.7.7
1852				12,614.13.9
1853				13,047.1.1 $\frac{1}{4}$
1854				16,423.7.7
1855				19,662.13.11
1856				20,851.8.8. $\frac{1}{4}$
1857				20,516.0.0.
1858				20,716.18.9 $\frac{1}{2}$ (5)
1859				18,990.8.1 $\frac{1}{4}$
1861	1,493*			
1871	1,818*			21,236+
1873				19,332+
1877	2,289#		4,930#	
1878			5,086#	

Year	Indoor Poor		Outdoor Cases	Amount of Outdoor Relief (Calendar Year)
	Workhouse (Average)	Children's Facility (Average)		

1881	2,341*		
1893	3,073(J)		771(J)
1895	3,089(J)		841(J)
1903	3,498(J)		1,465(J)
1905	3,738(J)		1,683(J)
1907	3,184(Ju)		1,718(Ju)
1909	3,809(J)		2,330(Ju)
1911	2,732(J)		2,412(J)
1912	3,091(Ju)		2,228(Ju)

Key: 1 = 1st quarter; 2 = 2nd quarter; 3 = 3rd quarter;
 4 = 4th quarter; a = actual total at time of report;
 * = On Census day; # = Week ending December 14th;
 + = Year ending Lady day; 5 = One week short in March;
 J = On January 1st; Ju = On July 1st.

[PRO: MH 12/13291, Mr Austin report, 31.7.47; PRO: MH 32/46, Mr Henley letter to LGB, 26.12.78; BRL: B. Min. Vols.1-4 & 7-23, 16.6.03, 19.4.05, 15.1.08, 17.2.09, 15.11.11 & 20.3.12; Census 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871 & 1881; BRL: The Poor Law and its Administration in the Aston Union, 1873, p.6; Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Town Queries, p.239g, 24; 1st Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1871-72, p.396; 3rd Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1873-74, p.540; Langford, A Century of Birmingham Life, Vol.2, pp.448-49.]

TABLE 6

The Comparative Poor Rates of the Parishes of Birmingham and
Kings Norton, 1803-31

Parish	Poor Rate and Expense Per Head of Population			
	1803	1813	1821	1831
Birmingham	£18,680 5s p.h.	£35,771 8s4d p.h.	£40,520 7s7d p.h.	£46,519 6s4d p.h.
Kings Norton	£3,094 £1.2s p.h.	£1,874 12s2d p.h.	£1,341 7s4d p.h.	£1,499 7s6d p.h.

Notes: p.h. = per head

[Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix B1, Rural Queries, p.586a & Appendix B2, Town Queries, p.239f.]

TABLE 7

Harborne Parish Accounts 1834/1835

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount of Arrears</u>	<u>Amount of Levy Granted</u>
March 26th 1833	£265.9.2½	
June 8th 1833		£361.14.7
Sept.5th 1833		£367.9.9½
Dec.7th 1833		£370.9.5
March 1834		£369.0.0
March 25th 1834	£430.12.2	
Sept.1834		£371.0.2
March 25th 1835	£13.0.8½	

[BRL: List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne ..., 1834, p.3;
List of Paupers ... Parish of Harborne, 1835, p.3.]

TABLE 8

Numbers of Paupers at the Birmingham Infirmary and Numbers of Outpatients, 1825-35

Quarter ended	Numbers at the Infirmary		
	Male	Female	Total
March 31st 1825	41	49	90
June 30th 1825	50	46	96
Michaelmas 1826	49	48	97
Christmas 1826	45	55	100
Lady day 1829	61	34	95
Midsummer 1829	55	45	100
Michaelmas 1833	59	55	114
Christmas 1833	65	61	126
Lady day 1834	59	57	116
Midsummer 1834	61	62	123
Michaelmas 1834	57	64	121
Christmas 1834	65	76	141
Lady day 1835	54	70	124

Numbers of Outpatients who received treatment

Quarter ended	Numbers of Outpatients who received treatment		
	Attended at Infirmary	Visited in their own homes	Total
June 30th 1825	890	517	1407
Christmas 1826	1334	1051	2385
Midsummer 1829	1750	1085	2835
Christmas 1833	2636	1333	3969
Lady day 1834	2738	1524	4262
Midsummer 1834	2722	1385	4107
Christmas 1834	2286	1367	3653
Lady day 1835	2037	1237	3274

[BRL: B. Min. 19.7.25, 30.1.27, 30.6.29, 7.1.34, 8.4.34, 8.7.34, 14.1.35 & 7.4.35.]

TABLE 9

Levels of Outdoor Relief Dispensed by the Parish of Northfield,
for Selected Periods from November 1831 to March 1834

<u>Date</u>	<u>Months Weekly Pay</u>	<u>Months Casual Pay</u>
Nov.12th 1831 (4 weeks)	£39.10.0	£ 6.2.5½
Jul.31st 1832 (4 weeks)	£38.3.6	£ 6.0.3
Sept.19th 1832 (4 weeks)	£33.8.0	£ 7.0.9
Dec.31st 1832 (4 weeks)	£46.9.6	£ 7.16.4
Jan.25th 1833 (4 weeks)	£46.9.6	£14.0.10
May 31st 1833 (5 weeks)	£46.8.0	£10.9.0
Aug.28th 1833 (5 weeks)	£41.11.6	£14.6.3
Oct.29th 1833 (4 weeks)	£43.3.6	£12.12.0
Nov.29th 1833 (5 weeks)	£48.1.0	£12.6.3
Dec.30th 1833 (4 weeks)	£44.11.7	£12.0.6
Jan.31st 1834 (5 weeks)	£56.10.6	£11.16.4
Feb.28th 1834 (4 weeks)	£42.14.6	£23.9.11
Mar.28th 1834 (4 weeks)	£50.4.7	£ 8.17.0

[BRL: Parish of Northfield Workhouse Accounts 1814-34.]

TABLE 10: The Men Elected as Guardians for the Parish of Aston
in 1837, and the Unelected Vauxhall List

<u>Name of Candidate</u>	<u>No. of Votes Received</u>
<u>Elected Guardians</u>	
John Butcherd	2506
William Beale	2581
Thomas Colmore	2486
William Gammon	2669
Samuel Haycock	2588
John Hardwick	2492
William Ingall	2586
William Jenkins	2498
William Jenkins	2477
Samuel Loveridge	2412
Samuel Lloyd	2635
Benjamin Millichamp	2405
Edward Nicklin	2473
Thomas Simms	2504
James Thornton	2463
Charles Walker	2387
Robert Webb	2479
Reuben Wigley	2508
<u>Unelected 'Vauxhall' List</u>	
Isaac Marshall	1668
John Llewellyn	1658
Thomas Cox	1607
John Smallwood	1602
John Minter	1588
William Wheelwright	1584
Richard Fowler, Jnr.	1582
George Joseph Green	1577
Richard Harborne	1576
John Brearley Payne	1572
John Chattock	1571
Thomas Powell	1558
William Botteley	1557
John Vyse	1544
Charles Allen Line	1531
John Blakesley	1521
Richard Pountney	1510
Edward Hill	1489

[Jnl. 15.4.37.]

TABLE 11: Guardians Elected at the 1843 Aston Parish Election
and the Number of Votes Received

<u>Name of Guardian</u>	<u>Number of Votes Received</u>
Samuel Haycock	938
John Bottomley	901
James Reynolds Boyce	861
Revd. Charles Hill Roe	848
Abel Rollason	840
George Branson	838
Edward Nicklin	821
John Evans	813
Edward Spawforth	791
Richard Taylor	784
Henry Holland	768
John Lord	741
John Fowler	654
John Nash	620
Thomas Pearson	580
George Richards	530
Daniel Hill	515
Richard Brookholding Dawes	481
<hr/>	
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES RECEIVED	13,324

[BRL: A. Min. 28.3.43.]

TABLE 12: The Men Elected as Guardians for the Parish of Kings Norton in 1845, 1846, 1849 and 1850, and the Number of Votes Received

Candidate	Number of Votes Received in the Relevant Years			
	1845	1846	1849	1850
John Simmons	341*	N/A	N/A	N/A
William Simmons	335*	359*	473*	521*
Thomas Pountney	225*	354*	322*	439*
Ingram Greaves	199*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Charles Emery	173*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thomas Whieldon	N/A	238*	344*	N/A
John P. Izon	N/A	223*	379*	N/A
William Spencer	N/A	196*	201	N/A
William Deakin	N/A	194	N/A	N/A
Thomas Gilbert	N/A	192	N/A	343*
John Taylor	N/A	170	N/A	N/A
Richard Buriman	N/A	N/A	306*	487*
James Baldwin	N/A	N/A	291	N/A
Joseph Greaves	N/A	N/A	253	461*
Richard Greves	N/A	N/A	N/A	336
Number of Candidates	5	8	8	6

Notes: * Indicates elected.
N/A - Not applicable.

[BRL: K.N. Min. 12.5.45, 13.4.46, 23.4.49 & 24.4.50.]

TABLE 13: Voting Levels at Contested Aston Parish Elections,
1874-79

<u>Year of Election</u>	<u>No. of Electors on the Voting List</u>	<u>No. of Votes Registered</u>
1874	22,732	3,908
1875	28,789	5,773
1876	30,725	5,139
1877	32,461	5,192
1879	35,715	6,667

[BRL: A. Min. 12.3.78 & 24.2.80.]

TABLE 14: Expenses Incurred in the Election of Guardians in the Parish of Aston, 1869-82

Year	Clerk's Remuneration	Printing &c.	Total
1869	£98.19.0	£18.11.6	£117.10.6
1870	98.19.0	20.14.6	119.13.6
1871	98.19.0	28.3.9	127.2.9
1872	-	-	-
1873	-	-	-
1874	145.16.4	25.5.0	171.1.4
1875	145.16.4	63.1.6	208.17.10
1876	145.16.4	83.13.4	229.9.8
1877	320.4.10	63.3.6	383.8.4
1878	342.16.8	45.1.3	387.17.11
1879	363.4.10	45.0.4	408.5.2
1880	374.9.8	26.2.6	400.12.2
1881	-	-	-
1882	-	-	-
Total	£ 2135.2.0	£418.17.2	£2503.19.2

Totals do not include the £10 per annum allowed the Clerk for 'preparing and posting election notices', or the £10 or £20 allowed 'in completing the return of guardians elected.' At the 1877 election, the clerk was paid £20 'for performing the duties, for completing the Election of Guardians for the whole Union ...', in accordance with the LGB's General Order dated February 14th 1877. (BRL: A. Min. 24.4.77, 22.5.77 & 11.7.82).

TABLE 15: The Results of the Contested Elections in the Kings Norton Union, 1884, 1887 and 1890

Parish or Ward	Number of Votes for Candidates		
	1884	1887	1890
Kings Norton Parish	2464*	-	-
	2297*	-	-
	2292*	-	-
	2290*	-	-
	2137*	-	-
	1372	-	-
	1358	-	-
	1264	-	-
	1257	-	-
	1249	-	-
	1151	-	-
& 2 R.S.			
Northfield Parish	793*	643*	-
	783*	447*	-
	780*	424*	-
	432	423	-
	410	357	-
	400	179	-
	16	151	-
Moseley Ward	-	1908*	2477*
	-	1761*	2410*
	-	1666*	2383*
	-	1660*	1860*
	-	776	1628
	-	-	1582
Edgbaston Parish	-	-	1467*
	-	-	1261*
	-	-	1073*
	-	-	1021*
	-	-	914*
	-	-	888
		& 1 R.S.	
Harborne Ward	-	-	585*
	-	-	409*
	-	-	387

Notes: * = Elected; R.S. = Refused to Serve

[BRL: K.N. Min. 23.4.84, 20.4.87 & 23.4.90.]

TABLE 16: Voting Statistics for Contested Elections to the Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Boards of Guardians, 1894-1910

Parish or Ward	Number of Votes for Candidates					
	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910
<u>Birmingham Parish</u>						
Market Hall (4 Seats)	(G)632	-	-	-	-	544
	(C)611	-	-	-	-	531
	(LU)593	-	-	-	-	518
	(C)530	-	-	-	-	516
	(I)221*	-	-	-	-	36*
	(I)109*	-	-	-	-	-
All Saints (4 Seats)	(C)538	-	-	-	801	-
	(LU/TC)395	-	-	-	792	-
	(LU)389	-	-	-	759	-
	(G)361	-	-	-	755	-
	(I)315	-	-	-	443*	-
	(I)237*	-	-	-	422*	-
	(I) 63*	-	-	-	-	-
Rotton Park (3 Seats)	(G)577	-	-	-	-	-
	(C)576	-	-	-	-	-
	(LU)565	-	-	-	-	-
	(TC)181*	-	-	-	-	-
St. Stephen's (3 Seats)	(LU)637	-	-	-	407	-
	(G)580	-	-	-	403	-
	(C)556	-	-	-	384	-
	(I)258*	-	-	-	43*	-
	(TC) 68*	-	-	-	-	-
Ladywood (3 Seats)	(C)501	815	-	-	1032	787
	(LU)493	432	-	-	842	738
	(LU)440	432	-	-	617	679
	(TC)284* (TC)417*	-	-	-	612*	76*
	(I)269*	366*	-	-	-	-
	(I)236*	59*	-	-	-	-
St. Bartholomews (3 Seats)	(C)382	327	374	-	-	-
	(C)292	203	322	-	-	-
	(LU)278	180	275	-	-	-
	(I)199*	159*	246*	-	-	-
	(I)178*	60*	239*	-	-	-
	-	-	68*	-	-	-
	-	-	48*	-	-	-
St. Mary's (3 Seats)	(G)667	-	-	-	-	-
	(C)619	-	-	-	-	-

Parish or Ward	Number of Votes for Candidates					
	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910
	(LU)541	-	-	-	-	-
	(I)124*	-	-	-	-	-
	(TC)110*	-	-	-	-	-
St. George's (3 Seats)	(LU)419	-	-	-	440	-
	(G)411	-	-	-	424	-
	(C)404	-	-	-	322	-
	(TC)102*	-	-	-	66*	-
St. Thomas's (3 Seats)	-	-	-	-	463	405
	-	-	-	-	444	346
	-	-	-	-	443	299
	-	-	-	-	443*	176*
St. Martin's (3 Seats)	-	-	-	-	-	157
	-	-	-	-	-	153
	-	-	-	-	-	104
	-	-	-	-	-	31*
<u>Aston Union</u>						
Bordesley Ward (3 Seats)	(TC)409	-	341	-	-	-
	286	-	346	-	-	-
	247	-	284	-	-	-
	215*	-	245*	-	-	-
	197*	-	-	-	-	-
Duddeston Ward (2 Seats)	643	-	-	-	-	775
	(TC)311	-	-	-	-	686
	202*	-	-	-	-	336*
	-	-	-	-	-	105*
Nechells Ward (3 Seats)	764	571	-	-	560	-
	468	560	-	-	546	-
	246	557	-	-	470	-
	174*	316*	-	-	139*	-
	55*	-	-	-	-	-
Saltley Ward (2 Seats)	500	383	-	-	(La)1186	-
	430	294	-	-	(La)1135	-
	429*	282*	-	-	(C)775*	-
	413*	-	-	-	-	-
Erdington (2 Seats)	791	554	446	676	-	-
	590	542	436	668	-	-
	542*	229*	337*	330*	-	-
	-	-	311*	-	-	-

Parish or Ward	Number of Votes for Candidates					
	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910
Minworth (1 Seat)	45 11*	- -	- -	- -	60 59*	- -
Sutton Coldfield (4 Seats)	- - - - -	368 355 203 153 117* 88*	- - - - - -	- - - - - -	- - - - - -	- - - - - -
Water Orton (1 Seat)	- -	61 41*	- -	- -	- -	- -
St. Mary's & St. Stephen's Ward (1 Seat)	- - -	- - -	52* 73* 99	- - -	- - -	- - -
<u>Aston Manor:</u>						
1st Ward (2 Seats)	- - -	- - -	575 568 30*	- - -	# # #	# # #
2nd Ward: (2 Seats)	- - -	- - -	904 833 534*	- - -	# # #	# # #
Castle Bromwich (1 Seat)	- - -	- - -	- - -	93 36* -	83 74* 3*	- - -
<u>Aston Manor:</u>						
Villa Ward (1 Seat)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	(C)437 (La)49*	(C)497 (La)55*
Lozells Ward (1 Seat)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	(C)491 (La)63*	(C)289 (La)21*
Six Ways (1 Seat)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	(C)449 (La)67*	(C)355 (La)25*
Brook Ward (1 Seat)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	(LU)588 (La)254*	(LU)206 (La)62*
Reservoir Ward (1 Seat)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	(C)521 (La)72*	- -
Park Ward (1 Seat)	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	(C)645 (La)109*	(C)385 (La)35*

Parish or Ward	Number of Votes for Candidates					
	1894	1898	1901	1904	1907	1910
<u>Kings Norton Union</u>						
Edgbaston Ward (3 Seats)	475	354	-	-	-	-
	444	307	-	-	-	-
	428	298	-	-	-	-
	306*	297*	-	-	-	-
	-	257*	-	-	-	-
Saint Martins Ward (1 Seat)	25	116	127	-	-	-
	4*	39*	26*	-	-	-
Harborne (2 Seats)	218	311	404	485	-	-
	136	259	401	446	-	-
	111*	252*	289*	370*	-	-
Balsall Heath (4 Seats)	552	779	617	-	-	-
	547	412	604	-	-	-
	533	403	580	-	-	-
	530	380	120	-	-	-
	167*	367*	114*	-	-	-
	-	33*	113*	-	-	-
-	21*	111*	-	-	-	
Selly Oak Ward (2 Seats)	444	490	-	-	-	-
	442	442	-	-	-	-
	401*	106*	-	-	-	-
	378*	-	-	-	-	-
	31*	-	-	-	-	-
Stirchley Ward (1 Seat)	226	-	-	-	-	-
	138*	-	-	-	-	-
Moseley Ward (3 Seats)	266	-	-	-	-	482
	242	-	-	-	-	473
	230	-	-	-	-	459
	111*	-	-	-	-	21*
Kings Heath Ward (2 Seats)	356	466	-	-	-	-
	184	462	-	-	-	-
	179*	262*	-	-	-	-
	154*	74*	-	-	-	-
Kings Norton Ward (2 Seats)	-	330	-	-	-	-
	-	298	-	-	-	-
	-	262*	-	-	-	-
Quinton (1 Seat)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	109
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95*

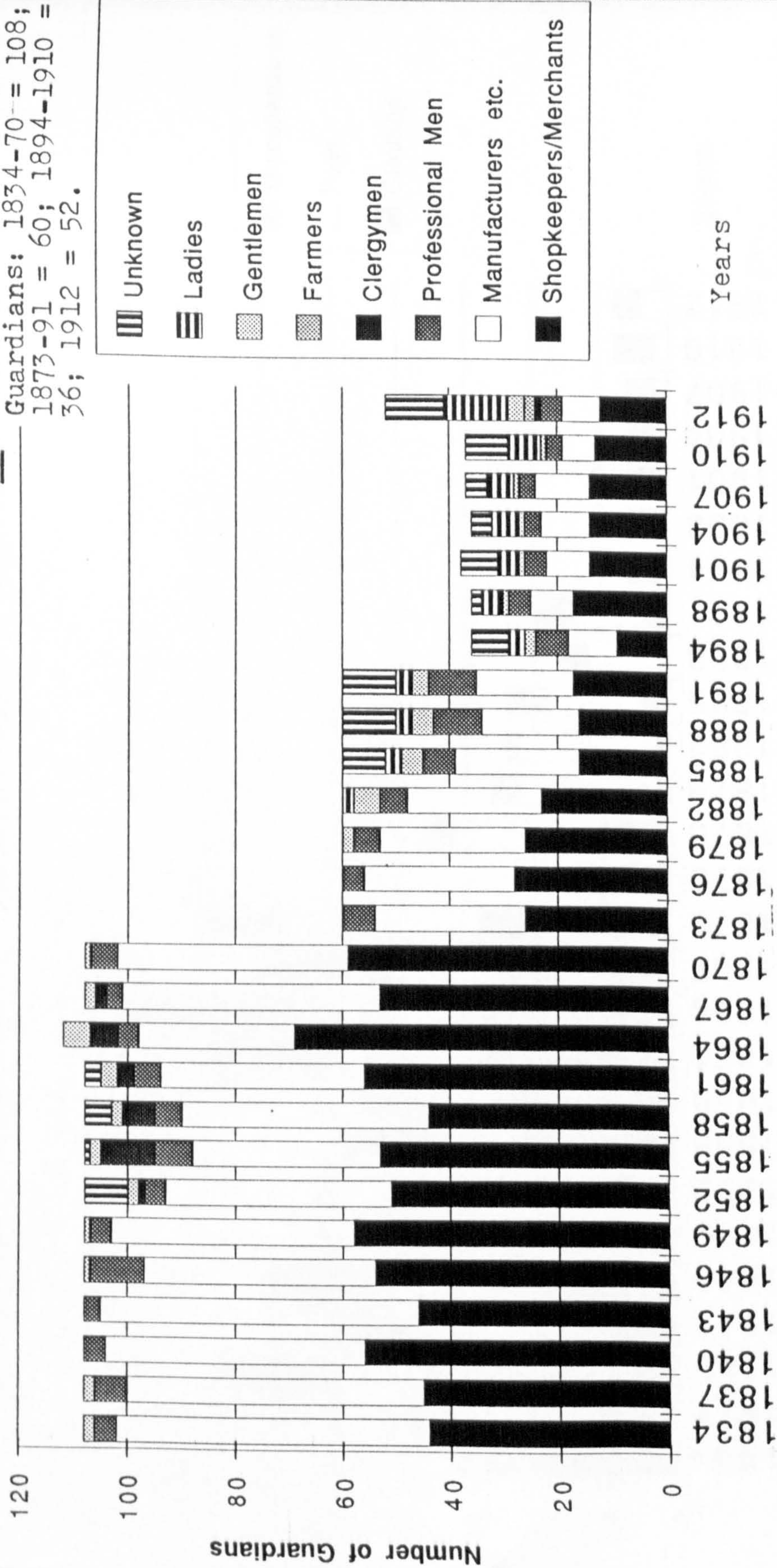
Notes: * = not elected; C = Conservative, G = Gladstonian, I = Independent, La = Labour, LU = Liberal Unionist, TC = Trades Council. # = At the 1907 and 1910 elections Aston Manor was divided into 6 wards with 1 seat each. N/A = Not applicable.

[BRL: A. Min. 8.1.95, 19.4.98, 16.4.01, 19.4.04, 16.4.07 & 19.4.10; BRL: K.N. Min. 23.4.90, 2.1.95, 20.4.98, 18.4.04, 17.4.07 & 27.4.10; Gaz. 3.12.94, 19.12.94, 5.4.98, 26.3.01, 26.3.07 & 5.4.10.]

TABLE 17:

BIRMINGHAM GUARDIANS: OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES 1834 - 1912

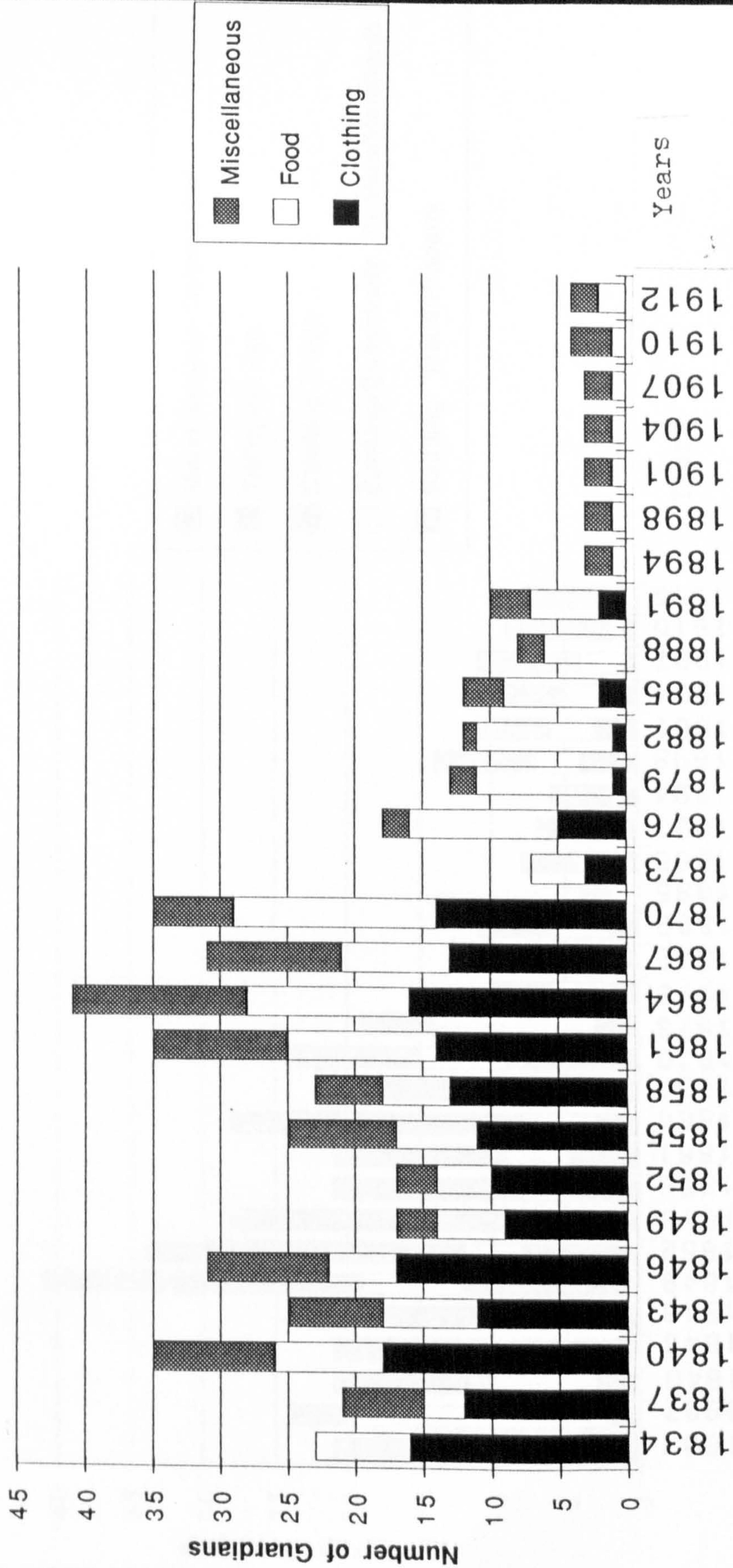
NB: Total number of elected Guardians: 1834-70 = 108; 1873-91 = 60; 1894-1910 = 36; 1912 = 52.



NB: Four extra Guardians listed in 1864. 1901 total includes two co-opted Guardians. 1907 and 1910 totals include one co-opted Guardian. (BRL: B. Min. vols.2-80; Gaz.; Jnl.; Mer.; D.Post; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham.)

TABLE 18:

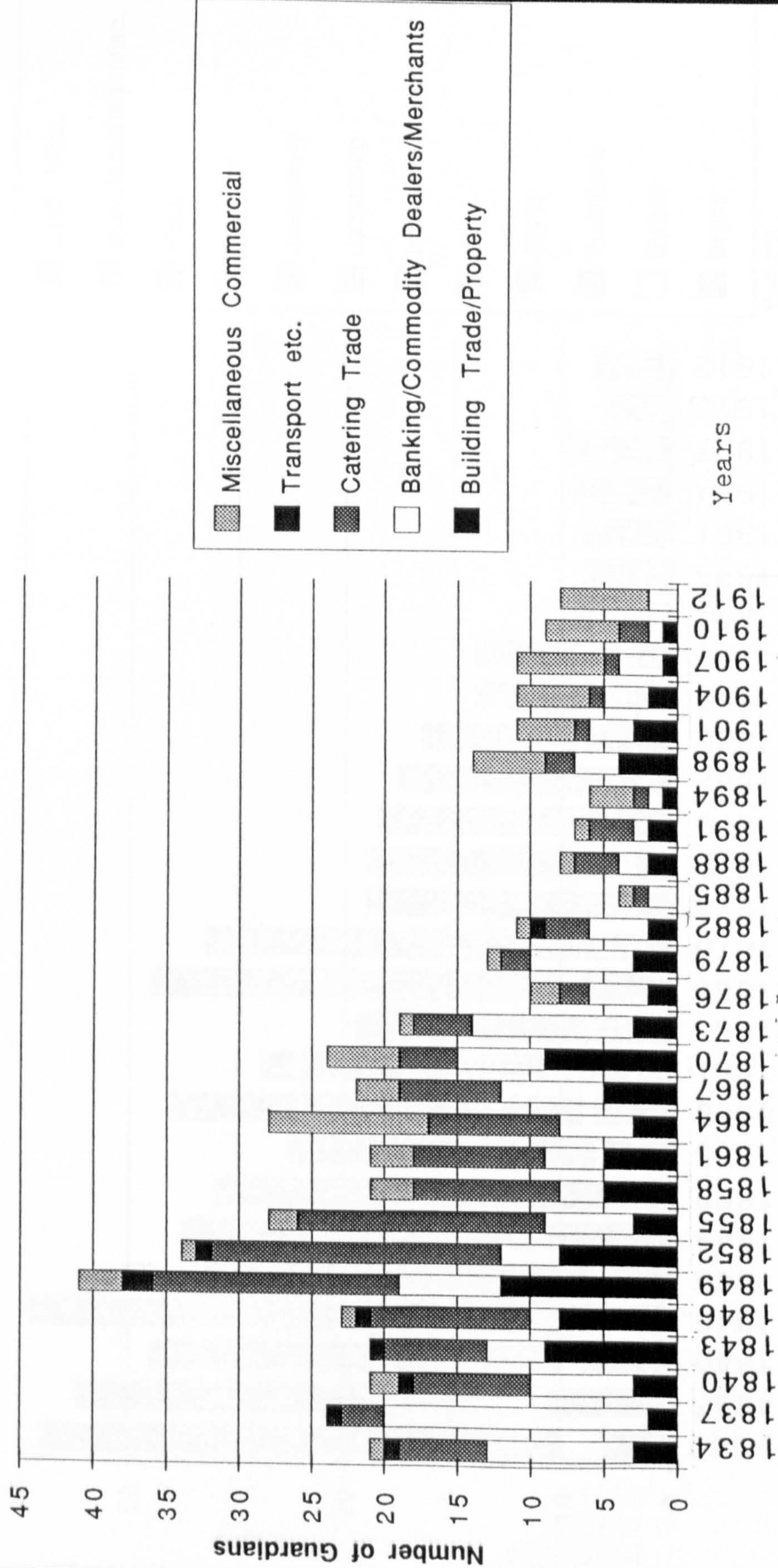
BIRMINGHAM GUARDIANS: SHOPKEEPERS (CLOTHING, FOOD AND MISCELLANEOUS)
1834 - 1912



(BRL: B. Min. vols.2-80; Gaz.; Jnl.; Mer.; D.Post; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham.)

TABLE 19:

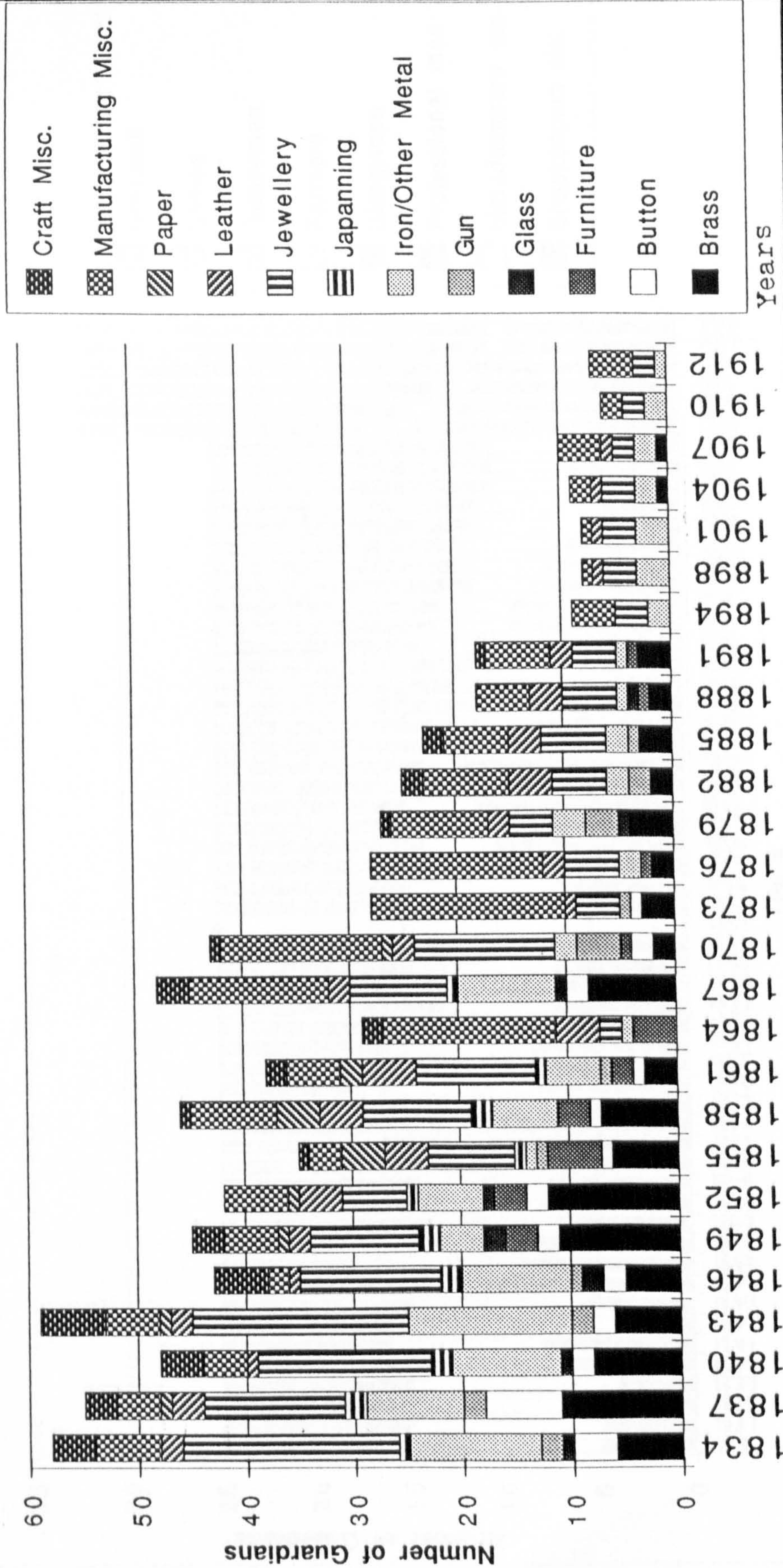
BIRMINGHAM GUARDIANS: MERCHANTS SUB-SECTIONS 1834 - 1912



(BRL: B. Min. vols.2-30; Gaz.; Jnl.; Mer.; D.Post; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham.)

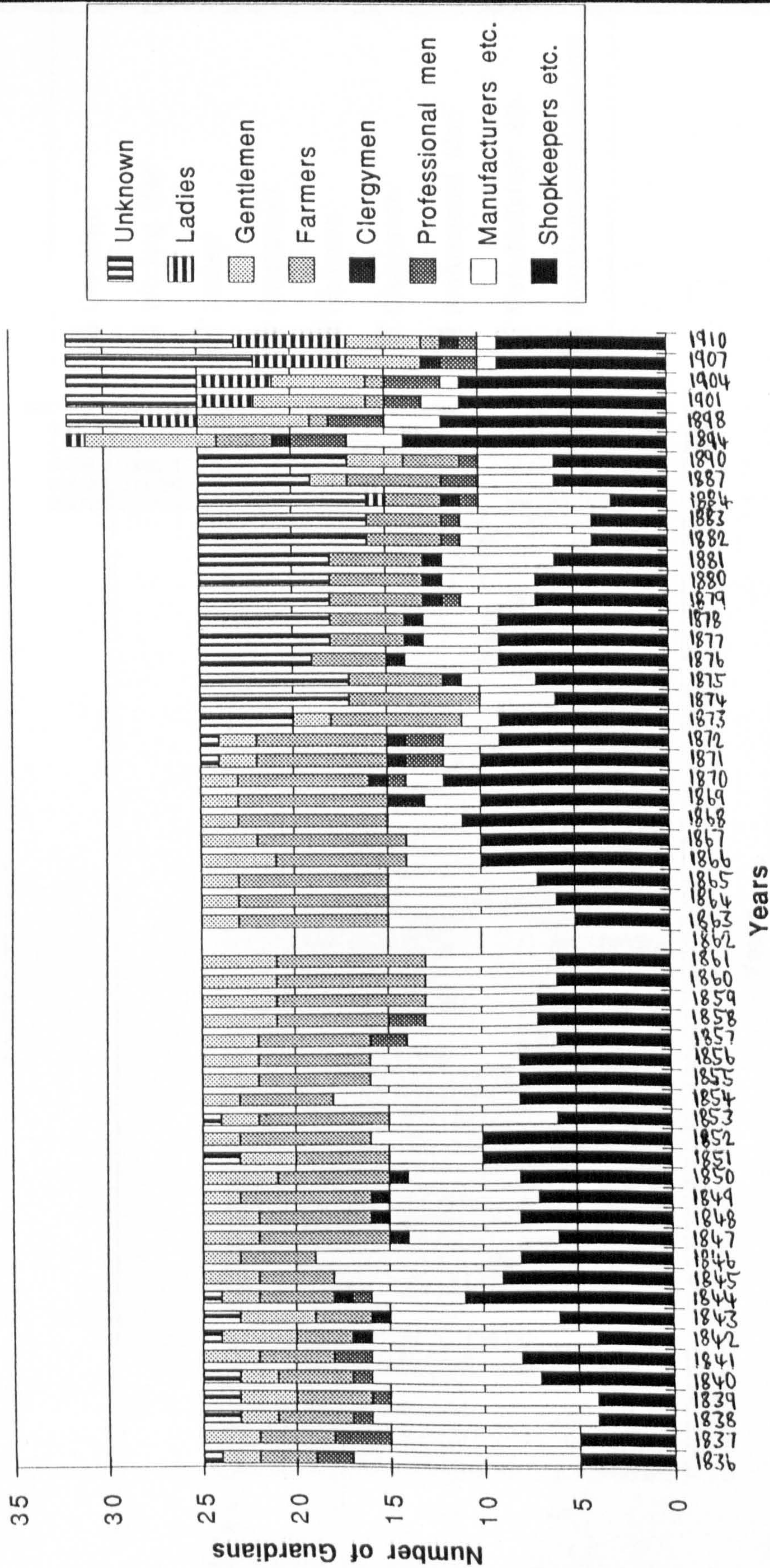
TABLE 20:

BIRMINGHAM GUARDIANS: MANUFACTURERS SUB-SECTIONS 1834 - 1912



(BRL: B. Min. vols. 2-30; Gaz.; Jnl.; Mer.; D. Post; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham.)

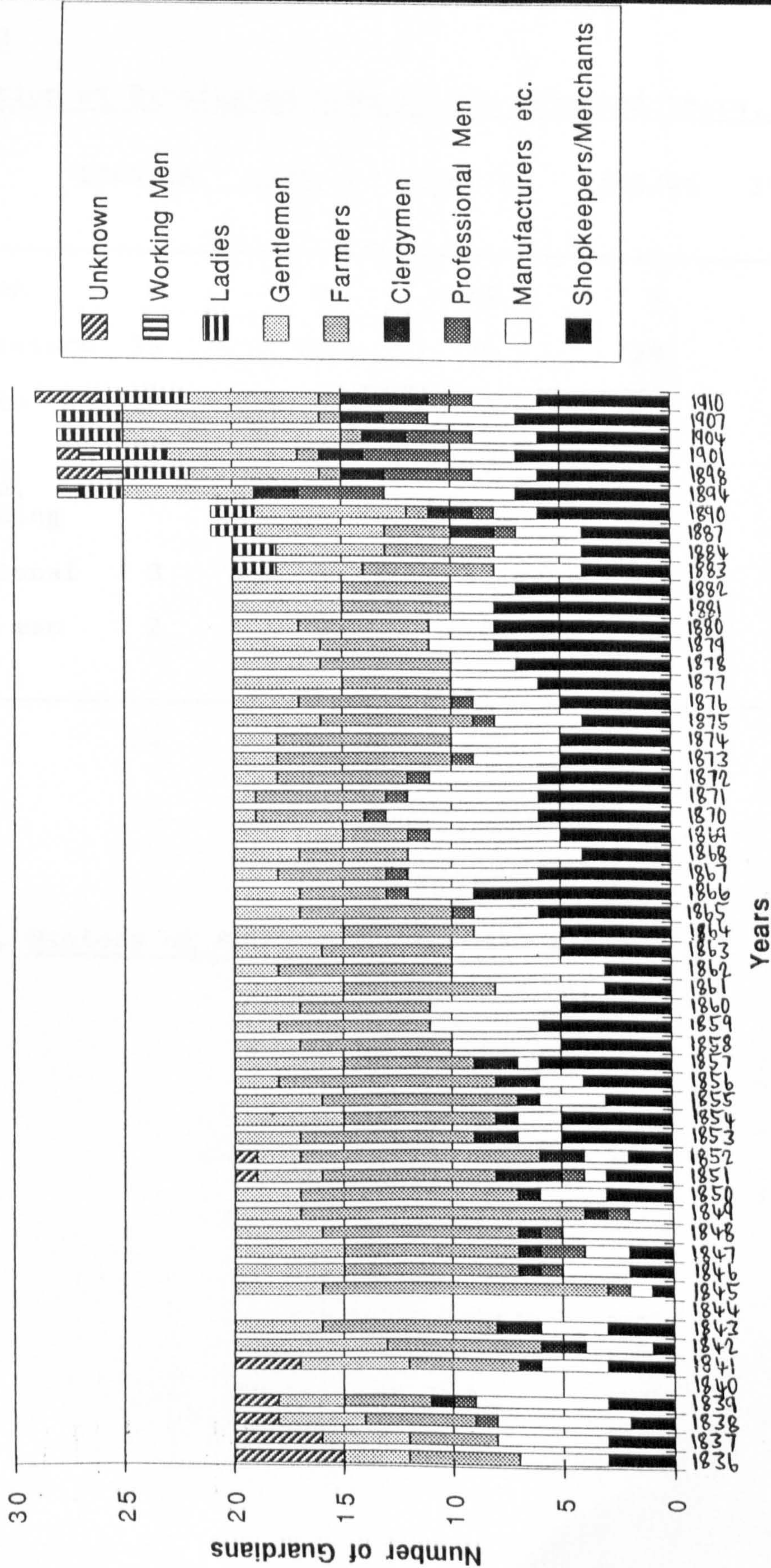
TABLE 21: ASTON GUARDIANS: OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES 1836 - 1910



NB: 1862-not known. Total number of elected Guardians: 1836-90 = 25;
 1894-1910 = 32. (BRL: A. Min. vols.1-58; Gaz.; D.Post; Kelly's
 Directory of Birmingham.)

TABLE 22:

KINGS NORTON GUARDIANS: OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES 1836 - 1910



NB: 1840 and 1844 not known. Total number of elected Guardians:
 1836-84 = 20; 1887-90 = 21; 1894-1907 = 28; 1910 = 29.
 (BRL: K.N. Min. vols.1-43; Gaz.; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham.)

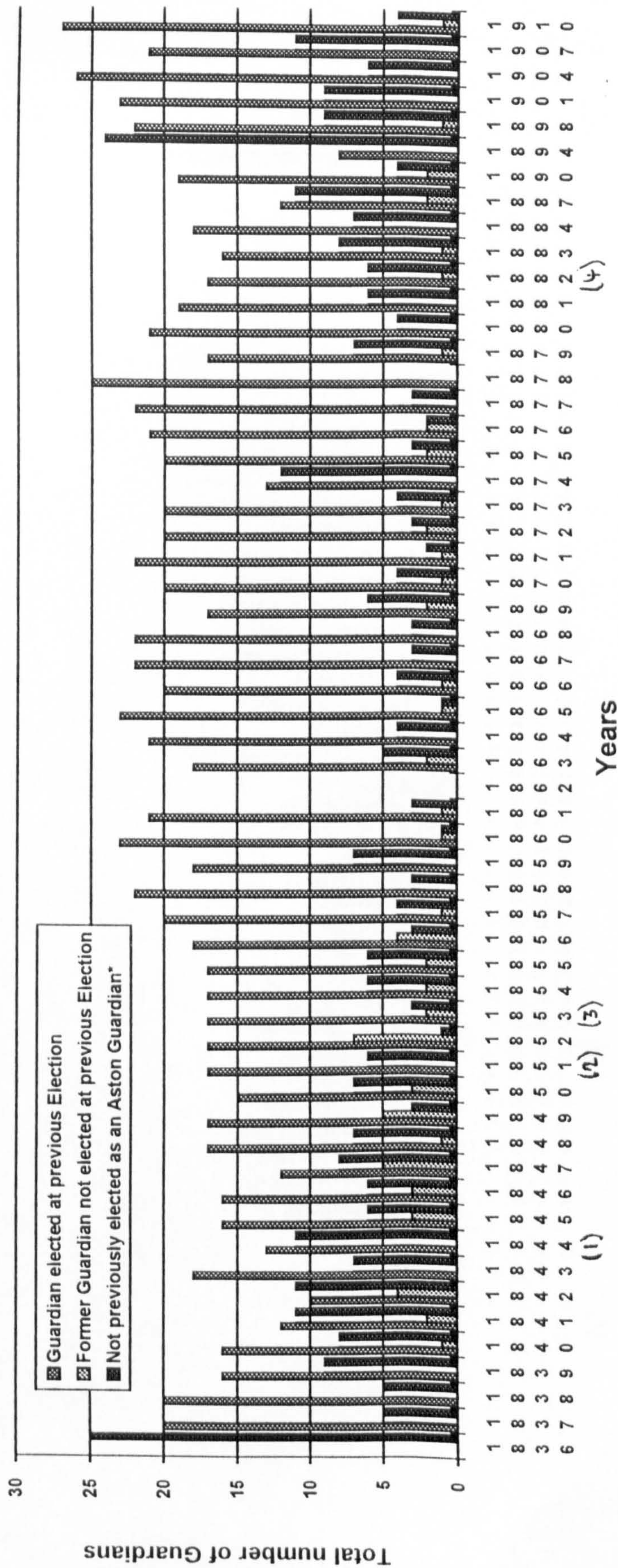
TABLE 23

Composition of Birmingham Council for Selected Years, 1865-1905

	1865/66	1875/76	1885/86	1895/96	1905/06
Gentlemen	6	9	14	6	7
Manufacturers	23	26	20	29	25
Tradesmen	10	5	7	10	5
Banking, Commerce, Merchanting	15	16	8	7	13
Professional	8	5	12	16	16
Working men	2	3	3	4	6
Totals	64	64	64	72	72

[Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II, p.128.]

TABLE 24: ASTON BOARD OF GUARDIANS: CONTINUITY AND NEW GUARDIANS 1836 - 1910



NB: 1862 not known. 1863 figures relate to 1861. Total number of Elected Guardians: 1836 - 1890 = 25
1894 - 1910 = 32

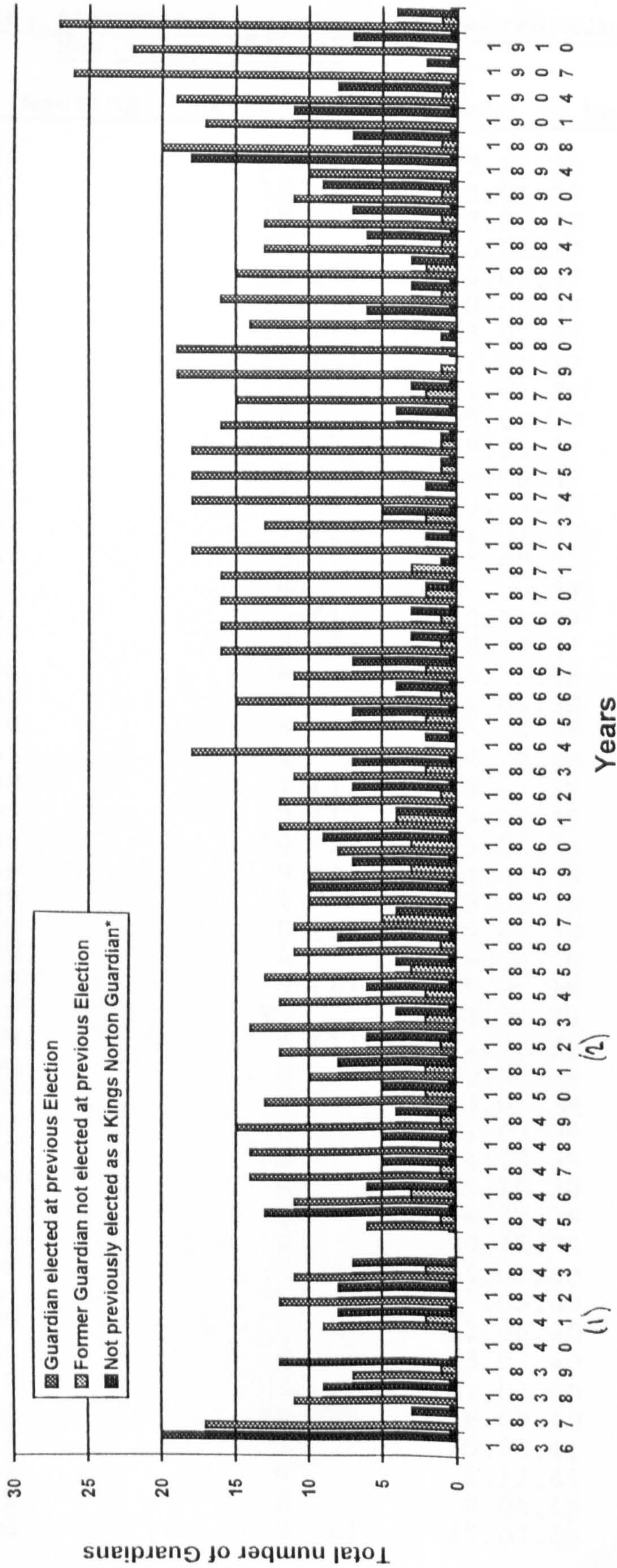
* Individuals were of course elected between elections.

(1) Only 17 Aston Parish Guardians. (2) Only 16 Aston Parish Guardians. (3) Only 17 Aston Parish Guardians.

(4) Only 3 Sutton Coldfield Guardians.

[BRL: A. Min. Vols. 1-58.]

TABLE 25: KINGS NORTON BOARD OF GUARDIANS: CONTINUITY AND NEW GUARDIANS 1836 - 1910



NB: 1840 and 1844 not known. 1841 and 1845 figures relate to 1839 and 1843 respectively.

Total number of Elected Guardians: 1836 - 1884 = 20, 1887 - 1890 = 21, 1894 - 1907 = 28, 1910 = 29

* Individuals were of course elected between elections.

(1) Only 1 Beoley Parish Guardian. (2) Only 4 Kings Norton Parish Guardians.

[BRL: K.N. Min. Vols. 1-43.; Kelly's Directory, 1902, pp984 - 985.]

TABLE 26: Attendance Levels at Selected Kings Norton Board Meetings, 1836-70

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
13.12.36	25 (6)	23.12.36	3
4.01.37	18 (2)	13.01.37	8 (1)
20.01.37	18 (2)	27.01.37	11 (1)
3.02.37	10	10.02.37	14 (1)
17.02.37	11 (1)	24.02.37	9 (1)
3.03.37	11 (1)	10.03.37	16
17.03.37	10 (1)	25.03.37	4
31.03.37	15 (2)	7.04.37	6 (1)
14.04.37	5	21.04.37	8 (1)
28.04.37	8 (2)	5.05.37	11 (1)
12.05.37	11 (2)	19.05.37	7
26.05.37	8 (1)	19.06.37	5 (2)
23.06.37	8 (1)	30.06.37	0
14.07.37	7 (1)	21.07.37	6 (1)
4.08.37	3 (1)	18.08.37	8 (2)
22.09.37	4	29.09.37	6 (1)
27.10.37	5 (1)	10.11.37	3 (1)
1.12.37	9 (1)	8.12.37	9 (1)
2.03.38	4	16.03.38	8 (1)
23.03.38	7	6.04.38	9 (1)
4.05.38	5	25.05.38	12
27.07.38	2	10.08.38	2
14.12.38	7 (1)	4.01.39	9 (1)
11.01.39	8 (1)	25.01.39	7 (1)
8.02.39	10 (1)	15.02.39	2
20.02.39	9 (1)	1.03.39	11 (1)
8.03.39	4	15.03.39	3 (1)
22.03.39	8 (1)	5.04.39	6 (1)
12.04.39	4	26.04.39	3
3.05.39	9 (1)	24.05.39	2
14.06.39	15	12.07.39	1
26.07.39	6 (1)	2.08.39	12 (1)
23.08.39	0	30.08.39	13 (1)
6.09.39	0	13.09.39	7 (1)
20.09.39	0	27.09.39	6 (1)
4.10.39	0	11.10.39	7 (1)
18.10.39	0	25.10.39	8
29.11.39	0	6.12.39	8 (1)
13.12.39	0	20.12.39	7 (1)
7.02.40	0	14.02.40	8 (1)
28.02.40	6	27.03.40	9
29.05.40	0	12.06.40	0
26.06.40	0	3.07.40	2
10.07.40	0	17.07.40	8 (1)
7.08.40	16 (2)	8.09.40	4 (1)
16.04.41	9	30.04.41	10 (1)
13.08.41	0	2.12.41	12 (2)
14.01.42	2	8.04.42	13
3.06.42	9 (1)	15.07.42	8

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
29.07.42	12 (1)	12.08.42	10 (1)
9.09.42	13	18.11.42	9 (1)
2.12.42	9 (1)	16.12.42	12
30.12.42	11	13.01.43	3
27.01.43	11	24.03.43	6
7.04.43	12	2.06.43	12
30.06.43	7	11.08.43	13
21.08.43	17	4.09.43	16
1.04.44	11	15.04.44	10
13.05.44	6	27.05.44	8
10.06.44	11	24.06.44	8
14.10.44	15	6.01.45	8
20.01.45	11	3.02.45	6
17.02.45	12 (1)	3.03.45	8
17.03.45	9	31.03.45	8
14.04.45	12 (1)	9.06.45	11
13.04.46	15 (1)	27.04.46	16
11.05.46	9	25.05.46	9
17.08.46	5	21.12.46	11
12.04.47	13 (1)	7.06.47	11 (1)
21.06.47	11 (1)	11.10.47	10
5.09.49	3	7.09.49	3
12.09.49	7	5.12.49	4
18.12.50	11 (1)	19.09.55	7 (1)
16.04.56	16 (1)	26.06.67	11
18.09.67	10	29.04.68	16
31.03.69	11	28.04.69	15
29.09.69	10	22.12.69	8

NB: The numbers shown in brackets indicate the number of ex-officio Guardians included in the overall attendance total. A minimum of 3 Guardians constituted a quorum. There were 10 ex-officio Guardians in 1836, 9 in 1865 and 19 in 1868. Meetings were held fortnightly by the end of the period. (Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1865, p.134 & 1868, p.134).

[BRL: K.N. Min. vols.1-12.]

TABLE 27: Attendance Levels at Selected Aston Board Meetings, 1836-70

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
8.11.36	26 (4)	15.11.36	6 (1)
29.11.36	26 (3)	13.12.36	11 (1)
20.12.36	20 (3)	27.12.36	12 (1)
28.12.36	11 (1)	30.12.36	11 (1)
3.01.37	13 (2)	14.03.37	19 (2)
21.03.37	25 (3)	28.03.37	11 (2)
4.04.37	21 (2)	11.04.37	19 (1)
25.04.37	17 (1)	2.05.37	20 (2)
9.05.37	12 (1)	16.05.37	12 (2)
23.05.37	13 (2)	30.05.37	14 (1)
6.06.37	9 (2)	13.06.37	8 (1)
20.06.37	17 (4)	27.06.37	11
4.07.37	10 (1)	11.07.37	11 (1)
18.07.37	6 (1)	25.07.37	11 (1)
1.08.37	7 (1)	8.08.37	6
15.08.37	10 (1)	22.08.37	11 (1)
29.08.37	6 (1)	5.09.37	9 (1)
12.09.37	13 (1)	19.09.37	15 (1)
26.09.37	7 (1)	3.10.37	10 (1)
10.10.37	12 (1)	17.10.37	11 (1)
24.10.37	17 (2)	31.10.37	14 (1)
7.11.37	7 (1)	14.11.37	17
21.11.37	7 (1)	28.11.37	10 (1)
5.12.37	8 (1)	12.12.37	14 (1)
19.12.37	10	26.12.37	10 (1)
2.01.38	7 (1)	30.01.38	9 (1)
20.03.38	9	27.03.38	19 (2)
3.04.38	16 (1)	8.05.38	10 (1)
15.05.38	16 (1)	5.06.38	16 (1)
12.06.38	16 (1)	26.06.38	13 (1)
10.07.38	12 (1)	17.07.38	16 (1)
24.07.38	15 (2)	31.07.38	11 (1)
7.08.38	11 (1)	14.08.38	18 (1)
28.08.38	10 (1)	4.09.38	10
11.09.38	9 (1)	18.09.38	11 (1)
25.09.38	13 (1)	2.10.38	13 (1)
16.10.38	13	13.11.38	7 (1)
4.12.38	14 (2)	11.12.38	18 (2)
18.12.38	20 (1)	8.01.39	8 (2)
15.01.39	11 (2)	22.01.39	11 (1)
29.01.39	7	12.02.39	9 (1)
26.03.39	21 (2)	2.04.39	19 (1)
11.06.39	17 (1)	18.06.39	22 (1)
25.06.39	8 (1)	2.07.39	14 (1)
9.07.39	20 (2)	24.09.39	15 (1)
29.10.39	16 (2)	17.12.39	11
31.03.40	18	21.04.40	14
15.12.40	12 (1)	30.03.41	20 (1)
20.04.41	19	27.04.41	9

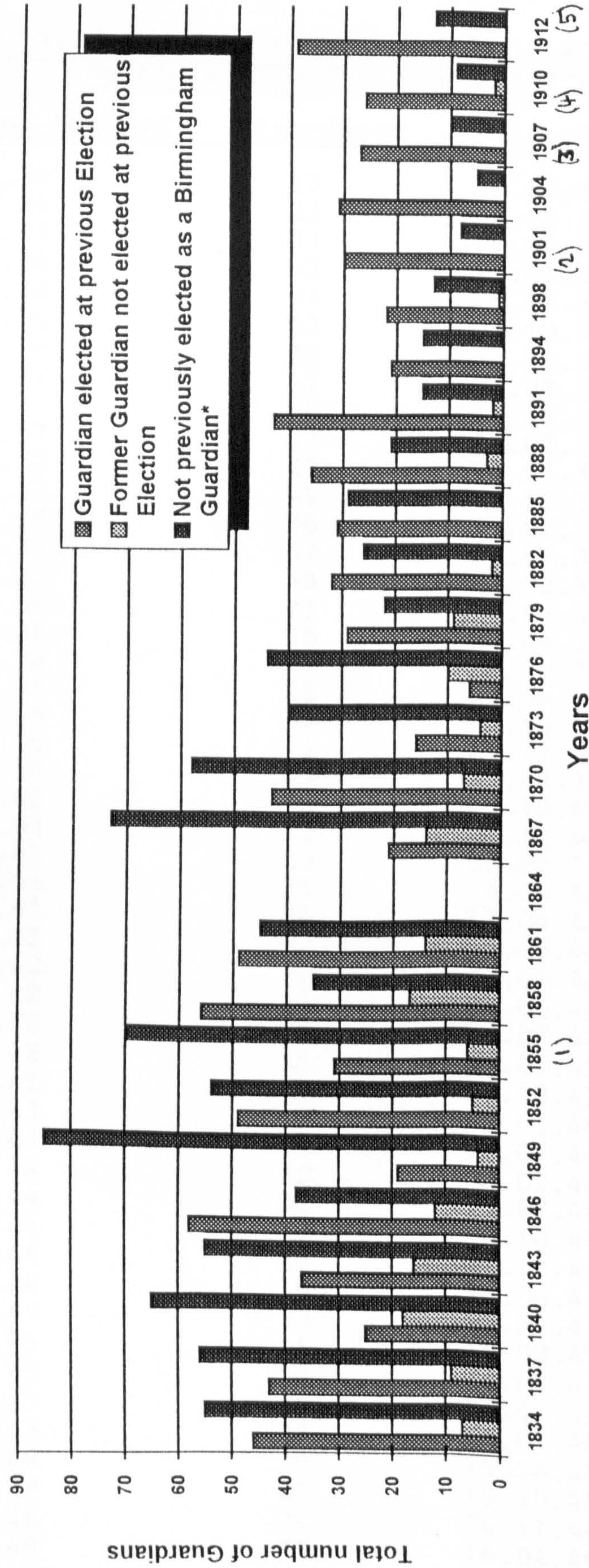
<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
4.05.41	12	18.05.41	12
7.09.41	15	2.11.41	10
9.11.41	11 (1)	14.12.41	13
28.12.41	15 (1)	4.01.42	10
11.01.42	10	29.03.42	8 (1)
17.05.42	15 (1)	28.03.43	22 (1)
12.09.43	6 (1)	26.03.44	11 (1)
30.07.44	1 (1)	19.11.44	2 (1)
15.04.45	11 (1)	17.02.46	3
10.03.46	12 (1)	24.03.46	10 (1)
31.03.46	17 (1)	14.04.46	7
16.03.47	8 (1)	13.04.47	15 (1)
21.09.47	8 (1)	5.10.47	9 (1)
9.11.47	6 (1)	16.11.47	4 (1)
7.12.47	9 (1)	13.12.47	12
21.12.47	16 (2)	18.04.48	16
21.11.48	6	9.01.49	9
23.01.49	7 (1)	17.04.49	14 (1)
11.12.49	6	5.02.50	8
20.08.50	8	29.06.52	8 (1)
6.07.52	11 (1)	21.06.53	6 (1)
28.06.53	9 (1)	3.01.55	5
10.01.55	5	27.06.55	14
1.10.56	6	28.01.57	14 (1)
22.04.57	13 (1)	30.12.57	14
17.02.58	11 (1)	6.04.59	15
20.04.59	18	1.06.59	10
15.02.60	11	14.03.60	10
28.03.60	18	4.04.60	15
11.04.60	14	18.04.60	15
25.04.60	14	30.05.60	13
29.08.60	14	5.09.60	6
12.09.60	9	19.09.60	11
26.09.60	9	3.10.60	15
12.12.60	9	6.02.61	10
3.04.61	12	31.07.61	8
25.09.61	11	2.10.61	10 (1)
9.10.61	12 (1)	23.10.61	18 (2)
17.12.61	10 (1)	28.01.62	7
25.03.62	9 (1)	23.06.63	15
22.09.63	14 (1)	6.10.63	10 (1)
22.12.63	10 (2)	12.01.64	18 (1)
29.03.64	8 (1)	19.04.64	19 (1)
27.09.64	10 (1)	11.10.64	21 (1)
27.12.64	10	21.03.65	19 (1)
18.04.65	21 (1)	2.05.65	20
23.05.65	11	26.09.65	13
3.10.65	15 (1)	17.10.65	13
31.10.65	11 (1)	28.11.65	9
26.12.65	9 (1)	1.05.66	18 (1)
27.10.68	19	17.11.68	7 (1)
24.11.68	19	1.12.68	20 (1)

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
29.12.68	12 (1)	5.01.69	16
12.01.69	19 (1)	26.01.69	19 (1)
9.02.69	12 (1)	23.02.69	16
16.03.69	21 (1)	23.03.69	15 (1)
13.04.69	15 (1)	20.04.69	24 (1)
27.04.69	23 (1)	11.05.69	16 (1)
18.05.69	18 (1)	1.06.69	20 (1)
22.06.69	20 (1)	28.09.69	17 (1)
19.04.70	20 (1)		

NB: The numbers shown in brackets indicate the number of ex-officio Guardians included in the overall attendance total. There were 5 ex-officio Guardians in 1836, 10 in 1865 and 9 in 1868. Meetings were still held weekly at the end of the period. (Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1865, p.124 & 1868, p.124).

[BRL: A. Min. vols.1-15.]

TABLE 28: BIRMINGHAM BOARD OF GUARDIANS: CONTINUITY AND NEW GUARDIANS 1834 - 1912



NB: 1864 not known. 1867 figures relate to 1861. Total number of Elected Guardians: 1834 - 1870 = 108
 1873 - 1891 = 60
 1894 - 1910 = 36
 1912 = 52

* Prior to 1894 individuals were chosen by the Board to fill vacancies between elections, and elected at by-elections thereafter.
 (1) Only 107 Guardians.
 (2) Including two co-opted Guardians.
 (3) Including one co-opted Guardian.
 (4) Including one co-opted Guardian.
 (5) The previously unelected total includes former members of the Solihull Board of Guardians.

[BRL: B. Min. Vols 2-80; Gaz.; Jnl.; Mer.; D.Post.]

TABLE 29: Attendance Levels at Selected Birmingham Board Meetings, from the Mid-1830s to 1873

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
6.01.34	13	8.04.34	52
8.07.34	22	7.10.34	16
14.01.35	33	7.04.35	23
5.01.36	43	13.04.36	43
20.04.36	37	5.07.36	20
10.08.36	37	5.10.36	43
11.10.36	28	7.12.36	98
3.01.37	27	1.03.37	86
4.04.37	29	14.06.37	47
4.07.37	43	12.07.37	44
3.08.37	28	27.09.37	57
3.10.37	48	10.10.37	30
1.01.38	38	8.01.38	44
13.02.38	67	16.02.38	48
21.02.38	48	7.03.38	63
11.04.38	77	18.04.38	50
2.05.38	50	20.06.38	59
2.07.38	67	3.07.38	15
18.07.38	22	23.08.38	44
12.09.38	64	3.10.38	100
17.10.38	71	26.11.38	61
5.12.38	44	29.07.39	64
13.10.40	30	21.10.40	54
23.11.40	72	28.12.40	29
5.01.41	35	13.01.41	26
2.02.41	65	6.04.41	19
5.04.42	36	13.04.42	57
2.05.42	37	18.05.42	42
1.06.42	76	13.06.42	45
20.06.42	38	22.06.42	88
5.07.42	28	18.07.42	33
22.08.42	15	14.09.42	24
5.10.42	60	11.10.42	25
27.12.43	51	2.01.44	37
10.01.44	74	15.01.44	58
2.02.44	72	7.02.44	43
29.02.44	82	15.07.44	49
6.08.44	47	8.10.44	44
6.11.44	30	18.12.44	96
23.12.44	19	25.06.45	30
8.07.45	33	22.07.45	33
31.07.45	44	14.08.45	34
21.08.45	18	4.09.45	84
18.09.45	48	30.09.45	55
7.10.45	22	15.02.48	20
29.02.48	19	15.08.48	31
21.09.48	29	19.10.48	37
7.11.48	39	24.11.48	39
9.04.49	83	16.04.49	72

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
18.04.49	85	24.04.49M	22
24.04.49A	51	25.04.49	69
1.05.49	50	22.05.49	49
29.01.50A	33	15.03.50A	88
6.08.51A	39	8.10.51A	31
17.12.51A	34	31.03.52A	21
28.08.52S	48	1.09.52A	42
23.03.53A	26	5.04.53Q	16
21.09.53A	37	22.11.53A	35
14.11.53M	46	3.05.54	26
17.05.54	25	31.05.54	26
7.06.54	32	5.07.54	27
14.03.55	32	23.03.55	30
11.04.55A	88	3.10.55A	50
9.10.55Q	21	16.04.56M	28
15.04.57A	32	4.11.57M	19
20.01.58M	21	14.04.58A	58
23.06.58A	56	23.10.61M	31
13.11.61M	40	4.12.61M	26
4.12.61A	19	15.02.62M	21
12.02.62M	21	26.03.62M	21
25.06.62A	33	3.07.62E	31
9.07.62A	49	16.07.62M	12
23.07.62A	17	30.07.62M	15
6.08.62A	18	3.09.62M	16
1.10.62M	18	15.10.62A	62
25.03.63M	15	15.04.63A	52
1.03.65M	16	15.03.65A	41
27.09.65A	53	4.07.66M	7
18.07.66M	7	10.04.67A	75
17.07.67A	43	25.09.67	46
25.03.68	56	17.06.68	62
22.09.69	39	15.12.69	41
29.06.70	45	14.06.71	41
20.09.71	39	20.03.72	38
28.10.72	63	30.10.72	37
13.11.72	52	27.11.72	74
11.12.72	83	23.12.72	73
1.01.73 (2 meetings)	85 & 86	8.01.73	62
22.01.73	67	5.02.73	53
19.02.73	81	26.02.73	35
19.03.73	72	9.04.73	55

Key: M = morning A = afternoon E = extraordinary
 Q = quarterly S = Saturday

NB: Some attendance totals include unspecified numbers of ex-officio Guardians. Meetings were weekly from 1849, but fortnightly by 1865. (Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1865, p.126).

[BRL: B. Min. vols.2-40.]

TABLE 30: Attendance Levels at Selected Kings Norton Board Meetings, 1871-94

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
26.04.71	11	24.05.71	10
24.04.72	17	3.07.72	10
23.04.73	17	8.10.73	12
25.03.74	18	22.04.74	17
30.12.74	11	21.04.75	15
16.06.75	10	30.06.75	13
17.11.75	13	1.12.75	11
15.12.75	15	29.12.75	13
19.04.76	13	4.04.77	14
18.04.77	13	2.05.77	16
16.05.77	13	3.10.77	11
31.10.77	14	14.11.77	15
21.11.77	11	12.12.77	12 (1)
23.01.78	11	6.02.78	17
13.02.78	9	17.04.78	14
2.10.78	12	27.11.78	13
19.03.79	16	16.04.79	11
6.08.79	12	3.09.79	11
17.03.80	13	28.04.80	13
30.03.81	15	13.04.81	11
27.04.81	18	11.05.81	19
25.05.81	17	8.06.81	13
22.06.81	15	6.07.81	14
26.04.82	17	10.05.82	16
19.07.82	14	6.12.82	15 (1)
20.12.82	12	3.01.83	11 (1)
25.04.83	19 (1)	9.05.83	15
23.05.83	16	6.06.83	15
20.06.83	17	4.07.83	17 (1)
18.07.83	12 (1)	26.09.83	17
5.12.83	17	19.12.83	17
22.12.83	11	2.01.84	15 (1)
16.01.84	17 (1)	30.01.84	14
23.04.84	21 (1)	18.06.84	18 (1)
24.09.84	16 (1)	5.11.84	18 (1)
19.11.84	12 (1)	3.12.84	18
17.12.84	16	31.12.84	15 (1)
14.01.85	16 (1)	28.01.85	15
11.02.85	17	27.02.85	14 (1)
11.03.85	15 (1)	25.03.85	14 (1)
22.04.85	18 (1)	6.05.85	11 (1)
20.05.85	11	3.06.85	11 (1)
17.06.85	13	15.07.85	11 (1)
23.09.85	9	16.12.85	12 (1)
30.12.85	13	13.01.86	13 (1)
10.02.86	14	24.02.86	13
10.03.86	14	8.09.86	10 (1)
22.09.86	16 (1)	3.11.86	9
17.11.86	10	1.12.86	14 (1)

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
15.12.86	14 (1)	9.03.87	12 (1)
20.04.87	22 (1)	18.05.87	16
1.06.87	11 (1)	19.10.87	15 (1)
2.11.87	18	16.11.87	18
30.11.87	19 (1)	13.12.87	17
21.03.88	16	20.02.89	11
3.04.89	17	17.04.89	15
1.05.89	13 (1)	8.05.89	12
22.05.89	13	31.07.89	11
4.12.89	17 (1)	18.12.89	14
1.01.90	13	12.02.90	13
26.02.90	11 (1)	26.03.90	12
9.04.90	11 (1)	23.04.90	20 (1)
7.05.90	16	21.05.90	19
4.06.90	18 (1)	16.07.90	19 (1)
24.09.90	14 (1)	5.11.90	14
25.03.91	14	22.04.91	15 (1)
6.05.91	15 (1)	20.05.91	17
17.06.91	14 (1)	1.07.91	13
15.07.91	11 (1)	29.07.91	13 (1)
12.08.91	14 (1)	26.08.91	15 (1)
23.09.91	16 (1)	7.10.91	10
15.06.92	17 (1)	29.06.92	16
27.07.92	10 (1)	14.12.92	17 (1)
28.12.92	14 (1)	14.06.93	18
9.08.93	17 (1)	6.09.93	18
20.09.93	17 (1)	4.10.93	14 (1)
1.11.93	18	15.11.93	21
29.11.93	22 (1)	24.01.94	17
21.03.94	17	18.04.94	20 (1)
2.05.94	17 (1)	16.05.94	20
30.05.94	20	27.06.94	16 (1)
25.07.94	18 (1)	19.09.94	16 (1)
3.10.94	15	17.10.94	18 (1)

NB: The numbers shown in brackets indicate the number of ex-officio Guardians included in the overall attendance total. There were 21 ex-officio Guardians in 1873 and 22 in 1877. Meetings were held fortnightly. (Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1873, p.142 & 1877, p.212; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1883, p.752 & 1894, p.770).

[BRL: K.N. Min. vols.13-33.]

TABLE 31: Attendance Levels at Selected Aston Board Meetings,
1871-94

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
18.04.71	17	22.08.71	12 (1)
26.12.71	17 (2)	9.07.72	15
1.10.72	12	8.10.72	17
15.10.72	14	22.10.72	20 (1)
12.11.72	18	17.12.72	15
24.12.72	15	14.01.73	16
4.02.73	13	22.04.73	17
24.06.73	14	24.03.74	14
21.04.74	29 (4)	19.05.74	18
19.01.75	15 (1)	2.03.75	12 (1)
23.03.75	20 (1)	6.04.75	16
20.04.75	24 (1)	21.12.75	16
28.12.75	16	29.02.76	18 (1)
4.04.76	18 (1)	11.04.76	16
18.04.76	22 (1)	26.09.76	18 (1)
28.11.76	19 (1)	5.12.76	16 (1)
12.12.76	16 (1)	19.12.76	22 (1)
2.01.77	21 (1)	9.01.77	21 (1)
16.01.77	17 (1)	6.02.77	17 (1)
13.02.77	19	27.02.77	13
13.03.77	17 (1)	10.04.77	21 (2)
17.04.77	23 (1)	24.04.77	20
8.05.77	19	22.05.77	20
31.07.77	13 (2)	23.10.77	18
5.02.78	16	12.02.78	19
19.02.78	16	26.02.78	19
5.03.78	18	12.03.78	17
26.03.78	20	2.04.78	16
9.04.78	17	16.04.78	22
23.04.78	15	30.04.78	17 (1)
21.05.78	15	28.05.78	19
4.01.78	19	11.06.78	13 (1)
18.06.78	18 (1)	25.06.78	18 (1)
2.07.78	17	30.07.78	14
6.08.78	9	13.08.78	16
3.09.78	13	10.09.78	15
15.10.78	13	22.04.79	23 (1)
10.06.79	16	29.07.79	12
30.09.79	16	9.12.79	13
23.12.79	9	20.01.80	15
3.02.80	16	24.02.80	15
23.03.80	17	30.03.80	12
20.04.80	23	11.05.80	15
18.05.80	17	8.06.80	16
27.07.80	12	24.08.80	15
7.09.80	10	14.09.80	11
26.10.80	6	16.11.80	11
23.11.80	11 (1)	30.11.80	15
14.12.80	14	21.12.80	14

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
4.01.81	14	18.01.81	14 (1)
25.01.81	10	1.02.81	8 (1)
8.02.81	12	15.02.81	14
22.02.81	10	15.03.81	13
22.03.81	17 (1)	12.04.81	15
19.04.81	24	10.05.81	21 (1)
28.06.81	12	16.08.81	13 (1)
27.09.81	15	11.10.81	14 (1)
15.11.81	18	13.12.81	14
3.01.82	13	10.01.82	19
14.02.82	14	21.02.82	13
28.02.82	10	14.03.82	12
21.03.82	14	4.04.82	22 (1)
18.04.82	24 (1)	13.06.82	17 (1)
20.06.82	18 (1)	27.06.82	18 (1)
11.07.82	18	25.07.82	14
1.08.82	9	19.09.82	13 (1)
26.12.82	16 (1)	6.02.83	14 (1)
6.03.83	15 (1)	20.03.83	16 (1)
17.04.83	23 (1)	12.06.83	16 (1)
10.07.83	19 (1)	7.08.83	16 (1)
21.08.83	16 (1)	16.10.83	21 (1)
30.10.83	19	27.11.83	17 (2)
11.12.83	21 (1)	18.12.83	18 (1)
1.01.84	21 (1)	8.01.84	16
22.01.84	23 (1)	5.02.84	20 (2)
19.02.84	17 (1)	18.03.84	21 (1)
22.04.84	25 (1)	5.08.84	21 (1)
23.12.84	22 (1)	3.02.84	16
17.02.85	21 (1)	3.03.85	18 (1)
17.03.85	14 (1)	30.03.85	21 (1)
14.04.85	15 (1)	28.04.85	14
7.07.85	12 (1)	10.11.85	17 (1)
16.03.86	19	13.04.86	17 (2)
27.04.86	21 (1)	11.05.86	14 (1)
25.05.86	21 (1)	8.06.86	16 (1)
22.06.85	20 (1)	28.09.86	21 (1)
19.04.87	25 (1)	9.08.87	17 (1)
6.09.87	15 (1)	13.12.87	18 (1)
10.01.88	20 (1)	20.03.88	19 (1)
1.05.88	18 (1)	18.09.88	14 (1)
11.12.88	14 (1)	5.02.89	19 (1)
14.05.89	15	17.09.89	18 (1)
15.10.89	16	26.11.89	18 (1)
14.01.90	18 (1)	25.02.90	16 (1)
22.04.90	25 (1)	6.05.90	20 (1)
15.07.90	15 (1)	29.07.90	18 (1)
9.09.90	17 (1)	23.09.90	20 (1)
7.10.90	18 (1)	18.11.90	20 (1)
2.12.90	17 (1)	30.12.90	15 (1)
13.01.91	20 (1)	27.01.91	17 (1)
10.02.91	18	24.02.91	18 (1)

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
10.03.91	21 (1)	24.03.91	19 (1)
7.04.91	23 (1)	21.04.91	22 (1)
5.05.91	22 (1)	19.05.91	24 (1)
2.06.91	11 (1)	16.06.91	17 (1)
28.07.91	18 (1)	22.09.91	20 (1)
6.10.91	12 (1)	3.11.91	18 (1)
15.12.91	19 (1)	12.01.92	13 (1)
9.02.92	16 (1)	22.03.92	16 (1)
5.04.92	15 (1)	19.04.92	16 (1)
9.08.92	15 (1)	20.09.92	18 (2)
11.07.93	19 (1)	14.11.92	13
2.01.94	21 (1)	6.02.94	15 (1)
6.03.94	17 (1)	3.04.94	18 (2)
17.04.94	16 (1)	22.05.94	20 (3)
26.06.94	15 (1)	10.07.94	17 (1)
24.07.94	16 (1)	4.09.94	14 (1)
16.10.94	19 (1)	30.10.94	18 (2)
13.11.94	17 (1)	27.12.94	17 (1)

NB: The numbers shown in brackets indicate the number of ex-officio Guardians included in the overall attendance total. There were 7 ex-officio Guardians in 1877. Meetings were still weekly in 1873, but fortnightly by 1884. (Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1873, p.132 & 1877, p.202; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1884, p.745).

[BRL: A. Min. vols.16-41.]

Table 32: Attendance Record of Members of the Aston Board,
April 15th 1881 to April 4th 1882

<u>Elected Guardians</u>		<u>Ex-Officio Guardians</u>	
Name	Number of Attendances	Name	Number of Attendances
Mr T.F.Adams	34	Rev.W.K.R.Bedford	10
J.Ansell	27	Mr T.Ryland	5
T.Brawn	36		
W.Clayton	25		
T.Creed	20		
J.Dixon	50		
J.B.Dyson	43		
A.H.Emery	38		
J.Evans	48		
W.Graham	23		
J.Hateley	30		
J.Jones	14		
A.Johnson	32		
J.March	48		
J.W.Potter	12		
E.Twist	29		
G.F.Weller	5		
G.Wheeler	48		
C.Thornton	13		
T.Cattell	21		
T.Ashmore	50		
Rev.E.H.Kittoe	45		
Mr E.F.Todd	25		
R.Turner	10		
J.Stephenson	3		

NB: Total number of meetings = 50

[BRL: A. Min. 4.4.82.]

TABLE 33: Attendance Record of Members of the Kings Norton Board, April-December 1894

<u>Elected Guardians</u>		<u>Ex-Officio Guardians</u>	
Name	Number of Attendances	Name	Number of Attendances
Rev.G.Astbury	10	Mr C.P.Lane	12
Rev.R.Rugg	3	Mr J.Baldwin	0
Ald.T.S.Fallows	19	Mr J.Bowen	2
Mr T.A.Bayliss	17		
T.R.Bayliss	17		
J.J.Bryson	15		
A.Fellows	18		
A.Green	5		
E.J.Green	18		
F.Houghton	18		
A.Jones	17		
Morton	6		
W.H.Parton	18		
Gen.Phelps	19		
Mr A.J.Pass	12		
H.Smyth	18		
J.Smith	20		
R.A.Twentyman	19		
E.Vernon	17		
Ward	17		
W.S.Welch	17		
W.D.Wilkinson	2		
Miss A.Stacey	15		
Mrs S.Francis	12		

NB: Meetings held fortnightly. (Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1894, p.770).

[Gaz. 27.12.94.]

TABLE 34: Attendance Levels at Selected Birmingham Board Meetings, 1873-94

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
11.06.73	34	18.03.74	36
10.06.74	32	15.03.76	34
20.12.76	49	14.03.77	39
27.02.78	48	13.03.78	42
18.06.79	44	13.08.79	37
17.12.79	47	16.06.80	47
22.09.80	40	15.06.81	35
29.06.81	40	14.12.81	39
8.03.82	37	22.03.82	37
5.04.82	48	19.04.82	46
3.05.82	47	17.05.82	53
12.07.82	40	20.09.82	41
21.03.83	44	9.07.83	37
5.09.83	46	19.09.83	35
3.10.83	36	17.10.83	44
31.10.83	48	14.11.83	42
28.11.83	54	12.12.83	30
25.06.84	42	9.07.84	44
20.08.84	41	24.12.84	32
18.03.85	45	1.04.85	38
8.04.85	51	15.04.85	54
29.04.85	56	13.05.85	48
10.06.85	43	24.06.85	45
8.07.85	44	22.07.85	43
28.10.85	50	9.12.85	48
15.06.86	31	23.06.86	51
7.07.86	39	4.08.86	25
18.08.86	33	15.09.86	42
13.04.87	46	4.05.87	34
21.09.87	44	19.10.87	39
21.11.88	43	20.03.89	37
15.05.89	37	4.09.89	34
18.09.89	46	16.10.89	42
19.03.90	35	21.05.90	35
18.06.90	33	19.11.90	31
16.09.91	37	21.10.91	46
16.03.92	43	15.06.92	33
21.12.92	39	20.09.93	31
21.03.94	38	19.09.94	33
17.10.94	42		

NB: Meetings held fortnightly. (Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1873, p.134 & 1877, p.202; Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, 1880, p.644 & 1894, p.769).

[BRL: B. Min. vols.41-62.]

TABLE 35: Attendance Levels at Selected Aston Board Meetings, 1895-1912

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
8.01.95	27	22.01.95	24
19.02.95	21	5.03.95	24
19.03.95	26	16.04.95	30
28.05.95	20	25.06.95	22
9.07.95	2	7.01.96	20
21.01.96	19	4.02.96	18
3.03.96	26	14.04.96	2
11.08.96	19	18.08.96	18
1.09.96	13	29.09.96	23
8.12.96	25	22.12.96	23
2.02.97	24	16.02.97	22
13.04.97	27	25.05.97	22
6.07.97	17	7.12.97	22
21.12.97	23	15.03.98	24
19.04.98	29	21.06.98	22
16.08.98	21	30.08.98	16
13.09.98	18	27.09.98	23
8.11.98	24	31.01.99	20
14.02.99	23	28.02.99	25
25.04.99	20	9.05.99	28
26.09.99	24	10.10.99	23
24.10.99	25	5.12.99	22
10.04.00	28	24.04.00	29
12.06.00	20	17.07.00	22
31.07.00	21	14.08.00	20
28.08.00	23	23.10.00	22
6.11.00	21	18.12.00	24
15.01.01	21	25.01.01	24
29.01.01	24	26.02.01	20
16.04.01	30	18.06.01	30
30.07.01	27	27.08.01	22
24.09.01	24	22.10.01	26
19.11.01	23	3.12.01	25
17.12.01	31	28.01.02	26
17.06.02	27	1.07.02	26
15.07.02	20	26.08.02	17
9.09.02	21	21.10.02	22
4.11.02	25	2.12.02	22
23.12.02	20	27.01.03	30
24.02.03	23	24.03.03	21
21.04.03	26	9.06.03	22
16.06.03	23	30.06.03	21
28.07.03	21	8.09.03	20
22.09.03	18	3.11.03	23
8.03.04	24	19.04.04	29
14.06.04	26	20.09.04	21
4.10.04	25	11.04.05	24
18.04.05	27	2.05.05	22
16.05.05	24	6.06.05	26

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
20.06.05	27	27.06.05	24
25.07.05	22	5.09.05	22
3.10.05	22	28.11.05	27
6.03.06	29	26.06.06	25
10.07.06	19	18.09.06	20
19.03.07	27	16.04.07	29
1.10.07	26	15.10.07	26
12.11.07	28	26.11.07	28
10.12.07	27	17.12.07	30
4.02.08	28	28.04.08	26
26.05.08	27	21.07.08	20
28.07.08	25	1.09.08	21
15.09.08	20	29.09.08	27
13.10.08	27	22.12.08	29
19.01.09	24	16.02.09	26
2.03.09	25	16.03.09	30
6.04.09	24	25.05.09	26
8.06.09	24	22.06.09	25
6.07.09	25	12.10.09	26
16.11.09	28	23.11.09	29
1.02.10	22	1.03.10	30
15.03.10	25	19.04.10	24
7.06.10	27	5.07.10	25
22.11.10	20	6.12.10	24
3.01.11	20	31.01.11	26
23.05.11	26	20.06.11	20
25.07.11	21	19.12.11	21
2.01.12	21	16.01.12	21
30.01.12	21	26.03.12	23

[BRL: A. Min. vols.41-60.]

TABLE 36: Attendance Levels at Selected Kings Norton Board Meetings, 1895-1912

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
2.01.95	26	16.10.95	20
30.10.95	21	27.11.95	24
8.01.96	24	18.03.96	21
11.11.96	22	9.12.96	20
17.03.97	21	26.05.97	13
21.07.97	16	8.12.97	22
20.04.98	26	27.04.98	24
17.08.98	19	14.09.98	21
28.09.98	16	12.10.98	19
23.11.98	15	1.03.99	22
19.04.99	20	14.06.99	17
8.11.99	20	13.12.99	13
10.01.00	16	14.02.00	16
14.03.00	17	28.03.00	16
11.04.00	18	26.09.00	18
10.10.00	18	24.10.00	15
14.11.00	22	28.11.00	18
12.12.00	17	27.02.01	15
13.03.01	21	24.04.01	27
8.05.01	19	24.07.01	19
22.01.02	20	12.02.02	14
26.02.02	14	28.05.02	20
18.06.02	16	23.07.02	18
20.08.02	21	24.09.02	19
22.10.02	18	11.03.03	20
16.03.03	22	16.03.03*	18
25.03.03	20	8.04.03	20
13.05.03	18	27.05.03	23
24.06.03	19	8.07.03	22
9.09.03	20	23.09.03	22
14.10.03	20	11.11.03	23
23.03.04	21	13.04.04	20
18.04.04	26	11.05.04	23
8.06.04	27	22.06.04	25
24.07.04	22	14.12.04	26
8.02.05	24	22.03.05	24
10.05.05	24	24.05.05	24
21.06.05	21	26.07.05	20
27.09.05	26	11.10.05	20
22.11.05	22	6.12.05	19
20.12.05	20	10.01.06	20
24.01.06	24	28.03.06	26
9.05.06	23	23.05.06	19
13.06.06	23	10.10.06	23
14.11.06	23	28.11.06	25
19.12.06	27	9.01.07	23
23.01.07	18	13.02.07	21
13.03.07	26	17.04.07	28
26.06.07	21	31.07.07	18

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
9.10.07	25	12.02.08	21
25.03.08	19	10.02.09	21
21.04.09	24	14.07.09	19
9.03.10	23	27.04.10	25
8.06.10	20	13.07.10	20
14.12.10	25	5.04.11	22
14.06.11	21	2.08.11	16
27.03.12	24		

Key: * = extraordinary meeting

[BRL: K.N. Min. vols.33-43.]

TABLE 37: Attendance Levels at Selected Birmingham Board Meetings, 1895-1912

<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
2.01.95	34	10.04.95	22
1.05.95	33	15.05.95	30
19.06.95	32	4.12.95	29
18.12.95	29	1.04.96	36
17.06.96	28	1.07.96	28
16.06.97	26	21.07.97	29
1.12.97	26	20.04.98	35
15.06.98	28	15.03.99	30
1.11.99	28	15.11.99	31
19.09.00	27	19.12.00	31
17.04.01	33	1.05.01	35
19.06.01	32	6.11.01	35
23.04.02	33	18.03.03	36
17.06.03	31	1.07.03	30
29.07.03	31	2.09.03	32
16.09.03	34	21.10.03	34
16.12.03	34	17.02.04	33
16.03.04	28	20.04.04	32
20.07.04	25	21.12.04	31
15.03.05	32	4.04.05	22
19.04.05	32	17.05.05	34
7.06.05	31	21.06.05	33
19.07.05	29	6.12.05	31
7.02.06	32	4.04.06	30
4.07.06	32	21.11.06	30
20.03.07	28	17.04.07	34
15.05.07	33	19.06.07	34
17.07.07	34	18.09.07	29
20.11.07	34	18.12.07	33
15.01.08	33	19.02.08	26
18.03.08	31	15.04.08	31
16.04.08	29	20.05.08	32
15.07.08	30	21.10.08	33
20.01.09	33	17.02.09	34
17.03.09	35	21.04.09	36
19.05.09	32	16.06.09	32
21.07.09	28	17.11.09	30
16.02.10	33	16.03.10	29
20.04.10	32	10.05.10	32
19.05.10	24	20.07.10	32
17.05.11	30	21.06.11	28
19.07.11	28	18.10.11	29
15.11.11	30	20.12.11	27
20.03.12	33	22.03.12	14

[BRL: B. Min. vols.62-79.]

TABLE 38

The First Aston and Kings Norton Union Rating Precepts, 1836

<u>Aston Union Parishes</u>		<u>Kings Norton Union Parishes</u>	
<u>Parish</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Aston	£698	Kings Norton	£232
Curdworth	£10	Harborne	£84
Minworth	£15	Northfield	£150
Sutton	£146	Beoley	£72
Wishaw	£10	Edgbaston	£184
Total	£879		£722

[BRL: A. Min. 15.11.36; BRL: K.N. Min. 3.2.37.]

TABLE 39: Aston Union: Numbers of Indoor and Outdoor Paupers, and the Amount of Outdoor Relief Dispensed for Selected Years, 1837-1907

Year	Indoor Poor	Outdoor Poor	Outdoor Relief Expenditure (Calendar Year)
1837			£3557.12.11
1838			3054.12.6 $\frac{1}{2}$
1839			3244.17.3 $\frac{1}{2}$
1840			3117.4.3
1841	123#		2949.15.10
1842			2965.19.0
1843			2756.7.9 $\frac{3}{4}$
1844			2957.3.1
1845			2566.11.10 $\frac{1}{2}$
1846			2503.7.7 $\frac{1}{2}$
1847			2595.1.10 $\frac{1}{4}$
1848			2646.14.7 $\frac{3}{4}$
1850			2600(a)
1851	103#		
1860			1200(a)
1861	128#		1200(a)
1862			1300(a)
1863			1300(a)
1864			1200(a)
1865	288*	545*	1432.9.9(b)
1866	267*	543*	1460.11.6 $\frac{1}{4}$ (b)
1867	271*	615*	1736.14.11 $\frac{1}{4}$ (b)
1868	321*	648*	1922.10.3(b)
1869	372*	691*	1942.6.2 $\frac{3}{4}$ (b)
1870	365*	724*	2023.6.0 $\frac{3}{4}$ (b)
1871	401*	786*	2225.1.7 $\frac{1}{2}$ (b)
	380#		
1872	441*	839*	2415.0.1 $\frac{1}{2}$ (b)
1873	465*	831*	2551.18.8 $\frac{1}{4}$ (b)
	453+	846+	
1874	471*	970*	2890.2.1 $\frac{1}{2}$ (b)
1875		1000(d)	3000(a)
1876		1000(d)	3100(a)
1877	636(c)	1100(d)	3100(a)
1878	642(c)	1400(d)	3700(a)
1879		1600(d)	4000(a)
1880		1500(d)	4200(a)
1881	837#	1600(d)	3900(a)
1882		1600(d)	3900(a)
1883		1800(d)	4000(a)
1884	821(1)	1740(1)	4100(a)
1885		1800(d)	4000(a)
1886	877(1)	2126(1)	4100(a)
1887		2000(d)	4500(a)
1888		2300(d)	5000(a)

Year	Indoor Poor	Outdoor Poor	Outdoor Relief Expenditure (Calendar Year)
1889		2300(d)	5300(a)
1890		2100(d)	5200(a)
1891	1046(1)	1603(1)	4200(a)
1892		1100(d)	3300(a)
1893		1000(d)	2600(a)
1894		1200(d)	2700(a)
1895		1400(d)	3000(a)
1896		1200(d)	3200(a)
1897		1200(d)	3200(a)
1898		1100(d)	3600(a)
1899		1200(d)	3700(a)
1900		1400(d)	4000(a)
1901		1600(d)	5000(a)
1902		1400(d)	5600(a)
1903		1700(d)	5900(a)
1904		1900(d)	6500(a)
1905		2000(d)	7400(a)
1906		1800(d)	7800(a)
1907		1700(d)	6800(e)

Key: # = On Census day. * = On January 1st. + = On May 12th
1873. (a) = Years ending March (approximately).
(b) = Years ending Lady day. (c) = Last week of November.
(d) = On April 1st (approximately). (e) = Estimate at
16.2.07. (1) = On March 25th.

[BRL: A. Min. Vols.1-4, 6.4.75 & 24.3.91; PRO: MH 32/46, letter
Mr Henley to LGB, 26.12.78; Census 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871 &
1881; London School of Economics & Political Science, Webb
Local Government Collection, Vol.336, Poor Law England and
Wales (Counties) Warwickshire; BRL: The Poor Law and its
Administration in the Aston Union, 1873, pp.6-7.]

TABLE 40: Kings Norton Union: Numbers of Indoor and Outdoor Paupers, and the Amount of Outdoor Relief Dispensed for Selected Years, 1837-98

Year	Indoor Poor	Outdoor Poor	Outdoor Relief Expenditure (Calendar Year)
1837			£1208.10.4½(1)
1838			2022.3.0
1839			1663.13.10½
1840			1479.18.5
1841	102#		1714.12.4¼
1842			2383.1.5¼
1843			2316.9.7½
1844			3198.8.0
1845			2854.5.6¾
1846			2603.17.1(2)
1851	105#		
1860	115(3)		
1865	133(4)		
1871	159#		5153(a)
1873			5949(a)
1877	279(5)	893(5)	
1878	253(5)	985(5)	
1881	327#		
1882	359*	1565*	5397
1883	296*	1410*	5404
1884	323*	1360*	5176
1885	341*	1431*	5169
1886	398*	1501*	5280
1887	391*	1857*	6201
1888	395*	1764*	
1892	497*	1360*	5428
1893	535*	1410*	5012
1894	571*	1580*	5500
1895	619*	1701*	6219
1896	584*	1963*	7335
1897	616*	1784*	6864
1898	644*	1689*	

Key: (1) = From the beginning of June to the end of the year.
 (2) = Two weeks missing in June. (3) = At January 25th 1860. (4) = At February 22nd 1865. (5) = Last week of November. # = On Census day. * = On January 1st.
 (a) = Years ending Lady day.

[BRL: K.N. Min. Vols.1-3, 17.8.98; PRO: MH 12/14044, R.Weale reports, 25.1.60 & 22.2.65; PRO: MH 32/46, letter Mr Henley to LGB, 26.12.78; Census 1841, 1851, 1871 & 1881; 1st Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1871-72, p.396; 3rd Ann. Rep. of the LGB, 1873-74, p.540.]

TABLE 41: Out Poor Relieved by the Birmingham Guardians During
the Week Ended December 23rd 1837

	Number of Cases		
	Aged & Infirm	Casual Poor With Tickets	Casual Poor Without Tickets
	859		
Orphans		33	5
Bachelors		23	22
Widowers		17	36 (1)
Spinsters		64	45 (2)
Widows without children		388	102
Widows with 1 or 2 children		188	62
Widows with more than 2 children		75	37
Married couples without children		68	126
Married couples with 1 or 2 children		23	243
Married couples with more than 2 children		5	265
TOTAL	859	884	943

(1) Including 12 widowers with children.

(2) Including 5 women with illegitimate children.

[BRL: Observations on the Relief of Cases of Out-door Poor, in
the Parish of Birmingham, 1838, pp.4-6.]

TABLE 42: A Comparison of New Cases Applying for Relief During
the Periods August 26th to December 31st in 1845 and 1846

	1845	1846
Birmingham Poor	422	557
English Non-settled Poor	271	653
Irish Poor	96	179
Scottish Poor	8	4
Total	797	1,393

[BRL: B. Min. 15.2.47.]

TABLE 43: Attendance of Birmingham, Aston and Kings Norton Guardians at West Midland District Conferences, for Selected Years 1876-1911

Year	Aston Union	Birmingham Parish	Kings Norton Union
1876	1	0	0
1877	0	0	0
1878	0	0	0
1879	1	0	0
1881	1	0	0
1882	0	3 & clerk	0
1883	4 & clerk	10 & clerk	4
1884	0	3 & clerk	1 & clerk
1885	0	4 & clerk	0
1886	1	4 & clerk	2
1887	0	3 & clerk	2
1888	0	2 & clerk	0
1889	0	2 & clerk	0
1890	-	2	2 & clerk
1895	-	3 & clerk	-
1897	0	2	2 *
1898	*	0	2 & clerk
1899	3 & clerk	1	0
1900	3 & clerk	4	3 & clerk
1901	4	7	5 & d.clerk
1902	4	6	4
1903	3 & clerk	5	5
1905	-	3	-
1907	2	4 & clerk	3 & clerk
1908	3	3 & clerk	3 & clerk
1910	3	7 & clerk	7 & clerk
1911	3	5 & clerk	4 & clerk

NB: Totals include official deputations and Guardians attending independently where known.

* = Representatives present, but totals only tentative.

d = deputy

[BRL: A. Min. 9.5.99; BRL: B. Min. 19.4.82, 15.5.89, 21.5.90, 1.5.95, 1.5.01 & 19.4.05; BRL: K.N. Min. 23.4.90, 27.4.98, 11.4.00 & 17.4.07; Reports and Proc. of the Poor Law Conferences, 1876-1911/12.]

TABLE 44: Frequency of Visits by Assistant Commissioners to the
Aston and Kings Norton Unions and the Parish of
Birmingham, During Selected Periods from 1837-46

Quarter ended	Aston Union	Kings Norton Union	Birmingham Parish
<u>Richard Earle</u>			
Dec.31st 1837	1(9)	2(10)	N/A
Apr.1st 1838	1	2	N/A
Jun.30th 1838	4	2	N/A
<u>Robert Weale</u>			
Dec.31st 1838	2	2	N/A
Mar.31st 1839	1	2	N/A
Jun.30th 1839	2	1	N/A
Sept.30th 1839	1	1	N/A
Mar.31st 1840	2	1	#
Mar.31st 1841	0	N/A	#
Dec.31st 1841	1	N/A	#
<u>Alfred Austin</u>			
Sept.30th 1843	1	#	#
Dec.31st 1843	2	3	#
Jun.30th 1844	1	0	#
Sept.30th 1845	2	#	21
Dec.31st 1845	1	1	8
Mar.31st 1846	0	N/A	2
Jun.30th 1846	1	N/A	4
Sept.30th 1846	1	N/A	2
<u>Edward Gulson</u>			
Jun.30th 1846	N/A	1	N/A
Sept.30th 1846	N/A	0	N/A

NB: N/A - Not applicable. # = Not known. The December 1837 totals in brackets are for the past year. The 29 days Mr Austin spent in Birmingham during the second half of 1845 were largely connected with the Birmingham Board's staffing review.

[PRO: MH 32/7, Q. reports, 30.9.43, 31.12.43, 30.6.44, 30.9.45, 31.12.45, 31.3.46, 30.6.46 & 30.9.46; PRO: MH32/21, Q. reports 1.1.38, 1.4.38 & 30.6.38; PRO: MH 32/29, Q. reports, 30.6.46 & 30.9.46; PRO: MH 32/85, Q. reports, 31.12.38, 31.3.39, 30.6.39 & 30.9.39; PRO: MH 32/86, Q. reports, 1.4.40, 31.3.41 & 31.12.41.]

TABLE 45: Comparative Populations and Poor Law Expenditure in the Parishes of Birmingham and Aston, During the Years Ended Lady day 1837, 1838 and 1840; and in the Wolverhampton and Dudley Unions, and all Seven Manufacturing Unions in Mr Weale's District, During the Year Ended Lady day 1840

	Population in 1831	Expenditure for the year ending Lady day		Average Cost per head of the Population
		Year	Amount	
Parish of Aston	32,000	1837	£6,801.9.7	4/3d
		1838	£4,497.17.9	2/10d
		1840	£4,566.0.0	2/8½d
Parish of Birmingham	110,914	1837	£24,686.15.3	4/5d
		1838	£34,755.10.8	6/3d
		1840	£30,358.8.6½	5/5½d
Wolverhampton & Dudley Unions	112,946	1840	£16,494.0.5½	2/11d
Seven Manuf- acturing Unions	233,961	1840	£41,925.11.8¼	3/7d

[PRO: MH 12/13232, Mr Earle report to E.Chadwick, 23.6.38; PRO: MH 12/13286, Mr Weale report, 7.11.40; Jnl. 14.11.40.]

TABLE 46: Comparative Populations and Poor Law Expenditure in
the Parishes of Aston and Birmingham During 1855

	Parish of Aston	Parish of Birmingham
Population	61,281	173,951
Relief Expenditure during 1855	£3,907.0.0	£38,235.0.0
Cost per head of the Population	1/3¼d	4/4¾d
Indoor relief: cost per head	3½d	10d
Outdoor relief: cost per head	5¾d	2/0¼d
Salaries and management: cost per head	5½d	1/6½d

[Gaz. 21.4.56.]

Chronology

- 1722 Knatchbull's Act encouraging erection of workhouses
- 1733/34 Erection of Birmingham's 'Old' Workhouse in Lichfield Street
- 1766 Infirmary wing added to Birmingham Workhouse
- 1769 Birmingham Street Commissioners established
- 1779 Birmingham Workhouse extension
- 1782 Gilbert's Act
- 1783 Local Act establishing Birmingham Board of Guardians
- 1784 Orders and rules for the Birmingham Workhouse
- 1791 Abortive Bill to repeal and alter the 1783 local Act
- 1797 Establishment of the Birmingham Asylum for Infant Poor
- 1790s-1815 French & Napoleonic Wars
- 1818/1822 Birmingham Workhouse regulations
- 1829 Birmingham Political Union founded
- 1831 Revised Birmingham Guardians Act
- 1832 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws
1st Reform Act
Birmingham a Parliamentary Borough
- 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act
Poor Law Commission established
- 1835 Municipal Corporations Act
- 1836 Aston Poor Law Union established
Kings Norton Poor Law Union established
- 1838 Reverend Bedford's petition to the House of Lords
Incorporation of Birmingham
- 1839 Chartist Disturbances in Birmingham
- Late 1830s Economic Depression
/1840s

- 1841 Rules & regulations of the Birmingham Guardians
- 1842 Birmingham Charter confirmed
Outdoor Labour Test Order
- 1844 Hirst scandal at the Birmingham Workhouse
PLC issues rules and regulations Order to the
Birmingham Guardians
(2nd) Poor Law Amendment Act
Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order
- 1845 Irish Potato Famine
- 1846 Poor Removal Act
- 1847 Poor Law Board replaced the Poor Law Commission
- 1850s-60s 'Economist' period in Birmingham politics
- 1850 Rules and regulations, outdoor and labour relief
and accounting Orders issued to the Birmingham
Guardians by the PLB
Work commenced on the 'New' Birmingham Workhouse
- 1851 Birmingham Improvement Act
- 1852 'New' Birmingham Workhouse opened at Birmingham
Heath
Outdoor Relief Regulation Orders
- 1858 Visit of Queen Victoria & Prince Albert to
Birmingham
- 1861 Irremovable Poor Act
Grice affair at the Aston Workhouse
- 1862 Union Assessment Committee Act
- 1865 Union Chargeability Act
- 1865-73 New Aston Workhouse erected
- 1867 2nd Reform Act
- 1869-72 New Kings Norton Workhouse erected
- 1870s Crusade against outdoor relief
- 1871 Local Government Board replaced Poor Law Board
- 1873 Elected Birmingham Guardians reduced to 60
- 1873-76 Joseph Chamberlain, Mayor of Birmingham

- 1878 Amendment to Birmingham Guardians Act
- 1880 Marston Green Cottage Homes opened
Birmingham Test-house established
- 1883 Amendment to Birmingham Guardians Act
- 1884 Transfer of the Aston and Kings Norton Boards to a
triennial electoral cycle
3rd Reform Act
- 1887 Shenley Fields Cottage Homes opened
- 1889 Birmingham Infirmary opened
Birmingham a city
- 1891 Enlargement of the City of Birmingham - Balsall
Heath, Harborne, Saltley & Little Bromwich added
Amendment to Birmingham Guardians Act
- 1894 Local Government Act
- 1895-1900 Erection of Selly Oak Infirmary
- 1900 Cottage Homes opened at Erdington
- 1903 Aston Manor Municipal Borough created
- 1905/06 Plans for Monyhull Colony approved
- 1911 Greater Birmingham Act
- 1912 Birmingham Union created with the unification of
the major part of the Aston and Kings Norton Unions
and the Parish of Birmingham

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography

Primary Sources

(I) Birmingham Library Services, Archives Department

(A) Boards of Guardians: Minutes

(1) BRL: Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of Birmingham
Minute Books

Vols.1-82, Mar.24th 1807-Mar.17th 1915.

(2) BRL: Aston Board of Guardians Minute Books

Vols.1-60, Nov.8th 1836-Mar.26th 1912.

(3) BRL: Kings Norton Board of Guardians Minute Books

Vols.1-43, Dec.13th 1836-Mar.27th 1912.

(B) Boards of Guardians: PLC, PLB & LGB Orders

(1) BRL: Parish of Birmingham Orders

1837-1862
Jan.16th 1850
1863-1877
1878-1886
1887-1895
1897-1903
1903-1912

(2) BRL: Aston Union Orders

1836-1857
1858-1889
1890-1897
1898-1903
1904-1911

(3) BRL: Kings Norton Union Orders

Feb.13th 1900

(C) Boards of Guardians: PLB & LGB Letters

(1) BRL: Parish of Birmingham Letters

1870-1871
1878
1879-1880
1887-1888
1889-1890

1899-1900
1903-1904
1904-1905
1905-1906
1906-1908
1909-1910
1910-1911
1911-1912

(2) BRL: Aston Union Letters

1892-1895
1896-1897
1898-1900
1901-1902
1903-1905
1906-1907
1908-1909
1910-1911
1912 & Sanitary letters, 1892-1912

(3) BRL: Kings Norton Union Letters

1900-1901

(D) Boards of Guardians: Returns

(1) BRL: Birmingham Returns

1877-1880
1894-1896
1896-1899
1899-1901
1901-1904
1904-1906
1906-1908
1908-1911

(E) Boards of Guardians: Miscellaneous

- (1) BRL: Kings Norton Union: Application & Report Book 1849.
- (2) BRL: Kings Norton Union: Out-relief list of Relieving Officer for the half-year ending March 1851.
- (3) BRL: Kings Norton Union: House Committee Minutes, 1883-1888.

(F) Overseers Minutes

(1) BRL: Birmingham Overseers Minutes

Vols.1-17, Apr.19th 1803-Oct.1st 1869.

(G) Parish Records: Miscellaneous

- (1) Kings Norton Parish. Volume of removal orders from Kings Norton. 1806-1822.
- (2) Parish of Northfield Workhouse Accounts 1814-1834.
- (3) Papers of the Rev. Henry Clarke, 1828-35.
- (4) List of Paupers Receiving Weekly Pay From The Parish of Harborne, In the County of Stafford; And A General Statement of Accounts For the Year ending March 25, 1834.
- (5) List of Paupers Receiving Weekly Pay From The Parish of Harborne, In the County of Stafford; And A General Statement of Accounts For the Year ending March 25, 1835.

(II) Public Record Office, Kew

(A) Ministry of Health Papers

(1) PLC, PLB & LGB: Registers of Paid Officers [MH 9]

MH 9/1
MH 9/9
MH 9/20

(2) Correspondence of the PLC, PLB & LGB with Poor Law Unions and Other Local Authorities [MH 12]

MH 12/13232-13269 (Aston Union, 1834-1896)
MH 12/13286-13376 (Parish of Birmingham, 1834-1896)
MH 12/14039-14078 (Kings Norton Union, 1834-1896)

(3) PLC, PLB & LGB: Assistant Commissioners' and Inspectors' Correspondence [MH 32]

MH 32/7 (Alfred Austin)
MH 32/21 (Richard Earle)
MH 32/29 (Edward Gulson)
MH 32/31 (John T. Graves)
MH 32/46 (J.J. Henley)
MH 32/64 (Alfred Power)
MH 32/85 (Robert Weale)
MH 32/86 (Robert Weale)
MH 32/87 (Robert Weale)
MH 32/88 (Robert Weale)
MH 32/89 (Robert Weale)
MH 32/97 (T.L. Murray Browne)
MH 32/101 (Herbert Jenner-Fust Jr.)
MH 32/104 (William A. Peel)

(4) PLC: Assistant Commissioners: Registers of Correspondence [MH 33]

MH 33/1
MH 33/2
MH 33/7

(5) PLC, PLB & LGB: Workhouse Expenditure: Register of Authorizations [MH 34]

MH 34/1 (1834-1883, A to Has)
MH 34/2 (1834-1883, Hat to Shepp)
MH 34/4 (1884-1901, A to D)
MH 34/5 (1884-1901, E to Mal)
MH 34/8 (1902- , A to D)
MH 34/9 (1902- , E to L)

(B) Home Office Papers

(1) Home Office: Various Commissions: Records and Correspondence [HO 73]

HO 73/52 (PLC Letters & Papers 1837)
HO 73/54 (PLC Letters & Papers 1838)

(III) Parliamentary Papers & Official Publications

(A) PLC, PLB & LGB Annual Reports

Annual Reports of the PLC, 1st (1835); 2nd (1836); 3rd (1837); 4th (1838); 5th (1839); 6th (1840); 7th (1841); 8th (1842); 10th (1844) & 13th (1847)

Annual Reports of the PLB, 3rd (1850); 9th (1856); 19th (1866-67); 20th (1867-68) & 21st (1868-69)

Annual Reports of the LGB, 1st (1871-72); 3rd (1873-74); 8th (1878-79); 13th (1883-84); 14th (1884-85); 18th (1888-89); 19th (1889-90); 24th (1894-95); 25th (1895-96); 27th (1897-98); 28th (1898-99) & 29th (1899-1900)

(B) Other Parliamentary Papers

(1) Statutes

The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 1844; 1847; 1867 & 1868.

The Public General Statutes, 1871 & 1879.

The Public General Acts, 1911.

(2) Reports

Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix A, Reports: No.23, Report from C.P.Villiers, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vol.9. Irish University Press.

Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix B1, Answers to Rural Queries, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vols.10-14. Irish University Press.

Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834, Appendix B2, Answers to Town Queries, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vols. 15 & 16. Irish University Press.

Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Poor Law Amendment Act, Report (Lord Wharnecliffe) 1837-38, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vol.7. Irish University Press.

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, From the Poor Law Commissioners, on the Training of Pauper Children, 1841.

Select Committee on Poor Removal, 1854-55, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vol.23. Irish University Press.

Select Committee on Irremovable Poor, 1860, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vol.24. Irish University Press.

House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vol.27. Irish University Press.

Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, in British Parliamentary Papers: Poor Law, Vols.28 & 29. Irish University Press.

(IV) Miscellaneous Contemporary Documents

BRL: The Present Situation of the Town of Birmingham, Respecting its Poor, Considered. With, A Proposal for Building a New Workhouse; Addressed to the Inhabitants, by the Overseers of the Poor. Birmingham: Pearson and Rollason, 1782

BRL: An Act for providing a proper Workhouse, within the Parish of Birmingham, in the County of Warwick, and for better regulating the Poor within the said Parish. 23 Geo.III, Cap.liv, 1783, in Miscellaneous Local and Private Acts: Stafford, Warwick, & Worcester, Vol.2, pp.485-514.

BRL: Orders and Rules, to be Observed in the Birmingham Workhouse. Birmingham: Piercy and Jones, 1784.

BRL: Articles of Agreement. Birmingham, June 17, 1789.

BRL: A Bill Proposed to be Passed into an Act, to Repeal an Act Passed in the Twenty-third Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George the Third, Intituled, "An Act for providing a proper Workhouse within the Parish of Birmingham, in the County of Warwick, and for better regulating the Poor within the said Parish." And also for The better Relief and Employment of the Poor belonging to the said Parish. Birmingham: Thomas Pearson, 1791.

BRL: An Abstract of the Act 23 George III. C.54, Intituled, "An Act for providing a proper Workhouse within the Parish of Birmingham, in the County of Warwick, and for the better regulating the Poor within the said Parish." Birmingham: Knott & Lloyd, 1801.

BRL: Plain Truth; or, A Correct Statement of the Late Events Relative to the Birmingham Workhouse. By H.W.S. Birmingham: W.Talbot, 1818.

BRL: Regulations for Conducting the Affairs of the Birmingham Workhouse. 1822.

BRL: An Act for better regulating the Poor within the Parish of Birmingham in the County of Warwick; and for empowering the Guardians of the Poor to grant Building Leases of certain Lands vested in them, or otherwise to sell and dispose of the same, and to apply the Monies to arise therefrom in the Enlargement or rebuilding of the present Workhouse; and for other Purposes. 1 & 2 Wm.IV, Cap.lxxvii, Sept.6th 1831, in Miscellaneous Local and Private Acts: Stafford, Warwick, and Worcester, Vol.7, pp.679-768.

BRL: Observations on the Relief of Cases of Out-Door Poor, in the Parish of Birmingham. Henry Knight. Birmingham: Richard Davies, 1838.

BRL: A Report of the Cases of Sickness that Occurred at the Asylum for the Children of the Poor of the Parish of Birmingham, Between June the 30th and December 31st, 1837. By F.Ryland. From Transactions of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, 1838.

BRL: Rules and Regulations of the Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of Birmingham. Birmingham: Charles Watson, 1841.

BRL: A List of the Out-Poor, Chargeable upon the Parish of Birmingham, January 1st, 1847, Alphabetically Arranged in the Relief Districts in which they Reside, with the Residences of the District Surgeons, Midwives, and Relieving Officers. Birmingham: William Hodgetts, 1847.

BRL: On the Education of Pauper Children in Cottage Homes, F.C.Clayton. Paper read at the West Midland Poor Law Conference, Birmingham, May 1883.

BRL: The Poor Law and its Administration in the Aston Union, William Fowler. Birmingham: The Journal Printing Office, July 1873.

BRL: Local Government Board's (Poor Law) Provisional Orders Confirmation (Birmingham, &c.) Act, 1878, 41 & 42 Vict., Ch.civ, Jul.4th 1878, in Miscellaneous Local & Private Acts: Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Staffordshire, Vol.XIV, 1878-1879.

BRL: Local Government Board's Provisional Orders Confirmation (Poor Law) (No.3) Act, 1883, 46 & 47 Vict. Ch.lxxxii, Jul.16th 1883, in Miscellaneous Local & Private Acts: Stafford, Warwick, Worcester, Vol.XVII, 1883.

BRL: Aston Union. Report of Mr David Clarke, Delegate to the Central Poor Law Conference, 10th December 1884. To the Aston Board of Guardians, 1885.

BRL: Parish of Birmingham. Report of Messrs. Price and Manton Re Election of Guardians. March 1886. Birmingham: George Jones and Son, 1886.

Copies of Evidence taken by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, at Sworn Inquiry held on the 16th and 17th days of February 1886, to inquire into Charges made by the Birmingham Board of Guardians against Mr A.B.Simpson, Medical Officer of Birmingham Workhouse. And, report of Inspectors founded thereon. LGB 21st June 1886.

BRL: Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (Poor Law) Act, 1891, 54 Vict., Ch.ii, Mar.26th 1891, in Miscellaneous Local and Private Acts: Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, Vol.XXI, 1891.

BRL: A Statement of the General Principles on which Relief is Granted By the Guardians of the Poor, C.A.Carter. City of Birmingham Aid Society Reports, June 1907.

(V) Newspapers & Periodicals

(Aris') Birmingham Gazette, 1783-1910.

Birmingham Daily Post, 1864-1900.

Birmingham Daily Mail, 1890.

Birmingham Journal, 1834-67.

Birmingham Mercury, 1849-55.

Poor Law Officers' Journal, 1905 and 1909.

Poor Law Unions' Gazette, 1868-1871 and 1894.

The Times, 1836-1838, 1840, 1843, 1867, 1879 and 1911.

(VI) Directories

(A) Local Directories

Pigot and Co.'s Commercial Directories of Birmingham, Worcester, and their Environs, May 1830.

Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory of Warwickshire, 1835.

Wrightson's Directory of Birmingham, 1835.

Robson's Birmingham and Sheffield Directory, [1839].

Pigot & Co.'s Birmingham Directory, 1841.

Pigot's Directory of Birmingham and its Environs, 1842.

Wrightson and Webb's Directory of Birmingham, 1843.

Post Office Directory of Birmingham, Warwickshire, and Part of Staffordshire, 1845.

Post Office Directory of Warwickshire, 1845.

White's History and General Directory of the Borough of Birmingham, 1849.

Slater's General and Classified Directory of Birmingham, and its Vicinities, for 1852-3.

Post Office Directory of Birmingham with Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire, 1854.

White's General and Commercial Directory and Topography of the Borough of Birmingham, 1855.

Post Office Directory of Birmingham, with the Principal Towns in the Hardware and Pottery Districts, 1856 & 1860.

Corporation General and Trades Directory of Birmingham, 1861.

Corporation Directory for Birmingham, 1864.

Jones's Mercantile Directory of Birmingham, 1865.

Kelly's Post Office Directory of Birmingham, with its suburbs, 1867, 1868, 1871 & 1872.

Post Office Directory of Warwickshire, 1872.

White & Co.'s Commercial & Trades Directory of Birmingham, 1875.

Hulley's Directory of Birmingham, 1870, 1876-77 & 1881.

Kelly's Post Office Directory of Birmingham, with its Suburbs, 1879, 1880, 1883, 1884, 1886, 1888, 1890, 1894, 1895 & 1897-1914.

Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire, 1880, 1888 & 1908.

Houghton & Co.'s Birmingham Post Office Directory, 1882.

Kelly's Directory of Birmingham, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, 1892 & 1896.

Everson's Moseley, Kings Heath and Balsall Heath Directory and Year-Book, 1896 & 1901.

Kelly's Directory of Warwickshire and Worcestershire, 1912.

(B) Poor Law Officers Directories

Knight's Union Officers' Almanac, 1865; 1868; 1873; 1874; 1875; 1876 & 1877.

Shaw's Union Officers' and Local Boards of Health Manual, 1865.

(VII) Poor Law Conferences

Reports of the Poor Law District Conferences Held During the Year 1875; 1876; 1877; 1878; 1879 and 1880; 1881; 1882; 1883; 1884; 1885; 1886; 1887; 1888 & 1889.

Proceedings of the Central and District Poor Law Conferences, 1897-98; 1898-99; 1899-1900; 1900-01; 1901-02; 1902-03; 1903-04; 1904-05; 1905-06; 1906-07; 1907-08; 1908-09; 1909-10 & 1910-11.

The Official Reports of Poor Law Conferences, 1911-12.

(VIII) Census Returns

1831 Census (Birmingham)
1841 Census (Birmingham)
1851 Census (Birmingham)
1861 Census (Birmingham)
1871 Census (Birmingham)
1881 Census (Birmingham)

(IX) Statistical Sources

B.R.Mitchell & P.Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics. Cambridge U.P., 1962.

Statistical Abstracts for the United Kingdom for each of the fifteen years from 1840 to 1854, with additions to correspond as nearly as possible with the information contained in the seventeenth number of the abstract, for the fifteen years from 1855 to 1869. H.M.S.O., 1870.

Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom in each of the last fifteen years, from 1854 to 1868. H.M.S.O., 1869.

(X) London School of Economics and Political Science

Webb Local Government Collection, Vol.336, Poor Law England and Wales (Counties) Warwickshire.

(XI) Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick

National Poor Law Officers Association Records

MSS.20/NPL/1/1/1-5

MSS.20/NPL/1/2/1

MSS.20/NPL/1/7/1

Secondary Sources

(1) General and Poor Law Books & Collections of Essays

I.Anstruther, The Scandal of the Andover Workhouse. Alan Sutton, 1984.

P.F.Aschrott, The English Poor Law System Past and Present. Knight & Co., 1902

J.J. & A.J.Bagley, The English Poor Law. Macmillan, 1968.

D.Baker, Workhouses in the Potteries. City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, 1987. *

T.F.T.Baker (ed.), A History of the County of Middlesex, Vol.VIII: Islington and Stoke Newington Parishes. 1985.
[The Victoria History of the Counties of England.]

S.Bradford, Disraeli. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982.

A.Briggs, The Age of Improvement 1783-1867. Longman, 1979.

A.Briggs, The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs Volume I: Words, Numbers, Places, People. Harvester Press, 1985.

A.Briggs, Victorian Cities. Penguin, 1968.

A.Briggs, Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes 1851-67. Penguin, 1965.

A.Brundage, The Making of the New Poor Law: The politics of inquiry, enactment and implementation. Hutchinson, 1978.

J.Burnett, Plenty and Want: A social history of diet in England from 1815 to the present day. Methuen, 1983.

E.Cadbury, M.C.Matheson & G.Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City. Garland, 1980.
[Reprint of 1906 ed.]

S.G. & E.O.A.Checkland (eds.), The Poor Law Report of 1834. Penguin, 1974.

A.W.Coats (introd.), Poverty in the Victorian Age: Debates on the issue from 19th century critical journals, Vol.II English Poor Laws 1834-1870. Gregg International, 1973.

M.A.Crowther, The Workhouse System 1834-1929: The history of an English social institution. Methuen, 1983.

A.Digby, Pauper Palaces. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

F.M.Eden, The State of the Poor: A History of the Labouring Classes in England, with Parochial Reports. Routledge, 1928. [Abridged from 1797 ed.]

N.C.Edsall, The anti-Poor Law movement 1834-44. Manchester University Press, 1971.

M.Fallowfield & I.Watson, The New Poor Law in Humberside. Humberside College of Higher Education, 1986.

S.E.Finer, The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick. Methuen, 1952.

G.B.A.M.Finlayson, England in the Eighteen Thirties: Decade of Reform. Edward Arnold, 1969.

D.Fraser, The Evolution of the British Welfare State: a History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution. Macmillan, 1984.

D.Fraser (ed.), The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century. Macmillan, 1976.

D.Fraser, Urban Politics in Victorian England: The structure of politics in Victorian cities. Macmillan, 1979.

J.C.Gill, Parson Bull of Byerley. SPCK, 1963.

P.H.J.H.Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875. Manchester University Press, 1961.

W.O.Hart, Hart's Introduction to the Law of Local Government and Administration. 5th ed. Butterworth, 1952.

G.Himmelfarb, The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age. Faber, 1984.

P.Hollis, Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914. Clarendon Press, 1989.

H.Jenner-Fust (arranged by), Poor Law Orders. P.S.King & Son, 1907.

D.Judd, Radical Joe: A Life of Joseph Chamberlain. Hamish Hamilton, 1977.

J.Knott, Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law. Croom Helm, 1986.

H.H.Lamb, Climate: present, past and future, Vol.2: Climatic history and the future. Methuen, 1977.

O.MacDonagh, Early Victorian Government 1830-1870.
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977.

D.F.MacDonald, The Age of Transition: Britain in the
Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Macmillan, 1967.

J.D.Marshall, The Old Poor Law, 1795-1834.
Macmillan, 1968.

E.C.Midwinter, Social Administration in Lancashire 1830-
1860: Poor Law, Public Health and Police. Manchester
University Press, 1969.

E.Midwinter, Victorian Social Reform. Longman, 1968.

G.Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, in
connexion with the Legislation and other circumstances
affecting the condition of the people, Vol.II. J.Murray,
1854.

T.Novak, Poverty and the State: An Historical Sociology.
Open University Press, 1988.

G.W.Oxley, Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601-1834.
David & Charles, 1974.

A.L.Parrott, The Iron Road to Social Security.
Book Guild, 1985.

A.Redford, The Economic History of England 1760-1860.
Greenwood Press, 1974.

D.Roberts, Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State.
Yale University Press, 1960.

M.Rochester, The Northwich Poor Law Union & Workhouse.
Cheshire Libraries and Museums, 1987. *

M.E.Rose, The English Poor Law 1780-1930.
David & Charles, 1971.

M.E.Rose (ed.), The poor and the city: the English poor
law in its urban context, 1834-1914. Leicester University
Press, 1985.

M.E.Rose, The Relief of Poverty, 1834-1914.
Macmillan, 1972.

S.V.Rowley, Poor Relief in the Parish of Kinnerley,
Shropshire c.1700-1840. S.V.Rowley, 1983. *

W.Runciman (ed.), Max Weber: Selections in translation.
Cambridge University Press, 1978.

N.J.Smith, Poverty in England 1601-1936.
David & Charles, 1972.

A.H.Stamp, A Social and Economic History of England from
1700 to 1970. Research Publishing, 1979.

T.Thomas, Poor Relief in Merthyr Tydfil Union in Victorian
Times based on a study of original documents. Glamorgan
Archive Service, 1992.

B.Trinder, A History of Shropshire. Phillimore, 1983.

C.H.Underhill, History of Burton-upon-Trent. 2nd ed.
Tresises (Printers) Ltd., 1976.

J.T.Ward, The Age of Change 1770-1870: documents in social
history. 1975.

S. & B.Webb, English Poor Law History, Part I: The Old
Poor Law. Cass, 1963. [Reprint of 1927 ed.]

S. & B. Webb, English Poor Law History, Part II: The Last
Hundred Years, Vols. I & II. Cass, 1963. [Reprint of
1929 ed.]

K.Williams, From pauperism to poverty. Routledge & Kegan
Paul, 1981.

M.J.Winstanley, The shopkeeper's world 1830-1914.
Manchester U.P., 1983.

A.Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain 1815-1914.
Longman, 1960.

P.Wood, Poverty and the Workhouse in Victorian Britain.
A.Sutton, 1991.

E.L.Woodward, The Age of Reform 1815-1870.
Clarendon Press, 1938.

E.A.Wrigley & R.S.Schofield, The Population History of
England 1541-1871: A reconstruction. Edward Arnold, 1981.

G.M.Young & W.D.Handcock, English Historical Documents
1833-1874. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956.

* Pamphlet or booklet.

(2) Journal Articles

W.Apfel & P.Dunkley, English rural society and the New Poor Law: Bedfordshire, 1834-47. Social History, 10 (1) Jan.1985, pp.37-68.

P.W.J.Bartrip, British Government Inspection, 1832-1875: Some Observations. Historical Journal, 25 (3) Sept.1982, pp.605-26.

P.W.J.Bartrip, Quacks and Cash. History Today, 40, Sept.1990, pp.45-51.

D.A.Baugh, The Cost of Poor Relief in South-East England, 1790-1834. Economic History Review, 2nd series, 28 (1) Feb.1975, pp.50-68.

E.A.Benjamin, Of Paupers and Workhouses. Ceredigion, 10, 1985, pp.147-54.

P.Beresford, The Relieving Officer: Poor Law Personified. New Society, Nov.6th 1969, pp.721-23.

N.Blewett, The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918. Past and Present, 32, 1965, pp.27-56.

H.M.Boot, Unemployment and poor law relief in Manchester, 1845-50. Social History, 15, May 1990, pp.217-28.

R.Boyson, The New Poor Law in North-East Lancashire, 1834-71. Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society Transactions, 70 (for 1960) 1962, pp.35-56.

J.A.H.Brocklebank, The New Poor Law in Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire Historian, 2 (9) 1962, pp.21-33.

A.Brundage, Debate: The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus I. Past and Present, 127, May 1990, pp.183-86.

A.Brundage, The English Poor Law of 1834 and the Cohesion of Agricultural Society. Agricultural History, 48 (3) Jul.1974, pp.405-17.

A.Brundage, The landed interest and the New Poor Law: a reply. English Historical Review, 90 (355) Apr.1975, pp.347-51.

A.Brundage, Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System, 1834-94. Albion, 7 (3) Fall 1975, pp.201-15.

C.A.Buchanan, John Bowen and the Bridgwater Scandal. Somerset Archaeology and Natural History Society Transactions, 131 (for 1987) 1988, pp.181-201.

M.Caplan, The New Poor Law and the Struggle for Union Chargeability. International Review of Social History, 23 (2) 1978, pp.267-300.

M.Caplan, The Poor Law in Nottinghamshire, 1836-71. Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire, LXXIV, 1970, pp.82-98 & illus.

E.O.Cockburn, The Cerne Abbas Union Workhouse 1835-1838. Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society Proceedings, 94 (for 1972) 1973, pp.89-94.

B.Coleman, Religion in the Victorian City. History Today, 30, Aug.1980, pp.25-31.

J.M.Coleman, Guardians' Minute Books. History, 48, 1963, pp.181-84.

R.H.Crocker, The Victorian Poor Law in Crisis and Change: Southampton, 1870-1895. Albion, 19 (1) Spring 1987, pp.19-44.

G.Crossick, Classes and the Masses in Victorian England. History Today, 37, March 1987, pp.29-35.

M.A.Crowther, Family Responsibility and State Responsibility in Britain Before the Welfare State. Historical Journal, 25 (1) 1982, pp.131-45.

I.Darlington, Rate Books. History, 47, 1962, pp.42-45.

A.C.Davies, The Old Poor Law in an Industrializing Parish: Aberdare, 1818-36. Welsh History Review, 8, 1976/77, pp.285-311.

A.E.Davies, Sir Hugh Owen and the New Poor Law. Board of Celtic Studies Bulletin, 21 (2) 1965, pp.166-70.

A.Digby, The Labour Market and the Continuity of Social Policy after 1834: The Case of the Eastern Counties. Economic History Review, 2nd series, XXVIII (1) 1975, pp.69-83.

A.Digby, Recent Developments in the Study of the English Poor Law. Local Historian, 12 (5) Feb.1977, pp.206-11

F.Driver, The historical geography of the workhouse system in England and Wales, 1834-1883. Journal of Historical Geography, 15 (3) Jul.1989, pp.269-86.

P.Dunkley, The 'Hungry Forties' and the New Poor Law: A Case Study. Historical Journal, XVII (2) 1974, pp.329-46.

P.Dunkley, The landed interest and the New Poor Law: a critical note. English Historical Review, 88 (349) Oct.1973, pp.836-41.

P.Dunkley, Paternalism, the Magistracy and Poor Relief in England, 1795-1834. International Review of Social History, 24 (3) 1979, pp.371-97.

P.Dunkley, Whigs and Paupers: The Reform of the English Poor Laws, 1830-1834. Journal of British Studies, 20 (2) 1981, pp.124-49.

D.Eastwood, Debate: The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus II. Past and Present, 127, May 1990, pp.186-94.

B.J.Elliott, The Last Five Years of the Sheffield Guardians. Hunter Archaeological Society Transactions, 10, 1973, pp.132-37.

J.M.Feheney, The Poor Law Board August Order, 1859: A Case Study of Protestant-Catholic Conflict. Recusant History, 17, 1984-85, pp.84-91.

M.J.Flame, The Politics of Poor Law Administration in the Borough of Poole 1835-c.1845. Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society Proceedings, 108 (for 1986) 1987, pp.19-25.

W.J.Forsythe, Paupers and Policy Makers in Exeter 1830-1860. Reports & Transactions Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, 117, Dec.1985, pp.151-60.

D.Fraser, Joseph Chamberlain and the Municipal Ideal. History Today, 37, Apr.1987, pp.33-39.

D.Fraser, Poor Law Politics in Leeds 1833-1855. Thoresby Society Publications, Part 53, 1970, pp. 23-49.

M.Furbank, J.Lee and M.D.G.Wanklyn, The Much Wenlock Poor-Law Records. West Midlands Studies, 6, 1973, pp.32-8.

J.S.W.Gibson, Assisted Pauper Emigration 1834-37: Following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Genealogists' Magazine, 20 (11) Sept.1982, pp.374-75.

C.P.Griffin, Chartism and Opposition to the New Poor Law in Nottinghamshire: The Basford Union Workhouse Affair of 1844. Midland History, 2 (4) Autumn 1974, pp.244-49.

R.M.Gutchen, Local Improvements and Centralization in Nineteenth-Century England. Historical Journal, IV (1) 1961, pp.85-96.

R.M.Gutchen, Masters of workhouses under the new Poor Law. Local Historian, 16, 1984, pp.93-99.

P.Harling, The Power of Persuasion: Central Authority, Local Bureaucracy and the New Poor Law. English Historical Review, 107, Jan.1992, pp.30-53.

E.P.Hennock, Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900. Historical Journal, VI (2) 1963, pp.212-25.

E.P.Hennock, The Poor Law Era. New Society, Feb.29th 1968, pp.301-03.

U.R.Q.Henriques, Bastardy and the New Poor Law. Past and Present, 37, Jul.1967, pp.103-29.

U.Henriques, How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law? Historical Journal, XI (2) 1968, pp.365-71.

S.Heydon, The provision of medical care for the poor in Leicester in the 1830s. Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society Transactions, 55, 1981, pp.65-71.

G.Himmelfarb, The Idea of Poverty: England in the early Industrial Age. History Today, 34, Apr.1984, pp.22-30.

R.G.Hodgkinson, Provision for Pauper Lunatics 1834-1871. Medical History, 10, 1966, pp.138-54.

P.Horn, Aspects of Oxfordshire Poor Relief: The 1830s. Cake & Cockhorse, 8, 1980, pp.55-67.

T.D.Jones, Poor Law Administration in Merthyr Tydfil Union 1834-1894. Morgannwg, VII, 1964, pp.35-62.

R.A.Lewis, William Day and the Poor Law Commissioners. University of Birmingham Historical Journal, IX, 1964, pp.163-95.

N.McCord, The Implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act on Tyneside. International Review of Social History, 14 (1) 1969, pp.90-108.

O.MacDonagh, The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal. Historical Journal, 1 (1) 1958, pp.52-67.

M.MacKinnon, English Poor Law Policy and the Crusade Against Out relief. Journal of Economic History, XLVII (3) Sept.1987, pp.603-25.

P.Mandler, Debate: The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus, Reply. Past and Present, 127, May 1990, pp.194-201.

P.Mandler, The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus. Past and Present, 117, Nov.1987, pp.131-57.

P.Mandler, Tories and Paupers: Christian Political Economy and the Making of the New Poor Law. Historical Journal, 33 (1) Mar.1990, pp.81-103.

J.D.Marshall, The Nottinghamshire Reformers and Their Contribution to the New Poor Law. Economic History Review, 2nd Series, XIII, 1961, pp.382-96.

G.Matthews, The Search for a Cure for Vagrancy in Worcestershire, 1870-1920. Midland History, X, 1986, pp.100-16.

E.C.Midwinter, State Intervention at the Local Level: The New Poor Law in Lancashire. Historical Journal, 10 (1) 1967, pp.106-12.

D.R.Mills, The Geographical Effects of the Laws of Settlement in Nottinghamshire: An Analysis of Francis Howell's Report, 1848. East Midlands Geographer, 5 (1/2) 1970, pp.31-38

S.A.Morrill, Poor Law in Hereford 1836-1851. Woolhope Naturalists Field Club Transactions, 41, 1974, pp.239-52.

G.O'Brien, The establishment of poor-law unions in Ireland, 1838-43. Irish Historical Studies, XXIII, No.90, Nov.1982, pp.97-120.

F.O'Gorman, Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Elections in England 1780-1860. Past and Present, 135, May 1992, pp.79-115.

S.Page, Pauperism and the Leicester Workhouse in 1881. Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society Transactions, 63, 1989, pp.85-95.

A.G.Parton and M.H.Matthews, The returns of Poor Law out-relief - a source for the local historian. Local Historian, 16 (1) Feb.1984, pp.25-31.

J.A.Perkins, Unmarried Mothers and The Poor Law in Lincolnshire, 1800-1850. Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 20, 1985, pp.21-33.

W.Proctor, Poor Law Administration in Preston Union, 1838-1848. Lancashire & Cheshire Historical Society Transactions, 117 (for 1965) 1966, pp.145-66.

- C.Rawding, The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834-1865: A Case Study of Caistor Poor Law Union. Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 22, 1987, pp.15-23.
- R.Richardson, Middlesex Hospital Outpatients Wing/The Strand Union Workhouse. History Today, 43, Sept.1993, pp.62-63.
- D.Roberts, Dealing with the Poor in Victorian England. Rice University Studies, 67 (1) 1981, pp.57-74.
- D.Roberts, How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law? Historical Journal, 6 (1) 1963, pp.97-107.
- M.E.Rose, The Allowance System under the New Poor Law. Economic History Review, 2nd Series, 29 (3) 1966, pp.607-20.
- M.E.Rose, The Anti-Poor Law Movement in the North of England. Northern History, 1, 1966, pp.70-91.
- P.Searby, The Relief of the Poor in Coventry, 1830-1863. Historical Journal, 20 (2) Jun.1977, pp.345-61.
- R.W.Shorthouse, Justices of the Peace in Northamptonshire, 1830-1845. Part II The Work of the County Magistrates. Northamptonshire Past and Present, 5 (3) 1975, pp.243-51.
- R.Smith, The Relief of Urban Poverty outside the Poor Law, 1800-1850: A Study of Nottingham. Midland History, 2 (4) Autumn 1974, pp.215-24.
- C.Spencer, Township Workhouses. Transactions Halifax Antiquarian Society, 1983, pp.37-47.
- J.M.Steane, The Poor in Rothwell, 1750-1840. Northamptonshire Past and Present, 4 (3) 1968, pp.143-48.
- G.Stedman Jones, Poor Laws and market forces. New Statesman, May 27th 1983, pp.x-xiii.
- B.Strauss, American Democracy Through Ancient Greek Eyes. History Today, 44 (4) Apr.1994, pp.32-37.
- A.Summers, Ministering Angels - Victorian Ladies and Nursing Reform. History Today, 39, Feb.1989, pp.31-37.
- P.Thane, Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England. History Workshop, 6, Autumn 1978, pp.29-51.
- P.Thane, The Working Class and State 'Welfare' in Britain, 1880-1914. Historical Journal, 27 (4) 1984, pp.877-900.

R.N.Thompson, The Working of the Poor Law Amendment Act in Cumbria, 1836-1871. Northern History, XV, 1979, pp.117-37.

A.W.Vincent, The Poor Law Reports of 1909 and the Social Theory of the Charity Organization Society. Victorian Studies, 27 (3) Spring 1984, pp.343-63.

R.Vorspan, Vagrancy and the New Poor Law in late-Victorian and Edwardian England. English Historical Review, 92 (362) Jan.1977, pp.59-81.

V.J.Walsh, Old and New Poor Laws in Shropshire, 1820-1870. Midland History, 2 (4) Autumn 1974, pp. 225-43.

B.Watkin, The Warminster Workhouses: Illustrations of the Old and New Poor Law. Hatchers Review, 3, 1986, pp.67-77.

C.W.J.Withers, Poor relief in Scotland and the General Register of Poor. Local Historian, 17 (1) Feb.1986, pp.19-29.

G.Woodcock, Henry Mayhew and the Undiscovered Country of the Poor. Sewanee Review, 92, 1984, pp.556-73.

K.Woodroffe, The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1905-09. International Review of Social History, 22, 1977, pp.137-64.

(3) Local Sources

(a) Books

G.C.Allen, The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country, 1860-1927. F.Cass, 1966. [Reprint of 1929 ed.].

J.H.Andrew, The Birmingham Pen Trade. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1981. *

M.J.Arkininstall & P.C.Baird, Erdington past and present. Birmingham Public Libraries, 1982.

D.W.Bailey & D.A.Nie, English Gunmakers: The Birmingham and Provincial Gun Trade in the 18th and 19th Century. Arms and Armour Press, 1978.

S.Bell, J.Woodall, & M.Varley (compilers), Solihull as it was. Hendon Publishing Co., 1980.

Birmingham Faces and Places. An Illustrated Local Magazine, Vol.IV. J.G.Hammond & Co., 1892.

Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, Birmingham Jewry 1749-1914, Vol.1. The Birmingham Jewish History Research Group, 1980.

A.Briggs, History of Birmingham, Vol.II: Borough and City, 1865-1938. Oxford University Press, 1952.

British Association for the Advancement of Science, Birmingham and its Regional Setting: a scientific survey. S.R.Publications, 1970.

F.Brook, The Industrial Archaeology of the British Isles: 1 The West Midlands: Hereford-Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands. Batsford, 1977.

J.T.Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham; with A Sketch of the Earlier Government of the Town, Vol.I. Cornish, 1878.

J.T.Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham; with A Sketch of the Earlier Government of the Town, Vol.II. Cornish, 1885.

D.Cannadine, Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967. Leicester University Press, 1980.

M.Counsell, A History of Harborne. Harborne Gazette, 1989.

L.G.Day, Northfield [Brum Trail 9]. Birmingham Urban Studies Committee, 1986.

R.K.Dent, The Making of Birmingham: Being A History of the Rise and Growth of the Midland Metropolis. J.L.Allday, and Simkin, Marshall and Co., 1894.

R.K.Dent, Old and New Birmingham: a history of the town and its people. E.P.Publishing, 1973. [Reprint of 1878-1880 publication].

Digbeth and Deritend in Retrospect. Digbeth and Deritend Local History Project, 1987.

G.Dowling, B.Giles, C.Hayfield, Selly Oak Past and Present: A Photographic Survey of a Birmingham Suburb. Dept. of Geography, University of Birmingham, 1987.

K.Dunham, The Gun Trade of Birmingham: a short historical note of some of the more interesting features of a long-established local industry. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1955.

E.Edwards, Personal Recollections of Birmingham and Birmingham Men. Midland Educational Trading Co., 1877.

P.Edwards, Canal Trail: A Canal Walk from Gas Street Basin to Farmer's Bridge, [Brum Trail 7]. Birmingham Urban Studies Committee, 1984.

N.G.Evans & M.Gardner, Holy Trinity Sutton Coldfield. 1987.

C.Flick, The Birmingham Political Union and the Movements for Reform in Britain 1830-1839. Archon Books, 1978.

L.Fletcher, Law and Order. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1981. *

R.Frost, The Toy Trades. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1981. *

A.G.Gardiner, Life of George Cadbury. Cassell, 1923.

C.Gilbert, Jewellery Quarter, [Brum Trail 6]. Birmingham Urban Studies Centre, 1981.

C.Gilbert, The Moseley Trail, [Brum Trail 8]. Birmingham Urban Studies Centre, 1986.

C.Gill, History of Birmingham, Vol.I: Manor and Borough to 1865. Oxford University Press, 1952.

C.Gill & C.G.Robertson, A Short History of Birmingham from its Origin to the Present Day. City of Birmingham, 1938.

H.Goodger, Kings Norton. Brewin Books, 1990.

H.Goodger, Notes on Kings Norton. Kings Norton History Society, 1987.

Great Men of Harborne. Articles from Harborne Parish Church Magazine 1982-1983. M.J.R.Counsell, 1987.

G.Griffith, History of the Free Schools, Colleges, Hospitals, and Asylums of Birmingham and their fulfilment. William Tweedie, and Hill & Halden, 1861.

P.Groves, Exploring Birmingham: A guided tour. Meridian Books, 1987.

R.P.Hastings, Discovering Northfield. Northfield Society, 1986/87.

G.W.Hearn, Dudley Road Hospital 1887-1987. The Postgraduate Centre, Dudley Road Hospital, 1987.

C.Heward, Growing up in Birmingham, 1850-1914. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1981. *

J.Hill & R.K.Dent, Memorials of the Old Square: being some notices of the Priory of St. Thomas in Birmingham, and the lands appertaining thereto; also of the Square built upon the Priory Close, known in later times as the Old Square; with notes concerning the dwellers in the sixteen houses thereof, and of some notable persons associated therewith. Achilles Taylor, 1897.

Historic Birmingham. Studio Press, 197(9).

E.Hopkins, Birmingham: The First Manufacturing Town in the World 1760-1840. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989.

W.Hutton, An History of Birmingham. E.P.Publishing, 1976. [Reprint of 1783 ed.]

D.V.Jones, Edgbaston As it Was. Westwood Press Publications, 1986.

D.V.Jones, The Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield: A Commemorative History. Westwood Press Publications, 1984.

D.V.Jones, The Story of Erdington: From Sleepy Hamlet to Thriving Suburb. Westwood Press Publications, 1985.

Y.Jones, The Birmingham Japanning & Papier Mache Industries. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1981. *

N.Land, Victorian Workhouse: A Study of the Bromsgrove Union Workhouse 1836-1901. Brewin, 1990.

J.A.Langford (ed.), A Century of Birmingham Life: or a chronicle of local events from 1741 to 1841, Vols. 1 & 2. E.C.Osborne, and Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1868.

J.A.Langford (ed.), Modern Birmingham and its Institutions: a chronicle of local events, from 1841 to 1871, Vol.1 (to 1861). E.C.Osborne, and Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1873.

R.Lea, Scenes from Sutton's Past: A closer look at aspects of the History of Sutton Coldfield. Westwood Press, 1989.

M.Lewis, Walsall in Old Picture Postcards. European Library, 1982.

S.Lloyd, The Lloyds of Birmingham: with some account of the founding of Lloyds Bank. Cornish, and Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1907.

T.Lloyd Renshaw, Birmingham: its Rise and Progress: a short history. Cornish, 1932.

J.McKenna, Birmingham Street Names. Birmingham Public Libraries, 1986.

J.McKenna, Watch, Clock & Dialmakers of Birmingham (1547-1900). Pendulum Press, 1987.

J.Maddison, Smethwick in Old Photographs. Alan Sutton, 1989.

J.Marks, Birmingham on Old Postcards. Reflections of a Bygone Age, 1982.

B.Marsden, A.B.C. of Small Heath and Bordesley Green: past and present. Small Heath Local History Society, 1987.

F.Mason, The Book of Wolverhampton: the story of an industrial town. Barracuda Books, 1979.

J.Morris Jones, Bygone Balsall Heath: a brief introduction to the historical geography of the district. J.Morris Jones, 1979.

J.Morris Jones, Manors of North Birmingham: an introduction to the historical geography of Erdington & Witton, Handsworth & Hamstead, Perry Barr. Birmingham Education Department, 1984.

J.Morris Jones, Moseley: a series of articles for a local newsletter, notes for a walk round the district, and

Moseley Hall: the Grevises and the Taylors. J.Morris Jones, 1980-82.

J.Morris Jones, Swanshurst Quarter: an introduction to the historical geography of the southwestern part of the manor and parish of Yardley in Worcestershire. J.Morris Jones, 1979.

J.T.J.Morrison, William Sands Cox and the Birmingham Medical School. Cornish, 1926.

J.H.Muirhead (ed.), Birmingham Institutions: lectures given at the University. Cornish, 1911.

J.Newton Friend, Forgotten Aston Manor in Birmingham; a brief record of early sites, buildings, and their history. J.Newton Friend, 1965.

The Outer Circle Bus Route, [Brum Trail 2]. Birmingham Urban Studies Committee, 1985.

R.Pemberton, Solihull and its Church. William Pollard, 1905.

B.Pugh, Solid Citizens: Statues in Birmingham. Westwood Press Publications, 1983.

P.Richards, A Series of Articles on the History of Northfield. 197?.

M.B.Rowlands, A History of Industry in Birmingham. City of Birmingham Education Department, 1977.

M.B.Rowlands, Masters and men in the West Midlands metalware trades before the industrial revolution. Manchester University Press, 1975.

A.H.Saxton, Bygone Erdington: A brief record, with Photographs of Men, Places, and Events in the Village. Saxton, 1928.

W.Showell, Dictionary of Birmingham. S.R.Publishers, 1969. [Reprint of 1885 ed.].

V.Skipp, A History of Greater Birmingham - down to 1830. V.Skipp, 1980.

V.Skipp, The Making of Victorian Birmingham. V.Skipp, 1983.

W.B.Stevens (ed.), A History of the County of Warwick, Vol.7: The City of Birmingham. Oxford University Press, 1964. [The Victoria History of the Counties of England].

W.Stranz, George Cadbury: An illustrated life of George Cadbury, 1839-1922. Shire Publications, 1973.

A Sutcliffe & R.Smith, History of Birmingham, Vol.III: Birmingham 1939-1970. Oxford University Press, 1974.

S.Timmins (ed.), The Resources, Products, and Industrial History of Birmingham and the Midland Hardware District. Robert Hardwicke, 1866.

R.E.Tupling, The Story of Rednal. Birmingham Public Libraries, 1983.

C.Upton, A History of Birmingham. Phillimore, 1993.

C.A.Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.III (1885-1899). Cornish, 1902.

C.A.Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, Vol.IV (1900-1915). Cornish, 1923.

D.White, The Birmingham Button Trade. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1981. *

I.A.Williams, The Firm of Cadbury 1831-1931. Constable, 1931.

J.W.Willis Bund (ed.), The Victoria History of the County of Worcester, Vol.3. 1913. (1971 Reprint). [The Victoria History of the Counties of England.]

J.Woodall & M.Varley, Looking Back at Solihull. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, 1987.

D.Wright, An Account of Harborne from earliest times to 1891. Birmingham Public Libraries, 1981.

D.Wright, Bygone Bartley Green. Birmingham Public Libraries, 198?

Yardley through the Camera 1890-1900. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1972.

J.Zuckerman & G.Eley, Birmingham Heritage. Croom Helm, 1979.

(b) Journal Articles

B.Ainsworth, In Search of George Dawson. The Birmingham Historian, No.5, Autumn/Winter 1989, pp.21-27.

S.Davies, The Nailmakers of Harborne. The Birmingham Historian, No.2, Spring/Summer 1988, pp.16-23.

W.English, Poor Relief in a Rural Parish - Alvechurch. The Birmingham Historian, No.7, Spring/Summer 1991, pp.13-15.

Medico, One Hundred Years of Dudley Road Hospital. The Birmingham Historian, No.1, Autumn 1987, pp.8-9.

D.J.Moss, A Forgotten Birmingham Hero: Thomas Attwood and the Rewriting of Early 19th Century History. The Birmingham Historian, No.8, 1992, pp.5-9.

S.Price, The Nailmakers' Workshops of Birmingham. The Birmingham Historian, No.2, Spring/Summer 1988, pp.5-15

L.D.Smith, Duddeston Hall and the 'Trade in Lunacy' 1835-65. The Birmingham Historian, No.8, 1992, pp.16-22.

C.Upton & J.Fellows, Birmingham and its Workhouses. The Birmingham Historian, No.4, Spring/Summer 1989, pp.13-16.

R.Ward, From Manchester to Birmingham: the political career of John Bright MP for Birmingham, 1857-1889. The Birmingham Historian, No.7, Spring/Summer 1991, pp.5-10.

* Leaflet or pamphlet.

(4) Unpublished Theses

D.Ashforth, The Poor Law in Bradford c.1834-1871: A study of the relief of poverty in mid-nineteenth century Bradford.

Ph.D. University of Bradford, 1979.

J.V.Corrigan, The Administration of the Poor Law in Tynemouth Union, 1830-1939.

HR 6106 Jan.1981. (SSRC Research Report)

A.M.Dickens, Architects and the Union Workhouse of the New Poor Law.

C.N.A.A. Ph.D. Brighton Polytechnic, 1982.

L.Feehan, Charitable Effort, Statutory Authorities and the Poor in Liverpool c.1850-1914.

Ph.D. University of Liverpool, 1987.

M.D.Handley, Local Administration of the Poor Law in the Great Boughton and Wirral Unions and the Chester Local Act Incorporation, 1834-71.

M.A. University of Wales, 1969.

S.Kelly, Select Vestry of Liverpool and the Administration of the Poor Law, 1821-1871.

M.A. University of Liverpool, 1971.

C.Kinealy, The Irish Poor Law, 1838-1862: A Study of the Relationship Between the Local and Central Administrators.

Ph.D. Trinity College, Dublin, 1984.

M.E.MacKinnon, Poverty and Policy: The English Poor Law 1860-1910.

Ph.D. Nuffield College, 1984.

M.McNaulty, Some Aspects of the History of the Administration of the Poor Laws in Birmingham between 1730 and 1834.

M.A. University of Birmingham, 1942.

F.W.D.Manders, The Administration of the Poor Law in the Gateshead Union, 1836-1930.

M.Litt. University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1980.

P.Rex, The Administration of the New Poor Law with particular reference to the Warwick Poor Law Union 1836-1863.

C.N.A.A. M.A. Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic, 1983.

M.E.Rose, Poor Law Administration in the West Riding of Yorkshire (1820-1855).

Ph.D. University of Oxford, 1965.

L.Shaw, Aspects of Poor Relief in Norwich 1825-1875.
Ph.D. University of East Anglia, 1980.

K.Thompson, The Leicester Poor Law Union, 1836-1871.
Ph.D. University of Leicester, 1988.

P.L.Tolley, Poor Relief and the Urban Poor. The
Birmingham Guardians and the Administration of Indoor
Relief in the Parish of Birmingham, during the early New
Poor Law Era, c.1830-1860.
C.N.A.A. M.A. Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic, 1987.

P.A.Wood, The Activities of the Sunderland Poor Law Union
1834-1930.
M.Litt. University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1975.