

**Shipped out? Pauper Apprentices of
Port Towns during the Industrial
Revolution
1750-1870**

Caroline Louise Withall

Wolfson College

University of Oxford

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SHORT ABSTRACT

Shipped out?

Pauper Apprentices of Port Towns during the Industrial Revolution 1750-1870

The thesis challenges popular generalisations about the trades, occupations and locations to which pauper apprentices were consigned, shining the spotlight away from the familiar narrative of factory children, onto the fate of their destitute peers in port towns. A comparative investigation of Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton, it adopts a deliberately broad definition of the term pauper apprenticeship in its multi-sourced approach, using 1710 Poor Law and charity apprenticeship records and previously unexamined New Poor Law and charity correspondence to provide new insight into the chronology, mechanisms and experience of pauper apprenticeship.

Not all port children were *shipped out*. Significantly more children than has hitherto been acknowledged were placed in traditional occupations, the dominant form of apprenticeship for port children. The survival and entrenchment of this type of work is striking, as are the locations in which children were placed; nearly half of those bound to traditional trades remained within the vicinity of the port. The thesis also sheds new light on a largely overlooked aspect of pauper apprenticeship, the binding of boys into the Merchant service. Furthermore, the availability of sea apprenticeships as well as traditional placements caused some children to be *shipped in* to the ports for apprenticeships. Of those who were still *shipped out* to the factories, the evidence shows that far from dying out, as previously thought, the practice of batch apprenticeship persisted under the New Poor Law.

The most significant finding of the thesis is the survival and endurance of pauper apprenticeship as an institution involving both Poor Law and charity children. Poor children were still being apprenticed *late* into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Pauper apprenticeship is shown to have been a robust, resilient and resurgent institution. The evidence from port towns offers significant revision to the existing historiography of pauper apprenticeship.

LONG ABSTRACT

Shipped out?

Pauper Apprentices of Port Towns during the Industrial Revolution 1750-1870

The term ‘pauper apprentice’ is generally associated with the textile mills of Northern England, for it has long been recognised that many of Britain’s poor children were transported from urban workhouses to provide a vital element in the early factory labour force. Yet recent historiography has highlighted the prevalence of children’s work in other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, domestic service and traditional occupations, with significant regional variations. Monographs such as Humphries’ and Honeyman’s have sought to bring the issue of child labour back from the periphery and make it once again central to interpretations of Britain’s economic success during the industrial revolution. And there is one particular category of child labourer that really epitomises this: the pauper apprentice. Were pauper apprentices similarly widely distributed? The thesis challenges popular generalisations about the trades, occupations and locations to which pauper apprentices were consigned, shining the spotlight away from those familiar factory children onto the fates of their destitute peers in port towns. As a result, the thesis provides a fresh perspective and uncovers important new evidence on the institution of pauper apprenticeship during the industrial revolution.

Although the work of revisionist historians has acknowledged the diversity of child employment during the industrial revolution, little is known about child employment in ports during this era. Port towns were significant in the development of a nation that could lay claim to being the workshop of the world; the Atlantic and British ports on its coastline

provided gateways for the flow of both goods and people that evidenced this claim. Could such thriving economic centres not offer any apprenticeship opportunities to poor children? Surely maritime opportunities were available, acknowledging the importance of regional focus? Nigel Goose's appeal for studies of pauper apprenticeship which looked beyond the documented flows from the metropolitan workhouses to the Northern mills gave momentum to the idea to explore this different setting. Investigating pauper apprenticeship in ports presented an opportunity to examine the diversity of children's work and to test the conventional premise that children were *shipped out* to the new industries for pauper apprenticeships.

The thesis provides a comparative investigation of pauper apprenticeship in Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton. Not only are my three locations all major Atlantic ports, but also their Poor Law systems were largely exempt from the mechanics of the New Poor Law; all followed Local Act Incorporation prior to 1834. These ports led the way in Poor Law administration. I have also included local charities in the study as they too were active in apprenticing poor children. Combining both Poor Law and charity apprentices is an unusual approach; charity schemes have more often been examined separately as examples of the aid available to the deserving poor, as distinct from recipients of poor relief. However, the thesis seeks to examine the apprenticeship of poor children in the widest sense, thus adopting a deliberately broad definition of the term pauper apprenticeship. As noted by Kirby, there is a distinct lack of sources for child labour; apprenticeship indentures are one of the most effective windows into poor children's employment, as they provide a yardstick of how some of the poorest children were treated. Using records from the mixed economy of welfare helps to gain as complete a picture as possible of the apprenticeship prospects available to poor children within each port. Combined with other regional studies, this research contributes to a more complete

coverage of the system of pauper apprenticeship at the national level. In some ways Poor Law and charities diverged in their treatment of the children in their care but they also shared similarities of approach. Indeed the thesis provides examples of the two institutions acting together and shows that the charity model of apprenticeship was influential in shaping Poor Law attitudes and behaviour. A common objective of both the Poor Law and charities was the need to introduce poor children to the world of work, to place them in positions which would enable them to contribute to their own upkeep and acquire the skills and discipline which would empower them to be independent and self-supporting adults. Although the wider history of charities has been well researched, very few studies focus specifically on their apprenticeship schemes for children. As well as adding to this literature, in adopting this wide definition of pauper apprenticeship, the thesis addresses the charge that the relationship between charities and the Poor Law has been ignored.

The period chosen for my study, 1750-1870, acknowledges the currently accepted view that the industrial revolution began much earlier than a previous generation of historians had thought, and was already underway in the early eighteenth century. It also reflects the fact that many of the children in this study would not have been afforded any sort of regulatory protection in the workplace until the 1867 Workshops Act. To document this broad time span, a multi-sourced approach was adopted, calling particularly on both Poor Law and charity apprenticeship records and indentures, covering 1710 cases across the three ports. The thesis also surveys a treasure trove of previously unexamined qualitative material. New Poor Law correspondence passing between the Poor Law officials of each port and the Poor Law Board, and the correspondence of the Southampton charity the Royal Military Asylum, provides new insight into the chronology, mechanisms and experience of pauper apprenticeship.

The sources unequivocally challenge popular generalisations about the type of work and locations to which pauper apprentices were consigned. Three key sectors of apprenticeship emerged as common destinations and form the basis for analysis of the fate of the maritime pauper apprentice: traditional occupations, the sea, and the new industries. Each of the sectors is examined in detail using a consistent thematic framework to enable comparison. There are five categories of analysis; the first, the apprenticeship process, considers the mechanics of the system, such as how the placements were organised, age at binding, length of term, premiums paid, assessment of masters' suitability and the locations to which children were sent. The second, application of regulations and batch apprenticeship, assesses the effectiveness of state intervention and the persistence of the customary practices adopted by the institutions, particularly in relation to monitoring children once apprenticed and the binding of children *en masse*. The third, life as an apprentice, reviews the type of work children performed, the conditions they faced and their prospects for employment upon completion. The fourth, gender issues, addresses principally whether girls were treated differently in terms of training received and sectoral placements. The final category looks at the settlement concerns provoked by pauper apprenticeships; a surprising discovery was the persistence of such concerns post-1834. Using this framework, the ports are not only compared with each other, but their combined experience is condensed into a view from the port towns and brought to bear on the standard account of pauper apprenticeship with revisionist implications.

The evidence uncovers a wide range of experiences for Poor Law and charity apprentices from port towns, including apprenticeships in the ports themselves. Critically, not all port children were found to be *shipped out*. Significantly more children than has hitherto been acknowledged were placed in traditional occupations, the dominant form of apprenticeship for port children, forming 63 per cent of the sample. The survival and

entrenchment of this type of work is striking, as are the locations in which children were placed; nearly half of those bound to traditional trades remained within the vicinity of the port town. Thus Poor Law and charity apprenticeships were available in urban settings, demonstrating that many children, contrary to existing views, did remain in ports to train in a conventional manner. This challenges conventional perceptions about pauper apprenticeship destinations, and consequently highlights the importance of local, regional and sectoral studies in the wider historiography of child labour to provide a nuanced account of the national picture.

The maritime influence also had a measurable effect, with sea apprenticeships providing opportunities for poor boys, some 8 per cent of the sample. The thesis sheds new light on a largely overlooked aspect of pauper apprenticeship, the binding of boys into the service of the Merchant Navy, extending the revisionist findings regarding the prevalence and diversity of child labour, as well as contributing to wider maritime history. The sea was an important avenue of apprenticeship for both Poor Law and charity boys well into the nineteenth century. In this sector more than any other, no distinction between Poor Law and charity apprentices was apparent; the sea was a great leveller for boys of every class. Furthermore, the availability of sea apprenticeships as well as traditional placements caused some children to be *shipped in* to the ports for apprenticeships, principally from surrounding areas, but also on a national scale from the Marine Society. The history of the Marine Society has been well documented in respect of its Naval apprentices, but this is the first study to make use of its Merchant service registers.

Returning to the original research question, although perhaps surprisingly not the dominant form of apprenticeship, 29 per cent of pauper apprentices from port towns were still *shipped out* to the factories. Crucially the thesis reveals that the practice was not only pursued by the Poor Law; the evidence from the Royal Military Asylum clearly shows that

charitable institutions also actively sought this type of arrangement. The sources demonstrate that factory placements were still being used as an avenue for batch apprenticeship late into the nineteenth century. This heralds a major revision of the conventional view that factory pauper placements and batch supply diminished prior to the New Poor Law. Pauper apprenticeship to the factories has been heavily documented. However, the thesis presents an important new chapter in its history: it contends that far from dying out, the practice of batch apprenticeship persisted under the New Poor Law. It delivers hard evidence that batch apprenticeship continued much longer than previously thought, and so demands a revision of the orthodox chronology. Further research is required to pinpoint the date of decline.

The thesis provides new perspectives on the system of pauper apprenticeship more generally. As well as highlighting the importance of regional analysis and the diversity of apprenticeship opportunities available, it offers vital new evidence on the institutions shaping the destiny of destitute port children, by reaching into the minds of the bureaucrats, those responsible for the future of Britain's most vulnerable children. The correspondence of these institutions offers new evidence about how the system was administered. It demonstrates attitudes towards children's welfare and protection and contributes towards debates about the motivations and diligence of officials. The thesis makes a particularly original contribution to the history of the Poor Law and administrative history, as the examination of New Poor Law correspondence between the Poor Law Board and port Poor Law officials has uncovered remarkable findings about the operation of the pauper apprenticeship system later in the nineteenth century. The material pertains to wider Poor Law issues, not just the apprenticeship of children, but also settlement concerns, issues of local autonomy and ultimately the greater continuity between the Old and Poor Law systems. The Royal Military Asylum evidence is just as vital, a wonderful

parallel resource illustrating the motivations of charity officials. It suggests that perhaps the treatment of charity children was not so markedly different to those placed under the Poor Law, particularly in terms of its use of factory apprenticeship. Just as with the operation of the Poor Law, the operation of charity apprenticeship schemes also varied considerably, and many of the values traditionally associated with charity apprenticeships, such as social mobility and aspiration, were not evident in this institution.

Thus the thesis presents a number of new perspectives on this important aspect of Britain's social and economic history; the most significant finding is the survival and endurance of pauper apprenticeship as an institution involving both Poor Law and charity children. The evidence shows that poor children were still being apprenticed across all three sectors even *late* into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Pauper apprenticeship is shown to have been a robust, resilient and resurgent institution. This is a critical revisionist finding, as traditional thinking has placed the decline of this system of apprenticeship as early as the 1820s. Hitherto, historians' focus has been on the operation of the system under the Old Poor Law; it has been too readily believed that pauper apprenticeship was dead or dying in the years after 1834, and there has been little serious investigation of New Poor Law records. The evidence from port towns begins to address this void and offers significant revision to the history of poor children and pauper apprentices.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| BA | Beaulieu Archives |
| BRO | Bristol Record Office |
| CA | Cheshire Archives |
| CLSAC | Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre |
| GA | Gloucestershire Archives |
| HRO | Hampshire Record Office |
| IOWRO | Isle of Wight Record Office |
| LA | Lancashire Archives |
| LRO | Liverpool Record Office |
| LSV | Liverpool Select Vestry |
| MA | Manchester Archives and Local Studies |
| MMA | Merseyside Maritime Museum Maritime Archives |
| NDRO | North Devon Record Office |
| NMM | National Maritime Museum Archive |
| PP | Parliamentary Papers |
| RMA | Royal Military Asylum |
| SA | Southampton Archives Services |
| SALS | Somerset Archives and Local Studies |
| TNA | The National Archives |

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1. Introduction

'We send you duplicate of Joseph Douglas indentures. Please have his things ready by the morn [the Cumberland] will sail tomorrow if the wind should be fair. The boy must be down here by 10 o'clock in the morning'.¹

In 1853, Joseph Douglas was apprenticed to seaman Thomas Tobin by the Poor Law. Imagine Joseph standing at the dockside, experiencing a mixture of fear and confusion, perhaps even a tinge of excitement at the prospect of adventure. Of course, this is romanticising the situation; the reality of life at sea was undoubtedly harsh.² Nevertheless, Joseph embarked upon a life away from the workhouse, engaged in what may have seemed a more appealing prospect than the alternatives that faced many of his peers, apprenticed to the ominous mines and mills.

The thesis provides a fresh perspective on the institution of pauper apprenticeship during the industrial revolution, through the novel lens of the port town. The term 'child labour' in the context of the industrial revolution evokes images of ragged Victorian children being forced up chimneys, herded down mines and scurrying between machines in textile factories. This research challenges popular generalisations about the trades, occupations and locations to which pauper apprentices were consigned, shining the spotlight away from those familiar factory children onto the fates of their destitute peers in port towns. Port towns were significant in the development of a nation that could lay

¹ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/125, 7 Apr. 1853.

² In J. Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) [hereafter, Humphries, *Childhood*] autobiographies illustrated the range of emotions boys experienced about this type of placement: Frank Bullen only enlisted for the food and shelter, 'under no delusion whatever as to the prospect [ahead]' (p. 202, citing F. Bullen, *The Log of a Sea Waif, Being Recollections of the First Four Years of My Sea Life* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1899), p. 2); whereas Henry Moffat believed his destiny was the sea, to the extent he forged his mother's signature to join the Navy (p. 218, citing H. Moffat, *From Ship's-Boy to Skipper. With Variations* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1911)).

claim to being the workshop of the world; the Atlantic and British ports on its coastline provided gateways for the flow of both goods and people that evidenced this claim. Using 1,710 Poor Law and charity apprenticeship records collected from three ports, Bristol, Liverpool and Southampton, as well as correspondence of officials involved in determining the children's fate, the thesis reveals a number of striking features about the apprenticeship of poor children, not least the endurance of the institution itself, late into the nineteenth century.

Combining both Poor Law and charity apprentices is an unusual approach. Charity schemes have more often been examined separately as shining examples of aid available to the deserving poor; the Poor Law served only the destitute. However, this thesis seeks to examine the apprenticeship of poor children in the widest sense, as work was a central tenet of schemes for children originating in both the Poor Law and charity; indeed the charity model of apprenticeship was influential in developing Poor Law attitudes and behaviour. Snell also adopted such a combined approach; when considering apprentices, he made a distinction between private apprentices, where families paid the premiums, and charity and parish apprentices, whom he grouped together.³ The correspondence of Southampton's Thorner charity perfectly illustrates how charity schemes operated alongside the Poor Law in assisting the poor: 'Boys whose friends are Capable of giving £10 or £12 fee for Apprenticing them are Scarcely the Objects intended by this Charity. They should be Realy [*sic*] Paupers or Poor Children'.⁴ Although areas of divergence are considered below, there were common aims, methods and placements, as well as examples

³ K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) [hereafter, Snell, *Annals*], p. 278.

⁴ SA, D/TH 52/3, 14 Apr. 1770.

of the two institutions working together.⁵ Yet the relationship between charities and the Poor Law is ‘a topic virtually ignored until recently’.⁶ Here they are viewed together to facilitate a better understanding of how they operated alongside, and sometimes collaborated with, one another. Furthermore, whatever their background, these were all children who needed assistance to gain entry into the world of work.

Three sectors of work offered apprenticeship opportunities for poor children of the port: the sea provided openings for boys like Joseph; the new industries tempted officials with the prospect of mass bindings further afield; and the dominance of traditional occupations, particularly in offering employment in the port, is both surprising and significant. Crucially, all three sectors received apprentices from both charities and the Poor Law. This was particularly surprising in relation to factories, as they are generally associated with only Poor Law children; this convinced me of the need to examine the two institutions in tandem to present a complete portrait of the apprenticeship of poor children from the ports.⁷

This Introduction will outline key findings and sketch the thematic framework used for analysis, but first it is important to define the research questions this thesis seeks to address. These, of course, arise from the existing historiography, and so it is here where I begin.

⁵ For example, Southampton Corporation administered many small charity endowments within its Municipal Charities fund.

⁶ A. Brundage, *The English Poor Laws, 1700-1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) [hereafter, Brundage, *Poor Laws*], p. 6. For studies that have addressed this issue see: D.E. Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) [hereafter; Owen, *Philanthropy*]; F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) [hereafter, Prochaska, *Philanthropy*].

⁷ For the purpose of brevity, the term ‘pauper apprenticeship’ will be used throughout this thesis, to be considered as an umbrella term to describe the apprenticeship of poor children from both institutions. Where appropriate, distinctions between charity and Poor Law apprenticeships are highlighted.

1.1 Overview of subject area and historiography

The question of how much children's labour contributed to the fortunes of our country has long been debated, the nation's wealth built upon their small shoulders, most famously summarized by the often cited Thompson: 'The exploitation of little children, on this scale and with this intensity, was one of the most shameful events in our history'.⁸ A recent text noted that while 'quantitative support for such a proposition remains undeveloped, the demographic argument is at least unassailable'.⁹ Children were a substantial group of society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; in 1771, children aged 5-14 comprised 20.6 per cent of the whole population.¹⁰ In just over fifty years, the population of children aged 15 and under peaked at 40 per cent in 1826, and between 1840 and 1870 the proportion never fell below 35 per cent.¹¹ With such a young population came a high dependency ratio, thus consequently children's work was an inevitable and important feature of society during this period.

Work is the beating heart of economic development and activity, one of the many facets of Britain's industrial revolution that scholars have been fascinated with. The causes of industrial revolution have been the subject of lively debate; Cannadine explained that the root of the differing interpretations over the years was because 'every generation

⁸ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* 4th ed. (London: Penguin, 1991) [hereafter, Thompson, *English Working Class*], p. 384. For other works citing the traditional view of child labour, see B.L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation*, 2nd ed. (London: P.S. King, 1911) [hereafter, Hutchins and Harrison, *Factory Legislation*]; B.B. Hammond and J.L. Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832: The New Civilisation* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918) [hereafter, Hammond, *Town Labourer*]. For a more recent examination, see C. Tuttle, 'A Revival of the Pessimist View: Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution', *Research in Economic History*, vol. 18 (1998) [hereafter, Tuttle, 'Revival'], pp. 53-82.

⁹ N. Goose and K. Honeyman (eds.), *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750-1914* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) [hereafter, Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*], p. 4.

¹⁰ J. Mokyr, *The Enlightened Economy: Britain and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1850* (London: Penguin, 2011) [hereafter, Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*], p. 332.

¹¹ E.A. Wrigley and R. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 217, cited also in Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 39; P. Horn, *The Victorian Town Child* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997) [hereafter, Horn, *Town Child*], Appendix 1.

to some extent rewrites the past in accordance with the preoccupations of the present'.¹² The classical account of this period focused on the dramatic rise of new industries, principally the coal mines and cotton manufactories, charting the effect on both the physical landscape and its people. But in more recent years, industrial revolution studies have moved away from analysis of the social effects of industrialization and indeed from Labour history, concentrating instead on chronological issues. For example, one of the biggest debates in the recent literature has been the timing and intensity of industrialization. For many years it was considered the result of a dramatic 'take-off' in the late eighteenth century, but in the 1980s Crafts and Harley contradicted this long-held view with new evidence of slower, more gradual growth and change, with the corollary that the industrial sector in the late eighteenth century must have been larger than previous historians had credited.¹³ More recently the industrial revolution has been redefined as a two-stage process: the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century as a period of steady growth and transition, with the 'revolution' in terms of more accelerated change occurring from 1820 onwards, for about fifty years.¹⁴

The causes of the change taking place have also been hotly contested. For example, Mokyr placed great emphasis on the scientific enlightenment leading to technical

¹² D. Cannadine, 'The Present and the Past in the English Industrial Revolution 1880-1980' *Past and Present*, vol. 103 (1984), pp. 131-72, at p. 131.

¹³ W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 36-58; N.F.R. Crafts, 'British Economic Growth, 1700-1831: A Review of the Evidence', *Economic History Review*, vol. 36, 2 (1983), pp. 177-99; N.F.R. Crafts, *British Economic Growth during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) [hereafter, Crafts, *British Economic Growth*]; C.K. Harley, 'British Industrialization before 1841: Evidence of Slower Growth during the Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 42, 2 (1982) [hereafter, Harley, 'British Industrialization'], pp. 267-89.

¹⁴ E. Griffin, *A Short History of the British Industrial Revolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 125.

innovation.¹⁵ Allen developed this further; arguing that there would not have been demand for such innovation without high male wages and the abundance of cheap coal, which provided an incentive for mechanization and re-organization of work practices.¹⁶ While in agreement that the mechanization and re-organization of work were important changes in the early industrial era, Humphries lamented that many explanations of industrialization failed to take account of the ways in which changes in women's and children's work was the vanguard of new and detailed labour processes. She argued that mechanization involved specific innovations allowing for substitution and work reorganization designed to accommodate cheaper female and child labour.¹⁷ This type of analysis answered Berg and Hudson's appeal from many years earlier; at the height of the chronology debate, they famously called for a broader view of the revolution, particularly one which included an account of how women and children actively facilitated such growth and change.¹⁸

Now that progress has perhaps been made on the chronology and causes, historians once again are focusing on specific aspects of the upheaval; the most pertinent to this thesis is that of the contribution of children's labour, an issue forgotten in the furious debate about chronology and timing. The revival of interest in this issue is partly a product of ongoing concern with child labour in developing nations, which continues to haunt modern day consumers of many internationally-produced goods. A recent report estimated

¹⁵ Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, especially chs. 3, 5-7.

¹⁶ R.C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) [hereafter, Allen, *British Industrial Revolution*], p. 2, and chs. 2, 4.

¹⁷ J. Humphries, 'The Lure of Aggregates and the Pitfalls of the Patriarchal Perspective: A Critique of the High Wage Economy Interpretation of the British Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review*, vol. 66, 3 (2013), pp. 693-714, at pp. 710-11.

¹⁸ M. Berg and P. Hudson, 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review*, vol. 45, 1 (1992) [hereafter Berg and Hudson, 'Rehabilitating'], pp. 24-50, at p. 44.

that there are 168 million child labourers, bringing back to the fore the part children play in economic life.¹⁹

There can be no doubt that the classic view of child labour during the industrial revolution imprinted an enduring image of small children toiling in mills and mines as the cornerstone of the new industrial workforce.²⁰ The general historiography of this emotive subject can be broadly summarized as examining the nature of the extent and decline of this practice from two opposing perspectives: the ‘classical’ account of compulsion centred on the children forced into *labour* for the new industries, exploited for little or no wages; versus a more measured approach accepting that children’s *work* was a necessary evil due to the socio-economic conditions of the time.²¹ The classical version is intrinsically associated with the rise of the factories and chimes with the critics of unregulated capitalism, who firmly asserted that child labour was one of its negative consequences.²² At its core is a morality tale hinging on the significance of protective labour legislation in reducing child labour in Britain, the result of a campaign that introduced the issue of children and their treatment onto the social agenda.²³ Unsurprisingly, other historians disagree about the effectiveness of the legislation.²⁴ However, the fixation on the role of regulation distorts the importance of the factory as a source of child employment, ignoring the many children who worked in agriculture, domestic service, small-scale production and in the home, and were afforded no statutory protection. Several historians have noted the

¹⁹ Prior, E., *Citi Research: Modern Slavery and Child Labour Assessing Risks in Global Industries and ASX-Listed Companies* (Sydney: Citi Research, 2014), p. 6.

²⁰ Thompson, *English Working Class*; Hutchins, *Factory Legislation*; Hammond, *Town Labourer*.

²¹ C. Heywood, 'A Brief Historiography of Child Labor', in H. Hindman (ed.) *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), p. 18.

²² Thompson, *English Working Class*, p. 384.

²³ Hutchins and Harrison, *Factory Legislation*.

²⁴ For example, P. Kirby, *Child Labour in Britain, 1750-1870* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) [hereafter, Kirby, *Child Labour*]; C. Nardinelli, *Child Labor and the Industrial Revolution* (Indiana, 1990) [hereafter, Nardinelli, *Child Labor*]. See pp. 11-13 below.

prevailing dominance and endurance of child labour in agriculture, service and traditional trades long into the nineteenth century.²⁵ Many of these debates are discussed further below.

Over time, the classical view was diluted. Humphries regretted that the central role of children has almost been erased from economic history, while revisionist historians believed child labour only affected a small minority, for a relatively short period in time.²⁶ There was nothing new about child labour; the ordinary family needed children to work as their income played a vital role in survival.²⁷ The contemporary stance was reflected in Adam Smith's opinion that, when working, a child 'instead of being a burden, is a source of opulence and prosperity to the parents...The value of children is the greatest of all encouragements to marriage'.²⁸ Work for children was desired by many parents, as the family's living standards were raised as a result of their child's participation and ability to contribute; Nardinelli even went as far as to suggest it was 'optimal', and a deliberate family strategy.²⁹

While not sharing such economistic views, historians such as McKendrick and de Vries highlighted that growing consumer demand for goods played a part in motivating family decisions regarding work participation; children became part of the 'industrious

²⁵ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 2; Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 2; H. Cunningham, 'The Employment and Unemployment of Children in England c. 1680–1851', *Past and Present*, 126 (1990) [hereafter, Cunningham, 'Employment'], pp. 115-50, at pp. 116-17; Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, p. 5; E. Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) [hereafter, Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn*], p. 27; A. Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship and the Old Poor Law in London', *Economic History Review*, vol. 63, 4 (2010) [hereafter, Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship'], pp. 915-41, at pp. 916-17.

²⁶ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 1; Cunningham, 'Employment', pp. 116-17; Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, pp. 4-5.

²⁷ S. Horrell and J. Humphries, 'The Exploitation of Little Children: Child Labor and the Family Economy in the Industrial Revolution', *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 32 (1995) [hereafter, Horrell and Humphries, 'Exploitation'], pp. 485-516; Cunningham, 'Employment', pp. 116-17.

²⁸ Smith, A., *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 1 (London: W. Allason, [1776] 1819) [hereafter, Smith, *Wealth of Nations*], p. 95.

²⁹ Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, p. 2, 157; Cunningham, 'Employment', pp. 116-17.

revolution', sent to work to increase purchasing power.³⁰ Others believed it to be a rational response to the social and economic conditions of the time, a necessary evil; the ordinary family had no choice, it needed children to work as their income played a vital role in survival.³¹ Excesses of cruelty were isolated and exaggerated, championed by those with a vested interest, such as labour activists or middle class intellectuals. Child labour was not a question of cruelty, but an accepted social norm amongst the labouring classes. The industrial revolution simply brought this practice into the spotlight because of a widening of opportunities for children's employment and, crucially, 'enhanced visibility'.³² Children going to, at, or coming away from work had never been witnessed on such a scale; factories 'symbolized the changes brought about by the industrial revolution, changes that many observers feared and distrusted'.³³ In reality, the horrors were just as bad in the proto-industrial era and for those working for single masters or in small workshops; the factories simply increased the visibility level and intensity of children's work.

Historians have emphasized the need to look at the extent and causes of child labour not just from the supply side, but also from the business angle; the demand from employers was crucial.³⁴ For example, Rose and Robinson documented in detail the

³⁰ N. McKendrick, 'Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution', in N. McKendrick and J.H. Plumb (eds.), *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society: In Honour of J.H. Plumb* (London: Europa, 1974), pp. 152-210; J. de Vries, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution', *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 54, 2 (1994), pp. 249-70.

³¹ Horrell and Humphries, 'Exploitation', p. 512.

³² Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 330.

³³ Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, p. 5.

³⁴ K. Honeyman, *Child Workers in England, 1780-1820: Parish Apprentices and the Making of the Early Industrial Labour Force* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) [hereafter, Honeyman, *Child Workers*], especially chs. 5-6; J. Humphries, 'Child Labor: Lessons from Historical Experience of Today's Industrial Economies', *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 17, 2 (2003), pp. 175-196; M. B. Rose, 'Social Policy and Business:

demand side from the rich resource of surviving business records for Quarry Bank mill in Styal, Cheshire.³⁵ Chapman also used business and government records for his studies of Midlands textile mills, particularly Cuckney Mill in Derbyshire; he argued that the ‘evils’ of the factory system and the use of parish apprentices was overstated.³⁶ Taking the opposite stance, and using government reports to survey a large number of enterprises, Tuttle revived what is now referred to as the ‘pessimist’ view, re-emphasizing the significance of child labour during this period, especially in the mills.³⁷ More recently, Honeyman, using both business and parish records thus piecing together the supply and demand side of the child labour market, initiated a new wave of interest in this topic with her reappraisal of the factory system and its child workforce, concluding that the textile industry would not have succeeded without the vanguard of apprentices.³⁸

One of the biggest issues arising in the history of child labour is quantification. Just how many children were actually working? One of the leading proponents of quantification is Kirby, who acknowledged that the ‘shortage of evidence has given rise to widely differing estimates of numbers of employed children’.³⁹ Kirby used the 1851 Census as his source, finding that 2 per cent of children aged 5-9 and 30 per cent of children aged 10-14 worked.⁴⁰ Horn cited similar figures, although distinguishing between

Parish Apprentices and the Early Factory System 1750-1834', *Business History*, vol. 31, 4 (1989) [hereafter, Rose, 'Social Policy'], pp. 5-32.

³⁵ Rose, 'Social Policy'; M. B. Rose, *The Gregs of Quarry Bank Mill: The Rise and Decline of a Family Firm, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) [hereafter, Rose, *Gregs of Quarry Bank*]; K. Robinson, *What Became of the Quarry Bank Mill Apprentices? The Origins, Childhood and Adult Lives of 200 Cotton Workers* (Wilmslow: Quarry Bank Mill Trust 1996) [hereafter, Robinson, *Quarry Bank*].

³⁶ S. D. Chapman, *The Early Factory Masters: The Transition to the Factory System in the Midlands Textile Industry* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1967) [hereafter, Chapman, *Factory Masters*], p. 199.

³⁷ Tuttle, 'Revival', pp. 53-82.

³⁸ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 111, 128, 261.

³⁹ Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 133.

⁴⁰ P. Kirby, *Child Workers and Industrial Health in Britain, 1780-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013) [hereafter, Kirby, *Industrial Health*], p. 158.

the sexes; she noted 36.6 per cent of boys and 19.9 per cent of girls aged 10-14 worked. By 1871 employment of those under 9 had been virtually erased, but there was little difference for those aged 10-14, suggesting only a small decline over the nineteenth century.⁴¹ Nardinelli attempted to quantify actual numbers of children working in factories and workshops in 1874; using both census data and government reports, he estimated that 8.4 per cent of the total population of children were employed, and concluded that child labour was not widespread.⁴² Both Nardinelli's and Kirby's attempts have been criticized for being based on sources for a period that was past the peak of industrialization and already well into the era of regulation. Nevertheless, they remain the only general overviews and attempts thus far to gauge the extent of children's contribution. By using autobiographical sources, Humphries tried to address this point with a much broader timescale, with sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; like some of the specific studies investigating pauper apprenticeship discussed below, it is successful in terms of indentifying trends rather than providing reliable estimates of numbers employed and the proportions they made up of both the child population and the total labour force. The patchwork of individual studies is invaluable in trying to form an overall picture, but exact quantification remains elusive.

Pinpointing the decline of child labour is another area of debate in the literature. The causes of decline remain contested, the intensity of disagreement probably related to the question's continued relevance in modern society. Economists and legislators remain interested in historical approaches to the problem as useful precedents for developing policies to tackle the issue in emerging nations today. The classical advocates of market

⁴¹ Horn, *Town Child*, Appendix 1.

⁴² Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, pp. 4-5.

regulation attribute decline to the success of legislative measures, coupled with a changing attitude towards children working.⁴³ Society had been called to attention by the various parliamentary inquiries that exposed some of the worst excesses, at the heart of which was concern about the physical health and development of children, which ultimately led to the rise of compulsory education.⁴⁴ But proponents of revisionism have argued that the removal of children from the labour force was independent of regulation.⁴⁵ Even for industries subject to legislative intervention, its purpose was merely to regulate, not abolish, child labour. Furthermore, Kirby emphasized that for the majority of child workers, legislation, focused as it was on factories, was not relevant, even as late as 1870. At this date, most children were still working in small workshops, and children working in service and agriculture remained the largest groups.⁴⁶ Full time education did not begin to impact during the period of this study; some children in the mills experienced some schooling but the average child worker would have had no exposure to compulsory education.

Changes on the demand side have been identified as key to the decline in child labour. Nardinelli and Bolin-Hort pointed towards the impact of technological and organizational change in the workplace, coupled with rising incomes, resulting in families

⁴³ Hutchins and Harrison, *Factory Legislation*.

⁴⁴ Creighton, C., 'Changing Conceptualizations of Children's Rights in Early Industrial Britain' in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, pp. 231-53, at pp. 248-9.

⁴⁵ P. Bolin-Hort, *Work, Family and the State: Child Labour and the Organization of Production in the British Cotton Industry, 1780-1920* (Lund, 1989) [hereafter, Bolin-Hort, *Work, Family and the State*]; Nardinelli, *Child Labor*; Kirby, *Child Labour*.

⁴⁶ Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 132; P. Kirby, 'Victorian Social Investigation and the Children's Employment Commission, 1840-1842', in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency* [hereafter, Kirby, 'Victorian Social Investigation'], p. 154; Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, p. 5; J. Humphries, 'Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review*, vol. 66, 2 (2013) [hereafter, Humphries, 'Childhood EHR'], p. 402.

no longer needing all members to work.⁴⁷ Cunningham argued there was demand for child workers ‘only in proto-industrial areas and later in factories’, not in towns or agricultural areas, which he linked to pervasive ‘under and unemployment’ of adults. In such slack labour markets he argued children were not needed.⁴⁸ But in examining casual day child labour recorded in farm accounts, Burnette found it was extensive, complementing the research by Horrell and Humphries which used household accounts to show that child labour increased until the early nineteenth century, then declined; the similarity in patterns giving authenticity to both studies and undermining Cunningham’s assertion there was no demand for child employment in agricultural areas.⁴⁹

Not all share the view that children were overworked. Contemporary opinion viewed unemployment of children as a problem; even child labour campaigners such as Hanway never pressed for prohibition of children’s work, their goal being to limit the worst excesses. Work was a positive concept, it kept children occupied and out of trouble. Cunningham argued that idleness was viewed as the great scourge, not only for orphans and the abandoned, but also for children brought up in families, and that there was not enough work available.⁵⁰ Tuttle disagreed with this account of widespread under and unemployment, concurring with the conventional premise that the employment of children during this period *was* significant, and not just in the new industries.⁵¹ Humphries believed that even conditions of widespread adult unemployment could coincide with a

⁴⁷ Bolin-Hort, *Work, Family and the State*; Nardinelli, *Child Labor*.

⁴⁸ Cunningham, ‘Employment’, pp. 148-9.

⁴⁹ J. Burnette, ‘Child Day-Labourers in Agriculture: Evidence from Farm Accounts, 1740–1850’, *Economic History Review*, vol. 65, 3 (2012) [hereafter, Burnette, ‘Child Day-Labourers’], pp. 1077-99; Horrell and Humphries, ‘Exploitation’.

⁵⁰ Cunningham, ‘Employment’, p. 131.

⁵¹ C. Tuttle, *Hard at Work in Factories and Mines: The Economics of Child Labor during the British Industrial Revolution* (Boulder: Westview, 1999), pp. 12-13.

surge in child labour, as children were substituted for adult workers: ‘The reorganization of production around a more detailed division of labour created jobs which children could fill’.⁵² Her working-class autobiographies indicated an upsurge in child labour during industrialization, with the majority of jobs in agriculture, service and small-scale manufacturing, finding that the factories were just ‘tiny islands of modernity’.⁵³ Monographs such as Humphries’ and Honeyman’s have sought to bring the issue of child labour back from the periphery and make it once again central to interpretations of Britain’s economic success during the industrial revolution. And there is one particular category of child labourer that really epitomizes this: the pauper apprentice. As Chapter 2 discusses, pauper apprenticeship indentures provide a yardstick of how some of the poorest children were treated. Before examining pauper apprenticeship in detail, it is worth considering the literature on the system of apprenticeship more generally.⁵⁴

Apprenticeship was a common training mechanism for many children in England since the Elizabethan age, although the concept of handing over children for training has been traced back to Roman times.⁵⁵ An established form of education in a skilled trade, apprenticeship marked the transition from childhood towards independence, generally at age 14. In exchange for this training, parents paid a fee, known as the premium, to cover investment costs and insure against default.⁵⁶ Private apprenticeship was common for even

⁵² Humphries, ‘Childhood EHR’, pp. 395-418, at pp. 399-400.

⁵³ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 366.

⁵⁴ See p. 55.

⁵⁵ L. Brockliss, ‘Apprenticeship in Northwest Europe 1300-1850’, in L. Brockliss and H. Montgomery (eds.), *Childhood and Violence in the Western Tradition* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010) [hereafter, Brockliss, ‘Apprenticeship’], pp. 171-80, at p. 171.

⁵⁶ S. Epstein, ‘Craft Guilds, Apprenticeship and Technological Change in Pre-Industrial Europe’, in S. Epstein and M. Prak (ed.), *Guilds, Innovation, and the European Economy, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) [hereafter, Epstein, ‘Craft Guilds’], pp. 52-80, at pp. 60-1. Epstein defined investment costs as time spent on training, wasted materials and maintenance; C. Minns and P. Wallis, ‘The Price of Human Capital in a Pre-Industrial Economy: Premiums and Apprenticeship Contracts

the upper classes; in many cases the child was considered privileged to receive training in a craft or profession, reflected in the high premium required. Children were bound to masters by an indenture, so called as one copy of the contract was indented (torn) upon commencement; they were no longer subject to the authority of their parents but legally tied to their master, both working and residing with him.⁵⁷ Trades were regulated by guilds, with the 1562 Statue of Artificers prescribing nationwide regulations, such as a seven year term for all.⁵⁸ Humphries estimated that apprentices comprised 7.5-10 per cent of the adult labour force in the eighteenth century.⁵⁹ A recurring theme in the literature on apprenticeship is the age at which children began their indentures, and length of term served, issues which will also be examined during the course of this thesis. For private apprenticeship, it is generally accepted that 14 was the average starting age; as will be discussed, for pauper apprenticeship there has been more debate.⁶⁰ Length of term is an issue that is linked to the debate about the decline of apprenticeship, which I turn to next.

Like child labour itself, the timing and the causes of the decline of apprenticeship is also disputed. Dunlop and Denman argued decline began as early as 1720, with the practice all but ended by 1780.⁶¹ Decline is often pinpointed to the repeal of the apprenticeship clauses of the Statue of Artificers in 1814, which removed the requirement to have completed an apprenticeship in order to practise a trade, and subsequently guilds

in 18th Century England', *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 50 (No. 3, 2013) [hereafter, Minns and Wallis, 'Human Capital'], pp. 335-50, at pp. 346, 349.

⁵⁷ Griffin *Liberty's Dawn*, p. 27 provides a full explanation of the indenture process.

⁵⁸ Brockliss, 'Apprenticeship', p. 172 noted the contrast with other European countries that had a much more fluid system, determined by individual guilds.

⁵⁹ J. Humphries, 'English Apprenticeship: A Neglected Factor in the First Industrial Revolution', in P.A. David and M. Thomas (eds.), *Economic Future in Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 73-102, at p. 81.

⁶⁰ See pp. 249-54.

⁶¹ O.J. Dunlop and R.D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour: A History* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912) [hereafter, Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*], p. 226-32.

lost control of their crafts. Snell argued that apprenticeship began its decline during the eighteenth century, reflected in the average length of term dropping from seven to four years, and that the 1814 act was partly ‘recognition of these transformations having already occurred in many trades’. He also attributed decline to the rise of large-scale production, and to the growing desire to resist the conferral of settlement with which apprenticeship was associated, as discussed further below.⁶² By the nineteenth century, Lane suggested that apprenticeship ‘must have seemed increasingly archaic’ and that education was the preferred model.⁶³

Griffin’s review of autobiographies discovered a ‘rise of informal apprenticeships’, particularly in tailoring and shoemaking: ‘They picked up the rudiments of their trade while working as a dogsbody’.⁶⁴ Formal apprenticeship contracts only remained the norm in highly skilled trades.⁶⁵ Humphries argued that apprenticeship did survive, but in a different form; it ‘adapted to better fit changing conditions so survived in the maturing industrial economy’.⁶⁶ However, Humphries did agree with Schwarz that ultimately decline was due to innovations in work reorganization, as discussed earlier, which led to the deskilling of trades. Work was still available for children, but its nature had changed; there was no longer a need for training, as the production process had been broken down into a series of menial tasks that required virtually no skill.⁶⁷ Apprenticeship as an institution also suffered from being linked to the perceived abuses of pauper

⁶² K.D.M. Snell, ‘The Apprenticeship System in British History: The Fragmentation of a Cultural Institution’, *History of Education*, vol. 25, 4 (1996) [hereafter, Snell, ‘Apprenticeship System’], pp. 303-21, at pp. 313-5; Snell, *Annals*, pp. 228-69; J. Lane, *Apprenticeship in England, 1600-1914* (London: UCL Press, 1996) [hereafter, Lane, *Apprenticeship*], pp. 245-6.

⁶³ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 247.

⁶⁴ Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn*, pp. 28, 31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 259 citing L. Schwarz, *London in the Age of Industrialization: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 216-21.

apprenticeship, harming its reputation: ‘Certain trades became increasingly pauperized and this stigma deterred children of respectable families from entering’.⁶⁸

Both charities and the Poor Law adapted the apprenticeship model for children under their charge.⁶⁹ Cunningham suggested that ‘probably between one-quarter and one-third of all apprentices were pauper children’, although he went on to state that ‘the sources defy all attempts to estimate the number of parish apprentices’.⁷⁰ Officials involved in the administration of indentures under the Old Poor Law were the Overseers of the Poor, and after 1834, elected Poor Law Guardians. Charity apprenticeship is examined below, highlighting the similarities and differences between these two types of training for poor children. Pauper apprenticeship was viewed as a way to prepare poor children to earn a reasonable living, thus avoiding later reliance on the Poor Law, a useful tool for the ‘mitigation of the intergenerational transmission of poverty’.⁷¹ Bristol Guardian James Johnson described the act of apprenticing poor children as giving them the opportunity ‘of emancipating themselves from their degraded and servile condition’.⁷² Dunlop and Denman were the first scholars to examine the institution of pauper apprenticeship; they demonstrated that the binding out of pauper children was an established practice prior to the industrial revolution, as sixteenth-century children were boarded out with local

⁶⁸ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 83.

⁶⁹ Snell, ‘Apprenticeship System’, p. 309; Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 117.

⁷⁰ Cunningham, ‘Employment’, p. 133. Note that the term ‘pauper apprentice’ is synonymous with ‘parish apprentice’. Generally ‘parish apprentice’ refers to those indentured under the Old Poor Law; and ‘pauper apprentice’ those apprenticed under the New Poor Law.

⁷¹ S. Horrell, J. Humphries and H. Voth, ‘Destined for Deprivation: Human Capital Formation and Intergenerational Poverty in Nineteenth-Century England’, *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 38, 3 (2001) [hereafter, Horrell, Humphries and Voth, ‘Destined for Deprivation’], pp. 339-46, at p. 341.

⁷² J. Johnson, *Transactions of the Corporation of the Poor, in the City of Bristol* (Bristol: P. Rose, 1826) [hereafter, Johnson, *Transactions*], p. 37.

ratepayers and then put to work as agricultural or domestic servants.⁷³ Hindle has done much to demonstrate the existence of the system since the sixteenth century, running in parallel with private apprenticeships.⁷⁴ It was a means of both lifting a child out of poverty and investing in the human capital of the future. When apprenticeship became a head of settlement in 1692, however, it began to be seen as also a means of shifting the burden of local poor onto another parish.⁷⁵

What was novel about pauper apprenticeship during the industrial revolution was the mass deployment of parish children to the new industries. How did children come to be used in this manner? ‘Parliamentary returns for 1803 showed that there were 195,000 children of paupers aged between five and fourteen who were permanently relieved by the parishes of England & Wales’.⁷⁶ Parish overseers were desperate for ways to reduce this burden on the local rate payer. Labour recruitment was problematic as the first factories used water power in isolated rural locations. Local populations were not large enough to supply a workforce, and it was difficult to attract workers to factories; many compared them to prisons or workhouses, the latter being synonymous with monotonous hard labour.⁷⁷ A solution was found by importing pauper apprentice labour, such as the children sent from London parishes to Cuckney Mill in Derbyshire.⁷⁸ Although this

⁷³ Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship*, pp. 248-60; J. Humphries 'Care and Cruelty in the Workhouse: Children's Experiences of Residential Poor Relief in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century England', in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency* [hereafter, Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty'], p. 118.

⁷⁴ S. Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c.1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [hereafter, Hindle, *On Parish*], pp. 191-227; S. Hindle, "'Waste" Children? Pauper Apprenticeship under the Elizabethan Poor Laws, c.1598-1697', in P. Lane, N. Raven, K.D.M. Snell (eds.), *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004) [hereafter, Hindle, 'Waste'], pp. 15-46.

⁷⁵ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 918.

⁷⁶ Cunningham, 'Employment', p. 133.

⁷⁷ R.S. Fitton, *The Strutts and the Arkwrights, 1758-1830: A Study of the Early Factory System* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), pp. 103-4.

⁷⁸ Chapman, *Factory Masters*, pp. 156, 166-70.

system was developed ‘primarily in the interests of trades and manufactures’ it was also a partial answer to the problem of pauperism.⁷⁹ Appealing to stretched parish budgets, groups of children were ‘supplied (one might almost say sold) to the new manufactories’.⁸⁰ Some London parishes advertised their children in the provincial press of the manufacturing districts, apprenticing as many as 90 per cent of their indigent young in this manner.⁸¹

The use of pauper children as a cheap and malleable workforce is often portrayed as one of the most disturbing aspects of the industrial revolution. The great social commentator Engels proclaimed ‘Children from the workhouses were employed in their multitudes, being rented out for a number of years to the manufacturers as apprentices. They were lodged, fed, and clothed in common, and were, of course, completely the slaves of their masters, by whom they were treated with the utmost recklessness and barbarity’.⁸² The practice was likened to slavery in contemporary literature, the most famous polemic being the 1832 ‘A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, an orphan boy’, a book which, along with novels such as Trollope’s ‘The life and adventures of Michael Armstrong, the factory boy’ defined the factory age; such works demonstrated ‘the extent to which social documentation and fiction were inseparable in the discourse on suffering children’.⁸³

⁷⁹ Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship*, p. 68.

⁸⁰ P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century: An Outline of the Beginnings of the Modern Factory System in England* 13th ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961) [hereafter, Mantoux, *Industrial Revolution*], p. 410.

⁸¹ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 60.

⁸² V. Kiernan (ed.), *Friedrich Engels: The Condition of the working class in England* (London: Penguin Classics, [1845] 2005), p. 171.

⁸³ J. Brown (ed.), *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* (Manchester: J. Doherty, 1832) [hereafter, Brown, *Blincoe*]; F. M. Trollope, *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy* (London: Henry Colburn, 1840); Benziman, G., *Narratives of Child Neglect in Romantic and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 17.

In the early twentieth century Dunlop and Denman identified the economic importance of this type of apprentice to the development of the factories, and more recent works have sought to examine and assess the scale of the practice more fully.⁸⁴ In particular, Honeyman, with her extensive primary research principally using surviving indentures, did much to highlight the fundamental role that the pauper apprentice labour played in the development of factories, suggesting its use was far from limited and continued to be significant: ‘Well into the second half of the nineteenth century, employers continued to beat on parish doors in pursuit of cheap youthful labour’.⁸⁵ Such children were central to industrial expansion that would not have succeeded at the same pace without this ready-made workforce. Although there was no overall quantification of the numbers involved, the aim was to signify broader patterns.⁸⁶ Goose placed this work in the wider context: ‘We must, however, await further work on *non-factory* pauper apprentices before we draw too sweeping conclusions from this work, for it was outside of the factory sector that most children worked’.⁸⁷ This reflects the point made earlier that child labour was found in many sectors, not just the new industries; it was rife in agriculture, domestic service and traditional occupations.

A small number of studies have looked at pauper apprenticeship in a broader context. Under the Old Poor Law, even Honeyman’s factory-centric study noted that from the 164 parishes she examined, ‘slightly less than 40 per cent’ of the bindings were to such

⁸⁴ Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship*; Honeyman, *Child Workers*; Rose, ‘Social Policy’; Rose, *Gregs of Quarry Bank*; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*; Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’.

⁸⁵ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 261.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58 ‘at this stage of research, it is not possible to estimate aggregate numbers of parish apprentices’. However, the Appendix does document the apprentice numbers specific to her study, pp. 265-91.

⁸⁷ Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, p. 16.

novel workplaces.⁸⁸ Several historians have looked at the system in rural parishes in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; for example, Sharpe at the Devonshire parish of Colyton, and Minister at Melbourne, Repton and Ticknall in Derbyshire.⁸⁹ Parrott surveyed Liverpool apprentices under the New Poor Law using a sub-sample of records used by this study.⁹⁰ In the context of wider poor relief studies, Emmison on Bedfordshire's Eaton Scoton noted the presence of pauper apprenticeship indentures to local masters in traditional trades.⁹¹ Levene's various studies of London parishes and charities has been most illuminating. Her work on charity apprentices is considered below, but in the context of the Poor Law, her study of 3,285 pauper apprentices from London parishes bound under the Old Poor Law demonstrated that although many were sent to the factories, they were also placed into traditional occupations locally.⁹² There are virtually no examinations of other forms of pauper apprenticeship (or indeed to the factories) under the New Poor Law; the survey of apprenticeship practices of Worcestershire Unions by Crompton in his wider survey of the workhouse system is a lone comparator.⁹³

⁸⁸ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 12.

⁸⁹ Sharpe, P., 'Poor Children as Apprentices in Colyton, 1598–1830', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 6, 2 (1991) [hereafter, Sharpe, 'Colyton'], pp. 253-70; A. Minister, 'Pauper Apprenticeship in South Derbyshire: A Positive Experience?', in A.M. Scott (ed.), *Experiences of Poverty in Late Medieval and Early Modern England and France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) [hereafter, Minister, 'Derbyshire'], pp. 63-84.

⁹⁰ F. Crompton, *Workhouse Children* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997) [hereafter, Crompton, *Workhouse*]; K. Parrott, 'The Apprenticeship of Parish Children from Kirkdale Industrial Schools Liverpool 1840-70', *The Local Historian*, vol. 39, 2 (2009), pp. 122-36. This article was published after my research commenced. The sample population used was just 93 indentures, of which 21 recorded an age of 15 or over. Parrott reached some different conclusions to those presented in this study, principally the finding of a greater presence of boys apprenticed to sea. This is because of the older apprenticing ages, as discussed in ch. 4, p. 160. This study can be distinguished by its robustness in reviewing all available indentures, and for only those aged 14 and under, thus conclusions reached are more definitive.

⁹¹ F. Emmison, *The Relief of the Poor at Eaton Socon, 1706-1834* (Aspley Guise: Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 1933) [hereafter, Emmison, *Eaton Socon*].

⁹² Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship'.

⁹³ Crompton, *Workhouse*, ch. 7. Ch. 4 refers to Horn's studies on the supply of pauper apprentices to the fishing industries of Grimsby and Hull under the New Poor Law, but these examine apprentices from 1870s onwards, see p. 180.

The New Poor Law is still an under-researched area.⁹⁴ Part of the problem is the perception that the Old and New Poor Laws were very different systems, with a clear break in 1834. While the letter of the law indicates such demarcation, research has shown that in fact changes were implemented to varying degrees depending on local politics.⁹⁵ The New Poor Law amalgamated the old parish system into approximately 600 unions under the central direction of the Poor Law Commission (in 1847 this became the Poor Law Board) but in fact prior to 1834 many parishes had already amalgamated so as to share costs and build joint workhouses. Prior to 1833 there were approximately 125 incorporations (including Southampton and Bristol). The passing of Gilbert's Act in 1782 also encouraged incorporation, resulting in the formation of 71 unions involving 1,000 parishes.⁹⁶

After 1834, parishes were forced to merge into Poor Law Unions with elected boards of guardians. But many authorities were uneasy about this intervention in their autonomy, and resisted interference with their strategies to deal with the indigent, and often old practices persisted.⁹⁷ The Old Poor Law had very much been an accepted part of the poor's survival strategy, with cyclical access to relief, and temporary stints in the workhouse a common experience.⁹⁸ Checkland described the system as 'an extraordinary

⁹⁴ D. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) [hereafter, Green, *Pauper Capital*] stands out, although this only touches upon apprenticeship. There are a number of overviews on legal and administrative aspects, particularly the workhouse e.g. F. Driver, *Power and Pauperism: The Workhouse System, 1834-1884* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); S. Fowler, *The Workhouse: The People, the Places, the Life Behind Doors* (Kew: National Archives, 2007) [hereafter, Fowler, *Workhouse*].

⁹⁵ A. Digby, *The Poor Law in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales* (London: Historical Association, 1982) [hereafter, Digby, *Poor Law*], pp. 19-26, especially pp. 20-1; A. Digby *Pauper Palaces* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) [hereafter, Digby, *Pauper Palaces*], pp. 75-82.

⁹⁶ Green, *Pauper Capital*, p. 10.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁸ Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty', pp. 122-3.

mixture of archaism and adaptation'.⁹⁹ Just as England was advanced with its technological progress aiding the industrial revolution, its welfare system was also sophisticated in comparison with other European countries which relied more upon philanthropy; the Old Poor Law was financed out of local taxation rather than voluntary donations.¹⁰⁰ The result was vast geographical variation in terms of provision. The New Poor Law was designed to take control with a central, uniform system in order to reduce spending and streamline the system. The new regime projected strong discipline. Large workhouses loomed on the edges of towns as a deterrent, their buildings reflecting the principle of 'less eligibility' whereby conditions in the workhouse had to be worse than any faced by the lowest paid worker. For orphan children this meant that 'the physical condition of the children who are deprived of the care of natural guardians ought not to be elevated above that of the household of the self-supported labourer. Their clothes, food, and lodging should not be better than that which the labourer can provide for his child'.¹⁰¹ However, in practice, the distinction was not clear cut, particularly with regard to apprenticeship. Although the Poor Law Commission actively discouraged apprenticeship, both Honeyman and Humphries found that it continued; the desire to abolish apprenticeship ultimately 'proved impractical and there was a drift back, albeit with new conditions'.¹⁰²

This continuance, or otherwise, of the system post-1834 is central to the arguments regarding the decline of pauper apprenticeship, in tandem with the debate about the decline

⁹⁹ S. Checkland, and E. Checkland, *The Poor Law Report of 1834* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Classics, 1974) [hereafter, Checkland, *Poor Law Report*], p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 440; Green, *Pauper Capital*, p. xv.

¹⁰¹ Poor Law Commissioners, *Report to the secretary of State for the Home Department from the Poor Law Commissioners on the Training of Pauper Children* (London: E.J. Morten, 1841) [hereafter, Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*], p. 19.

¹⁰² Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty', p. 119.

of apprenticeship as a process more generally. Just as some scholars argued private apprenticeship did not decline, as noted above, Humphries' and Honeyman's parallel finding was that pauper apprenticeship also continued throughout the nineteenth century. Yet Rose and Kirby argued that the system declined after 1820.¹⁰³ More recently Green contended that after 1834, public opinion turned away from apprenticeship towards education. Although acknowledging that the institution was not abolished entirely, he argued that it was significantly curtailed in light of tighter regulation and limited premiums. 'The outcome was that what little inducement remained for employers to take on pauper apprentices all but ceased'.¹⁰⁴ Similarly Cunningham declared pauper apprenticeship 'by the 1830s was anathema to the free-market ideologues of the Poor Law Commission'.¹⁰⁵ Despite Honeyman suggesting that it continued much longer than this, in his latest monograph Kirby reiterated his view that the New Poor Law marked the end of pauper apprenticeship, although this time placing decline in the 1830s-40s, alongside Green.¹⁰⁶

Part of the reason these debates have persisted and remain ongoing is because of the lack of empirical evidence; despite the fact that Honeyman and Humphries uncovered evidence of the practice late into the nineteenth century, there is too much reliance on, and repetition of, the evidence from a single enterprise, Quarry Bank mill, as used by Rose.¹⁰⁷ A recent example of this is Mokyr's monograph on the industrial revolution; one sentence reads 'by 1830, in any case, the practice had begun to fall into disuse and it disappeared

¹⁰³ Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 40; Rose, 'Social Policy', pp. 23-5; Rose, *Greys of Quarry Bank*, p. 78; Kirby, *Industrial Health*, pp. 26-7.

¹⁰⁴ Green, *Pauper Capital*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁵ Cunningham, 'Employment', p. 150.

¹⁰⁶ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, pp. 26-7, 133.

¹⁰⁷ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 102-4; Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 199, 304-5.

with the Poor Law reform'.¹⁰⁸ This is a classic example of how this issue has become an accepted fact, without further review: 'History repeats itself, says an ancient proverb – and historians repeat each other'.¹⁰⁹ The study of pauper apprenticeship seems to have reached a premature ending, Honeyman's suggested significant revision quietly ignored. This thesis will present evidence to show there were still many employers willing to exploit this source of labour, cautioning against such definitive pronouncements and supporting Honeyman's finding that factory pauper apprenticeship continued well into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, it will also support her assertions about the continuance of batch apprenticeship, the practice of sending groups of children *en masse* to the new industries; the same historians who contended pauper apprenticeship died, also believe that batch apprenticeship ceased in the era of the New Poor Law.¹¹⁰

As noted earlier, employment was central to both Poor Law and charity policy towards children. At the heart of charity apprenticeship was the need for moral education to aid poor children to develop their self worth, work ethic and thus ultimately their own economic independence. Not only was there a philanthropic aim to set children on a better path, at the same time charity schemes helped to alleviate the burden of poverty on the Poor Law and ultimately the ratepayers. The Marine Society, one of the charities featured in this study, is a strong example of the multi-purpose function of such institutions. Not only did it work with the Poor Law, often receiving boys referred to it by Overseers, but there was also an underlying benefit to the nation in providing a source of strong and well trained labour for the Navy. Admiral Boscawen considered that 'no scheme for the

¹⁰⁸ Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 332.

¹⁰⁹ M. Blaug, 'The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 23, 2 (1963), pp. 151-84, at p. 152.

¹¹⁰ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 102-4; Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 40; Rose, 'Social Policy', pp. 23-5; Rose, *Gregs of Quarry Bank*, p. 78; Kirby, *Industrial Health*, pp. 26-7.

manning of the Navy within my knowledge has ever had the success of the Marine Society'.¹¹¹ It combined principles of moral reform, benevolence and social control.¹¹²

As well as institutions like the Marine Society, other smaller charity schemes supplemented the Poor Law, or were even administered by its officials; this was often the case with small endowment schemes from local benefactors, the local parish being responsible for allocation. For example, from the sources in this study, Southampton Corporation administered a Municipal Charities scheme, amalgamating many small endowments into one central fund. But there were also areas of tension, principally regarding issues of settlement. An important difference between the two types of apprenticeship concerns the nature of the indentures. Charity apprenticeships were voluntary, the child (in theory) consenting to the binding. There are a small number of voluntary Poor Law indentures in this study, the majority being boys bound as sea apprentices, such as Joseph Douglas, who we met at the beginning of this chapter, but the majority of Poor Law indentures were involuntary, with children, and in some cases parents, having no say in the placement. In addition to the different binding mechanisms, the principal divergence between pauper and charity apprentices was their status. Poor Law apprenticeships, both under the Old and New Poor Law, were never designed to raise the standing of a child or to effect upward mobility; they were simply a lifeline to lift them out of poverty. Charity apprenticeships had an air of respectability, with an active policy to improve or preserve the child's status and connections as opposed to the provision of

¹¹¹ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: Collins, 1986) [hereafter, Rodger, *Wooden World*], p. 162.

¹¹² A. Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) [hereafter, Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*], p. 139.

mere training.¹¹³ Generally charity apprentices were from better backgrounds than Poor Law children; these were children of the respectable poor, whose parents were perhaps ‘reduced in circumstances’.¹¹⁴ The respectability of these children is best evidenced by placements to domestic service; as will be demonstrated, very few Poor Law girls served apprenticeships in service, as most masters did not want to be tainted by association with the Poor Law.¹¹⁵

Just as with pauper apprentices, there are no estimates of the overall number of charity apprentices, only discrete studies indicating trends. Levene, the leading researcher into charity schemes, examined three prominent institutions; the London Foundling Hospital, the Marine Society and Christ’s Hospital. In her study of the Foundling children in the eighteenth century, girls were largely apprenticed to domestic service and boys to traditional manufacturing occupations such as weaving and shoemaking. Examination of the registers of the Marine Society and Christ’s Hospital apprentices revealed a more aspirational form of pauper apprenticeship, aimed at creating ‘social capital’; the charities tried to invest in children’s training to improve their social mobility.¹¹⁶ Pietsch also studied the Marine Society in detail, although focusing only on its recruitment for boys to the Navy; this study will look at those apprenticed by the Society to the Merchant service.¹¹⁷ There are few other comprehensive charity apprentice studies, although Hanley’s study of Aylesbury’s William Harding’s charity examined its apprenticeship

¹¹³ Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, p. 11.

¹¹⁴ A. Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship and Social Capital in Eighteenth-Century England', in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency* [hereafter, Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship'], pp. 45-70, at p. 61.

¹¹⁵ See pp. 96-7.

¹¹⁶ Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship', pp. 56-67; Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, pp.139-44.

¹¹⁷ R.W. Pietsch, 'Ships' Boys and Charity in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: The London Marine Society (1756-1772)', University of London, Ph.D, 2003 [hereafter, Pietsch, *Ships' Boys*]; R.W. Pietsch, *The Real Jim Hawkins: Ships' Boys in the Georgian Navy* (Barnsley: Seaforth, 2010) [hereafter, Pietsch, *Jim Hawkins*].

scheme in detail.¹¹⁸ Perhaps this is because of a lack of such schemes; Lane noted that in 1815, there were said to be only 15 out of the 38 English counties with charities dedicated to apprenticing poor children.¹¹⁹ Humphries cited some individual examples of charity boys, finding just over 4 per cent of her autobiographical sample recording such apprenticeships.¹²⁰

The current vogue in the literature is to recognize the diversity of children's working experience.¹²¹ As has already been highlighted, revisionists have emphasized that child labour was not solely the preserve of the factories; many other sectors including agriculture, domestic service and traditional trades employed children as suggested by the emphasis on the persistence of traditional activities in the general literature on the industrial revolution. For example, Harley found that even in the 1840s, cotton, steam and iron, the 'poster' industries of the industrial revolution, comprised less than one quarter of all manufacturing, concluding that the 'diverse, dispersed and unspectacular' industries are where historians should focus further attention.¹²² We are well versed in the tale of those sent to their fate in the new industries, but there is a lack of research into other less dramatically conceived areas.¹²³

Berg and Hudson also identified the importance of the non-factory sector and called for regional emphasis.¹²⁴ Diversity is also important in the context of where the

¹¹⁸ H. Hanley, *Apprenticing in a Market Town: The Story of William Harding's Charity, Aylesbury, 1719-2000* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2005).

¹¹⁹ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 245.

¹²⁰ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 299.

¹²¹ Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, p. 8.

¹²² Harley, 'British Industrialization', p. 268.

¹²³ As noted by Kirby, *Child Labour*, pp. 2-3, 53; P. Kirby, 'A Brief Statistical Sketch of the Child Labour Market in Mid-Nineteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 20, 2 (2005) [hereafter, Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch'], pp. 229-45, at p. 229.

¹²⁴ Berg and Hudson, 'Rehabilitating', p. 44.

children originated from, and where they were sent to. Geographical perspective is essential; the traditional association of industry with child labour implies it was more frequent in certain regions, such as the mining and factory districts of Northern England, but regional studies are crucial to locate other centres of industry. Despite being critical of the scale and intensity of child labour in Britain, Cunningham admitted ‘the child labour market was highly localized, and the employment opportunities could differ widely between and even within parishes’, which he described as creating ‘a geography of child employment and unemployment’.¹²⁵

Cunningham’s statement fails to recognize that by the end of the eighteenth century, improvements in transport allowed officials to transfer children to where there was work. Children’s opportunities were no longer restricted to their locality; indeed, free workers were also relocating to factory districts. The different elements must not be viewed in isolation, but woven together to create an overall picture. Indeed, Kirby highlighted this need for more integrated regional research with an understanding of local causes and conditions in a comparative context.¹²⁶ More recently, Goose reiterated that a local and regional perspective is vital for a proper understanding of the true nature of child employment during this period, even suggesting that regional level analysis can prove meaningless, given the diversity of experience found even within one county.¹²⁷ Levene

¹²⁵ Cunningham, ‘Employment’, pp. 146-7.

¹²⁶ Kirby, *Child Labour*, pp. 81, 133. For some existing non-industrial studies, see Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’; Emmison, *Eaton Socon*; Minister, ‘Derbyshire’; E. Thomas, ‘The Apprenticeship and Settlement Papers of St Thomas Portsmouth: Pauper Apprenticeship’, *Portsmouth Archive Review*, vol. 4 (1979-80), pp. 12-24; D. Boswell, *Sea Fishing Apprentices of Grimsby* (Grimsby: Grimsby Public Libraries, 1974) [hereafter, Boswell, *Sea Fishing*]; E. Wallace, *Children of the Labouring Poor: The Working Lives of Children in Nineteenth-Century Hertfordshire* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010) [hereafter, Wallace, *Hertfordshire*]; N. Goose, ‘Child Employment Prospects in Nineteenth-Century Hertfordshire in Perspective: Varieties of Childhood?’, in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency* [hereafter, Goose, ‘Hertfordshire’], pp. 157-214.

¹²⁷ Goose, ‘Hertfordshire’, pp. 159, 176.

also noted from her London study that there was a significant degree of variety in the experience and function of parish apprenticeship, and so a need to consider the local situation on a parish level'.¹²⁸

Some excellent micro studies which use pauper apprenticeship indentures to assess the extent and role of the practice offer useful comparators for this research, as cited above. Goose suggested that the persistence of such diverse interpretations relates not only to regional and local variations in context, but also to the different sources that historians use. Comparison with studies on child labour more generally help place the pauper apprenticeship research in context. Humphries, Honeyman and Levene used sources, such as indentures, household accounts and autobiographies, that predated the census, thus complementing the new chronology of industrialization which identifies its origins in the eighteenth century. Nardinelli, Cunningham and Kirby largely concentrated on census data post-1851, after the peak of industrialization.¹²⁹ Several interesting micro studies use census data, such as Kirby's assessment of the child labour market in London in the nineteenth century, which found low levels of employment compared to other parts of the country.¹³⁰ Similarly, in studying children working in coal mines from the reports of the Children's Employment Commission, Kirby found significant variation in experience from region to region, despite concentration on the same industry.¹³¹ Both Wallace and Goose in their studies of nineteenth-century child labourers in Hertfordshire noted the dominance of the straw plait industry, with Goose finding great variation within this single county, with some areas providing little in the way of employment, while others saw as

¹²⁸ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 937.

¹²⁹ Goose, 'Hertfordshire', p. 159.

¹³⁰ Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch', p. 231.

¹³¹ Kirby, 'Victorian Social Investigation', p. 146-54.

much as 70 per cent of children working.¹³² Horn has provided a number of descriptive accounts of children working in straw plait and pillow lace-making industries in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, in addition to her research on Oxfordshire pauper apprentices.¹³³

I conclude this historiographical review by considering the wider context of this study: the history of childhood. This is a vast subject in its own right, interlinked with many disciplines and themes; as Heywood succinctly put it ‘childhood is a variable of social analysis, to be considered in conjunction with others such as the famous triad of class, gender and ethnicity’.¹³⁴ From an economic and social history standpoint, Goose linked into the wider history of childhood with his suggestion that children’s work would best be understood if considered in all its forms and so thought of as ‘varieties of childhood’.¹³⁵ Children’s labour is just one aspect; work was an intrinsic part of children’s life, with very new forms emerging in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It seems fitting to conclude the historiography with reference to Ariès’ seminal work. Known as the ‘godfather’ of the history of childhood, Ariès was first to chart one of the fundamental changes in attitude towards children that occurred during the eighteenth century: the recognition there was a step between infancy and adulthood.¹³⁶ From this perspective, Ariès then questioned whether the child labour prevalent in the mills during

¹³² Wallace, *Hertfordshire*; Goose, *Hertfordshire*, p. 163.

¹³³ P. Horn, ‘Pillow Lacemaking in Victorian England: The Experience of Oxfordshire’, *Textile History*, vol. 3 (1972), pp. 100-15; ‘Child Workers in the Pillow Lace and Straw Plait Trades of Victorian Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 17, 4 (1974), pp. 779-96; ‘The Employment of Children in Victorian Oxfordshire’, *Midland History*, vol. 4 (1977), pp. 61-85; *Headington Pauper Apprentices and the Fishing Industry 1874-1877* (Oxford: Oxford Local History Society, 2003) [hereafter, Horn, *Headington*].

¹³⁴ C. Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) [hereafter, Heywood, *Childhood*], p. 4.

¹³⁵ Goose, ‘Hertfordshire’, p. 160.

¹³⁶ Ariès, P., *Centuries of Childhood; a Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962), p. 133.

the nineteenth century was a retrograde step, as it retained ‘a characteristic of medieval society: the precocity of the entry into adult life’.¹³⁷ Yet perhaps only Heywood as a mainstream historian of childhood addresses children’s work in any depth.¹³⁸ One emerging theme in the current literature concerns the agency of children themselves. For example, Honeyman considered in depth whether the pauper apprentices in her study had any active role in their placements, and what voice, if any, they had during their employment. This was a novel line of enquiry, heavily influenced by the ‘new sociology of childhood’ as described by Lavalette, who applied this multi-disciplined approach to the history of childhood placing at centre stage the thoughts and feelings of the children involved.¹³⁹ By emancipating children from the role of passive pawns, and giving them their own agency, the new sociology of childhood can perhaps contribute to a wider understanding of children’s experiences in the past.

1.2 Research questions

In addressing how my research fits into the historiography outlined above, it is helpful to consider how the initial central question emerged. We are all familiar with the tales of mines and mills, but as a child of a port town, I was curious to discover what had happened to children from an environment with which I felt connected. Honeyman’s extensive survey of 164 Old Poor Law parishes, focusing on factory apprentices, served as inspiration; could I uncover the fate of port pauper apprentices by using similar sources? As noted above, her monograph acknowledged that only 40 per cent of bindings were to

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 336.

¹³⁸ Heywood, *Childhood*; Heywood, C., ‘Age and Gender at the Workplace: The Historical Experiences of Young People in Western Europe and North America’, in M. Walsh (ed.), *Working Out Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) [hereafter, Heywood, ‘Gender’], pp. 48-65.

¹³⁹ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 199-213; Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, especially pp. 3, 8; M. Lavalette, *A Thing of the Past: Child Labour in Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) [hereafter, Lavalette, *Thing of the Past*], pp. 15-43, especially pp. 26-8.

the new manufactories; this piqued my interest to investigate what other pauper apprenticeship opportunities there were at this time. The two strands of interest seemed to marry; after all, surely ports offered specific maritime opportunities? A research idea germinated, and one that appeared to answer the appeal made by Goose, for ‘a parallel study of non-factory parish apprenticeship’ which he thought was ‘urgently required’.¹⁴⁰ As noted earlier, regional studies, particularly of non-industrial areas, are essential to help build up a more nuanced national account. This thesis addresses the gaps by examining three types of placement for pauper apprentices, in three ports, from three different regions. While not attempting to resolve the thorny quantification issue debated above, it adds to the patchwork of evidence already established, and serves to indicate patterns of pauper apprenticeship.

An outline of the relevant history of each of the ports is given below; it references claims by some historians that there was no work for children in urban conurbations such as ports.¹⁴¹ Such statements induced scepticism; could thriving commercial centres not provide suitable employment opportunities? Despite their commercial significance during this period, facilitating the industrial boom with both imports of raw material and exports of finished goods, there has been no specific study of children’s work in port towns. What role did they play in this type of labour market? Specifically, what, if any, employment opportunities were there for poor children? The prevalence of casual work in the ports is discussed further below, but children labouring for a daily rate rarely left a mark in the records. As Honeyman showed with her study, apprenticeship indentures recorded basic facts such as age, date of binding, type of trade, location placed, all of which can be used

¹⁴⁰ N. Goose review of Honeyman, *Child Workers*, in *Economic History Review*, vol. 62, 1 (2009), p. 222.

¹⁴¹ See pp. 36-7.

to construct a representative picture of children's occupations. Poor Law indentures and records can be supplemented by drawing on charity indentures and registers which also recorded the apprenticeship of poor children.

Both sources were combined to investigate the conventional premise that pauper children from urban centres such as ports were *shipped out* to mills and mines. My perspective was that of a sceptic. Were there really no opportunities to place children closer to home in the local labour market? As pondered above, did the ports offer specific maritime opportunities; just how representative is Joseph Douglas, the Liverpool sea apprentice? Surely the maritime trades had some effect on the pauper apprenticeship system, a seemingly obvious source of placement for local children. Furthermore, did maritime activities actually offer any opportunities for children to be *shipped in* to the port for apprenticeships?

The three sectors of pauper apprenticeships examined emerged from the records organically, rather than from a predetermined plan to assess a specific type of employment. Some children were indeed shipped out to the new industries, but factories did not prove the dominant destination for pauper apprenticeship; the survival and endurance of traditional occupational bindings was immediately striking. The maritime influence was evident with sea apprenticeships, but not in the volume anticipated. The sectors are examined in detail in Chapters 3 to 5 and reasons for the distribution of apprenticeships by sector are debated. My empirical evidence raised a raft of questions about the organization, prevalence and impact of pauper apprenticeship that seemed to call out for a comparative analysis across the three sectors.

The first set of issues concerned the experience of the children themselves. Did these children have any say in their fate? As noted above, the concept of agency is a strong theme in the most recent literature, heavily influenced by the new sociology of childhood.¹⁴² The industrial revolution is often associated with images of very young children in hard labour; what was the average age of a port apprentice on binding? Typically how long would they be bound for, and upon completion what prospects did they have to be kept on as an adult or to become an independent working journeyman?

There are also questions about the actions of those arranging apprenticeships. Honeyman's work controversially suggested that officials did try to display diligence in assessing the suitability of masters prior to placement. Was there any evidence of assessment procedures? Or was the traditional view of officials eager to offload children into other parishes in order to effect new settlements, removing the future burdens from their own shoulders, accurate? Honeyman also explored the gender issue; were boys treated differently from girls? Were any of these employment sectors divided along gender lines?

A further line of enquiry related to the administration of these schemes. As explained above, the conventional stance on the transition from Old to New Poor Law was one of dramatic, draconian change, but a significant minority of historians have suggested that there was actually great continuity in behaviour and outcome.¹⁴³ My sources side with the latter, suggesting any distinction between the two regimes was far from clear cut. Just

¹⁴² See p. 32.

¹⁴³ Digby, *Poor Law*, p. 26; Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, pp. 75-82; Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty', pp. 118-19; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 261-2; J. Humphries, 'Memories of Pauperism', in S. King and A. Winter (eds.), *Migration, Settlement and Belonging in Europe 1500-1930s* (New York: Berghahn, 2013) [hereafter, Humphries, 'Memories'], pp. 102-26, at p. 103; P. Mandler, 'The Making of the New Poor Law Redivivus', *Past and Present*, vol. 117 (1987), pp. 131-57, at p. 116.

how much control did central authority exercise? Did pauper apprenticeship decline as suggested by Kirby and Rose? Was the New Poor Law its nemesis? Were charities still using such schemes, and if so, what if any overlap was there with the Poor Law? The port sources yield answers to all these questions, and more. Therefore, some contextual background about the featured ports is essential to aid understanding.

1.3 Background to the ports

Ports are a surprisingly overlooked topic in industrial revolution studies, despite being the gateway for vital imports and exports; commercial success was intrinsic to the strength of the British Empire at this time. ‘Many non-industrial towns and major sea ports harboured fundamentally different labour demands compared with the northern industrial towns’.¹⁴⁴ As acknowledged above, urban centres, in particular ports, have largely escaped scrutiny regarding children’s work perhaps because of the existing pessimism that such economies could not sustain youthful employment. Heywood stated: ‘In the towns, particularly the major commercial and administrative centres, formal training or paid work for children was also not always easy to come by’.¹⁴⁵ Cunningham’s assertion that there was no employment for children in towns has already been noted.¹⁴⁶ Kirby also contended that opportunities in urban centres were limited.¹⁴⁷ Winstanley argued that cities relied on casual work, and that in Liverpool there was a real concern about lack of jobs for children.¹⁴⁸ Certainly a large number of children simply laboured in exchange for a daily wage, with no element of training, in jobs connected to the maritime and commerce of a

¹⁴⁴ P. Kirby, ‘The Transition to Working Life in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century England and Wales’, in K. Lieten and E. van Nederveen Meerkerk (eds.), *Child Labour's Global Past 1650-2000* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 119-36, at p. 128.

¹⁴⁵ Heywood, *Childhood*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁶ Cunningham, ‘Employment’, p. 149.

¹⁴⁷ Kirby, *Child Labour*, pp. 68-71; Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 158.

¹⁴⁸ M. Winstanley, *Working Children in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire* (Preston: Lancashire County Books, 1995) [hereafter, Winstanley, *Lancashire*], p. 10.

port town. For example, ‘messenger’ was the most frequently recorded job for males under 20 in Liverpool in the 1851 census.¹⁴⁹ The Children’s Employment Commissions of 1843 and 1862 recorded children working in roperies in Liverpool and Bristol; the 1843 report even demonstrated that children came from other areas to obtain work in Liverpool, somewhat refuting Winstanley’s claim there was no such employment in the city. The report listed children from Scotland, Ireland, Hull, Shields, Macclesfield, Plymouth and Bolton.¹⁵⁰ While the prevalence of such casual labour in ports is accepted, the focus of this thesis is to look at pauper apprenticeship that in theory offered training opportunities, rather than ‘blind alley labour’ which has been researched by other authors.¹⁵¹

Other than the passing references from the historians cited above, there is virtually no existing secondary literature regarding children’s occupations for the featured ports, apart from a small text on apprentices in Southampton in the seventeenth century.¹⁵² Honeyman made reference to apprentices from all three ports in her monograph, but not in detail. Chapter 2 outlines the comprehensive search for sources undertaken, and the resulting collection of a large volume of diverse evidence, which begins to redress the prior lack of research on ports. While not attempting to give a full history of each port, a summary description of each, with details of their economies, Poor Law structure and featured charities is useful background. Bristol, Liverpool and Southampton are three very

¹⁴⁹ Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population tables. II. Ages, civil condition, occupations, and birth-place of the people, vol. I, PP 1852-3 (1691-I) and vol. II, PP 1852-53 (1691-II) [hereafter, Census 1851, Population Tables], vol. II, pp. 648-51.

¹⁵⁰ Children's Employment Commission. Second report of the commissioners. Trades and manufactures, PP 1843 [hereafter, CEC, *Second report 1843*], Appendix M40-45.

¹⁵¹ For example, F.H. Keeling, *Child Labour in the United Kingdom: A Study of the Development and Administration of the Law Relating to the Employment of Children* (London: P.S. King, 1914); M.J. Childs, *Labour's Apprentices: Working-Class Lads in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

¹⁵² E. Thomas, 'The Old Poor Law and Maritime Apprenticeship', *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 63, 2 (1977) [hereafter, Thomas, 'Maritime Apprenticeship'], pp. 153-61, at p. 153; A.J. Willis, *A Calendar of Southampton Apprenticeship Registers, 1609-1740* (Southampton: University of Southampton Press, 1968).

different ports, all prominent at different points during this period. Bristol initially reigned supreme, but Liverpool came into ascendancy by the nineteenth century, and Southampton was a star in ascent at the end of the period and beyond.

Beginning with Bristol, at the start of the eighteenth century it was second only to London in terms of population.¹⁵³ From the commencement of this period of study, 1750, its population grew from 50,000 to 179,000 by 1861.¹⁵⁴ The port was a particularly important centre for the sugar, tobacco and slave trades, but the importation of many other raw materials contributed to thriving dockside manufacturing with industries such as sugar refining and soap making, as well as brassworks, glassworks and potteries. ‘Bristolians were keenly attentive to the progress of industry and manufactures, so seldom let slip a new chance of profitable enterprise’.¹⁵⁵ In particular Bristol developed a reputation as a centre for porcelain manufacture until the Staffordshire potteries began to dominate towards the end of the eighteenth century. Poutneys of the Temple Backs area was particularly famous for its distinctive blue and white earthenware. In the Redcliffe area, larger factories could be found, the most famous being Fry’s Chocolate Factory, which opened in 1777 and expanded in 1840, the first example of the mass production of confectionary. Wills Tobacco factory opened in 1786, and subsequently Bristol also became a centre for the printing industry, responding to the demand for packaging of products like chocolate and tobacco. These three industries sustained prosperity throughout the nineteenth century. Bristol was also located within a coal mining area with pits near to the port in Bedminster. No other Southern city had such direct access to coal,

¹⁵³ W.E. Minchinton, *The Trade of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1957), p. ix.

¹⁵⁴ Foyle, A and Cherry, B., *Bristol* (New Haven: Yale, 2004), pp. 16, 24. Population figures have been rounded to the nearest 1,000.

¹⁵⁵ J. Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (Frome: n.p. 1893), p. 7.

and undoubtedly it played a key role in the economy of the city; in many ways Bristol industrialized long before the industrial revolution began in earnest, though its early start was not sustained as illustrated by the rise and fall of nearby collieries, for in 1750 there were 140 collieries, but by 1879 just 21.¹⁵⁶ Ultimately Bristol's geography was not conducive to a long life as a leading port. It was tidal in nature, culminating in riverside wharves; ships had to navigate the Bristol Channel and several miles of winding river-mouth up the Avon into the port, with the risk of running aground. Despite Jessop's invention of the Floating Harbour, built between 1804 and 1809 in order to counter the tidal nature of the port, poor management and high uncompetitive port duties led to decline. The small-scale industrial activities started to stagnate in the 1830s in the face of quickening industrialization elsewhere.

In terms of its Poor Law administration, it led by example. Bristol Incorporation was established from 18 parishes, and it was first to appoint a board of guardians and a workhouse by virtue of the 1696 Bristol Poor Act. In many ways it was almost a prototype for the New Poor Law administrative model, and it retained its status post-1834. In 1835, the boundaries of Bristol were redrawn to include St Philip, Clifton, St James, St Pauls and some Bedminster and Westbury-on-Trym parishes.¹⁵⁷ It did not become known as a Poor Law Union until 1897, when it combined with neighbouring Bedminster and Barton Regis Unions. Bristol was also a forerunner in the charitable field, renowned for its institutions and philanthropists, such as Edward Colston and Mary Carpenter, active in the field of children's education. Societies like the Gloucestershire Society (1659) and Grateful Society (1758) were established for social reasons but engaged in fundraising activities to

¹⁵⁶ J. Penny, *Bristol at Work* (Derby: Breedon, 2005), p. 26.

¹⁵⁷ D. Large, *Bristol and the New Poor Law* (Bristol: Historical Association, 1995), p. 3.

collect apprentice fees and support ‘lying in’ women. Bristol had the wealth to finance this thriving voluntary sector; the annual income of its endowed charities in 1837 was £19,874, second only to London. In contrast, Liverpool’s annual income was just £509.¹⁵⁸

Liverpool was famous in the Victorian age for its participation in shipping and slave trades. Its growth as a city was astonishing; it barely existed at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but by the end of the Victorian era, was one of the Empire’s foremost ports, originating from Steers’ first wet dock which opened in 1715. The population in 1750 was 22,000, and between 1801 and 1851 it more than tripled from 78,000 to 258,000.¹⁵⁹ Liverpool is a chronological bridge between Bristol and Southampton; it took the baton from Bristol, but also kept pace with Southampton by embracing the steam age. Similar to Bristol, it also had dockside industries in the eighteenth century, largely processing and refining the raw materials flooding through its gates. Its pottery industry also thrived; Herculaneum pottery’s wares were subject to critical acclaim. Opening in 1796, it employed a workforce of 60 recruited from the Staffordshire potteries, and by 1827 had expanded to 300, but business ceased in 1840.¹⁶⁰

Liverpool too had a very established Poor Law structure. The Liverpool Select Vestry (“LSV”) was created from the Liverpool parish committee in 1820 following the Sturges Bourne Acts of 1819.¹⁶¹ These allowed for the scrutiny of poor relief by a small

¹⁵⁸ M. Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999) [hereafter, Gorsky, *Philanthropy*], p. 17.

¹⁵⁹ R. Lawton, and W.R. Lee (eds.), *Population and Society in Western European Port Cities, c.1650-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002) [hereafter, Lawton, *Population*], p. 102. All population figures have been rounded to the nearest 1,000.

¹⁶⁰ P. Hyland, *The Herculaneum Pottery: Liverpool's Forgotten Glory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 28; A. Smith, *The Illustrated Guide to Liverpool Herculaneum Pottery, 1796-1840* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), p. 32.

¹⁶¹ This was after the MP who introduced the Bill, also known as the Select Vestries Act: An Act to Amend the Law for Relief of the Poor (58 Geo. III c.69). It introduced the scrutiny of poor relief by small

committee. LSV had a very fierce reputation for rigorous application; it was also allowed to retain its status after the New Poor Law. However, unlike Bristol and Southampton, in 1841 LSV was forced into becoming a Poor Law Union with a board of guardians; but protest was so strong that just a year later, it reverted back to the Vestry model, continuing until 1922 when it joined the West Derby Poor Law Union.¹⁶² In terms of this research, as Chapter 2 discusses, Liverpool did not enjoy the same degree of charitable endowments as the other two ports. The only featured institution is the Female Orphan Asylum, founded in 1840 for the rescue of 150 girls. Mrs Aikin, the founder, was concerned by the number of destitute girls, the institution being an opportunity for them to be trained in domestic service and secure positions as servants.

Southampton was an important port in medieval times, principally for its trade with France and Spain; it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that it began to expand again after a long period of decline. In the eighteenth century it was known as a place of leisure, fashionable for its naval connections, spa and sea bathing. In 1801, its population was 8,000, rising to 35,000 in 1851.¹⁶³ A contemporary guidebook in 1850 noted: ‘Southampton is at present increasing more rapidly in population than any town in the South of England. Building is everywhere being carried on to a great extent’.¹⁶⁴ In 1861, the population had increased to 47,000; this increase undoubtedly because of the revitalization of the port.¹⁶⁵ In 1842, the town unveiled the largest deep water tidal dock in England, its development fuelled by London merchants’ frustrations with pilotage times to

committees, known as Vestries, and established salaried Overseers and the concept of deserving and non-deserving poor.

¹⁶² Continued petitioning led to Parliament passing a Local Act that permitted reversion to a Select Vestry.

¹⁶³ P. Brannon, *The Picture of Southampton, and Stranger's Hand-Book* (Southampton: n.p. 1850), p. 4. All population figures have been rounded to the nearest 1,000.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

the port of London; with the advent of the railway, which came to Southampton in 1840, the South coast was an attractive alternative.¹⁶⁶ In the 1840s it had become the fifth biggest port, referred to as ‘a second Liverpool’.¹⁶⁷ Unlike the other ports there was no development of dockside industries. It was heavily associated with the rise of steam ships and its strength was to build upon its reputation as a leisure playground, becoming a gateway to the continents with passenger steamers.

In a similar manner to Bristol, Southampton also followed the incorporation model under the Poor Law; Southampton Corporation was set up by the Act for better regulating the Poor in 1772, uniting the parishes of All Saints, Holy Rood, St Michael’s, St John’s, St Lawrence’s and St Mary’s. Its first workhouse was built in 1776, with another in 1868. Again it retained its identity post-1834, not becoming a Poor Law Union until 1909. Southampton also appears to have had a strong charitable tradition. A number of endowments from the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century specifically made provision for apprenticing poor boys, such as the funds from Nathaniel Mills’ and Richard Taunton’s estates. Robert Thorner’s Will granted £25 per annum for apprenticeship premiums. Southampton Corporation administered many of the small charities, combining them in 1837 into a single Municipal Charities fund. Southampton was also home to a branch of a large institution, featured heavily in this study. The Royal Military Asylum (“RMA”) was established in 1816, a contemporary guidebook describing: ‘This establishment consists of between three and four hundred children – orphans, or their fathers abroad upon foreign service, having lost their mothers. They are clothed, fed and

¹⁶⁶ A.T. Patterson, *A History of Southampton, 1700-1914*, vol. 2 (Southampton: Southampton University Press, 1975) [hereafter, Patterson, *Southampton*], p. 163-4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13 referring to an article in the Hampshire Advertiser, 8 Feb. 1840.

instructed in religious principles with domestic duties. This is for girls, being a branch similar institution at Chelsea for boys'.¹⁶⁸

It is evident that despite the differences in size and prominence of these ports, there is a common link of rapid population growth and similar methods of dealing with the poor. All sustained growth exceeding national levels for this period.¹⁶⁹ Mantoux remarked that in the mid-eighteenth century the population 'seemed to be moving towards the Atlantic, drawn thither by the development of the Maritime trade and the growing wealth of Liverpool and Bristol'.¹⁷⁰ Southampton was described as 'virtually unique in being a southern town which grew in size and population during the industrial (or rather, in its case, commercial) revolution as fast as almost any of the smoke-grimed conurbations of the north'.¹⁷¹ All three ports retained their own Poor Law systems at the dawn of the New Poor Law, and with that, a large degree of autonomy; their rigorous systems had been developed to cope with specific pressures port towns faced. Digby found considerable autonomy for the 'oases of independence', those towns which had incorporated before 1834, as all these ports had done.¹⁷² As future chapters will illustrate, all tackled problems associated with being a maritime settlement, and a gateway for migrants and thus the nub of acute population pressures, not to mention having to cope with sailors' deserted wives and illegitimate children.

¹⁶⁸ C. Andrews, *A Guide to Southampton, Netley Abbey, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Gosport, Winchester, and Basingstoke* (Southampton: n.p. 1831) [hereafter, Andrews, *Southampton*], p. 33. The RMA was established in 1803 at Chelsea and Noke's Farm, Isle of Wight (for infants under age 6), for the children of soldiers. In 1816 the Isle of Wight branch relocated to Southampton, and from 1823 onwards it housed boys under 7 and all girls, with the boys at Chelsea. The Southampton branch closed in 1841.

¹⁶⁹ Lawton, *Population*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁰ Mantoux, *Industrial Revolution*, p. 354.

¹⁷¹ A.T., Patterson, *A Selection from the Southampton Corporation Journals, 1815-35, and Borough Council Minutes, 1835-47* (Southampton: Southampton Corporation, 1965) [hereafter, Patterson, *Corporation Journals*], p. vii.

¹⁷² Digby, *Poor Law*, p. 21.

1.4 Overview of analysis

From the records of each port, as noted above, the three sectors of work investigated were self selecting. Levene provided an excellent summary of how studying pauper apprenticeship illuminates the state of the contemporary labour market. Apprenticeship was driven by officials, not parents, seeking placements, therefore it was ‘closely tied to the state of the labour market, at least at its lower end’, as they bound children where they could. It acts as a guide to those trades that were depressed and low status, but also highlights expanding sectors that needed pools of flexible workers, such as those sent to the mills.¹⁷³

Chapter 3 of the thesis reveals that the majority of children from port towns were apprenticed to traditional occupations. This supports those authors who have argued for the persistence and continuance of such trades, right through the peak of industrialization and beyond. As referenced earlier, Hindle indicated the existence of pauper apprenticeships to traditional trades as early as the sixteenth century; the studies by Sharpe (Devon), Emmison (Bedfordshire), Minister (Derbyshire) and Levene (London and Foundling Hospital charity apprentices) all showed that traditional placements were thriving under the Old Poor Law. Crompton (Worcestershire) suggested their survival under the New Poor Law. Using the census and looking at child work more generally, Goose (Hertfordshire), Horn (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire) and Kirby (London, and nationwide) also demonstrated the sector’s continued dominance throughout the nineteenth century. Together this forms a patchwork of coverage, albeit it Southern-centred, indicating trends.

¹⁷³ Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’, p. 918.

Much less has been written about pauper boys apprenticed to the sea, as Chapter 4 notes. There are post-1870 studies of pauper boys apprenticed to the fishing trades out of Hull and Grimsby but little else.¹⁷⁴ For charity apprentices, although the Marine Society boys are well documented, for example, by Pietsch, Levene, and Payne, it is in relation to those apprenticed to the Navy, while boys in this study were apprenticed by the Society to the Merchant service. Thus the thesis makes a real contribution to this area, taking the first tentative steps to filling this large gap in the literature. It also contributes to wider maritime history, complementing the work of Rodger, Davis, and Course in documenting the social history of the Merchant Navy.¹⁷⁵

What can Chapter 5 of the thesis offer to the history of factory pauper apprenticeship, the most prominent aspect of the system? As noted earlier, the literature encompasses a wide range of views on the impact, ranging from the classical accounts centred on exposing the exploitation of children in this industry, to Nardinelli's virtual denial of the significance of child labour. Studies such as Honeyman's have tried to take a more objective stance. Dunlop and Denman were the first to point out the significance of pauper apprenticeship in the growth of factory industry, a theme that has in more recent times been strengthened by Honeyman and Tuttle. Individual studies, such as those on Quarry Bank mill, by Rose and Robinson, for which an unusual amount of records survive, provide colour and detail on apprentice lives. This thesis shows that although children from urban centres were sent away for this type of work, it was not the dominant form of

¹⁷⁴ P. Horn, 'Pauper Apprenticeship and the Grimsby Fishing Industry, 1870 to 1914', *Labour History Review*, vol. 61 (1996)[hereafter, Horn, 'Grimsby'], pp. 173-94; Horn, *Headington*; Boswell, *Sea Fishing*.

¹⁷⁵ Rodger, *Wooden World*; R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (St. John's: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2012) [hereafter, Davis, *Rise of Shipping*]; A.G. Course, *The Merchant Navy; a Social History* (London: F. Muller, 1963) [hereafter, Course, *Merchant Navy*].

pauper apprenticeships for those from port towns. What is significant is that my research categorically proves that the practice of indenturing pauper children to textile factories continued, and thrived, under the New Poor Law, well beyond the peak of industrialization. Furthermore, children continued to be sent in large groups, as so called batch apprentices, to the factories, late into the nineteenth century.

Chapters 3 to 5 examine each sector of apprenticeship in turn, presenting the empirical evidence under a number of broad thematic headings relevant to all the sectors: the apprenticeship process; application of regulations and batch apprenticeship; life as an apprentice; gender issues; and, settlement concerns. Chapter 6 offers a comparative analysis of the different sectors using the same thematic categories, providing some conclusions about the fate of poor children in port towns, and the implications of this new material for our understanding of the pauper apprenticeship system more generally.

2. Sources and Method

'Perhaps the single most serious obstacle to the historian of child labour is the paucity of reliable quantitative evidence'.¹⁷⁶

Despite the fragmentary nature of sources regarding children's work, lamented by Kirby and other scholars in this field, Chapter 1 suggested that historians have still produced some thought-provoking and evocative studies. The aim of this research is to contribute to the existing patchwork of research by assessing the experience of charity and Poor Law apprentices from port towns; this chapter delineates and justifies the approach taken.

2.1 Parameters of the study

2.1.1 Choice of ports

Why is a focus on ports important? 'Seaports accounted for almost 40 per cent of the world's greatest cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants in 1850 and it was not until the mid-twentieth century that the role of port-cities in the European urban hierarchy was eclipsed by industrial towns and conurbations'.¹⁷⁷ As major commercial centres, and significant to the economic development of the nation during this era, the question of children's labour in ports has largely been neglected until now. Exploration is comparative. Why have the ports of Liverpool, Bristol and Southampton been chosen? As explained in Chapter 1, the starting point was the connection to Liverpool; it then flowed logically to investigate other Atlantic ports. But as the previous chapter suggested, it is not only their geographical position that renders them effective comparators. All three ports had a strong, directional Poor Law practice, independently forming amalgamations of local parishes to combine costs and build workhouses, decades before the New Poor Law led

¹⁷⁶ Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁷ Lawton, *Population*, p. 3.

such development from the centre. Bristol Incorporation built the first workhouse in the country in 1698, the parishes having united two years earlier. Southampton Corporation formed in 1772, building their first workhouse in 1776. Liverpool had a small workhouse in 1723, followed by a House of Industry built in 1769. Its size was such that it did not combine with neighbouring parishes, but it still had strong leadership in the form of the LSV, as a result of the Sturges Bourne Act in 1819.¹⁷⁸ As Chapter 1 noted, the independent systems were retained post-1834; these ports led the way in Poor Law administration, and as a result of their autonomy, transition to the New Poor Law was more gradual. As discussed below, the Poor Law correspondence for these ports illustrates that many practices from the Old Poor Law were retained, and the distinction between the two systems was not clear cut.¹⁷⁹

‘A comparative analysis of...port cities has to contend with qualitative differences in the available source material, as well as the need to take into consideration both cross-sectional and diachronic perspectives given variations in the scale and timing of urban growth’.¹⁸⁰ The selected ports are different in geographical size, which inevitably leads to differences in the volume of records. The very definition of ‘port’ is subject to interpretation; often considered a distinct area from the main town centre, harbour and dockside are frequently associated with an air of degeneracy and separateness. In this study, I look at the port town as a whole. The boundaries of the port towns in this study observe the contemporaneous situation, rather than modern limits that would have yielded a greater number of records. The effect of this is discussed further below in the summary

¹⁷⁸ See pp. 40-1.

¹⁷⁹ See pp. 324-7.

¹⁸⁰ W.R. Lee, 'Domestic Service and Female Domestic Servants: A Port-City Comparison of Bremen and Liverpool, 1850–1914', *The History of the Family*, vol. 10, 4 (2005), pp. 435-60, at p. 455.

of evidence available for the individual ports. As noted in Chapter 1, despite differences in geographical size, the ports have an important unifying factor in that all sustained population growth exceeding national levels in this period. Even the smallest port, Southampton, was ‘virtually unique in being a Southern town which grew in size and population during the industrial revolution as fast as almost any of the smoke-grimed conurbations of the North and Northern Midlands’.¹⁸¹

The ports were prominent in the British economy at differing times over this period. Bristol was the first of the trio to rise to dominance in the early eighteenth century, with Liverpool reigning supreme by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Southampton completes the chronological scene as an emerging international port in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This chronology has both its strengths and weaknesses, as the individual and unsynchronized life cycles of the three ports might suggest that as the ports were not dominant at the same time, accurate comparisons cannot be drawn. Certainly the different chronologies of prominence inhibit statistical comparison. Nonetheless, analogous economic frameworks and labour structures provide a positive basis for comparison. The spread over time does offer the chance to investigate whether or not the same trends occurred as ports developed and declined. If trends observed are appearing across all three ports, they cannot be ignored. Moreover, this is not a mere statistical survey but research that places equal significance on the richness of the qualitative sources found, which serves to illustrate, often during parallel time periods, the similar attitudes and policy decisions of the officials who administered charity and Poor Law apprenticeships.

¹⁸¹ Patterson, *Corporation Journals*, p. vii.

2.1.2 Definition of ‘child’

Scholars have varying interpretations of the term ‘child’: ‘It would be possible to spend an entire book dealing with the vexed question of what, or who, is a child’.¹⁸² To fix my upper age limit I looked to similar studies for guidance, because simply to use 18, British society's current age of adulthood, would be to ‘impose a modern, western straightjacket’.¹⁸³ Kirby argued that children under ten were rarely employed, and that it is the 10-15 age group that requires attention.¹⁸⁴ Levene chose age 13 as her upper limit, as that was the average age at binding of London paupers.¹⁸⁵ Yet ‘children’ as old as 18 were recorded in the registers and indentures reviewed for this research, particularly for those apprenticed to the sea by the Marine Society and LSV. A significant number of 15-16 year olds featured in the sources and consideration was given as to whether these should be included, given that the officials of the time classed them as dependent. Their inclusion would have significantly increased the sea portion of the data, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4. However, a number of factors suggested that age 14 would be an appropriate cut off. Unlike today, the Victorians did not abhor the idea of a 14 year old in full time employment; as the historiography indicated, 14 was the standard age of binding for private apprentices.¹⁸⁶ Society clearly viewed this as the transition age for independence, a custom that continued for generations; even legislation in relation to compulsory schooling, the 1918 Education Act, required mandatory attendance only up to the age of 14.

¹⁸² L. Brockliss and H. Montgomery (eds.), *Childhood and Violence in the Western Tradition* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010), p. 3.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 4. Kirby argued that age 16 marked the beginning of adult life.

¹⁸⁵ Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁶ See p. 14.

Whatever age limits a historian selects, questions remain as to whether the ages stated in the documents were correct. The recording of age can be circumspect for many reasons, not least because parents often falsified children's ages in order to avoid legislation such as the Factory Acts. This was widely recognized at the time: 'The anxiety of parents to enable their children to support themselves, frequently induces them to violate the truth, and affirm their child to be older than it really is'.¹⁸⁷ Aside from deliberate falsification, many simply did not know their exact age. Civil registration was not introduced until 1837, and baptism certificates did not record birth date.¹⁸⁸

2.1.3 Period of study

Chapter 1 sketched the various chronological debates concerning the timing and intensity of the industrial revolution.¹⁸⁹ Given it is largely accepted that Britain began to industrialize in the eighteenth century, the chronology of any meaningful thesis must encompass this earlier era of domestic manufacturing as well as the high peak of industrialization in the nineteenth century. Evidence was gathered from 1750 onwards, as industrial output was growing and new forms of production, such as hand powered Jennies and later water powered mills, were becoming common. The peak of industrialization is placed at around 1850 so why not end the study at this point?¹⁹⁰ It became evident from the records that the practice of pauper apprenticeship was continuing long past the accepted date of decline, as discussed in Chapter 1.¹⁹¹ Such an important finding needed to

¹⁸⁷ W.R. Greg, *An Enquiry into the State of the Manufacturing Population: and the Causes and Cures of the Evils therein Existing* (London: J. Ridgway, 1831), p. 34.

¹⁸⁸ Kirby, *Victorian Social Investigation*, p. 143; Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 99.

¹⁸⁹ See pp. 4-6.

¹⁹⁰ Allen, *British Industrial Revolution*, p. 2 dated the end of industrial revolution to 'the second third of the nineteenth century' noting that other scholars have dated between 1830-50. Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, pp. 475-7 concluded that Britain was 'the most sophisticated economy in the world' in 1850.

¹⁹¹ See pp. 23-5.

be fully explored. It was also important to define a time frame that allowed comparison with findings using the classic child labour sources of the nineteenth century, the census data and the Victorian child labour enquiries, detailed below. Legislation also guided the parameters of the study; although by the mid-nineteenth century regulation was in place protecting the factory apprentice from the worst of the industrial revolution's excesses, for many of the children in this investigation there was no protection until the Factory Acts (Extension), more commonly referred to as the Workshops Regulation Act of 1867. It was only at this juncture that most, but certainly not all, trades employing children had to adhere to regulation of some description. Finally while by no means comprehensive, the breakthrough that was the Elementary Education Act of 1870 seemed an appropriate place to finish the study, as it marked the first attempt by the state to move children from the workplace to the schoolroom.

2.1.4 Choice of sources

Historians of child labour traditionally have used the great Victorian survey documents, the census and Parliamentary Papers containing the various Victorian child labour inquiries. Although of course invaluable, they refer to the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and as noted above, it's now widely accepted that Britain began industrializing much earlier. Therefore any enquiry into child labour during the industrial revolution needs to exploit other sources. Given the dearth of data, how have other historians approached this problem?

Several recent works have successfully used non-census quantitative sources. For example, in *Child Workers in England 1780-1820*, Honeyman analysed the records and indentures of 164 parishes (largely London centric), Quarter Sessions cases and business

records to construct a detailed assessment of the experience of parish factory apprentices.¹⁹² Horrell and Humphries used household budgets to assess the role of children in the family economy, and in Humphries' monograph *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*, data was stripped from 617 working class autobiographies to reconstruct an 'as if' household survey spanning 1700-1878.¹⁹³ Levene combined charity records (Foundling Hospital and Marine Society), and workhouse registers and indentures to examine poor children in London during the eighteenth century.¹⁹⁴ In particular her survey of London parishes 1767-1833 resulted in the collection of 3,285 pauper apprenticeship records.¹⁹⁵

Levene commented that as 'parish and charity authorities rarely recorded the rationale behind their actions, we must rely on practice to reveal motivation and underlying principles. This necessitates a critical mass of data in order to be able to say anything meaningful, and so I have used all the sources specifically on child welfare I have been able to find'.¹⁹⁶ In the spirit of this, Chapter 1 explained the motivations for combining examination of both charity and Poor Law apprenticeships.¹⁹⁷ Taking both Levene and Honeyman's research as a valuable template, I have adopted a similar approach; my study, too, is multi-sourced, with all possible quantitative and qualitative sources for each port actively surveyed. Humphries believes 'combining quantitative and qualitative analysis gets the best out of both methodologies, by using them to check,

¹⁹² Honeyman, *Child Workers*.

¹⁹³ Horrell and Humphries, 'Exploitation?'; Humphries, *Childhood*.

¹⁹⁴ Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*.

¹⁹⁵ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship'.

¹⁹⁶ Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 15.

¹⁹⁷ See pp. 2-3.

balance and inform each other'.¹⁹⁸ Sources have been found for the parishes, Poor Law Unions and charitable institutions of each port, and in addition, from institutions and parishes elsewhere that specifically sent children into these ports to serve apprenticeships. This produced an extensive collection of records totalling 1,710 cases, comprising material taken principally from indentures and apprenticeship registers, but also records of apprenticeships contained in minutes, correspondence, orders, annual reports and Quarter Sessions.¹⁹⁹ Statistical analysis of this data reveals patterns in relation to themes such as age, sex, length of term, location, type of work, and premiums paid. Analysis is then enhanced by a number of qualitative sources which shed further light on the practices adopted; in particular correspondence under the New Poor Law is extremely illuminating. An overview of the different sources used, and how they have been exploited, is presented later below. Inevitably, there are still many gaps, as records are not available for every year of the period of study; it is ultimately a 'sample imposed by the vicissitudes of time'.²⁰⁰

The inspiration to concentrate solely on Poor Law and charity apprenticeship records brings a charge of narrow focus. Poor Law and charities are at the heart of society's response to those less fortunate, but these were still children receiving a form of care. Admittedly the thesis lacks information about the poorest of children, particularly those on the streets, hawking or begging, or those who would have laboured without any apprenticeship or contract at all, such as daily casual hire. But their experiences were not

¹⁹⁸ Humphries, 'Childhood EHR', p. 416.

¹⁹⁹ For the purpose of brevity, the term 'indenture' is used throughout as an umbrella term, referring to the various types of records of apprenticeships. The dataset of 1,710 records is referred to throughout as the 'indenture data'.

²⁰⁰ D. Simonton, 'Apprenticeship: Training and Gender in Eighteenth-Century England', in M. Berg (ed.), *Markets and Manufacture in Early Industrial Europe* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 227-55, at p. 239.

recorded, save for the descriptive accounts contained in the Victorian child labour inquiries, such as the various Children's Employment Commissions. Therefore, because of the lack of 'free' labour sources, apprenticeship indentures are one of the most effective windows into poor children's employment; they provide a yardstick of how some of the poorest children were treated. A benefit of focussing only on pauper apprentices is the ability to compare results and contribute to the existing set of other such studies on this subject; in particular I hope to complement and actively extend the research by Honeyman and Levene.

2.2 *The sources*

2.2.1 Quantitative sources

The Victorian mania for statistics manifests itself most clearly with the census. As discussed above, this is not a major source for this research, although the summary occupational tables have been consulted for comparison purposes. Although there are occupational tables for each of the featured ports in the Principal Towns summaries, unfortunately they are limited as a comparative source for this study, as they classify males and females as only 'under 20'; the tables do not specify individual ages, or even groups of ages.²⁰¹ But they do provide a useful indicator of popular occupations for children. As stated earlier, one aim of this study is to follow the industrial revolution historians into the eighteenth century and uncover fresh quantitative evidence.

²⁰¹ The 15-20 age group would heavily distort comparison.

2.2.2 Pauper apprenticeship records

Honeyman highlighted the scarcity of business records, concluding that surviving parish documents are vital.²⁰² Of course, some parishes/Poor Law Unions recorded the information more diligently than others, and surviving material is patchy; there is no comprehensive coverage. As well as the Poor Law, charities played an important part in schemes of apprenticeship for poor children, as Chapter 1 demonstrated. In particular, the Marine Society registers, held at the National Maritime Museum, are a wonderful example of extensive records of boys being sent to ports all over the country for Merchant service apprenticeships. As noted in Chapter 1, this study looks at Merchant service rather than Naval placements. In addition, each of the ports had their own charitable institutions, reflecting the strong philanthropic drive of the era. Innes famously described the hotchpotch of poor and charitable relief as the 'mixed economy of welfare'.²⁰³ Examining the two types of apprenticeship together facilitates a complete as picture as possible. This chapter will conclude with a summary of evidence for each port detailing the Poor Law and charity records found.

Surviving pauper apprenticeship indentures, registers of apprentices, and records of apprenticeships contained in minutes, orders, correspondence and Quarter Sessions cases yield the information for quantitative analysis. One of the benefits of dealing with less subjective sources such as indentures and register entries is the reduced scope for bias and untruthfulness in the sources. For example, this type of source requires less scrutiny than

²⁰² Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 11

²⁰³ J. Innes, 'The "Mixed Economy of Welfare" in Early Modern England: Assessments of the Options from Hale to Malthus (c.1683-1803)', in M. Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: UCL Press, 1996), pp. 139-80.

autobiographies.²⁰⁴ Indentures are public documents that record the social control of the poor. They are largely standard in form, recording the main terms of the apprenticeship, such as the names of the parties, age, length of term, location of master and occupation, and as noted above, such terms provide scope for statistical analysis in order to identify trends.

What is the composition of the 1,710 records collected? Humphries used cohorts to subdivide her extended time frame in *Childhood and Child Labour*.²⁰⁵ Table 2.1 below uses this concept to demonstrate the range of the indenture data collected, broadly following the phases of the chronology of the industrial revolution.

Table 2.1 Range of indenture data, 1750-1870, by cohort

| Cohort | No. of indentures |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1750-1790 | 200 (12%) |
| 1791-1820 | 73 (4%) |
| 1821-1850 | 810 (47%) |
| 1851-1870 | 627 (37%) |
| Total | 1,710 |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data (see footnote 199, p. 54 above).

²⁰⁴ Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 17-20; Griffin, *Liberty's Dawn*, pp. 7-10.

²⁰⁵ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 14.

In terms of the indenture data for each port, the proportions are indicated in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Pauper apprenticeships, 1750-1870, by port

| Port | No. of indentures children sent into the port | No. of indentures children from the port | Total no. of indentures for the port |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Bristol | 94 | 40 | 134 (8%) |
| Southampton | 17 | 671 | 688 (40%) |
| Liverpool | 68 | 820 | 888 (52%) |
| Totals | 179 | 1,531 | 1,710 |

Notes:

- 1) 12 sources relate to more than one port e.g. a Liverpool apprentice was sent to Bristol; where this was the case, the child was classed as from the port.
- 2) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

The spread of charity and Poor Law (and whether in the Old or New Poor Law period) is illustrated in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Pauper apprenticeships, 1750-1870, by type

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Total |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Charity | 196 | 603 | 799 |
| Poor Law | 746 | 165 | 911 |
| Totals | 942 | 708 | 1,710 |

Notes:

- 1) Old Poor Law period are indentures dated prior to August 1834; bindings from August 1834 onwards have been classed as New Poor Law.

Source: Indenture data.

A real strength of the quantitative evidence is the excellent balance of gender; 46 per cent (786) female, 54 per cent (924) male. Evidence of female apprenticeships can be quite difficult to obtain, as Levene noted with her study of London parishes.²⁰⁶

This comparative study uses a typological structure, examining three key occupational sectors to which poor children were apprenticed: traditional occupations, sea and new industries, as these were the three sectors that emerged from the quantitative analysis. Table 2.4 below illustrates the split of the sample across the three sectors.

Table 2.4 Pauper apprenticeships, 1750-1870, by sector

| Type | Traditional occupations | Sea | New industries |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Charity | 620 | 46 | 133 |
| Poor Law | 457 | 86 | 360 |
| Totals | 1,077 | 132 | 493 |

Notes:

1) There were 8 indentures for which the work category was unknown, thus the total for Table 2.4 is 1702.
Source: Indenture data.

In considering how to categorize the information for analysis, I took direction from Levene’s research into London parish apprentices, which adopted the Armstrong/Booth scheme.²⁰⁷ I too adopted this, but subject to one modification, to account for an important distinction. Trade was simply the occupation noted in the source, but this was then categorized further to aid identification of trends. The Armstrong/Booth scheme places each trade into a category and subcategory; for example, a tailor would be classed as

²⁰⁶ A. Levene, “‘Honesty, Sobriety and Diligence’: Master-Apprentice Relations in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England”, *Social History*, vol. 33, 2 (2008) [hereafter, Levene, ‘Honesty’], pp. 183-200, at p. 189.

²⁰⁷ Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’, p. 926; W.A. Armstrong, ‘The use of Information about Occupation’, in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society: Essays in the use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) [hereafter, Armstrong, ‘Information’], pp. 191-310.

manufacture, clothing. It is the category of manufacture that caused some careful consideration; I feel there is a discernible difference between children apprenticed to a craftsman weaving cloth in a small workshop in 1760, compared to those children sent *en masse* to the large cotton manufactories of the North in 1860. The difference between the factory setting and more traditional workshops needed to be reflected, so I adapted the scheme to introduce an extra classification, 'sector', to denote if the category was either new Industries, traditional occupations or sea.

Some of the individual trades were not included in the scheme, therefore I have categorized accordingly. For example, a bridlebit maker (horse tack) was categorized as manufacture, carriages & harness; a cordwainer, (essentially a shoemaker) manufacture, dress. Other trades could be classed in more than one category, so the context needed to be taken into account. For example, Armstrong classed a blockmaker as shipbuilding, but this term could also mean making blocks for the printing industry. As the area of study is ports, it seems logical to classify as Armstrong does, a decision bolstered by the fact one boy was sent to Deptford, another docks area, to perform this work. A staymaker was classed in the Armstrong scheme as manufacture, machinery. By the end of the nineteenth century, stays would have been machine made, but in this study those apprenticed to this work were in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century to single masters, who were often also described as tailors, therefore I have classified as manufacture, dress.

2.3 *Qualitative sources*

2.3.1 Poor Law Correspondence

As highlighted above, combining quantitative and qualitative sources deepens analysis; data is meaningless without the colour of human behaviour to shade it. This research

benefits from a riot of colour by virtue of the Poor Law correspondence (held at The National Archives, class MH12) passing between each of the port's Poor Law officials and the Poor Law Board during the New Poor Law period.²⁰⁸ Few studies have exploited this source.²⁰⁹ The material for the three ports has never been examined. It proves particularly valuable in illustrating the attitudes and policies of those at the heart of administering the Poor Law, including the important discovery that batch apprenticeship continued long into the New Poor Law period, as well as detailed evidence regarding procedures for assessment and monitoring of placements. This evidence firmly supports the suggestion that pauper apprenticeship continued past the traditional point of decline, as outlined in Chapter 1 and fully considered in Chapter 6.²¹⁰

The correspondence is a treasure trove of information regarding motivations; it deftly demonstrates the conflict between local and national, as the Poor Law Board struggled to control officials and enforce regulations on the ground. Furthermore, the consistencies revealed across the ports are very encouraging as to the authenticity and reliability of the source; similar things were happening during the same time period in different places. Humphries raised the issue that many of the traditional sources for the study of child labour are a product of the powerful and educated, and therefore do not shed light on the actual experience of the child. Her study revealed the voice from below by using autobiographies.²¹¹ Alas indentures and registers were clearly a means of social control, but what is new and exciting is the light cast on the thoughts and opinions of the

²⁰⁸ The correspondence covers both the Poor Law Commission 1834-47, and the Poor Law Board from 1847 onwards.

²⁰⁹ Green, *Pauper Capital*, reviewed the correspondence of 10 London Unions; Crompton, *Workhouse*, examined Worcestershire Unions.

²¹⁰ See pp. 23-5, 260-6.

²¹¹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 15.

controllers. It cannot be emphasized enough how vital a source the Poor Law correspondence is. It complements and enhances the different types of sources used by historians thus far, genuinely contributing something fresh and original to the debate.

2.3.2 Other sources

Other institutional documents (both Poor Law and charity) such as minutes, correspondence and letter books shed further light on practices, as illustrated below in the individual port summaries. The invaluable Parliamentary Papers containing various Victorian inquiries into child labour are used to gain insight into conditions. Parliamentary reports were commissioned to provide a broad overview of key industries; they were not designed to capture practices in small workshops and the reports have been criticized as biased. For example, the 1832 Sadler committee was thought to have concentrated on the worst excesses and posed leading questions to the witnesses. Despite such flaws, the reports justifiably remain a rich source on the child worker's life and the conditions endured; Liverpool featured in many, and to a lesser extent Southampton and Bristol. Various Poor Law Commission and Board reports, principally Kay's report on pauper training, and associated philanthropic writings (although again tending to highlight the very worst conditions) are also useful.²¹²

Quarter Sessions records are also a good source of evidence about conditions. Although there is a wealth of cases concerning free apprentices, it was possible to find cases that specifically refer to pauper apprentices, detailing such matters as cruel treatment from masters and apprentice desertion. Evidence regarding conditions can also be found in business records, although as noted previously, such records are scarce. The records of

²¹² Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*.

Quarry Bank mill in Cheshire are pertinent, as the mill owners, the Greg family, received apprentices from LSV. Surviving documentation includes indentures for these apprentices 1821-1846. There are also a number of accounts, wage books, ledgers, indentures and doctor's prescriptions. Both Rose and Robinson have produced informative studies of the mill and its practices from these documents, but as emphasized in the previous chapter, perhaps too much reliance has been placed on the study of just one enterprise.²¹³ In connection with those apprenticed to the sea, the apprenticeship registers of Liverpool shipping firm T & J Brocklebank Ltd have been consulted to gain insight into life at sea.

Some material from autobiographies, diaries and memoirs proved useful, paying careful attention to the motivation of the writer. Similar caution was applied to the use of newspaper articles, pamphlets, letters and campaigning materials. Autobiographies in particular provide general insight into different trades. For example, very little is known about a pauper apprentice boy's time at sea. Of all the types of occupation, as Chapter 4 will show, this was the least monitored, and no accounts survive, something also noted by Humphries.²¹⁴ Thus the Brocklebank registers and autobiographical accounts help with understanding what life at sea entailed. Although mindful that pauper boys were of a very different class to boy sailors who were privately apprenticed (who could reach the rank of captain), conditions on-board ship were likely universal. Whatever the rank, a boy would still be subject to the same dangers: disease, weather, accidents, none of which distinguished status. Therefore parallels can justifiably be drawn.

²¹³ Robinson, *Quarry Bank*; Rose, *Gregs of Quarry Bank*.

²¹⁴ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 202.

2.4 *Summary of the sources for each port*

2.4.1 Bristol

Table 2.5 below illustrates the range of indenture data collected for Bristol.

Table 2.5 Pauper apprenticeships, 1750-1870, Bristol

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Total |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Charity | 50 | 13 | 63 |
| Poor Law | 67 | 4 | 71 |
| Totals | 117 | 17 | 134 |

Source: Indenture data.

Bristol is renowned for its rich source of city apprenticeship rolls, but a less trodden path is to scratch the surface of the city's poorer sons. Regrettably the bulk of Bristol Incorporation's Poor Law records were destroyed in the bombing of St Peter's Hospital during World War II; for such a significant eighteenth century port, the lack of surviving source material is tragic. I have only been able to trace 40 cases of children from the port. However, I was not deterred from using such an obvious comparator for Liverpool, so a resourceful approach was required. I felt sure that such an important port would have attracted opportunities for pauper apprentices from the region, so indentures from surrounding parishes were examined to see if children were sent into the port centre for work. The resulting 94 cases illustrate that placements were available. As well as children from Somerset and Gloucestershire parishes and charities, the Marine Society also sent boys to the port. Thus the numbers for those from the port could reasonably be assumed to be larger if records had survived, further evidenced by the qualitative sources and the Poor Law correspondence passing between Bristol Incorporation and the Poor Law Board, that showed they were still apprenticing as late as the 1860s.

The main Poor Law sources were largely located from documents held at Bristol Record Office, and neighbouring counties Somerset Archives and Gloucestershire Archives. Many parts of modern Bristol were part of these counties prior to becoming more urban; in fact, if the study had used the current boundaries of Bristol, more records would have been denoted as from the port. For example, the parish of St Luke's Brislington, with 31 indentures and just 3 miles from the city centre, was originally part of Somerset.²¹⁵ Clifton is an area of Bristol that also needs clarification. Prior to 1832, it was part of Gloucestershire, but then became part of the city boundaries. There are six cases of children being sent to work there, but as all are prior to 1832, they are recorded as children sent into the port; again if the modern boundary interpretation was applied, they would have been counted as apprenticed in the port.

As Chapter 1 highlighted, Bristol is a city associated with philanthropic endeavour.²¹⁶ Alas, surviving records of its famous institutions such as the Colston and Dolphin Societies do not include material relating to apprenticeship; however, it was possible to collect evidence from some less well known ventures, such as the Gloucestershire [sic] Society and Somerset Society.²¹⁷ Lady Norton's Charity, administered by parish officials at Abbots Leigh in Somerset, indentured 18 children.²¹⁸ In total the split of the type of sources for this port is quite even, 63 charity cases, and 71 Poor Law, as noted above.

²¹⁵ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15, St Luke Brislington, Apprenticeship Indentures, 1751-1766.

²¹⁶ See pp. 39-40.

²¹⁷ BRO, 35684/10, Gloucestershire Society Annual Report, 1796; AC/JS/13/8, Somerset Society Annual Report, 1774.

²¹⁸ BRO, P/AL/ChW/3/a, Lady Norton's Charity Abbots Leigh, Apprenticeship Register 1781-1857;

The defect in the quantity of Poor Law indenture data is more than mitigated by the qualitative material obtained. The highlight is the Poor Law union correspondence passing between the Poor Law Board and both Bristol Incorporation between 1859 and 1869, and Clifton Union between 1837 and 1860.²¹⁹ It evidences that the Incorporation regularly apprenticed its children well into the nineteenth century. The correspondence is a gold mine of information about batch bindings, settlement concerns about apprentices, gender bias in placement and training, and conditions for those placed in traditional occupations; there is even evidence of children sent under contracts for hire rather than indentures, in order to circumvent opposition. This new material leads to some exciting revisionist conclusions.

2.4.2 Liverpool

Table 2.6 below illustrates the range of indenture data collected for Liverpool.

Table 2.6 Pauper apprenticeships, 1750-1870, Liverpool

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Total |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Charity | 24 | 46 | 70 |
| Poor Law | 79 | 739 | 818 |
| Totals | 103 | 785 | 888 |

Source: Indenture data.

Liverpool serves as an excellent balance to that of the other ports as it contains a substantial number of Poor Law indentures. Details of LSV apprentices sent to Quarry Bank mill in Cheshire were collated from records at Manchester Archives.²²⁰ Liverpool Record Office holds indentures of those placed into apprenticeships for the period 1840-70

²¹⁹ TNA, Bristol 139, MH 12/3862-3871, 1837-70; Clifton 143, MH 12/4000, 1834-37.

²²⁰ MA, GB 127.C5/5/4 & C5/5/3, R Greg and Co Ltd Quarry Bank Mill, Apprenticeship Indentures, 1815-46.

from its industrial school, 620 in total.²²¹ In some cases medical and magistrate certificates, reports and correspondence were attached, providing invaluable additional detail about the procedures involved. A further 101 indentures are recorded in correspondence between the Vestry and the Poor Law Board, from the Poor Law Correspondence files of The National Archives.²²² Material collected from Lancashire Record Office and Cheshire Archives illustrates that other parishes/Poor Law unions and charities were sending children into Liverpool for work, as was the Marine Society. The apprenticeship register for the Female Orphan Asylum in Liverpool is also a valuable charity source, yielding 24 cases.²²³

In terms of qualitative evidence, key documents include LSV Board minutes from 1852-73.²²⁴ The Female Orphan Asylum discharge registers contain greater background detail than is usually found in such documents, such as wider family details, in particular siblings and their occupations (if any), and notes regarding the circumstances of the death of parents. But again it is the fantastic wealth of information and record of detailed decision making contained in the correspondence between LSV and the Poor Law Board that in many ways is equal to, if not eclipses, the quantitative sources in terms of value. Levene would delight in such a fabulous lens into the everyday operation of the Poor Law. A wealth of inspection reports, requests for advice, accounts of policy intentions and acts of independence combine to produce riveting insight.

²²¹ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1 & 2, LSV Apprenticeship Indentures, 1840-70. For some of the records of the LSV there was duplicate use of a record number.

²²² TNA, Liverpool 220, MH 12/5966-5981, 1834-1869.

²²³ LRO, 362 SAL 9/1/1 & 2, Liverpool Female Orphan Asylum Discharge Register, 1840-63. For some of the records of the Female Orphan Asylum there was duplicate use of a record number.

²²⁴ LRO, 353 SEL 1/1-3, LSV Board Minutes, 1852-73.

2.4.3 Southampton

Table 2.7 below illustrates the range of indenture data collected for Southampton.

Table 2.7 Pauper apprenticeships, 1750-1870, Southampton

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Total |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Charity | 529 | 137 | 666 |
| Poor Law | 19 | 3 | 22 |
| Totals | 548 | 140 | 688 |

Source: Indenture data.

The Southampton sources were collected principally from Southampton Archives, Hampshire Record Office and The National Archives, chiefly strong for its charitable records, notably the Thorner Charity (95 cases) and Royal Military Asylum (545 cases).²²⁵ The charity had its headquarters in Chelsea, London, but also a Southampton branch. Several smaller local charities, such as Mills', Seale's and the Taunton Foundation, the result of bequests, were amalgamated and administered by Southampton Corporation from its Municipal Charities fund (25 cases).²²⁶ Just like Bristol there is some evidence that neighbouring parishes sent children into the port for work, 10 in total. But the bulk of the

²²⁵ SA, D/TH 56, Thorner Charity Southampton Apprenticeship Indentures, 1753-1800; TNA, WO 143/52, RMA Apprenticeship Book, 1806-48. The RMA records held at The National Archive are for both its Chelsea and Southampton branches, and in some circumstances it was not clear to which institution the child belonged. RMA Southampton branch opened in 1816 and was mixed until 1823 when it became girls only, until its closure in 1841. There is only one combined apprenticeship register, which makes it difficult to distinguish the data. For the purpose of this research, I used only records that could positively be attributed to Southampton. Therefore all female entries 1823-41, which can be proved to be Southampton since the girls were only based there, were collected. In addition I extracted all children apprenticed to one of the featured ports, some of which by process of deduction were sent by RMA Chelsea. This is because either the date of binding predates the 1816 opening of RMA Southampton, or post-1823 they are boys, and therefore could only have been apprenticed from the Chelsea branch. A few RMA data anomalies also needed to be addressed. Sometimes a register entry regarding a specific apprentice and the date of their indenture in the Letter Book does not match the date of binding stated in the register. An explanation for this might be a trial period, that could be weeks or months, with formal binding often happening quite some time after the service contract began. More simply, duplication of record numbers assigned to the girls is common. 12 record numbers are assigned twice, to different named girls and masters, and in one case, the same record number is used three different times.

²²⁶ SA, D/MC 24/2, Municipal Charities Charity Trustees' Apprentice Book, 1837-43.

sources relate to those from the port, apprenticed by the charities. The richness of charity sources, in particular the RMA, is enhanced by the amount of female indenture data it yields, which perhaps offsets the low number of Poor Law indentures.

In terms of qualitative evidence, the New Poor Law correspondence between Southampton Corporation and the Poor Law Board sheds light on both apprenticeships to the sea, and also placement procedures.²²⁷ But it was the RMA Letter Books that accompanied the apprenticeship register that proved revealing.²²⁸ There is wonderful detail about different types of placements, illuminating the intentions of those involved. Notable highlights include RMA's active pursuance of mill owners for batch apprenticeship, domestic service placements to foreign lands, and cases of abuse by the master. As noted earlier, the failure of officials to record their rationale which Levene so lamented, is not evident in this source which includes much detail in discussion of individual cases.

‘All historians faced with fragmentary surviving records must wrestle with the question whether they are representative of a wider population’.²²⁹ In the following chapters, the common apprenticeship terms are compared across the ports, and to other similar studies, using the thematic framework outlined in Chapter 1, thus assessing the representativeness of the sources and relating my findings to the overall national picture of pauper apprenticeship.

²²⁷ TNA, Southampton 407, MH 12/10997-11004, 1834-1869.

²²⁸ TNA, WO 143/52, Apprenticeship Book, 1806-48.

²²⁹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 23.

3. Endless toil: Children working in traditional occupations

'However bad factory conditions were for the young apprentices, they would otherwise have been bound to the worst conditions available locally'.²³⁰

One of the most striking findings of this research is that as a destination for pauper apprenticeships, traditional occupations not only persisted within the changing landscape of the industrial revolution, they dominated that landscape. As already highlighted in the introductory chapter, the majority of children, 63 per cent, were still placed into traditional occupations. Over one thousand children were indentured to this sector (1,077 total), 130 of which were sent into the ports for this type of work. Table 3.1 below outlines the composition of the sample.

Table 3.1 Traditional occupations pauper apprenticeships, by type

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Total |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Charity | 485 | 135 | 620 |
| Poor Law | 96 | 361 | 457 |
| Totals | 581 | 496 | 1,077 |

Source: Indenture data.

Of those originally from the port, just over one third (38 per cent) were sent out of their home port for apprenticeship, while a further 15 per cent were sent to work in other parts of their region. There is nothing new about children being sent from urban areas to obtain employment, but what is startling about my findings is that 36 per cent of children remained in the port, with another 11 per cent placed locally (within five miles of the port), resulting in nearly half of the children placed into traditional occupations remaining in the vicinity of the port. With the added 130 children who were specifically sent into port for

²³⁰ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 197.

apprenticeships, these findings challenge the stereotype that there was *no* work for children in urban settings, and broaden the historiography of the types of work children performed during the industrial revolution.²³¹ It also supplements the work of Kirby and Levene, who both found that children from London continued to enter traditional sectors of the economy, and of Minister in her study of Derbyshire pauper apprentices. She found 90 per cent were apprenticed to traditional trades ‘despite the presence nearby of new style factories’.²³²

Honeyman’s succinct summary which began this chapter perfectly captures the hidden horrors of this sector. During the industrial revolution the spotlight was very much on exposing children’s work in factories and mines. Although some traditional occupations were investigated in the Children’s Employment Commissions during the second half of the nineteenth century, in general this was an overlooked sector, yet it provided some of the harshest forms of child labour.²³³ Trades such as dressmaking and smithing overworked people of all ages, with excessive hours and often in cramped conditions.²³⁴ Many pauper children were apprenticed to trades regarded as inferior, reflecting the low or non-existent premiums on offer. In some ways the factories were a safer destination, as at least there was an attempt to remedy the worst miseries with legislation. Children in traditional occupations were ‘beyond the scope of meaningful

²³¹ See pp. 36-7.

²³² Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’; Kirby, ‘Statistical Sketch’; Minister, ‘Derbyshire’, p. 71.

²³³ For example CEC, *Second report 1843*.

²³⁴ Marx, *Capital*, pp. 158-9.

regulation until the late nineteenth century', as it was not until 1867 that the first piece of relevant legislation was enacted.²³⁵

Table 3.1 illustrates that there is a good range of Old and New Poor Law indentures. In terms of port coverage, Table 3.2 below shows that Bristol indentures account for just over 10 per cent of all traditional occupations, with Liverpool and Southampton 39 per cent and 51 per cent respectively. Girls were also represented; 42 per cent of the traditional occupations indentures are female, although it is important to note this is heavily weighted by the evidence from Southampton's RMA.

As well as the surprising number of children who either remained in the port or locally in these trades, as noted above, the sources include pauper apprentices who were specifically sent into the port for work; 12 per cent of traditional occupational indentures (130) follow this pattern, promoted by regional parishes and charities sending children to their nearest port. For example, Hampshire parishes and charities sent children into Southampton; Gloucestershire and Somerset to Bristol, and Lancashire into Liverpool. Bristol provides a particularly good example of such migration; 16 boys came from various Gloucestershire parishes, and the Gloucestershire [*sic*] Society, a charity based in the city took seven boys from nearby county towns such as Gloucester and Stroud. Neighbouring Somerset parishes sent multiple children; St Luke's Brislington, just three miles from the city, sent 31 children, largely during the late eighteenth century, and Lady Norton's charity administered by Abbots Leigh parish, two miles from the centre, sent 18 during the first half of the nineteenth century.

²³⁵ Kirby, 'Victorian Social Investigation', p. 154, noting the Workshops' Regulation Act 1867 (30&31 Vict. c.146).

The distinction between the two types of pauper apprenticeship, Poor Law and charitable, has already been discussed in Chapter 1.²³⁶ Overall, as Table 3.1 above illustrates, 58 per cent of all traditional occupations indentures were charitable apprenticeships. The composition of charity and Poor Law records for each port is outlined in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Traditional occupations pauper apprenticeships, by port

| Port | Old Poor Law | | New Poor Law | | Totals |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| | Charity | Poor Law | Charity | Poor Law | |
| Bristol | 40 | 60 | 9 | 4 | 113 |
| Liverpool | 15 | 20 | 24 | 356 | 415 |
| Southampton | 430 | 16 | 102 | 1 | 549 |
| Totals | 485 | 96 | 135 | 361 | 1,077 |

Source: Indenture data.

Table 3.2 above illustrates that the indenture data is not evenly spread. For example, for Liverpool, Poor Law indentures dominate, of which 355 are from LSV records, and the Female Orphan Asylum provides most of the charity records. Bristol exhibits an almost even split between the two types of indenture, from a variety of sources with no one single institution dominating. Southampton is dominated by charitable apprentices, from both the Thorner charity and the RMA.

The indentures provide a vast amount of evidence about the trades to which these children were apprenticed, and the first part of this chapter presents a synopsis of each category and its individual trades, in order to understand the types of work children were required to perform. The chapter will then go on to analyse the evidence through a

²³⁶ See pp. 25-7.

framework of five themes: the apprenticeship process; application of regulations and batch apprenticeship; life as an apprentice; gender biases; and, settlement issues.

3.1 Categories of traditional occupations

As explained in Chapter 2 each of the three sector destinations identified are split further into categories, according to the Armstrong/Booth scheme.²³⁷ For traditional occupations, there are eight categories of work, the most significant being manufacture and domestic service, accounting for 44 per cent each of all traditional occupations. The category split is fully illustrated in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Categories of traditional occupations

| Category | No. of indentures |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Agriculture | 13 (1%) |
| Building | 39 (4%) |
| Dealing | 47 (4%) |
| Domestic Service | 476 (44%) |
| Manufacture | 477 (44%) |
| Manufacture/Dealing | 17 (2%) |
| Other | 8 (<1%) |
| Totals | 1,077 |

Notes:

- 1) Manufacture/Dealing covers occupations of dual function, common in retail e.g. baker and grocer.
- 2) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

These categories are examined below, with particular emphasis on the principal ones of manufacture and domestic service.

²³⁷ See p. 59.

3.1.1 Manufacture

This is the largest category within traditional occupations, providing a total of 477 indentures. Table 3.4 below provides a summary breakdown of the category.

Table 3.4 Subcategories of Manufacture

| Subcategory | No. of indentures |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Baking | 13 |
| Carriages & Harness | 15 |
| Copper, Tin, Lead etc. | 14 |
| Cotton & Silk | 6 |
| Dress | 308 |
| Dyeing | 2 |
| Earthenware etc | 3 |
| Flax, Hemp etc. | 4 |
| Furniture | 17 |
| Furs & Leather | 3 |
| Glue, Tallow etc. | 3 |
| Gold, Silver and Jewellery | 1 |
| Hair | 2 |
| Iron & Steel | 14 |
| Iron & Steel/Copper, Tin, Lead etc. | 1 |
| Machinery | 1 |
| Printing & Bookbinding | 4 |
| Shipbuilding | 13 |
| Tools etc. | 5 |
| Watches, Instruments & Toys | 23 |
| Wood workers | 24 |
| Woollens | 1 |
| Total | 477 |

Notes:

1) A full breakdown of each subcategory is included in Appendix 1.

Source: Indenture data.

Table 3.4 shows that manufacture is dominated by the subcategory of dress (65 per cent of all manufacturing indentures), with other smaller notable areas such as woodwork, metals, maritime occupations and niche trades. The majority of children indentured in this category were boys (92 per cent, 440 indentures). Two thirds are Poor Law children, just over half being from the LSV.

Dress

Dress is the largest subcategory of manufacturing trades such as tailors, dressmakers and shoemakers, as well as more specialist trades, such as staymaking. Appendix 1 shows that all forms of shoemaking accounted for the largest trade in this area, 62 per cent, whereas tailoring accounted for just over one quarter.

As shoemaking was the largest artisan trade in the 1841 census, it is unsurprising to find it also dominated pauper apprenticeships.²³⁸ Using the censuses of 1831-51, Wrigley found that 10 retail based trades, including shoemaking, comprised of 17-18 per cent of the male population of working age, with little difference between urban and rural locations, illustrating the prevalence of traditional occupations well into the period of industrialization.²³⁹ The shoemaking trade encompassed many branches: cordwainer, shoemaker, boot closer, clogger, and bootmaker are just some of the specific designations that appear in the indentures, with 190 apprenticeships in total, only two of which were girls (both from St Luke's Brislington parish into Bristol during the 1760s). Shoemaking certainly epitomizes traditional hand manufacture, with 60 indentures under the Old Poor Law, 42 of which were as an apprentice cordwainer, and largely charity apprentices.

²³⁸ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 139.

²³⁹ E.A. Wrigley, *Poverty, Progress, and Population* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 47 and Table 4.2 pp. 92-3, cited in Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 92-4. The 10 occupations were: baker, blacksmith, bricklayer, butcher, carpenter, mason, publican, shoemaker, shopkeeper, tailor.

Traditionally, cordwaining was an artisanal skill of working with leather to make products such as shoes. During the late eighteenth century, Southampton's Thorner charity placed 18 of its 99 boys as cordwainers, 12 in the port itself, all for a premium of £5.

However, the majority of shoemaking indentures in this sample are from the New Poor Law period, from mid-nineteenth century onwards, evidencing the endurance of traditional methods of production. That is not to say that the trade did not adapt to the new industrial environment; change occurred in the production process, but it was more gradual, reflecting the Crafts and Harley view of the industrial revolution as steady development.²⁴⁰ Rather than a single artisan constructing an entire product, the process was subdivided and became more geared towards batch production. Humphries explained that organizational innovations in the trade, principally subdividing labour for each task, led to roles for child workers as they could be substituted for more costly adults. Guilds had lost their regulatory grip following the repeal of the Statute of Artificers in 1814, and therefore it was possible to work in the trade without having completed an apprenticeship.²⁴¹ Changes in the method of production also had an impact; for example, nailing soles of shoes onto the uppers, instead of hand stitching. This was a task a child could easily undertake.²⁴² These changes led to deskilling and the status of the trade weakened; indentures describing the apprenticeship as shoe or bootmaker perhaps implies a lesser degree of skill, with the term cordwainer falling out of use. Children were not really apprentices in the traditional sense of the word as they were no longer acquiring a skill set over a period of time, but just learning one specific skill in the overall process.

²⁴⁰ See p. 5.

²⁴¹ Humphries, 'Childhood EHR', p. 411.

²⁴² Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 185-6, 213-14.

Clearly there were numerous opportunities for placements, but as a result of organizational change and the subsequent competition it bred, the trade became increasingly impoverished. Furthermore, the volume of pauper apprentices to this trade with little or no premium offered, contributed to its decline, creating a stigma deterring respectable families from apprenticing their children to it. Prospects for children apprenticed to shoemaking were not high; referring to the end of the Old Poor Law period, Lees argued ‘Overseers could no longer delude themselves that apprenticing a child to a tailor or shoemaker would give that child access to a skilled occupation’.²⁴³ Yet this evidence shows that plenty of officials continued to do so late into the nineteenth century, even if the child was not assured of a future; shoemaking accounts for 11 per cent of the entire sample (190 out of 1,710 indentures).

In particular, LSV operated in this manner, making the most of local resources; *Gore’s Directory for Liverpool* of 1857 listed over 150 boot/shoemakers.²⁴⁴ It apprenticed 124 boys to shoemaking between 1846 and 1870, 20 per cent of all their children (under 14) indentured during this period. The majority (37 per cent) were placed in the port, with another 29 per cent locally, so over two thirds were indentured within five miles of the city centre. 10 per cent of boys were still sent further afield, with three over 100 miles, such as 13 year old Thomas Paton to William Wilson of Blaydon, Durham in 1870.²⁴⁵ Insight into the nature of work undertaken can be gained from one of LSV’s regional placements, as the 1869 indenture of Richard Travis to clogger John Occleshaw of Hindley, Lancashire

²⁴³ L.H. Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 101.

²⁴⁴ J. Gore, *Gore’s Directory for Liverpool and its Environs* (Liverpool: John Gore, 1857) [hereafter, *Gore, Liverpool*].

²⁴⁵ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/620, 12 Sept. 1870.

stipulated that work was to be between 7am-8pm, with an hour for dinner and half an hour each for breakfast and tea.²⁴⁶

Indentures from the other ports broadly support the trends identified in the Liverpool sources. Most boys were placed within five miles of the port, the majority in the centre; for example, Southampton's Thorne Charity conformed to this pattern. Bristol illustrates that surrounding parishes and charities sent boys into the port for shoemaking; for example, the Somerset parish of St Luke's Brislington sent five boys; Lady's Norton's charity of Abbot's Leigh sent four. The eighteenth-century Thorne charity's £5 premiums have already been noted; the largest single premium offered in this trade was £10, in two charitable indentures to cordwainers. As noted earlier, most of the charitable placements to this trade were as cordwainers, in the eighteenth century. But for the nineteenth-century boot and shoemakers, the majority of whom employed Poor Law boys, there was a declining use of premiums reflecting that the trade that was falling in status; out of the 124 LSV boys apprenticed, only five came with premiums: four of £3 15s in 1849, and one of just 5s in 1847. The majority of boys apprenticed were 14, but the youngest example is from the late eighteenth century; in 1794, 7 year old William Haynes was apprenticed to William Gill, sent from St Luke's parish in Brislington, Somerset, into Bristol port. He was apprenticed until the age of 21, thus a 14 year indenture.²⁴⁷ In total there were four children apprenticed to this trade aged 10 and under, all into Bristol during the eighteenth century; the youngest New Poor Law apprentices were aged 12.

The tailoring trade employed thousands of children nationally, both pauper and non-pauper; such was its prevalence it was one of the industries investigated by the various

²⁴⁶ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/563, 26 Apr. 1869.

²⁴⁷ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/119, 3 Feb. 1794.

Children's Employment Commissions.²⁴⁸ In this sample there are 87 indentures, accounting for 28 per cent of the dress subcategory, and 8 per cent of all traditional occupations. The most frequently recorded age is 14, with the youngest being 12. It was a male dominated area, with just one female apprentice, Betty Berry, also to the only female tailor, Betty Cook, from Somerset's Lady Norton's Charity into Bristol in 1781.²⁴⁹ Several Southampton charities apprenticed to this trade, particularly the Thorner charity (9 boys in the eighteenth century). In the nineteenth century, it was largely boys from LSV (59 indentures), who were destined for tailoring: 10 per cent of its overall bindings in this sample.

Just as with shoemaking, premiums were largely associated with eighteenth-century indentures, particularly charities, for example, the customary £5 attached to every Thorner charity boy. Betty Berry, the only female apprentice noted above, came with a premium of £6. At this time some parish boys also came with premiums, such as Joseph Biles to William Dymott, Southampton in 1784, aged 14 for seven years, the £10 premium paid by Beaulieu parish. The Lancashire parish of Kirkham sent five pauper boys with small premiums of £3-4, again illustrating how children were sent specifically into the port for work. Mirroring the pattern for shoemaking, the New Poor Law indentures of the LSV did not include premiums, except for three boys apprenticed with £3 15s, 1848-50.

The apprentice tailors were a slightly more scattered bunch than the shoemakers; although 43 per cent were still placed in their port, there were also a higher proportion of regional placements, 32 per cent. However, 21 per cent were still placed in the local area,

²⁴⁸ CEC, *Second report 1843*; Children's Employment Commission (1862). Second report of the commissioners, PP 1864 (3414) (3414-I) [hereafter, CEC 1862, *Second report 1864*].

²⁴⁹ BRO, P/AL/ChW/3/a, 3 May 1781.

illustrating again that almost two thirds of those placed as tailors were within five miles of the port centre. Although no indenture details typical conditions for these boys, evidence given by a Liverpool tailor to the Children's Employment Commission illustrates that the hours worked were very similar to the shoemakers; James Holliday stated that his apprentices worked 6am-6pm, with one hour for dinner, eating breakfast while they worked.²⁵⁰

With so many boys employed as tailors, it would be natural to assume that similar opportunities presented themselves for pauper girls in the equivalent female employment, dressmaking. But the evidence tells a very different story; just 13 girls in total, 4 per cent of the dress subcategory. Millinery and dressmaking were also subject to the scrutiny of the Victorian inquiries. For example, the Children's Employment Commission of 1862, in examining Bristol's dressmaking trade, found the busy season lasted for eight months each year, with typical hours of 5am-midnight; it described working hours of 8am-10pm in the season of 'leisure time'!²⁵¹ As well as the continual sitting, often in cramped conditions, there were also errands to run, such as fetching material and cottons and delivering orders. Despite such arduous conditions, as a trade it enjoyed slightly higher status, since a girl was learning a skill to command a wage, with the potential even to run her own business, and so secure better future prospects. The Children's Employment Commission noted that girls working in the trade in Liverpool were not girls of the poorest classes but from respectable families; most were apprenticed for three years and could read and write.²⁵² This view is supported by the indenture evidence, as only four girls were apprenticed by the Poor Law (one, in the eighteenth century, sent into Southampton as a needleworker,

²⁵⁰ CEC, *Second report 1843*, Appendix M54, witness no. 170.

²⁵¹ CEC, *Second report 1843*, pp. 120, d49.

²⁵² CEC, *Second report 1843*, p. 121, paragraph 656.

and three LSV girls, of whom two remained in port); the majority of girls apprenticed as dressmakers were from Southampton's RMA. All nine girls were sent away from Southampton, mirroring the fate of 12 year old June Gibbens who was apprenticed to Robert Coyle of London, while others were sent further afield to Lancashire, Ireland and Scotland, such as 14 year old Elizabeth O'Neil apprenticed to Elizabeth Dawson in Edinburgh, over 350 miles from Southampton.²⁵³

The remaining trades in the dress subcategory consist of occupations involved in the manufacture of specific items of clothing, such as that of hatter and glover. For example, in 1772, two girls, Anne and Leah Weeks, presumably sisters, were apprenticed to a glover in Bristol, from the nearby Somerset parish of Brislington. They appear to have been apprenticed to sisters themselves; eight year old Anne to Ann Milsom, and nine year old Leah to Mary Milsom, both until they were 21.²⁵⁴ Staymaking, essentially the art of making corsetry, had three indentures, one for Southampton, and two for the Clifton area of Bristol, apprenticed from the Lady Norton's charity with premiums of £10; in 1817 Sarah Hillier was apprenticed to William Poulton, and six years later, Mary Hillier appears to have followed in her sister's footsteps.²⁵⁵

Wood workers/Furniture

Wood workers and furniture combined account for 9 per cent of the manufacture category. Sheldon commented that officials liked this type of placement 'for its moral qualities – the development of self-control and adaptability – as well as the fact that it built up the boys'

²⁵³ TNA, WO143/52/1252, 4 Apr. 1823; WO143/52/1523, 5 Nov. 1832.

²⁵⁴ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/105-6, 28 Feb. 1772.

²⁵⁵ BRO, P/AL/ChW/3/a, 24 May 1817 and Mar. 1823.

confidence and general manual skills'.²⁵⁶ Certainly these trades were rooted in artisanal skill. Furniture included cabinet makers (11), chairmakers (3) and carvers (3) and wood workers included coopers (including hoopers, who made the actual hoop sections) (9), basketmakers (6), and cork cutters (4).

Wood working and furniture was a male dominated subcategory, the only female apprentice was an eighteenth-century basketmaker. It provides a good spread of both Poor Law and charity and eighteenth and nineteenth-century apprenticeships. Of the wood workers, coopers dominated, with Bristol and Southampton charities the main providers of boys. There is also an example of a young Poor Law apprentice, as late as 1801, apprenticed at the tender age of 8; William Anthony was sent into Bristol from neighbouring Brislington to work for Jacob Meredith, a lastmaker, until he was 21, a 13 year apprenticeship.²⁵⁷ Just over half of the wood workers were Poor Law apprentices, including four under the New Poor Law. These boys really demonstrate the continuance of pauper apprenticeship late into the nineteenth century, but also the low status of such placements; in 1865 a batch of three boys were sent out of the port to the Lancashire village of Bispham, a centre for basket weaving using locally grown osier. The boys were apprenticed for seven years to basketmaker Robert Haughton; the boys were 12 and 13, all orphans, and sent with no premium.²⁵⁸

In complete contrast, the furniture subcategory had premiums attached to 14 of the 17 indentures, particularly for cabinetmaking; the frequency and payment of premiums indicate a higher status for this type of work. What is interesting is the continuance of

²⁵⁶ N. Sheldon, ‘‘Something in the Place of Home’’: Children in Institutional Care 1850-1918’, in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, [hereafter, Sheldon, ‘Home’], pp. 255-76, at p. 268.

²⁵⁷ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/122, 24 Apr. 1801.

²⁵⁸ LRO, 353 SEL/12/1/396-8, 7 Feb. 1865.

premiums through the nineteenth century; aside from Southampton's six £5 Thorner charity premiums in the eighteenth century, there is also a £5 premium from Southampton's Corporation in 1840, when it used the charitable funds it administered to apprentice James Chandler to James Weston.²⁵⁹ Two years earlier, Southampton Corporation had apprenticed a tailor's son, George Pullen, to a local carver.²⁶⁰ During the 1860s LSV apprenticed 13 and 14 year old orphans to carvers in Liverpool, although with no premium. These are perhaps examples of more considered New Poor Law placements, as the boys were given an opportunity to acquire a proper skill.

Of the 41 bindings in total for this subcategory, 11 were sent into the port for their apprenticeships, with a further 26 remaining in the port, once more demonstrating that there were a range of opportunities available for children in the port town.

Metals

The metal trades were another good example of slightly higher status apprenticeships, with likely better prospects for the child, reflected in the frequency of premiums being offered with these occupations. Metals account for 7 per cent of the manufacture category, comprising of copper, tin and lead trades (14 indentures), iron and steel (15), gold (1) and the related tool trades such as edge toolmaker and cutler (5). Just as with the previous subcategory, these trades are entirely male apprentices, and largely port-based as over half remained in their home port, with 5 boys also being sent into the ports for work.

The bindings are relatively equally split between Poor Law (19) and charity (14). The most dominant single trade was blacksmith. The trade required strength for work such

²⁵⁹ SA, D/MC24/2, 13 Jan. 1840.

²⁶⁰ SA, D/MC24/2, 9 Jan. 1838.

as blowing the bellows, preparing the ore, wheeling it to the furnace and removing cinders from the furnace. *Gore's Directory for Liverpool* of 1857 lists 43 blacksmiths for Liverpool, yet nine LSV boys were sent out to various parts of Lancashire, suggesting that smithing remained a more rural occupation. But Bristol charitable societies placed boys in the city to occupations such as nailer and zinc worker, and all those apprenticed to the copper trades, both Poor Law and charity, were based in the port. In Southampton, the trade of whitesmith was popular. They differed from blacksmiths as they worked with lighter coloured metals such as tin and pewter.

This subcategory also had the most premiums on offer, with a particularly unusual example of a high premium attached to a Poor Law apprentice, late into the New Poor Law period. In 1868, William London of Bristol was apprenticed to Henry Harris for £20 as a brass and copper worker.²⁶¹ Examples of smaller Poor Law premiums can be found in the 1820s: £10 from Gloucestershire's Frampton Cotterell St Peter parish for William Cooksey to be apprenticed for 10 years as a brightsmith; and £5 for William Hadley to be apprenticed as a whitesmith by Southampton Corporation in 1826.²⁶² In terms of charity premiums, the usual £5 Thorner charity apprenticeship premiums were evidenced, and a charity boy from Bristol even had small wages specified in his indenture. In 1847 Samuel Stockham was apprenticed to David Price as a brass founder. He was placed with a £10 premium, and was to earn 2s from his second year of apprenticeship, rising to 9s in his final year.²⁶³ Insight into the sort of conditions a founder might face can be found in the Children's Employment Commission report of 1843. Bristol's Acraman & Morgan's

²⁶¹ BRO, P.St S/OP/2/34, 19 Feb. 1868.

²⁶² BRO, P.FC/OP/5/80, 8 Sept. 1825; SA, SC/AG/1/3, 21 Aug. 1826.

²⁶³ BRO, 8024/13db, 15 May 1847.

foundry employed around 80 boys under 13, the youngest age 10, to perform jobs such as picking and sorting iron, cleaning castings, and carrying rivets to boiler makers.²⁶⁴

3.1.2 Niche occupations

Examining children's employment through a regional lens revealed some niche occupations, and although not of national significance in terms of sheer numbers of children working, they represent an important feature of specific opportunities in the ports. Two specialist areas, carriages and harness, and watches, instruments and toys account for 8 per cent of manufacturing.

Southampton was famous for its coach making, reflected in the carriages and harness subcategory, as the indentures include eight boys bound as coach builders in the town.²⁶⁵ During the 1830/40s the Corporation indentured boys to John Aslatt and Richard Andrews, coach builders in Above Bar Street, generally with a premium of £5, again from its Municipal Charities pot.²⁶⁶ Half of these boys received consent from their mother or father, indicating that this was a desirable apprenticeship to attain. This subcategory also includes jobs such as saddler, there being four indentures for this trade. It also has one of the youngest apprentices to be indentured, and in the nineteenth century. Mary Green was just seven years old when she was indentured in 1810 to Daniel Hedges in Bristol as a whipmaker. The indenture was for 14 years, and she was sent from the Somerset parish of Compton Dando.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ CEC, *Second report 1843*, pp. d45-46.

²⁶⁵ Patterson, *Southampton*, p. 109.

²⁶⁶ SA, D/MC24/2, various dates, 1838-1843.

²⁶⁷ BRO, 5918/3, 29 June 1810.

Allen identified Lancashire as the centre of the watch and clock making industry during the industrial revolution, meeting both the rising consumer demand for watches and clocks, but also in making gears for textile machinery.²⁶⁸ Liverpool's watchmaking industry began in the eighteenth century and rivalled that of Geneva. 'For the construction of gold and silver watches and their movements, Liverpool and its vicinities are renowned'.²⁶⁹ As well as the finished articles, many individual parts were made and exported. Much of the industry was concentrated in the wider local area, in neighbouring Prescott, but there were also plenty of businesses in the centre; a city directory of 1857 listed over 150 watchmakers.²⁷⁰ However nationally there were very small numbers of children under 15 recorded in this industry, just 800 boys in the Census of 1851.²⁷¹

Liverpool has 23 indentures in this subcategory, with 21 being from LSV, which clearly contradicts Lane who argued that watchmaking was an exclusive trade, and that it 'almost excluded the parish apprentice'.²⁷² More likely, this industry suffered a similar fate to that of shoemaking, once exclusive and highly skilled, but as it expanded, the process subdivided and deskilled so more children could participate. The 21 LSV boys, ages 12-14, are testament to such deterioration: they were apprenticed after the New Poor Law, between 1841 and 1863, none came with a premium, and three were orphans. Most were apprenticed watchmakers in surrounding Lancashire, 8 into the local area (for example, 12 year old Thomas Prophet went five miles to Prescott for apprenticeship to John

²⁶⁸ R.C. Allen, 'Why the Industrial Revolution was British: Commerce, Induced Invention, and the Scientific Revolution', *Economic History Review*, vol. 64, 2 (2011), pp. 357-84, at p. 376.

²⁶⁹ H. Smithers, *Liverpool its Commerce, Statistics and Institutions, with a History of the Cotton Trade* (Thomas Kaye: Liverpool, 1825), p. 188.

²⁷⁰ Gore, *Liverpool*.

²⁷¹ C. Booth, *Occupations of the People of England, Scotland, Ireland 1841-1881* (London: Edward Stanford, 1886) [hereafter, Booth, *Occupations*], p. 12.

²⁷² Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 159.

Chew in 1856), and 10 a little further in the region, although the greatest distance was 20 miles to Ecclestone.²⁷³ There were just two placements in the port to related industries, such as 14 year old Edward Charles to William Hacking, who was a watch dial painter, apprenticed in 1852.²⁷⁴

3.1.3 Maritime occupations

It would be reasonable to assume maritime occupations provided employment for local children, indeed, Honeyman found that most boys from Hull's Sculwater parish were bound to shipbuilding and associated trades.²⁷⁵ Yet there are no specific RMA indentures to any maritime occupations, and the number of overall indentures to this subcategory in the sample is surprisingly low, 15, or just 3 per cent of the manufacture category. The absence of pauper and charity apprentices suggests that this market had no problem finding casual child labour for a daily rate; the various Children's Employment Commission reports on ropewalks and foundries support such a hypothesis.²⁷⁶ When conducting a study of Worcestershire pauper apprentices, Crompton similarly assumed indentures might have been to industries prominent in the local economy, such as the Kidderminster carpet trade, yet he also failed to find significant numbers assigned to unique local trades.²⁷⁷ Similarly, Levene observed that 'parish apprentices did not participate in the particular employment profile of their home city'. This was in context of her London Poor Law study which

²⁷³ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/192, 23 Dec. 1856.

²⁷⁴ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/98, 29 June 1852.

²⁷⁵ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 87.

²⁷⁶ CEC, *Second report 1843*; Children's Employment Commission (1862). Fifth report of the commissioners, PP 1866 (3678) [hereafter, CEC 1862, *Fifth report 1866*].

²⁷⁷ Crompton, *Workhouse*, pp. 18-19.

identified low placements into dealing, despite it being one of the largest sectors of employment in London.²⁷⁸

Of the maritime related trade indentures identified, these were predominantly for boys, with only one girl bound. The most frequent occupation in the Shipbuilding subcategory was that of blockmaker, which attracted six charity boys, five in Southampton with a £5 premium from the Thorner charity, and one in Bristol placed by the Gloscestershire [*sic*] Society. The ambiguity of this occupation was observed in Chapter 2, but as noted, since one of the Thorner boys was sent to Deptford in Kent for his apprenticeship, another port area, and all six indentures are from the late eighteenth century, it is likely that blockmaker was the traditional maritime skill connected to boat building, making the blocks that guided rope and assisted with the hoisting process.²⁷⁹

There are some good examples of nineteenth century indentures to very traditional maritime trades, such as two from Bristol's St Mary Redcliffe parish: in 1829 Joseph Clark was apprenticed to William Cook as a sailmaker, and in 1834 James Hunt to Charles Hill, a shipwright, unusually with both a £4 premium, and a full-term wages provision (5s at the end of first two years, 6s at the end of years three and four, 7s years five and six, and 8s at the end of the last year).²⁸⁰ In Southampton in 1825, the Corporation apprenticed Frank Abbee to William Tubby, a boat builder.²⁸¹ But such examples are few and far between; it would appear that non-maritime connected traditional occupations provided more opportunities for apprenticeship.

²⁷⁸ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 928.

²⁷⁹ See p. 60.

²⁸⁰ BRO, P.St MR/OP/3/e, 28 Oct. 1829; P.St MR/ChW/14/f, 11 July 1834.

²⁸¹ SA, SC/AG/1/3, 7 Nov. 1825.

One of the maritime industries featured in the Children's Employment Commissions were ropewalks. They were a common sight in port towns; narrow, long and straight, with the machinery at one end. Children were employed to turn the wheels that twisted the strands of rope together. The fifth report of Children's Employment Commission examined the industry in Bristol, and noted that: 'An unemployed child at 8 years would, the relieving officer says, be required to work, if his family applied for relief'.²⁸² This is a statement by a Poor Law official from as late as 1866! But generally this was not an industry that supported apprenticeships, as there were only two bindings to ropemakers: in 1781 Thomas Snape was sent from Freckleton in Lancashire to George Kelly, a ropemaker in Liverpool, for seven years; and in 1801 Southampton's All Saints parish apprenticed John Barnett to John Major for seven years. Barnett did not complete his indenture; five years into the apprenticeship, Major informed the court that Barnett had absented himself from service, and he did not believe that the boy would return.²⁸³

In conclusion, ropewalks were more suited for casual child labour on daily rates, as detailed in the reports; it was explicitly a children's occupation, with no skill to be learnt as a child could 'learn the ropes' almost immediately, hence no requirement for apprenticeships. Clearly there were plenty of children working in port towns, as the reports demonstrate child in-migration from other areas to obtain work in Liverpool, refuting historians' claims that there was no employment in the city; children are listed from Scotland, Ireland, Hull, Shields, Macclesfield, Plymouth and Bolton.²⁸⁴ But maritime industries were not ripe with pauper apprenticeship opportunities.

²⁸² CEC 1862, *Fifth report 1866*, p. 103.

²⁸³ SA, SC9/4/781, 6 Jan. 1806.

²⁸⁴ CEC, *Second report 1843*, Appendix M40-45.

3.1.4 Other

There are two other smaller subcategories to note. Baking consists of both bakery and confectionary, with only 13 children apprenticed, just 3 per cent of all traditional occupations. The majority of these were New Poor Law placements by the LSV. Predominantly boys, just two girls were apprenticed in this subcategory, both to confectioners, one from LSV and the other a charity girl of Southampton's RMA; 13 year old Whilemina [sic] May was sent to William Walker of Bolton, 188 miles away.²⁸⁵ There is only one premium, a £5 Thorner charity boy to a baker in 1782.²⁸⁶ Locations are evenly split between six remaining in port, with another six apprenticed in the local area/region.

Finally, there are surprisingly few indentures to traditional cloth manufacture such as hand spinning and weaving. Doubtless this probably reflects the opportunities offered by batch apprenticeship to the factories, as will be demonstrated in a later chapter. Only six children were apprenticed to such trades, three of whom were girls from the RMA, sent to a Lancashire weaver in 1824.

3.1.5 Domestic Service

Abiding by the Armstrong/Booth classifications, this section examines what is traditionally thought of as domestic service, indoor service, i.e. servants working in the home, but also the subcategory of extra service which covers service industries such as hairdressing and chimney sweeps. Table 3.5 below illustrates the composition of this category.

²⁸⁵ TNA, WO143/52/1093, 5 June 1823.

²⁸⁶ SA, D/TH 56/60, 15 Nov. 1782.

In terms of the traditional occupations sector, 476 indentures make this the second largest category (in fact virtually equal to the largest, manufacture, with its 477 indentures) in the sector, and 28% of the entire sample. In sharp contrast to the manufacture category, domestic service was, as expected, dominated by girls; 411 indentures, 86 per cent, and by charitable indentures (88 per cent), in particular Southampton's RMA.

Table 3.5 Detailed breakdown of Domestic Service

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Extra Service | Barber | 3 |
| | Barber & peruke maker | 14 |
| | Chimney sweep | 3 |
| | Hairdresser | 28 |
| | Hairdresser & peruke maker | 1 |
| | Peruke maker | 6 |
| Extra Service Total | | 55 |
| Indoor Service | Housewifery | 50 |
| | Laundress | 5 |
| | Nurse | 1 |
| | Servant | 364 |
| | Widow | 1 |
| Indoor Service Total | | 421 |
| TOTAL | | 476 |

Source: Indenture data.

Extra service

There are 55 indentures in total for this subcategory, all boys, some 5 per cent of the total of traditional occupations (3 per cent of the entire sample), the majority for grooming, a term encompassing those engaged in hairdressing and wig making. Lane suggested that hairdressing was largely an urban occupation, and the evidence from the port towns certainly supports this, with 29 hairdressers and 23 barbers/peruke makers (or combination

of both), all boys.²⁸⁷ A peruke maker was a wig maker, and this and the term barber are found in Old Poor Law indentures, with the term hairdresser being used in the New Poor Law ones, reflecting the decline in wig use because of changing fashions and a tax levied on wig wearers from 1795 onwards.²⁸⁸

Under the Old Poor Law, barber and/or peruke maker was a popular occupation, 24 in total, with young children apprenticed: for example, in Bristol 1789, 10 year olds James and Samuel Joy (possibly twins) were both bound on the same day to barbers in the port parish of St Philip & St Jacob until they were 21, from a Gloucestershire parish in Bitton.²⁸⁹ The eighteenth-century barber and peruke maker indentures do evidence premiums being offered, both by charities and the Poor Law. The Lancashire parish of Kirkham sent six boys to Liverpool for this type of apprenticeship between 1767 and 1784, with an average premium of £3 6s 8d (although one was as high as £6 6s).²⁹⁰ Barbering was also an occupational destination for charity boys: for example, Southampton's Thorner Charity placed one boy in 1758 and three boys in 1771, all with premiums of £5.²⁹¹ Henry Gregson in Liverpool accepted two boys from Lancashire's Newton-with-Scales Blue School, Richard and John Mayson (also potential siblings), within a year of each other from 1759, again for a premiums of £5.²⁹²

‘All areas of the service sector underwent major expansion’, and hairdressing is an excellent illustration of this.²⁹³ Hairdressing was a recurring occupation in the LSV

²⁸⁷ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 126.

²⁸⁸ Duty on Hair Powder Act 1795 (35 Geo. III c. 49), repealed in 1869.

²⁸⁹ BRO, NPM/B/10/48-9, 11 May 1789.

²⁹⁰ LA, PR827, various dates, 1767-1784.

²⁹¹ SA, D/TH 56/10, 16, 17, 21, various dates, 1758-1771.

²⁹² LA, DDNW/9/10/BUNDLE, 1/34, 36, 1 May 1759, 2 June 1760.

²⁹³ <http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/introduction/summary.pdf> L. Shaw-Taylor and E.A. Wrigley, *The Occupational Structure of England c.1750-1871: A Preliminary Report* University of

indentures, 25 boys aged 11-14 under the New Poor Law between 1843 and 1870, 16 of whom were orphans, with a seven year term being the most frequent. Hairdressing provided local placements, as 19 apprentices remained in the port area itself, the rest within 3 miles, placed in neighbouring Poor Law union areas such as Toxteth and Everton. Moses Lansing typifies employers from the port. He received three boys from LSV, the first in 1855, 14 year old Henry Hurst for four years. In the last year of Henry's term of indenture he took another, 11 year old John Bond for six years in 1858, presumably training him up before the first boy left. In 1859 he also took on another boy. We know some detail about Lansing from the report prepared by the LSV prior to Bond's placement, as a magistrate's certificate was issued. It stated that Lansing was 37 years old and married; he lived at 128 Great Howard Street, with his premises down the road at 185.²⁹⁴ This location was just a stone's throw from Nelson and Bramley-Moore docks, built in 1848; therefore it is likely that many of the customers the boys would have attended to were sailors.

Bristol indentures also evidence this trade in the nineteenth century, for example, 13 year old William Howland was sent into the port in 1844 from Gloucestershire's St Mary's Olveston parish, just under 10 miles away.²⁹⁵ As with shoemaking, it would appear that this type of work suffered a decline in status. As illustrated above, during the eighteenth century premiums were offered with greater frequency; perhaps because of the association with wig making, barbering was viewed as a more skilled occupation. Again, most of the charity placements were for this period. But hairdressing became much less

Cambridge, Department of Geography, (date accessed: 29 September 2014, copy available from the author), p. 26.

²⁹⁴ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/222, 17 Aug. 1858.

²⁹⁵ BRO, P.OV/OP/14/42, 6 July 1844.

exclusive and like the clothing trades, adapted towards mass consumerism. The lower status of the trade in the nineteenth century was reflected in virtually non-existent premiums, largely in accordance with New Poor Law doctrine, and there is just a single example with a premium, 12 year old Edwin Tallemach was apprenticed with £3 15s to his master in Toxteth in 1849.²⁹⁶

Another branch of extra service was chimney sweeping, the plight of its employees particularly synonymous with the image of the child worker. Yet the actual numbers involved were tiny; for example, in the 1851 census, only 1,107 sweeps under 15 were recorded nationally.²⁹⁷ Despite being marginal, they were a highly visible workforce. Largely a trade associated with 'free' child labour, again, like ropemaking, this was a child-specific occupation requiring minimal training, and boys were let go as soon as they became too big. Yet there are still three indentures for chimney sweeps from the sources. Under the Old Poor Law in 1826, 10 year old Robert Coles was apprenticed in Bristol, with his father's consent, the very same year that Bristol's James Johnson proclaimed 'the Guardians of Bristol, from the most humane motives, refuse binding their children to this trade'.²⁹⁸ Recently van Manen has suggested that parishes in fact stopped binding children to this trade, as injuries and deformity from being an apprentice led to them becoming a burden on parish rates in later life, since they could not find employment or were not fit to work.²⁹⁹ Yet LSV placed two boys late in the period: 14 year old orphans John Parry (1865) and Edmund Kitts (1870) to sweeps in neighbouring areas of West Derby Poor Law

²⁹⁶ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/56, 18 Sept. 1849.

²⁹⁷ Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch', p. 238.

²⁹⁸ BRO, 22158, 13 Nov. 1826; Johnson, *Transactions*, p. 40.

²⁹⁹ N. van Manen, 'Agency and Reform: The Regulation of Chimney Sweep Apprentices, 1770-1840', in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, pp. 97-114, at pp. 103-4.

Union, Everton and Waterloo.³⁰⁰ The miserable status of the trade in Liverpool at this time was summarized by master sweep Francis Peacock to the 1863 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (“Royal Commission”): ‘I have bought lads myself. I used to give the parents so much a year for them. Sometimes they got £5, sometimes 50s, and sometimes they let you have them for nothing at all. In Liverpool, where there are lots of bad women, you can get any quantity you want’.³⁰¹ This would certainly explain a lack of bindings, as sweeps had no incentive to enter into such arrangements with such availability of free labour.

Indoor Service

Domestic service was the most recorded occupation in the 1851 census, over one million women and girls, with 61,000 under the age of 15 employed full-time; several studies have focussed entirely on this occupation.³⁰² As might be anticipated with an urban area, Kirby found a very high concentration in London: 59% of occupied females aged 10-14 were so employed.³⁰³ My evidence complements these findings, as there are 421 indentures, 39% of the traditional occupations sector (and one quarter of the overall sample), therefore a very significant subcategory. Reflecting the national trend, the indentures are dominated by girls, with just 10 boys recorded. Domestic service was tedious, heavy, unremitting toil, ‘shut away from private gaze and public conscience’.³⁰⁴ Despite its arduousness, service was seen as more respectable than other trades, as girls

³⁰⁰ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/415, 631, 5 Dec. 1865, 20 Dec. 1870.

³⁰¹ Children's Employment Commission (1862). First report of the commissioners. PP 1863 (3170), p. lxxxviii, para. 624.

³⁰² Booth, *Occupations*, p. 20; for studies, see W.F. Neff, *Victorian Working Women: An Historical and Literary Study of Women in British Industries and Professions, 1832-1850* (London: Cass, 1966); E.J. Higgs, 'Domestic Servants and Households in Rochdale, 1851-1871', University of Oxford, D.Phil., 1979.

³⁰³ Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch', p. 233.

³⁰⁴ J. Walvin, *A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood, 1800-1914* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982). p. 70.

were trained in the virtues of domestic management; it was an introduction to polite society life and manners and to the female destiny of wife/mother. Yet in reality this was only for a select few; although port towns had their share of wealthy merchants providing employment opportunities in their homes, the majority of girls slaved for middle and lower-class families as their single servant.

A significant point to note is that of the 421 indentures in this sector, only 15 were Poor Law apprentices. This type of placement was dominated by charity indentures, tying in with the notion of respectability noted above. Levene's study of London parishes under the Old Poor Law also illustrated a lack of placements, 4.5 per cent of her sample, despite, as she notes, the city employing large numbers of young girls on waged contracts.³⁰⁵ Many households did not want the stigma of being associated with a Poor Law apprentice, as exposure to the workhouse tainted children, whereas taking on a charity girl was perceived as an act of philanthropy. This is perhaps why there are so few Poor Law apprentices, and those who were placed as domestic servants were apprenticed to masters of low status, in some cases enduring terrible treatment. Prochaska has written about Poor Law girls' experiences as low paid domestics for tradesmen; these were basically people who would ordinarily have done their own housework therefore not of high status, and they treated girls as drudges.³⁰⁶ Stigma was not the only barrier to Poor Law girls being apprenticed. Contemporary comment acknowledged that the style of training received in a Poor Law institution was of little practical use, as it was essentially domestic work in the institution itself, and not relevant to private domestic conditions: 'These girls are sent out, as trained from domestic service; and, of course, are turned away from their places as

³⁰⁵ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 927.

³⁰⁶ Prochaska, *Philanthropy*, p. 149.

knowing nothing'.³⁰⁷ For example, some girls in this sample were apprenticed internally to the Matron of the RMA, but completing the indenture would not have necessarily equipped them for employment in a genteel household.

Domestic service encompassed several occupations, not just being a house servant. Housewifery accounted for 12 per cent of the indoor service subcategory, an eighteenth century term to describe the art of household management.³⁰⁸ Snell noted that those apprenticed to housewifery were for very low premiums, and it was not a trade associated with private apprenticeships.³⁰⁹ The role was very wide ranging: 'The housewife of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was assumed to live in a rural household, and was expected to be proficient in providing medical care, distilling, gardening, poultry farming, making butter and cheese, baking bread, brewing ale or beer, spinning and sewing'.³¹⁰

Although the apprenticeships in this sample took place in an urban setting, the girls would still have been expected to perform a wide range of tasks. Complementing Snell's research, this sample is also largely Old Poor Law, although there is one New Poor Law example: 13 year old Catherine Skelly was apprenticed to Jane Neale by LSV in 1844 for seven years. The placement was some six miles from the city centre to Great Crosby, which was more rural.³¹¹ In the eighteenth century, the Somerset parish of St Luke's Brislington, just three miles from Bristol's centre, apprenticed girls to housewifery, six

³⁰⁷ F.E. Bree, *On the training of young girls for domestic service in industrial schools* (London: n.p. 1872) [hereafter, Bree, *Domestic Service*], p. 6; Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty', p. 133.

³⁰⁸ Snell, *Annals*, p. 295.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

³¹⁰ J. Whittle, and E. Griffiths, 'Issues and Context', in J. Whittle and E. Griffiths (eds.), *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 1-26, at p. 12.

³¹¹ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/31, 1 June 1844.

girls between 1761 and 1793, all to male masters.³¹² Here we can see some examples of very young girls, and long terms of service. Sarah Huntington was just seven years old, apprenticed in 1793 until 21, to Samuel Huntington. The same surnames suggests that Sarah was working for a relative, perhaps even her father, but even so, this was still a child being indentured for 14 years.³¹³ In the same year, 10 year old Sarah Powell was apprenticed to John Cole ‘until 21 or married’.³¹⁴ Another Bristol placement affords us some insight into the sort of conditions these girls faced. In 1783, 13 year old Sarah Thomas was indentured to housewifery by Bristol Incorporation, placed with a ship’s carpenter and his wife in the parish of St Mary Redcliffe, until age 21. Her treatment resulted in a case being brought to the Quarter Sessions for violent abuse. Richard Wood was accused of ‘having several times violently beat and assaulted me without any Cause or provocation given [*sic*] you on my part’.³¹⁵ Unfortunately there is no record of the outcome, although she requested discharge from her indenture.

Housewifery also appears in the charitable indentures; between 1819 and 1825, 40 girls were apprenticed by the RMA, ages ranged between 12-14 and virtually all for much shorter terms than their Poor Law counterparts, just four years, despite the fact they were apprenticed at a similar age. Significantly, these girls travelled some great distances, with only two remaining in Southampton. Over half (25) were sent to London, nearly 70 miles from their home. Some were sent even further afield, to places such as Northumberland, Durham, Devon, Jersey; the furthest was to Lanarkshire in Scotland, over 300 miles away.

³¹² BRO, P.St LB/OP/15, various dates, 1761-93.

³¹³ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/114, 17 May 1793.

³¹⁴ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/118, 23 Jan. 1793.

³¹⁵ BRO, JQS/P/111, 24 Nov. 1783; Appeal 4 Aug. 1786

Another occupation was working as a laundress; just five girls, between 1823 and 1841, all from RMA, ages 13/14 for four years, and all to London.

Predictably the largest occupation within indoor service (86 per cent) is that of servant. Of 364 children apprenticed in total, just five were from the Poor Law. In the mid-eighteenth century, Everton parish apprenticed two girls to masters in Liverpool. One indenture notes the status of the master, illustrating the issues raised earlier that such apprenticeships were not to serve wealthy individuals: Margaret Appleton was apprenticed for 6 years for £2 10s, to a labourer.³¹⁶ Another eighteenth-century indenture from Bristol also gives details of the master; Ann Bartlett was bound to husbandman William Weymouth from St Luke's in Brislington, Somerset to Bristol, at just seven years old and until she was 21 or married. This is another example of a very young age and long term, with no apparent familial connection. Her indenture notes that her mother consented, Ann being one of three children and her father a seaman, having deserted the family.³¹⁷ Under the New Poor Law, there is only one example of this type of apprenticeship. In 1844 13 year old Caroline Levi was sent as a servant to Thomas Cowen in Toxteth by LSV.³¹⁸ The lack of Poor Law apprenticeships reflects the perceived status of servants, as discussed earlier; the girls had to fit into a household, therefore a certain level of respectability was required, which only charity girls were thought to possess. This did not stop the Bristol Guardians trying to aim for more placements though; in 1864, they wrote to the Poor Law Board requesting an exemption from an Order of 1856 requiring workhouse schooling, requesting instead a two month period of intensive domestic training as it would 'fit a Girl

³¹⁶ LRO, 354 EVE/5/338, 3 Dec. 1757.

³¹⁷ BRO, P.St LB/HM/12, 25 July 1787.

³¹⁸ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/34, 25 June 1844.

for the work which she will actually have to do when taken out of the Workhouse'.³¹⁹ The request was refused.

Many charitable institutions across the country trained young girls for domestic service, capitalising on the altruistic angle, but also to meet the 'insatiable demand for reliable servants'. Prochaska suggested that the reason many women were involved in such acts of benevolence by taking on a charitable child was due to the dearth of decent staff.³²⁰ Levene found that the Marine Society had a scheme for apprenticing girls as servants in the London area, and that just over two thirds of London Foundling Hospital apprentices were placed in domestic service.³²¹ Recent work has also indicated that the Foundling service apprenticeships continued through the nineteenth century.³²² All port cities had their various charitable orphan homes for girls. In Bristol, for example, there was the Hooks Mills Bristol Asylum for Poor Orphan Girls, established in 1795, where the girls learnt needlework, knitting and housework.³²³ There was also the Industrial Home for Destitute Girls in Hotwells in 1852, a Church of England charity for girls aged 6-12, training 24 girls for service.³²⁴

One such body in Liverpool was the Female Orphan Asylum, established in 1840 for the rescue of 150 girls. It took girls from the age of eight, Church of England by faith, and within seven miles of the city centre. Its discharge registers illustrate many girls were

³¹⁹ TNA, MH12/3867, 26 May 1864. Bristol MH12 files remain uncatalogued at TNA, so only date references can be provided. Liverpool and Southampton MH12 correspondence has been fully catalogued, thus Folio numbers are provided.

³²⁰ Prochaska, *Philanthropy*, p. 148.

³²¹ Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 32; Levene, 'Honesty', p. 190.

³²² J. Sheetz-Nguyen, *Victorian Women, Unwed Mothers and the London Foundling Hospital* (London: Continuum, 2012) [hereafter, Sheetz-Nguyen, *Unwed Mothers*], pp. 183-4 noted girls were apprenticed in 1850s-60s.

³²³ BRO, 40556/1, 1883.

³²⁴ C.J., Ellicott, Report of the Committee to Inquire into the Condition of the Bristol Poor (Bristol: P.S. King, 1885) [hereafter, Ellicott, *Report of the Bristol Poor*], p. 218.

apprenticed as domestic servants to individuals. Unlike the RMA's, which sought to have all of its girls apprenticed at 14, this Asylum's registers show that girls were often 16 or 17 when they left. Between 1840 and 1864, 471 girls were apprenticed, with just 24 girls aged 10-14 being placed. For example, Susannah Rush was apprenticed, aged 13, to Mrs Frances Williamson of Chester for five years. Both parents had died in 1847; her father had been a labourer, leaving six children, with her older sisters already placed in service. The asylum's notes state she was 'healthy, well disposed, rather quick temper'.³²⁵ Rush was sent to Chester but most girls stayed in Liverpool itself, although placements to Wirral were also frequent. The furthest a girl was sent was Manchester. Most of the girls were 14 when they left, but there are still three instances of younger girls, and in the second half of the nineteenth century: 10 year old Helen Fitzgerald in 1850; and 10 year old Helen Booth, and 11 year old Gemma Jordan, in 1864. The register records a happy ending for Fitzgerald as she was sent for by an aunt in New York who had not been aware of her parents' death and subsequent admission to the asylum.³²⁶

Service is the most frequently recorded form of apprenticeship in the registers of Southampton's RMA. Established in 1817 for the training of orphans, it was described in a travel guide of the time: 'This establishment consists of between three and four hundred children – orphans, or their father abroad upon foreign service, having lost their mothers. They are clothed, fed and instructed in religious principles with domestic duties. This is for girls, being a branch of a similar institution at Chelsea for boys'.³²⁷ Although we will see in a later chapter that they also made use of the Northern factories for mass

³²⁵ LRO, 362 SAL 9/1/1/132, 30 June 1853; 362 SAL 9/1/2, p. 35.

³²⁶ LRO, 362 SAL 9/1/1/53, 15 Aug 1850; 362 SAL 9/1/1/31, 14 Mar. 1864; 362 SAL 9/1/1/132, 18 Aug. 1864.

³²⁷ Andrews, *Southampton*, p. 33.

apprenticeships, domestic service was by far its biggest source of apprenticeships, 70 per cent of all bindings. As well as those noted above in housewifery placements, 61 per cent were servants (335 children, 9 of whom were boys from the early period of the institution in Southampton before it became for girls only). The boys were aged between 12 and 14, seven of whom were placed in the port, with some boys from the Chelsea branch also being sent. The remaining two boys were dispatched to another port, Liverpool.³²⁸ Although there was a handful of younger girls apprenticed aged 12 and under, such as Elizabeth Neil, bound in 1833 to a Mrs Morrison of London at just 11 years old, the overwhelming majority (284) were 14.³²⁹ Girls needed to be strong to perform this type of work; as noted in a contemporary pamphlet discussing training for service, they needed to be able to ‘lift a boiler, handle a broom, stand all day at a washtub, and do other things which small children cannot accomplish’.³³⁰

Around 10 per cent of the opportunities for the girls were in the locality; 20 girls remained in the port, with a further 16 in the local area and region (this includes two girls sent to the Isle of Wight). In contrast, some of the girls were sent far and wide. Two girls were sent to Paris: in 1827, 14 year old Mary Ann Rowatt was apprenticed to Dr Chermiside in the heart of the city at Rue Taitbout, aged 14 for four years; when arranging the apprenticeship it was stated that ‘you must send a proper person to receive her’.³³¹ And in 1839, 13 year old Ann Doran was also sent to Paris for four years.³³² There are examples of placements even further afield; 13 year old Ann Dougherty to Jamaica in 1828; and the year before, Sir George Robinson requested an apprentice to accompany him

³²⁸ See p. 68.

³²⁹ TNA, WO143/52/1538, 25 Apr. 1833.

³³⁰ Bree, *Domestic Service*, pp. 12-13.

³³¹ TNA, WO143/61, 19 Feb 1827, p. 119; WO143/52/1218, 3 Mar. 1827.

³³² TNA, WO143/52/1713, 16 Apr. 1839.

to China! The process and outcome of this is detailed further below in the discussion regarding distances.³³³

3.1.6 Dealing

A key feature of urban centres was the opportunity to indenture to retail trades. Table 3.6 below illustrates where such opportunities lay. There were 47 children indentured to the category of dealing, with principal trades being pawnbroking, food retail and drapery. A further 17 children were apprenticed to the hybrid category of manufacture/dealing, either to learn the dual trade of tailor and draper (11) or baking combined with grocery (6). In total the two categories combined account for 6 per cent of traditional occupations.

³³³ TNA, WO143/61, 8 June 1827, p. 132; WO143/52/1270, 13 June 1827.

Table 3.6 Detailed breakdown of Dealing

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dress | Draper | 3 |
| | Hosier | 1 |
| Dress Total | | 4 |
| Food | Butcher | 1 |
| | Grocer | 9 |
| | Mealman | 1 |
| | Victualler | 1 |
| | Provision dealer | 1 |
| Food Total | | 13 |
| Furniture | Pawnbroker | 19 |
| General Dealers | Chandler | 1 |
| Household Utensils & Ornaments | Ironmonger | 2 |
| Stationery & Publications | Bookseller | 2 |
| | Stationer | 1 |
| Stationery & Publications Total | | 3 |
| Tobacco | Tobacconists | 2 |
| Unspecified | General Dealer | 1 |
| | Merchant | 1 |
| Unspecified Total | | 2 |
| Wines, Spirits & Hotels | Spirit merchant | 1 |
| Baking/Food | Baker & grocer | 2 |
| | Baker & provision dealer | 1 |
| | Grocer & baker | 2 |
| | Grocer & provision dealer | 1 |
| Baking/Food Total | | 6 |
| Dress | Tailor & draper | 11 |
| TOTAL | | 47 |

Source: Indenture data.

Levene's study of London also found dealing as a destination for pauper apprenticeships, 4.5 per cent of her sample.³³⁴ The shops themselves varied greatly, there were those on main roads in the centre of town which served the merchant classes, or some were 'smaller general shops run by and for the poorer classes. Sometimes these had formal premises, but many may have just been part of a room at the back of a house'.³³⁵

Children working in shops were largely neglected in the various parliamentary investigations into child labour; yet often the work was more arduous than factories, in terms of hours and physicality. The autobiography of Jack Jones, for example, (who later became an MP), gives some insight into conditions on the shop floor, which would have been universal to all young employees. At age 11, Jack started working as a draper in Liverpool, with hours of 8am-8pm, with two more hours after the shop closed delivering parcels.³³⁶ Drapers sold wool and cloth, a trade which took a steady stream of apprentices from LSV; 14 children (11 as tailors and drapers) six based in the city centre with the rest locally or further afield, deeper into the Lancashire region, in places such as Rossendale and Burnley. George Ford was typical of the LSV apprentices to drapery, bound age 14 in 1857. His indenture notes that his mother had left him four years earlier to go to America.³³⁷ Another popular retail occupation was pawnbroking. LSV apprenticed 19 children ages 12-14, to pawnbroking, 11 of whom were based in the city and the rest locally in Lancashire. Nine of the children were specifically recorded as being orphans, and 11 indentures had accompanying magistrates' certifications, the significance of which

³³⁴ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 927.

³³⁵ S. Haggerty, 'Women, Work and the Consumer Revolution: Liverpool in the Late Eighteenth Century', in J. Benson and L. Ugolini (eds.), *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Five Centuries of British Retailing* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2003), p. 112.

³³⁶ J.J. Jones, *My Lively Life* (London: J. Long, 1928), p. 16.

³³⁷ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/209, 8 Sept. 1857.

is discussed below. Unusually one boy, 14 year old James Dickinson, was apprenticed with a premium of £3 15s to George Kewley in 1850.³³⁸ Grocery is a particularly interesting trade to consider, as a child needed to be able to count and write in order to price and weigh items; for this reason Lane argued that it was rare for paupers to be apprenticed to bakery or butchery.³³⁹ However, my evidence shows such apprenticeships did take place. There are 12 grocers, with a further 6 for grocery combined with an aspect of food manufacture, such as bakery. Again most are New Poor Law apprentices from the LSV, with seven placed in port and others to Wirral and Lancashire; however, there are four indentures under the Old Poor Law for Bristol and Southampton, two for each port, with occupational titles such as butchery and victualing.

It was not just the LSV that apprenticed children to retail trades under the New Poor Law. Southampton Corporation also did so, charging their Municipal Charities fund for any required premiums. There are four indentures between 1838 and 1842, two to ironmongery and two to bookselling; in 1839 John Gouk was apprenticed to Messrs Lankester as an ironmonger with a premium of £5, his father, a labourer, having consented.³⁴⁰ Levene noted that contemporaneous opinion did not hold retail in high stead: ‘An eighteenth-century manual of trades disparaged apprenticeships in retail, for example, which was a common source of employment for poor children’. The guide was critical about the prospects for a boy, as he was not learning a skill from which he could later command a living, hence perhaps it was associated with poorer children.³⁴¹

³³⁸ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/64, 20 Apr. 1850.

³³⁹ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 118.

³⁴⁰ SA, D/MC24/2, 16 Dec. 1839.

³⁴¹ A. Levene, 'Pauper Apprenticeship in England', in H. Hindman (ed.), *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey* (Armonk: M.E.Sharpe, 2009) [hereafter, Levene, 'Pauper Apprenticeship

Although in theory they would have been equipped to establish their own business, it is doubtful pauper children would have been able to acquire the capital required.

3.1.7 Building

With 39 indentures, this category accounts for 4 per cent of traditional occupations, and predictably all were boys. Table 3.7 below illustrates the composition of the sample; carpenters, joiners and combination thereof making up half this category.

Table 3.7 Detailed breakdown Building

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Management | Estate Agent | 2 |
| Operative | Bricklayer | 7 |
| | Carpenter | 12 |
| | Hellier & plumber | 1 |
| | Joiner | 2 |
| | Joiner & carpenter | 6 |
| | Painter | 4 |
| | Painter | 1 |
| | Painter & bookbinder | 1 |
| | Painter & plasterer | 1 |
| | Plumber & glazier | 1 |
| | Stonemason | 1 |
| Operative Total | | 37 |
| TOTAL | | 39 |

Source: Indenture data.

Other dominant trades within the operative subcategory include bricklaying (7) and various painters (7). Of the 12 apprentice carpenters in the sample, all were placed within Bristol and Southampton, both in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and largely by

England’], pp. 549-51, at p. 551 citing R Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1969 [1747]), pp. 282-3.

charities. Similarly, all six joiner/carpenters were from the Southampton Thorner charity, with the customary £5 premium. One New Poor Law indenture is notable for having a premium; in 1836 St James Westerleigh parish in Gloucester sent Henry Roger 10 miles into Bristol to train as a carpenter under Robert Drew, with a £5 premium noted as being paid by a Robert Mayfield. There are no details of Mayfield's connection with the boy, but a note stated that his father, a miner, had consented.³⁴² The bricklaying indentures are from the eighteenth century, all seven for various Southampton charities, all with premiums. The Corporation administered Mills' and Seale's charities placing two boys into this occupation, with one indenture specifying 45s premium and hours of work 5am-7pm.³⁴³ Painting is an occupation which occurs in New Poor Law indentures; five LSV boys into the regions, Lancashire and Cheshire, and one Southampton boy remaining in port, apprenticed in 1841 with a £5 premium from the Corporation's Municipal Charities fund.³⁴⁴

3.1.8 Agriculture

Although nationally this category was still the largest employer of boys late into the nineteenth century, there are just 13 agricultural indentures, 1 per cent of traditional occupations, and all Poor Law apprentices; again those that were indentured were boys.³⁴⁵

Table 3.8 below provides a breakdown of the category.

³⁴² BRO, P.W/OP/15/217, 30 May 1836.

³⁴³ SA, SC 10/5/6, 21 Jan. 1766.

³⁴⁴ SA, D/MC24/2, 18 Jan. 1841.

³⁴⁵ Kirby, *Child Labour*, p. 52; Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch', p. 242; Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 334; N. Verdon, 'Child Work in Agriculture in Britain', in H. Hindman (ed.), *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey* (Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 2009) [hereafter, Verdon, 'Agriculture'], pp. 558-62, at p. 559.

Table 3.8 Detailed breakdown of Agriculture

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Farming | Farmer | 6 |
| | Gardener | 2 |
| | Market gardener | 1 |
| | Yeoman | 1 |
| Farming Total | | 10 |
| Fishing | Fisherman | 3 |
| TOTAL | | 13 |

Notes:

1) Fishing subcategory considered in ch. 4, see p.180.

Source: Indenture data.

The lack of agricultural indentures undoubtedly relates to the urban context of the parishes and unions researched. Of those apprenticed, farming was the most popular occupation, six boys were sent under the New Poor Law by LSV to farms in surrounding Lancashire, all but one within 20 miles of the port. Tasks for these boys might have included field work such as bird scaring, picking potatoes, hoeing, bundling hay and harvesting, and duties with the animals.³⁴⁶ Girls were also sent to farms to work; as discussed below, three girls were sent by Southampton Corporation in 1850 to a farm in Timsbury, just under 10 miles away into Hampshire.³⁴⁷ Gardening was another occupation that attracted apprentices. Under the Old Poor Law in 1784, two ten year old boys, William and Samuel Haynes, presumably brothers, were sent to gardener Isaac Martin of St George's parish on the outskirts of Bristol, apprenticed until 24.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Burnette, 'Child Day-Labourer's, pp. 1080-1; Verdon, 'Agriculture', p. 558.

³⁴⁷ TNA, MH12/10999/273, Folios 589-90, 30 July 1850.

³⁴⁸ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/108-9, 15 Oct. 1784.

3.1.9 Summary

The wealth of indentures examined above shows how crucial traditional occupations were as a destination for pauper apprenticeship, both charity and Poor Law, and not only from the eighteenth century, but persisting throughout the nineteenth century. The top three traditional trades of apprenticeship for each port are summarized in Tables 3.9 A and B below, largely displaying uniformity across the three ports. Table 3.9A shows that manufacture dominated for boys; shoemaker was the most frequently recorded trade for each port. Domestic service dominated the girls' indentures, as Table 3.9 B shows. The consistency of findings suggests the authenticity of the sample.

Table 3.9a Top three trades for males, by port

| | Bristol | | Liverpool | | Southampton |
|----|---|---|---------------------------------------|----|---|
| 1 | Shoemaker | 1 | Shoemaker | 1 | Shoemaker |
| 2= | Carpenter/joiner Hairdresser / Barber / Perukemaker | 2 | Tailor | 2 | Tailor |
| | | 3 | Hairdresser / Barber / Perukemaker | 3= | Carpenter/joiner Hairdresser / Barber / Perukemaker |

Source: Indenture data.

Table 3.9b Top three trades for females, by port

| | Bristol | | Liverpool | | Southampton |
|----|-----------------------|----|-------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Housewife | 1 | Domestic Servant | 1 | Domestic Servant |
| 2= | Staymaker Engraver | 2= | Housewife Dressmaker | 2 | Housewife |
| | | | | 3 | Dressmaker |

Source: Indenture data.

The top 3 trades clearly show the importance of the manufacture and domestic service categories in providing apprenticeships; these two categories account for 90 per cent of all

traditional occupations, 389 Poor Law and 581 charity. The manufacture category plainly demonstrates the significance of traditional processes of production, in particular illustrating the continuance and endurance of such methods, despite the rapid mechanization of many industries during this period. Children were being placed in smaller workshops late into the nineteenth century, and as highlighted in Chapter 1, with little regulatory protection.³⁴⁹ Although the local maritime economy may have provided work for children in the casual labour market, on the basis of this evidence it did not provide a wealth of opportunities; rather it was actually the traditional trades such as dress, wood work and metals that provided openings for charities and Poor Law officials to indenture their children. This conclusion is further supported by the number of indentures to the Building trades, again all employing traditional methods and techniques.

The survival of traditional occupations and their vitality in pauper apprenticeship fits with the wider historiography of the industrial revolution discussed in the introduction, supporting Humphries' contention cited in Chapter 1 that factories were 'but tiny islands of modernity'.³⁵⁰ It accords with Crafts and Harley downgrading the dominance of large-scale manufacture and emphasizing the continuation of traditional labour processes.³⁵¹ These findings complement research from other urban settings; it is interesting to note that of the top three trades Levene found for the Foundling Hospital apprentices in London, two are reflected in the port findings; tailoring was the most common occupation, followed by weaving and shoemaking. She noted that these were all 'fairly impoverished trades', as discussed earlier with regard to shoemaking, and that just as this study shows, they were

³⁴⁹ See p. 12.

³⁵⁰ See p. 14.

³⁵¹ Crafts, *British Economic Growth*; Harley, 'British Industrialization'; C.K. Harley and N.F.R. Crafts, 'Simulating the Two Views of the British Industrial Revolution', *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 60, 3 (2000), pp. 819-41.

trades ‘not characteristic of the burgeoning industrial sector’.³⁵² Kirby’s study of London also confirmed the dominance of conventional trades.³⁵³ Under the New Poor Law, in Worcestershire, Crompton found pauper boys being indentured to traditional occupations and girls to service between 1837 and 1871.³⁵⁴ More generally, Mokyr has also emphasized that during this period nationally ‘the biggest employers of children were still traditional non-factory occupations: farms, artisans, and service industries’.³⁵⁵ Domestic service was indeed a very significant area of pauper apprenticeship, with the important qualification of it absorbing young girls from charitable institutions, essentially confirming a story that is already well known; what is less common knowledge, and has been identified here, is the importance of hairdressing as a source of pauper apprenticeship for young boys. Officials also apprenticed children to dealing trades, making the most of the retail economy found in such urban centres.

My evidence highlights much overlooked destinations of pauper apprenticeships, which would not be recognized as significant on a national scale, but nevertheless were clearly important in an urban context, emphasizing the importance of micro studies to gain better insight into the lives of working children. These findings very much echo Goose’s conclusion from his detailed studies of child labour in Hertfordshire during this period, that there were a ‘variety of childhood employments in mid-Victorian England, for the expansion of old crafts and trades alongside the development of new ones, and the rapidly burgeoning urban sector alongside an agrarian one as yet only in the early stages of decline

³⁵² Levene, ‘Charity Apprenticeship’, p. 54.

³⁵³ Kirby, ‘Statistical Sketch’, p. 242.

³⁵⁴ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 215.

³⁵⁵ Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 334; Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’, p. 916.

– the very diversity that is now seen as characteristic of the whole process of industrialization – had implications too for child employment’.³⁵⁶

This rich material invites scrutiny, through the framework of five themes, the first of which is to explore the actual process and mechanics of establishing a pauper apprenticeship within these kinds of occupations. As outlined in Chapter 1, in the following chapters these themes will also be explored in the context of the other two sectors of pauper apprenticeship, the sea and factory work, finishing with wider discussion that will consider all three sectors together in relation to these same themes.

3.2 The apprenticeship process

Before being apprenticed, children residing in charitable homes or the workhouse generally received some form of training, whether specific formal instruction, or simply performing manual work. Although, as Levene noted, in the eighteenth century there were some experimental schemes for institutional training, the focus was on manual labour.³⁵⁷ For example, Liverpool workhouse was rebuilt in 1771 as a ‘house of industry’, one of the largest in the country employing adults and children in manual tasks for commercial profit. Similarly in the Bristol workhouse, girls laboured 10.5 hours a day in unskilled trades such as pin making and oakum picking.³⁵⁸ A memorandum refers to a ‘general rule for all Children, to work at that Branch of pin making, one Month, before they have any [sic] Reward, as Being part of anprentisship [sic].’³⁵⁹ The entries record children being paid a couple of shillings. The ethos behind these schemes was to ensure that pauper children did not become idle and therefore unprepared for the world of work, a topic of national

³⁵⁶ Goose, ‘Hertfordshire’, p. 175.

³⁵⁷ Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 107.

³⁵⁸ E.E. Butcher, (ed.), *Bristol Corporation of the Poor; Selected Records, 1696-1834* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1932) [hereafter, Butcher, *Bristol Corporation*], pp. 6-7.

³⁵⁹ BRO, 3740, 1779-1780.

concern; in 1796, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce offered a prize of 50 guineas for an essay on the best means of employing the poor in the workhouse. The winning entry suggested young children should pick oakum, spin flax and 'be fitted for servants, and domestic occupations, they should be instructed in plain needlework' thus 'employing their time to future advantage'³⁶⁰ In the various districts Honeyman examined, she also found evidence of children working in workhouses picking oakum, spinning, carding and glovemaking.³⁶¹

During the nineteenth century there was a shift towards more structured, purposeful training rather than, in essence, slave labour. Charitable institutions led the way, particularly for domestic service; as discussed earlier, both the RMA in Southampton and the Female Orphan Asylum in Liverpool trained their girls for this role. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Poor Law was also acknowledging the benefits of prior training. Sheldon identified that because of the stricter terms of the New Poor Law, far more children were coming into institutional care as their families were forced into the workhouse.³⁶² In 1840, the number of children (under 16) nationally in workhouses was estimated at 64,570.³⁶³ Originally the New Poor Law was to move away from the system of apprenticeship completely, but the continued pressure on the Poor Law regime gave fresh impetus to the concept of training for future life; but rather than spending money on apprenticeship premiums, it was to be diverted to schooling children for work, thus negating the need for payments as the child would already be trained. In 1841, a seminal report on the training of pauper children was published; the author, Kay, believed that

³⁶⁰ J.M. Good, *Dissertation on the Best Means of Maintaining and Employing the Poor in the Parish Workhouse* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1798), pp. 20-1.

³⁶¹ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 21

³⁶² Sheldon, 'Home', p. 259.

³⁶³ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. iii.

children were idle in the workhouse and needed direction, away from the influence of adults that were a burden on the Poor Law system, as ‘no care had been taken to form habits of industry and good conduct’.³⁶⁴

LSV was one of the first to adopt this new thinking; in 1843 work began building an industrial school in Kirkdale on the edge of town. Two years later, in May 1845, pupils (aged 9-16) numbered 136 boys, 80 girls.³⁶⁵ The school was later featured in the Illustrated London News in 1850:

*‘At present it [the school] contains 1,123 children, of whom 640 are boys, and 483 girls; the number is limited to 1,150. The annual cost to the parish for their support and education is £10,483 1s. 9d...The trades which the boys are taught are tailoring, shoemaking, and carpentering. The girls are instructed in knitting and needlework, in washing, ironing, mangling, cooking, and general household work, to qualify them for domestic servants. For such of the boys as exhibit an inclination to go to sea, instruction is also provided...No compulsion is exercised upon them as to the trade which they shall learn. It is found, that, next to the sea, the tailoring business is the most popular among them. On the day of our visit we were introduced to an assemblage of about forty young tailors, sitting cross-legged, in the approved fashion, and all being engaged, under the superintendence of a foreman, to mending clothes for the whole establishment. The establishment...is admirably conducted, and is a model of order and cleanliness’.*³⁶⁶

The school was successful in securing apprenticeships; as noted earlier, 355 children (14 and under) were apprenticed to traditional occupations, and as will be illustrated in later chapters, children were also indentured to factories and the sea. Clearly the school was a key strategy for LSV; a minute of 1853 signals further emphasis and expansion: ‘That it be

³⁶⁴ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 26.

³⁶⁵ TNA, MH12/5967, Folio 225, 24 May 1845.

³⁶⁶ *Illustrated London News*, vol. XVI, 423 (27 Apr. 1850), p. 296.

an instruction from this Board to the School Committee to take in their early consideration how far and by what means the industrial training of the children may be extended and improved'.³⁶⁷ From 1857 industrial schools gained state recognition and funding and by 1861 there were 18 certified establishments: 11 in London, 2 in Liverpool, 2 in Bristol (Bristol Industrial School for Boys (later relocated and renamed Clifton) opened 1859, Park Row, also for boys from 1859), and 1 in each of Manchester, York and Newcastle.³⁶⁸ There is also reference to an industrial school in the St Mary's area of Southampton, the Crabniton Industrial National School.³⁶⁹

How were apprenticeships organized? A later chapter on factory apprenticeships will show that there were specific procedures to effect those placements, similarly with boys sent to sea. But what methods were used to attract masters from traditional occupations? What parties were involved in procuring a situation, was it just officials, or also parents, and even children themselves?

Advertising was a simple, yet effective method. For example, a Bristol inn keeper wrote to the officers of Wells St Cuthbert parish in Somerset in June 1816, in direct response to a newspaper advert placed by them in the Bristol press. He requested two apprentices, a boy of 12-14 of 'lively disposition' to learn the trade of a brush and bobbin turner, and a girl 12-14 to 'be brought up under my Cook'.³⁷⁰ The RMA also considered

³⁶⁷ LRO, 353 SEL 1/1, p. 179, 11 Oct.1853.

³⁶⁸ Sheldon, 'Home', pp. 257-62; 18 establishments were cited in Royal Commission on Education, *Report of the Commissioners appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England* (London: H.M.S.O., 1861), p. 399; Bristol establishments cited in Ellicott, *Report of the Bristol Poor*, p. 220.

³⁶⁹ https://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/John%20Colson2_tcm46-308801.pdf R. Preston, 'John Colson: the Southampton works of a Winchester architect 1850-78', *Southampton Occasional Papers* No. 4 (June, 2011), (date accessed: 29 September 2014, copy available from the author), p. 2. There is some ambiguity as although it opened as a school in 1856, the industrial department was not in 'full operation' when inspected in 1858.

³⁷⁰ SALS, DP\w.st.c/13/6, 11 June 1816.

deploying this tactic, their correspondence is rather revealing about their attitudes towards the girls: ‘I have had several applications for apprentices lately. It strikes me, that if you approved of it, that when you advertise for Provisions. [sic] If you were to add, that apprentices Girls [sic] might be had, by respectable persons, from this asylum, by application to The Commandant. This will not cause any additional expense, and may be of service, in disposing of the Girls’.³⁷¹ However, there is no evidence they pursued this; correspondence evidences that their preferred method was to be sent to a family member at age 14: ‘The Girls are always delivered to the Parents, when they demand them, if they can obtain a Certificate, they are apprenticed, if not they are sent to them Clothed as an apprentice’.³⁷² As a subsequent chapter will demonstrate, if they were not apprenticed to their family, alternatives were found, either as servants to other masters, or to the factories.

Pauper apprenticeship is often associated with orphans. There are 176 traditional occupations’ indentures that specifically record whether the child was an orphan; and they are all LSV children under the New Poor Law. One example highlights how the term ‘orphan’ needs to be considered carefully, as it does not necessarily denote that the child was parentless. John Moragea’s indenture by LSV records him as an orphan even though his mother was in fact alive; it was noted ‘Mother disqualified to give such consent being a lunatic’.³⁷³ There are also a number of examples of parents leaving their child to go to America; in 1851, John Cameron, was apprenticed for 7 years to a tailor outside the parish, having been abandoned. A similar situation occurred for Henry Porter; originally from Leeds, his parents left him in Liverpool workhouse while they continued on to America. He was apprenticed in 1844, to a shoemaker – in Leeds! This is a great example of the

³⁷¹ TNA, WO143/62, 23 Feb. 1835, p. 157.

³⁷² TNA, WO143/61, 10 July 1828, p. 188.

³⁷³ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/382, 17 May 1864.

Poor Law transferring the burden where it was rightfully due; settlement issues arising from apprenticeships are examined below. In fact, Porter was one of the few voluntary Poor Law apprentices; perhaps he had wanted to return to familiar territory, or still had wider kin in the town.³⁷⁴ In cases of parental abandonment, Guardians stated ‘the consent of the father and mother is not required they having for the space of six calendar months, before the time of the execution here of, deserted the said child’.³⁷⁵ The child was then treated effectively as an orphan. The indentures show that orphans were apprenticed to all trades, but in particular to the dress trades: shoemaking (33) and tailoring (29).

Sometimes the indentures also record whether or not a parent, or another responsible adult, consented to the binding; 45 fathers and 35 mothers are noted. For Poor Law children who had parents, the level of parental involvement in the binding process is unclear; at its worst, consent was simply under duress in exchange for relief: ‘Pauper parents had little room for negotiation’.³⁷⁶ Occasionally we gain a glimpse into the circumstances that led to parents consenting; in 1856, Catherine Holmes agreed to her 13 year old son Peter Connolly being bound to a shoemaker in Birkenhead. The certificate stated ‘father is dead, his mother married a second time, her husband shoemaker, poor and in bad health’.³⁷⁷ It would seem Holmes had little option; contrast to the boys in the following chapter whose parents directly requested sea apprenticeships for their sons. Recent literature has also emphasized the concept of agency in the children being placed, recognising that they may have been actively involved in securing their own placement.³⁷⁸ Whether or not an indenture was actually entered into voluntarily is debatable. Charitable

³⁷⁴ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/4, 10 June 1844.

³⁷⁵ LRO, 353 12/1/160, 179, 21 Nov. 1854, 22 July 1856.

³⁷⁶ Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’, p. 918.

³⁷⁷ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/180, 5 Aug. 1856.

³⁷⁸ Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 264.

bindings were all entered into in this manner, and in some circumstances, there were also voluntary indentures for the Poor Law; 37 LSV children, largely to shoemakers. The lure of the sea may well have drawn young boys to it; whether being a shoemaker had the same appeal seems doubtful.

A distinct difference between Poor Law and charity methods in placing children relates to the idea of what Levene termed ‘social capital’.³⁷⁹ She argued that charities tried to invest in children’s future and improve their status and prospects, working with the parents to achieve this aim. In this sample there is a small amount of evidence to support this, as there are 10 charitable apprenticeships for which the father’s occupation is known; these are all smaller charities administered by the Southampton Corporation Municipal Charities fund. In most cases, the status of the occupation the child is placed into is higher than their father’s, for example: labourer’s son to a coach builder; shoemaker’s son to a bookseller; tailor’s son to a carver. This suggests there was an active policy to enable these poor children, which was not a consideration under the Poor Law; as discussed below, this was particularly so under the New Poor Law.

Children were also bound to relatives in this sector, which perhaps implies more consent on the part of both parties; 21 indentures state a family connection, 17 of which to their father, one to a father-in-law, one to a sister and two to a mother. A further 134 traditional occupation indentures appear to have a potential familial connection based on surname match, whether apprenticed to father/male relative or mother/female relative; thus in total, apprenticing to kin accounts for 9 per cent of the entire sample. The vast majority were charitable bindings, but seven of the potential kin placements were under the Poor

³⁷⁹ Levene, ‘Charity Apprenticeship’, pp. 47-8.

Law; from St Luke's Brislington parish, the Huntington children were apprenticed in 1793 to two male masters in Bristol; the two sisters as housewives, and two brothers as basket makers, to James and Samuel Huntington. Clearly this must be some sort of family connection; however, the other three examples are less certain as very common surnames, therefore could just be coincidental. Either way, from this evidence apprenticeship to kin under the Poor Law was very rare.

In her study of London, almost twice the size of this sample, under the Old Poor Law Levene found 37 possible kin placements based on apprentice and master having the same surname, with a further 11 noted as being bound to wider family, equating to 1 per cent of her sample.³⁸⁰ From autobiographies, Humphries established that just over 8 per cent were bound to their fathers, and 9 per cent to uncles.³⁸¹ Southampton's charities were the main sources of apprenticing to kin. For example, 18 of the Thorner indentures specifically stated the family member, and a further 2 also had same surname, accounting for just over 20 per cent of their bindings. For the RMA, as detailed above, apprenticeship to family was the preferred mode of disposal, 62 to mothers/female relatives, 58 to fathers/male relatives, accounting for 22 per cent of their total bindings.³⁸² However, their girls were not always placed with their family; poor Margaret Cutts was 'now of age to quit the Asylum and request instructions how she is to be disposed of'. She was placed into service of Henry Kingsmill of Southampton.³⁸³ Cutts had wished to be sent to her father, stationed in 'Van Dieman's Land' (Tasmania, Australia) but as no arrangements were made to facilitate her passage there was 'no alternative but to bind her as an

³⁸⁰ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 935.

³⁸¹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 168.

³⁸² See p. 118.

³⁸³ TNA, WO143/61, 26 May 1828, pp. 184-5; WO143/52/1428, 25 Mar. 1828.

apprentice in the usual manner. It should however be stated in the Indenture, that circumstances in which she is faced and that she may be withdrawn on Legal application of the Father'.³⁸⁴ Unfortunately there is no further mention of this case so we are left wondering if she was ever reunited with him.

The next chapter will demonstrate that some potential masters were wary, to say the least, of taking on apprentices; as Chapter 4 will demonstrate, with regard to sea apprentices, legislation enabled Poor Law officials to enforce a binding. There were some powers available to officials to bind to this sector too. In theory they could have relied upon a seventeenth century law forcing householders to take an apprentice, with a fine of £10 for refusal.³⁸⁵ Hindle summarized the problem 'Employers were both resentful of zealous magistrates and suspicious of idle children...Accordingly it was especially difficult to find sufficient numbers of employers for pauper children'.³⁸⁶ Honeyman noted problems with resistance too, such as an 1819 Leeds workhouse minute resolving to increase the fine to try and settle the problem.³⁸⁷ The Royal Commission suggested abandoning compulsion, but as apprenticeship issues were put in abeyance following the 1834 Act, it was not abolished until the 1844 Parish Apprentices Act.³⁸⁸

For the majority of children who were sent to live and work with an unfamiliar adult, was there any screening process? Snell argued that enquiries were made before children were bound to traditional trades in their locality; Honeyman was the first to examine this concept fully, principally in relation to factory placements, finding that some

³⁸⁴ TNA, WO143/61, 3 Nov. 1828, p. 198.

³⁸⁵ An Act for supplying Some Defects in the Laws for the relief of the Poor of this Kingdome 1696 (8&9 Will. III c.30), see discussion in Lane, *Apprenticeship* pp. 75-6.

³⁸⁶ Hindle, 'Waste', p. 30; Hindle, *On Parish*, p. 208.

³⁸⁷ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 89, especially footnote 104.

³⁸⁸ Hindle, *On Parish*, p. 203.

Poor Law officials did conduct placements with the appropriate due diligence.³⁸⁹ Emmison's study of Bedfordshire apprentices also concurs that Overseers were sincere in their efforts.³⁹⁰ Although most of the pre-placement assessment reports unearthed by this study are for the factories, there are also examples of enquiry for this sector, albeit it in a much more haphazard form. Southampton Corporation, for example, stated in an application for an Order to bind: 'We have made the requisite inquiries into the propriety of binding' for James Quinton, a poor child of All Saints aged 12, the son of a widow, to Thomas Lazett shoemaker.³⁹¹ LSV must have also taken steps to assess the suitability of the tailor William Elliot, as there is a letter attached to an indenture from the Great Broughton Union in Chester: 'Sir, In answer of your letter of yesterday I beg to inform you that I have every reason to believe that William Elliot, tailor, of Tarvin, is a very respectable person'.³⁹²

The regulations pertaining to this type of investigation are discussed in the regulations section below; there are some excellent examples in the LSV indentures, which have a number of medical and magistrates certificates included, indicating attempts were made to ensure that bindings were suitable.³⁹³ One indenture contains a report for 13 year old orphan James Moran who was placed with a boot maker in the nearby parish of Everton. James was a resident of the workhouse's industrial school, and apprenticed on Christmas Eve in 1849 to Thomas Owen, who was paid a premium of £3 15s. This indenture illustrates the process when procedures were followed properly. A report detailed the terms of the apprenticeship, with space for parental consent; but as James was

³⁸⁹ Snell, *Annals*, p. 284; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, chs. 11, 12.

³⁹⁰ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 215-38; Emmison, *Eaton Socon*, p. 93.

³⁹¹ SA, D/PM/5/2/18/31, 3 Oct. 1820.

³⁹² LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/83, 23 Dec. 1851.

³⁹³ See pp. 131-3.

an orphan, the Relieving Officer James Martindale signed. The report also contained a medical certificate section, which declared James fit for work as a boot maker. Both the Relieving Officer and the master of the industrial school signed a section also declaring that he was fit. We can learn more about the proposed master from Mr Martindale's report of a visit he made prior to the placement. Thomas Owen of 30 Great Homer Street was 45, married, and employed one other apprentice. His business 'appears to be conducted proper and respectable'.³⁹⁴ In total, LSV indentures to traditional occupations had 2 medical certificates, and 86 magistrates certificates, all under the New Poor Law.

The factories chapter demonstrates extensive scoping undertaken on behalf of the Poor Law Board prior to placing children; a single example was found for this sector. In Southampton in 1850, three girls from the workhouse were proposed for service at the farm of Mr Clark in Timsbury. Generally female farm service was centred on the farmhouse, yard and dairy.³⁹⁵ However, there was a concern that girls sent to farm service not only performed domestic duties, but might also be sent into the fields. Not only would this double the workload, it was also viewed as coarsening, as this type of work was increasingly thought of as improper for girls. Therefore the Poor Law Board ordered a Poor Law inspector scoping visit to assess suitability: meeting the master and assessing facilities, especially the sleeping arrangements. The inspector, Lord Courtney wrote: 'I have seen the rooms in which it is intended the girls should sleep, in a cottage very near the Clark's house and occupied by a trustworthy labourer and his wife and have had the opportunity at Mr Clark's desire of questioning in the absence of their mother, 2 children...in their service, as to the manner in which they are treated and the work which

³⁹⁴ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/59, 24 Dec. 1849.

³⁹⁵ Verdon, 'Agriculture', p. 558.

they have to do'.³⁹⁶ It was intended that the girls attend the village school also. Accordingly he endorsed the placement.

The RMA letter book illustrates some examples of investigation prior to placement as it even shows a relative being scrutinized; in 1827 Maria Silley's aunt, Maria Cox of 68 Bold Street Liverpool, wished to apprentice her niece, but Cox's respectability needed to be assessed.³⁹⁷ We know from Children's Employment Commission reports that Bold Street was the centre of dressmaking in the city: 'The establishments carrying on millinery or dressmaking of some kind in this street alone, which is the fashionable part for them, are very numerous'.³⁹⁸ Cox must have been deemed unsuitable, as Maria was apprenticed to Mrs Holmes in Dublin, Ireland instead.³⁹⁹ There is also evidence of health assessments too, upon apprenticing Mary Bowers: 'I enclose the Surgeon's report respecting her health'.⁴⁰⁰

Was there a chance for parties to trial the arrangement? Southampton Corporation allowed William Hadley to 'leave the House to go on trial to Thomas Andrews Whitesmith with a view to be apprenticed to him' in July 1826; a month later he was formally apprenticed with a fee of £5.⁴⁰¹ There are examples from Liverpool, too. Tailor Edward Jones wrote: 'I beg to inform you that the boy Francis Drumgold has been with me a week, I believe he will answer, and I am desirous of having him bound'.⁴⁰² Clogger Richard Rigby of Wigan had the following questions before accepting a child: 'What age is Thos. Whalen? What is his religion? Has he either Father or Mother living – if he has, where do

³⁹⁶ TNA, MH12/10999/273, Folios 589-90, 30 July 1850.

³⁹⁷ TNA, WO143/61, 8 Aug. 1827, p. 143.

³⁹⁸ CEC 1862, *Second report 1864*, p. 30.

³⁹⁹ TNA, WO143/52/1321, 8 Dec. 1827.

⁴⁰⁰ WO143/61, 10 Aug. 1831, p. 310.

⁴⁰¹ SA, SC/AG/1/3, 17 July, 21 Aug. 1826.

⁴⁰² LRO, SEL 353 12/1/240, 18 Jan. 1859.

they reside and their names'. LSV replied 'Thomas Whalen was 14 years old last May and he is a Catholic. His father is dead his name was James Whalen, his mother is in America she was alive last June her name is Arin Whalen'. Rigby accepted the boy on trial. This case illustrates a breakdown in communication in the system. After five weeks, Rigby wrote to LSV asking when he must bring him to be bound. He was eventually bound on 31 August 1858.⁴⁰³ Whether or not such examples are indicative of widespread practice is difficult to say. It is possible this was the case for the RMA also, as sometimes dates in the letter book do not match the same girls' date of binding in the register. Minns has considered such an issue in relation to other sources, and noted that often there was a trial period of weeks or months, with the formal binding date some time after service contract had actually begun.⁴⁰⁴

Age and length of term are issues that have been studied by a number of scholars; the wider discussion chapter of this thesis will consider these themes in more depth, particularly the correlation between the two.⁴⁰⁵ In terms of traditional occupations, a high proportion of indentures in this sector, 70 per cent, recorded the child's age. The majority of children placed in this sector were within the 10-14 age range, conforming to Kirby's assessments as discussed in Chapter 6.⁴⁰⁶ The most frequently recorded age at binding was 14 (535 indentures), with a mean of 13.5. But, supporting Humphries contention that very young working was not so rare, there were also 13 examples of younger children too, aged 9 and under, the majority were girls. Bristol under the Old Poor Law gives some good

⁴⁰³ LRO, SEL 353 12/1/224, 31 Aug. 1858.

⁴⁰⁴ P. Wallis, C. Webb and C. Minns, 'Leaving Home and Entering Service: The Age of Apprenticeship in Early Modern London', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 25, 3 (2010) [hereafter, Wallis, Webb and Minns, 'Leaving Home'], pp. 377-404, at p. 385.

⁴⁰⁵ See pp. 249-55.

⁴⁰⁶ See p. 251.

examples: 1768 Martha Challenger, age 8, to George Lilly, Shoemaker; 1784, 9 year old Isaac Brain to John Abbott, carpenter; 1794 7 year old William Haynes to William Gill, cordwainer; and even as late as 1810, 7 year old Mary Green to Daniel Hedges, whipmaker.⁴⁰⁷ Most of the indentures also specified a clear term of apprenticeship (90 per cent). The shortest length was three years, the longest 14. For girls the most frequently recorded term was 4 years, a reflection of the large presence of service indentures for 14 year olds. If split out between charity and Poor Law, generally Poor Law girls were employed at a younger age, for longer terms. For boys, 380 specified 7 years, the most frequently recorded term for both Poor Law and charity. Another common binding was ‘Until 21’, and in the case of girls, this often also stated ‘or married’. Overall, the mean length of term was 5.6 years.

What is crucial to consider is what, if any, premiums were supplied with these children? There is a distinct difference between the Old and New Poor Law. Premiums were certainly an established concept under the Old Poor Law; as Chapter 1 noted they covered against investment costs and ‘provided a surety against misbehaviour’.⁴⁰⁸ Humphries suggested they were also necessary to attract masters outside the parish to compensate them for the risk of unpopularity, due to the potential settlement burden; settlement issues, an important aspect of this process, are discussed in depth at the end of this chapter.⁴⁰⁹ From the traditional occupations of this sample, 28 Poor Law premiums were paid during the eighteenth century, a total of £105 16s 4d paid out, thus a mean of £3.75; the most frequently recorded premium was £3 6s 8d. These were not large

⁴⁰⁷ BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/100, 28 Dec. 1768; NPM/B/10/45, 5 Feb. 1784; P.St LB/OP/15/119, 3 Feb. 1794; 5918/35, 29 June 1810.

⁴⁰⁸ Epstein, ‘Craft Guilds’, pp. 60-1.

⁴⁰⁹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 290.

payments, although the largest single one was £17, the least 15s 6d. From the nineteenth century, prior to the New Poor Law (premiums under this are considered separately below), just 11 premiums were paid out totalling £52, the most frequently recorded sum was £5 and the mean was £4.72. This is revealing as it suggests that the Poor Law was naturally moving towards little or no premium offered, prior to any ideology change under the New Poor Law.

Premiums were very much at the heart of charity apprenticeship: for example, the Gloucestershire [*sic*] Society used the bequests of its members to apprentice boys to Bristol, generally with a premium of £10, since it was thought difficult to find a good master for less. Similarly Bristol's Grateful Society also paid £10 premium; in 1855, George Jenkins was indentured to John Furse, an iron and zinc worker, for seven years.⁴¹⁰ In this sample, Southampton's Thorner charity stands out, prominent in the late eighteenth century, and apprenticing 95 boys with £5 premiums. However, there is a surprisingly low rate of premiums for this sample, 132 recorded for the 620 charity indentures to traditional occupations, just 21 per cent; this shows that not all charitable institutions offered payments. Levene found that the Foundling hospital had a deliberate policy to not pay a premium, partly because of concerns about attracting unscrupulous masters, but also to emphasise the philanthropic aspects of the system; those employing children were to reap the reward of being associated with helping the foundation.⁴¹¹ This may well have been the policy adopted by both The Female Orphan Asylum in Liverpool, and Southampton's RMA, as neither of their registers record any payments. Both of those institutions were operating in the nineteenth century; certainly for traditional occupations in this sample,

⁴¹⁰ BRO, 39499/1, 10 Feb. 1855; 37983(1), 16 Jan. 1855.

⁴¹¹ Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship', p. 55; Levene, 'Honesty', p. 187.

there were considerably less charitable premiums than in the eighteenth century. The total sum paid out in premiums in the eighteenth century for all charities was £545 15s, from 106 indentures. The most frequently recorded amount was £5; with an average of £4.54. In the nineteenth century this drops to just 26 payments, a total of £211. The most frequently recorded premium is higher at £10, with an average of £8.11.

A key principle of the New Poor Law was less eligibility, which impacted on the payment of premiums. However, the evidence shows that even prior to the change in ethos, there was a decline in the payment of premiums from the start of the nineteenth century, in both the Poor Law and charitable spheres. The Poor Law Commission wanted to prevent the payments for two reasons. First, a practical action to stop the abuse of the system by masters, as it was felt that many applied for an apprentice simply to obtain the premium: 'These persons were usually milliners, straw-bonnet-makers, shoemakers, and petty tradesmen. The pauperism of the children was thus transferred to another parish'.⁴¹² The second reason was out of principle, to ensure that a workhouse child was not being placed in a better position than that of a child of the poorest labourer. The 1841 report on pauper training stated: 'The physical condition of the children who are deprived of the care of natural guardians ought not to be elevated above that of the household of the self-supported labourer. Their clothes, food, and lodging should not be better than that which the labourer can provide for his child'.⁴¹³ If an ordinary poor family could not afford to pay a premium for their child to be apprenticed, under 'less eligibility' paupers should not be indentured with one; just 17 premiums were issued by Poor Law unions post-1834, a total of £84 15s. The most frequently recorded payment was £3 15s, with an average of

⁴¹² Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 95.

⁴¹³ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 19.

£4.94. Further discussion of the significance of this, and the context of its legality, is discussed below in the examination of adherence to regulations.

Unlike those apprenticed to the sea, where wages were usually paid, just 1 per cent of traditional apprentices in this sector had remuneration scheduled in their indentures. Given the very little or complete lack of premiums, discussed above, this is hardly surprising; pauper apprenticeship was not generally associated with wages. After all, why would a master offer wages when he had not received any payment himself? Of those who did receive a wage, all were boys, with just two Poor Law boys; for example, Bristol's St Mary Redcliffe's parish apprenticed James Hunt to Charles Hill in July 1834 as a shipwright to earn wages of 5s weekly in the first two years, 6s the next two, 7s years five to six, and 8s in the final year.⁴¹⁴ The other indentures that specified wages were all charity ones, involving the more skilled crafts such as blockmaker, carpenter, cabinetmaker and coppersmith. The majority were under the Old Poor Law, with just three under the New Poor Law.

Where were these children placed into traditional occupations sent? Table 3.10 below indicates their locations. The beginning of this chapter highlighted the significant finding that 31 per cent of children placed in this sector remained in the port, with another 11 per cent placed in the local area (within five miles of the port), resulting in nearly half of the children in traditional apprenticeships remaining in the port area. A further 15 per cent were placed regionally, a category that has wide variance in terms of distance; as little as 6 miles from the port centre, up to 46 miles away. Just over one third (38 per cent) of children were placed nationally, and finally a very small number (just four indentures)

⁴¹⁴ BRO, P.St MR/ChW/14/f, 11 July 1834.

were international.⁴¹⁵ But, taking into account the 130 sent into port in order to get a complete picture of work in this sector, 44 per cent of traditional occupations jobs were based in port; another 9 per cent in the local area, therefore interestingly 53 per cent of placements were within the vicinity of the port.

Table 3.10 Location of traditional occupations pauper apprenticeships, from apprentices' home port

| Location | No. of indentures |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Port | 469 (44%) |
| Local area | 100 (9%) |
| Region | 138 (13%) |
| National | 358 (31%) |
| Foreign | 4 (<1%) |
| Unknown | 8 (<1%) |
| Totals | 1,077 |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

3.3 Application of regulations and batch apprenticeship

Certain regulations governed the process of apprenticeship, as the presence of magistrates and medical certificates discussed above indicate. They related to the selection of masters. Lane alleged that children were apprenticed out by parishes without investigation, despite the 'Act for the better regulating the binding out of parish apprentices' in 1816 requiring a magistrate's certificate testifying to the master's suitability. Lane claims 'they were rarely

⁴¹⁵ Distances were calculated using "As the Crow Flies" distance calculator: <http://tjpeiffer.com/crowflies.html>. Other scholars have also adopted As the Crow Flies method of calculation see for example J. Humphries and T. Leunig, 'Cities, Market Integration, and Going to Sea: Stunting and the Standard of Living in Early Nineteenth-Century England and Wales', *Economic History Review*, vol. 62, 2 (2009) [hereafter, Humphries and Leunig, 'Stunting'], pp. 458-78, at p. 463. Distances defined as follows: Port (within 1 mile of the centre); Local Area (1-5 miles); Region (6-40 miles, or those over 40 miles that were sent into the same geographic county); National (over 40 miles); Foreign (destinations abroad).

given, or they were destroyed as of little value'.⁴¹⁶ The evidence above suggests otherwise, as Honeyman has contended. There were also limits prescribed as to how far a child could be sent, and later in the New Poor Law period, some regulations to clear up the confusion about the process of apprenticeship that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the passing of the 1834 Act, as detailed below. First this section will examine this period of uncertainty, then look at whether distance limits were observed, and consider multiple and batch apprenticeships.

The bold new vision of the New Poor Law was to dispense with the practice of pauper apprenticeship. The Royal Commission had mooted change to the system, principally to abandon the unpopular ability to compel a potential master into taking an apprentice. However the Poor Law Amendment Act was silent on all aspects of apprenticeship, although this did not deter the Poor Law Commission from actively discouraging it. The Commission came under steady pressure to properly define policy going forward, which was a long and painful process; in 1842, the Parish Apprentices Act was a temporary measure banning the practice entirely until full regulations were produced. This eventually resulted in the Parish Apprentices Act 1844, which allowed the resumption of apprenticing, as well as premiums, and finally the compulsion of masters was abolished.⁴¹⁷ Detailed regulations were then finally issued, over 10 years after the introduction of the New Poor Law. The General Orders Relating to the Apprenticeship of Poor Children were brought into force in 1845.⁴¹⁸ The key directives were that all

⁴¹⁶ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 88

⁴¹⁷ A good detailed summary of regulations can be found in Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 203-4; W. Chance, *Children under the Poor Law Their Education, Training and After-care* (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1897) [hereafter, Chance, *Poor Law*], pp. 8-10.

⁴¹⁸ There is ambiguity about the date of issue: Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 203, states 1845 and is supported by Chance, *Poor Law*, pp. 8-9, but other works e.g. Fowler, *Workhouse*, p. 135 states 1847, when the Poor Law

apprentices must be over 9, certified in good health, to be placed within 30 miles of their home, and apprenticed for a maximum of eight years or less. Standardized indenture forms were now also used, children had to be able to read and write their own name, and medical certificates were required to secure a placement. Crucially, it offered a compromise on premiums, permitting part clothing and part money.⁴¹⁹

How did this all shape up on the ground? It has already been indicated above that a small number of premiums were still given under the New Poor Law; the various trades examined above identified several premiums from the late 1840s. Considering this evidence in the context of the regulations, interestingly 1834-1845, no premiums were issued with indentures. However, between 1842 and 1844 (the period of moratorium), LSV continued to arrange apprenticeships (although no premium was granted), eight in total, contravening the ban. There was also resistance in Bristol, as revealed in correspondence of the Clifton Union, whose officers wrote to the Poor Law Commission to complain about neighbouring Bristol Incorporation's apprenticeship practice. Clifton Union claimed that it was 'impossible' to find good situations for orphan and bastard children to work as labourers or servants, because of Bristol apprenticing to those trades offering premiums of less than £5.⁴²⁰ Clifton Union wanted to apprentice 10 boys and 4 girls at premiums of £6.⁴²¹ The Poor Law Commission talked of the 'evils' of apprenticing children with premiums but stated 'Nevertheless, the Commission believe that in some

Board replaced the Poor Law Commission. A Consolidated General Order was issued following this, amalgamating all previous Orders. This is perhaps why confusion has arisen, as the various apprenticing orders are contained within this, at Articles 52-74.

⁴¹⁹ Again there has been confusion in the literature; on this occasion Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 203, is incorrect to state that the 1845 Order provided for 'no premium apart from clothes'. The Order did not ban premiums, only for those *over* 14, as confirmed in Chance, *Poor Law*, p. 9. By the time of 1847 consolidated order, this had been raised to 16.

⁴²⁰ TNA, MH12/4000, 29 May 1837. Clifton MH12 correspondence is also uncatalogued.

⁴²¹ TNA, MH12/4000, 7 July 1837.

instances may be with benefit. When children, whether orphans or otherwise, become dependent on their parish for support. [sic] The Guardians may be properly discharging their duties by binding them apprentices, however the Commission deem it to be contrary to sound principles to pay with the apprentices a premium from the poor rates as it rarely happens that the Labouring classes who support their families by their own exertions are in a position to give a premium'. The Commission went on to suggest that the children could be provided with a suitable outfit of clothes rather than a premium.⁴²² Clifton Union made an interesting point in reply; that in fact it cost them £8 per annum to house a child in the workhouse, therefore surely a premium of £6 for an apprenticeship was 'to be considered an advantage'. They suggested it could even be limited to children of 'misfortune not fault...because of their helplessness and because they do not possess the advantages which other children do'.⁴²³ What continued was a stalemate with the Commission insisting that no premium could be paid, other than a suit of clothes. There is nothing further in the correspondence so unfortunately we do not know how this issue concluded, but it is interesting to see the two different stances taken by neighbouring unions.

It would appear that after the 1844 Act rehabilitated premiums, there was enthusiasm on the part of the unions to reinstate them: for example, in 1846, Everton parish sent 12 year old Charles Bradbury to a Liverpool cordwainer with a premium of £2.⁴²⁴ LSV bound 10 children with premiums of £3 15s between 1848 and 1850. But what is interesting is that after the initial flurry, no more were granted post-1850, save for two issued by Bristol in 1868, and one by LSV in 1869. It is important to note that while on the whole premiums were sporadic, the practice of apprenticing itself was not. From the

⁴²² TNA, MH12/4000, 2 June 1837.

⁴²³ TNA, MH12/4000, 15 July 1837.

⁴²⁴ LRO, 354 EVE/5/344, 22 Aug. 1846.

late 1840s there appears to have been a gradual drift back towards apprenticeship, as a result of economic pressures; essentially there was a sort of stalemate between central authority and local administration. Guardians were generally observing the less eligibility mantra, but still very much participating in the practice. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, pauper apprenticeship was very much alive and indeed continued to thrive; the temptations of mass apprenticeship to the factories were just too attractive for Poor Law officials to resist.

Another specific regulation, from early in the nineteenth century, was concerned with the distances from the original parish/Poor Law union at which children could be placed. The 'Act for the better regulating the binding out of parish apprentices' in 1816 specified children should be placed within forty miles of their parish. The distance regulation covered all pauper apprentices, although it was specifically brought into being with the London parishes in mind. Distances over forty miles required the consent of a magistrate. The penalty for exceeding the limit without consent was a fine. The Act was modified further under the New Poor Law by the 1845 General Orders Relating to the Apprenticeship of Poor Children cited above, bringing the prescribed limit down to 30 miles.

To assess whether the distance regulations were breached, the definition of distance needs to be defined. How was this measured? Bristol Incorporation expressly sought clarification 'whether the expression 5 miles from any part of such Union means 5 miles measured in a direct line or 5 miles by the nearest road or path'.⁴²⁵ The Poor Law Board responded 'it is now established by various directions of the Courts of Law that distances

⁴²⁵ TNA, MH12/3866, 27 July 1860.

prescribed by Act of Parliament or other legal authority are to be measured by the direct line'.⁴²⁶ Therefore, the distances travelled by all apprentices in this study have been calculated in accordance with the Poor Law definition.⁴²⁷

Honeyman noted that 'although journeys of 200 miles or more, which feature prominently in conventional thought, were not unusual, short distance bindings were also common'. She argued that if local opportunities were available, they were taken.⁴²⁸ From his study of New Poor Law apprentices in Worcestershire, Crompton would agree with this result, as he did not find many placements exceeding the distance regulations.⁴²⁹ For 21 per cent (228) of the traditional occupations indentures, the distance regulations were not applicable as the indentures were prior to the 1816 Act. Of those placed in this sector, 41 per cent (446) were within the distance limits, with just 3 per cent of indentures (37) directly in contravention. This is a low figure, and needs to be taken into consideration with the many voluntarily indentured children who did travel long distances; as we have seen, the majority of the RMA apprentices were sent far and wide. The variety of destinations, both national and international, were described earlier. As noted, four girls were sent abroad to China, Jamaica and France, but such vast distances were not breaking the regulations since the girls were all under voluntary indentures. Similarly, 40 LSV apprentices also signed up voluntarily, three of which were over the distance regulations.

If children under voluntary indenture who were still apprenticed more than the 30-40 miles were included as contravening the regulations, this would total 363 charity

⁴²⁶ TNA, MH12/3866, 7 Aug. 1860.

⁴²⁷ See footnote 415, p. 131.

⁴²⁸ K. Honeyman, 'Compulsion, Compassion and Consent: Parish Apprenticeship in Early-Nineteenth-Century England' in Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency* [hereafter, Honeyman, 'Compulsion'], pp. 71-96, at p. 73.

⁴²⁹ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 218.

children, 34 per cent of those placed into traditional occupations, a significant proportion, and because of the nature of the source, heavily weighted towards girls. China is, of course, the most extreme example; in 1827, Sir George Robinson wanted an apprentice to accompany him there. As this was such a distance (nearly 5,000 miles) a request was made by the Southampton Commandant to the RMA headquarters in Chelsea for express permission. Robinson 'expects to sail in a few days therefore an early answer is requested. I think it too good an opportunity of providing for one of the orphans not to let her go'.⁴³⁰ Permission was given, and on 16 June 13 year old Margaret Meagher was sent.⁴³¹ This distance not only rivals those other children bound great distances voluntarily, for example, the boys sent to sea in the next chapter; it more than doubles those sent to Newfoundland. Whether Margaret Meagher found this an exciting prospect or was terrified, we do not know; as with all voluntary indentures, the extent of the child's active participation and willingness is circumspect. Did she even survive the journey or die far from home and remaining friends or family?

Later in this thesis, the persistence of batch apprenticeship for pauper children will be examined, in particular its endurance late into the nineteenth century; but this is largely in relation to placements in factories, and on a much smaller scale, to the sea. As a result of the nature of this type of work, and the fact that most masters in this sector only ever had a single or a handful of apprentices at any one time, batch apprenticeship is not something associated with this sector. For example, the biggest single 'batch' was three children, one batch from the LSV, the other the RMA. In February 1865, three boys were sent out of Liverpool to the Lancashire village of Bispham, to be apprenticed to

⁴³⁰ TNA, WO143/61, 8 June 1827, p. 132; WO143/52/1270, 13 June 1827.

⁴³¹ TNA, WO143/52/1270, 13 June 1827.

basketmaker Robert Haughton; the boys were 12 and 13, all orphans, and sent with no premiums.⁴³² In April 1824, three RMA girls were sent to Richard Stock, a weaver of Heyside, Lancashire⁴³³

One thing that does occur in the indentures is evidence of repeat customers. John Aslatt was a Southampton coach builder who took four boys from Southampton Corporation; in 1838, 39, 42 and 43.⁴³⁴ Another 12 employers took three children in total. Shoemaker Thomas Twynan took three boys from the LSV in 1844 and 1847, each time for seven years.⁴³⁵ Moses Lansing, the Liverpool hairdresser described earlier in the chapter, took three boys, in 1855, 1858 and 1859.⁴³⁶ The RMA particularly enjoyed the benefits of established relationships, a letter book referring to a request from Mr George Harrison of Guernsey: ‘This is the third apprentice he has had from this Establishment’.⁴³⁷ He was not the only one; for example, James Slade apprenticed three girls to his London home, who appear to be sisters: Elizabeth Boreham in 1830; Caroline Boreham in 1831 and Emily Boreham in 1833.⁴³⁸ Robert Rickerby took three girls during the course of 1837 to be servants for four years in Sunderland.⁴³⁹ Solomon Hibbert took three to London in 1826, 1830 and 1841.⁴⁴⁰

3.4 Life as an apprentice

The indentures rarely stipulated details of training to be received or work performed, other than the title of the occupation itself. On rare occasions some hours are recorded, such as

⁴³² LRO, 353 SEL/12/1/396-8, 7 February 1865.

⁴³³ TNA, WO143/52/1023, 1045, 1101, 14 Apr. 1824.

⁴³⁴ SA, D/MC24/2

⁴³⁵ LRO, 353 SEL/12/1/40, 79, 111, 16. Mar. 1840, 2 Sept. 1851, 27 Sept. 1853.

⁴³⁶ LRO, 353 SEL/12/1/170, 222, 264, 28 Aug. 1855, 17 Aug. 1858, 4 Oct. 1859.

⁴³⁷ WO143/61, 15 Oct 1830, p. 273

⁴³⁸ TNA, WO143/52/1466, 1540, 1542, 26 Oct. 1831, 4 May 1830, 31 Jan. 1833.

⁴³⁹ TNA, WO143/52/1573, 1664, 1648, 15 June 1837, 24 Feb. 1837, 10 Apr. 1837.

⁴⁴⁰ TNA, WO143/52/1247, 1388, 1727, 8 Apr. 1826, 6 Apr. 1830, 12 Apr. 1841.

the clogger indenture cited earlier, but generally it is impossible to know what exactly these children did, as Levene also noted: ‘Expectations for training and prospects are particularly difficult to establish for pauper apprentices, as their indentures often failed to specify exactly what they were to learn. This was particularly true for girls, who might be more likely to be trained in domestic service by the master’s wife than in the master’s own trade’.⁴⁴¹ There are examples in my evidence of ambiguous female indentures: for example, in 1759 Hannah Harris was indentured to John Jeffries, a ships carpenter in Bristol, but it is more likely that she was working for him in a service capacity than as a jobbing carpenter!⁴⁴²

The records provide one rare example of a discussion about working hours, from the very end of this period, 1869. Mr Thomas Hardwinge wrote directly to the Poor Law Board to complain about Bristol Incorporation’s conduct. He had applied for an apprentice, but was rejected on the basis that he advocated Sunday working; other potential masters had also been rejected on these grounds. Yet Mr Hardwinge complained that a barber, Mr Fletcher, employed four Poor Law boys at his Thomas Street premises, regularly working them on the Sabbath. The Board wrote to Bristol Incorporation for comments. The officers responded that three of the boys were signed under indentures before the no Sunday working rule was introduced, and that the fourth boy, when told he would have to go back to Stapleton Workhouse as a result of this complaint, was so distressed that they decided to allow him to stay, since his trial period had begun before the resolution was passed. Mr Hardwinge was advised that in future the Incorporation would

⁴⁴¹ Levene, ‘Pauper Apprenticeship England’, pp. 550-1; Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’, p. 927.

⁴⁴² BRO, P.St LB/OP/15/91, 25 July 1759.

be adhering to the rule.⁴⁴³ Although there are many examples of the Poor Law Board intervening in placements to factories, the Hardwinge correspondence offers a rare example of post-placement involvement in apprenticeships to traditional trades.

Honeyman identified one of the big differences between traditional work versus new factory employment as the traditional pauper apprentice's tenuous link to the production process, with 'the urban parish apprentice, bound to the master or mistress of a skilled or unskilled trade, typically engaged in menial tasks'.⁴⁴⁴ Often factory indentures were more prescriptive, with set hours and meal breaks. The opening paragraphs of this chapter highlighted the difficulties of working in these trades: long hours, cramped conditions, with no statutory regulation to limit the worst excess. Kirby's recent work on child health noted that children who were sons of traditional hand weavers had remarked that working in the mill was preferable because of the set hours.⁴⁴⁵ As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter: 'However bad factory conditions were for the young apprentices, they would otherwise have been bound to the worst conditions available locally'.⁴⁴⁶

On the other hand, Nardinelli argued violence was a necessary and accepted measure for control over apprentices, an issue taken up below. Acts of violence remain invisible in the kind of record used in this study, apart from the Ludden case discussed below. Examples of abuse of pauper apprentices more generally in both Bristol and Southampton are detailed below in the context of court proceedings. Although it is factories that are often associated with the worst excesses of cruelty, Humphries made the

⁴⁴³ TNA, MH12/3871, 15 Feb., 1 Mar. 1869.

⁴⁴⁴ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 9.

⁴⁴⁵ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 155.

⁴⁴⁶ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 197.

point that children in large-scale workshops with others present, and possibly in the midst of family members, were potentially afforded some protection: ‘Abuse appears to have been more common where children worked in isolated locations or under the supervision of individual adults whose remuneration depended on their performance’.⁴⁴⁷

The circumstances of Jane Ludden, an RMA apprentice, bring to life the risk of working in isolation. In 1833, age 14, she was apprenticed to Hugh Penfold of Salisbury, Wiltshire. The letter book for 1834 describes ‘You will be pleased to take the necessary steps to have justice done to the Girl, who from her account left her master in consequence of his having horse whipped her, and which he did not deny to Mr Jeffries who was kind enough to take some interest in this girl. The Girl will be at the Asylum at anytime you may fix to give you the necessary information’. Yet despite this poor girl’s suffering, they were not keen to take her back in Southampton: ‘If the magistrates should cancel the indenture the Parish must provide for her, or the errant master’.⁴⁴⁸ Nearly one month later, the RMA received a letter from Mr Jeffries that stated: ‘I cannot help expressing my surprise at not having before this received some communication in writing from you respecting the decision on the case of Ludden the apprentice of Mr Penfold of harm [sic], the Girl is still here in consequence of your not having written’. A week or so later, a transfer request was made for Mr Penfold to pay the expense for her to be apprenticed to a Mr Gulley.⁴⁴⁹ This lack of action and compassion is truly shocking. Levene also found cases where the Foundling Hospital apprentices were seriously abused, but in direct contrast to the RMA, Foundling officials handled the case of a girl who was badly treated

⁴⁴⁷ Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 245-6.

⁴⁴⁸ TNA, WO143/62, 26 Feb. 1834, p. 88; WO143/52/1601, 27 Apr. 1833.

⁴⁴⁹ TNA WO143/62, 19 Mar. 1834 p. 96.

in an expedient and thorough fashion, and in general they offered advice, medical aid and safe haven in such cases, and even prosecuted some masters.⁴⁵⁰

Together with the various pre-placement assessments to which Honeyman brought new focus, she also suggested that children were not necessarily abandoned upon signing of indentures, and that some parishes persevered with careful monitoring. Her work sought out the ‘voice of the children’, and considered whether or not children had sufficient agency to be heard.⁴⁵¹ In the case of this sector, the authorities were deaf to children's views. Jane Ludden’s tragic tale is testament to this. While specific monitoring procedures, such as inspection reports, were conducted for factory placements (as considered in detail later), there is not a single instance of post-placement monitoring within traditional occupations. Nor was there any follow up care, as will be discussed in the next chapter, for boys sent to sea. Clearly then, monitoring of factories, with the ease of reviewing the multiple children sent there, was a more established practice, probably in response to the national outcry about the cruelty children supposedly faced therein. As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, children bound to traditional occupations were very much a forgotten breed, out of sight and mind. Even charities did not seem to follow up children; indeed, the examples below illustrate that the RMA was particularly keen to rid itself of the burden! Once indentured children were forgotten.⁴⁵²

The only source that sheds light on any sort of follow up post placement are Quarter Sessions cases. Sometimes they expressly refer to those children who were placed under Poor Law indentures; on rare occasions, Guardians did take action against masters.

⁴⁵⁰ Levene, ‘Honesty’, p. 196-7.

⁴⁵¹ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 199-238.

⁴⁵² Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 305.

For example, in the case of Sarah Thomas cited earlier in the chapter, who had complained to the Bristol Quarter Sessions of assault by her master, Richard Wood and his wife.⁴⁵³ After mistreatment was found proven in court, the Guardians took out an advertisement to serve as a ‘warning [to] all others who have taken Apprentices out of this house to take all proper Care of them as the House is Determined to prosecute all Persons who ill use or do not take such care of them’.⁴⁵⁴ In another case in 1819, an appeal was made by the Bristol Guardians against William Price, on the grounds of ‘misusing and evil treating’ seven boys apprenticed to him a year earlier. As well as the boys being discharged from their indentures, they requested a return of the £35 they had spent in premiums.⁴⁵⁵ Alas there is no record of the outcome, although it is possible that this was the case Bristol Guardian James Johnson referred to in a public pamphlet in 1826: ‘A master was prosecuted, at the expense of the Guardians, for using improper severity to his apprentices, for which he was punished by imprisonment’.⁴⁵⁶

In 1830, a Lancaster court convicted Jonathan Buckley, a cotton weaver of Heyside, of assaulting a RMA apprentice; he was sentenced to two years hard labour.⁴⁵⁷ There is also a rare example of a parent complaining to the authorities, regarding a Southampton master. William Silvester complained that Joseph Granier, a shipwright of St Mary’s, refused to continue with an apprenticeship. His son had been apprenticed by Holy Rood Overseers in May 1812, but in 1814 the father petitioned as ‘for some little inattention to his work... [he] gave him a stroke, across the back with ropes...and that this

⁴⁵³ BRO, JQS/P/111, 4 Aug. 1786.

⁴⁵⁴ Butcher, *Bristol Corporation*, 10 Aug. 1786, p. 122.

⁴⁵⁵ BRO, JQS/P/428, 29 June 1819.

⁴⁵⁶ Johnson, *Transactions*, p. 41.

⁴⁵⁷ Honeyman, ‘Compulsion’, p. 75.

Informant hath made several applications...to take back his Son which he hath refused and neglected to do'.⁴⁵⁸ Granier was summoned but the outcome is not known.

There is also an unusual example of one parish writing to castigate the placing Southampton parishes for poor protection of the children they had placed. This letter of 1760 is worth citing in full for the depth of its criticism:

'Gentlemen

I have orders given me from the Churchwardens & Overseers of the Parish of Saint Luke Middlesex to write to you concerning some poor Girls who have been bound to one Joseph Cockburn by the Parishes of Saint Lawrence's and St Michael's Southampton being about nine in number their particulars Names are hereunder sent who ones [sic] become Chargeable to the Parish of Saint Lukes on Account of the Cruel usage they have met with from the said Cockburn who hath lately absconded on Account of one of the Girls dying in our Workhouse, the manner they have been used is most shocking and too much here to relate and if you have any bowels of compassion to take care for the future who you bind your poor to. We are informed one Peter Britton is master of your Workhouse and if he is the Instigation of the Children being bound to such a vile fellow I think he is no better than himself but as we have a Warrant to apprehend and bring the said Cockburn to Justice we shall at present keep the children as evidence against him and then remove them down to you, the above case I hope you will make known to the other Parish or Parishes that may be concerned'.⁴⁵⁹

Unfortunately a search of both St Luke's and Southampton records yielded no further details on this sad tale. In many ways this letter sums up the neglect of children bound to masters with traditional occupations; it comes to something when a Poor Law official criticizes one of their own about the practice of pauper apprenticeship!

⁴⁵⁸ SA, SC9/4/876-7, 27 June 1814.

⁴⁵⁹ SA, SC9/4/560, 5 Jan. 1760.

Sometimes apprenticeships failed for reasons other than cruelty or violence on the part of the master. There could be many reasons for a breakdown in relations: the behaviour of the child, the untimely death of the child or master during the term, or even perhaps the child's unsuitability for the job. For example, the Liverpool Female Orphan Asylum registers record the death of several girls from diseases such as smallpox and consumption. Naturally children rebelled; although there are no direct examples from the sources, as some Southampton Quarter Sessions cases illustrate obstreperous behaviour was a common occurrence. Mary Joceline was apprenticed from the Taunton charity funds to Barbara Irwin, a mantua maker, for 4 years, but 'several times ran away and misbehaved', so Irwin applied for discharge.⁴⁶⁰ John Barnett, an apprentice ropemaker of John Major of All Saints, also absconded.⁴⁶¹ In Bristol, in 1818 master William Stinchcomb applied to have James Edes released from his charge for 'various misdemeanours' including repeated disappearance; he had been bound by the Bristol Guardians for 7 years in 1816.⁴⁶²

For some, absconding was less of a knee-jerk reaction to the daily grind, more a case of moving onto something perceived as better; in 1810, Southampton shoemaker James Newlyn suffered his apprentice enlisting as a soldier! A warrant was issued for the arrest of Robert Hill, a Taunton charity apprentice.⁴⁶³ Humphries found that the French wars undermined apprenticeship by offering an escape route via enlistment, even though military service could prove just as unpleasant as serving time, summing up the dilemma as them escaping 'the frying pan of an unsatisfactory apprenticeship by jumping into the

⁴⁶⁰ SA, SC/4/559, undated.

⁴⁶¹ SA, SC/4/781, 6 Jan. 1806.

⁴⁶² BRO, JQS/P/398, 30 Mar. 1818.

⁴⁶³ SA, SC9/4/851, 5 June 1810.

fire of military service'.⁴⁶⁴ That this was a charity boy might be more surprising in light of Levene's assessment that 'charity apprentices remained tied into a long-standing rhetoric of subservience and gratitude to authority'.⁴⁶⁵ That said, in her study of Foundling hospital apprentices, Levene also found just over 40 per cent changed master or mistress.⁴⁶⁶

It is very difficult to pinpoint instances of breakdown from the evidence available for this sample; just one case specifically details a transfer, Mary Nurse, a RMA apprentice.⁴⁶⁷ She was indentured to John Bruce of Guernsey in May 1828, but he returned her 'by the Guernsey Packet, for some alleged offence, without giving notice as he was bound to do, the Girl I have sent to the Workhouse here to remain until the master is obliged to take her back or provide for her according to the Terms of the Indenture'.⁴⁶⁸ However, the Workhouse refused to take her, so the local Mayor placed Nurse 'in a home called the Travellers, which I considered an improper place for her to remain in and had her removed to the Asylum' wrote the Commandant of the RMA to his headquarters in London.⁴⁶⁹ Nurse was later sent to a cotton mill under a new indenture.

As there are so many examples of duplicate surnames amongst the sample, often because of the commonness of the name e.g. Thomas Jones, it makes it very difficult to be certain about any other children who may have transferred master. However, having reviewed all the evidence, and carefully considered dates and ages, I have identified three possible other instances in the entire sample. These three examples, plus the Nurse case, all involve children originally apprenticed to a traditional occupation. Two examples are

⁴⁶⁴ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 279.

⁴⁶⁵ Levene, 'Honesty', p. 184.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁴⁶⁷ TNA, WO143/52/1270, 18 Apr. 1829.

⁴⁶⁸ TNA, WO143/61, 13 Jan. 1829, p. 205; WO143/52/1270, 3 May 1828.

⁴⁶⁹ TNA, WO143/61, 19 Jan. 1829, p. 209.

from Liverpool, under the New Poor Law. In December 1851, William Hughes was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Tarvin, Cheshire, aged 13; in August 1853, the same name, aged 14, appears, being apprenticed to another shoemaker, this time in Sefton, West Derby Union, bordering Liverpool.⁴⁷⁰ Perhaps his first master died, or could no longer afford an apprentice. In October 1858, Robert Jones was apprenticed to a grocer in the city, but some six months later the same name appears, this time apprenticed to James Farrell, a shoemaker.⁴⁷¹ Finally, an example from the Old Poor Law, and an interesting one to speculate on, David Hutchins was apprenticed in January 1780 by Southampton Corporation to cordwainer Thomas Glead. Again just six months later, there is an indenture that features the same names for both apprentice and master, this time in the records of the Thorner charity, with a £5 premium paid. Perhaps Glead would not keep the boy on unless he received a payment, and the charity had come to the rescue.⁴⁷² Hindle noted that charity funds for apprenticing were often used to help induce reluctant masters.⁴⁷³

The RMA letter books are a rich resource of detail about master/apprentice relations, particularly evidencing the situation when a girl was simply deemed unbefitting. In 1828 Rev. Bonnett in Hampshire received Rosanna Kelly as an apprentice. A year later he was trying to get the indentures cancelled, and although initially refused in March 1829, he eventually succeeded later in the same year (December) on the proviso that an ‘allowance is made to the Girl of 3 shillings per week for the remainder of her

⁴⁷⁰ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/85, 23 Dec. 1851; 353 SEL 12/1/103, 2 Aug. 1853.

⁴⁷¹ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/232, 26 Oct. 1858; 353 SEL 12/1/242, 1 Feb. 1859.

⁴⁷² SA, SC 10/5/10, 7 Jan. 1780; D TH 56/46, 7 June 1780.

⁴⁷³ Hindle, *On Parish*, p. 204.

apprenticeship'.⁴⁷⁴ Kelly's rejection was simply for the reason that her master felt her unsuitable for the work. In 1840, another master, Colonel Nicholson based in Jersey, requested the RMA cancel an indenture and take back the child, but he was advised 'the only thing that can be done is if you find a person willing to take your apprentice off your hands, there will be no objection made to transferring her, provided the person is a respectable flower keeper'. The letter further states: 'I have not yet known that an apprentice has been received back into the establishment under any circumstances. And if you will consider for a moment you will see the improbability of doing so as there would be nothing but complying with the requests of masters or their apprentices when hidden fault was found out'.⁴⁷⁵ As will be demonstrated in subsequent paragraphs, and was evident in the Ludden case, the RMA was strongly opposed to girls returning, whatever the reason.

What about those who did survive till the end of their term? Sometimes charity apprentices were awarded a gratuity upon completion of their indenture. Levene found this for the Foundling hospital; the majority of those who applied for a gratuity were awarded the full amount of five guineas.⁴⁷⁶ A similar type of scheme appears to have been in place at the RMA, as one girl, Mary McCourt, who had been indentured as an assistant cook at the asylum itself, received 'the usual gratuity' of five pounds'.⁴⁷⁷ Most of the other girls recorded as receiving a gratuity were those apprenticed to factories, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. Humphries also found that charity apprentices were more likely to have rewards for behaviour and completion; this was generally money but sometimes a

⁴⁷⁴ TNA, WO143/61, 16 Dec. 1829, p. 237; WO143/52/1385, 30 June 1828.

⁴⁷⁵ TNA, WO143/62, 17 Sept. 1840, p. 300.

⁴⁷⁶ Levene, 'Honesty', pp. 189, 191.

⁴⁷⁷ TNA, WO143/61, 11 Jan. 1830, p. 241.

gift, such as a bible.⁴⁷⁸ Unusually, there is one Poor Law indenture that referred to a gratuity. John Moragea's 1864 indenture to hairdressing noted the promise of £20 at the completion of the term.⁴⁷⁹

There has been debate about the value of pauper apprenticeship to the child's later life, an issue particularly brought to the fore and reappraised by Honeyman in the context of factory placements, discussed in Chapter 5. Earlier in this chapter, the aspirational nature of charity apprenticeships was examined. So what about children from the traditional sector? Honeyman benefited from using surviving business records; with traditional occupations, the luxury of such a paper trail is rarely available, given placements were often to sole masters. Furthermore, the problem of children being apprenticed to impoverished trades, such as shoemaking, has already been highlighted. Any chance of the child having genuine prospects was more likely under the Old Poor Law, as with the New Poor Law, the principle of 'less eligibility' applied. Unfortunately there is no evidence to support the traditional occupations indentures in assessing whether or not the child's prospects were improved as a result of being apprenticed by the Poor Law. Humphries used autobiographies and was therefore able to enjoy a rounder picture for each child and track them into adulthood. On the basis of this extended picture she argued that traditional Poor Law apprenticeships appeared to have given some genuine instruction and provided the possibility of economic independence for some of the boys.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 300.

⁴⁷⁹ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/382, 17 May 1864.

⁴⁸⁰ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 301, citing Snell, *Annals*, p. 284, who found from biographical information in settlement examinations that those apprenticed by parish or charity did go on to practise their trade.

She concluded that although they had received ‘less eligible tickets into less desirable trades’, nevertheless they served as lifelines back into respectable society.⁴⁸¹

Evidence earlier in the chapter showed that charity children, usually apprenticed with a premium ranging between £5-10 to those trades that still aspired to artisan skills, such as metals and woodwork, were viewed as of higher status, and as also noted earlier, in some cases, there was an active policy of creating social capital. It was possible to track two RMA girls post-completion because of its detailed letter books; these were girls who had been apprenticed ‘in house’ and were subsequently promoted. For example, Mary McCourt was indentured as an assistant cook at the establishment, remaining in this position.⁴⁸² Eliza Ferries was apprenticed in 1824 for 4 years, age 14, to the Matron of their branch for infants at Newport, on the Isle of Wight. She was promoted early to the position of Nurse. ‘She will receive the provisions and clothing of a Nurse, and in addition some Tea and Sugar with 6d per week as subsistence’. Another girl was apprenticed to replace her.⁴⁸³

3.5 Gender issues

Many gender related issues have already been discussed, but it is worth considering separately the undoubted heavy bias in the types of apprenticeship procured for girls, principally domestic service. This is possible because the sample of traditional occupations is quite equally split: girls 454 indentures, boys 623. As noted before, there are 421 indentures in the domestic service category, 39% of the traditional occupations sector (and one quarter of the overall sample), with just 10 being boys, thus 411 girls in

⁴⁸¹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 305.

⁴⁸² TNA, WO143/61, 24 Jan. 1830, p. 241.

⁴⁸³ TNA, WO143/52/1022, 27 Aug. 1824; WO143/61, 5 Mar. 1827, p. 120.

total. The only other traditional trade area that provides any multiple apprenticeships is dress, part of the manufacture category, where 28 girls were apprenticed, the majority to dressmaking. Thus of the 454 girls in total, only 15 were apprenticed to trades outside these two categories; examples were given in the individual trades analysed above. The female apprentice was noted, usually for the fact there were so few, for example, one tailor, two shoemakers, one basketmaker.

An important qualification to note about these findings is the large presence of charity apprentices among the female indentures, particularly the girls of the RMA. As discussed above, both dressmaking and service were considered suitable occupations for non-Poor Law girls consistent with contemporaneous notions of respectability, even if the actual work was just pure grind. There were just 35 girls apprenticed by the Poor Law to traditional occupations, and despite the difficulties officials faced regarding the perceived respectability of their charges, the Poor Law reflects the charity trends. There are 14 girls apprenticed to domestic service, (with the important distinction that 9 were to housewifery, rather than as a servant), and 11 to dress, with no one single trade dominating, and, finally a number of girls placed as singletons into trades such as mantua making, shoemaking, glover, stocking maker.

That most girls ended up in service is no surprise given the deliberate policy and specific training which channelled them towards such a fate, particularly in the case of charities. A RMA letter of 1840 clearly details their intentions: 'It can be proved that the females educated in this Establishment have received every instruction and even more than the Regulations direct viz reading, writing, and what is not directed sewing, knitting,

washing, getting up linen, in kitchen and house work, and in such other female employments as may qualify them for useful servants'.⁴⁸⁴ Earlier in the chapter the enthusiasm of the Bristol Guardians for such training was also detailed. In 1864 it wrote to the Poor Law Board requesting dispensation for its girls from the educational requirements for workhouse children: 'Mental education should be laid aside for a limited time and the girls kept regularly employed during the whole of that time in cleaning, cooking, and such household work as domestic servants are expected to perform'. They requested no schooling for a two-month period (despite regulations requiring up to 18 hours schooling a week) and the rejection of this plan has already been highlighted.⁴⁸⁵ As indicated before, the evidence from this sample accords with other historians who have found domestic service accounted for most female bindings, such as Kirby and Levene's work on London.⁴⁸⁶

Honeyman concluded that pauper boys had a wider choice of apprenticeships, being more likely to be bound to skilled trades, whereas girls were confined to domestic trades or the factories.⁴⁸⁷ Indeed Chapter 5 will illustrate that both Poor Law and charity officials took advantage of opportunities offered by factories to apprentice children, particularly girls *en masse* in batches.

3.6 Settlement concerns

Under the Old Poor Law, sending children into other parishes was considered advantageous, as settlement was conferred upon completion of the term of apprenticeship. In addition, in theory an apprentice could claim poor relief from the new parish after forty

⁴⁸⁴ TNA, WO143/62, 14 Apr. 1840, p. 281.

⁴⁸⁵ TNA, MH12/3867, 26 May 1864.

⁴⁸⁶ See pp. 96-7.

⁴⁸⁷ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 151 citing Snell, *Annals*, p. 272 .

days of work.⁴⁸⁸ The Royal Commission had noted that some parishes were deliberately attracting masters from outside the parish in order to transfer the settlement burden. Although the Commission proposed abolition of the completion of apprenticeship as a head of settlement, this was not enacted in the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, so consternation continued.⁴⁸⁹ From a practical point of view, it was very unlikely that children sent some distance could return to their home parish to claim relief. Settlement is often viewed as less of an issue under the New Poor Law, the misconception being that the law had been clarified as per the proposals by the Royal Commission; Rose argued that the settlement laws were more of a deterrent than a functioning part of the Poor Law by this time.⁴⁹⁰ But as the later factories chapter will highlight, settlement was still very much an issue for those living in factory districts where children arrived in groups *en masse*.

It was also still very much an issue in the context of placing children into traditional occupations. When binding a child to another area, the receiving parish had to be notified. As late as 1858 concerns were being raised to the Poor Law Board about the implication of receiving children: for example, Clifton Union in Bristol wrote to the Board requesting advice about taking apprentices from neighbouring Bristol Incorporation. The officials had previously not objected to such arrangements, but they requested clarification

⁴⁸⁸ Snell, 'Apprenticeship System', pp. 308-9; K. Snell, *Parish and Belonging. Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2006) [hereafter, Snell, *Parish and Belonging*], p85-6; Snell, *Annals*, p. 228 insisted the full 7 years had to be served to achieve settlement; in theory apprentices were irremovable after 40 days, but his impression was the legislation was ignored, p. 258. Honeyman noted 'contemporaries understood the situation rather differently. It was widely held that 40 days service under an apprenticeship was sufficient to gain settlement', Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 23; Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, pp. 85-6, Snell had a revised view that settlement was achieved 'by serving a legal indentured apprenticeship and residing in the parish for forty days during one's term'.

⁴⁸⁹ Checkland, *Poor Law Report*, pp. 38, 466-7, 472-3; M.E. Rose, *The English Poor Law, 1780-1930* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971) [hereafter, Rose, *English Poor Law*], p. 191 states settlement only abolished for hiring and service after one year, s.64, An Act for the Amendment and Better Administration of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales 1834 (4&5 Will. IV, c.76) [hereafter, Poor Law Amendment Act].

⁴⁹⁰ M.E. Rose, 'Settlement, Removal, and the New Poor Law', in D. Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 25-44 at p. 43.

as ‘if the settlement is gained, it becomes matter for their serious consideration’. Alas the Poor Law Board evaded giving the clear direction Clifton were seeking as it wanted specific case details. No further exchange appears to have taken place as no further reference was found in the Poor Law correspondence files.⁴⁹¹

Of course, settlement disputes were common under the Old Poor Law, but it was not just Poor Law officials who were anxious about the position. RMA correspondence reveals its officers desired a definitive opinion regarding settlement: In January 1829, they sought legal opinion from their solicitors, Jewell & Hearn, as to whether children could claim a right over the parish in which they resided with their master. This inquiry was prompted by the case examined earlier, Mary Nurse, who was returned from Guernsey by her master, without consultation or consent. There is no copy of the opinion obtained in the records, but it was obviously not favourable, as the RMA were obliged to take her back until they could find another master. They did not have to wait too long, as the registers show she was apprenticed to Mr Newton’s Cressbrook mill in April.⁴⁹² Separate correspondence refers to applications from potential masters in Guernsey, with Evatt seeking guidance on what was needed in the indentures ‘so as to give force and make effective our Indentures on that Island as well as Jersey’.⁴⁹³

There are other examples of the RMA trying to enforce settlement upon the master’s parish. A letter of 1827 is rather vigorous in its reply to a Manchester Overseer who enquired about returning a girl following the breakdown of her apprenticeship: ‘I have only to say in reply that the Parish must take care of the Girl, as I have in my possession a

⁴⁹¹ TNA, MH12/4008, 10 Oct. 1858.

⁴⁹² TNA, WO143/52/1270, 18 Apr. 1829.

⁴⁹³ TNA, WO 143/61, 5 Mar. 1829, p. 214.

Certificate from the Minister and Churchwardens that John McDonald was able to support an apprentice, and that he is a respectable person. Without this Certificate, the Girl would not have been bound to him'.⁴⁹⁴ In 1829, Caroline Lambert was apprenticed to Jacob Glover; but three years later there is a note in the letter book about her being discharged by Justices and 'she was delivered over to the Guardians of the poor for the Parish of Millbrook, under whose charge she is at present'.⁴⁹⁵ Then in 1832, a master based in Romford wrote to them asking whether his apprentice servant Margaret Kinsella should have her settlement in his parish; RMA advised that 'should the Magistrates cancel the Indentures of your apprentice Margaret Kinsella there is no means of providing for her except by a weekly allowance to be paid by yourself, or become a charge upon the Parish in which you reside'.⁴⁹⁶ It seems that on these occasions the RMA was more successful in absolving itself of responsibility for the girls, just as it had done for Jane Ludden, the abuse case examined earlier.

These cases illustrate the tension caused by settlement between charity and Poor Law, an issue highlighted in the Reports from Commissioners Poor Laws of 1834: 'This evil is much promoted in many parishes by charitable endowments for the purpose of apprenticing children. The premium supplied by the charity affords an easy mode of tempting an out parishioner to take the children, and it is feared that in many cases the parish officers inquire no further; they have changed the child's settlement, and if he is ruined in consequence, his new parish must maintain him'.⁴⁹⁷ It seems that the RMA tried to address this issue head on with the Southampton Corporation, as its correspondence

⁴⁹⁴ TNA, WO143/61, 22 Feb.1827, p. 119.

⁴⁹⁵ TNA, WO143/62, 5 Mar. 1832. p. 19.

⁴⁹⁶ TNA, WO143/62, 31 Aug., 3 Sept. 1832, p. 38; WO143/52/1454, 7 Oct. 1830.

⁴⁹⁷ Checkland, *Poor Law Report*, p. 250.

reveals: ‘As Poor Rates could not of course be levied on the Establishment but in consideration that Children might claim a right to the Parish were they had no other, the Commissioners allowed a Charge, which has been paid, on the Officer’s Houses...whether this will give Children a right to Claim a settlement I cannot tell’.⁴⁹⁸ Rather than this being an act designed to placate local Poor Law officials, the tone of the letter comes across as seeking yet another way to ensure the settlement burden was offloaded, and trying to absolve the RMA of responsibility for a girl once she had left the institution! This is significant given the majority of their bindings were outside the local parish (353 out of the 412 to traditional occupations).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated in detail the prevalence and survival of traditional occupations as a source of pauper apprenticeship, throughout the industrial revolution. It continues the work by Honeyman, Humphries, Goose and Kirby who have all rightly identified that children’s work was not exclusively in the mills and mines of Victorian Britain. As well as signifying the dominance of this type of work, it extends the historiography by illustrating that both Poor Law and charity apprenticeships were available in urban settings, and indeed in maritime centres, demonstrating that many children, contrary to existing views, did remain in ports to train in a conventional manner, with some children even sent into the port for this type of work. Children in this sector were working very long hours, at demanding physical tasks, with no statutory protection or public spotlight on their conditions.

⁴⁹⁸ TNA, WO143/61, 16 Jan. 1829, p. 207.

Crucially, my evidence also shows that pauper apprenticeship as a system was still deployed throughout the nineteenth century, and that this was true for both charitable and Poor Law boys and girls. Honeyman was the first to identify that pauper apprenticeship continued for much longer than previously thought; as highlighted in Chapter 1, Rose and Kirby believed it ceased in the 1820s, and more recently Kirby amended his view to agree with Green that decline was during the 1830/40s.⁴⁹⁹ But this sample clearly shows that children were placed into traditional occupations as pauper apprentices as late as 1870. Although after the initial implementation of the New Poor Law, unions were discouraged by the Poor Law Commission from continuing to bind children in this manner, by the 1840s there was recognition that it was the only workable system for dealing with the many pauper children whom the workhouses were having to shelter; there was in fact a distinct shift towards training children in order to gain apprenticeships, but without the cost of a premiums.

In some ways then, the New Poor Law saw deterioration in the protections and opportunities that the Old Poor Law apprenticeship system had afforded boys and girls. It is in the traditional sector that the New Poor Law's less eligibility principle, as applied to apprenticeship, is most clearly demonstrated; the majority of children were placed into the impoverished dress trades, and whether these children really acquired skills that would lead them to be able to support themselves in later life is a moot point. As the following chapters will show, there were perhaps more opportunities for advancement through other types of pauper apprenticeship.

⁴⁹⁹ See pp. 23-5, 260-6.

4. Shipped out: Children sent to sea

'The dangers and hair-breadth escapes of a life of adventures, instead of disheartening young people, seem frequently to recommend a trade to them. A tender mother, among the inferior ranks of people, is often afraid to send her son to school at a sea-port town, lest the sight of the ships and the conversation and adventures of the sailors should entice him to go to sea'.⁵⁰⁰

Adam Smith's observation in 1776 perfectly captured the essence of the appeal of the maritime trade to young boys. For the workhouse orphan who had no 'tender mother' to look out for them, apprenticeship to the sea would doubtless have been an exciting prospect, an appealing cocktail of earnings and adventure, especially compared with other types of pauper apprenticeship. Yet such boys endured some of the worst conditions of all pauper apprentices, not least the prospect of fatality. Humphries has argued that the lure of the sea is an overlooked aspect of the industrial revolution, and this chapter highlights its important and hitherto largely unexplored role in the pauper apprenticeship system.⁵⁰¹ It is concerned with the fate of poor (in both senses of the word) boys; there are no girls in this sample, just as none were recorded in any of the nineteenth century censuses, despite sensational newspaper tales from time to time exposing girls who passed themselves off as sailors in order to earn the higher wages associated with being at sea.⁵⁰²

In Humphries' study of working class autobiographies, seaman was the eighth most frequently recorded occupation; in the summary tables of the 1851 Census, it just scraped into the top 20 recorded jobs of males under 20 years of age; yet for all three ports, it was

⁵⁰⁰ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 150.

⁵⁰¹ Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 212, 218.

⁵⁰² Armstrong, 'Information', p. 269 notes a small amount of census data recording females who went on-board as stewards and cooks. For sensational stories, see <http://www.historyofwomen.org/sailors.html> H. Wojtczak, *History of Women* (date accessed: 29 September 2014, copy available from the author).

much more frequently noted, being the second most recorded occupation in Liverpool, third in Southampton and fifth in Bristol.⁵⁰³ This is unsurprising, as other historians have also found that most sailors were from coastal areas.⁵⁰⁴ What this clearly demonstrates is the importance of regional focus; as a dominant trade in each port, its ability to have provided pauper apprenticeship opportunities merits investigation. Sending pauper boys to sea seems an obvious solution for overburdened Poor Law officials in port towns. Why not take advantage of a unique local economic factor, and literally ship them out? Yet curiously, only 8 per cent (132 indentures) of the entire sample evidences this. Table 4.1 below shows the composition of this subsample, illustrating that the sea was a source of charitable and Poor Law apprenticeships.

Table 4.1 Sea pauper apprenticeships, by type

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Totals |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Charity | 20 | 26 | 46 |
| Poor Law | 5 | 81 | 86 |
| Totals | 25 | 107 | 132 |

Source: Indenture data.

Why are there surprisingly fewer boys than initially anticipated? The parameters of this study may be responsible. First, indenture data collection focused only on recruits to the Merchant service, as outlined in Chapter 2.⁵⁰⁵ Apprenticeship and recruitment to the Royal Navy would pose a separate study in itself, already the domain of other scholars, particularly in relation to the Marine Society.⁵⁰⁶ Moreover, it is not just naval evidence

⁵⁰³ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 212; Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. I, pp. ccxxiii, 113, 505; vol. II, p. 649.

⁵⁰⁴ Humphries and Leunig, 'Stunting', p. 464; P. Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seamen 1650-1775* (London: Methuen, 1998) [hereafter, Earle, *Sailors*], p. 19.

⁵⁰⁵ See p. 56.

⁵⁰⁶ Pietsch, *Ships' Boys*; Pietsch, *Jim Hawkins*.

from the Marine Society that has been excluded; for example, the Southampton Poor Law correspondence contains several examples of naval placements under the New Poor Law. Second, as discussed in Chapter 2, for the purposes of this study, a child has been defined as being aged 14 and under.⁵⁰⁷ This is crucial, as the sea sample would be considerably larger if older boys had been included. For example, if *all* boys indentured as seamen by LSV had been included, there would be 226 in total, of which 94 were aged 15, 50 aged 16, and 3 aged 17; therefore more than half of the total number of recruits was excluded from the evidence for being over the defined age limit.⁵⁰⁸ That sea apprenticeships attracted older boys is understandable. They were more attractive to masters because they were understood to be bigger and stronger; selection policies were often based on such criteria. However, Poor Law officials sought to counteract this, and encouraged recruitment of younger boys through proper training prior to placement. A report into the training of pauper children in 1841 discussed the success of this approach; it described ship masters visiting the Limehouse industry school to choose boys. ‘Upon hands all being turned up, they have immediately said they are all too small and too young. I have then requested that they would see what the boys could do; and immediately upon seeing that, they have selected two, three and four together...They have said that the knowledge the boys acquire is certainly worth two inches in height, or two years in age’.⁵⁰⁹ As detailed later below, training was a model adopted by the LSV, also to much success.

A third reason for lower numbers of apprentices may relate to conditions of the time; there was a tide of reluctance by ship masters to take on pauper boys, for various reasons as will be revealed later in this chapter. Although the scope of this study may have

⁵⁰⁷ See p. 50.

⁵⁰⁸ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/1-271, 1840-70.

⁵⁰⁹ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 168.

age limitations that prevent an assessment of the *full* impact of the sea on pauper apprenticeship, nevertheless, the 132 sailor boys who feature can still cast light on the trends in this type of apprenticeship, and the motivations of both charity and Poor Law officials in utilizing this type of placement.

As with the previous chapter, both children from the port and those sent into the port are combined for the analysis of the sector. It is not surprising that 37 per cent of the sea indentures consist of boys sent into the port, principally charity apprentices from the Marine Society. This explodes the stereotype of there being no work for children in ports. In terms of the Poor Law, the records of LSV provide the bulk of the sources for this chapter, although Southampton Corporation's correspondence also gives good insight into practices. The sample comprises 132 boys in total, spread over the Old and New Poor Law; with 80 per cent of all placements post-1834, which is significant as sea apprenticeship is often regarded as a traditional placement of the eighteenth century. This sample demonstrates that it was a tradition that held fast and continued long into the nineteenth century. It also demonstrates that the system of pauper apprenticeship was thriving long into the New Poor Law era, just as traditional occupations indentures also evidenced. Again, this is firm evidence contradicting the assertions of Rose and Kirby.⁵¹⁰ Indeed, the quotation above describing specific training in order to procure sea apprenticeships for younger boys contributes a contemporary contradiction. My evidence thus highlights the importance of an occupational destination that is not always associated with pauper apprenticeships in the literature, which has tended to concentrate on placements in factories, and to a lesser extent, traditional occupations.

⁵¹⁰ See pp. 23-5.

Apprenticeship to the Merchant service played an important role in the wider context of maritime history. Britain was the world’s greatest trading nation and most successful naval power.⁵¹¹ There are many works that detail the role of the Royal Navy and its recruitment, but less on its commercial counterpart. This was the era of the French wars, as well as Britain’s imperial activity; the Merchant service was crucial to success in both of these missions, not only as a source of trained seamen to supply the Navy, but also, as the vanguard of imports and exports, to ensure Britain’s economic success as a trading nation, which ultimately financed imperial ambitions.⁵¹² Table 4.2 below shows the composition of sea apprentices in this sample, for each port.

Table 4.2 Sea pauper apprenticeships, by port

| Port | Old Poor Law | | New Poor Law | | Totals |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | Charity | Poor Law | Charity | Poor Law | |
| Bristol | 10 | - | 4 | - | 14 |
| Liverpool | 9 | 2 | 22 | 79 | 112 |
| Southampton | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Totals | 20 | 5 | 26 | 81 | 132 |

Source: Indenture data.

The table shows that LSV records are the main source of Poor Law records, with the Marine Society providing the charitable evidence. Established in 1756 to take boys off the streets of London and put them to use positively for both themselves and the nation, the Marine society was the brainchild of Jonas Hanway (celebrated also for his involvement in the Foundling Hospital and pioneering reform for chimney sweep boys).⁵¹³ Initially the

⁵¹¹ Earle, *Sailors*, p. 5.

⁵¹² Rodger, *Wooden World*; Davis, *Rise of Shipping*.

⁵¹³ S.V. Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty in England, c. 1680-1820: Wild and Visionary Schemes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

purpose of this philanthropic venture was to aid in the recruitment for the Royal Navy, which was engaged in the Seven Years War, but also extended to supply the Merchant service. One of the benefits of recruiting for the Merchant rather than Royal Navy was that boys could be a bit smaller. Pietsch argued that in addition to the recruitment exercise, the Society was also motivated by social concern regarding the behaviour of unemployed boys.⁵¹⁴ In the early days the Marine Society had a reputation for recruiting delinquents, sons of poor widows, from masters who wanted to cancel indentures and magistrates who sought sea service as punishment, but it later became more about recruiting from the honest poor.⁵¹⁵ Some evidence from Bristol supports the idea that social control was a driving force. At the first meeting of the 'Committee of the Marine Society' in Bristol in July 1785, it was commented: 'That the Number of Boys who are continually to be met with in the Streets, and on the Quays of this City, in a State of great Poverty, and without Employment, renders the immediate Establishment of a MARINE SOCIETY essentially necessary'. It was proposed that sons of poor persons were to be recommended for apprenticeship by members of the committee, but also vagrants as recommended by the Guardians from the workhouse, with the aim of placing boys aged 10-16 onto vessels from the port of Bristol employed in foreign voyages, coal trades or fishery.⁵¹⁶

Whatever the motivation for providing apprenticeships, nationally the Society was a great success; between 1756 and 1863, it fitted out 10,625 boys for Naval sea duty.⁵¹⁷ A much studied institution, its registers are a good illustration of how boys were placed in

⁵¹⁴ Pietsch, *Ships' Boys*, Abstract.

⁵¹⁵ D. Payne, 'Rhetoric, Reality and the Marine Society', *The London Journal*, vol. 30, 2 (2005) [hereafter, Payne, 'Marine Society'], pp. 66-84, at p. 68.

⁵¹⁶ BRO, 11168/69h, 17 July 1792, pp. 1-2.

⁵¹⁷ Owen, *Philanthropy*, p. 60; Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 201.

ports all over the country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵¹⁸ For the study's featured ports from 1758-1869, 45 boys are recorded in their registers. Just as with recruitment from the Poor Law, the strength of the boys recruited was paramount; 66 per cent of the boys placed were aged 14.⁵¹⁹ In terms of ports, 1 was sent to Southampton, 14 to Bristol and 30 to Liverpool, a probable reflection on the relative size of each of the ports.

The differences between charitable and Poor Law apprenticeships have already been considered in Chapter 1.⁵²⁰ Whatever the perceived differences in background and status, the sea was a great leveller.⁵²¹ As this chapter will go on to demonstrate, conditions of apprenticeship were universal in experience. The sea apprenticeship evidence is analysed using the same thematic headings explored in Chapter 3, in order to provide meaningful comparison for the discussion in Chapter 6. I will begin with the start of a boy's journey, the mechanics of the apprenticeship process.

4.1 The apprenticeship process

As noted earlier, Poor Law officials introduced training to make their boys more attractive as potential sea apprentices. As part of its curriculum, the Liverpool industrial school specifically prepared boys for a life at sea. Details of their instruction can be found in the *Illustrated London News*' account in 1850: 'A ship has been erected on a portion of the grounds, where an old sailor teaches the aspirants for a maritime life the work required of young sailors on their first few voyages — everything, in fact, except steering, and such other matters as can only be performed upon the water. The boys generally seem to

⁵¹⁸ Pietsch, *Ships' Boys*; Pietsch, *Jim Hawkins*; Payne, 'Marine Society'; Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship'.

⁵¹⁹ This accords with Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship', which found the mean age at binding of 14.6, p. 56.

⁵²⁰ See pp. 25-7.

⁵²¹ Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 68.

consider it a privilege to learn to be sailors; and many of them, under the tuition thus acquired, have been qualified for, and have obtained, good situations on-board ship'.⁵²² A comment from another industrial school master summarized the principal aim of the training 'We get them into service or to sea for the most part at 13 years of age or younger, without premiums, and simply an outfit of clothes'.⁵²³

How were the boys placed at sea? A practical method was adopted in terms of interaction with the port; for example, the Southampton Poor Law correspondence reveals how Guardians went about organizing placements. A list of workhouse boys suitable for sea service was posted in the office of the Shipping Master at the Port of Southampton, following a recommendation to do so by the Poor Law Board.⁵²⁴ Applications were then received from ship owners. The process of advertising a list of available boys was clearly effective, as several indentures resulted. For example, in June 1852, William Odell, age 14, deserted by his parents, resided in Southampton Workhouse. The Guardians requested sanction from the Poor Law Board to spend £4 18s 6d to equip him for sea service, following an application for an apprentice from the owners of *Utility of Sunderland* after reviewing the list of available boys posted at the port.⁵²⁵ Correspondence to the Liverpool Guardians illustrates the practicalities of beginning their apprenticeship; the boys were to be provided with the necessary possessions and sent for: 'Sir, We send you duplicate of Joseph Douglas indentures. Please have his things ready by the morn (the Cumberland)

⁵²² *Illustrated London News*, vol. XVI, 423 (27 Apr. 1850), p. 296.

⁵²³ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 180.

⁵²⁴ TNA, MH12/10999, Folios 395-7, 14 Nov. 1851; MH12/10999, Folios 622-4, 18 June 1852.

⁵²⁵ TNA, MH12/10999/382 Folios 626-7, 18 June 1852.

will sail tomorrow if the wind should be fair. The boy must be down here by 10 o'clock in the morning'.⁵²⁶

Many of the boys were orphans but there are a few cases illustrating parental consent, and even active requests for placements, despite Adam Smith's sentimentalization of a 'tender mother'. This was more common with charity apprentices, such as Richard Morris, age 13, who was brought by his mother to the Marine Society in London, and subsequently placed on Captain Hackman's ship *Mermaid*, at Bristol in 1758.⁵²⁷ Boys were nominated to the Society by parents, the Poor Law, magistrates or directly by ships officers. Pietsch found that 44 per cent of boys (1756-1762) had a father alive, 39 per cent were brought by another adult (usually a mother), and that only 17 per cent were 'friendless' i.e. orphans, those being the boys presented through the other methods.⁵²⁸ Unfortunately the evidence for this study was not sufficiently detailed to enable a comparison with Pietsch's findings; just two boys were specifically noted as being orphans, and just the one entry records the mother's consent.

Bearing in mind the dangers Smith identified, why would parents willingly present their boys for sea service? Levene suggested Marine Society apprenticeship was aspirational, possibly perceived as a step up from Poor Law apprenticeship.⁵²⁹ In some cases the register indicates the background of the boy prior to apprenticeship. Casual jobs such as milk boy, carrier, and hawker were common; seven boys were previously errand boys, and several others worked as painters. Other backgrounds included: from the workhouse, working in a saw mill, shoemaking and gardening. Interestingly there was

⁵²⁶ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/125, 7 Apr. 1853.

⁵²⁷ NMM, MSY/H/2/2884, 12 Oct. 1758.

⁵²⁸ Pietsch, *Ships' Boys*, p. 164, cited in Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, pp. 163-4.

⁵²⁹ Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship', p. 59.

also one boy from a factory, giving some credence to the suggestion that the sea was used as a fall back mechanism when a prior apprenticeship failed.

There are examples of parents working with the Poor Law too, most interestingly under the New Poor Law. In Liverpool, 1858, the father of Thomas Irvine, 14, consented to a five year apprenticeship for John Roberts, based in the port, and arranged by the LSV.⁵³⁰ The New Poor Law has traditionally been portrayed as draconian in its application, despite Snell's argument that 'well over 80 per cent of poor relief under the system was outdoor relief'.⁵³¹ Certainly the practices in Southampton would support this, suggesting greater flexibility than the legislation prescribed. There are several examples of Guardians requesting sanction from the Poor Law Board to pay for local poor boys to go to sea. Although the examples found in correspondence were for naval apprentices, it nevertheless shows that the Poor Law was working with families outside the workhouse. William Brown, 14, was the son of a local whitesmith. His father was 63 and infirm, so unable to maintain his family. During 1852, the Guardians actively sought apprenticeship to avoid the boy becoming a burden on the rates. The Poor Law Board duly sanctioned the 40s requested for fitting him out on the basis that the Guardians stated that no work could be found for him in the town. Both the parents and the boy desired the apprenticeship.⁵³² This was by no means a unique case; Guardians asked for 50s each to outfit a further six boys in total, such as William Longman, whose father had died of cholera in 1849, and whose mother was unable to support him, and Robert Perkins whose father was ill.⁵³³ Previous chapters have already demonstrated that the Poor Law Board did have discretion

⁵³⁰ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/264, 10 May 1858.

⁵³¹ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, p. 17.

⁵³² TNA, MH12/10999, Folio 657, 10 Sept. 1852.

⁵³³ TNA, MH12/10999, Folio 16, 11 Jan. 1851.

to allow assistance for apprenticeships, generally for specific items such as clothing. These examples show the Poor Law Board adopting a pragmatic, case by case approach, and local Guardians working actively with parents.

The previous chapter commented on the notion of agency, the child having a say in the type of placement arranged. Sea Service is perhaps the only sector where some desire on the part of the child might be manifest, particularly in relation to Poor Law apprentices. As well as the 46 charity boy volunteers, 70 of the 86 Poor Law indentures were also voluntary. As mooted in the opening of this chapter, despite its perils the sea would have been an enticing escape from a wretched life in the workhouse. John Lowrey, 13, was bound voluntarily to Azariah Munden in 1844, to sail to Newfoundland; the perfect example of a boy succumbing to the lure of the sea, regardless of the enormous distance over which he would be placed, over two thousand miles from home. Of course, how far boys were genuinely volunteers is questionable.

The introduction to this chapter hinted that Poor Law officials faced some prejudice in seeking to place pauper boys into sea apprenticeships. ‘If there was not a particular law to oblige Masters of Ships to take such children, we should find it very difficult to put any off that way’ stated a Bristol Guardian in the early eighteenth century.⁵³⁴ ‘An Act for the Increase of Seamen, and better Encouragement of Navigation, and Security of the Coal Trade’ of 1703 provided authority to compel masters of ships to take local parish boys. Overseers could bind any boy over 10 until the age of 21, with a premium of 50s to be paid in order to provide clothing and bedding. The number of apprentices a master was required to take was based on the size of the vessel’s tonnage;

⁵³⁴ Bristol Corporation of the Poor, *Some Considerations Offer'd to the Citizens of Bristol, Relating to the Corporation for the Poor in the said City* (Bristol: n.p. 1711), p. 5.

one for 30-50 tons, another for the next fifty, and one for every subsequent hundred, with a £10 fine for refusing to comply. Although under the New Poor Law formal training offered a carrot to persuade captains to take poor boys, under the Old Poor Law many ships were unwilling to accept untrained boys despite the premium on offer.⁵³⁵

Up until the early nineteenth century, the Bristol Guardians had not had to resort to enforcing the Act, but in 1818 they reverted to it when they encountered difficulties placing their boys. Compulsion was not always successful, as many masters simply paid the fine rather than take on the city's poor; in 1819, 13 persons paid the £10 fine.⁵³⁶ Workhouse lads were regarded as idle and rough; ship owners preferred to take on country boys, which caused further bad feeling with local officials. Bristol Guardian James Johnson lamented 'a great number of country boys was [sic] brought into the city, and, by being bound apprentices upon the shipping of the port, obtained settlements, to the manifest injury of our own poor'.⁵³⁷ The impact of sea apprenticeship on settlement issues is examined in detail at the end of this chapter. Neighbouring Clifton parish produced a pamphlet of protest against Marine Society apprentices for a number of reasons, again primarily relating to settlement, but it also noted the perverseness of trying to force ship owners to take local boys: 'This Grievance is aggravated likewise by a Refusal of the Shipwrights, *and that not in the civilest Terms*, to comply with the Desires of the Overseers of the Parish, to employ poor Boys of the Parish'. The pamphlet mused whether

⁵³⁵ Johnson, *Transactions*, pp. 38-9.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵³⁷ Butcher, *Bristol Corporation*, p. 14.

ship owners were not ‘virtually assuming a Right of Exemption’ and describing it as ‘so odious as to be disavowed, at the Expense of contradicting common sense’.⁵³⁸

A counsel’s opinion from this time shows the strength of ship owners’ aversion to the legislation. The advice was commissioned as a result of anxiety about potential double liability; in addition to the 1703 Act, another Act in 1797, the ‘Act for preventing the Desertion of Seamen from British Merchant Ships trading to his Majesty’s Colonies and Plantations in the West Indies’ specifically determined the number of apprentices on-board ships bound for West Indies. There was to be one apprentice under the age of 17 for every 100 tons; again a £10 fine was imposed for non-compliance. In 1821, Bristol merchants sought an opinion as to whether they could have pauper apprentices imposed upon them by *both* Acts. Counsel William Gasalee concluded that the latter Act did not repeal the terms of 1703, but that magistrates ought to take into account other liabilities when considering applications by Guardians for boys to be placed at sea.⁵³⁹ In fact, the 1797 Act was modified in 1823 to lower the number required (80-200 tons, one apprentice; 200-400 tons, two apprentices).⁵⁴⁰ Following the advent of the New Poor Law, a further Act had great impact on the pauper apprenticeship system in terms of sea service. The Merchant Shipping Act of 1835 stipulated that parish boys could still be sent to sea if a burden, but the minimum age was raised to 13. In addition boys had to give their consent, and were required to be of ‘sufficient health and strength’. Registers of both parish and voluntary apprentices had to be kept at the general Register Office of Merchant seamen in the Port of

⁵³⁸ BRO, 11168/69h, 17 July 1792, pp. 1-3.

⁵³⁹ BRO, JQS/P/477, 20 Feb. 1821.

⁵⁴⁰ An Act for Regulating the Number of Apprentices to be taken on-board British Merchant Vessels; and for preventing the Desertion of Seamen therefrom, 12 May 1823 (4 Geo. IV. c.25).

London.⁵⁴¹ The Act was modified in 1844 reducing the minimum age to 12, and limiting indenture to either seven years or until 21, whichever occurred first.⁵⁴² We have already seen that this was not strictly adhered to; Henry Tubbs, placed by Southampton Corporation on-board *Cicely* was only age 11 in 1852, thus in contravention of the regulation. Compulsory carriage of apprentices on-board ships was eventually abolished in 1849.⁵⁴³

Apprenticeships to the sea could prove more costly than other types of placement as generally the boys had to provide their own apparel. For example, in 1825, Southampton Guardians gave Captain James Privett one pound to clothe his apprentice Edward Downes, in addition to the premium of £2 4s.⁵⁴⁴ As discussed in Chapter 3, the climate of the New Poor Law discouraged apprenticeship premiums; Guardians had to request sanction from the Poor Law Board to pay for clothing and equipment.⁵⁴⁵ This was the case for Southampton workhouse orphan, Henry Tubbs, 11, encountered above. Apprenticed to the ship *Cicely*, he required the following equipment costing £4 7s: drawers, hose, large shirts, jumpers, stripe shirts, money jacket, pilot front, vest, blue cap, comforter, mitts, clothes bag, hammock, bed, rug, blanket, pannikin, plate, spoon and knife, leather belt, oil coat, oil front, blue cloth, brush and comb, boots and shoes.

A similar request was made for William Odell, 14, also referred to earlier. The owners of the ship *Utility of Sunderland* requested an apprentice from the Southampton

⁵⁴¹ An Act to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to the Merchant Seamen of the United Kingdom, and forming and maintaining a Register of all the Men engaged in that Service, 1835 (5&6 Will. IV. c.19)

⁵⁴² An Act to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to Merchant Seamen; and for keeping a Register of Seamen, 1844 (7&8 Vict. c.112)

⁵⁴³ An Act to amend the Laws in force for the Encouragement of British Shipping and Navigation, 1849 (12&13 Vict. c.29)

⁵⁴⁴ SA, SC/AG/1/3, 15 Aug. 1825.

⁵⁴⁵ See pp. 127-30.

Guardians, and the Poor Law Board sanctioned a payment of £4 18s 6d for Odell's necessary equipment. He required a similar level of outfitting to Tubbs: bed and bedding, hammock, oil coat and trousers, Bristol coat and trousers, check linen shirts, stripe cotton shirt, blue serge shirt, jersey, drawers, duck trousers, worsted hose, comforter, mufflers, scarlet bonnet, blue cloth cap, sow wester, leather belt, canvas cloths bags, boots, knife, needles thread and buttons, braces, jumpers and mittens.⁵⁴⁶ Enclosed with a Liverpool indenture was this list for George Napier, aged 14, bound March 1856 to Thomas Ridley, in the port as a Mariner: 1 blanket, suit of oilskin, blue shirt, sea cape, 2 canvas trousers, 1 P-vest, 2 jumpers, 1 bag.⁵⁴⁷

These examples show that under the New Poor Law, Guardians were achieving their aim of apprenticing boys without having to pay a premium (other than the cost of the kit), demonstrating a concerted effort to get boys off to sea. Was this at the cost of the protection of the boy? Unlike factory apprentices, where there is a wealth of evidence appertaining to assessment of masters prior to placement, as well as monitoring mechanisms once apprenticed, there is not a *single* instance of such diligence and care for sea apprentices, for any of the ports. Perhaps a comparison with factory placements is unbalanced, given factories received more legislative and popular attention, referring back again to Humphries observation about sea apprenticeship being overlooked. But even some of the apprenticeships to traditional trades evidenced protection mechanisms, be it prior or post placement. Although the sea apprenticeships are a much smaller sample of cases, it is nevertheless startling how these boys were signed off to the sea with not so much as a second thought.

⁵⁴⁶ TNA, MH12/10999, Folios 626-7, 18 June 1852.

⁵⁴⁷ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/227, 31 Mar. 1856.

In terms of age of starting apprenticeship and length of term, John Gibbons was a typical example of a poor boy cast out to sea; aged 14, he was placed by the LSV with Seddon, Son & Garrett for five years in 1854, with wages specified of £40.⁵⁴⁸ Both his age, and the length of term are representative of the sample; 77 per cent of the boys (both Poor Law and charity) were aged 14 when apprenticed, which reflects the demand for strong, tall boys. The average age was 13.7, which takes into account that there were examples of placements of younger boys; 4 per cent were aged 12 and under. In 1758, 11 year old James Conoway was apprenticed by the Marine Society to the ship *Orford* under Captain Spry at Bristol.⁵⁴⁹ Perhaps more surprising is another apprentice of the same tender age, but nearly 100 years later under the New Poor Law; remember Henry Tubbs, 11, placed aboard *Cicely* by Southampton Corporation in 1852?⁵⁵⁰ The most frequently recorded length of term for all apprentices in this sample was five years; 33 per cent of indentures specified this term, shorter than terms experienced by apprentices of factory or traditional occupations, likely a reflection of the generally older starting age. This is further supported by terms of four years accounting for 24 per cent of all sea indentures. As Chapter 3 noted, the issues of age and length of term are considered fully across all three sectors in the discussion chapter later in this thesis. It will place this study's finding in the context of the findings of other scholars contributing to this debate.⁵⁵¹

Gibbons' remuneration was also standard; most boys were paid wages, and premiums were rare, with only three indentures specifying one. The payment of wages was atypical of the experience of a pauper apprentice. Was this compensation for the dangers

⁵⁴⁸ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/147, 1 Oct. 1854.

⁵⁴⁹ NMM, MSY/H/2/2937, 30 Nov. 1758.

⁵⁵⁰ TNA, MH12/10999, Folios 461-2, 2 Jan. 1852.

⁵⁵¹ See pp. 249-55.

faced? ‘In trades which are known to be very unwholesome, the wages of labour are always remarkably high’.⁵⁵² In this sample, 68 per cent of indentures recorded wages; this appears to be the more common system for sea apprenticeships, with payments based over the number of years of service in progressive increments. For example, a charitable indenture for William Ferris’ charity of Barnstaple Devon, apprenticing John Yeo to Liverpool in 1838, specified the following payment schedule: £5 at the end of the first year; £6 for the second year; £7 the third year and £9 for the fourth and final year.⁵⁵³ The prospect of wages surely increased the appeal to pauper boys; the incremental system designed to keep them on-board once the going got tough. Of the 82 recorded amounts, the average wage was £35.79, as the range of the most commonly recorded amounts was quite evenly spread between £30-40: £30 (19 indentures, 14 per cent) followed by, £35 (14, 11 per cent) and £40 (13, 10 per cent), either spread over four or five years. The lowest wage was £5, the highest £60.

Of course, the wages were high in order to compensate for the dangers faced. Again Adam Smith made pertinent observations, recognising the need for a risk premium while cannily noticing that adolescents predisposition to view themselves as indestructible meant that they could be recruited without real financial recompense relative to the actual level of risk: ‘The contempt of risk, and the presumptuous hope of success, are in no period of life more active than at the age at which young people chose their professions. How little the fear of misfortune is then capable of balancing the hope of good luck, appears still more evidently in the readiness of the common people to enlist as soldiers, or

⁵⁵² Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 150.

⁵⁵³ NDRO, TD146/A84/16, 1 Oct. 1838.

go to sea'.⁵⁵⁴ He went on to compare the sea more favourably than enlisting as a soldier as 'Common sailors, therefore, more frequently get some fortune and preferment than common soldiers; and the hope of those prizes is what principally recommends the trade'.⁵⁵⁵

The previous chapter examined the distances apprentices were placed from their home. Using the same categorization of distances, Table 4.3 illustrates how far the boys travelled to join their ship.

Table 4.3 Location of sea pauper apprenticeships, from apprentices' home port

| Location | No. of indentures |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Port | 50 (38%) |
| Regional | 3 (2%) |
| National | 60 (45%) |
| Foreign | 19 (14%) |
| Totals | 132 |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

Home ports provided employment for 50 of Poor Law boys, and as discussed earlier, 49 charity boys were sent into the featured ports; it is noteworthy that three quarters of the boys in this sample were all apprenticed out of one of the three. It is also curious that the featured ports do not appear to have acted as more of a magnet regionally, just three indentures, such as 14 year old Hampshire boy Thomas Millar apprenticed as a mariner to Southampton's Thomas Bulmore, from Winchester St Peter Chesil parish in 1820, for 5 years at a premium of £10.⁵⁵⁶ Almost one quarter of boys were sent out of their home

⁵⁵⁴ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 147-8.

⁵⁵⁵ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 149.

⁵⁵⁶ HRO, 3M82W/PO19/27, 22 Apr. 1820.

port for work, to other ports; these boys were all from Liverpool, and they were scattered to ports far and wide, including foreign shores. Their destinations are now considered in the context of application of regulations; were there any measures that prevented officials sending boys to the other side of the world?

4.2 Application of regulations and batch apprenticeship

Although the lack of protection for sea boys has already been commented upon, there were some regulations forming part of wider Merchant service protection, beginning with the 1835 Merchant Shipping Act cited above. The Merchant Shipping Acts of 1835, 1844 and 1854 did lay down requirements for certifying good health, the need for consent, and minimum ages, as well as more generally, better recording procedures for all sailors, such as the ‘tickets’ system.⁵⁵⁷ Were any of these Acts disregarded by bindings in this sample? Eleven year old Henry Tubbs has been cited as being placed in 1852; this contravened the 1844 Merchant Shipping Act’s minimum age of 12.⁵⁵⁸ However this is the only example. There is also an example of possible breach of the stipulation for consent. During the 1860s, LSV bound seven boys by involuntary indenture: three remained in Liverpool, one to Maldon in Essex and three to New York. However, the boys were all orphans, and as noted in Chapter 3, Guardians had the power to consent on their behalf.⁵⁵⁹

As discussed in Chapter 3, an Act of 1816 stipulated that a pauper apprentice should not be placed more than 40 miles from their home parish, reduced to 30 miles in 1845. The 1845 General Order excluded sea apprenticeship, so there were no prescribed limits applicable. Prior to this, whether the limits were relevant between 1816-45 is an

⁵⁵⁷ Course, *Merchant Navy*, p. 209.

⁵⁵⁸ TNA, MH12/10999, Folios 461-2, 2 Jan. 1852.

⁵⁵⁹ See pp. 118-9.

area of ambiguity; as the 1845 regulations expressly excluded the limit, by implication they did apply before, and this is the position adopted when analysing the sea indenture data.

Although three-quarters of boys were apprenticed to one of the featured ports, 10 per cent (13 boys) were sent to other ports in Britain, and 14 per cent to foreign lands. One boy was even sent out of his home port to another of the featured ports; in 1845 William Owens was sent to Bristol by the LSV.⁵⁶⁰ In fact, 14 LSV apprentices were sent out of their own port to various North East coast ports such as Shields, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool, as well as Southern ports such as Salcombe and Penzance. Nineteen boys were indentured even further afield to ports in North America, including six to New York, and nine to Brigus North in Newfoundland. Given the size and dominance of the port of Liverpool in the mid-nineteenth century, it is a little surprising that they could not place all their boys locally. As mooted later in the discussion in Chapter 6, perhaps this was a response to the population boom and epidemics like cholera; North American masters were willing to take several boys, and there was probably no shortage of volunteers for crossing the Atlantic to pastures new.⁵⁶¹ So how many of these destinations contravened the regulations? For just under half of all sea indentures (47 per cent), no regulations were applicable. A further 28 per cent were for distances further than the prescribed limits; but they were not in fact contravening the regulation, as the indentures simply circumvented distance rules because they were voluntary agreements not covered by the legislation. It is crucial to note that the majority of indentures to sea service for all three ports were voluntary bindings, in contrast to most of the Poor Law apprentices in the entire sample

⁵⁶⁰ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/48, 10 June 1845.

⁵⁶¹ See p. 216.

who were subject to compulsory binding. The Marine Society did not need to concern itself either, as all of its boys ‘volunteered’ for such a life, as did some of the LSV apprentices who also offered themselves up for voluntary indentures. As noted above, only 7 indentures were bound involuntarily; the three boys, one aged 13, the other two 14, indentured to Captain Thomas Boyle in New York travelled 3,312 miles, which certainly broke the distance regulations over a hundred fold! However, as also noted above, it is unlikely the consent regulation was breached given their status as orphans. Irrespective of regulations, just 19 per cent of indentures were within the prescribed distance limits. While no rules may have been broken, it is clear that this was a sector that did not need to play by them in any event, equally attractive to boys wanting an adventure and officials looking to offload without any pressure of further responsibility to monitor.

As with other types of pauper apprenticeship, several masters were repeat customers. For example, the LSV placed nine boys with Thomas Ridley between 1852 and 1862, and the Marine Society similarly engaged in recurring business. For example, Richard Michell took Thomas Platt in 1804, and then Peter Short in 1806, for the same ship, *Flanders*.⁵⁶² What is really revealing, however, is the number of batch apprenticeship placements. This type of clustered supply is normally associated with the Northern mills, as detailed in Chapter 5, but it also occurred with sea apprenticeship, albeit on a much smaller scale. Nevertheless, the principle was the same, and most importantly, this batch placement occurred in the mid-nineteenth century, again strongly refuting the claims that this practice had died out by 1820.⁵⁶³ Thomas Ridley, referred to above, took three of his nine apprentices as a single batch, in 1852. Captain Thomas Boyle, took two

⁵⁶² NMM, MSY/Q3/14533038, 8 Dec. 1804; MSY/Q3/17643357, 13 July 1806.

⁵⁶³ See pp. 210-16.

batches of three, first in 1852 and then again in 1861. Azariah Munden of Newfoundland took three boys in 1844 and another two in 1847. These were all for LSV but the Marine Society also engaged in mini batches too, as John Irving and John Purvis took three boys each, in 1836 and 1864 respectively.

Liverpool's industrial school actively welcomed opportunities for batch apprenticeship; a Vestry board minute of 1854 stated 'Read a letter from Mr Coates enclosing one from the South American and General Steam Navigation Company agreeing to take four boys from the school as apprentices in the steam ship *Olinda*.⁵⁶⁴ When the Liverpool records are examined as a whole, including older boys outside the scope of this study, larger batches are evident. For example, between 1856-7, 18 boys were placed with Liverpool firm WH Thomas & Co, in two batches. Undoubtedly the investment in training at the industrial school paid off for the Vestry; between 1840 and 1870, 226 boys (all ages) were sent to sea, the vast majority by voluntary indentures, therefore subject to no regulatory constraints.

So far the boys' situation prior to being placed on-board has been examined. But what was life like for them once at sea?

4.3 Life as an apprentice

The boys in this sample were either employed as a mariner or seaman, mariner simply being the more traditional term. In what exactly were the boys trained? A charitable indenture records John Yeo, age 14, being sent from Barnstaple, Devon to mariner Benjamin Davidson in Liverpool to be 'instructed in the Art of Navigation'.⁵⁶⁵ In practice this would not have been formal training in the science of navigation, for which boys were

⁵⁶⁴ LRO, 353 SEL 1/1, 17 Jan. 1854, p. 217.

⁵⁶⁵ NDRO, TD146/A84/16, 1 Oct. 1838.

formally schooled in. For these types of apprentices, it probably meant observing routes and handling cargo; whether this was specific instruction or just learning by osmosis would have been determined by the individual masters. The reality would often be that the boys were a cheap source of labour with no real formal element of training, just the performance of monotonous physical work, such as deck scrubbing, cleaning brasses, loading and unloading cargo, handling sails and performing lookout duty.⁵⁶⁶ In many cases the boys might not have even been doing seafaring work for example, simply being the cook on-board a vessel.

Surprisingly few indentures refer specifically to boys being placed as fishermen, despite several studies noting a link between the Poor Law and fishing trades. Thomas found that Essex parishes bound out to fishing trades all over the Thames Estuary and the East coast.⁵⁶⁷ In her research of London parishes, Honeyman also found boys apprenticed to the Essex fishing trade, as well as the East coast ports of Whitby, Newcastle and South Shields.⁵⁶⁸ Horn argued that the upsurge of factory placements diverted Poor Law officials away from apprenticing to fishing trades: ‘Not until the second half of the nineteenth century, with the upsurge in importance of the North Sea fishing grounds, did the Poor Law in London, and elsewhere, again become a major supplier of recruits to the trade’.⁵⁶⁹ Both Horn and Boswell demonstrated that pauper apprenticeship to fishing trades in Hull and Grimsby continued late into the nineteenth century.⁵⁷⁰ By virtue of using the Booth/Armstrong classification scheme as explained in Chapter 2, fishing as a trade in this

⁵⁶⁶ W.M. Barnes, *Rolling Home* (Barnsley: Seaforth, 2013) [hereafter, Barnes, *Rolling Home*], p. 40; Earle, *Sailors*, p. 43.

⁵⁶⁷ Thomas, ‘Maritime Apprenticeship’, p. 154.

⁵⁶⁸ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 68.

⁵⁶⁹ Horn, ‘Grimsby’, p. 174-5.

⁵⁷⁰ Boswell, *Sea Fishing*; Horn, *Headington*; Horn, ‘Grimsby’.

study is classed under traditional occupations, as part of the agricultural sector, in order to apply the scheme consistently across all the sectors, yet it is appropriate to examine fishing in this chapter, as it involved the boys being at sea.⁵⁷¹ However, for boys 14 and under in the featured ports, it was not a common occupation. It had a reputation as a rougher trade, and generally older boys were employed; indeed, LSV apprenticed many boys over 14. For example, 17 boys, aged 15-16, were indentured in a couple of batches to the Liverpool firm WH Thomas & Co in 1856-7. The firm also took three boys aged 14, and thus included in the study, the only three fishermen in this entire sample. Although the boys were indentured in the port, the documents also note 'proceed to Newfoundland when required' so providing another example of the great distances some boys travelled.⁵⁷² What was it like when they arrived? A contemporary account of 1846 describing St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland, evokes the sights and smells awaiting a lad from Liverpool:

*'Round a great part of the harbour are sheds, acres in extent, roofed with cod split in half, laid on like slates, drying in the sun, or rather the air, for there is not much of the former to depend upon. Those ships bearing nearly every flag in the world, are laden with cod...Earth, sea, and air, are alike pervaded with this wonderful fish...The town is irregular and dirty, built chiefly of wood; the dampness of the climate rendering stone unsuitable, The heavy rains plough the streets into water courses. Thousands of lean dogs stalk about, quarrelling with each other for the offal of the fish, which lies plentifully scattered in all directions...A large fish oil factory in the centre of the town, fills it with most obnoxious odours'.*⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ See p. 110.

⁵⁷² LRO, 353 SEL/12/2/231, 234, 6 Aug. 1856; and 246, 5 Mar. 1857.

⁵⁷³ G. Warbuton and E. Warbuton, *Hochelaga; or England in the New World*, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1846), pp. 19-20, abridged version in Barnes, *Rolling Home*, p. 5.

The Marine Society register entries are invaluable for gaining insight into the types of sea trades to which boys were consigned. Thirty four of their entries give details, the majority being placed into foreign trade out of Liverpool. Three of the Bristol boys were placed to John Irving on an Atlantic trade route to Quebec in 1836; others into Transport and the Mediterranean trades.⁵⁷⁴ The coasting trade had three boys from Liverpool; this involved transport around short coastal routes, for example moving coal on collier brigs, such vessels being a little more rough and ready than the ocean ships for the foreign trades. Indeed, the Newcastle coal transporting trade was known as a ‘school of seamen’.⁵⁷⁵ Other boys sent to Liverpool were placed into the Indies and Americas trade, and one boy was even sent on a route as far as Melbourne. Journeys of this length were a very different experience: for example, William Davies was bound for five years in 1841 by the Marine Society to the Liverpool ship *Fory*, which was bound for the East Indies; a passage that could take two years.⁵⁷⁶ Contrast this to a collier brig round trip from Newcastle to London that would take around six weeks.⁵⁷⁷

The New Poor Law correspondence also gives some insight into the type of ships on which boys were placed. Generally clippers were used to transport cargos, but from the late 1830s steamships began to be substituted.⁵⁷⁸ Southampton Corporation placed six boys onto steam ships in Southampton. The Corporation’s Poor Law correspondence shows that the Royal Mail Packet Company specifically requested an apprentice for its

⁵⁷⁴ NMM, MSY/Q7/247210867; 247410865, 247110866, all 8 Apr. 1836.

⁵⁷⁵ Davis, *Rise of Shipping*, p. 108.

⁵⁷⁶ NMM, MSY/Q8/439514029, 1 Jan 1841; Davis, *Rise of Shipping*, p. 105 estimated journey time.

⁵⁷⁷ Earle, *Sailors*, p. 8.

⁵⁷⁸ The first steamship to cross the Atlantic was *Savannah* in 1819, built in New York; the first British one, *Sirius*, crossed in 1838, followed a few days later by Brunel’s *Great Western*. Course, *Merchant Navy*, p. 215.

steamship *Medway*.⁵⁷⁹ However, most boys in this sample would have probably still been placed on clippers, as they were cheaper to run.

Everyday life on-board was tough. Rodger used the colloquial phrase ‘wooden world’ to explain that ships operated as floating societies with their own customs.⁵⁸⁰ Again we turn to Adam Smith for a succinct summary of the experience of a sea apprentice: ‘their whole life is one continual scene of hardship and danger’.⁵⁸¹ Unfortunately there is no evidence of pauper apprentice experiences; these boys were never followed up with the assiduity of other types of placements, for example the inspection reports detailed in Chapter 5, regarding children sent to factories.⁵⁸² Post placement, there is not a single example of contact or monitoring from either charity or Poor Law officials. In order to construct a typical picture of what life at sea might have been like for the boys, as discussed in Chapter 2, I have used sources from free apprentice records to draw analogies.⁵⁸³ In addition to selected relevant autobiographical accounts, records of private apprentices, from a shipping firm based out of Liverpool provides some excellent analogous material. The registers of apprentices of T&J Brocklebank recorded boys aged 13-18, crucially detailing information about destinations and accidents, and for a similar time period as the poorer apprentices in this study.⁵⁸⁴ As noted at the beginning of this chapter, in many respects ‘sea life was a leveller of the advantages which money could buy’.⁵⁸⁵ Whatever the status of the young boys on-board, their experiences were probably not that much different, and likely every bit as brutal. Perhaps the only difference was the

⁵⁷⁹ TNA, MH12/10999/389, 14 Dec. 1850.

⁵⁸⁰ Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 14.

⁵⁸¹ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 149.

⁵⁸² Noted also in Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 202.

⁵⁸³ See p. 63.

⁵⁸⁴ MMA, B/BROC/7/2/1-12.

⁵⁸⁵ Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 68.

possible need for more accountability towards the private apprentices, whose parents might seek to enquire and monitor, in a way that simply never happened with Poor Law apprentices. The reality was that the sea itself made no distinction as to class; whether a qualified sailor, apprentice, man or boy, all faced the same perils.

A principal danger facing any seaman was the threat to his health, particularly those on long voyages. Disease on-board ships was rife; fevers, dysentery, scurvy and beri-beri were common, as well as the risk of physical deformity from amputation due to gangrene, or blindness resulting from contracting a tropical disease. A contemporary health report of 1862 made some pertinent points about the threat to life at sea. Although more likely to die of an accident at sea than their Royal Naval counterparts, as there were greater incidences of shipwreck of merchant fleets, merchant sailors in fact enjoyed better general health at sea, principally as they were not at sea for years on end; although the Navy had a better reputation for ship cleanliness, merchant men's 'constitution gets renovated by comparatively frequent returns to more healthy latitudes', away from the constant damp climate.⁵⁸⁶ However, that is not to say that Merchant men did not succumb to disease; in particular, fevers accounted for sizeable proportion of the average mortality rate cited in the report above; 4.30 per 1,000 men.⁵⁸⁷ If the rates included those who died at home after voyages, the disease rate would have been higher, as men often died soon after discharge.⁵⁸⁸

In terms of diet, there was improvement in the quality over time. For example, an eighteenth-century sea apprentice described the food on a West Indian voyage: 'The

⁵⁸⁶ J.O. McWilliam, *On the Health of Merchant Seamen* (London: n.p. 1862) [hereafter, McWilliam, *Health*], p. 7; Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 62; Course, *Merchant Navy*, p. 198.

⁵⁸⁷ McWilliam, *Health*, p. 9.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

barrels of salt pork contained pigs' heads with the iron rings still in their noses'.⁵⁸⁹ Not very appetising! But by the middle of the nineteenth century, legislation had been enacted to counteract sickness; for example, the 1844 Merchant Seaman Act required a daily issue of lime juice.⁵⁹⁰ The Mercantile Marine Act of 1850 prescribed guidelines for each crew member, known as 'the Liverpool scale'; each person on-board was to have 3 quarts of water, 1lb of biscuit, 11/2 lbs salt beef or pork, 11/2 lbs of flour, 11/2 pts dried peas, plus small quantities of tea, coffee, sugar.⁵⁹¹ Under the 1854 Merchant Shipping Act, masters had to provide weighing scales to ensure the correct amounts were given.⁵⁹² In the context of the living conditions of the poor on land, Rodger argued the poor sea boy was no worse off as 'life on a snug lower deck with hot food daily' was a better deal.⁵⁹³ Humphries and Leunig argued that food was a definite attraction for poor boys; not only was a boy's diet at sea higher in calories, protein and nutrients, but crucially they could consume all that was given to them; while on-board there was no compulsion to share with the wider family.⁵⁹⁴

The boys also faced the hazards of war. Britain was involved in a number of conflicts throughout this period, most notably with neighbouring France, and as noted earlier, the Marine Society was conceived as a solution to the difficulty recruiting sailors to fight in the Seven Years War. There were also the Napoleonic Wars, and later the

⁵⁸⁹ Course, *Merchant Navy*, p. 172, citing description of Samuel Kelly, an apprentice on a voyage to Barbados in 1781.

⁵⁹⁰ Thomas, D.A., *The Right Kind of Boy: A Portrait of the British Sea Apprentice 1830-1980* (Ystradowen: Phaiacia, 2004) [hereafter, Thomas, *Right Kind of Boy*], p. 68; Course, *Merchant Navy*, pp. 209, 215; Humphries and Leunig, 'Stunting', p. 474.

⁵⁹¹ An Act for improving the Condition of Masters, Mates, and Seamen, and maintaining Discipline in the Merchant Service, 1850 (13&14 Vict. c.93); Thomas, *Right Kind of Boy*, p. 348.

⁵⁹² Course, *Merchant Navy*, p. 217.

⁵⁹³ Rodger, *Wooden World*, pp. 60, 68; Davis, *Rise of Shipping*, p. 145 noted that people on land did not have a daily portion of meat in their diet.

⁵⁹⁴ Humphries and Leunig, 'Stunting', pp. 473, 475.

Crimean War. As well as fear of being killed or captured by enemies, another possible threat in port was the menace of being press ganged into the Navy. Ships were often stopped as they entered port and men were forcibly taken off, and although in theory apprentices were immune while under indentures, in practice, older boys who had already been apprenticed for a few years, and thus had acquired some sea faring skills, were more at risk.⁵⁹⁵

Loss of life was a very real possibility, from accidents such as shipwreck or falling overboard as ‘even the best ships were often at the mercy of wind and the current’.⁵⁹⁶ The McWilliam report cited above used seamen returns for 1852-60 to calculate an annual average mortality rate of 3,249 deaths at sea, a rate of 18.62 per 1,000 men, of which 7.72 were accidents.⁵⁹⁷ Drowning was common; for example, the Brocklebank books are full of entries such as that of Thomas Conway who ‘drowned at Parkgate after bathing on the deck’ in 1865; he did not get very far from Liverpool, as Parkgate is only on the Wirral. George Ormerod, aged 13, ‘fell from the main top Gallant, and was drowned’. Thomas Walker was ‘killed by a fall from aloft on-board the Sumatra’ in 1862.⁵⁹⁸ The weather was a test of a seaman’s metal; a boy on his first voyage to Quebec in 1822, (just like the three boys noted above apprenticed by the Marine Society) endured severe gales at sea for the first two weeks. The crew kept below deck the entire time, except for look-out duty. The passage took eight weeks, a death described as ‘through inattention, he let the wind get into the folds of the sail, and it flung him over to leeward. “A man overboard” was echoed

⁵⁹⁵ J. Press, *The Merchant Seamen of Bristol 1747-1789* (Bristol: Historical Association, 1976), p. 17.

⁵⁹⁶ Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 46.

⁵⁹⁷ McWilliam, *Health*, p. 9, Table II ‘Main Causes of Death on Board the Merchant Ships of the United Kingdom, employed in the Home and Foreign Voyages, during the following years’; M. Quinlan, ‘Precarious and Hazardous Work: The Health and Safety of Merchant Seamen 1815–1935’, *Social History*, vol. 38, 3 (2013), pp. 281-307, at p. 303.

⁵⁹⁸ MMA, B/BROC/7/2/12.

through the ship, and in an instant the whole crew was on deck looking all around; but he never rose to view'.⁵⁹⁹ Although there are no definitive statements, given conditions on-board, it is reasonable to suppose that sometimes 'accidents' might in fact have been desperate resorts to find a way out of misery. Less drastically, there are several instances in the Brocklebank books of boys running away; desertion was a common problem. 'It was commonplace among officers that new recruits...were not to be trusted on shore until they had settled down'.⁶⁰⁰ Brutality was not the only reason; the temptations and other opportunities on shore could lure a boy away, or even to another ship.

One element of fear on-board was the social aspect of dealing with fellow sailors. Senior crew members 'were brought up at sea in the hard way...they meted out the same harsh and brutal treatment to their sailors as they had received'.⁶⁰¹ Nardinelli argued violence (in the context of factories) was a necessary and accepted measure for control over apprentices; it was certainly commonplace on a ship. Rodger noted that discipline on merchant ships was lax, with no authority to appeal to in the event of ill treatment, unlike the Navy.⁶⁰² One boy engaged in the Baltic trade wrote in his autobiography that he was 'obliged, as youngest apprentice, to take the blame of every fault that no one else would acknowledge'. He also described how he would have to sit up while the sailors went out drinking in port at night, keeping a light burning to show the way home. If he fell asleep, when they got on-board they woke him 'with a bucket of cold water or cutting me down by the head' (cutting hammock straps).⁶⁰³ Davis found it was certainly common for apprentices to be the crew member left on-board as watchman while others went to 'taste

⁵⁹⁹ R. Lowery, *Robert Lowery: Radical and Chartist* (London: Europa, 1979), p. 47.

⁶⁰⁰ Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 196.

⁶⁰¹ Course, *Merchant Navy*, p. 195.

⁶⁰² Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 117.

⁶⁰³ J. Burnet, *The Adventures of a Ship-Boy* (Leith: James Burnet, 1823), pp. 9-10.

the pleasures of the shore'.⁶⁰⁴ The diary of apprentice James Knox, who was on-board the Liverpool ship *Martha* for four years from 1819 gives a good summary of the miseries faced, stating that apprentices were 'dogs to be kicked and ill-treated'.⁶⁰⁵

Even if boys escaped cruelty, there was concern about the influence of hard-bitten and rough adult sailors on young minds. In May 1760, a letter to *Grand Magazine* criticized the 'training' Marine Society boys received while at sea: 'The first qualifications they acquire are blasphemy, chewing tobacco and gaming, from whence they proceed to drinking and talking bawdy'.⁶⁰⁶ As highlighted in Chapter 1, port areas were associated with degenerate activities, and unlike many of the children placed in traditional occupations, boys did not reside with their master when on shore.⁶⁰⁷ A 14 year old private apprentice who worked regular passages to Liverpool depicted the education he received in the port: 'I was four years running back and forward to Liverpool. It was during this time [1864-8] I began to learn about sailors properly, and things like shanghaiing, boarding houses, and girls'.⁶⁰⁸ Lack of supervision was a something that greatly troubled Bristol's neighbouring Clifton parish:

'Apprentices to Shipwrights do not constitute any Part of the Master's family; they are allowed for maintenance themselves four Shillings and Sixpence a Week...they are under no Regulations out of Working Hours, and if their Dispositions are untoward they have idle Time enough to indulge them; the Consequence is, that they make female Connections, and increase and multiply not sparingly, more plentifully than their Means of Maintenance; - and it is not an improbable Calculation, that

⁶⁰⁴ Davis, *Rise of Shipping*, p. 108.

⁶⁰⁵ Thomas, *Right Kind of Boy*, p. 33.

⁶⁰⁶ J. Hanway, *An Account of the Marine society, Recommending the Piety and Policy of the Institution, and Pointing out the Advantages Accruing to the Nation*. (London: n.p. 1759), p. 148, citing a letter to Grand Magazine from N. T. K. to be inserted May 1760 edition.

⁶⁰⁷ See p. 48.

⁶⁰⁸ Barnes, *Rolling Home*, p. 50.

*these eight Lads may leave thrice as many Paupers on the Parish – One of Mr. Hillhouse’s former Apprentices lately died, and has left a Widow and three young Children on the Parish.*⁶⁰⁹

It is easy to be sentimental about these ‘poor’ boys, but referring back to the earlier discussion about the types of boy recruited by the Marine Society, often they were no innocents. For example, magistrates sent boys to sea as punishment for delinquency. And even those who began their voyage ‘green’ would have been hardened by life at sea; they had to be, in order to survive. Yet despite the various hazards, in many ways life at sea could offer the adventure for which young boys longed. Travel and comradeship were in short supply in other types of pauper apprenticeship placements.

Were there rewards for surviving and completing an apprenticeship? A small number of indentures (just seven) granted extra gratuities upon completion of term. Five offered £5, described in one indenture as being awarded ‘if satisfaction given’, one even offered £10 ‘if conducts himself properly’.⁶¹⁰ Surprisingly these were all from the Poor Law. A bonus upon completion was another common way to ensure boys stuck with a placement, just as with incremental wages, it gave an incentive to keep going. As Chapter 5 will show, incentives were sometimes used in the factories as well.⁶¹¹

In theory, those boys who completed a Poor Law or charity sea apprenticeship could take advantage of the opportunity to command a high wage and improve their situation in life as ‘the seaman had a much better chance of obtaining a moderate promotion, which might double his wage, than did his counterpart in the rural or urban

⁶⁰⁹ BRO, 11168/69h, 17 July 1792, p. 2.

⁶¹⁰ LRO, 353 SEL 12/2/219, 2 Nov. 1855; 353 SEL 12/2/244, 23 Dec. 1856.

⁶¹¹ See p. 229-30.

workforce'.⁶¹² The sea offered genuine opportunities for advancement and upward mobility for poor boys.⁶¹³ The next step up the ladder would be to become a ship's mate, and progress up the chain, perhaps even rising to boatswain. But senior positions, such as the ships' master, were the reserve of the educated, private apprentices.⁶¹⁴ Sadly there are no examples of career progression from the sources, a problem other historians of sea apprentices have also encountered: 'It is almost impossible to trace the careers of apprentices after they left their parish of origin for the sea; surmise is the only recourse until chance brings to light facts which might illuminate a young seaman's career'.⁶¹⁵ While they may not have been able to progress to the top of crew list, there is no doubt that if they survived the voyages and completed their training, Poor Law and charity boys were equipped to earn decent wages relative to those who had completed their training in other types of pauper apprenticeships.

4.4 Settlement concerns

'In all sea-ports, a very considerable burthen [*sic*] is thrown on the public, in the maintenance of the poor, by the shipping concerns; and it is well known that the owners of the shipping contribute themselves, but a very small proportion thereto'.⁶¹⁶ In placing boys as sea apprentices, the natural inclination is to consider them as being sent away for work, but in fact, under the Old Poor Law the port where the ship was registered was deemed their place of settlement. This situation is neatly summarized by the Swedish proverb

⁶¹² Davis, *Rise of Shipping*, p. 151.

⁶¹³ J. Humphries and T. Leunig, 'Was Dick Whittington Taller than those He Left Behind? Anthropometric Measures, Migration and the Quality of Life in Early Nineteenth Century London?', *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 46, 1 (2009), pp. 120-31, at pp. 128-9.

⁶¹⁴ Earle, *Sailors*, pp. 22, 43.

⁶¹⁵ Thomas, 'Maritime Apprenticeship', p. 160.

⁶¹⁶ Johnson, *Transactions*, p. 39.

about sailors ‘one boot in the boat and the other in the field’.⁶¹⁷ Such boys were connected to, and part of the fabric of port life, and thus could arguably even be classed as a local occupation. This is in stark contrast to those apprenticed to far reaching foreign territories, such as North America; those boys essentially became transnational and probably felt quite rootless.

The situation improved under the New Poor Law, in that there could no longer be settlement attached to sea service.⁶¹⁸ The legislation was definitive, unlike the ambiguity surrounding those apprenticed in other sectors. Despite the clear amendment to settlement law, it still appears to have been confusing for Guardians. In 1852, Southampton Guardians received a request for an apprentice from a ship master in Newport in Wales, who specifically enquired whether the boy could be apprenticed without settlement; surprisingly, the Guardians sought clarification from the Poor Law Board whether settlement was obtained in the place apprenticed.⁶¹⁹ The Poor Law Board referred the Guardians back to s67 of the 1834 Act: ‘That from and after the passing of this Act, no Settlement shall be acquired by being apprenticed in the Sea Service, or to a Householder exercising the Trade of the Seas, as a Fisherman or otherwise, nor by any Person now being such an Apprentice in respect of such Apprenticeship’.⁶²⁰

The unpopularity of sea indentures for pauper apprentices was not only fed by the usual anti-settlement objections any apprentice faced in coming into a new parish; hostility was intensified by the reputation of seamen for nonchalantly leaving wives and children,

⁶¹⁷ J.R. Gillis, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 75. The quote refers to a time when farmers were also fishermen.

⁶¹⁸ s.67 Poor Law Amendment Act.

⁶¹⁹ TNA, MH12/10999/416-7, Folios 686-7, 25, 30 Oct. 1852.

⁶²⁰ s.67 Poor Law Amendment Act.

not to mention illegitimates, at the mercy of local poor relief. This was a common thread between all the ports, a unique pressure on this type of settlement. The problem was expressed in the Southampton Poor Law correspondence to the Poor Law Board ‘it is common practice for Sailors, Engineers and others who have engaged themselves on-board some of the numerous vessels trading from this Port to leave their wives and families destitute in consequence of which they become burdensome to the rates’. Because of the great increase in shipping in the port it became ‘a serious inconvenience’ and requests were made for an Order to be made to deal with this type of circumstance.⁶²¹ It seems as though the plea fell on deaf ears, as there was no such resulting Order.

The behaviour of sea apprentices caused tension between charity and Poor Law with regard to maritime placements. The aims of charities in their apprenticing schemes did not always accord with the local Poor Law officials; just as Chapter 3 demonstrated tension between local charity RMA and the Southampton Guardians, similarly not everyone welcomed the Marine Society’s efforts.⁶²² Bristol’s neighbouring Clifton parish raised a dispute in 1792: ‘This Parish finds itself much aggrieved by the Conduct of the Committee of the Marine Society, in binding Apprentice to Mr Hillhouse, an Inhabitant thereof, eight of the Marine Boys, Parishioners of other Parishes’. In a pamphlet of protest, the parish cited some of the 1785 resolutions they claimed had not been adhered to: ‘They have done the Parish of Clifton a *material wrong*, by adding to the Number of their poor Parishioners’.⁶²³ The pamphlet referred to the Society’s riposte: that of 60 ships in one type of trade in the port, over the course of six years, they had taken only 31

⁶²¹ TNA, MH12/10999/76, Folios 194-5, 17 Apr. 1843.

⁶²² See pp.155-6.

⁶²³ BRO, 11168/69h, 17 July 1792, p. 2.

apprentices from the Society, thus impact was overstated.⁶²⁴ What is clear is that just as with other types of placement in different sectors, settlement concerns persisted through this period, with great hostility to non-native apprentices placed in the port. The reputation of sailors in their leisure time only served to heighten this sentiment; even if the sailor himself did not gain settlement by virtue of his indenture, the Poor Law could still be affected by their dalliances with local women should they become ‘with child’.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter sheds new light on a largely overlooked aspect of pauper apprenticeship, the binding of boys into the Merchant service. It has demonstrated that this was an important avenue of apprenticeship for both the Poor Law and charity well into the nineteenth century. The notion of the sea as a levelling force has permeated throughout this chapter, and this applies to both Poor Law and charity apprentices whose age, length of term and wages are remarkably similar. The sea did not make distinction, unlike the girls apprenticed to service in the previous chapter where there was a clear distinction between Poor Law and charity placements. Just as with the mills, the sea also provided opportunities for batch placements. However, unlike other forms of pauper apprenticeship, there was no assessment or monitoring mechanisms in place, despite particularly vulnerable conditions. Given the activeness of the Poor Law Board in attempting to enforce regulations with regard to the other types of pauper bindings, this is both surprising and shocking, and leads to questioning whether the system really did consider the best interests of the child. On the strength of this new evidence, in the case of sea apprentices, Honeyman’s assertion that officials exercised a modicum of care and diligence in binding children cannot be supported. Thomas’ dramatic summation appears

⁶²⁴ BRO, 11168/69h, 17 July 1792, p. 3.

to be more fitting: ‘It was not only a means of keeping up the numbers of seamen, but also, undoubtedly, a way of getting rid of refuse, the sea being a handy receptacle for it whether mineral, vegetable, animal or human’.⁶²⁵

While there is no doubt that prospects for boys who survived were superior in terms of potential earnings, this does not seem to have been a motivating factor for officials in organizing placements, although it may have seduced boys into ‘volunteering’ for a seafaring life. The evidence used here only scratches the surface of this interesting area; if pauper boys over 14 had also been included, the volume of material would be overwhelming, but the story would remain unchanged, serving only to highlight even further the deplorable level of neglect and abandonment of young boys in this important sector of the world’s biggest trading nation and most rapidly expanding Empire.

⁶²⁵ Thomas, *Right Kind of Boy*, p. 38.

5. Factory fodder: Children sent away to new industries

'It would appear that a considerably larger number of children have been apprenticed to the manufacturers referred to, than was originally proposed'.⁶²⁶

In Britain in 1835, 43 per cent of workers in the cotton industry were under eighteen.⁶²⁷

The phrase 'child labour' is synonymous with Victorian factory children, the nation's wealth built on their shoulders. Manufactories had a poor reputation, famously being referred to as 'dark satanic mills'.⁶²⁸ Memoirs such as Robert Blincoe's famously detailed the worst excesses of evil factory owners towards their hired hands; long hours, monotonous tasks, poor diet and health, cruelty, and danger from machinery were some of the features of factory life.⁶²⁹ Chapter 1 highlighted how pauper apprentices were a popular source of labour for mill owners as they were cheap and available in large batches, and with Poor Law officials eager to offload children from their charge, there was a perfect marriage of interests.

One of the principal aims of this thesis is to establish whether port children were shipped out in this manner to the new industries because of lack of opportunities closer to home. Chapters 3 and 4 comprehensively demonstrate that this was not uniformly the case. However, in acknowledging the greater variance of trades providing apprenticeships, Goose warned that 'we must not fall into the trap of denying the fact that some children did indeed work in factories and mines, and in a host of other manufacturing industries too, and that this continued into the third quarter of the nineteenth century'.⁶³⁰ The 493 children, 29 per cent of the sample, who were sent to the new industries support Goose in

⁶²⁶ TNA, MH12/5974, Folio 10, 23 Jan. 1861.

⁶²⁷ H. Cunningham, *Children and childhood in Western society since 1500* (Harlow, 2005), p. 143.

⁶²⁸ From the hymn 'Jerusalem' based on Blake's poem 'And did those feet in ancient time', 1808

⁶²⁹ Brown, *Blincoe*.

⁶³⁰ Goose, 'Hertfordshire', pp. 175-6.

his reminder of priorities. However, given the entrenched stereotype of children being farmed out in droves it is perhaps surprising that the figure was not even higher. The conventional stereotype is somewhat dented, once again emphasizing the importance of regional focus.⁶³¹

Ports are generally considered as centres of commerce, but as Chapter 2 illustrated, Bristol and Liverpool did host industrial activities, although there were limited textile manufactories within the ports themselves.⁶³² A few mills were started up in Liverpool, but they did not last long; the cotton factory, North Shore Mills, was destroyed in a storm in 1839.⁶³³ In Bristol, the Great Western cotton factory at Barton Hill opened to great fanfare in 1838, the largest spinning factory outside Lancashire. But despite being located on a feeder canal and near a cheap source of coal, it failed to divert business south from the established textile centres. Therefore port children's experience of factory work, if so apprenticed, was as a result of being sent away. Although their experiences as factory apprentices in many ways trace a familiar narrative, this thesis distinguishes itself from the current literature by exploiting previously unused Poor Law and charity correspondence to bring fresh insight into the everyday operation of the New Poor Law on the ground. In particular, it heralds a major revision of conventional views about the practice of batch apprenticeship; the quotation at the head of this chapter is just one striking example of reprimands sent by the Poor Law Board to the LSV, for undertaking a batch placement, as late as 1860, reprimands that by their frequency suggest their lack of force.

⁶³¹ Even in her factory centric research, Honeyman noted that of 164 parishes, just 40 per cent sent to mills Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 12.

⁶³² See pp. 38, 40.

⁶³³ H. Gawthrop, *Fraser's Guide to Liverpool and Birkenhead* (London: n.p. 1855), p. 181.

The new industries category was dominated by the factories; 476 children were sent to various industries, the remaining 17 children were LSV boys sent to Lancashire coal fields. This chapter concentrates on the factories; Table 5.1 below outlines the composition of the sample.

Table 5.1 Factory pauper apprenticeships, by type

| Type | Old Poor Law | New Poor Law | Totals |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Charity | 98 | 35 | 133 |
| Poor Law | 57 | 286 | 343 |
| Totals | 155 | 321 | 476 |

Source: Indenture data.

That the factories were also destinations for charity apprenticeships is of great interest, as these have been relatively neglected. Levene identified that the London Foundling Hospital sent children to work in factories, more so in the earlier eighteenth century. By the end of the century, children placed in manufacture were more likely to be sent to smaller enterprises within the environs of London, but that it ‘was an employment avenue pursued as a first choice for some’.⁶³⁴ She found that a factory placement was sometimes used as a threat of punishment for bad behaviour.⁶³⁵ Honeyman noted that the RMA sent children to the mills, but did not research the institution’s records in any detail.⁶³⁶ This study’s use of the RMA’s registers and correspondence is therefore an important addition to the fledgling historiography on charity children’s involvement in the workforce of the new industries.

⁶³⁴ Levene, ‘Honesty’, p. 195.

⁶³⁵ Levene, ‘Charity Apprenticeship’, pp. 52-3; Levene, ‘Honesty’, pp. 190, 195.

⁶³⁶ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 281.

This chapter suffers from an embarrassment of riches in terms of qualitative evidence for each of the ports; Southampton's RMA letter book, and the correspondence between the Poor Law Board and both Bristol Incorporation and the LSV, are a goldmine of detail about their practices and motivations. However, the survival of quantitative evidence data is imbalanced; LSV provides the Poor Law indenture evidence and the RMA the charity bindings. Unfortunately there are no indentures to factories in the extant Bristol parish records, although it is clear from correspondence between officials and the Poor Law Board that Bristol Incorporation did bind children to factories in batches during the New Poor Law era.⁶³⁷ Table 5.2 below illustrates the composition of factory apprentices from each port.

Table 5.2 Factory pauper apprenticeships, by port

| Port | Old Poor Law | | New Poor Law | | Totals |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|
| | Charity | Poor Law | Charity | Poor Law | |
| Bristol | - | - | - | - | - |
| Liverpool | - | 57 | 0 | 286 | 343 |
| Southampton | 98 | 0 | 35 | 0 | 133 |
| Totals | 98 | 57 | 35 | 286 | 476 |

Source: Indenture data.

Apprenticeship to mills by the LSV is documented in a number of sources.⁶³⁸ The Gregs of Quarry Bank mill in Cheshire were regular customers, with 74 children apprenticed between 1821 and 1846, straddling both the Old and New Poor Law. Lane noted that the Gregs obtained 58% of their apprentices from Liverpool workhouse.⁶³⁹ Under the New Poor Law, between 1840 and 1870, LSV bound 168 children to the mills, 27 per cent of

⁶³⁷ See p. 64.

⁶³⁸ 168 LSV indentures, 74 Quarry Bank indentures and lists in MH12 correspondence recording 101 apprenticeships.

⁶³⁹ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 55.

their surviving indentures for children aged 14 and under. The Poor Law correspondence recorded details of an additional 101 apprenticeships, during the same period, that are not found within the separate LSV indentures. In total, 343 children were sent to silk, worsted flax mills, as well as 13 cotton mills, and also to related industries such as bobbin manufacturers and turners, scattered across the valleys of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Although there are no surviving records of Southampton's Poor Law children being sent to the mills, as noted above, local charity the RMA did not miss the opportunity to send orphan girls to the Northern factory districts: 'It is usual for the friend of the Girl to provide a Mistress for her when she completes her 14th year or she will be sent to one of the Factories in the North of England'.⁶⁴⁰ According to Honeyman, from 1823 onwards, the RMA disposed of 300 girls in this manner, my subset of this sample was between 1823 and 1840 (when the Southampton branch closed).⁶⁴¹ The girls were sent to three different cotton mills in Derbyshire: Cressbrook, Mellor and Edale. Cressbrook mill was first under the ownership of William Newton, but from August 1834 the registers record girls being apprenticed to the brothers Henry and James McConnel, the new owners.

What type of factories were ready to receive these children? Nationally, the 1851 Census found textile manufacturing was a prime employer of those under 20, with cotton manufacturing the second most popular occupation for girls, and fourth for boys. Other textiles such as wool, worsted and silk also featured heavily in the top 20 jobs nationally.⁶⁴² The composition of this sample reflects the national pattern, as Table 5.3 illustrates. Children were sent to 23 different factories, 17 of which were cotton; they were

⁶⁴⁰ TNA, WO143/61, 14 July 1829, p. 225.

⁶⁴¹ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 281. It is likely the other 167 girls were from the Chelsea branch, therefore not part of the remit of this study.

⁶⁴² Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch', pp. 241-2, Table A.1-2.

also sent to three factories in the related industry of bobbin manufacturing. That the majority were placed in cotton mills is important, as it illustrates that the children were not being consigned to depressed textile trades, unlike the children in Chapter 3 who were apprenticed into declining traditional trades, such as shoemaking.

Table 5.3 Type of factory

| Type of factory | No. of indentures |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cotton | 394 (82%) |
| Worsted | 26 (5%) |
| Silk | 23 (5%) |
| Flax | 19 (4%) |
| Bobbin manufacturing | 14 (3%) |
| Totals | 476 |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

The factory apprenticeship evidence is now analysed using the same thematic framework as the preceding two chapters beginning, of course, with the mechanics of the apprenticeship process.

5.1 The apprenticeship process

Chapter 3 outlined the shift towards the education and training of children prior to obtaining apprenticeships and Chapter 4 described how boys were specifically trained for sea apprenticeships in order to convince masters to accept boys younger than 14. But for factory placements, training was not a prerequisite; there is no evidence of children being specifically trained for mill work, either in my sample, or in the evidence surveyed by other historians. This was a labour force specifically trained on the job upon arrival.⁶⁴³ There was no shortage of willing employers, who actively desired their apprentices

⁶⁴³ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 13.

‘green’. Honeyman suggested that factory employers preferred to use children as they were ‘amenable to novel and experimental forms of labour’.⁶⁴⁴ They needed a cheap, malleable workforce that could be moulded to their exact requirements.

How were apprenticeships arranged? Mill owners often approached officials directly. Requests to the LSV under the New Poor Law are examined below in the context of the assessment process prior to placement; upon a request from a potential employer, prescribed procedures were followed in order to secure the indentures. Under the Old Poor Law, the relationship with the Greys of Quarry Bank mill was noted above; repeat demand was a primary source of apprenticeships. My sample contains 19 identifiable factory employers who took children from the LSV, 13 of whom were repeat customers. Southampton’s RMA correspondence also evidences that relationships between officials and mill owners were developed for mutual benefit. The RMA actively pursued placements. For example, a letter in 1829 to one of its regulars, Newton of Cressbrook mill, read: ‘I request that you will be pleased to inform me what number of Girls as apprentices you will be able to receive this year’.⁶⁴⁵ It seems nothing could deter the relationship either; this was written to the same Newton who had advised of the unfortunate death of one of their former charges. Despite this they were determined to send a further batch of girls! ‘There will be nearly Twenty Orphans to leave the Asylum this year, and to be provided for’.⁶⁴⁶ The RMA also developed a trade with Samuel Oldknow of Mellor Mill, supplying a major constituent of his workforce. How did the children reach him given the distance of 174 miles? There are several examples of transport arrangements in the correspondence. In 1825, ‘the Girls will be sent under the

⁶⁴⁴ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 3.

⁶⁴⁵ TNA, WO143/61, 7 July 1829, p. 224.

⁶⁴⁶ TNA, WO143/61, 26 Feb. 1828, p. 174.

charge of a Nurse...I think of sending these children through Cheltenham if you know the Route to be a good one'.⁶⁴⁷ And In 1827, 'my intention is to send them to Chelsea upon Thursday, on their way to Mellor. Will you have the goodness to give directions that places may be taken for them, so as to proceed on Friday from London'.⁶⁴⁸ And in 1829, a letter noted the 5s subsistence allowed for each child for the journey; this was based on a tariff of 1s a day, therefore the journey must have taken around 5 days to complete. They also requested a receipt from the coach office, confirming the mode of travel.⁶⁴⁹

It is generally perceived that most children sent to the mills in this manner were orphans; as noted above the RMA sent all its orphaned and abandoned girls to Derbyshire. An example of the operation of this policy proves interesting, reflecting the observation made in earlier chapters that being classed as an orphan did not always mean that the child had no surviving parents. The letter book records the case of Mary Owens; the RMA supposedly tried to approach her mother before apprenticing 'but in the present instance the Mother of Owens could not be found. She was therefore apprenticed to Mr Newton after remaining more than six months after the usual time'. Having turned 14 in October 1827, when contacted, the mother had allegedly attended the Asylum in person and requested collection of her daughter after Christmas, as it was more convenient for her to do so then. But the mother never returned. Thus they claimed they had no alternative but to send her to Cressbrook mill; yet the apprenticeship register shows that a Mary Owens was apprenticed to Newton on 16 October 1827. Could this just be a coincidence? After all, the child's name was reasonably common; but it seems more likely that the RMA did not allow sufficient time for the mother to contact them, and they proceeded with the

⁶⁴⁷ TNA, WO143/61, 16 Nov. 1825, p. 4.

⁶⁴⁸ TNA, WO143/61, 23 Oct. 1827, p. 153.

⁶⁴⁹ TNA, WO143/61, 29 Feb, 1829, p. 175.

apprenticeship in their haste to rid themselves of the burden. In the context of the actions of the RMA already observed in earlier chapters, it is tempting to conclude the latter. This case resulted in the RMA later having to write to Newton to ‘ascertain if he have [*sic*] any objection to comply with it [the release of Mary back to her mother]’.⁶⁵⁰

The Poor Law officials also demonstrated a propensity to place orphans in factories. For example, later in this chapter, there is evidence of girls being sent in 1859 to a Worcestershire silk mill by Bristol Incorporation, all of whom were orphans. For Liverpool, 136 of LSV’s 168 factory indentures recorded orphan status. However, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, many orphans were placed in traditional trades as well, 176 in total.⁶⁵¹ Not all factory apprentices were orphans. There is evidence of mothers involvement in LSV bindings; 26 indentures recorded maternal consent, and an additional one noted a father’s permission. No other details about parental circumstances were recorded, so it is difficult to know if this consent was informed or coerced. Most likely these were lone parents forced into the arrangement in exchange for relief. For example, in 1860 an unusually high number of mothers (17) gave consent, which suggests pressure on the LSV, a view borne out by the number of placements in that year alone: 95 children to factories, the highest number of bindings in any single year. Even if the LSV was uncompassionate about separating children from their mothers, the sample does suggest that they made efforts to ensure siblings remained together. In reviewing the sample, children with the same surname, bound on the same date, have been speculated as having a familial connection; LSV bound 11 siblings to factories, and in all but one case kept them together. For example, Elizabeth and John Harvey, 12 and 11 respectively, were sent to

⁶⁵⁰ TNA, WO143/61, 7, 10, 23 July 1828, pp. 188-9; WO143/52/1383, 16 Oct. 1827.

⁶⁵¹ See p. 118.

Hargreaves' factory in Burnley in 1860.⁶⁵² The theme of children's active participation in securing their apprenticeships has been addressed in previous chapters, but for this sector there is no evidence of their involvement in the binding process. Their actions once at their destination are examined below, as there were occasional examples of protest, perhaps indicative of agency earlier suppressed.

Honeyman invited debate about the levels of assessment of placements prior to apprenticeships and protection/monitoring mechanisms once the children had left the charge of their parish, challenging the conventional view of children being farmed out with no regard for their future welfare. Honeyman surveyed 164 parishes and found considerable evidence that most officials upheld their responsibilities towards apprentices as diligently as possible.⁶⁵³ Chapter 3 highlighted that there were some regulations governing procedures for binding children, such as the requirement for a magistrate's certificate attesting to the master's suitability.⁶⁵⁴ Although there were no magistrates certificates with the sample factory indentures, 19 medical certificates were attached to LSV indentures. The General Orders Relating to the Apprenticeship of Poor Children of 1845 required a medical examination of the child prior to placement.⁶⁵⁵ The certificates issued were either on standard forms, Henry Thomas being certified 'in good health' prior to apprenticeship as a bobbin turner; or handwritten 'I certify that Thomas Reid is in good health and free from disease'.⁶⁵⁶ Although a small figure in comparison with the overall number of children bound, these 19 certificates do indicate that some attempt was made by

⁶⁵² TNA, MH12/5974, Folios 3-8, 2 Oct. 1860.

⁶⁵³ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 12 for method, pp. 215-38 for assessment; K. Honeyman, 'The Poor Law, the Parish Apprentice, and the Textile Industries in the North of England, 1780-1830', *Northern History*, vol. 44, 2 (2007), pp. 115-40, at pp. 131-9.

⁶⁵⁴ See p. 131.

⁶⁵⁵ See p. 132-3.

⁶⁵⁶ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/330, 334, both 4 June 1861.

LSV to follow protocol. It is also interesting to note that although there was no formal obligation on the RMA to follow any regulations since their bindings were of a voluntary nature, on occasion they did make enquiries. Their letter book records that they obtained a certificate of respectability from local Overseers for Oldknow of Mellor mill, and Newton of Cressbrook mill ‘was sent to Chelsea in November 1826 and he was approved of as a proper person to receive apprentices’.⁶⁵⁷

In terms of pre-assessment placements, Chapter 3 gave the example from the Southampton Corporation Poor Law correspondence assessing a farm service placement before the girls were sent. This process also applied to factory positions. During the 1860s there are numerous extremely detailed inspection reports prepared by the LSV for the Poor Law Board, in order to obtain permission for proposed placements to factories, evidence which is extremely significant in light of the customary view that apprenticeship died out decades earlier. The reports contain descriptions of work, accommodation arrangements, supervisor details, and education provisions. Any girls from the Liverpool Workhouse previously placed at the factory being proposed were interviewed. For example, girls at Hargreaves’ factory in Burnley were visited twice, first, in 1860, ‘all of whom appeared happy and contented. They stated they had been kindly treated’; and in 1861, ‘the children from the Schools now in the employ of the applicant are comfortable and doing well. The houses in which they reside are very clean, the children are all in good health having been at work at the Factory for upwards of 11 months’.⁶⁵⁸ These reports were commissioned as a result of a request for further children from the employers,

⁶⁵⁷ TNA, WO143/61, 14 Jan. 1830, p. 242.

⁶⁵⁸ TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 268-75, 20 Apr. 1860; MH12/5974, Folios 120-1, 29 Apr. 1861.

and at the behest of Poor Law Board, before they would grant approval. Would the LSV have been so diligent otherwise?

Similar reports are found in the correspondence between the Poor Law Board and Bristol Incorporation. Bristol seems to have had a patchy relationship with the factories; it was initially one of the first parishes to send batches, as a Minute of 1767 recorded inquiries being made with Manchester gentlemen owning cotton manufactories.⁶⁵⁹ But by 1795, requests for children from such establishments are noted as suspended from consideration, although no reason was recorded.⁶⁶⁰ Three years later, requests were obviously considered again, as a worsted mill in Nottinghamshire, run by Messrs Davison and Hawkesley, requested ‘another’ batch of children on similar terms. The Guardians ordered a response advising the names and ages of children to be sent.⁶⁶¹ It then appears that a more active policy of local placements was pursued, with a pronouncement in 1826 by Guardian James Johnson about the trade of pauper apprentices to the factories: ‘Nothing, in my opinion, could justify this practice, but the impossibility of providing for them elsewhere. It always appeared to me, cruel, to remove children so great a distance from their parents, who although poor, are not destitute of parental feelings’.⁶⁶² Despite this principle, the Poor Law correspondence reveals that as late as 1859 Bristol Guardians were sending children off to mills, and not even under the protection of indentures! One example is that of the 13 year old orphan girls sent to a Worcestershire silk factory. Before they sent the girls, ‘The Guardians have caused the Mill to be visited and examined and have also made themselves acquainted with the character of Mr Smith and they are

⁶⁵⁹ Butcher, *Bristol Corporation*, 10 Dec. 1767, p. 112.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 Aug., 8 Oct. 1795, 9 June 1796, pp. 125-6.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1798, p. 129.

⁶⁶² Johnson, *Transactions*, p. 40.

satisfied that the children will be well cared for and that it will be to their advantage to enter into the service in question'.⁶⁶³

Usually the reason for obtaining pre-placement inspection reports was to sanction a further request for apprentices, but what they also demonstrate is how strong the drive for batch apprenticeship was particularly by the Liverpool Guardians. As highlighted above there was no shortage of willing employers contacting the Poor Law officials, and this marriage of interests will be returned to below in considering the effectiveness of regulations.

The literature on factory work has very much been associated with young children. In her study of factory pauper apprentices, Honeyman found 48 per cent were less than 10 years old, a proportion she cautiously described as 'a sizeable minority'.⁶⁶⁴ Levene found that those bound to the factories from London parishes were an average age of 11.⁶⁶⁵ The youngest age a port apprentice was indentured was 9; LSV bound seven children of this age between 1821 and 1833 to Quarry Bank mill, but in general for this sample, the age at binding was higher. The most frequently recorded age was 14, with an average age of 12.9 years. The difference in findings compared with the literature is easily explained. First, the majority of bindings in this study were for the New Poor Law whereas Honeyman and Levene's studies relate to the Old Poor Law. In addition, the average for factory apprentices in the sample is distorted because of the RMA apprentices.⁶⁶⁶ As noted earlier, RMA's policy was to apprentice girls to the Derbyshire factories at age 14, the age upon which girls were obliged to leave. If no other placement was found for them, that is where

⁶⁶³ TNA, MH12/14121, 26 Feb. 1859. Shipston-on-Stour MH12 correspondence is also uncatalogued.

⁶⁶⁴ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 45-6.

⁶⁶⁵ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 936.

⁶⁶⁶ This distortion is also noted when considering gendered aspects of age, as discussed further below.

they were sent. However, the LSV apprenticed children of all ages, from 9-14. The most frequently recorded age was 13, with an average of 12.6, compared with the RMA girls' 14 and 13.9 years respectively. The LSV indenture data is a better reflection of the system, and broadly supports the accepted wisdom that children started factory work at a younger age than other types of apprenticeship; factory apprentices had the lowest average age of the three sectors examined in this thesis. As with other chapters, differences between boys and girls for both binding age, and length of term, are discussed below when considering gender issues.

For factory apprentices, the most frequently recorded term was seven years (179 indentures), but the average of 5.7 years, reflects that four year terms were also very common (131 indentures). It is no surprise that the seven children aged 9 cited above when bound all had terms of either nine years or until married. What is revealing is that, overall, the Poor Law bound for shorter terms. Chapter 3 noted that the RMA often bound its 14 year old girls to domestic service for four years.⁶⁶⁷ Therefore it seems reasonable to assume it was the charity girls who made up the bulk of the four year factory terms. However, the exact opposite was the case. LSV bound 128 children for four years, the RMA just three. In fact, 115 RMA girls were bound for seven years, compared with just 49 Poor Law apprentices. It seems the RMA treated its orphans more harshly than its other charges. As well as examining length of term, previous chapters have also considered the apprentices' premiums and wages. There is not a single example of either for the factory sector. The lack of factory premiums contrasts with Honeyman's finding of an average premium of £5-6, but again this is undoubtedly because her evidence was

⁶⁶⁷ See p. 99.

drawn from the earlier Old Poor Law period.⁶⁶⁸ Factory apprenticeship is the one sector in which the central New Poor Law tenets of no premium and perceived less eligibility were effectively applied.

The destinations of children sent to the factories have already been indicated: Southampton girls to Derbyshire, and Liverpool children to Lancashire and Yorkshire. Table 5.4 provides a breakdown of the distances from the home port, using the same parameters of analysis as adopted for the other sectors. It illustrates that 47 per cent (225 children) were sent nationally; 133 were the RMA girls to Derbyshire, the rest were Liverpool children to various factories in Yorkshire. The greatest distance LSV children were sent was 62 miles to Burley, near Bradford, a good 100 miles or so less than the RMA girls travelled. Therefore the Liverpool findings compare favourably with Honeyman's verdict that 'placements within the locality or the region were much more common than previously understood'.⁶⁶⁹

Table 5.4 Location of factory pauper apprenticeships, from apprentices' home port

| Location | No. of indentures |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Regional | 251 (53%) |
| National | 225 (47%) |
| Totals | 476 |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

5.2 *Application of regulations and batch apprenticeship*

The climate of alleged change ushered in by the New Poor Law, and its effect on the system of apprenticeship, has been examined in previous chapters in the context of each

⁶⁶⁸ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 118.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

employment sector. Despite the best efforts of central authority to discourage the practice of binding children out, it has been shown that the practice endured. The factories sector was no exception to this. Indeed, both the evidence from the sample, and the supporting Poor Law correspondence, categorically establishes that not only did pauper apprenticeship continue, but in addition, in this sector the practice of batch apprenticeship, the binding of groups of children to employers as a single batch, also persisted under the New Poor Law.

As has already been detailed in previous chapters, one specific regulation for pauper apprentices concerned the distance of placements. An Act in 1816 specified children should be placed within forty miles of their parish, modified under the New Poor Law by a General Order in 1845 lowering the maximum distance to thirty miles from the parish.⁶⁷⁰ Chapter 3 outlined other terms of this Order, such as the requirement for medical certification, as discussed earlier.⁶⁷¹

The distance regulations were not convenient for Guardians who wanted to utilize opportunities to send children *en masse* to the new industries: ‘The restriction as to distance in this article will be attended with great inconvenience, the major part of our apprentices being bound out in manufacturing districts, none of which are less than 30 miles from Liverpool’ wrote the LSV in 1845 to the Poor Law Board.⁶⁷² Table 5.4 above showed that all the apprentices in this sample were either placed regionally or nationally. The actual distances LSV children were sent reveals that in 48 per cent of cases (229 indentures) the regulations were contravened. While in the other sectors of employment

⁶⁷⁰ See pp. 135-6.

⁶⁷¹ See pp. 132-3.

⁶⁷² TNA, MH12/5967, Folios 223-4, 27 June 1845.

the regulations were sometimes breached, it would appear that here officials actively ignored them to pursue placements in the new industries. As will be discussed below, the motivation for this was the opportunity to bind children in groups to the factories, which proved too tempting to resist. As noted in previous chapters, voluntary bindings were not subject to the regulations, so the RMA girls sent to the Derbyshire mills were technically not in breach. However, if their indentures were included, then 76 per cent of children in the factory sample were sent beyond prescribed limits. As Honeyman rightly pointed out, mill owners developed a relationship with the RMA as a ‘means of evading the 1816 Act’.⁶⁷³

As outlined in Chapter 1, Kirby argued that the mass supply of poor children as apprentices to the mills was short lived, and that by 1820 it was contained by growing public hostility and regulations such as the 1802 Health and Morals of Apprentices Act.⁶⁷⁴ Rose too believed the practice dwindled because of legislation and technological change (as the switch to steam from water power led to mills being built in less isolated locations).⁶⁷⁵ Green argued that after 1834 public opinion turned away from apprenticeship towards education.⁶⁷⁶ Recently Kirby reiterated his views, dating decline to the 1830s-40s along with Green.⁶⁷⁷ Honeyman challenged these views as she found that ‘well into the second half of the nineteenth century, employers continued to beat on parish doors in pursuit of cheap youthful labour’.⁶⁷⁸ Poor Law officials were more than willing to open them; factories represented an important destination for apprentices, and especially

⁶⁷³ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 103.

⁶⁷⁴ See pp. 23-5.

⁶⁷⁵ Rose, ‘Social Policy’, pp. 20-1; Rose, *Gregs of Quarry Bank*, p. 78.

⁶⁷⁶ Green, *Pauper Capital*, p. 139.

⁶⁷⁷ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 26.

⁶⁷⁸ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 261.

batch apprentices, for stretched Poor Law unions. Significantly, the RMA evidence shows that it was not just the Poor Law that was still engaging in this practice in the New Poor Law period; a letter in 1835 to Newton, the owner of Cressbrook mill, who had regularly received RMA girls, read: 'I shall feel obliged by your making enquiry amongst your friends, if there are any other manufactories where apprentices of the description are required'.⁶⁷⁹ The RMA went on to place 12 girls at Cressbrook that year; the last girl to be sent there was in 1840.

However, it is the Poor Law evidence that really exhibits the longevity of pauper apprenticeship. The indentures in this sample, together with the Poor Law correspondence of both Liverpool and Bristol, exemplify how deeply entrenched this system of batch apprenticeship was, and despite regulations, how officials actively sought dispensation from the rules in order to further it. Indentures show that Liverpool children were regularly placed in mills between 1833 and 1870, including 18 batches, the largest ones 23 girls in 1854, and 22 boys in 1861.⁶⁸⁰ The LSV records note 19 different employers in total, 13 receiving multiple batches. Of the surviving indentures, there was just a single child placed on his own, the rest were all in groups. For example, Hector Christie of Giggleswick in Yorkshire took two batches of children for his cotton mill in April and then in August 1869, and then another batch again in July 1870. As the mill was 54 miles from Liverpool, how were these placements effected given the regulations?

Although there was no regulation prohibiting batch apprenticeship, it was the distance regulations that triggered the need to seek sanction from the Poor Law Board, as

⁶⁷⁹ TNA, WO143/62, 23 Feb. 1835, p. 157.

⁶⁸⁰ For the purpose of this study, a batch is defined as five children or more, bound to the same employer, on the same date.

most of the factories were over the prescribed limit. In January 1860 LSV wrote to the Poor Law Board stating that the industrial school had been approached by several manufacturers in Lancashire and Yorkshire. In one case, they wanted to send 20-30 children to Fison & Co woollen manufacturers of Burley, near Bradford. LSV expressly referred to the fact that the placement exceeded the 30 mile limit, but requested ‘to solicit your sanction to the binding’.⁶⁸¹ The average age of the children was 12, with a proposal for many of the children to lodge with Overlookers’ families or in a cottage with a Matron. The Poor Law Board requested details of each individual child, in accordance the General Apprenticeship Order 31 December 1844, Article 14, which required that all names must be communicated before approval could be granted.⁶⁸²

Surprisingly, they were told that the potential employer was ‘naturally unwilling to incur further trouble or expense in the matter, so long as they receive no definite answer as to whether or not their application will be acceded to’.⁶⁸³ Only when agreement was reached would the Principal Overlooker attend to select the children. LSV was keen not to let this ‘highly desirable opening’ slip through their fingers, but the Poor Law Board kept pushing back, questioning the rationale for the proposed placement. For example, they wanted evidence why the children could not be placed locally, whether the proposed apprentices would receive any schooling, and what physical and moral arrangements were in place for the children’s care, expressing a preference for the family placements.⁶⁸⁴ The Board again reiterated that names had to be provided for approval.

⁶⁸¹ TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 79-80, 31 Jan. 1860.

⁶⁸² TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 91-2, 18 Feb. 1860.

⁶⁸³ TNA, MH12/5973, Folio 87, 4 Feb. 1860.

⁶⁸⁴ TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 79-80, 31 Jan. 1860.

LSV's response really serves to indicate they had no intention of complying with the regulations, obstinately refusing to let a good opportunity pass by. Regarding availability of local placements, they stated 'prior to yielding their assent to this application the Select Vestry had satisfied itself that no equally eligible opening for the children in this neighbourhood, is at all likely to present itself...although there is no difficulty in obtaining situations in Liverpool and the adjoining districts for the Girls under their care, it is a very rare thing for any of the children to be placed in really good situations'. In fact, the LSV contended distant placements were actively desirable: 'The interference of idle or profligate relatives or acquaintances is frequently the cause of children being dismissed from their situations and thus ample proof that those girls succeed the best who are placed in service at a distance from Liverpool'. This accorded with the New Poor Law principle of tackling the contagion of indigence and pauperism, thought to be transmitted through kin ties. The LSV also ignored the Board's advice to place the children with families; they believed an apprentice house had 'one undoubted advantage...is that the children are brought into direct contact with the employer and they are more under his control and will necessarily receive more of his attention'.⁶⁸⁵

Some two months later, the Poor Law Board finally approved the arrangement stating it was willing to grant dispensation from the Order, provided their other conditions had been met. They were not, but the LSV bound the children anyway. In reality, the placement was not only against the regulations, it went against everything the Poor Law Board requested, suggesting that its power as an overriding authority was hollow.

⁶⁸⁵ TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 117-19, 22 Feb. 1860.

Correspondence does not suggest that the Burley placement was a one-off; in fact, LSV requested numerous sanctions for batch placements. In February 1860 there was a request for children aged 13 and upwards to be placed with three cotton spinners in Burnley, and one in Barnoldswick. The Poor Law Board responded that the request was ‘one of considerable difficulty’ and wished to see copies of all correspondence entered into with potential employers, to ascertain arrangements for lodging, clothing, diet etc.⁶⁸⁶ They ordered inspection reports to be compiled to consider the validity of request. The reports were duly gathered for all the factories in question, with favourable outcomes, and once again this led to dispensation. What is especially revealing is that when the Board was sent the final list of those indentured, it wrote to LSV concerned that it ‘would appear that a considerably larger number of children have been apprenticed to the manufacturers referred to, than was originally proposed’.⁶⁸⁷

Originally LSV had declared that 6 boys would be sent to Hargreaves in Burnley, yet 7 boys and 7 girls were sent, aged 11-14; and in the case of Hopwood in Burnley, instead of 6 boys and 6 girls, a staggering 24 boys and 27 girls.⁶⁸⁸ It was not only larger numbers of children that were apprenticed; the ages of the children were also ‘less than appears desirable’ given that some were just eleven, having previously advised the Poor Law Board that they would be a minimum of 13 years old’.⁶⁸⁹ This correspondence is quite astounding as it clearly displays blatant disregard for central authority. It illustrates precisely why the General Order stipulating that all names were to be supplied should have been complied with, in order to prevent such a situation. Even after such an apparent

⁶⁸⁶ TNA, MH12/5973, Folio 125 12, Mar. 1860.

⁶⁸⁷ TNA, MH12/5974, Folio 10, 23 Jan. 1861.

⁶⁸⁸ TNA, MH12/5974, Folios 3-8, 31 Dec. 1860.

⁶⁸⁹ TNA, MH12/5974, Folio 10, 23 Jan. 1861.

breach there was no sanction, suggesting that the local Poor Law authority at grass roots level had all the power.

This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that this pattern regularly repeated itself throughout the 1860s. In one year alone, 1860, LSV bound 95 children ages 11-14 to four different mill owners, in seven batches, ranging from 6 to 18 children in the batch. The pace of requests to the Poor Law Board was relentless. During November 1860, LSV sought to place children to Lancashire mills in Bury, Waddington, Todmorden and Burnley, and in 1861, again to Todmorden. Further requests abound: in 1862 to Burley, Yorkshire; in 1866 more to Burnley, Lancashire; then in 1867 to Bentham and in 1868 to Barnoldswick, both in Yorkshire. It appears the Poor Law Board was led the same merry dance every time; blanket requests were made, the Board asked for names, full details, and commissioned reports into current conditions.

Every time the placement was sanctioned, even though the Board was only supplied with the names and actual numbers *after* the agreement. Ultimately LSV was in charge of its own matters and did as it saw fit. Why was this allowed time and time again? Perhaps the Poor Law Board was willing to dispense with regulations because of the particular pressures faced by Liverpool: for example, the port suffered a number of cholera epidemics in these years. It is surely no coincidence that in 1854, one of the years that saw an outbreak of the disease, the single largest batch of children was apprenticed, the 23 girls to a silk mill noted above.⁶⁹⁰ Resources and relief were probably stretched to the absolute limit. But if that was the case, why did similar cases occur in Bristol?

⁶⁹⁰ Poor Law Board, *Eighth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board*, 1855 (London: HMSO, 1856) [hereafter, Poor Law Board, *Eighth Report*], p. 43, Appendix, noted that in 1854, Liverpool's Poor Law cost increased

Bristol Incorporation ostensibly displayed the same disregard for the regulations. That they sent a batch of children who were not protected by indenture has already been highlighted above. However, their correspondence with the Poor Law Board on this issue was every bit as tenacious as LSV's. In March 1859, the Incorporation wrote to the Poor Law Board regarding a draft contract for the hire of 12 girls, aged 11-13, to a silk mill in Blockley, part of the Shipston-on-Stour Union in Worcestershire. All the girls were orphans, to be contracted for five years service. The draft contract included provisions very similar to those found in indentures, such as clothing, food, lodging and attendance to church on Sundays. Provision was also made 'on the expiration of the said term, two pence per week, for and in respect of all the time, after the expiration of one year from commencement of hiring', during which, she shall have properly served him under the same'.⁶⁹¹ It was noted earlier that no children in the factory sample were bound with a premium or received wages; this term could perhaps be best likened to a gratuity received at the end of the term, as discussed in previous chapters.

The reason cited by Bristol Incorporation for not apprenticing these children was the probable objection by local magistrates to the apprenticeship contracts, on the grounds of settlement. A contract for hire of service was thought the better route: 'It was intended to apprentice the children, but this intention has been given up from the improbability which exists of obtaining the allowance of the Local Justices'.⁶⁹² Nor was the use of hire contracts a one-off; later that year, exactly the same process was repeated. This time a batch of 20-30 boys were proposed for hire to a worsted spinner in Luddenden Foot, near

by 26.2%, attributed to 'extraordinary dearness of provisions, the cholera and its consequences, and the scarcity of work amongst the labouring classes during the inclement season'.

⁶⁹¹ TNA, MH12/3865, 26 Feb. 1859.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

Halifax.⁶⁹³ All the boys were either orphaned or deserted, and again there was some provision for a payment at the end of the contract. A penny a week, two pence in the second year, rising to sixpence weekly for the remainder of the five year term was ‘to be preserved and paid by the said Mssrs [*sic*] Whitworth to the said child at the termination of this contract’.⁶⁹⁴ The Bristol Guardians approached the Poor Law Board: ‘The Guardians have been under the impression that a Contract for hiring of Service, entered into by a Minor, if beneficial to him, would be binding on him notwithstanding his infancy. The Guardians would feel greatly obliged by the early consideration of this matter by the Board’.⁶⁹⁵

Once more the reason for the lack of indentures was the alleged likely objection because of settlement concerns. Following the Blockley case, the Bristol Guardians obviously thought they had precedent to enter into hire contracts. As the contract terms were similar to the Blockley one in other respects, for consistency purposes the Poor Law Board felt that they were obliged to approve, although the correspondence evidences a last ditch attempt to steer in the direction of an indenture: ‘Under the circumstances and particularly as the law upon the subject may be considered somewhat obscure, the Board would strongly recommend the Guardians bind as apprentices in the ordinary manner the boys whom Messrs Whitworth & Co propose to take with their employment’.⁶⁹⁶ Just like their Liverpool counterparts, the Bristol Incorporation was firm in their refusal and passed a resolution on 11 November 1859 that:

⁶⁹³ TNA, MH12/3865, 27 Oct. 1859.

⁶⁹⁴ TNA, MH12/3865, 25 Oct. 1859.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ TNA, MH12/3865, 7 Nov. 1859.

*‘The Guardians feel obliged for the consideration bestowed upon this matter and for the advice given them thereon, by the Poor Law Board but they consider that the objections stated by Lord Redesdale against the hiring out of the girls to Mr Smith of Blockley cannot be sustained, especially as applied to the present case in which boys and not girls are proposed to be hired – that the apprenticeship of the Boys would be impracticable in as much as their Guardians are told by Messrs Whitworth & Co that the local magistrates (urged by Parish Officers) would in all probability refuse their assent to the Indentures lest the Boys should gain settlement under them’.*⁶⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that even as late as 1859 magistrates were still viewed as an obstacle; after all, in 1784 it was Manchester magistrates who sowed the seeds of regulation by prohibiting more than 10 hours work a day by a pauper apprentice in their locality. Over seventy years later, employers and Poor Law officials were still cautious of magistrates’ rulings. There is no formal response by the Poor Law Board to Bristol’s defiance, but a handwritten note on the back of the letter again evidences a last ditch attempt to change the course of events: ‘The Board might state it is very desirable that the Guardians should ascertain when [sic] in fact apprenticeship cannot be effected. If not the Board recommend the Guardians to modify the form of contract so as to make it as nearly as may be conformant with the conditions of apprenticeship indentures’.⁶⁹⁸

Once again, the Poor Law Board did not enforce its will; it merely repeated its guidance that apprenticeship was the more advisable route. The acrimony over this issue is alluded to in a letter the Guardians sent to the Bristol Poor Law Inspector. The Guardians received a letter from a boy at the Luddenden Foot factory, reporting favourable conditions (discussed later). They reported this to the local Inspector, and specifically referred to the fact that the Board would have preferred him to have been apprenticed: ‘We think it better

⁶⁹⁷ TNA, MH12/3865, 11 Nov. 1859.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

to send the letter to you rather than the Poor Law Board, as the official correspondence on the subject appears to be now closed, and it is scarcely worthwhile to re-open it'.⁶⁹⁹

It would be fascinating to review Poor Law correspondence for other unions to see if similar behaviour was occurring elsewhere; if the evidence of the two port towns reveals this practice, surely it is the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, later in this chapter, reference is made to Bath Union apprenticing boys to employers in Yorkshire in the 1860s. Correspondence of the London unions was reviewed by Green, and although not examining apprenticeship issues, in relation to other matters he also found that New Poor Law policies were implemented with differing levels of intensity. He argued that the various Orders issued by the Poor Law Board were a response to constant manipulation: 'Despite the creation of a centralised authority, considerable local variations existed in the way that the new system was implemented'.⁷⁰⁰ The evidence from both Liverpool and Bristol, along with Green's research, supports those historians who emphasize continuity between the Old and New Poor Law systems.⁷⁰¹

The question posed earlier still needs to be addressed. Why did the Poor Law Board allow regulations to be so flagrantly breached? Batch apprenticeship was a reviled custom, as illustrated by James Johnson's comments condemning its inhumanity cited earlier in this chapter. It was the antithesis of the New Poor Law ethos which tried to steer in the direction of general education for children in an attempt to shed past association with cart-loads of destitute children sent off to industrial heartlands, in effect the slaves of Britain. How had the practice slipped back under the radar? One possibility is that it was

⁶⁹⁹ TNA, MH12 3866, 10 Jan. 1860.

⁷⁰⁰ Green, *Pauper Capital*, pp. 2, 15.

⁷⁰¹ See pp. 323-6.

in fact a deliberate policy of the Poor Law Board to allow such strong local autonomy, the equivalent of modern ‘light touch’ regulation. All three of the port Poor Law administrations had incorporated long before the advent of the New Poor Law; perhaps they were rewarded for this by being left alone. But there is no evidence to support such a proposition. The detailed correspondence cited above shows that the Board desperately tried to influence decisions. What this body of correspondence depicts is that the Poor Law Board, although an overarching body, in reality had no power to force Guardians to adhere to regulations. Viewed in isolation actions such as ordering inspection reports suggests that officials were acting in a caring and diligent manner, but on the ground local autonomy prevailed and the unions made their own decisions irrespective of any Poor Law Board directives.

Of course, in the light of Honeyman’s research, a less cynical view must also be considered. Perhaps local officials genuinely believed these placements to be in the best interests of the children. The future employment prospects of such children is considered further below; in summary, although it has been argued factory apprenticeship was beneficial with a chance to become economically independent, opinion at the time was not as favourable, therefore it is unlikely officials had future status in mind.⁷⁰² Batch bindings had some positive aspects, since the children could support each other. Imagine being the sole child sent to the factories, having witnessed other children from the workhouse being sent off in groups together. It also made the process of monitoring much easier for officials; indeed, children sent to mills, as Chapters 3 and 4 noted, were at least much more likely to be monitored and subject to certain safeguards that were simply not in place for

⁷⁰² See pp. 230-1.

other kinds of apprenticeship. However, it is hard not to revert back to a position of scepticism. Inspection reports, read in the context of complete chains of correspondence, and recurring patterns of resistance to Board advice, soon appear a formulaic formality designed to just get children off the parish books. Hence the suggestion that, far from dying out, batch apprenticeship persisted, and arguably even intensified under the New Poor Law. Honeyman succinctly summed up: ‘The movement from one system, which was overburdened with needy children, to another, which required large numbers of young people, eased pressures on both’.⁷⁰³

5.3 *Life as an apprentice*

Honeyman pointed out that in more traditional forms of apprenticeship, children were essentially performing the role of helper, whereas factory apprentices from an early stage worked independently, being trained in and assigned a specific task central to the production process.⁷⁰⁴ The majority of children indentured to the mills were apprentice cotton spinners. An inspection report described a typical experience: ‘Their employment will commence in the Winding House as Doffers, that is taking from the machines full Bobbins and replacing them with empty ones; once competent at this they can progress to spinning’.⁷⁰⁵ Another inspection report, this time from Bristol, depicted 13 year old Catherine Murphy’s daily routine at a Worcestershire silk factory: ‘I do the silk work here – draw it out of the bobbin. We begin at 8 and work till 7 in the evening, and have two hours for meals...I would rather stay here than go back to Bristol. We have clean pinafores once a week, and clean frocks once a fortnight, clean stockings once a week’. Breakfast consisted of tea, bread and lard; lunch meals of rice and treacle, broth and bread, meat and

⁷⁰³ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 15, 114.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷⁰⁵ TNA, MH12/5974, Folios 120-1, 29 Apr. 1861.

carrots and apple pudding on Sundays. On Saturdays they worked until 2 p.m., then cleaned shoes and mended their clothes, attending Baptist chapel and Sunday school the following day. Schooling was in the evening, although it appears rather irregularly attended as Catherine reported ‘we have not gone for the last two weeks since the evenings have become dark’.⁷⁰⁶

One of the destinations for RMA girls was Lorenzo Christie’s Edale mill, which also took parish children, and an inspection report prepared for St Giles in the Fields and St George Bloomsbury detailed life for all the apprentices. In 1841 an official visited and reported that ‘The work...was to watch the thread as it was wound off through water from bobbins on to reels, and to take out the knots and piece it where broken’. The report expressly identified girls apprenticed from the RMA in Southampton, for their apparent better health: ‘The girls are generally very undersized and this is the more remarkable perhaps because the apprentices from Southampton who are subjected to exactly the same work and treatment are as [sic] generally very fine tall girls’. Perhaps this was because of their previous life in the sea air! There is a wealth of information about their general conditions:

*‘The hours of work are fixed by the Factory Act namely for children above thirteen years old thirteen hours and a half a day allowing them an hour and a half for meals and for children under thirteen, ten hours work daily and two hours schooling...The apprentices live and sleep in a building next to the mill...under the care of the wife of the Overlooker of the mill. The rooms are very airy and very clean and each girl has there a box to hold her apparel. They lie three in a bed’.*⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁶ TNA, MH12/14121, 7 Nov. 1859.

⁷⁰⁷ CLSAC, P/GG/PO/4, 1 Mar. 1841.

Life as a factory apprentice was undoubtedly more regimented and prescriptive than the other sectors, and although arduous in terms of long hours, as already debated, these were children who did enjoy some regulatory protection and monitoring, and as the Bristol example notes, even some elements of education.

Although it has been argued that children placed in traditional trades were worse off than factory apprentices (see Chapter 3), the risk to health and in some cases, life, still loomed large. A government report noted that of 2,026 pauper apprentices aged between 8 and 18 bound from London parishes between 1802 and 1811, one third were not accounted for and around 4 per cent were known to be dead.⁷⁰⁸ Kirby found that industrial injuries went largely unreported until safety legislation enacted in 1844 required records to be kept for factory inspectors.⁷⁰⁹ Some enterprises already kept such records; Quarry Bank mill documents give insight into typical mortality rates of children working in mills. In the twenty two year period 1811-33, 17 deaths were recorded at the mill, eight boys and nine girls.⁷¹⁰ However, none of the deaths were directly related to work; the majority were because of illness or disease, such as that of Elizabeth Grimes, bound by the LSV aged 10 in 1836, who died of a chest ailment 2 years later.⁷¹¹ There was only one accidental death recorded, and it occurred during play, not while working. RMA correspondence also documented abrupt endings. Newton of Cressbrook Mill wrote in 1832, advising of the death of three girls who had been apprenticed to him. No further details were given, nor any response recorded.⁷¹² It did not deter the institution from sending further girls, and following notification of ‘the unfortunate death of Eleanor Dean’ bound in 1826, in 1828

⁷⁰⁸ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 25

⁷⁰⁹ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 90.

⁷¹⁰ MA, GB 127 C5/8/27, undated.

⁷¹¹ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/28, 24 Mar. 1836; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 9.

⁷¹² TNA, WO143/62, 5 Mar. 1832, p. 19

the RMA still requested permission from Headquarters in Chelsea to send a further batch of girls: 'I beg leave to state that there will be nearly Twenty Orphans to leave the Asylum this year, and to be provided for'. The Commissioners at RMA Chelsea noted 'the death of this Child arose from circumstances wholly accidental, and which could not with the usual and proper precautions have been prevented' and did not object to further children being sent.⁷¹³

Factories also had a reputation for violence and brutality. Inquiries such as the Sadler report exposed the harsh methods of discipline, linking violence with mechanized production, but as Chapters 3 and 4 illustrated, it was not necessarily more common than in other occupations, just more visible.⁷¹⁴ Nardinelli argued that in factories violence was used as a method of control over the workforce and to increase productivity, and that as brutality in everyday life was commonplace, adverse contemporary opinion has been overstated.⁷¹⁵ There is nothing in the available evidence to suggest that children were subject to violent assault during their factory apprenticeship, but an incident at Quarry Bank mill serves to remind of the harsh environment generally. The Greys are considered to be one of the more enlightened, humane employers from this period, but the punishment of two girls who ran away in 1836, Esther Price and Lucy Garner, is a stark reminder of the brutalities children faced. Price had already been before magistrates for violent conduct towards another apprentice, but misbehaved again and escaped, along with Garner. Potential runaways were threatened with 'the old punishment of cutting off the hair of all future runaways'. However, instead of having their locks shorn, they were

⁷¹³ TNA, WO143/61, 26 Feb. 1828, p. 174.

⁷¹⁴ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 197.

⁷¹⁵ Nardinelli, *Child Labor*, pp. 91-2; C. Nardinelli, 'Corporal Punishment and Children's Wages in Nineteenth Century Britain', *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 19, 3 (1982), pp. 283-95, at p. 289.

placed in solitary confinement, Garner for three days, Price for a week, in a room with boarded up windows, and given only water and porridge twice a day.⁷¹⁶

Another popular view was that children were sent away with no further thought, yet Honeyman concluded that most parishes maintained ‘at least a modicum of contact’.⁷¹⁷ Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, gave a realistic assessment of the situation; in his report on the training of pauper children, he suggested that even if a Guardian was caring ‘they cannot devote that sedulous attention to the care of each apprentice which a parent brings to the interests of his child’.⁷¹⁸ However, for the Old Poor Law, LSV correspondence does support Honeyman’s assertions, as there are frequent examples in their minutes recording checks on establishments. For example, in 1827: ‘It is gratifying to learn from the personal observations of Mr Black the Overseer, who lately visited some of the districts they are bound, that they are comfortable and contented in their situations, and attached to their masters’.⁷¹⁹ In 1830, an Overseer visited 40 establishments in Prescot, Manchester, Oldham, Bakewell, Ashbourne and Winston: ‘They have great satisfaction in stating that they found the children, without any exception, comfortably situated. Many of them are with manufacturers having two or three looms only; with such they are treated as members of the family. The rest are under the protection of larger manufacturers, are well clothed and well fed, and have opportunities afforded of attending religious duties’.⁷²⁰ These examples give some credence to LSV’s claim in 1845 to the Poor Law Board that ‘it has always been the custom in Liverpool for

⁷¹⁶ MA, GB 127 C5/8/22, undated.

⁷¹⁷ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 238.

⁷¹⁸ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 93.

⁷¹⁹ H. Peet, (ed.), *Liverpool Vestry Books 1681-1834*, vol. 2 (Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 1912) [hereafter, Peet, *Liverpool Vestry*], 17. Apr. 1827, p. 241.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 280, 13 April 1830.

the Churchwardens and Overseers to visit the children once a year and to see that there is no cause of complaint on the part of the apprentices'.⁷²¹

The Poor Law correspondence shows that inspection reports were prepared with regularity, either commissioned prior to a placement, or post-placement to check welfare before apprenticing more children. The motives for such monitoring has been questioned above, but were there any circumstances where monitoring effected genuine change? A Bristol case provides a good example. George Smith's hiring of Bristol girls caused quite a stir in the local community of Blockley; the local Poor Law union, Shipston-on-Stour, wrote to the Poor Law Board to object and raised concerns that contractual terms, particularly church observance on a Sunday, were not being followed. The particular concern was that the children were not taken to the Church of England, the stated religion in the indenture, but to a 'dissenting school and meeting house'.⁷²² The Poor Law Board commissioned an inspection that reported favourably; it found the girls to be 'clean, cheerful, and almost without exception, robust and healthy' and that indeed the girls were going to chapel rather than Church of England services.⁷²³ Since none of the girls objected, the Poor Law Board did not pursue the case. This incident illustrates that officials did respond to concerns raised by the community and investigated, and that claims were not just dismissed. In any event, the concerns raised were a smokescreen for the real issue troubling the locals, settlement worries, as discussed later in this chapter.

While it is clear visits did take place, it must be borne in mind that it would have been very difficult for children to actually complain about their circumstances. But some

⁷²¹ TNA, MH12/5967, Folios 223-4, 27 June 1845.

⁷²² TNA, MH12/14121, 14 Oct. 1859.

⁷²³ TNA, MH12/14121, 7 Nov. 1859; case also discussed in Crompton, *Workhouse Children*, pp. 218-9.

were brave enough to do so, as the RMA's letter book hints grumbles were registered: 'The Girl Wells dislikes work therefore her statement cannot be relied upon, however it may be right to mention the Circumstances of their [*sic*] not attending divine service'.⁷²⁴ This probably referred to apprentice Mary Wells, bound in 1827 to Cressbrook mill, who must have informed the RMA that they were not attending church on a Sunday in accordance with the provisions of their indenture. Sadly there is no further mention of this matter in the correspondence, unlike the Blockley case above.

On rare occasions Guardians even received reports from the children themselves. As indicated above, a Bristol boy sent to Whitworth's factory in Luddendenfoot, Yorkshire, wrote to the Guardians. 'We have a very good place and plenty of good food and good Lodgings [*sic*] and we all give you and the rest of the Guardians and Mr Morgan a hearty thanks for getting us this Place ...We have a little Fife and Drum Band made up by the Bath Union Boys here. Our work is not hard and we are learning to spin'.⁷²⁵ Not all children were as merry as this letter suggested. Indentures merely record contractual facts so it is difficult to assess whether children were passive victims of the system; but there are a couple of valuable examples, which while not on the same dramatic scale as Blincoe's story, do illustrate resistance and opposition.⁷²⁶ Of course, simply absconding was the most obvious tactic. From this sample, as well as Esther Price and Lucy Garner noted above, another Quarry Bank apprentice, Catherine Hawley, ran away in 1833, having been placed there by LSV in 1829.⁷²⁷ The RMA letter books record a case of dissenting behaviour. Maria Chambers was sent to Cressbrook mill in Derbyshire in 1833, but in

⁷²⁴ TNA, WO143/61, 7 July 1828, p. 188; WO143/52/1156, 8 Feb. 1827.

⁷²⁵ TNA, MH12/3865, 22 Dec. 1859.

⁷²⁶ For more on Blincoe see Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency* p. 228; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 264

⁷²⁷ Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, pp. 6-7, MA GB 127 C5/5/3/31 16 September 1829

1838 her indenture was cancelled by magistrates due to her ‘bad behaviour’. Sadly the correspondence does not document her purported crimes.⁷²⁸

As noted in previous chapters, indentures did not always break down because of the actions of children. For example, the RMA correspondence discusses the transfer of girls at Cressbrook mill; 45 sets of indentures were sent by coach from Newton to the McConnells, who bought the mill. However, not all the girls must have been taken on as the correspondence refers to a request being made for other manufacturers to take them as apprentices.⁷²⁹ The RMA letter book also records a problem with the indenture of Matilda Blair, bound in 1832. Frustratingly, again no actual reason is documented but the letter stated: ‘The usual measures were taken by me to ascertain that McClusky was a proper person to apprentice a girl’ and went on to state: ‘I know of no way of disposing the girl now than that of giving a new set of indentures to Mr Newton...or she being provided for by the Parish to which the Minister and Churchwardens belong who so improperly signed the certificate’.⁷³⁰ Once again, RMA’s attitude towards its former charge is stark; the cases of Jane Ludden and Mary Nurse in Chapter 3 showed how the institution had an uncaring attitude to girls who fell into difficulties after being bound, even through no fault of their own. They had no interest in assisting these children; they were only keen to ensure no responsibility reverted to them.⁷³¹ Some children did complete their apprenticeships, and previous chapters have noted rewards were occasionally given. Elizabeth Bowden, a RMA apprentice, completed her apprenticeship and her completion

⁷²⁸ TNA, WO143/62, 15 Dec. 1838, p. 197; WO143/52/1501, 23 Sep. 1833.

⁷²⁹ TNA, WO143/62, 19 Feb. 1835, p. 156.

⁷³⁰ TNA, WO143/62, 22 Nov. 1832, p. 45; WO143/52/1500, 25 Oct. 1832.

⁷³¹ See pp. 141, 146.

certificate indicates she was given a gratuity of 5 guineas, the only example of a gratuity received by a factory apprentice in the sample.⁷³²

When considering those children placed into traditional occupations, future prospects post-apprenticeship were examined, and it was noted that although pauper apprenticeship in many ways gave poor children a lifeline, indentures under the New Poor Law appeared to limit the child's status; with the majority of children being placed in unskilled trades for little or no premium.⁷³³ What future did training in a mill bring? At the time, factory work was viewed as low status and holding out few prospects, so it would seem children's futures were very similar regardless of the occupation to which they were bound. Chapman's review of Cuckney mill's records bear testament to this, as he found that only two of the 780 apprentices employed obtained positions at the end of the term.⁷³⁴ In contrast, Honeyman broke new ground with her suggestion that factory apprenticeship ultimately enabled children to access a better life as they were trained in a new industry, for which not everyone had acquired skills, thus able to command a wage and even the prospect of promotion. Unfortunately there is no direct evidence of any subsequent progress of the apprentices in this sample, but Robinson's study of Quarry Bank mill, one of the destinations for LSV apprentices, found 'at least nine former apprentices became overlookers at Quarry Bank mill'. Margaret Magan, bound age 10 from Liverpool in 1823, first obtained a job in the spinning room, then as a powerloom operator, eventually

⁷³² TNA, WO143/52, 18 May 1837 (certificate in Register); WO143/52/1570, 10 Oct. 1833.

⁷³³ See pp. 149-50.

⁷³⁴ Chapman, *Factory Masters*, p. 171.

she rose to Overlooker. Most who did stay on became spinners, over 70 in total.⁷³⁵ Similarly, Honeyman found some RMA girls were retained at Mellor mill.⁷³⁶

Future employability was a point expressly stated by the LSV in 1860 when trying to persuade the Poor Law Board to sanction a group of girls for batch apprenticeship to Yorkshire; the Board was informed ‘that upwards of 22 per cent of the adult population of Lancashire and Yorkshire (West Riding) are employed in occupations...for which these children will in the course of their apprenticeship become fitted’.⁷³⁷ One of their reports found that children could earn as much as 25-30s a week once qualified spinners.⁷³⁸ Similarly, for the RMA girls, according to the Edale report cited earlier, the mill owner was happy to hire any of the girls upon reaching the age of 21.⁷³⁹ The suggestion certainly seems to be that these children could acquire skills which enabled them not to be a future burden on the Poor Law. Yet it must be remembered that it is only retrospectively that this form of apprenticeship has been suggested as ultimately advantageous. The officials allotting apprenticeships, whether Poor Law or charity, did not deliberately try improve children’s prospects by binding to the mills. It would be difficult to argue that the RMA were upholding the universal charitable apprenticing aims of improving the status of the child; they may have inadvertently done so for some of the girls, but it was by no means an active policy objective.

⁷³⁵ Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, pp. 17-18; 23.

⁷³⁶ Honeyman, ‘Compulsion’, p. 86, although no actual figure is given.

⁷³⁷ TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 117-19, 22 Feb. 1860.

⁷³⁸ TNA, MH12/5973, Folios 268-75, 20 Apr. 1860.

⁷³⁹ CLSAC, P/GG/PO/4, 1 Mar. 1841.

5.4 *Gender issues*

Chapter 3 highlighted how domestic service was a goal of officials seeking to place their girls in work, more successfully so in the case of charities.⁷⁴⁰ The chapter noted that Honeyman had concluded that pauper boys had a wider choice of apprenticeships, being more likely to be bound to skilled trades, whereas girls were confined to domestic ones, as well as the factories.⁷⁴¹ Certainly apprenticeship to the mills was an opportunity to be seized, but is there evidence to support the idea that the practice was particularly associated with girls? Honeyman found that 55 per cent of those in factories she investigated were girls, and overall there was no marked preference.⁷⁴² By virtue of the nature of its Southampton branch, all the RMA mill apprentices were girls. Examination of the LSV indenture subset of bindings between 1840 and 1870 (620 indentures) assists in detecting gender bias, as it provides a defined group for comparison purposes.⁷⁴³ It shows that LSV placed 104 boys and 81 girls into factories, initially supporting Honeyman's findings. However, there were only 90 LSV female apprentices in total, so the percentage of LSV girls sent to the factories was actually very high, 90 per cent, compared to just 20 per cent of boys.

Interestingly, there does not seem to be any bias in terms of the ages at which children were bound; using the same LSV subset (in order to avoid the distortion created by the RMA records), the average age for girls was 13.1, just slightly younger than 13.3 for boys. However, the average length of term was different; girls were bound for 5.1 years, whereas boys for less time with an average term of 4.6 years. What is striking is the

⁷⁴⁰ See pp. 151-2.

⁷⁴¹ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 151 citing Snell, *Annals*, p. 272.

⁷⁴² Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 156, 173.

⁷⁴³ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1-2.

distances girls were sent, with many more instances of the distance regulations being breached. In only 10 cases were the regulations observed: 71 girls were sent over the prescribed limit. Contrast to the boys, with a much more even split; in 56 cases it was not observed, but 31 were within the limit. Girls were also twice as likely to be bound in a batch. Of the 18 large batches identified earlier, 12 were girls, including the largest batch, 23 girls aged 12-14 were bound in 1854 to James Hobson, a silk manufacturer in Cheshire.

It is difficult to be more than circumspect about possible gender bias, but this evidence does suggest that factory apprenticeship, and particularly batch apprenticeship, and at a greater distance, was more the norm for girls. This was not necessarily a bad thing; one of the most interesting arguments Honeyman advanced was that this type of apprenticeship offered more opportunities for girls, perversely placing them in a better position than girls who were bound privately. Factory girls could go on to command a wage, with the possibility of promotion, whereas often private apprenticeships in traditional trades did not lead to the acquisition of skills necessary to enable a girl to be self-sufficient. Many private apprenticeships for women were simply a form of education and training prior to marriage.⁷⁴⁴ Factory girls, on the other hand, were placed on a path of freedom and independence.

5.5 *Settlement concerns*

Settlement concerns arising from long distance batch apprenticeship were alluded to above. The general issues surrounding settlement and its connection with apprenticeship were explored in Chapter 3, in particular the continuing climate of uncertainty post-

⁷⁴⁴ M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures, 1700-1820: Industry, Innovation, and Work in Britain*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1994) [hereafter, Berg, *Manufactures*], p. 162.

1834.⁷⁴⁵ Settlement was still very much an issue for those living in factory districts where children arrived in groups *en masse*. The Poor Law correspondence of Bristol and Liverpool establishes that factory district Poor Law unions strongly objected to batch apprenticeships based on settlement concerns, principally baulking at the prospect of children left at the end of the term with no employment, but also expressing concern during the indenture that the apprenticeship might not be completed.

Settlement concerns were at the heart of some of the objections to the Bristol placements of 1859 to the Blockley and Luddenden Foot mills discussed above. The 1834 Act abolished one year of continuous service under hire contract as a means of acquiring settlement. Thus on both occasions Bristol Incorporation sent the children under a service contract rather than full indenture, as ‘local magistrates (urged by the Parish officers) would in all probability refuse their assent to the Indentures lest the boys should gain settlement under them’.⁷⁴⁶ Certainly the numerous letters of protest to the Poor Law Board from Shipston-on-Stour Union, about the conditions of the Blockley placement, were really a smokescreen for the deep-rooted opposition to any prospect of the children gaining settlement in the area. In Yorkshire, the hiring of Bristol boys for a mill in Luddenden Foot reduced one local to violent protest. In January 1860, the Leeds Mercury reported that Sutcliffe Greenwood, a blacksmith’s striker from Sowerby, had been charged with assault upon Robert Bishop, one of the pauper boys ‘which Messrs. Whitworth have lately got from the Bath and Bristol Unions...it seems a great deal of ill-feeling is shown towards them, by the other hands, arising out of the circumstances under which they have been brought into this part of the country. Messrs. Whitworth were most desirous that an

⁷⁴⁵ See pp. 152-6.

⁷⁴⁶ TNA, MH12/3865, 11 Nov. 1859.

example should be made of the defendant as warning to others'. Greenwood received a fine of 20s for striking Bishop on the head with a clothes prop!⁷⁴⁷

There are abundant examples of Yorkshire and Lancashire unions protesting at LSV placing children into factories in their districts. In Yorkshire in 1860, Burley Guardians outlined their reasons for objection: 'the neighbourhood of Burley is agricultural, excepting the mills of Messrs Fison & Co, and when the proposed apprentices have served their time, they will then have gained a settlement in Burley which brings a heavy burden upon the land to which the landed proprietors in the parish as well as myself most strongly object'⁷⁴⁸ Again in 1862 when a further batch was proposed, the Burley Union had this to say on the matter: 'I presume their being bound apprentice to the above firm, for the term of five years, will cause them to belong to our Township...I know there are decided objections on the part of the Rate Payers'.⁷⁴⁹ Similarly, in 1860, Skipton Union objected to a proposed placement of children 'at present chargeable to your parish' to William Bracewell's factory at Barnoldswick.⁷⁵⁰ There were not always objections. For example, in 1861, Lancashire's Burnley Union just wanted the names, ages and, most importantly, doctors' certificates before they gave consent.⁷⁵¹ But overall, objections were definitely the norm, confirming that unease about settlement was still rife late into the century.

⁷⁴⁷ TNA, MH12/3866, 31 Jan. 1860. The newspaper article is contained in the Bristol correspondence files in connection with its documentation on this placement.

⁷⁴⁸ TNA, MH12/5973, Folio 130, 6 Mar. 1860.

⁷⁴⁹ TNA, MH12/5975, Folio 281, 25 Aug. 1862.

⁷⁵⁰ TNA, MH12/5973, Folio 236, 22 Mar. 1860.

⁷⁵¹ TNA, MH12/5974, Folios 139-142, 8 May 1861.

5.6 Conclusion

Although surprisingly not the dominant form of apprenticeship in this study, 29 per cent of pauper apprentices from port parishes were still sent away to the factories. This practice was not only pursued by the Poor Law; RMA's letter book and apprenticeship register clearly shows that charitable institutions also played a role, and actively sought such arrangements. Most importantly, this chapter has shown that factory apprenticeship was used as an avenue for batch apprenticeship continuing late into the nineteenth century. This significantly challenges the conventional wisdom that pauper apprenticeship, and batch supply, diminished prior to the New Poor Law. As stated above, far from dying out, batch apprenticeship persisted under the New Poor Law.

The Poor Law correspondence vividly illustrates the frequent tensions between the Poor Law unions and the Poor Law Board concerning the ongoing struggle to provide for destitute children. This remarkable correspondence evidences the balancing act between central authority and local autonomy in action, and has proved incredibly revealing about the true nature of pauper apprenticeship during the New Poor Law, offering new perspectives and fresh evidence about how the system was administered. The new evidence nuances Honeyman's argument that officials acted with some degree of diligence.⁷⁵² I have demonstrated that while the Poor Law Board did try to follow protocol, the motives of local Guardians were questionable. In isolation the reports portray the Guardians as being protective, but in the context of the whole chain of correspondence, they were undoubtedly in many situations pursuing batch apprenticeship for their own ends.

⁷⁵² Honeyman, *Child Workers*, ch. 11.

6. Discussion: Robust, resilient and resurgent – an assessment of pauper apprenticeship during the industrial revolution

*‘Over-emphasis upon the employment of children in centralized industry in factories and mines has given way to appreciation of the diversity of situations in which children were employed’.*⁷⁵³

Three sectors of pauper apprenticeship, traditional occupations, the sea and factories, have been put under the microscope and examined through the lens of some prominent port towns. Now it is time to look at how these sectors compare, identifying trends across all three ports, in order to gain fresh insight into the pauper apprenticeship system during the industrial revolution. The evidence has examined two different types of institution which administered apprenticeships for poor children: charities and the Poor Law. They are often viewed as distinct institutions but the evidence has indicated that there were many areas of overlap; for example, the Marine Society often received Poor Law boys, and in traditional occupations, charity funds often supplemented the Poor Law to make premiums more generous, just as the Southampton Corporation Municipal Charities fund operated. Charitable practices were instrumental in developing Poor Law policies: London’s Foundling Hospital has been described as providing a ‘model for other Victorian charities and even for Poor Law administration’.⁷⁵⁴ However, areas of tension between the two systems have also been highlighted, principally with regard to settlement issues.

Having now examined the three main occupational destinations for pauper apprentices, and where they were despatched, the extent to which children of port towns

⁷⁵³ Goose, ‘Hertfordshire’, p. 157.

⁷⁵⁴ Sheetz-Nguyen, *Unwed Mothers*, p. 188.

were *shipped out* for pauper apprenticeships can be ascertained. Table 6.1 illustrates the composition of the sample.

Table 6.1 Summary of the port towns sample

| Location | Sector | No. of indentures |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Port | Traditional occupations | 339 (20%) |
| | Sea | 50 (3%) |
| Shipped in | Traditional occupations | 130 (8%) |
| | Sea | 49 (3%) |
| Subtotal | | 568 (34%) |
| Shipped out | Traditional occupations | 608 (36%) |
| | Sea | 33 (2%) |
| | New industries | 493 (29%) |
| Subtotal | | 1,134 (67%) |
| TOTAL | | 1,702 |

Notes:

- 1) Total is 1702 as 8 occupations were unknown.
- 2) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

Table 6.1 shows that two thirds of children were indeed *shipped out*, which initially appears to support the conventional view that there was no employment for children in port towns, and therefore officials had to resort to sending children away for apprenticeships to the mines and mills. However, the table illustrates a number of important revisions to that picture.

First, there *were* apprenticeship opportunities available for children in port towns, contrary to the notion that urban centres could not sustain anything other than casual work.⁷⁵⁵ Both charity and Poor Law apprentices were employed in an array of traditional occupations and based in ports for sea apprenticeships. In addition, some children were

⁷⁵⁵ See Kirby, *Child Labour*, pp. 68-71; Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 158; Winstanley, *Lancashire*, p. 10.

actually *shipped in* to the port for these two types of placements, and surprisingly, more for the traditional trades rather than the sea. As discussed further below, although all children working in port account for just one third of the total sample, this is still a significant enough proportion to challenge conventional perceptions about pauper apprenticeship destinations, and consequently highlights the importance of local, regional and sectoral studies in the wider historiography of child labour to provide a nuanced account of the national picture.

Second, of the two thirds of children who still had to be *shipped out* for their apprenticeships, although still an important destination, the new industries did not dominate. Traditional occupations were the main source of apprenticeships, wherever children were located, a finding which significantly revises the standard view of the type of apprenticeship utilized by the Poor Law during the industrial revolution. Furthermore, Table 6.2 below shows that it was also the dominant form of apprenticeship by charities.

Table 6.2 Summary of the port towns sample, by type

| Location | Sector | No. of Charity Indentures | No. of Poor Law Indentures |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Port | Traditional occupations | 180 (11%) | 159 (9%) |
| | Sea | - | 50 (3%) |
| Shipped in | Traditional occupations | 48 (3%) | 82 (5%) |
| | Sea | 46 (3%) | 3 (<1%) |
| Subtotal | | 274 (17%) | 294 (17%) |
| Shipped out | Traditional Occupations | 392 (23%) | 216 (13%) |
| | Sea | - | 33 (2%) |
| | New Industries | 133 (8%) | 360 (21%) |
| Subtotal | | 525 (31%) | 609 (36%) |
| TOTAL | | 799 (48%) | 903 (53%) |

Notes:

- 1) Total is 1702 as 8 occupations were unknown.
- 2) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

Table 6.2 shows that charity and Poor Law placements had a very similar distribution across the sectors. Children appear not to have been treated differently if they were bound by either the Poor Law or a charity. For example, Chapter 5 highlighted how orphans were more likely to be bound to factories by both institutions.

Using the ports as a lens through which to view pauper apprenticeship has highlighted how unique local factors can alter any broad national overview. Overall, the vast majority of children identified in my sources were apprenticed to traditional occupations, the persistence of which, in the face of the modernization occurring during this period, is startling. Furthermore, the maritime factor had a real bearing on the fates of children in these towns, for as Chapter 4 proved, for some boys, the sea was the gateway to the wider world.

In order to gauge the significance of the findings, it is useful to try and derive a comparative perspective across the ports, and then see how this relates to the overall picture of child work during the period. In his analysis of children's work in London, Kirby presented a helpful 'Top twenty jobs' table using the 1851 Census Summary Tables, to identify the most frequently observed occupation, a standard that Humphries adopted to check the representativeness of her autobiographical sources.⁷⁵⁶ In terms of comparative census material, although the decennial records provide occupational summary tables for each port, unfortunately they only register breakdown totals by over and under 20 years old; with no further decomposition possible, inclusion of 15-20 year olds would seriously distort any potential comparison.⁷⁵⁷ Therefore, in Tables 6.4 and 6.6 below, I check the port evidence against Kirby's table, with the benefit of comparing with Humphries' male

⁷⁵⁶ Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch', Tables A.1 and A.2 pp. 241-2; Humphries, *Childhood*, Table 8.1 p. 212.

⁷⁵⁷ Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. I, pp. 112-17, 504-9; vol. II, pp. 648-53.

sample as well in Table 6.4.⁷⁵⁸ Of course, the date range of my sample is not directly comparable with Kirby's snapshot from 1851; furthermore, Kirby's evidence is for all forms of children's work, compared with my narrow focus on Poor Law and charity apprentices. Although it cannot be a like for like comparison, it still serves as a useful benchmark for discussion. The tables have been modified to focus on the top ten jobs as the basis for comparison, as the indenture data for Bristol is insufficient to provide twenty different occupations.

Table 6.3 Top ten jobs for male pauper apprentices aged 14 and under, ports, 1750-1870

| | Bristol | | Liverpool | | Southampton |
|-----|--------------------------|----|---------------------|----|--------------------|
| 1 | Shoemaker | 1= | Cotton manufacture | 1 | Shoemaker |
| 2 | Sailor | | Shoemaker | 2 | Tailor |
| 3= | Carpenter, joiner | 3 | Sailor | 3= | Carpenter, joiner |
| 4 | Hairdresser | 4 | Tailor | | Hairdresser |
| 5 | Unknown | 5 | Hairdresser | 5= | Coach builder |
| 6 | Tailor | 6 | Watchmaker | | Domestic servant |
| 7 | Cooper | 7 | Pawnbroker | 7= | Cabinetmaker |
| 8= | Brassfounder/coppersmith | 8 | Coal-miner | | Bricklayer |
| | Cabinetmaker | 9 | Blacksmith | 9 | Sailor |
| 10= | Gardener | 10 | Worsted manufacture | 10 | Blockmaker |
| | Brightsmith | | | | |

Source: Indenture data.

Looking firstly at males, and the three ports together, the prevalence of traditional trades in all three locations stands out in Table 6.3 above. Although Liverpool's top ten is distorted by the LSV boys who were sent away to the mills, the actual proportions of boys placed in each trade are very similar across the ports, suggesting the authenticity of the findings. For example, shoemaking accounts for 19 per cent of Bristol boys' placements, compared

⁷⁵⁸ Humphries, *Childhood*, Table 8.1 p. 212. No female autobiographies were examined.

to 23 per cent in Southampton and 20 per cent in Liverpool. Hairdressing accounts for 8 per cent in Bristol, 6 per cent in Southampton and 5 per cent in Liverpool. As Chapter 3 noted, Wrigley found that 10 retail-based trades, including shoemaking, comprised 17-18 per cent of the male population of working age, therefore it is not surprising to find these trades dominating the port top ten tables.⁷⁵⁹

Table 6.4 Top ten jobs for males aged 14 and under, National, Autobiographies and Ports

| | National* | Autobiographies* | Ports* |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Agricultural labourer | Agriculture | Shoemaker |
| 2 | Farmers son | Messenger | Sailor |
| 3 | Messenger | Cotton manufacture | Cotton manufacture |
| 4 | Farm servant | Coal-miner | Tailor |
| 5 | Cotton manufacture | Woollen/worsted manufacture | Hairdresser |
| 6 | Coal-miner | Shop boy/retail | Watchmaker |
| 7 | Labourer | Monitor schoolteacher | Carpenter, joiner |
| 8 | Wool manufacture | Sailor | Pawnbroker |
| 9 | Worsted manufacture | Shoemaker | Coal-miner |
| 10 | Shoemaker | Office boy | Blacksmith |

Notes:

1) *National – Based on Kirby’s *Top twenty jobs for 10-14 year old males in England and Wales (excluding London), 1851*.

2) *Autobiographies – Based on Humphries’ *Most frequently recorded first jobs*.

3) *Ports – Based on Indenture data.

Sources: Kirby, *Statistical Sketch*, Table A.2 p. 242.

Humphries, *Childhood*, Table 8.1 p. 212.

Indenture data.

Table 6.4 above compares the combined port indentures with Kirby and Humphries’ data highlighting the importance of regional studies, as the ports’ top ten is significantly different from the national picture. Only three of the ports’ top ten (cotton manufacture, coal-mining and shoemaking) appear in the national list; and shoemaking is actually the only trade based in port. The same three appear in Humphries’ table, as well as sailor.

⁷⁵⁹ See p. 76.

Unsurprisingly, sailor is the second most popular port job, yet it does not appear in the national top ten.

Table 6.5 Top five jobs for female pauper apprentices aged 14 and under, ports, 1750-1870

| | Bristol | | Liverpool | | Southampton |
|----|----------------|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Housewife | 1 | Cotton manufacture | 1 | Domestic Servant |
| 2= | Engraver | 2 | Domestic Servant | 2 | Cotton manufacture |
| | Staymaker | 3 | Silk manufacture | 3 | Housewife |
| 4 | Glover | 4 | Worsted manufacture | 4 | Dressmaker |
| 5 | Shoemaker | 5 | Flax manufacture | 5 | Laundress |

Source: Indenture data.

The port comparisons of the most common girls' jobs reduce to top five because of the narrow occupational distribution observed. Table 6.5 above shows that the Liverpool picture is clearly one of girls being sent out to manufacture, whereas Bristol and Southampton placed their girls by and large in traditional occupations.

Table 6.6 below, the comparison with national data, shows more convergence than the male distribution; four jobs appear in the national top ten (domestic servant, cotton, worsted and silk manufacture), but the presence of traditional trades still shows the diversity. The greater convergence is explained by the much narrower range of apprenticeship opportunities for girls, as discussed in Chapter 3, which noted that boys had a wider choice and were more likely to be bound to skilled trades, whereas girls were confined to domestic jobs or the factories.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁶⁰ See p. 152.

Table 6.6 Top ten jobs for females aged 14 and under, National and Ports

| National* | | Ports * | |
|------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Domestic Servant | 1 | Domestic Servant |
| 2 | Cotton manufacture | 2 | Cotton manufacture |
| 3 | Farmer's daughter | 3 | Housewife |
| 4 | Farm servant | 4 | Silk manufacture |
| 5 | Worsted manufacture | 5 | Worsted manufacture |
| 6 | Silk manufacture | 6 | Flax manufacture |
| 7 | Lace manufacture | 7 | Dressmaker |
| 8 | Wool manufacture | 8 | Laundress |
| 9 | Nurse | 9= | Confectioner |
| 10 | Straw plait manufacture | | Glover |
| | | | Tailor |
| | | | Staymaker |
| | | | Engraver |
| | | | Mantua maker |

Notes:

1) *National – Based on Kirby's *Top twenty jobs for 10-14 year old females in England and Wales (excluding London), 1851*.

2) *Ports – Based on Indenture data.

Sources: Sources: Kirby, *Statistical Sketch*, Table A.1 p. 241.

Indenture data.

How do the key findings contribute to the current literature as outlined in Chapter 1? An overview is helpful before proceeding to more detailed analysis below. My evidence as a whole clearly shows that pauper apprenticeship as a system endured late into the nineteenth century, long after the advent of the New Poor Law, dramatically revising the conventional wisdom. As already noted above, the evidence also refutes those who believe no real employment opportunities existed for children in urban centres. Not only were children placed in the port, but of those who were bound out, many were still within the vicinity of the centre or placed regionally, supporting the premise that 'some towns provided a vibrant enough labour market that parish and charity officials did not need to

place their children far from home'.⁷⁶¹ The findings also reflect the quotation at the head of this chapter, a recent summation by Goose of the current position in the literature. Thus, this thesis supports the research of other scholars who have shown that children's work was common in a wide range of sectors, not just mines and mills.⁷⁶²

The sources show that poor children were apprenticed to an array of older trades, including many traditional forms of manufacture. 'It is easy to lose sight of proto-industrialism after the take-off of mechanization. But of course it continued alongside it'.⁷⁶³ If the whole of the manufacturing were to be combined, i.e. placements to factories added to those children placed in more traditional forms of manufacturing, over half of all the bindings in this sample were to manufacturing of some sort (953 indentures).⁷⁶⁴ Were the factories a natural extension and continuation of manufacturing, or did this new form of production represent a structural break? The important point highlighted by the sources is that pauper apprenticeship underpinned both, providing a bridge between old and new styles of production. Chapter 3 noted how traditional manufacturing did not cease at the dawn of the factory age, but continued to evolve alongside, adopting new methods of production such as the subdivision of labour.⁷⁶⁵

Regarding the conventional view of the dominance of factories in pauper apprenticeships, especially for children placed at distance, even Honeyman's sector-specific study found that 'slightly less than 40 per cent of the 164 parishes included

⁷⁶¹ Levene, 'Pauper Apprenticeship England', p. 550.

⁷⁶² Kirby, *Child Labour* p. 52; Kirby, 'Statistical Sketch' p. 242; Honeyman, *Child Workers*; Humphries, *Childhood*; Humphries, 'Childhood EHR'; Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 915, 937; Emmison, *Eaton Socon* pp. 66-80; Minister, 'Derbyshire', p. 71.

⁷⁶³ H. Cunningham, 'Child Labour's Global Past 1650-2000', in K. Lieten and E. van Nederveen Meerkerk (eds.), *Child Labour's Global Past 1650-2000* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 61-74, at p. 64.

⁷⁶⁴ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 927. Levene's sample found 76% to manufacturing.

⁷⁶⁵ See p. 77.

children bound to textile manufacturers' therefore illustrating that there were plenty of other types of pauper apprenticeship available too.⁷⁶⁶ But equally, as Chapter 5 noted, Goose was right to caution against too abrupt a turn in the tide of opinion in denying the significance of factory apprenticeship.⁷⁶⁷ The evidence shows that it remained an important option for both Poor Law and charity officials, with just over one quarter of children documented still being sent to factories. Crucially, the evidence also shows that the practice of batch apprenticeship to the new industries continued late into the nineteenth century, contradicting the too often repeated declaration that it died out in the 1820s.⁷⁶⁸

Using the same thematic framework employed in the three previous chapters, some of the key issues that have emerged from all three sectors of pauper apprenticeship are compared and discussed in order to form some overall conclusions about the system.

6.1 The apprenticeship process

Pauper apprenticeship is heavily associated with the binding of orphans, yet the previous chapters have shown it was not exclusively so. Orphans, that is those who were specifically recorded as parentless, account for 19 per cent of observations in the sample, and while a prominent group, 324 in total, and virtually all LSV children (accounting for just over half of all LSV indentures), this thesis demonstrates that children who did have parents and families were not treated noticeably differently. Many, while not orphaned, came from lone parent families. Humphries found that to be part-orphaned was common during this period: 28.2 per cent of children lost a mother or father before 14.⁷⁶⁹ Her higher figure for parental loss is based on personal sources, highly likely to record such

⁷⁶⁶ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 12, 57.

⁷⁶⁷ See p. 195.

⁷⁶⁸ See pp. 260-6.

⁷⁶⁹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 63.

tragedies. Sometimes children were an encumbrance that needed to be abandoned; in Liverpool this appears to have been by those en route to a new life in America, such as the tale of Henry Porter from Leeds, as told in Chapter 3.⁷⁷⁰ In total, three boys in the sample were known to be abandoned, figures which compare with Humphries' findings from her autobiographical sources; in her sample, four suffered maternal abandonment.⁷⁷¹ Children could even be the victim of deliberate orphaning. Chapter 3 suggested that in some circumstances parents were deemed unfit, such as the case of John Moragea, recorded as an orphan on his indenture, as his mother was 'disqualified to give such consent being a lunatic'.⁷⁷² Another two children with mothers in the lunatic asylum were categorized in this manner; Martha Peach, indentured to a mill in 1866, and Ellis Jones, to a hairdresser in 1865.⁷⁷³ All three examples are from LSV under the New Poor Law, and such a strategy accords with its principle to separate children from backgrounds of contagion to enable them to break free of the cycle of poverty and learn more industrious habits; an idea rooted in the origins of parish apprenticeship, as Hindle established in his study of the practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁷⁷⁴

What type of placements were these orphans given? Again a popular misconception is that they were all sent to the new industries with no protection or monitoring and no real future. Yet the orphans in the sample were largely split between traditional occupations and the new industries; 176 children were indentured to traditional masters, whereas 137 were sent to the mills. The remaining 11 orphans were sent to sea. Certainly some institutions did favour factory placements, as illustrated most clearly by the

⁷⁷⁰ See p. 118.

⁷⁷¹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 67.

⁷⁷² See p. 118.

⁷⁷³ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/395, 442, 10 Jan. 1865, 19 June 1866.

⁷⁷⁴ Hindle, *On Parish*, p. 196.

RMA. Their policy to send only orphan girls has already been noted above.⁷⁷⁵ The Poor Law correspondence examined in detail in the previous chapter, evidenced that some Bristol children were despatched without even the protection of an indenture; these girls sent to the Worcestershire silk mill give credence to the suggestion that orphans were more vulnerable and exploited.

Humphries noted that whether a child became an orphan before adulthood was ‘crucial to their life chances’.⁷⁷⁶ As will be discussed below, arguably those children sent to the mills were ultimately better off in terms of protection and future prospects, than those placed largely into impoverished trades such as shoemaking and tailoring. The two types of bindings, voluntary and involuntary, have been discussed in both Chapters 1 and 2, and what is striking about the placement of orphans is that with the exception of two boys sent to sea by the Marine Society, the 324 orphan indentures indicate they were all involuntarily bindings. The eight orphan LSV indentures to the sea are especially noticeable; this was an area where boys largely ‘volunteered’ for an apprenticeship, especially from LSV’s industrial school, yet these orphan indentures are involuntary. Compulsion was also operated by Southampton Corporation; William Odell was abandoned by his parents and placed into sea service in 1852.⁷⁷⁷ In total, 11 known orphans were sent to sea; this figure is surprisingly low in light of Chapter 4’s revelation of the authorities’ cavalier despatch of boys on ships bound for foreign shores, but perhaps this is because there was no shortage of boys volunteering to go to sea, as the chapter also recognized.

⁷⁷⁵ See p. 202.

⁷⁷⁶ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 192.

⁷⁷⁷ See p. 165.

Whether an orphan pauper apprentice, or if the parent consented, or indeed if even a free apprentice, an issue of great debate in the literature is the age children began their apprenticeship. Humphries emphasized the important distinction between the age at which children were bound, and the age of starting work. Apprenticeships were not necessarily children's first jobs, particularly for poor children.⁷⁷⁸ For example, in this sample the Marine Society registers sometimes recorded the prior jobs of boys it apprenticed. Previous jobs recorded include butcher, errand boy, shoemaker, painter and milk boy. Age is recorded in 80 per cent of the cases; the most frequently recorded was 14, with an average of 13.3 years.

Table 6.7 Average age at starting apprenticeship

| Sector | Modal age | Mean age |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Traditional occupations | 14 | 13.5 |
| Sea | 14 | 13.7 |
| New industries | 14 | 12.9 |

Source: Indenture data.

Table 6.7 above shows that 14 was the most frequently recorded age for all sectors, but the mean provides a more nuanced picture. Within the factories sector, there was a reasonable difference between the Poor Law LSV apprentices, who were the youngest; their average age was 12.6, compared with charity the RMA girls' 13.9. While these findings broadly support the accepted wisdom that children started factory work at younger ages, the Poor Law distinction is important to note, and further, even age 12 was not considered a very young working age, perfectly acceptable within both the regulations and society in a wider sense. Overall there is no real discernible difference between the mean starting age of charity and Poor Law apprentices, best exemplified by the two averages of the main

⁷⁷⁸ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 234.

institutions in this study, LSV 13.5, compared with RMA's 13.7. Further, there is no evidence that orphans were apprenticed any earlier; of 324 orphans, for whom 260 ages were recorded, the average age of binding was 13.4. Whether there was any distinction between the average ages at indenture for boys compared to girls is examined below in the discussion of gender.

How do these findings contribute to the existing literature? This material contrasts with Levene's finding of an average age of 12 in her study of pauper apprentices in London, and most recently Minister found the same for South Derbyshire.⁷⁷⁹ It is in even starker contrast to a rural study for the early nineteenth century, in which Sharpe found a mean age of 10 for the Devonshire town of Colyton.⁷⁸⁰ The average age of pauper apprentices in Kent was found to be 11.3 years.⁷⁸¹ Levene found that those bound to the factories were younger still, with an average age of 11, while Honeyman's evidence suggested an even younger age at binding; the mean age for many of her factory indentures was 10.⁷⁸² The difference in findings is easily accounted for by the fact the majority of bindings in this study are for the New Poor Law and therefore relate to a later era, whereas the studies cited above are focussed on the Old Poor Law and an earlier time period. This is confirmed if the indenture data is stratified according to New versus Old Poor Law. Both Liverpool and Southampton have a similar average, 13.2 and 13.8 respectively. But the Bristol data, which is almost entirely reliant Old Poor Law sources has a much more even distribution of ages from as young as 7 to 14, giving a much lower average of 11.2 years.

⁷⁷⁹ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 924; Minister, 'Derbyshire', p. 78.

⁷⁸⁰ Sharpe, 'Colyton', p. 256.

⁷⁸¹ T.D. Marshall, 'Apprenticeship in Mid-Eighteenth Century England: How did this Ancient Institution Operate during the Commencement of Industrialisation?', University of Oxford, D.Phil., 2013, p. 95.

⁷⁸² Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 936; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 45-6.

If the mean age of indenture is compared to other studies restricted to apprenticeship under the New Poor Law, it broadly complements earlier findings, with the important caveat that it is not a comparison based on the same type of source material. Whereas Old Poor Law comparisons are based on studies that also used pauper apprenticeship indentures, as noted earlier in Chapters 1 and 2, there are very few studies that have used such sources for the New Poor Law, undoubtedly because of the misconception that pauper apprenticeship died out post-1834. As discussed in previous chapters, Crompton's analysis of Worcestershire pauper apprentices under the New Poor Law, within the context of his wider study of the operation of the local welfare regime provides the only equivalent comparison. He found children's age at indenture varied from 11.8 years to 14.1 years, for the period 1837-71.⁷⁸³ Unfortunately Green's study of London under the New Poor Law does not survey pauper apprentices in any detail.

Other studies do offer some yardsticks, though based on different sources, for example Kirby's evaluation of children's work in the nineteenth century through his studies of census data. Kirby's data covers all types of child workers and is not specific to pauper apprentices, and covers only from 1851 onwards, towards the end of my period of study. He found that children working under the age of 10 was 'never widespread', that the vast majority were between ages 10 to 15.⁷⁸⁴ In my very different evidence just 1 per cent (20 children) were aged 7-9, with none specifically being recorded as orphans which initially appears to support Kirby's assertion. However, it is important to note some specific features of my material as it serves to highlight that very young working was not confined to the eighteenth century. Five children were aged 7 when apprenticed in Bristol

⁷⁸³ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 201.

⁷⁸⁴ Kirby, *Child Labour*, pp. 4, 131.

under the Old Poor Law, but with one being as late as 1810, Mary Green to Daniel Hedges, a whipmaker.⁷⁸⁵ Four children were aged 8 when apprenticed, two of whom were placed in traditional occupations in the nineteenth century, in 1801 and 1813. Eleven children were aged 9, 7 of whom were mid-nineteenth century, from 1821-1833, and all of whom were Liverpool apprentices sent to Greg's Quarry Bank mill. It is also worth noting that 10 per cent (168 children) of the sample were aged 10-12, many of whom were apprenticed as late as the 1860s. In more recent works Kirby appears to have accepted qualification by other scholars of his bold claim, noting that in female-headed households, outdoor relief was often dependent on children working, from as young as 9 or 10; and in his specific study of the coal industry, he found the mean age of starting work to have been 9, with more than three quarters commencing before age 11.⁷⁸⁶

Honeyman also found considerable evidence of younger children working. In her study of factory pauper apprentices, 48 per cent were under 10, a proportion she cautiously described as 'a sizeable minority'.⁷⁸⁷ Humphries firmly believes that child workers under 10 were 'far from rare', a view based on her findings employing a different type of source, household accounts, which revealed non-apprenticed children working under 10 to be common, as well as her work using autobiographies.⁷⁸⁸ Humphries stressed the importance of using sources prior to the census as 'by 1851 the Industrial revolution was already more than seventy years old in Britain and had been subject of imperfect

⁷⁸⁵ BRO, 5918/3, 29 June 1810.

⁷⁸⁶ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 42 citing Horrell, Humphries and Voth, 'Destined for Deprivation', pp. 75-8; Kirby, 'Victorian Social Investigation', p. 146. Note this is age starting work, not apprenticeship, as discussed above, pp. 259-60.

⁷⁸⁷ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 45-6.

⁷⁸⁸ Humphries, 'Childhood EHR', p. 401, 406; Horrell and Humphries, 'Exploitation', pp. 485-516.

regulation for nearly half a century'.⁷⁸⁹ The census, simply because of its timing, cannot address the issue of child labour fully. There is agreement that children aged 10-14 in all forms of work were still working at the end of my time period, 1870, and that children aged 5-9 were largely eradicated from the workplace by 1851.⁷⁹⁰ The period post-1850 has been referred to as the beginning of the 'adulting' of labour force as Cunningham termed it.⁷⁹¹ My research based on hitherto untapped archival evidence supports this general chronology.

The comparison of my findings to those described above suggests that there must have been a gradual increase in the age of starting apprenticeship as the industrial revolution wore on. Old Poor Law apprentices had younger ages, with the age rising as the nineteenth century progressed. Crompton's study suggests this pattern, as he compared his New Poor Law evidence to the period 1796-1800 for the same parishes, which had a lower indenture starting age range of 9.1 to 11.5 years.⁷⁹² However, in this study there is very little difference in the average age of indenture between the Old Poor Law (13.2) and the New Poor Law (13.5).

Much has been written about the age of free apprentices in commencing their trade, with around 14 being the generally accepted starting age; for the period 1700-1860, Snell found an average of 14.3 years for girls and 13.5 for boys.⁷⁹³ More recently, in analysing

⁷⁸⁹ J. Humphries, 'Child Labor: Lessons from the Historical Experience of Today's Industrial Economies', in K. Lieten and E. van Nederveen Meerkerk (eds.), *Child Labour's Global Past 1650-2000* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 35-60, at p. 37.

⁷⁹⁰ Goose, 'Hertfordshire', p. 163, Goose qualified noting the regional dimensions as in his area of survey, Hertfordshire, employment of children aged 5-9 did exist in 1851, and in some areas of the county heavily so.

⁷⁹¹ H. Cunningham, 'The Decline of Child Labour: Labour Markets and Family Economies in Europe and North America since 1830', *Economic History Review*, vol. 53, 3 (2000), pp. 409-28, at p. 410.

⁷⁹² Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 201.

⁷⁹³ Lane, *Apprenticeship*, p. 17; Snell, *Annals*, pp. 236, 323-31.

London private apprentices, Minns and Wallis also found an older starting age, typically three years older than Levene's London pauper apprentices.⁷⁹⁴ For reasons already discussed above (comparing the New Poor Law to an earlier time frame), children in this study were not three years younger than the average age of apprenticeship; they were only marginally younger, although the factory children were just over a year younger.

Another topic of interest which goes hand in hand with age is that of the length of term served. The majority of indentures specifically define the length of term by a number of years, however 120 state terms such as 'Until 21'. It has been possible in most cases to calculate the actual length of term where the age of the child was also specified in the indenture. In total 1,535 indentures yield information, 90 per cent of the sample. The most frequently recorded term was the standard seven years, but the average term was 5.7 years, reflecting the frequency of four year apprenticeships for charity apprentices from the Marine Society and RMA, and as Chapter 5 noted surprisingly, from the LSV to the factories. Term encompasses a broad range, from as little as 3 years, to the shockingly oppressive 17 years required of 7 year old Thomas Cains, when apprenticed to a Bristol mealman in 1766. Although Cains is an extreme example, there are eight children who were indentured for 14 years, and again, all in the traditional occupations sector. While these oppressive terms all related to eighteenth-century indentures, again there are cases from the nineteenth century where a young binding age correlated with prolonged term. Mary Green, for example, aged 7, was indentured for 14 years in 1810. In fact, all terms over 10 years were in the traditional occupations sector, 32 indentures in total. However,

⁷⁹⁴ Wallis, Webb and Minns, 'Leaving Home', p. 398.

there is little difference overall between the sectors in terms of average length of term, as Table 6.8 below demonstrates.

Table 6.8 Average length of term of apprenticeship

| Sector | Modal term | Mean term |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Traditional occupations | 7 | 5.6 |
| Sea | 5 | 5.3 |
| New industries | 7 | 5.6 |

Source: Indenture data.

Similarly, there is little difference between the ports if only Liverpool and Southampton are considered: averages of 5.9 and 5.2 respectively. It is Bristol that again provides some variance, with a much broader spread of terms, and some much longer terms, ranging from 4 to 17 years. The most frequently recorded term for Bristol was 7, but the average term was higher, at 9.1 years. This undoubtedly ties in with the age evidence which was also much more expansive in range, and included some younger ages at binding.

Given that virtually all apprenticeships with premiums in this sample were to traditional trades, there is little purpose in repeating the detailed analysis from Chapter 3.⁷⁹⁵ The evidence suggests that the payment of premiums was already declining under the Old Poor Law, without the need for the New Poor Law to assert a strong stance on this issue. Regrettably this suggestion cannot be tested against Levene's study of London pauper apprentices, as the themes she explored (starting age, type of placement, location) did not include the provision of premiums. However, the finding complements research by Minns and Wallace for free apprenticeships during the eighteenth century, as they found generally more modest premiums than anticipated, with fees below £10 typical in crafts and trades such as clothing, footwear, metals, and no premiums at all for some trades, such

⁷⁹⁵ See pp. 127-30. Of 193 instances of premiums in total, 190 were for traditional occupations.

as smithing.⁷⁹⁶ It is the lesser volume of premiums, coupled with the indication that previously skilled trades could no longer command a fee, that accords with Minns and Wallace's findings.⁷⁹⁷ The idea that premiums did not decline as a result of the New Poor Law also supports the more general argument that there was greater continuity between the Old and New Poor Law.⁷⁹⁸

Location is a theme that can be explored against my evidence. Levene found that although the children in her study of London parishes did not necessarily remain in their home parish, they were generally placed in neighbouring parishes locally. For example, City of London pauper apprentices were sent to Middlesex parishes. Although there were clearly relationships with factories, and children were sent further afield to areas such as Lancashire, the majority of pauper apprentices in her study were bound in London or its vicinity.⁷⁹⁹ Even in her specific study of factory apprentices, Honeyman stressed 'placements within the locality or the region were much more common than previously understood'.⁸⁰⁰ Crompton's New Poor Law Worcestershire children also remained in the vicinity; although 73 per cent of boys were sent out, the average distance was just 9.8 miles; similarly for girls, 76 per cent moved, but only an average distance of 5.2 miles.⁸⁰¹ Table 6.9 below illustrates the destinations of children apprenticed from their home port.

⁷⁹⁶ Minns and Wallis, 'Human Capital', pp. 342-3.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁷⁹⁸ See pp. 323-6.

⁷⁹⁹ Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', pp. 934-37.

⁸⁰⁰ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 58.

⁸⁰¹ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 217.

Table 6.9 Distance sent from home port

| Distance | No. of indentures |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Remaining in port | 396 (26%) |
| Local area | 100 (7%) |
| Regional | 397 (26%) |
| National | 606 (40%) |
| Foreign | 23 (1%) |
| Unknown | 9 (<1%) |
| Total | 1,531 |

Notes:

- 1) This does not include those children shipped into port.
- 2) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

Upon first glance, Table 6.9 largely supports the premise that ports could not sustain employment for their pauper children, with only just over one quarter remaining at home. But closer consideration illustrates that in actual fact one third of children remained in the vicinity of the port (either in the port itself or a maximum of five miles from its centre) if local placements are also taken into account. Coupled with another 26 per cent being placed regionally, arguably 59 per cent of children were near to home, shattering the perception that children in urban centres were farmed out at great distances to the new industries. These findings clearly support the work of the other historians cited above. Of course, regional is a wide category (covering 6-40 miles or sent within the same geographic county); mindful of the time and ability to complete such journeys during this period, taking 20 miles or less as a reasonable figure to regard as still being in proximity of the port, this criterion means that only 95 children remained local, therefore arguably only 39 per cent of port children were kept close to home. Regardless, this still illustrates the point Honeyman made that placements closer to home were more common than has

traditionally been perceived; as Minister put it, children were still near enough to ‘be in familiar surroundings and to hear familiar dialects’.⁸⁰²

It is also useful to summarize the three sectors in terms of associated locations, as they vary quite considerably. Table 6.10 below shows that children placed into traditional occupations could be located anywhere, whereas if apprenticed to the new industries, they would almost certainly be sent away, although sometimes relatively short distances such as the regional placements from Liverpool into Lancashire, 15 miles to the coalfields of Ashton in Makerfield, or in the case of factories, 23 miles to a cotton mill in Lostock. A significant proportion of boys sent to sea were based out of their home port, although of course they did not remain there all the time: Chapter 4 debated in detail whether these boys remained part of port life.

Table 6.10 Distance sent from home port, by sector

| Distance | Sea (%) | Traditional Occupations (%) | New Industries (%) |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Remaining in port | 60% | 36% | - |
| Local area | - | 11% | - |
| Regional | - | 15% | 53% |
| National | 17% | 38% | 47% |
| Foreign | 23% | <1% | - |
| Unknown | - | <1% | - |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

⁸⁰² Minister, ‘Derbyshire’, p. 81.

6.2 *Application of regulations and batch apprenticeship*

Each chapter has examined the one regulation that was universal to all pauper apprentices whatever the placement; the 1816 ‘Act for the better regulating the binding out of parish apprentices’ specified that children should be placed within 40 miles of their parish. Distances over 40 miles required the consent of a magistrate, and as reviewed, the Act also required a magistrate’s certificate testifying to the master’s suitability. Chapter 3 outlined regulations pertinent to apprentices under the New Poor Law, the 1845 General Orders Relating to the Apprenticeship of Poor Children. This consolidated existing rules, including ensuring no pauper child under nine could be apprenticed, and the distance regulation was lowered to 30 miles from the parish, although this expressly excluded sea apprentices.⁸⁰³

Analysis of whether the distance regulations were observed has proved revealing. As Chapter 2 noted, the regulation had virtually no impact on sea apprenticeship both because of the voluntary nature of the vast majority of sea indentures, and also because the 1845 General Order issued regarding pauper apprenticeship specifically excluded sea service indentures.⁸⁰⁴ In traditional occupations, the regulations were breached in only 3 per cent of bindings, compared to 48 per cent of factory indentures. These figures do not take into account voluntary bindings; if included, 34 per cent of traditional occupational bindings were over the limit, compared to 76 per cent of factory bindings. The sample as a whole (as the distance regulations applied to all children, and any assessment of its effectiveness must also observe that the regulation was not breached for any of the 179 children sent into port) shows that the regulation was only breached in 276 (16 per cent) of

⁸⁰³ Crompton, *Workhouse*, pp. 203-4; Chance, *Poor Law*, p. 9.

⁸⁰⁴ Art. 74. Consolidated General Order, 1847.

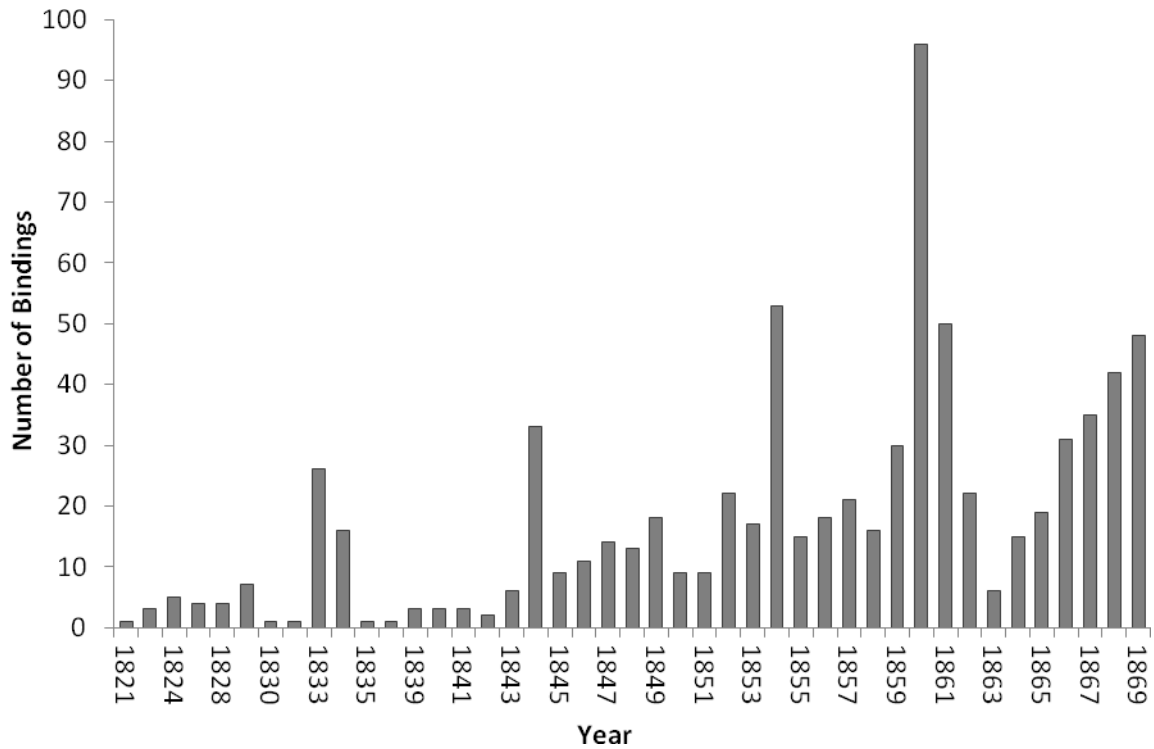
the bindings. Again if the voluntary nature of some of the indentures was set aside, this figure would rise to nearly half, 49 per cent. As has already been discussed in Chapter 3, the RMA sent virtually all of its girls beyond the distance, even abroad to China! Similarly, in some cases, sea apprentices were sent vast distances. In conclusion, nearly half the children were sent over the recommended distance, even if not in direct contravention of the regulation.

One of the most vital contributions to the existing literature made by this thesis is the confirmation that the system of pauper apprenticeship survived the attack of the New Poor Law. Bindings remain in evidence for all three sectors through the end of the eighteenth century and on well into the nineteenth century. The continued dominance of pauper apprenticeship as a mechanism to relieve the children of the poor post-1834 has been seriously underestimated. As discussed below, Kirby is a proponent of the view that the system crumbled prior to the introduction of the New Poor Law, and post-1834 Green argued that public opinion turned away from apprenticeship towards education.⁸⁰⁵ Liverpool provides an excellent case study to counteract these claims. To illustrate, Fig. 6.1 below shows the frequency of LSV's bindings between 1820 and 1870.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰⁵ Green, *Pauper Capital*, p. 139.

⁸⁰⁶ Using all sources of LSV bindings in the Indenture data.

Figure 6.1 Frequency of LSV Bindings 1821-1870



Source: Indenture data.

The first point to note is the large spike in 1833/4, probably because of the impending Poor Law Amendment Act, as officials rushed to bind children before any changes were made to the system, as the Royal Commission had suggested new regulations were to be devised. The rate then dropped, initially suggesting the New Poor Law anti-apprenticeship stance was effective, but the graph shows apprenticeship did not cease entirely; although there were lower numbers post-1834, it nevertheless continued. In total LSV bound 30 children between 1834 and 1844. For example, the supply to Quarry Bank mill in Cheshire continued until 1839, and between 1840 and 1844 children were still bound to traditional occupations and the sea. Crompton also found that Worcestershire, Bromsgrove and Kidderminster unions still engaged in the practice; 70 children were bound out between

1838 and 1840.⁸⁰⁷ 1844 witnessed another surge, suddenly 35 in a single year, coinciding with the 1844 Parish Apprentices Act. This allowed for the resumption of premiums and apprenticeships following a moratorium in 1842 until policy was clarified; yet even between 1842-3 LSV still apprenticed 8 children to traditional occupations. The frequency then dropped once more the following year, 1845, as LSV opened their industrial school. But over the next few years there was a gradual increase again, as the compromise on premiums took effect and perhaps also reflecting that children had been trained up at the industrial school, countering Green's argument that the system moved towards general education away from apprenticeship. There was then a steady stream until the next surge, in 1854.

The port provides an excellent example of how, faced with unique local pressures, it was inevitable that local authorities were going to pursue options deemed desirable on the ground rather than follow national guidelines. Liverpool had one of the largest and fastest growing populations during this period, and was particularly affected by a bad winter during 1854-5, also the time of a cholera epidemic.⁸⁰⁸ It is perhaps no coincidence that 1854 witnessed one of the largest numbers of children apprenticed by LSV in a single year, 53, which included 23 girls sent in a single batch to a silk mill in Prestbury. From 1860 onwards there was a gradual consistent increase, pointing towards an active policy decision to pursue apprenticeships vigorously. But the trend illustrates another exogenous factor, for clearly the Lancashire cotton famine of 1862 affected bindings. The decline thereafter was probably because of the pressures mill owners were facing; they did not require additional workforce at this time. The steady increase in bindings from 1864

⁸⁰⁷ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 199.

⁸⁰⁸ Poor Law Board, *Eighth Report*, p. 47.

parallels the recovery from depression, and by the end of this period of study, bindings were continuing to rise, suggesting that it would be fruitful to continue this research post-1870 to pinpoint when the system really fell into disuse.

An indication this pattern was not unique to LSV can be found in Crompton's research, as he also discovered a steady increase post-1844; 11 out of 13 Worcestershire unions apprenticed between 1837 and 1871, 344 boys and 93 girls, (437 total) into traditional occupations and domestic service.⁸⁰⁹ Another point to note arising from the Liverpool evidence was the high number of orphans bound between 1852 and 1870, 321 orphans, so a very high proportion, supporting Crompton's suggestion that the Poor Law Board were more likely to sanction apprenticeships for orphans, as a compromise, or simply because there was nobody to uphold the child's rights.⁸¹⁰ This idea is further supported by the Bristol Poor Law correspondence in the 1860s, as it was orphan girls that were sent *en masse* to a silk mill.

Another important feature of the apprenticeship system is that not only did it survive, but within it, the practice of batch apprenticeship endured and thrived. Chapter 5 examined in detail the practice of batch apprenticeship, the evidence providing major revision of the current literature, confirming and extending Honeyman's contention that the Poor Law continued to use batch apprenticeship 'well into the second half of the nineteenth century'.⁸¹¹ One reason this is key is that it pertains to the wider argument in industrial revolution studies as to whether children sent to factories played a pivotal role in the success of the newly mechanized textile industry. Humphries agrees with Honeyman

⁸⁰⁹ Crompton, *Workhouse*, pp. 199, 215.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁸¹¹ See p. 211.

that ‘without the early and important contribution made by child labour, it is difficult to see how the factory sector could have expanded at the pace and in the way that it did’.⁸¹² The batch evidence from my sample extends this argument to suggest that children also sustained the industry past the peak of industrialization. Yet as already discussed in Chapter 1, both Rose and Kirby argued this type of mass supply had declined by 1820.⁸¹³ As indicated above, Green also argued the system declined under the New Poor Law. Despite Honeyman indicating further consideration and research was required, in his more recent work Kirby chose to reiterate that by the 1820s pauper apprentices were just a small proportion of the workforce and that the system was short lived.⁸¹⁴ Both issues are clearly addressed by this research, which agrees with Honeyman regarding both the longevity of pauper apprenticeship, and the persistence of batch consignments.

The distinction to be made between these differing schools of thought is based upon the source material used. Rose’s work relies on the records of just one mill, Quarry Bank; even then, its employment ledgers evidence children were continuing to be supplied in batches till 1840, at least 20 years after Rose contends the practice dwindled. Chapman also used business records from Midlands textile mills and pronounced that ‘the apprenticeship system hardly lasted a generation in most places’.⁸¹⁵ Kirby and Green principally relied on the various Parliamentary reports on children’s work. On the other hand, Honeyman’s assertions were based on analysis of literally thousands of

⁸¹² Humphries, ‘Childhood HER’, p. 404; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, pp. 91-111; see also C. Tuttle, ‘Why do Countries use Children to Industrialize?’, in K. Lieten and E. van Nederveen Meerkerk (eds.) *Child Labour’s Global Past 1650-2000* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 75-96, at p. 75: ‘most countries have industrialized on the backs of children’. Heywood concurred ‘the safest conclusion must be that child labour in the manufacturing sector was particularly important for the early starters of the path to industrialization’ Heywood, *Childhood*, p. 133.

⁸¹³ See pp. 23-5.

⁸¹⁴ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, pp. 26-7.

⁸¹⁵ Chapman, *Factory Masters*, p. 173.

apprenticeship indentures, although as the focus of her monograph was the Old Poor Law, the persistence of parish apprenticeship was not something she pursued in detail in her pioneering monograph. This thesis aims to bridge this gap, sourcing both indenture evidence as Honeyman did, but also extending it by drawing on vital Poor Law correspondence from the New Poor Law period. As stated before, this is new and unexploited evidence. Although Crompton's work did not uncover any batch apprenticeships, it also used this type of source material, and his work certainly supports the hypothesis that pauper apprenticeship endured as a means to relieve the poor at least until 1870.⁸¹⁶

The LSV records illustrate the longevity of the practice right up to 1870; for example, in 1860 alone, 95 children were bound to mills, of which there were 7 batches, ranging from 6-18 children; and the Bristol Poor Law correspondence refers to batches of children sent during the 1860s albeit under hiring contracts rather than indentures. In addition, the Bristol correspondence contains passing reference to Bath Union sending children in a similar manner. It is also important to note that LSV records have only been examined for the purposes of this study up to 1870; but an overview indicates that the practice even continued post-1870. Although on a much smaller scale, Chapter 2 gave examples of mini batches of boys placed at sea by both by LSV and the Marine Society. There are also two examples of small batches to the mines, 5 in 1845, and 9 in 1854, again from LSV. In conclusion, there is enough material to suggest that far from dying out, batch apprenticeship remained an integral part of the management of pauper children under the New Poor Law. My evidence supports Honeyman's lone voice in demanding a

⁸¹⁶ Crompton, *Workhouse*, ch. 7.

dramatic revision of the standard chronology. The promise of further investigation of other unions, potentially even post-1870 is an exciting prospect.

The correspondence between the port officials and the Poor Law Board in Chapter 5 gave real insight into the everyday workings of the New Poor Law, and raised a question mark over the ultimate authority of the Poor Law Board. The aim of the New Poor Law had been to standardize practises, but as Snell succinctly summarized ‘successive administrators had failed through central control, legislative interpretation, instruction and General Orders to bring about a system of regulated and standardized relief across the localities of England and Wales’.⁸¹⁷ In terms of its stance towards pauper apprenticeship, the Poor Law Commission initially resisted, but after it was succeeded by the Poor Law Board, in the face of persistent opposition a more practical approach ensued, and it acquiesced in the re-emergence of apprenticeship; however, by the end of 1860s it reverted toward a more hard line stance. The tone of the correspondence of the 1860s for these ports shows that the Poor Law Board was trying to enforce the regulations, but to no avail. It seems that local unions retained a large amount of independence in their decision making. Snell underlined the continued dominance of local autonomy under the New Poor Law, what he refers to as ‘parochial localism’.⁸¹⁸ Green also believed that the New Poor Law was implemented with different levels of intensity, and that local politics played a key role: ‘Despite the creation of a centralised authority, considerable local variations existed in the way that the new system was implemented’.⁸¹⁹ The New Poor Law was much more about negotiation than its reputation belies, hence the various Orders issued in response to the constant manipulation of the Act by the local administrators.

⁸¹⁷ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, p. 233.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁸¹⁹ Green, *Pauper Capital*, pp, 2, 15.

Chapter 5 outlined why batch apprenticeship was abhorred, and described in great detail officials' manipulation of the Poor Law Board in order to retain it as an easy way of disposing of youthful dependants. There are numerous placements subject to correspondence and reports, both for Bristol and Liverpool. LSV repeatedly made requests for batch apprenticeship to be sanctioned a total of 13 times in the 1860s. The same procedure was followed each time, more details were requested, inspection reports were commissioned, and ultimately sanction was given. As detailed above, one particular case demonstrated the flagrant disregard for authority; even when sanction was granted, LSV went on to apprentice more children than had been approved and at younger ages. Bristol's correspondence illustrates their devious use of hiring contracts to get round any opposition based on settlement concerns, resulting in children having very little protection. As Humphries neatly summarized: 'In practice, the Guardians often regressed to older tactics, only without the safeguards that indentures, even pauper indentures, had provided'.⁸²⁰

The autonomy of local Poor Law officials is also illustrated by the pockets of outdoor relief granted. Although in theory the New Poor Law prohibited outdoor relief, correspondence between the unions and the Poor Law Board show that on some occasions it was still administered. A contemporary report noted that out of 351 unions 'in but 64 was outdoor relief prohibited at all'.⁸²¹ Snell estimated that in 1851, children under 16 comprised 38 per cent of all outdoor paupers and 41% of workhouse paupers.⁸²² He argued that outdoor relief persisted on a much wider scale than the draconian nature of the

⁸²⁰ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 326.

⁸²¹ Anonymous, *A Voice from the North of England on the New Poor Laws: Ought we to have them, or Ought we not?* (London: C.Knight, 1837), p. 29.

⁸²² Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, p. 309.

regime suggested claiming ‘well over 80 per cent of poor relief under the system was outdoor relief’.⁸²³ However, the full extent of this is yet to be discovered, and is a subject ripe for research in itself. Guardians found granting temporary relief cheaper than maintaining people in the workhouse. Analogous to granting poor relief temporarily, the Poor Law Board did have discretion to approve financial assistance for apprenticeships, usually in the form of clothing, a strategy observed in use in Chapter 4, with boys being fitted out with a full kit for sea service, but no other premium being paid.

In many ways, assessing the effectiveness of the Poor Law Board has a parallel with the debate about the causes of the decline of child labour, and particularly about the role of regulation in its demise.⁸²⁴ Here the question is whether legislation (the 1834 Act and also subsequent General Orders) had an impact on pauper apprenticeship. The Poor Law correspondence passing between the ports and the Poor Law Board suggests its role was minimal; for example, in the context of factory placements, time after time the Poor Law Board’s authority was demonstrated as hollow. The fact that this occurred with two different unions, during the same time period, does not suggest it was a coincidence; and in neither port was it merely a one-off example of local disobedience to the central authorities and statute. Furthermore, Crompton’s New Poor Law study of Worcestershire illustrates that other unions were ignoring regulations too. He cites several examples, such as one from Worcester Union in 1839; they sent six boys to weavers in Bridgnorth, Shropshire, without requesting prior approval. When the Poor Law Commission became aware of this breach, the Assistant Commissioner was sent to investigate and although he objected on

⁸²³ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, p. 17, although this is later qualified - Snell found more of this pragmatism in rural areas, for example, in Lincolnshire over 80% outdoor relief, but much lower for Liverpool 33%, Bristol 56%, pp. 231-2.

⁸²⁴ See pp. 11-13.

the grounds of unsuitability, ultimately there was no sanction, and the boys were not returned.⁸²⁵

Alternatively, rather than viewing the Poor Law Commission/Poor Law Board as an abject failure in the fight against the perceived active collusion between factory masters and Poor Law Guardians, a less negative, pragmatic view is that local unions were simply responding to the needs on the ground, particularly in times of acute economic distress; perhaps there was actually a deliberate policy of ‘light touch’ regulation on the part of the Poor Law Board? However, the tone of their correspondence belies this interpretation. The reality is likely that the Poor Law Board did the best it could in very difficult circumstances; officials were simply too overstretched and had no sanctions available to secure compliance. It did as much as it could, robustly trying to guide the unions. The length of the correspondence for each breach runs over several months, with the Poor Law Board’s repeated questioning and resistance to local policies demonstrating its tenacity, particularly in light of the strong, well-organized unions with which it was dealing. All three of these ports had led the way in Poor Law reform. Southampton and Bristol had incorporated their parishes as one unit decades before the New Poor Law (Bristol 1696, Southampton 1773), and LSV was established from the old parish committee in 1820 following the Sturges Bourne Acts of 1818/9, which reformed and streamlined its operation. These were forward-thinking, progressive unions, hence they enjoyed the autonomy of retaining their titles rather than being rebranded as unions. It is not surprising that they continued to administer relief as they saw fit. Just as this research has established the existence of children’s work in ports, illustrating the importance of regional context

⁸²⁵ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 203.

and research, the same holds for the operation of the Poor Law; it proved very different in different areas, and therefore it is difficult to merge local behaviour into a national picture. Certainly for the ports, there was a great deal of autonomy and digression from the letter of the law. Mokyr labelled this compromise between central and local a ‘very British system of constrained local autonomy’.⁸²⁶

6.3 *Life as an apprentice*

Whether placed locally or further afield, and whatever the occupation, as a group, pauper apprentices were vulnerable; unlike free apprentices, pauper children did not have parents to watch over their progress or make frequent inquiries as to their health or circumstances. And even if officials did engage in some ongoing monitoring, ‘they cannot devote that sedulous attention to the care of each apprentice which a parent brings to the interests of his child’.⁸²⁷ As indicated in previous chapters, Honeyman recast the traditional view of heartless officials offloading children without trace.⁸²⁸ My research qualifies this claim; while the extensive reports contained in the Poor Law Correspondence certainly verify this in relation to factory placements, there is not a shred of evidence such practices were extended to the pauper and charity children placed in the other two sectors. Undoubtedly children sent to the factories enjoyed a greater level of protection.⁸²⁹

From a purely practical perspective it would have been very difficult for officials to monitor placements at sea, but that does not explain the lack of continued care for children placed into traditional occupations, especially locally. Surely making visits in those circumstances was considerably easier than travelling to a factory. It seems the only

⁸²⁶ Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*, p. 443.

⁸²⁷ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, p. 93.

⁸²⁸ See p. 226.

⁸²⁹ A conclusion shared by Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 263, Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p.161.

‘monitoring’ that took place post-placement for traditional occupations, was when circumstances were so bad that court proceedings were initiated. Such cases were rare. Factories were only monitored because of the regulations; but as Chapter 5 also mooted, the ulterior motive was to be able to continue batch apprenticeship; reports were compiled to check the welfare of children currently apprenticed simply to gain sanction to send further children.

Humphries concluded that Poor Law children, particularly orphans, were vulnerable to violence.⁸³⁰ Certainly examples of harsh discipline and cruelty are evident in all three sectors, and not exclusively against Poor Law apprentices. Who can forget Jane Ludden, the RMA servant apprentice whipped by her master, with the charity loathe to come to her aid. Both Kirby and Rodger rightly pointed out that everyday violence and aggression was pervasive in this period; corporal punishment was a standard way to control children, an accepted cultural norm.⁸³¹ Humphries also noted its prevalence, showing that schools were run by physical force.⁸³² However, violence in the factories was well documented and in the public spotlight; again it was in the other sectors that brutalities went largely ignored and unpunished. With large numbers of children to manage, and without the incentive of payment, it is not surprising that factories were hotbeds of harsh discipline; remember Nardinelli even argued that corporal punishment was a necessity to ensure an effective production process.⁸³³ Inquiries such as the Sadler reports exposed factories, linking violence with mechanized production, but it was not

⁸³⁰ J. Humphries, ‘Childhood and Violence in Working-Class England, 1800-70’, in L. Brockliss and H. Montgomery (eds.), *Childhood and Violence in the Western Tradition* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010), pp. 135-40, at p. 138.

⁸³¹ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 125; Rodger, *Wooden World*, p. 212.

⁸³² Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 247-8.

⁸³³ See pp. 140, 187, 225.

necessarily more common, just more visible.⁸³⁴ Control on-board ship was equally paramount, and ensured by brutal command as showed in Chapter 4; and Chapter 3 began with Honeyman's assessment of the woeful situation of apprentices to hand trades, who were, in her view, considerably worse off than those in the factories. For example, apprentices in small workshops or working for relatives found a further blurring of the lines between industrial and domestic violence.⁸³⁵ Yet despite this, historians seem in agreement that although dreadful incidences did occur, violence was not as widespread as the grim examples portrayed. Humphries concluded that the experience of Poor Law apprentices was probably 'less terrifying than the streets'.⁸³⁶

As when investigating traditional occupations, indentures did not always breakdown due to ill treatment or bad behaviour on the part of the apprentice. An issue facing all pauper apprentices was their health and the risk of accidents, most acutely felt by the boys sent to sea. Although there are no direct examples, Chapter 4 demonstrated the risks posed: disease, hazards of war, and serious accidents. Life in the factories was less dramatic, although insults to health and dangers in the workplace were still a concern. For example, the Quarry Bank records of LSV apprentices detail how ten year old Elizabeth Grimes died in 1836 of a lung disease just two years into her apprenticeship; and the RMA letter book notes that again just two years into an apprenticeship, Eleanor Dean died as a result of an accident in 1828 at Cressbrook mill.⁸³⁷ In total there were 12 examples of non-completion of indentures. Of these 12 children, 5 were in the factories, and relate to two deaths, a pregnancy, absconding and bad behaviour. The rest were bindings to traditional

⁸³⁴ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 197.

⁸³⁵ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, p. 130.

⁸³⁶ Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty', p. 121.

⁸³⁷ MA, GB 127 C5/8/27, undated; TNA, WO143/61, 26 Feb. 1828, p. 174.

occupations, prematurely ended as a result of transfer to another master (3), masters' dissatisfaction (3) and assault by a master (1). Minns and Wallis researched completion rates for free apprentices in Bristol and London during the seventeenth century and found that there was divergence between the 'rules and reality of apprenticeship' as terms were often not strictly adhered to, and non-completion was common.⁸³⁸

The status and prospects of children placed into different sectors has been considered in each chapter. Although pauper apprenticeship in many ways gave poor children a lifeline, there has been much debate about the nature of the life chances on offer. Here the differences between charitable and Poor Law apprentices are most marked. Charities are associated with the 'rescue' and reform of children, whereas the Poor Law is depicted as simply trying to farm children out to reduce burdens on the rates. Levene suggested that charity apprenticeships were more concerned with investment in human capital, leading to possible improvement of social status, or to assist those who had fallen on hard times in order to preserve family status.⁸³⁹ At its best, it was about making social connections for the child, aiding not containing social mobility, in complete contrast with the New Poor Law ethic.⁸⁴⁰ In her study of the Foundling Hospital in London, she found that most children were apprenticed in a manner that enforced their status; craft apprenticeships were thought to be the preserve of children from wealthier families; poor children were apprenticed only into agriculture, labour, service or the sea.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁸ C. Minns, and P. Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England', *Economic History Review*, vol. 65, 2 (2012), pp. 556-79, at pp. 558, 574-5.

⁸³⁹ Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship', p. 67.

⁸⁴⁰ Goose and Honeyman, *Diversity and Agency*, p. 11.

⁸⁴¹ A. Levene, *Childcare, Health and Mortality in the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-1800: 'Left to the Mercy of the World'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 204.

Levene also suggested that charity officials had access to better connected individuals and a wider choice of respectable masters and genuine apprenticeships.⁸⁴² Yet in this study, although a number of girls were placed with titled masters such as Sir or Reverend, the RMA seemed more interested in shedding the girls from its books rather than in considering their future career paths. The RMA's actions show that it had no intention of assisting or rescuing girls once they had been placed; if their apprenticeship failed they were at the mercy of the Poor Law. Furthermore, the behaviour of their 'respectable' masters towards their apprentice was not always commendable.

It has been argued that Poor Law apprenticeships could be aspirational too, and that there were genuine attempts to offer lifelines to children and chances to improve their lot. Those trained in the newer industries, such as cotton spinning, acquired novel and perhaps valuable skills.⁸⁴³ Furthermore, the apprenticeship system helped to produce 'human capital formation in poor households', imparting skills to escape the cycle of poverty.⁸⁴⁴ The evidence from the ports suggests that was perhaps true for those boys who survived sea apprenticeship and went on to command high wages as seamen; and to a certain extent, also those sent to the factories. For example, Honeyman found some RMA girls were retained at Mellor mill.⁸⁴⁵ Robinson researched those placed by LSV at Quarry Bank mill, finding several examples of children who progressed through the factory hierarchy.⁸⁴⁶ Yet as already pointed out, it is only retrospectively that the kind of training afforded by factory work has been appreciated. At the time, a great stigma was attached to this type of work. Certain traditional occupations too were not attractive to many artisan parents who

⁸⁴² Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship', p. 46.

⁸⁴³ Horrell, Humphries and Voth, 'Destined for Deprivation', pp. 358-9; Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 262.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁸⁴⁵ See p. 231.

⁸⁴⁶ See pp. 230-1.

saw the erosion of skill and decline in pay. Consequently, apprenticeship in this sector became about the transfer of children into low-skilled trades rather than investment and training for the future.⁸⁴⁷

Economically pauper apprenticeship was simply filling the labour gaps and providing workers to the lower skilled, depressed traditional trades, such as shoemaking, and to the new industries located outside of populated areas. There is no evidence of progression for any of the traditional occupations apprentices, save for two kept on by the RMA to work in the institution as a cook and a nurse. Under the New Poor Law, the ‘less eligibility’ principle was firmly applied in this sector; for example, evidence from LSV indentures suggests that concerted efforts were made to ensure that pauper apprenticeships were less attractive than paid employment, the majority being placed in lower-skilled trades for little or no premium.

6.4 Gender issues

Heywood lamented that the gender aspects of children’s work were neglected.⁸⁴⁸ Berg did much to highlight the importance of women and children in industrial revolution, concluding ‘the skill content and the training component of many of the trades to which women were apprenticed were modest, and, for girls in particular, a training in value and behaviour was as much a part of the purpose of apprenticeship as any industrial training’. Berg concluded that apprenticeship for females was viewed as simply a means of maintenance before marriage.⁸⁴⁹ But Honeyman’s more recent research argued that pauper apprenticeship was a route to independence for some girls; being sent to a factory allowed

⁸⁴⁷ Poor Law Commission, *Training of Pauper Children*, pp. 95-7.

⁸⁴⁸ Heywood, ‘Gender’, p. 48.

⁸⁴⁹ Berg, *Manufactures*, p. 162.

them a chance to learn a new type of skill that could command wages, giving them greater equality with boys. She even argued that because of this, pauper girls had more opportunity than their private counterparts.⁸⁵⁰

Previous chapters have explored whether any gender biases can be detected in the port evidence, relating to age of binding, term, type of placement and distance sent. Gender also raises other issues, such as whether male and female siblings were kept together and treated equally, and whether there were any female masters. Levene's work on both Foundling Hospital apprentices and London parishes under the Old Poor Law demonstrated the importance of analysing any sample by gender. For the Foundling sample, over half were girls, and in her London OPL study just over 42 per cent, and the frequency with which these girls were apprenticed enabled her to challenge Snell's argument that girls were squeezed out of the labour market.⁸⁵¹ This study supports her contention on the basis of a significant amount of female evidence (46 per cent of total indentures) and sheds light on gendered practices.⁸⁵²

The average age of starting apprenticeship for girls was 13.3; surprisingly it is boys who had a lower average, 12.8. Of the two sectors that can be compared, boys were a slightly lower starting age for traditional occupations (13.4 compared to 13.6) but higher for the factories (13.1 compared to 12.9). As well as girls being slightly younger when sent to the factories, of the 20 children under 10 apprenticed, three quarters were girls. Correlating with the average age, it was also boys who served longer terms, the most frequently recorded being seven years, with an average of 6.1 years. For girls, the most

⁸⁵⁰ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, ch. 8 and p. 152.

⁸⁵¹ Levene, 'Honesty', p. 189; Levene, 'Parish Apprenticeship', p. 921-2 citing Snell, *Annals*, pp. 270, 272.

⁸⁵² See p. 59.

frequently recorded term was four years, with an average of 5.0; although it should be noted that the average term is heavily skewed by the RMA girls who were apprenticed to domestic service, generally for four years, thus lowering the average. So far there is little to choose between girls and boys. Was there then a bias with respect to their occupational destinations? Earlier in this chapter the binding of siblings was considered, but were boys given preferential treatment? There is nothing to suggest that sisters were treated differently to their brothers; in fact, most appear to have been actively kept together in batch bindings to factories.

Honeyman found that although 55 per cent of those in factories she investigated were girls, overall there was no marked preference.⁸⁵³ But this is not supported by the evidence of those sent from the ports. As already noted, no girls were sent to sea; 42 per cent of the total female bindings were to the factories, 58 per cent to traditional occupations. By comparison, 17 per cent of boys were bound to factories, 67 per cent to traditional occupations, thus indicating a clear bias towards factory work for girls. Chapter 5 demonstrated that the RMA actively engaged in batch apprenticing for its girls. From a set of 620 LSV indentures 1840-70, 87 boys and 81 girls were sent to factories, initially supporting Honeyman's findings; however, there were only 90 female apprentices in total, so the percentage of girls sent to the factories was very high, at 90 per cent, compared to just 16 per cent of boys. Therefore my evidence indicates that factory apprenticeship was particularly favoured for girls, agreeing with both Honeyman who stated 'workers were gendered within new organization forms' and Heywood who found that gender divisions

⁸⁵³ See p. 232.

were ‘maximised in large scale enterprises’.⁸⁵⁴ While it is crucial to remember that this type of placement was not considered advantageous at the time, as Honeyman has suggested, ultimately it may have been beneficial for the girls, elevating them to the status of independent workers. In terms of traditional occupations, there was a clear bias towards domestic service; as indicated before, the evidence accords with other historians such as Kirby and Levene who have found domestic service accounted for most female bindings, but with the important qualification that in this instance it was for charity apprentices.⁸⁵⁵ Overall, Honeyman rightly concluded that pauper boys had a wider choice of apprenticeships, being more likely to be bound to skilled trades, whereas girls were confined to domestic ones, as well as the factories.⁸⁵⁶ Heywood also concluded that girls had fewer options from his study of European and North American apprentices.⁸⁵⁷ This was certainly the case for the port pauper apprentices, both Poor Law and charity.

Were girls likely to be sent greater distances? Of the 1,531 children from the port, excluding foreign placements, Table 6.11 below indicates a clear disparity, which follows from the trends outlined above:

Table 6.11 Distance sent from home port, by gender

| Distance | Male (%) | Female (%) |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Remaining in port | 45% | 6% |
| Local area | 12% | 1% |
| Regional | 30% | 22% |
| National | 11% | 69% |

Notes:

1) Percentages subject to rounding.

Source: Indenture data.

⁸⁵⁴ Heywood, ‘Gender’, p. 60.

⁸⁵⁵ See pp. 96-7.

⁸⁵⁶ See p. 233.

⁸⁵⁷ Heywood, ‘Gender’, p. 60.

First, there was a greater likelihood of girls being sent to the factories. Of 493 children in total sent to the factories, there is little gender bias at regional level, 110 boys and 149 girls were sent to factories within their region. But of the total number sent longer distances nationally, only 51 were boys, compared with 183 girls. Second, for the traditional occupations sector, just 34 boys were sent beyond their region, compared with 338 girls, reflecting the large number of RMA girls who were sent far and wide as domestic servants. However, despite girls being sent further distances than boys, this does not equate to any gender bias in the violation of distance regulations. Surprisingly, 21 per cent of boys from the port were sent over the distance limit, compared to 16 per cent of girls. The picture would be different if those sent long distances were not voluntary bindings. Then it would be that 80 per cent of girls were sent beyond the prescribed limits, as opposed to just 25 per cent of boys. Again, this is because of the RMA apprenticeships, the majority of which would have breached the regulations if not for their voluntary nature.

One final gender issue concerns the presence of female masters. Just over 10 per cent of bindings were to female masters (183), the vast majority in the RMA registers where 28 per cent (155) of girls were bound to females, including 62 to their own mothers or another female relative, as noted in Chapter 3. Elsewhere 28 children were apprenticed to females, 7 of whom were boys. For example, the LSV apprenticed two boys to pawnbroker Alice Markland in 1857. Sometimes female masters were single women carrying out a trade; Markland was most likely in that category. But female masters could also be widows carrying on their husbands' businesses, such as shipbuilder's widow Rosanna Tucker. William Robertson was apprenticed to her in 1855 by Bristol's Grateful Society, presumably to carry on the business. Perhaps he had already been working for her

husband prior to his death and the Society stepped in to offer assistance.⁸⁵⁸ Herndon and Murray have emphasized that women were involved in indentures on a much wider scale than acknowledged; even though they were often not listed as the legal master, they were essential to the operation of the apprenticeship, often fulfilling all the contractual care requirements such as the provision of food and lodging. In addition, if a girl was sent as a housewife or servant to a master, his wife was likely to be the real instructor. For example, witness the Sarah Thomas cruelty case in Bristol cited in Chapter 3, which apportioned equal blame to the husband and wife.⁸⁵⁹

6.5 Settlement concerns

Earlier in this chapter, it was noted that 40 per cent of port children were apprenticed nationally, with a further 26 per cent located in the region.⁸⁶⁰ One effect of this was to alter the child's parish of settlement: All three chapters have demonstrated how integral pauper apprenticeship and settlement issues were. It is important to note that this is not an issue that only pertains to Poor Law apprentices; in fact, it is an issue that very much illuminates tensions between Poor Law and charity officials. The detailed examples in Chapter 3 of the RMA's attitude towards the girls it bound out give real insight. When indentures broke down, they did everything they could to avoid ultimate responsibility for the girls, relying on the Poor Law to pick up the pieces, and so triggering settlement disputes. Thus poor Mary Nurse was passed from pillar to post as the RMA desperately

⁸⁵⁸ BRO, 39449/1, 10 February 1855.

⁸⁵⁹ R. Herndon and J. Murray, *Children Bound to Labor: The Pauper Apprentice System in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 12.

⁸⁶⁰ Even the 7% of children sent locally could in some instances alter settlement, as local area is defined as five miles or less, but boundary changes could be within this. For example, LSV apprentices were sent to Everton, just two miles out of the centre, but it was part of West Derby Union. There is also some ambiguity as to whether settlement could be effected even within the same Union, as the New Poor Law kept the parish as unit for rating and settlement purposes until it was changed to the Union based system by the Union Chargeability Act 1865 (28&29 Vict. c.79), Brundage, *Poor Laws*, p. 104.

searched for ways to absolve themselves of her care. Similarly, Chapter 4 described the conflict between the Marine Society and Clifton parish over apprentices sent to the port of Bristol, with the Guardians angrily anticipating that the young men's dalliances with local women could result in additional burdens if the women fell pregnant.⁸⁶¹

Although the origins of settlement law were in the seventeenth-century Acts of 1662 and 1692, Hindle argued that binding out children to deliberately ensure settlement elsewhere occurred much earlier than the laws, as apprenticeship was interpreted as head of settlement from earlier in the century.⁸⁶² Sending children into other parishes was considered advantageous, as settlement was conferred upon completion of the term of apprenticeship. In addition, the general 40 day residence rule also appears to have been accepted by parishes; in theory an apprentice could claim poor relief from the new parish after just 40 days of work. Under the Old Poor Law many Overseers actively sought to exploit this situation; the Royal Commission of 1832 noted that some Poor Law officials sought to deliberately attract masters from outside the parish in order to transfer the settlement burden. Although the Commission proposed abolition of a completed apprenticeship as a head of settlement, this was not followed through in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, so the confusion continued.⁸⁶³ The Act only abolished settlement by means of hiring/service, or for those placed in sea service.⁸⁶⁴

In their recent book on settlement, King and Winter demonstrated that just as with other aspects of the Poor Law, there was a wide variation in terms of how settlement laws

⁸⁶¹ See pp. 191-2.

⁸⁶² Hindle, *On Parish*, p. 199.

⁸⁶³ See pp. 152-3.

⁸⁶⁴ D. Ashworth, '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* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985), pp. 58-91, at p. 61; s.67 Poor Law Amendment Act.

were interpreted and implemented: ‘The prescriptions of national and regional laws gave way to a system of practice in which the key word was negotiation’. Application of the law was not rigorously enforced.⁸⁶⁵ The power to remove was costly and in some parishes the expense of removal outweighed any action; others had very sophisticated systems, for example, Boulton established that Westminster parish in London had a very advanced administrative procedures and actively pursued removal.⁸⁶⁶ From a practical point of view, it was very unlikely that children sent some distance could make it back to their home parish to claim relief; something which Honeyman investigated. In reviewing settlement examinations, she found very few returned to their birth parish, so concluded that the objective of the system was successful.⁸⁶⁷ Levene argued that the risk to the receiving parish was minimal, as by the time settlement was actually achieved when the apprenticeship was completed the child had acquired work skills thus avoiding the need to be a burden.⁸⁶⁸

However, her research pertained to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the Poor Law landscape was very different to the regime after 1834. Even if a child had acquired factory skills, there may not have been employment at the end of the term, and such skills were of no use for other types of work in some of the remote locations of the rural mills. By the 1860s the competitive pressure on such mills meant they needed low cost labour to survive and apprentices could always be replaced with another batch. There was every chance a child might not remain employed in adulthood, hence why Poor

⁸⁶⁵ J. Innes, S. King, and A. Winter, 'Introduction. Settlement and Belonging in Europe, 1500-1930s: Structures, Negotiations and Experiences', in S. King and A. Winter (eds.), *Migration, Settlement and Belonging in Europe 1500-1930s Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn, 2013), pp. 1-28, at p. 18.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁶⁷ Honeyman, ‘Compulsion’, p. 95.

⁸⁶⁸ Levene, ‘Parish Apprenticeship’, p. 935.

Law officials in these areas remained anxious about the settlement ramifications of the pauper apprenticeship system.

Previous chapters have demonstrated how settlement concerns were still very much an issue under the New Poor Law. Although the legal position was resolved definitively with regards to sea apprentices, who could no longer claim settlement, it was not changed for any other type of pauper apprenticeship. In addition to worries about apprentices gaining settlement receiving unions protested about the devious use of hiring contracts to avoid settlement issues and thus gain magistrates' approval of bindings. The Poor Law correspondence demonstrates how Bristol Incorporation switched to such contracts in order to negate settlement opposition from receiving unions; these children were essentially sent as apprentices, but without being afforded the protection of indentures. Even if they could not acquire settlement formally, as noted above, locals still viewed children as a likely burden as they knew settlement was not always rigorously enforced. Chapter 5 documented the hostility; in Yorkshire this even resulted in violence, a newspaper report of 1860 describing how one apprentice had been struck over the head with a clothes prop!⁸⁶⁹ The LSV sent multiple batches of children to mills in Lancashire and Yorkshire; these children were under the protection of an indenture, which resulted in several protests from the receiving unions, principally expressing concern as to how the children would support themselves once the indenture was completed if they did not gain adult employment in the factory of their apprenticeship. This anxiety underlines the point raised above that acquirement of work skill was irrelevant if there was no employment

⁸⁶⁹ See p. 235.

available, and in the 1860s the textile industry did experience a series of recessions with knock on effects on employment.⁸⁷⁰

And what of those who did not complete their apprenticeship? Although unions may have had the power to remove migrant workers, just as was the case with the Old Poor Law, in practice it was not always wielded. In manufacturing areas, employers encouraged workers to turn to poor relief in times of downturn in order for them remain locally available when good times returned; similarly, in rural parishes it was often cheaper to give temporary relief to labourers rather than paying to have them removed.⁸⁷¹ Contemporary unease can be explained because ratepayers knew that apprentices would likely not be moved on. Anxiety was not just related to the factory sector either; remember the 1858 correspondence in Chapter 3 from Clifton Union, which raised concerns about receiving neighbouring Bristol Incorporations' apprentices. The ongoing debate around settlement late into the nineteenth century is a surprising and significant finding of this thesis, revising the stance of those such as Rose who claimed that it ceased to be an issue after 1834.⁸⁷² It supports Levene's theory that it was the settlement aspect of pauper apprenticeship that helped keep 'the institution alive longer than its private equivalent'.⁸⁷³ It was just too good an opportunity for both Poor Law and charity officials to resist.

⁸⁷⁰ Brundage, *Poor Laws*, pp. 105-6.

⁸⁷¹ Rose, *English Poor Law*, p. 28; G.R. Boyer, *An Economic History of the English Poor Law, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 245.

Brundage, *Poor Laws*, p. 103.

⁸⁷² See p. 153.

⁸⁷³ Levene, 'Pauper Apprenticeship England', p. 549.

7. Conclusions

The thesis has explored a familiar narrative, the use of poor children's labour during the industrial revolution, but shined the spotlight on less well covered terrain: three Atlantic port towns. Two important conclusions emerge from the evidence, both of which challenge the conventional wisdom on the topic. First, Poor Law and charity apprentices from port towns experienced a wide range of outcomes, including placement in the port itself. Consistent with the traditional account, children, particularly girls, were *shipped out* to work in the mills of industrializing Britain, but at the same time significantly more children than has hitherto been acknowledged were found apprenticeships in traditional occupations within the port economy, even though such a location is conventionally held to have been less open to parish placements. The survival, indeed entrenchment, of apprenticeships in traditional occupations is striking. Moreover, sea apprenticeships were also common, suggesting another powerful local factor: indeed, such opportunities, as well as traditional occupations within the ports, even caused children to be *shipped in* for apprenticeships. Second, pauper apprenticeship as an institution, deployed by both Poor Law and charities tasked with the care of destitute children, survived well into the nineteenth century; apprenticeship as a solution to poverty was far from an anachronism of an earlier less-caring age. Furthermore, the practice of batch apprenticeship also continued, and was a favoured option of Poor Law officials, in some cases not even with the protection of indentures.

How do these two principal findings impact upon the existing historiography? The view from the ports provides a fresh perspective, for such centres have been neglected both by Poor Law historians and historians of child labour. Moreover, the research contributes to revisionist views that pauper apprenticeship was not just associated with textile mills in

specific districts at limited times, but was in fact widespread and deeply entrenched in traditional occupations and industries, not just during the crucible of industrialization, but continuing well into the nineteenth century. Evidence of the extent to which Poor Law and charity boys were bound to the sea also documents a neglected but important aspect of pauper apprenticeship which has wider significance for maritime history, highlighting the role boys played in the Merchant service, a useful foil for existing research on the role of pauper apprentices in recruitment for the Royal Navy.⁸⁷⁴ Although pauper apprenticeship to factory employment is a familiar story, the thesis presents an important new chapter in the institution's history. It delivers hard evidence that the system continued much longer than previously thought, and so demands that the standard chronology be revised and further research be undertaken to pinpoint decline. The evidence from port towns shows the importance of a regional focus and modifies the national picture, demonstrating that popular generalisations about the type and location of pauper apprenticeship, and perhaps child labour more generally, are problematic. Different locations provided unique economic and social settings which moulded both the wider child labour market and the distribution of pauper apprentices.

The research extends the work of Honeyman and Levene, offering insight into the pauper apprenticeship system in the era of the New Poor Law, a relatively neglected topic for research. Honeyman pioneered the suggestion that pauper apprenticeships remained commonplace long after the regime change, yet repeatedly historians cite the practice as dwindling after 1820; most recently, and in a mainstream text book, Wallis claimed even

⁸⁷⁴ Pietsch, *Ships' Boys*; Pietsch, *Jim Hawkins*.

earlier, after 1810.⁸⁷⁵ My research provides persuasive evidence in support of Honeyman's claim.

This study also adds to the literature on charity apprenticeship. Although charities have been extensively researched, few studies focus on their apprenticeship schemes. The thesis not only provides new evidence on charity apprenticeships, but suggests that the treatment of poor children by Poor Law Guardians or by philanthropists was not so different. As found with the operation of apprenticeship under the Poor Law, charity apprenticeship schemes also varied considerably. It is hard to erase the pitiful images of Jane Ludden and Mary Nurse, abandoned after placements with cruel masters, the RMA desperately trying to offload responsibility; such cases are a far cry from some of the charities studied by Levene which shouldered their obligations towards their vulnerable charges a little more diligently. Significantly, the RMA evidence demonstrates that charities also welcomed the opportunity to send children to factories, tempering the perception that charity apprenticeship was more aspirational and enabled children to move up in the world.

I have demonstrated how the thesis has extended and revised the conventional accounts of pauper apprenticeship, but what are the implications of my research? The first issue to consider is why did pauper apprenticeship persist? It would seem that the scheme was no longer fit for purpose, since many children were placed into depressed trades and so emerged from their indenture without the skills needed to ensure their future independence. The thesis has offered a number of reasons for the institution's longevity.

⁸⁷⁵ P. Wallis, 'Labour markets and training' in R. Floud, J. Humphries & P. Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Volume 1 1700-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 184.

A key factor underpinning its endurance was the issue of settlement, which continued to be uppermost among motivations to bind children away from home. Crucially the thesis has highlighted that contrary to the belief that the 1834 Act undermined settlement as a condition for poor relief, that is, whether a destitute individual ‘belonged’ to a parish and so had a claim on the rates, it remained a lived issue well in the nineteenth century. Binding children out of the parish still offered the prospect of exporting future responsibility. The correspondence of the Poor Law unions with the Poor Law Board categorically demonstrates the persistence of this issue in the 1860s.⁸⁷⁶ Indeed apprenticeship became especially vital post-1834 given the abolition of settlement rights for those who had completed one year of service in a simple hiring contract. Employment without indentures posed a risk that the child would return to be a burden on the parish of origin, hence the desire to persist with apprenticeships. Crompton found the Worcestershire Poor Law unions continued the practice as late as 1871: ‘In spite of the inadequacies of parish apprenticeship from the recipient’s point of view, it remained an attractive proposition to the parish burdened with pauper children, because an individual’s settlement moved to the parish where they had attained craftsman status at the end of their apprenticeship, which was seen as a wholly desirable outcome that rid the poor rates of an unwanted burden’.⁸⁷⁷ As noted in Chapter 6, Levene also concurs that settlement concerns kept the institution alive.⁸⁷⁸

Interestingly, the thesis demonstrates that when officials did resort to using hiring contracts to get round settlement objections from the receiving union, the strategy did not defuse local opposition; the depth of ill feeling illustrated by the case of the Bristol boy

⁸⁷⁶ See pp. 233-5 and 280-4.

⁸⁷⁷ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 13.

⁸⁷⁸ See p. 284.

struck by a clothes prop.⁸⁷⁹ Clearly locals still perceived a risk of immigrant penury, given the practical obstacles to children returning home to claim Poor Law assistance. Chapter 6 cited Honeyman's study of settlement examinations of factory apprentices, which suggested that 'very few pauper apprentices returned to be chargeable to their birth parish, and in that respect one of the key objectives of the system was successfully met'.⁸⁸⁰ The Poor Law correspondence highlighted how Bristol officials twice resorted to hiring contracts, pragmatically speculating that once sent far away, children were unlikely to return; a gambling proposition borne out by the protest occasioned by the contracts, despite the children incurring no formal settlement rights. Humphries also found evidence of the use of informal apprenticeship under the New Poor Law, in the case of Lucy Luck, first sent out to a silk mill then as a servant, on neither occasion formally bound. She caused guardians no further trouble, in her own words 'they had quite done with me now'.⁸⁸¹ These were children who were ultimately in worse situations than those placed in low skilled apprenticeships, as they did not even have the protection afforded by indentures.

The correspondence of the RMA demonstrated that settlement was an equally important consideration in charity bindings. Girls had to leave the institution in their fourteenth year, with officials adamantly unwilling to offer any further assistance. The Nurse and Ludden cases showed that the RMA rejected any ongoing responsibility. Relations with Southampton Corporation were eased if the girl was apprenticed outside the area and the settlement burden transferred; the Nurse case depicted tensions created by

⁸⁷⁹ See p. 235.

⁸⁸⁰ See p. 282.

⁸⁸¹ Humphries, *Childhood*, p. 305.

settlement issues.⁸⁸² The mills of Derbyshire were a particularly useful repository for RMA's orphan girls, as was service far away, even overseas, in one case as far as China. Apprentices sent such distances had little prospect of returning home.⁸⁸³

Settlement was not the only reason that the institution endured. Overall the evidence suggests that apprenticeship was still the preferred way by which to dispose of pauper children throughout the nineteenth century, the Poor Law correspondence demonstrating the tenacity with which it was pursued. Pauper apprenticeship retained attractions for officials who were steeped in Old Poor Law principles and saw nothing wrong with exporting poverty so as to keep local rates low, especially as many rate payers were not particularly wealthy.⁸⁸⁴ Crompton summarised the pragmatic view: 'Apprenticeship continued to provide the only legitimate escape from the workhouse for the deserted or orphaned destitute child, for whom the alternative was continued residence in the workhouse with the continued threat of life-long pauperism. This was the very eventuality the New Poor Law had been intended to avoid'.⁸⁸⁵ The New Poor Law had proposed no alternative to apprenticeship, and as the workhouses became increasingly crowded with children, it was soon realised that the old solution remained the best option.⁸⁸⁶ There was also an element of social control in persisting with a work-based scheme, particularly for those many pauper children who were not orphans, as destitute kin were viewed as potential contaminants. As noted in Chapters 5 and 6, there was a genuine desire to break the cycle and habits of poverty with a key principle of pauper

⁸⁸² See p. 146.

⁸⁸³ See p. 137.

⁸⁸⁴ Digby, *Poor Law*, p. 30.

⁸⁸⁵ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 224.

⁸⁸⁶ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 230.

apprenticeship being the need to remove children from the influence of idle and dissolute parents.⁸⁸⁷

Pauper apprenticeship also continued to be shaped by economic demand. Although the market for child workers in traditional occupations was less robust, the new industries provided ample opportunities. A clear case was made by Honeyman and Tuttle, and later echoed by Humphries, that pauper apprentices undoubtedly aided factories to start up in remote areas during the late eighteenth century.⁸⁸⁸ But what this thesis uniquely demonstrates is that they were *still* being used to fill the gaps a century later, not only in factories, but also, as the LSV evidence indicated, in shipping and fishing concerns.⁸⁸⁹ Remember the plethora of examples of mill owners directly approaching the RMA, LSV and Bristol Incorporation on multiple occasions; officials were simply responding to the market forces of supply and demand.

The study also illustrates the flexibility of pauper apprenticeship in responding to the changes taking place in the industrial economy. Each of the three sectors examined experienced significant change yet the system adapted to the shifting nature of work. The industrial revolution is synonymous with the rise of the new industries, and the transition from small artisan workshops employing a few children, to mass manufacturing with hundreds of children employed, has already been documented by historians. The thesis evidences that both aspects endured and thrived late into the nineteenth century. Technological change did not lessen opportunities for apprenticeship, as both Bristol Incorporation and LSV continued to feed those many mills that remained powered by

⁸⁸⁷ See pp. 214, 247.

⁸⁸⁸ See pp. 263-4.

⁸⁸⁹ See p. 265.

water in the more isolated locations; for example, as late as 1870, LSV children were sent to such a mill in Giggleswick, Yorkshire.⁸⁹⁰

A similar pattern was noted in traditional occupations with indentures charting both change and stagnation. Apprenticeships ranged from examples such as the eighteenth-century charity boy apprenticed to an artisan cordwainer, to the nineteenth-century bindings of boys who performed just a single step of the shoemaking process, such as riveting. As Chapter 3 discussed, increasing subdivision of labour in traditional trades led to deskilling and enabled children to be inserted into the production process to perform single, repetitive tasks.⁸⁹¹ Hairdressing provides another example of such change, for eighteenth century indentures were for the skilled art of peruke manufacture, but the trade mutated into the wider service of hairdressing, symbolised by the LSV boys' indentures to the dockside barbers in the mid-nineteenth century.

The change documented by the sea service indentures is particularly striking, not only illustrating the metamorphosis of this sector, but also the shift in fortunes of each of the three ports. Many of the eighteenth-century Marine Society indentures were for Bristol, with boys bound to single masters sailing on wooden vessels. By the mid-nineteenth century, the LSV indentures reveal the commercialisation and growing scale of Merchant service, reflecting the powerhouse that was the port of Liverpool by this time, as boys were being bound to large shipping concerns, such as the South American and General Steam Navigation Company.⁸⁹² As the nineteenth century progressed, boys sailed on new types of vessels. Clippers remained cheaper to run and many boys continued to be

⁸⁹⁰ See p. 212.

⁸⁹¹ See p. 77.

⁸⁹² See pp. 173, 179, 182-3.

placed on them, illustrating that older methods endured here as elsewhere, but the Southampton evidence demonstrates the adoption of new types of vessels from the 1850's. Boys were increasingly being placed on steamships, and of course the rise of the steamers made Southampton into a key port.

Officials clearly adapted the practice of apprenticeship to suit demand throughout the industrial revolution, but let us also consider its longevity in a less cynical light. Perhaps officials persisted in binding children because they genuinely believed it would improve their prospects. As previously noted, Honeyman argued that by virtue of pauper apprenticeships some children sent to the factories were able to improve their life chances.⁸⁹³ Although factory apprenticeship was not held in high regard at the time, it offered a chance to become self-supporting, as discussed further below. Chapter 4 explored the potential benefits of sea apprenticeship, detailing how parents took the initiative in approaching both the Marine Society and the Poor Law for ship placements for their boys. Despite its danger and privations, a sailor's life was considered to have genuine prospects; wages were decent if the challenges were survived.⁸⁹⁴ Traditional occupations offered the fewest prospects, but Humphries argued that even here pauper apprenticeships threw out lifelines, and some examples are provided below which also offer a more hopeful interpretation.⁸⁹⁵

While many studies have documented the start of children's working lives, much less is known about the aftermath of apprenticeships. Honeyman acknowledged the need to complete the picture in order to assess effectiveness: 'The dearth of attention is

⁸⁹³ See pp. 230-1.

⁸⁹⁴ See pp. 166-8, 189-90.

⁸⁹⁵ See pp. 149-50.

regrettable because information about the future lives of pauper children is essential...to determining the success of parishes in establishing their children on a path of independence and rectitude'.⁸⁹⁶ She proposed an extensive research project investigating the outcomes for the apprentices in her monograph, using sources such as letters from employers, records of parish visits, parliamentary enquiries, settlement examinations and biographies to link with census records.⁸⁹⁷ Analysis on this scale has rarely been attempted. The 'London Lives' project took a similar multi-sourced approach, with particular use of settlement examinations, yet even from such a wide-ranging project with the specific remit of tracing pauper lives, very little was discovered about the fate of parish apprentices after their training was completed.⁸⁹⁸ Robinson's micro-study of the apprentices of Styal mill was more successful, using the types of sources Honeyman proposed, principally the mill's wage books together with census returns and parish registers.⁸⁹⁹ As examined below, he demonstrated that some children were retained post-apprenticeship.

Robinson's success is a notable exception. Humphries highlighted the general problem: 'The limitations of the sources available hamper investigation of the outcomes for children under different Poor Law regimes'.⁹⁰⁰ This is one of the reasons why her recent monograph, which used autobiographies, stands out; she was able to unlock the stories of 62 pauper boys (those either receiving outdoor relief as part of a family, or in the

⁸⁹⁶ Honeyman, 'Compulsion', p. 85.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 86; Humphries, 'Memories', p. 104.

⁸⁹⁸ <http://www.londonlives.org>, T. Hitchcock, S. Howard, J. McLaughlin and R. Shoemaker, *et al.*, *London Lives, 1690-1800* (date accessed: 24 March 2015, copy available from the author).

⁸⁹⁹ Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 1.

⁹⁰⁰ Humphries, 'Memories', p. 103.

workhouse), the source allowing her the luxury of tracking their progress through life.⁹⁰¹ For example, John Reilly was ‘apprenticed’ (it is unclear if there was a formal indenture) from Sheffield workhouse to a master in Rotherham, but twice fled after beatings. He went on to work in a coal mine where he was ‘always able to get work and sometimes earned good wages, but always lost them more rapidly’, spiralling down, spending time in prison, but later recovering to become an Army minister.⁹⁰² John Shipp, voluntarily bound to a Poor Law regiment in the Napoleonic Wars, eventually became master of Liverpool workhouse.⁹⁰³ Robert Collyer’s autobiography described how his parents fared under the Poor Law, as both were pauper apprentices in a Northern textile mill, his father from a London workhouse, his mother from Norwich. Both parents carried on working at the mill post-apprenticeship, and Robert himself went on to work there. Robert’s father was first an apprentice spinner, but then became a blacksmith in the factory.⁹⁰⁴ Humphries also had 26 charity boys in her sample; for example, Tommy Mitchell was apprenticed by Bristol’s Anchor Society as a whitesmith, and went on to become a businessman.⁹⁰⁵

So what happened to the pauper apprentices of the port towns? The fate of some of the factory apprentices in my sample has already been discovered through Robinson’s work; 15 of the LSV children appear in his study. Margaret Magan was indentured as a 10 year old in 1823, and started adult work as a spinner, progressing to powerloom operator, and by 1861 was an overlooker.⁹⁰⁶ Margaret Donally was apprenticed in 1828, age 11.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 105.

⁹⁰² S. Reilly, *I walk with the King: the life story of John Edward Reilly* (London: Epworth Press, 1931) [hereafter, Reilly, *Walk with the King*], p. 12; Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 199, 303.

⁹⁰³ Humphries, ‘Memories’, p. 119.

⁹⁰⁴ R. Collyer, *Some Memories* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1908), [hereafter, Collyer, *Memories*], pp. 2-4. ; Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 200-201.

⁹⁰⁵ Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 299-301.

⁹⁰⁶ See p. 230.

The wages book records her working as a spinner after her apprenticeship, and she later became a schoolmistress, having married Styal's schoolmaster in 1853.⁹⁰⁷ Thomas Jackson was indentured in 1825, at the tender age of 9; upon completion he worked as a 'scutcher', performing hot, uncomfortable work in the blowing room, separating the cotton from the bales.⁹⁰⁸ Carding and spinning were common jobs; Isabella Shaw, Mary Scarsfield and Elizabeth Pattinson all become spinners at the end of their apprenticeships.⁹⁰⁹ Mary Murphy and Sarah Brown become 'reelers', winding the spun yarns ready for the looms.⁹¹⁰

Listed in the wages book of the 1840s working as weavers were Catherine Speedy, Esther Roberts, Sarah Woods, and even the runaway Esther Price, who went on to marry the village shoemaker.⁹¹¹ Marriage may have been a reason some girls remained in the area, but were not working in the mill; Robinson found two LSV girls who were apprenticed in 1825, Sophia Wilson and Mary Vallely, recorded in the village shop's debt book some years after their apprenticeships had ended.⁹¹² The case of Ellen Tweed also illustrates alternatives to mill work. Indentured in 1833, she was not kept on, but Robinson found her in the 1841 census for Styal, listed as a servant. It seems she eventually returned to the mill, as the 1844 ledgers record her employed as a winder.⁹¹³ Honeyman noted that Southampton's RMA apprentices were often retained at Mellor Mill.

⁹⁰⁷ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/19, 20 May 1828; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 19.

⁹⁰⁸ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/36, 4 June 1825; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 21.

⁹⁰⁹ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/58, 26 Oct. 1833; 127 C5/5/3/67, 16 Sept. 1829; 127 C5/5/3/119, 2 Oct. 1834; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 23.

⁹¹⁰ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/46, 2 Nov. 1833; 127 C5/5/3/81, 26 Oct. 1833; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 25.

⁹¹¹ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/54, 26 Oct. 1833; 127 C5/5/3/93, 2 Oct. 1834; 127 C5/5/3/108, 1 Jan. 1834; 127 C5/5/3/75, 26 Oct. 1833; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, pp. 25, 30.

⁹¹² MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/78, 4 June 1825; 127 C5/5/3/72, 4 June 1825; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 28.

⁹¹³ MA, GB 127 C5/5/3/88, 2 Nov. 1833; Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 34.

Ann Vapine, from my sample, was one such girl: she married a mill worker, and went on to become the school mistress.⁹¹⁴

It is beyond the scope of this study to track the outcomes for all the apprentices in my sample; as has been demonstrated, Robinson is one of the few researchers to make progress with such an exercise, but it is pertinent to consider how such a project could be attempted. Previous chapters have highlighted how, following despatch, children placed in traditional occupations and the sea were subject to much less scrutiny compared with those placed in factories, and the lack of business records makes tracking outcomes doubly difficult.⁹¹⁵ For those placed in traditional occupations, the sources for this study only revealed the progress of two RMA girls, as both remained in house. Correspondence records Mary McCourt was retained as an assistant cook, and Eliza Ferries employed as a nurse at the Isle of Wight branch.⁹¹⁶ Such serendipitous cases aside, it is hard to know how to follow up the children who have appeared in this study, as my records yield no further biographical details presenting obstacles to record linkage as used by Robinson. It is possible to estimate an approximate year of birth from the age noted in an indenture, in order to track an individual in the census, but with a raft of common surnames, and no accurate birth details, linkage is unlikely to yield anything other than fragmentary data. To pilot this methodology, I took 30 of the more unusual surnames from my sample (both male and female) to see if they could be traced using an online census portal.⁹¹⁷ From this small sub-sample, I was able to discover what happened to three individuals, all males; a

⁹¹⁴ Honeyman, *Compulsion*, p. 86; TNA, WO143/52/1329, 29 Nov. 1825.

⁹¹⁵ See pp. 142, 193.

⁹¹⁶ See p. 150.

⁹¹⁷ <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>.

selection that probably reflects the greater difficulty in tracing females, whose names change on marriage.

Three boys, two Poor Law and one charity, all from Liverpool, could be traced. Henry Weatherall was indentured at 14 by LSV in 1849, to John Parry, a shoemaker of Liverpool.⁹¹⁸ Using an estimated birth date of around 1835, a Henry Weatherall, 35, with birth date of 1836, is listed in the 1871 census as a cordwainer in Liverpool; thus it is possible this is a neat demonstration that even low skilled placements under the New Poor Law *did* yield some employment prospects, the ‘lifelines’ which, following Humphries, were discussed in Chapter 3.⁹¹⁹ Promising greater accuracy is Edwin Tallemache. He was indentured in 1849, age 12, to Edward Smith, a hairdresser of Toxteth.⁹²⁰ Tallemache appears in the censuses of 1861 and 1871 as a hairdresser. It lists his place of birth as Liverpool, but he resided in the parish of Christchurch in Surrey, part of Southwark in London. Age 24 in 1861, he was married with two sons. He is even listed in the 1911 census, age 73, still a hairdresser, and still living in south London, although now in the Camberwell district: more evidence to support Humphries’ ‘lifelines’ thesis.⁹²¹ It has also been possible to trace the fate of a charity boy, John Yeo, who was apprenticed in 1838 by a Barnstaple charity to a Liverpool mariner.⁹²² His indenture was for four years, so would have been completed in 1842. Clearly it was a successful grounding for him, as ten years later, in May 1852, he received a certificate of competency as a Master in the Merchant

⁹¹⁸ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/57, 18 Sept. 1849.

⁹¹⁹ From search of <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>, 1871 England Census (original data TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1871, Class: RG10; Piece: 3780; Folio: 20, Page: 34); see pp. 149-50.

⁹²⁰ LRO, 353 SEL 12/1/56, 18 Sept. 1849.

⁹²¹ From search of <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>, 1861 England Census (original data TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1861, Class: RG9; Piece: 313; Folio: 116, Page: 39); 1871 England Census (original data TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1871, Class: RG10; Piece: 594; Folio: 73, Page: 46); 1911 England Census (original data TNA, Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911, Class: RG14; Piece: 2481).

⁹²² NDRO, TD146/A84/16, 1 Oct. 1838.

service. The certificate was issued by the Port of Liverpool, suggesting that he remained working out of his home port post-apprenticeship.⁹²³

Of course, the examples above, traced through the census or linked via Robinson and Honeyman's work, are success stories. Robinson's findings support Honeyman's results that generally high rates of retention were found at all the mills she studied, although her evidence was at an impressionistic stage.⁹²⁴ Even the famously abused Blincoe stayed on at Litton Mill, and eventually became a cotton waste dealer.⁹²⁵ Humphries too found continuity: 'Settlement examinations show that parish apprenticeships did provide training and most ex-apprentices worked at their trades. The autobiographical evidence supports this finding'.⁹²⁶ But whether continuity of employment post-indenture was typical remains difficult to ascertain, particularly for the non-factory sectors. In terms of proportions, so far there are 21 known outcomes for my 1,710 apprentices, which is just over 1 per cent of the sample. Using the census tracking method outlined above, I was able to track 10 per cent of my sub-sample, so an optimistic estimate would be that I might reasonably be able to trace a similar proportion of my complete sample, although that is merely conjecture. At this stage, it is simply not possible to be definitive about the proportion of apprentices who went on to become established citizens; what it has been possible to show is that pauper apprenticeships provided genuine opportunities and training for some children, even those outside of the new industries.

⁹²³From search of <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>, UK and Ireland, Masters and Mates Certificates, 1850-1927 (original data from NMM, Master's Certificates).

⁹²⁴Honeyman, 'Compulsion', pp. 87-9.

⁹²⁵Brown, *Blincoe*, pp. iv, 62; Honeyman, 'Compulsion', p. 90.

⁹²⁶Humphries, 'Memories', p. 118.

However, the fact that I was unable to trace 17 individuals in my sub-sample suggests that some children did not go on to establish themselves. Robinson examined cases of incomplete apprenticeships. Just as any other employer faced runaways, as discussed in previous chapters, children absconded from Styal mill; between 1785-1847, approximately 100 children ran away.⁹²⁷ Chapter 5 also noted 17 deaths between 1811-33, principally from chest ailments and fever rather than accidents.⁹²⁸ Here then are two very common reasons why indentures failed and children did not go on to become independent. Retention was perhaps not always as common as Honeyman and Robinson suggest. As cited in Chapter 5, Chapman's study of Cuckney mill noted that just two out of 700 apprentices were employed post-indenture.⁹²⁹ The Gregs' of Styal were notable for their investment in their workforce, but other employers had a policy of simply replacing maturing children with another batch of apprentices. The same would have been true for many individual masters using the Poor Law as source of cheap labour.

Children who did not complete their training or were not retained post-indenture did not necessarily face chronic unemployment. Humphries' absconder Reilly, cited above, soon found himself other work. The armed forces often absorbed boys but ex-workhouse girls had 'fewer safety nets', as illustrated by the story of Lucy Luck, sent to work at a silk mill, age 9, without the protection of an indenture, and then at 13 moved on to service at public house, with no further contact or support.⁹³⁰ Humphries' econometric analysis using autobiographies to assess the outcomes for the children who had an encounter with the Poor Law (including those not apprenticed) suggested that *ceteris*

⁹²⁷ Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 6.

⁹²⁸ See p. 224.

⁹²⁹ See p. 230.

⁹³⁰ Humphries, 'Care and Cruelty', p. 133; Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 304-5.

paribus they did not do as well in life as children of the independent working class, though what would have happened to such children without the Poor Law is unknown.⁹³¹

Of those who did become solid citizens, did any actually improve upon their status socially? The testimony of one of Humphries' autobiographers is poignant. Robert Collyer told of his father becoming an apprentice spinner, and then a blacksmith; years later Robert worked at the same mill, but he described how 'if I stayed on in the factory, this would be a step down from the rank my father had attained as a smith'.⁹³² Thus he was bound age 14 to a blacksmith himself, preserving, but not improving upon his father's achievement. Chapter 4 argued that apprentices who survived placement at sea went on to command good wages and could enjoy some minor advancement.⁹³³ Charity boy John Yeo, discussed above, represents such a trajectory supporting the hypothesis that charity children benefitted from aspirational placements.⁹³⁴ It could even be argued that factory girls Margaret Donally and Ann Vapine succeeded in improving their status when they became school mistresses, albeit by virtue of marriage, since such opportunity would not have arisen if they had not been sent to Styal. But this was not typical. Robinson stated that at Styal, although 'many of these (girls) became adult millworkers, few rose to positions of authority. Most remain simply names in the wages book'.⁹³⁵ Although rising in rank within the mill, like Margaret Magan discussed above, was exceptional, pauper apprenticeship still resulted in girls' ability to support themselves. Chapter 5 agreed with Honeyman that although not viewed favourably by contemporaries, the factories, for girls in particular, were a route to economic independence. This concurs with an American

⁹³¹ Humphries. *Childhood*, p. 295.

⁹³² Collyer, *Some Memories*, p. 21.

⁹³³ See pp. 189-90.

⁹³⁴ See p. 298.

⁹³⁵ Robinson, *Quarry Bank*, p. 18.

study of pauper apprentices cited by Honeyman, that found ex-apprentices became self supporting but without social mobility.⁹³⁶ The literature more generally on the social mobility of apprentices is inconclusive, and my sources can add little to this interesting discussion. Griffin argued that apprenticeships declined as an institution and became less formal, which, on the one hand provided greater access, but on the other meant that the status of the artisan fell as numbers of informally trained workmen moved into hitherto skilled trades.⁹³⁷ Clark and Cummins concluded that ‘social mobility has always been low in England and was surprisingly unaffected by the industrial revolution’.⁹³⁸ The prospects of mobility afforded by new industries were cancelled out by the collapse in status of earlier skilled occupations in the handicrafts sector.⁹³⁹ Further work on the 1,710 individuals, using the census in the manner demonstrated above, may contribute further to this debate.

Is it possible to assess the quantitative significance of pauper apprentices from the ports? Unfortunately the quest for accurate measures of all types of child labour during the industrial revolution has proved problematic. Even if the numbers of children involved at any point in time or in any specific work can be approximated, it is often impossible with the historical sources available to estimate the stocks from which this flow is drawn and so estimate the proportions of children involved. This is the case with the types of child worker considered in this thesis: pauper and charity apprentices. Existing pauper

⁹³⁶ Honeyman, ‘Compulsion’, p. 85, referencing T. Lockley, “‘To Train them to Habits of Industry and Usefulness’: Moulding the Poor Children of Antebellum Savannah’, in R. Herndon and J. Murray (eds.), *Children Bound to Labor: The Pauper Apprentice System in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 133-48.

⁹³⁷ See p. 16.

⁹³⁸ G. Clark and N. Cummins, ‘Inequality and social mobility in the era of the industrial revolution’ in R. Floud, J. Humphries and P. Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Volume 1 1700-1870* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 211.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

apprenticeship studies have made a start on measurement by concentrating on estimating the numbers of paupers apprenticed, but there is still much work to be done to be able to identify how significant pauper apprentices were as a component of the industrial workforce.⁹⁴⁰ How, then, can this study make a meaningful contribution? While it gives some indication of the size, scale and persistence of the flows of children through the networks of these three port towns, it too lacks the data necessary to provide an accurate estimate of the numbers involved or the proportions of children in the care of the Poor Law who were apprenticed, or indeed their cumulative importance in the industrial labour force. However, this does not preclude a rough estimate based on the available patchwork of evidence.

As the largest of the ports, and enjoying the most extensive Poor Law evidence, Liverpool in 1861 will be used as the basis of a working example to illustrate how the significance of pauper apprenticeship might be measured. First, some pertinent national statistics are required to set the scene, and place any evidence in the context of the total child population. The national figures recorded in the censuses were for all young persons under the age of 20, and therefore include a large number of children outside the definition of ‘child’ used in this study.⁹⁴¹ However, Chapter 1 noted that between 1840 and 1870, the proportion of children under 15 never fell below 35 per cent, and the breakdown of ages in the Census Summary Tables confirms this, as Table 7.1 shows.⁹⁴²

⁹⁴⁰ Goose, ‘Hertfordshire’, p. 177.

⁹⁴¹ See p. 50.

⁹⁴² See p. 4; Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. I, p. cxcii; Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. I, pp. 48, 425; vol. II, p. 611; Accounts and papers: forty-eight volumes. (25--Part I and Part II) Population (England and Wales) PP 1863 (3221), [hereafter, Census 1861, Population Tables], Part I, p. x.

Table 7.1 Population of England and Wales, 1851 and 1861

| Year | Total population | Population under 20 | Population under 15 | % of total population | Population 10-14 | % of total population |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1851 | 17,927,609 | 8,981,012 | 6,323,823 | 35% | 1,883,357 | 11% |
| 1861 | 20,066,224 | 9,082,666 | 7,150,024 | 36% | 2,105,176 | 10% |

Note: All percentages rounded up to nearest whole.

Source: Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. I, p. cxcii; Census 1861, Population Tables, Part I, p. x.

The censuses also provide information about the port towns; children under 15 accounted for around one third of each of the populations of the three ports. Further, those aged 10-14, essentially the working age children, accounted for 9-10 per cent of all three of the port town populations.⁹⁴³ For Liverpool, the detailed figures were as follows:

Table 7.2 Population of Liverpool, 1851 and 1861.

| Year | Total population | Population under 15 | % of total population | Population 10-14 | % of total population |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1851 | 258,236 | 82,657 | 32% | 25,064 | 10% |
| 1861 | 269,742 | 87,774 | 33% | 24,787 | 9% |

Note: All percentages rounded up to nearest whole.

Source: Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. II, p. 611; Census 1861, Population Tables, Part II, p. 613.

With total child populations established, the next aspect to consider is how many children were under the care of the Poor Law. Poor Law Board Annual Reports gave the figures for the overall number of paupers relieved in England and Wales: in 1851, 844,142 persons received assistance, rising in 1861 to 857,040.⁹⁴⁴ As discussed in Chapter 3, not all children were institutionalised in order to receive assistance, despite the hard line of the New Poor Law.⁹⁴⁵ Using the official statistics contained in Poor Law Board reports, Williams calculated that in 1861 children accounted for 36.2 per cent of all paupers, indoor

⁹⁴³ Census 1861, Population Tables, Part I, pp. 70, 437; Part II, p. 613.

⁹⁴⁴ Poor Law Board, *Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, 1851* (London: HMSO, 1852) [hereafter, Poor Law Board, *Fourth Report*], p. 3; Poor Law Board, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, 1860-61* (London: HMSO, 1861) [hereafter, Poor Law Board, *Thirteenth Report*], p. 11.

⁹⁴⁵ See p. 167.

and outdoor.⁹⁴⁶ As there is further data available for 1861, this naturally leads to a focus on this year for the working example.

The 1861 Poor Law Board Annual Report recorded the number of children under 16 in receipt of outdoor relief as 214,991.⁹⁴⁷ Fortunately, there are also statistics available that provide an indication of the number of children relieved indoors. A national return of the number of children in all workhouses exists for 1862, making it the best available comparator for the 1861 figures. The return noted 52,125 children in workhouses.⁹⁴⁸ The Poor Law Board Annual Report also recorded 30,654 children in workhouse schools, although it is unclear if these children were also resident in the workhouse, thus potentially leading to double counting.⁹⁴⁹ Chapter 3 noted that in 1861, nationally there were 18 industrial schools, with a total number of pupils of 1,193.⁹⁵⁰ This figure seems low in comparison with the numbers for Liverpool's industrial school whose population alone was generally around the 1,000 mark, although as will be discussed below, the figure for 1861 was unusually low.⁹⁵¹ Bearing these caveats in mind, from these three pieces of evidence we can infer a maximum indoor population in 1861 of approximately 84,000 children. Added to the outdoor relief figure above, and compared with Williams' estimate, it seems a credible projection; it lowers his estimate for 1861 to 34.9 per cent of all

⁹⁴⁶ K. Williams, *From Pauperism to Poverty* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 197.

⁹⁴⁷ Poor Law Board, *Thirteenth Report*, p. 13.

⁹⁴⁸ Children in Workhouses. Return of the number of children under sixteen years of age in the workhouses of the several unions, incorporations, and parishes of England and Wales, on 1st January 1862, PP 1862 (268), [hereafter, *Children in Workhouses*], p. 3.

⁹⁴⁹ Poor Law Board, *Thirteenth Report*, p. 25.

⁹⁵⁰ See p. 117.

⁹⁵¹ The 1851 census recorded 1,108 children, and LRO 353 SEL/22 Kirkdale Industrial School Admission and Discharge Registers, 1862-5 recorded quarterly numbers; for example, in 1863, the numbers recorded for each quarter were 1,149; 1,159; 992 and 1,091. An inspection report in the Poor Law Correspondence noted 1,181 children in 1867, TNA, MH12/5980, Folios 210-14, 21 May 1867.

paupers relieved (approximately 299,000 children), equating to around 4 per cent of the total population of all children under 15 in 1861.

Of those relieved indoors, it is possible to derive an estimate of what could be regarded as 'working age children' i.e. those aged 10-14, using the same evidence as above, in order to arrive at a national estimate for the number of Poor Law children eligible for pauper apprenticeship in 1861. Of those children recorded as being in workhouse schools, 13,351 were above the age of 10.⁹⁵² The 1862 workhouses return noted 4,393 children as being 'capable of entering upon service'.⁹⁵³ These two figures, amalgamated with the industrial schools figure already cited above, result in the most conservative estimate being approximately 18,900 children eligible, 23 per cent of all indoor children, and around 6 per cent of all children under the care of the Poor Law in 1861, and equating to just under 1 per cent of the total population of 10-14 year olds.

The focus now turns to comparing these national estimates with Liverpool in 1861. The Poor Law Board Annual Report for 1861 records 955 children in Liverpool workhouse schools, of whom 633 were above 10.⁹⁵⁴ The Census Summary Tables recorded the number of inmates in workhouses; Liverpool workhouse housed 2,388 inmates, with an additional 630 separately noted for the industrial school.⁹⁵⁵ That children in the industrial school were separate from the workhouse headcount is confirmed by an LSV memorandum in the Poor Law correspondence files, which notes that during September and October in 1862, 377 children were transferred from the workhouse to the

⁹⁵² Poor Law Board, *Thirteenth Report*, p. 25.

⁹⁵³ Children in Workhouses, p. 3.

⁹⁵⁴ Poor Law Board, *Thirteenth Report*, p. 280.

⁹⁵⁵ Census 1861, Population Tables, Part II, p. 667.

school (270 of whom were aged 7 to 15).⁹⁵⁶ Unfortunately there is no age breakdown in the census summary for the workhouse, nor do the Poor Law correspondence files contain any Annual Returns providing this information. Similarly, there is no documentation contained within any surviving LSV records. Here then an estimate needs to be made, which can be done by drawing parallels to existing data for 1851.

The Census Summary Tables for 1851 recorded 2,025 inmates of Liverpool workhouse, and an additional 1,108 in the industrial school.⁹⁵⁷ Fortunately, the 1851 Annual Return for Liverpool Workhouse in 1851 is available; it counted 523 children aged 14 and under (26 per cent of the workhouse population), 223 of whom were 10-14 (11 per cent).⁹⁵⁸ The figure of 26 per cent is a little lower than Crompton's study of Worcestershire unions for a similar period; between 1834-71, he found that 'over one-third of workhouse inmates were under sixteen years of age'.⁹⁵⁹ The comparison with Crompton's study raises an interesting side issue about age limits in arriving at any estimates. As discussed above, the parameters of this study were confined to children up to the age of 14. Chapter 2 noted that LSV indentures are in existence for children up to the age of 18, and certainly if all indentures had been included the dataset would have been larger.⁹⁶⁰ Chapter 4 also noted that if boys up to the age of 16 had been included, there would be many more sea apprentices in the sample; indeed boys as old as 18 were bound.⁹⁶¹ Further, the study only considered apprentices to the Merchant Navy, not those sent to the Royal Navy, again for reasons discussed earlier, therefore it is worth stressing

⁹⁵⁶ TNA, MH12/5975, Folio 360, Oct. 1862.

⁹⁵⁷ Census 1851, Population Tables, vol. II, p. 666.

⁹⁵⁸ LRO, 312 FAM, 1851 Census: Liverpool Workhouse Return.

⁹⁵⁹ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. xiv.

⁹⁶⁰ See p. 50.

⁹⁶¹ See pp. 159-60.

that any estimate given is very conservative, and an expanded age limit might sensibly be used in any future research.⁹⁶²

Returning to the Liverpool estimate, if the 1851 proportion of children in the workhouse is applied, an estimated 621 children would have been in the workhouse in 1861, with 263 aged 10-14. If this figure is added to the industrial school population of 630, and the 633 children in workhouse schools, this gives an estimated 1,526 children who could potentially have been apprenticed in 1861. As discussed with regard to the national estimate above, it is unclear whether those denoted in the Poor Law Board Annual Report, the 633 children in workhouse school, were in fact in the industrial school, or whether this was part of the workhouse. The national comparison with Williams' estimate suggests that the two can be counted separately. However, the figure of 630 for the industrial school also requires scrutiny. As noted above, this figure appears unusually low compared with the numbers recorded for other years, so this should be borne in mind; but it is also important to acknowledge that the industrial school did not just train working-age children. In 1862, 377 children were transferred from the workhouse, and surprisingly 107 were under 7. Thus, 1,526 is the maximum number of children potentially eligible for apprenticeship, but the pool could have been as small as 1,350 if a similar proportion as the 1862 intake is applied. As there were 50 LSV indentures for 1861, this results in an estimated proportion of between 3-4 per cent of Liverpool's indoor Poor Law children of working age being apprenticed that year.

This clearly begs the question, what happened to all the other children? Before attempting to shed light on this, let us first consider how the 3-4 per cent of 'lucky'

⁹⁶² See p. 159.

children might have been chosen. Why was apprenticeship the fate of some but not others? Is there any evidence of selection procedures or customary methods? These were explored by examining each of the sectors of employment in the body of the thesis. Chapter 3 noted the importance of familial ties, with 9 per cent of all port indentures to traditional occupations being to kin, such indentures constituting a natural selection process.⁹⁶³ Chapter 3 also detailed the various trades for which Liverpool's industrial school groomed their children, such as tailoring, shoemaking and carpentry, thus to an extent predetermining their futures.⁹⁶⁴ Chapter 4 discussed how the school also specifically prepared boys for life at sea in order to attract potential masters, seeking via prior training to detract from the perceived lack of strength of its younger pupils, dangling the prospect of a boy already trained in seafaring ways.⁹⁶⁵ It might well be that guardians still factored strength in their choice of boys for binding, however, in the sea sector more than any other, boys eagerly volunteered for such apprenticeships, lured by the romance of adventure at sea. Chapter 4 also reported a few examples of parents requesting sea apprenticeships.⁹⁶⁶

Overall, there is no evidence of coordinated or definitive selection policies, suggesting disposal was largely random, and often in response to childish enthusiasm. One of Humphries' autobiographers, Robert Collyer, described how his father was apprenticed to a Yorkshire factory in 1807, from a London workhouse, simply by putting his hand up, 'he told me they gave him free choice to go or stay and wanted him to stay; but he said, "I will go"'.⁹⁶⁷ This tale echoes the experience of Robert Blincoe who 'was the first at the gate, one of the foremost who mounted the wagon, and the loudest in his

⁹⁶³ See p. 120.

⁹⁶⁴ See p. 116.

⁹⁶⁵ See pp. 164-5.

⁹⁶⁶ See p. 167.

⁹⁶⁷ Collyer, *Memories*, pp. 2-3.

cheering'.⁹⁶⁸ Chapter 5 saw factory owners visiting the workhouse to hand pick children.⁹⁶⁹ Again it might seem that strength would be a key attraction, but Kirby suggested that factory work actually offered opportunities for disabled children.⁹⁷⁰ Factory placements were particularly associated with orphans, although the LSV indentures also noted parental consents.⁹⁷¹

Crompton made the point that workhouse populations were transitory, with some children experiencing periods in and out of the workhouse, therefore it was orphaned and deserted children, the most permanent residents, who were subject to training and apprenticeship.⁹⁷² Crowther estimated that orphans accounted for around half of all indoor children throughout the nineteenth century.⁹⁷³ As Chapter 3 noted, orphans need not have lost both of their parents; children were recorded as orphaned if parents had deserted or were insane.⁹⁷⁴ The national workhouse Annual Return of 1862 recorded the number of orphans in the workhouse population as 11,385. A further 1,889 had been deserted, and 1,914 resided because of the mental infirmity of their parents, thus a total of 15,188 children were designated orphan status, 29 per cent of all children in workhouses. LSV evidence mirrors this pattern with 176 of the 620 indentures, 28 per cent, specifically recording children as orphans. Bearing in mind the age limits of this study, the figure is a conservative estimate. It appears there was no obvious rationale for selection for apprenticeship, other than perhaps a higher likelihood to be bound if orphaned.

⁹⁶⁸ Brown, *Blincoe*, p. 13.

⁹⁶⁹ See p. 213.

⁹⁷⁰ Kirby, *Industrial Health*, pp. 78, 156.

⁹⁷¹ See pp. 203-4.

⁹⁷² Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 52-3.

⁹⁷³ M. Crowther, *The Workhouse System, 1834-1929: The History of an English Social Institution* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 203, using figures from Poor Law Board, *Fourth Report*, p. 99.

⁹⁷⁴ See p. 118.

What, then, were the destinies of those Poor Law children who were not apprenticed? The thesis has shown that some children were still placed in employment by virtue of a hire contract. The Poor Law correspondence provided fascinating insight into this practice, such as the revelation that Bristol children were parcelled off in batches to factories without the protection of indentures.⁹⁷⁵ Humphries also found similar New Poor Law examples of children being shipped off without indentures, as discussed earlier. In many ways, this reflects Griffin's thesis that apprenticeship in general was becoming less formal, as discussed in Chapter 1.⁹⁷⁶ Further examination of Poor Law correspondence for an extended time frame, and of other unions, would help to establish the prevalence and extent of such evolved practice. But formal apprenticeships and hire contracts are still only part of the story.

Under the Old Poor Law, Levene found that for St Marylebone Workhouse between 1769-81, only 7 per cent of children were apprenticed, 15 per cent died, 4 per cent ran away, 13 per cent were sent out to a nurse, but the majority, 56 per cent, were simply discharged, often to their parents.⁹⁷⁷ As Crompton explained: 'For the majority of pauper children in the workhouse the institution was a short-term expediency sought by parents in time of severe economic conditions...few of these children were apprenticed by the union, because their parents did not ask for help doing this, so that most such children drifted into employment, but there are no records of this and it is difficult to be specific about the outcome'.⁹⁷⁸ Under the New Poor Law in Worcestershire, Crompton found children were adopted, sent to orphanages or relatives, or they absconded, but in contrast to Levene's

⁹⁷⁵ See pp. 217-19.

⁹⁷⁶ See p. 16.

⁹⁷⁷ Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 118. All percentages rounded to nearest whole figure.

⁹⁷⁸ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 213.

findings, the most common outcome was apprenticeship.⁹⁷⁹ He even found some instances of former workhouse officers applying for children, in one case a schoolteacher requesting a child as a servant.⁹⁸⁰ There were also destinations within the workhouse, with children being transferred to different wards due to sickness or lunacy. Workhouse discharge registers help to ascertain alternative paths, and depending on the completeness of the records, they can also be used to establish what proportion of workhouse children became pauper apprentices.

What material is available for Liverpool? Workhouse discharge information for the period survives, including for the focus year of 1861. However, it takes the form of an admissions and discharge ledger in a single document, and so it is not possible to easily identify entries and exits for any given year, as the material is arranged alphabetically by surname and their date of admission. In addition, the reason for discharge is generally not recorded, although sometimes there are entries marked ‘died’, ‘absconded’, or sent to ‘Industrial School’.⁹⁸¹ I was able to find one entry that matched a surviving LSV indenture: John Kennedy was recorded as discharged to ‘Factory’ in June 1861, matching the name on an indenture for a 13 year old boy for the same date who was sent to a factory in Burnley.⁹⁸² Alas, the exploration of these discharge registers is a separate, extensive research project outside the remit of this study, but again offers direction for future research. Coupled with the potential Poor Law correspondence investigation identified above, the study of workhouse discharge registers could shed light on other outcomes for Poor Law children. However, although the Liverpool workhouse discharge register is

⁹⁷⁹ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 48.

⁹⁸⁰ Crompton, *Workhouse*, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁸¹ LRO, 353 SEL 19/12 & 13.

⁹⁸² LRO, 353 SEL 19/12 & 13; 353 SEL 12/1/317, 4 June 1861.

complex and disappointingly silent on many destinations at discharge, I was able to consult an additional source that contained richer detail.

LSV's industrial school kept a discharge register of its own. Data exists for 1863-5, arranged chronologically.⁹⁸³ Again, extensive review is beyond the scope of this research, but examination of the register for 1863 provides insight. The register recorded eight destinations for those discharged: 1) to workhouse relations; 2) given to friends; 3) to workhouse for ailments; 4) to workhouse for misconduct; 5) appointed pupil teacher or nurse; 6) absconded; 7) sent to service; and 8) dead. In total 125 children left the school in 1863; the most frequently recorded reasons were return to relations, absconding or service. Whether 'service' refers to domestic service or is a broader term for apprenticeship is not clear. It seems those apprenticed are not recorded at all in this register; the entries marked as service record the child being sent to a named individual at a residential address, which certainly suggests domestic service. I selected a sample of eight individuals discharged in this manner, entirely at random, and none matched any existing LSV indentures. A Poor Law inspection report of 1867 also records the destinations of those leaving the school, with very similar outcomes to the register entries.⁹⁸⁴ A total of 35 children left: 1 was sent to friends, 21 returned to the workhouse, 1 died, 4 absconded and 8 were placed in service. Therefore both these documents suggest that direct placements into service occurred, despite the taint girls acquired from residence in the workhouse as discussed in Chapter 3.⁹⁸⁵ These were likely far from salubrious placements: Crompton found parallel evidence concluding that 'girls from workhouses were cheap to employ as domestic servants outside

⁹⁸³ LRO, 353 SEL/22.

⁹⁸⁴ TNA, MH12/5980, Folios 210-14, 21 May 1867.

⁹⁸⁵ See p. 97.

the workhouse, in fact so cheap that even working-class people could afford them'.⁹⁸⁶ This suggests another area for further exploration.

Poor Law correspondence reveals one final mode of despatch of the workhouse child. By 1870 the Poor Law began to use emigration as a vent to relieve pressure in the workhouses: Parr found that between 1868 and 1925 approximately 80,000 children were sent to Canada as agricultural labourers or domestic servants.⁹⁸⁷ Yet emigration was also occurring in earlier decades; a letter to the Poor Law Board from LSV in 1852 contained a list of 'persons desirous of emigrating to Australia' including the children of adults wishing to leave. Those under 14 were given no designated occupation, but occupations for those over 14 included domestic servant and labourer.⁹⁸⁸ The Poor Law Board Annual Report of 1851 accounted for the passage of 406 boys and 365 girls to Australia.⁹⁸⁹ Henry Price of Warminster workhouse, one of Humphries' autobiographers, emigrated; after an abortive pauper apprenticeship as a carpenter (he was returned after his trial), and regular stints in the workhouse, the guardians paid for his passage to New York to join his grandmother.⁹⁹⁰

Finally, let us turn to the fate of the charity child. Here outcomes were more certain, as institutions such as the Marine Society were popular with poor parents precisely because apprenticeship was guaranteed. As Chapter 4 detailed, parents actively brought their boys to the Society's headquarters in London.⁹⁹¹ The Society was not a residential institution but merely a staging point, which in itself ensured a subsequent placement. The

⁹⁸⁶ Crompton, *Workhouse*, p. 52.

⁹⁸⁷ J. Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 11.

⁹⁸⁸ TNA, MH12/5969, Folios 399-400, 9 Oct. 1852.

⁹⁸⁹ Poor Law Board, *Fourth Report*, p. 6.

⁹⁹⁰ Humphries, *Childhood*, pp. 303-4.

⁹⁹¹ See p. 166.

same would likely also have been the case with Southampton's Thorner charity which successfully placed boys with local craftsmen. Levene also found that admission to the charity school Christ's hospital was much sought after as it practically guaranteed a respectable craft apprenticeship.⁹⁹² The available port evidence, from Liverpool's Female Orphan Asylum and Southampton's RMA, illustrates that children residing in charitable institutions were also virtually assured apprenticeships, either with relatives, or into service. The RMA registers also revealed that children were apprenticed to factories, a type of placement more usually associated with the Poor Law. There is no evidence in either institution's registers of hirings; disposal was always by way of apprenticeship, to ensure that the responsibility for the child was offloaded. Several examples have been given earlier of the RMA's repeated dogmatic avoidance of responsibility when things went wrong during the apprenticeship, illustrating their determination to be legally rid of the burden that their charges represented.⁹⁹³

Obviously children resident in these institutions experienced the other outcomes listed above: dying and absconding were not exclusive to the Poor Law. Three Female Orphan Asylum apprentices fared very differently: Elizabeth Jones 'left the institution without leave and was not allowed to return', while Mary Gitton was judged 'rather peculiar, not very intelligent, considered of unsound mind', and sent to the workhouse.⁹⁹⁴ But remember also the happy ending detailed in Chapter 3 for 10 year old Helen Fitzgerald, claimed by a long lost aunt in New York.⁹⁹⁵ For those who remained, fates were certain compared to their Poor Law counterparts. The type of institution

⁹⁹² Levene, 'Charity Apprenticeship'.

⁹⁹³ See pp. 141, 146.

⁹⁹⁴ LRO, 362 SAL 9/1/1/111, May 1850; 362 SAL 9/1/1/135, 16 June 1851.

⁹⁹⁵ See p. 102.

predetermined their apprenticeship; for the boys associated with the Marine Society, a life at sea beckoned, for the female institutions, generally the call of service. The RMA had a clear selection policy for their factory placements; only orphans were sent to the Northern factories. Chapter 5 described how those who had no relatives, or were not claimed, were disposed of in this manner, as the RMA required its charges to leave in their fourteenth year.⁹⁹⁶

It could be argued that overall pauper apprenticeship accounted only for a small minority of working children, and perhaps most importantly, possibly only a significant minority within the Poor Law itself. My estimate that only 3-4 per cent of Liverpool's indoor working age Poor Law children in 1861 were apprenticed in this manner supports such a conclusion, but again, it must be stressed that this is a very conservative estimate, for a single union in a single year. Cumulatively such proportions would have amounted to an important contribution to the labour force. No historian has been able to definitively state the numbers involved, but research by Honeyman and Levene has documented the flows of children under the Old Poor Law. The finding that pauper apprenticeship persisted well into the New Poor Law suggests a reappraisal of available evidence is necessary, with a requirement to cast the net wider in terms of sources and to extend time periods and possible upper age limits. Undoubtedly other methods of disposal also need to be researched more deeply, and the workhouse discharge registers and Poor Law correspondence offer an opportunity to uncover evidence of not only formal pauper apprenticeships, but also more informal methods of providing employment.

⁹⁹⁶ See p. 201.

It is important to understand how pauper apprentices fitted into the world of children's work more generally, an issue touched upon in Chapter 6 which examined the most popular jobs for boys and girls, comparing the port town as a whole with the national picture, noting some interesting divergences, principally resulting from the economic influence of the sea and the strong presence of traditional trades.⁹⁹⁷ Looking at the pauper apprentices in the wider economy of the port itself, and the types of jobs and locations they undertook in comparison with the jobs performed by other poor children, offers further understanding. Census data is of course the key source to provide this information. It was noted above that children under 15 accounted for around one third of each of the populations of the three port towns, with working age children (10-14) accounting for 9-10 per cent. These figures also broadly reflect national proportions, as illustrated in Table 7.1 above.

As noted above, pauper apprentices may have been a minority of working children; in 1861, I estimated that around 3-4 per cent of Liverpool's Poor Law children of working age were apprenticed, which would equate to just 0.2 per cent of the 24,787 10-14 year olds recorded in the port in that year. How do we find out what other working children were doing? The Census Summary Tables contain detailed occupational data, with breakdowns for each port, making it possible to compare the indenture data with the occupational profile of the town. Although the tables denote adult and youth occupations, unfortunately the breakdown for youth occupations is presented only as a count of all those under 20, so the inclusion of workers aged 15-19 clouds a direct comparison with the indenture data. Nevertheless the census serves as a useful indicator of the child labour

⁹⁹⁷ See pp. 241-4.

market.⁹⁹⁸ Once again, Liverpool in 1861 will be used as a working example to demonstrate how these sources could be deployed to investigate whether or not pauper apprentices were woven into the fabric of the port economy, or if employment for them had to be sought elsewhere.

Table 7.3 below lists the top ten jobs for males in Liverpool in 1861. As noted earlier, 50 children were bound by LSV in this year, 42 of whom were boys. The table clearly illustrates that not all of the pauper boys were absorbed into the local economy, as the top two occupations were manufacturing, which was located away from the port, and accounts for 28 boys. Thus two thirds were sent away, with the remaining third being placed locally. The maritime influence is evident as seaman is the top local occupation, while traditional trades provided a job for the other LSV boys.

⁹⁹⁸ Further breakdown in five year segments is available only for Lancashire as a whole. Thus original returns would have to be consulted to ascertain the Liverpool breakdown further.

Table 7.3 Top ten jobs for males, Liverpool 1861

| | Under 20 years | 20 years and upwards | Pauper apprentices |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Messenger | Deck servant | Cotton manufacture |
| 2 | Seaman | Seaman | Bobbin manufacture |
| 3 | Commercial clerk | Labourer | Seaman |
| 4 | Labourer | Carpenter/joiner | Tailor |
| 5 | Deck servant | Shoemaker | Hairdresser |
| 6 | Plumber | Commercial clerk | Grocer |
| 7 | Carter | Messenger | Shoemaker |
| 8 | Carpenter/joiner | Carter | Watchmaker |
| 9 | Shoemaker | Shipbuilder | Pawnbroker |
| 10 | Iron manufacture | Tailor | Wheelwright |

Sources: 1861 Census Summary Tables, pt. 2, pp. 648-52.
Indenture data, Liverpool indentures 1861.

Table 7.3 shows that traditional trades also provided employment for Liverpool's other working children, but what is striking is that the influence of the maritime economy appears more pervasive, directly with seaman and deck servant appearing in the top ten for those under 20, but also indirectly with occupations connected with maritime commerce, such as messenger, clerk, and carter. This very much reflects the adult occupational profile. Shipbuilding and iron manufacture also feature; we know that iron manufacture absorbed a lot of child day labour from the Children's Employment Commission reports.⁹⁹⁹ Although not in the top ten, the reports also document children working in other maritime industries, such as ropemaking.¹⁰⁰⁰ Jobs attached to port functions appear unavailable to apprentices. Chapter 3 discussed how the maritime sector found no difficulty in hiring casual child labour for a daily rate, which suited the organization and fluctuations of trade, and so creating interest in signing up to indentures. For example,

⁹⁹⁹ CEC, Second report 1843, M45-50.

¹⁰⁰⁰ CEC 1862, Fifth report 1866, pp. 88-90.

there was no real training aspect required to perform roles such as a messenger or carter. Even in occupations that might be perceived as more skilled, employers were simply looking for the cheapest source of labour. Just as Chapter 3 discussed the change in traditional processes of shoemaking causing deskilling and the creation of specific roles for children, similar changes in the iron industry also led to a requirement for cheap hands to focus on single monotonous tasks.¹⁰⁰¹

Chapter 3 noted that Levene and Crompton also found that pauper apprenticeships did not match the employment profiles of the towns they studied.¹⁰⁰² Table 7.3 supports their findings as it confirms that casual work (not only in the maritime sector, but also as general labourers) provided many jobs for working children, making up a significant part of the local labour force. It seems that LSV replaced this type of work with bindings to factories further afield, but were also able to tap into both traditional trades in the port, as well as sea apprenticeships, essentially occupations that were suited to indentures. This is a pattern found for other years too. Table 6.3 in Chapter 6 illustrated that Liverpool indentures for the whole period of study, rather than the snapshot of 1861, also show the significance of bindings to traditional trades and the sea, as well as manufacture.¹⁰⁰³ Clearly the pattern of pauper apprenticeship is a response to the local labour market, but not exclusively so. Undoubtedly guardians could not bind boys to the casual port work, but Table 7.3 demonstrates that traditional trades and the sea did offer opportunities, so why did they not bind *all* their boys to these sectors? Of course it may simply be that there were not enough of such opportunities, but the temptation to transfer children's settlement must not be forgotten. As discussed earlier, settlement was the key to the longevity of the

¹⁰⁰¹ See p. 77.

¹⁰⁰² See p. 88-9.

¹⁰⁰³ See p. 241.

practice of pauper apprenticeship; binding boys further afield as well as in port was an active, advantageous policy decision.

Can a similar pattern be ascertained for Liverpool's girls? Table 7.4 below illustrates starkly that in 1861, no girl was indentured in the port.¹⁰⁰⁴ All 8 LSV girls were sent to cotton factories; and even if Liverpool female bindings for the entire period of study are considered, Table 6.5 in Chapter 6 showed that girls were predominantly sent away to all types of cloth manufacture.¹⁰⁰⁵ Some girls were placed into domestic service, the top employer of working girls in the port, but the factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire were the prime destinations for LSV girls. As Chapter 6 concluded, unlike for boys, factory apprenticeship was actively favoured for girls, and in contrast to the female employment profile of the port, which was dominated by service and dressmaking.¹⁰⁰⁶ Chapter 3 discussed the reasons why these two sectors recruited fewer pauper apprentices. Despite the long hours, dressmaking attracted respectable girls, and households did not want servants tainted with the stigma of the Poor Law.¹⁰⁰⁷ As mooted above, further research using workhouse registers might reveal whether guardians were actually more successful in placing girls directly into service. However, indenture evidence suggests there was little option but to bind girls to the factories because of the lack of opportunities for apprenticeship in the local labour market; removing the settlement burden was simply an added bonus. Evidently it was much more difficult to apprentice girls compared with boys within the port economy.

¹⁰⁰⁴ A top five comparison has been made to complement Table 6.5 on p. 243, reflecting the lesser choice of trades available to females, as discussed pp. 152, 294.

¹⁰⁰⁵ See p. 243.

¹⁰⁰⁶ See p. 277-8.

¹⁰⁰⁷ See pp. 81, 97.

Table 7.4 Top five jobs for females, Liverpool 1861

| | Under 20 years | 20 years and upwards | Pauper apprentices |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Domestic servant | Domestic servant | Cotton manufacture |
| 2 | Milliner/dressmaker | Milliner/dressmaker | |
| 3 | Nurse | Laundress | |
| 4 | General teacher | Charwoman | |
| 5 | Seamstress | Seamstress | |

Sources: 1861 Census Summary Tables, pt. 2, pp. 652-54.
Indenture data, Liverpool indentures 1861.

It must be emphasised that for both boys and girls, these are just the findings for a single port in a single year; if the same exercise was undertaken for each port and for each of the census years, different patterns may be revealed. For example, in Southampton, a large number of RMA girls were bound to domestic service, better reflecting the town's occupational profile. Once again this serves to illustrate the uniqueness of local factors. Liverpool in 1861 is merely an example to illustrate the methods that could be adopted for extending this research. Combined with the potential further research identified earlier, comparison with the census occupational tables would contribute to obtaining a clearer understanding of the significance of pauper apprentices and Poor Law children within the wider economy of children's work in ports. It would also be informative to contrast the port research with a different type of urban centre. For example, it would be interesting to see if pauper apprentices constituted a much more significant proportion of the child workforce in manufacturing centres.

This study's use of Poor Law correspondence on the subject of pauper apprenticeship has put New Poor Law practices under the microscope. A great deal has been written about this era as seeing the origins of the future welfare state, as the Victorians began to acknowledge that state and society could no longer be neatly

separated.¹⁰⁰⁸ ‘From the 1860s onwards there were many movements and pressures – economic, social, political and intellectual – conspiring to alter the character of the British state and to promote a wider conception of its role. The changing nature and increasing scale of economic organization meant that local and voluntary provision was increasingly inadequate to provide social infrastructure for economic life’.¹⁰⁰⁹ This ushered in a new dawn of growing centralization in both the public and charity sectors.

Considering first the public sphere, and the development of Poor Law post-1834, the study of pauper apprenticeship illustrates the evolution towards a social service state, in terms of both concern for children’s welfare, but significantly, also the growing acceptance of increasing government intervention. Pauper apprenticeship persisted, reflecting perhaps the recognition of the responsibility of the state in determining the course of children’s lives. Crucially, the Poor Law correspondence demonstrates the involvement of officials in shaping children’s welfare and affording protection, contributing to Honeyman’s revisionist verdict that officials did act with a modicum of care and attention.¹⁰¹⁰ The numbers of inspection reports prior to factory placement contained in the Poor Law correspondence of the 1860s suggests a diligent process very much centred on the interests of the children, with all aspects of their welfare examined, demonstrating growing awareness of the state’s responsibility towards children’s welfare. Viewed in isolation this may appear the case, but as Chapter 5 argued, when read in the context of the full chain of correspondence, together with the frequency and formulaic

¹⁰⁰⁸ See in particular P. Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State* (London: Longman, 1982) [hereafter, Thane, *Welfare State*]; J. Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1994) [hereafter, Harris, *Private Lives*] and B. Harris, *The Origins of the British Welfare State: Society, State and Social Welfare in England and Wales, 1800-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) [hereafter, Harris, *Welfare State*].

¹⁰⁰⁹ Harris, *Private Lives*, p. 181.

¹⁰¹⁰ See p. 226.

character of these reports, it becomes clear that children's welfare was not the principal driver of such placements.¹⁰¹¹

A cynical interpretation might be that concern was for society rather than the individual child, and that pauper apprenticeship was a means of social control, removing children from the contagion of idle parents, offering a functional solution to avoid future burden on the rates.¹⁰¹² The Poor Law correspondence invites a direct counter opinion to Honeyman's view of compassionate Old Poor Law officials; it could be argued that the New Poor Law brought about deterioration in the treatment of children, for example, consignment to factories taking place without even the protection of indentures.

Whatever the underlying motive, in some areas there were improvements in accountability, albeit for those children being placed in the most visible and newest of industries, the factories. By the end of the period different approaches were beginning to have some impact. As noted above, emigration was increasingly used, but there was also a move towards boarding children out in place of apprenticeship. The continued use of pauper apprenticeship needs to be examined further, not only to include other unions within the same time period, but also post-1870. A pilot survey of the post-1870 Poor Law correspondence of the ports suggests that apprenticeship continued even after this date, and that it would be prudent to review records as far as 1890.

What is particularly striking from the Poor Law correspondence is what it tells us about the actual pace of evolution, that is, the difference between the impression the legislation gives of progress, compared with actual events at ground level. The introduction of overarching processes was not straightforward, nor was the letter of the law

¹⁰¹¹ See p. 221.

¹⁰¹² See p. 214.

strictly obeyed. Rather, the reality on the ground embodied a more flexible, interpretative approach. Chapter 5 provided several illuminating examples. My research suggests that although 1834 marked the appearance of centralization and rigid control, in practice the local governing authorities often regressed to old trusted methods when under pressure. For example, the intention of the New Poor Law was to end temporary relief, yet there were several examples from Southampton Corporation's correspondence requesting sanction to provide small amounts for boys of local families to be outfitted for sea apprenticeship, demonstrating essentially a pragmatic approach as likely more cost effective than receiving another entrant into the workhouse.¹⁰¹³

How was it that localities could act in this manner? 'A growth in the provision of social welfare during the closing years of the Old Poor Law meant that some parishes and unions approximated to a welfare state in miniature'.¹⁰¹⁴ The evidence from all three ports bears testament to this, particularly as both Bristol and Southampton were early examples of incorporation. The thesis shines a spotlight on legislative interpretation at the front line. It is important to note that the Poor Law Board was not introducing new legislation with regard to pauper apprenticeship, merely issuing directives in the form of Orders interpreting the 1834 Act, which lacked definitive apprenticeship regulations. The centre advocated administrative improvement, but the localities implemented the Orders issued with varying levels of compliance. My evidence demonstrates the ongoing dialogue between the central authority and three strong, independent local unions, with the Poor Law Board issuing their guidance, and local officials choosing to either adopt or disregard

¹⁰¹³ See p. 167.

¹⁰¹⁴ Digby, *Poor Law*, p. 8.

as they saw fit. This is a pattern noted by other historians, as discussed in Chapter 6.¹⁰¹⁵ As Digby observed: ‘Centralization in the relief administration after 1834 was a convenient fiction to which public lip service was paid by the inspectors, while they acknowledged privately that effective power lay in the localities’.¹⁰¹⁶

The persisting autonomy at local level is unsurprising given that in the initial decades post-1834, much of the local structure remained the same; workhouses occupied the same premises, and the Boards of Guardians were made up by the same people who had served as Overseers. Over time this changed as guardians were determined by election, and their social composition moved away from the local elite to include tradesmen and artisans.¹⁰¹⁷ But whatever the composition of those in charge, ultimately the Poor Law was still financed and controlled locally, indeed Digby lamented that the ‘opportunity for radical reform, which would have occurred if a national system of taxation had been given responsibility for financing the Poor Law, was allowed to slip by’.¹⁰¹⁸ Ultimately then, central authority did not have power to ensure enforcement, having to rely on its ‘agents in the field’, the assistant commissioners and inspectors, to enforce the Orders issued.¹⁰¹⁹ This was compounded by its weak structural position, as the administration was not made a permanent department of state until 1867.¹⁰²⁰ Further, the very concept of Poor Law unions took time to take root, as it redefined notions of community. Although 1834 established the principle of amalgamation for poor relief

¹⁰¹⁵ See p. 220.

¹⁰¹⁶ Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, p. 75.

¹⁰¹⁷ Digby, *Poor Law*, p. 16.

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁰²⁰ M. Rose, ‘The crisis of poor relief in England, 1850-90’, in W. Mommsen (ed.), *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany, 1850-90* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) [hereafter, Rose, *Crisis*], p. 59.

purposes, it was not until 1865 that unions became complete units, with poor relief coming from rates levied across the union as a whole; until this date rates were still collected on a parish basis.¹⁰²¹

The divergence between legislation and implementation highlighted by this thesis has also been noted in other administrative areas. For example, in her thesis on truancy, Sheldon examined the dilemma faced by local education authorities in agricultural areas.¹⁰²² At the end of the nineteenth century, school attendance was more likely to be enforced in urban areas than in places that afforded opportunities for child labour to supplement the family income. Sheldon concluded that the legislation was in effect more of an ‘enabling’ directive. Local schooling was implemented through bye-laws, taking many years to achieve the compulsory school attendance envisaged by the 1870 Act; indeed Sheldon argued that implementation of education followed established structures, such as the Poor Law, being led by local initiatives.¹⁰²³

The pauper apprenticeship evidence also reflects the growth of bureaucracy during this period. Although the aim of centralization was to unify practices, this did not mean streamlining, as it inaugurated an expansion in the numbers of civil servants. The volume of Poor Law correspondence clearly demonstrates the increasing professionalism of the Poor Law Board. The correspondence ranges from pro-forma dealing with management issues, such as the appointment of workhouse staff, to extremely detailed exchanges about pauper apprenticeship. Chapter 5 discussed in detail the correspondence passing between the Board and local officials over proposed batches of apprentices, debates which dragged

¹⁰²¹ See footnote 860, p. 280.

¹⁰²² N. Sheldon, ‘School Attendance 1880-1939: a study of policy and practice in response to the problem of truancy’, University of Oxford, D. Phil., 2007, p. 210.

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 42-3.

on for months.¹⁰²⁴ The Poor Law Board's ability to inspect, report and advise brought new levels of scrutiny. 'Local autonomy was not so much overthrown by frontal assaults, in the form of policy directives from a central authority, as insidiously submerged under expert advice and bureaucratic red tape'.¹⁰²⁵ The growth of bureaucracy was not just a product of central government as local guardians had to respond to this prodigious output. The previous unit of local government, the parish, was replaced by the Poor Law Union, and with that an evolution towards elected, paid officials. Guardians had to take more time to engage with the increasing correspondence and management issues; perhaps with that also came their confidence to challenge central authority, their deep involvement fuelling their convictions. Green argued that the Poor Law was not just about the poor as it affected the lives of ratepayers, guardians, magistrates, and philanthropists.¹⁰²⁶ By using the Poor Law correspondence, my thesis successfully reaches into the minds of the bureaucrats, the voice from above, those responsible for the future of Britain's most vulnerable children.

This study examines pauper apprenticeship until 1870. Shortly after this, in 1871, the Poor Law Board was replaced by the Local Government Board. Its function expanded, not only overseeing the Poor Law, but in addition other issues of increasing importance and in need of state direction, such as sanitation and public health. This reflected the public mood towards limiting poor relief, with a new emphasis on promoting philanthropic intervention as a substitute for public assistance, while expanding the state's role in other areas.¹⁰²⁷ But as this study has demonstrated, philanthropy was an important part of the

¹⁰²⁴ See pp. 212-22.

¹⁰²⁵ Digby, *Poor Law*, p. 15.

¹⁰²⁶ Green, *Pauper Capital*, p. xi.

¹⁰²⁷ Harris, *Private Lives*, p. 198.

welfare patchwork prior to the late nineteenth century, with the apprenticeship of children being an established method of assistance, as illustrated by the Marine Society and RMA records, and other studies of charities as cited in Chapter 1.¹⁰²⁸

If the Poor Law evidence illustrates great diversity in approach, this was even truer of charities, as operation of their apprenticeship schemes varied considerably. Modes of assistance could range from the more formal institutions of the nineteenth century, like the RMA with its detailed records, to small local estate legacies for apprenticing poor children, as eighteenth-century evidence from Bristol and Southampton demonstrated, with many parishes administering charitable endowments. Even under the New Poor Law, Southampton Corporation amalgamated smaller gifts into a single Municipal Charities fund, which was often used for apprenticeship premiums.¹⁰²⁹ Just as with the public sphere, the drive towards centralization also impacted charities: ‘The faults of private benevolence, unorganized and indiscriminating as it was, to a degree paralleled those of the old Poor Law, and called for some of the same rationalizing treatment’.¹⁰³⁰

The change in the charity sector was a move away from personal patronage and endowments towards more organised schemes with social control and moral reform at its core, such as the Sunday school and temperance movements. In Bristol, Gorsky found endowments gave way to more specific actions of voluntarism, such as subscriber charities to establish schools.¹⁰³¹ Again, mirroring developments in the Poor Law, a new distinction was made between the deserving and non-deserving poor, as it was believed unorganised charity encouraged pauperism merely treating symptoms, not causes, and corrupting the

¹⁰²⁸ See p. 27.

¹⁰²⁹ See pp. 26, 42, 237.

¹⁰³⁰ Owen, *Philanthropy*, p. 138.

¹⁰³¹ Gorsky, *Philanthropy*, pp. 58-60.

poor giving them no incentive to improve.¹⁰³² The Central Relief Society formed in Liverpool in 1863 by William Rathbone embodied these new ideas, and was a forerunner for the national centralized charity scheme that materialised at the end of the decade.¹⁰³³ ‘The size and variety of charitable effort and the absence of universal or consistent principles underlying such activities was a major reason for the foundation of the Charity Organization Society in 1869’.¹⁰³⁴ Although it aimed to reform and strengthen the haphazard nature of charity schemes, the society proved unsuccessful as in practice it was too moralistic, operating very intrusive investigative processes; ironically it had a reputation for being even harsher than the Poor Law.¹⁰³⁵ By end of the nineteenth century, people like Booth had done much to highlight how poverty could be the result of circumstances beyond an individual’s control, for example, in port towns in the cyclical nature of the maritime trades, such as shipbuilding and dock work, and the associated casual nature of employment. Industrialism changed the nature of poverty, which in turn demanded state intervention.

The Victorians reluctantly came to accept that greater government intervention was necessary to remedy the social ills brought on by the new industrial landscape: ‘New ways of thinking led to major changes in the relationship between central and local government, and the role of the state in relation to social policy’.¹⁰³⁶ Administration of the Poor Laws was one of the first areas to see the enhanced role of the state, which would later expand to

¹⁰³² Harris, *Private Lives*, pp. 238-9.

¹⁰³³ Rose, *Crisis*, pp. 61-3.

¹⁰³⁴ Thane, *Welfare State*, p. 21.

¹⁰³⁵ R. Humphreys, *Sin, Organized Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 68.

¹⁰³⁶ Harris, *Welfare State*, p. 39.

include other elements of welfare such as public health, education, and housing.¹⁰³⁷ Development in the philanthropic sector matched this, so in both sectors important steps were made towards the evolution of the social service state. But for the period of this study, it is important to emphasise that these steps were subject to the tensions between local administrators and central officials whose immediate interests and concerns were not always aligned. As a result it was often one step forward, two steps back. Pauper apprenticeship as an institution perfectly illustrates this far from uniformly progressive evolution, the children passing through it subject to its sometimes regressive implications.

The conclusions that are drawn from the thesis are not final. On the contrary, they suggest that further research is required to reinforce and develop these findings and give added weight to the call to revise the historiography. The thesis places the issues back into the arena for debate, with my sources suggesting that both the continued use of pauper apprenticeship and other more informal methods of placing pauper children need to be examined, not only for other unions within my time period, but also post-1870.

It is left only to speculate why this research may have meaning and importance in a wider context in the world today. Children's work remains a serious problem. Chapter 1 reported that there were 168 million child labourers around the world, the subject of ongoing debate about causes, consequence and meaning of their status.¹⁰³⁸ Much has been said about the effectiveness of legislation in eradicating the problem, specifically looking at the lessons learnt from industrial era Britain. Just as Third World child labour re-opens debate about the use of children in the industrial revolution, this research pertains to current debates about how to make welfare systems work effectively, particularly in

¹⁰³⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰³⁸ See pp. 6-7.

developing nations. It invites reflection upon a time when children were actively put to work by the state as well as by parents. A contemporary observation of 1862 is a fitting place to end, as the statement is as relevant today as it was then. Bristol ropewalk owner William Terrell told the Children's Employment Commission that 'to improve the condition of working children generally, the persons whom it is most important to reach are not the manufacturers but the parents'.¹⁰³⁹ In many cases, children's work was necessary for the survival of the family unit. With thousands of destitute children on their hands, both Poor Law and charity officials acted in the same manner as parents faced with hungry mouths to feed. The word 'parents' in Terrell's statement could easily be substituted with 'officials'; the thesis has demonstrated their eagerness to pursue factory owners, bind children to low skilled impoverished trades in traditional occupations, and train boys up for sea service with little thought for their long term wellbeing, and sometimes even batch children off without even the protection of an indenture. Crucially, these practices persisted late in the nineteenth century, under the New Poor Law. Honeyman commented on a pronouncement from the classic Poor Law text by the Webbs: "What the Poor Law administrators were thinking about was merely how to get the boy off their hands". It is difficult to find a historian, or even a contemporary commentator, who does not express this opinion. What is missing is conclusive, supporting evidence'.¹⁰⁴⁰ This thesis has perhaps found this evidence, and such an important and exciting discovery deserves further attention.

¹⁰³⁹ CEC 1862, *Fifth report 1866*, p. 113.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Honeyman, *Child Workers*, p. 25, citing S. Webb and B. Webb, *English Local Government, Vol. 7, English Poor Law History Part 1 the Old Poor Law* (7 vols.), (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1927), p. 197.

8. Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1

Table 8.1 Detailed breakdown of Manufacture

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Baking | Baker | 7 |
| | Baker & confectioner | 1 |
| | Confectioner | 4 |
| | Pastry cook | 1 |
| Baking Total | | 13 |
| Carriages & Harness | Bridlebit maker | 1 |
| | Coach builder | 7 |
| | Coachmaker | 1 |
| | Saddler | 4 |
| | Wheelwright | 1 |
| | Whipmaker | 1 |
| Carriages & Harness Total | | 15 |
| Copper, Tin, Lead etc. | Brass & copper worker | 1 |
| | Brass founder & coppersmith | 2 |
| | Brazier | 2 |
| | Brightsmith | 2 |
| | Coppersmith | 1 |
| | Tin plate worker | 1 |
| | Whitesmith | 3 |
| | Wireworker | 2 |
| Copper, Tin, Lead etc. Total | | 14 |
| Cotton & Silk | Cotton Spinner | 1 |
| | Cotton Weaver | 3 |
| | Frame Knitter | 1 |
| | Weaver | 1 |
| Cotton & Silk Total | | 6 |
| Continued overleaf | | |

Table 8.1 Detailed breakdown of Manufacture

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Dress | Boot & shoemaker | 79 |
| | Boot closer | 7 |
| | Bootmaker | 3 |
| | Clog & shoemaker | 1 |
| | Clogger | 5 |
| | Clogmaker | 1 |
| | Collarmaker | 1 |
| | Cordwainer | 50 |
| | Corset maker | 1 |
| | Dressmaker | 10 |
| | Glover | 2 |
| | Hat maker | 1 |
| | Hatter | 2 |
| | Heel & patternmaker | 2 |
| | Heelmaker | 1 |
| | Mantua Maker | 2 |
| | Milliner | 1 |
| | Milliner & dressmaker | 1 |
| | Needleworker | 1 |
| | Patternmaker | 1 |
| | Shoe & clogmaker | 2 |
| | Shoemaker | 42 |
| | Staymaker | 2 |
| | Staymaker & tailor | 1 |
| Stockingmaker | 1 | |
| Straw hat maker | 1 | |
| Tailor | 87 | |
| Dress Total | | 308 |

Continued overleaf

Table 8.1 Detailed breakdown of Manufacture

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dyeing | Dyer | 2 |
| Earthenware etc. | Glass cutter | 1 |
| | Pipemaker | 1 |
| | Potter | 1 |
| Earthenware etc. Total | | 3 |
| Flax, Hemp etc. | Flaxdresser | 1 |
| | Ready made linen | 1 |
| | Ropemaker | 2 |
| Flax, Hemp etc. Total | | 4 |
| Furniture | Cabinetmaker | 9 |
| | Cabinetmaker & joiner | 1 |
| | Cabinetmaker & upholsterer | 1 |
| | Carver | 1 |
| | Carver & gilder | 2 |
| | Chairmaker | 3 |
| Furniture Total | | 17 |
| Furs & Leather | Currier | 2 |
| | Holsterer | 1 |
| Furs & Leather Total | | 3 |
| Glue, Tallow etc. | Soap boiler & chandler | 1 |
| | Soapboiler | 1 |
| | Tallow Chandler | 1 |
| Glue, Tallow etc. Total | | 3 |
| Gold, Silver and Jewellery | Goldsmith | 1 |
| Hair | Brushmaker | 2 |
| Iron & Steel | Blacksmith | 12 |
| | Nailer | 1 |
| | Smith | 1 |
| Iron & Steel Total | | 14 |
| Continued overleaf | | |

Table 8.1 Detailed breakdown of Manufacture

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Iron & Steel/Copper, Tin, Lead etc. | Iron and Zinc worker | 1 |
| Machinery | Millwright | 1 |
| Printing & Bookbinding | Book binder | 1 |
| | Printer | 3 |
| Printing & Bookbinding Total | | 4 |
| Shipbuilding | Blockmaker | 6 |
| | Boat builder | 1 |
| | Sailmaker | 1 |
| | Shipbuilder widow | 1 |
| | Ships carpenter | 2 |
| | Shipwright | 2 |
| Shipbuilding Total | | 13 |
| Tools etc. | Cutler | 1 |
| | Edge toolmaker | 1 |
| | Gun lockmaker | 1 |
| | Gunsmith | 1 |
| | Toolmaker | 1 |
| Tools etc. Total | | 5 |
| Watches, Instruments & Toys | Clockmaker | 1 |
| | Watch dial painter | 2 |
| | Watch finisher | 1 |
| | Watch tool maker | 1 |
| | Watch-glass maker | 1 |
| | Watchmaker | 16 |
| | Watch-wheel maker | 1 |
| Watches, Instruments & Toys Total | | 23 |
| Continued overleaf | | |

Table 8.1 Detailed breakdown of Manufacture

| Subcategory | Trade | No. of indentures |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Wood workers | Basketmaker | 6 |
| | Cooper | 6 |
| | Cork cutter | 4 |
| | Hooper | 2 |
| | Lastmaker | 1 |
| | Saddle tree maker | 2 |
| | Trunkmaker | 1 |
| | Turner | 1 |
| | Wine cooper | 1 |
| Wood workers Total | | 24 |
| Woollens | Quilter | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 477 |

Source: Indenture data.

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