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# The Rise of the Parish Welfare State in England, c.1600-1800

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**Abstract:** *The world's first nation-wide, publicly-funded welfare system emerged and solidified in England over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its influence on society and economy in this period was profound, but this article is the first attempt to determine the scale of its impact by examining the amount of money annually spent on relief across the whole period. Drawing on data from 184 widely dispersed parishes over more than two centuries and a new estimate for spending in c.1600, it shows that poor relief experienced alternating phases of rapid expansion, relative stability and occasionally outright retrenchment. Levels of redistribution were pushed higher by both 'supply' and 'demand' factors. Specifically, trends in relief spending are compared to other indices such as population, economic expansion, central government revenues, labourers' wages and inflation to show how the growth of poor relief related to wider demographic and economic changes. Such comparisons make it possible to think more clearly about causation: how much of the growth in spending can be attributed to such developments? While law, demography, inflation and other well-attested factors certainly contributed to the rise of this early modern welfare system, the poor themselves may well have played an important role.*

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At the end of the sixteenth century, the famed Elizabethan poor laws commanded every parish in the kingdom to support their poor residents through local taxation. By around 1800, England's parishes were spending more than £4 million per year on poor relief. This article examines the long-term rise of these so-called 'miniature welfare states' using a new dataset of annual poor relief expenditure from 1600 to the onset of annual national surveys in 1812, based on a sample of 184 parishes from across the country.<sup>1</sup>

The English poor relief system was unique in structure and far-reaching in its impact.<sup>2</sup> The laws that underpinned it were the first of their kind in Europe and the system long remained exceptional in its national scope, its reliance on compulsory taxation, and its creation of a legal duty to relieve the destitute.<sup>3</sup> The effect it had on the lives of ordinary English people was often immense. For many individuals, it provided a vital source of income when they were suffering due to age, illness, disability, family break-down or unemployment. It could, in fact, mean the difference between life and death, helping to explain England's precocious escape from famine by the mid seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> For the ratepayers and parish officials who funded and ran the system, it was a major expense but also a source of status and authority. As such, it became an inescapable part of 'the politics of

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<sup>1</sup> For the terminology of 'welfare state in miniature' and 'miniature welfare states', see Mark Blaug, 'The Poor Law Report Reexamined', *Journal of Economic History*, 24 (1964), p. 229; K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Although the laws also theoretically applied to Wales and very similar laws were passed in Scotland, their histories of poor relief are very different, so this article is limited strictly to England. For elsewhere in Britain, see Joanna Innes, 'The Distinctiveness of the English Poor Laws, 1750-1850' in P. O'Brien and D. Winch (eds.), *The Political Economy of British Historical Experience 1688-1914* (2002); Joanna Innes, 'The State and the Poor: Eighteenth-Century England in European Perspective', in John Brewer and Eckhart Hellmuth (eds), *Rethinking Leviathan* (London, 1999); Rosalind Mitchison, *The Old Poor Law in Scotland: The Experience of Poverty, 1574-1845* (Edinburgh, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> The series of statutes and their provisions – which also concerned vagrancy, endowed charity and much else – are discussed more fully in Marjorie McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge, 2012); Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Basingstoke, 1990). It is now clear that the English system was no longer entirely unique by the late eighteenth century thanks to developments in the Low Countries, but no earlier continental equivalent has yet been found: Thijs Lambrecht and Anne Winter, 'An Old Poor Law on the Continent? Agrarian Capitalism, Poor Taxes, and Village Conflict in Eighteenth-Century Coastal Flanders', *Economic History Review*, 71:4 (2018); Anne Winter and Thijs Lambrecht, 'Migration, Poor Relief and Local Autonomy: Settlement Policies in England and the Southern Low Countries in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, 218 (2013).

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Healey, *The First Century of Welfare: Poverty and Poor Relief in Lancashire, 1620-1730* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 228-9, 253-4.

the parish' throughout the early modern period.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have, with some justification, seen the poor relief system as a key contributing factor in grand narratives of state-formation, economic growth and industrialisation.<sup>6</sup> Historians interested in nineteenth and twentieth century welfare have similarly cited the development of the English system as an important precursor.<sup>7</sup> The rise of this new system did not bring an end to private charity or personal networks of informal support.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the emergence of statutory poor relief had profound consequences for the people of early modern England and, perhaps, the trajectory of the country's long-term development.

Understanding the impact of early modern poor relief has been hampered by a lack of reliable data, especially before the late eighteenth century. This article presents an entirely new dataset and uses it to draw preliminary conclusions about the chronology, context and causes of the rise of the parish welfare system.<sup>9</sup> The article begins by demonstrating the need for new data by reviewing past attempts to measure relief and then provides a new baseline estimate for public relief at the beginning of the period. In the next section, I introduce the

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<sup>5</sup> Keith Wrightson, 'The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England' in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996); Naomi Tadmor, 'Where was Mrs Turner? Governance and Gender in an Eighteenth-Century Village' in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (eds), *Remaking English Society* (Woodbridge, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, c.1550-1640* (Basingstoke, 2000); Michael Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, ca. 1550-1700* (Cambridge, 2000); Innes, 'The State and the Poor'; Larry Patriquin, *Agrarian Capitalism and Poor Relief in England, 1500-1860* (Basingstoke, 2007); Peter Solar, 'Poor Relief and English Economic Development', *Economic History Review*, 50 (1997), pp. 369-74; Peter Lindert, *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge 2004); Naomi Tadmor, 'The Settlement of the Poor and the Rise of the Form in England, c.1662-1780', *Past and Present*, 236 (2017).

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (1998); Lorie Charlesworth, *Welfare's Forgotten Past: A Socio-Legal History of the Poor Law* (Abingdon, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> For recent work on the resilience of non-statutory charity, see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008); Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c.1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), ch. 1-2; Joanna Innes, 'The "Mixed Economy of Welfare" in Early Modern England' in Martin Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London, 1996); Angela Nicholls, *Almshouses in Early Modern England, 1550-1725* (2017); Brodie Waddell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life, 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> All data, including full archival references for each parish, will be made publicly available online. Jonathan Healey and I collected the vast majority of the data and we have discussed methodologies and findings, but he is publishing a separate analysis from a different angle and bears no responsibility for any possible misinterpretations offered here. For his analysis, see Jonathan Healey, 'The Response of the English Poor Law to Economic Shocks, c.1600-1750', *Economic History Review* (forthcoming).

dataset, outlining the research process and the methodology used to calculate national annual relief totals. This section also assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the new data, including its coverage and representativeness. The new index of relief spending is then compared to previous estimates, testing its robustness against the parliamentary surveys of the late eighteenth century and reviewing its implications for contemporary estimates from the seventeenth century. Next, the article analyses chronological trends in relief costs, with special attention to changing rates of annual growth. The new series indicates that poor relief did not grow slowly and steadily across the period, but rather experienced alternating phases of rapid expansion, relative stability and occasionally outright retrenchment. Finally, these trends are compared to other indices such as population, economic expansion, national government revenues, labourers' wages and inflation to show how the growth of poor relief related to wider demographic and economic changes.

This new data shows that welfare expenditure rose faster than increased need in every decade over two centuries, outpacing the combined effects of population growth and inflation. It also comprised an ever-growing proportion of the English economy and of overall fiscal outlays. Indeed, spending on the poor grew significantly faster than wages for agricultural labourers, suggesting that the distance between a pauper and a day labourer probably declined over the period. Such comparisons make it possible to think more clearly about causation: how much of the growth in spending can be attributed to such developments? While law, demography, inflation and other well-attested factors certainly contributed to the rise of this early modern welfare system, the poor themselves may well have played an important role.

## 1. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ON POOR RELIEF

The history of poor relief in England is a well-ploughed field. Even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some contemporaries were interested in the long-term changes in relief costs, leading some men to publish their own calculations, such as John Fransham's *Exact Account of the Charge for Supporting the Poor of the City of Norwich ... for a compleat 100 Years*, which looked back from 1720. By the 1770s, parliament itself was publishing the findings of national investigations into parish disbursements stretching back several decades.<sup>10</sup> Such contemporary calculations provide invaluable data for historians, but they do not allow even the roughest measurement of annual or decadal change at the national level before the final quarter of the eighteenth century.

Modern scholars have tended to address the 'Old Poor Law' qualitatively rather than quantitatively. Beginning with Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1906, they have provided a thorough analysis of the changing legal framework as well as the complex relationships between judges, magistrates, parish officers, ratepayers and the poor themselves.<sup>11</sup> However, some scholars have gone further and measured the rising level of relief costs across multiple

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<sup>10</sup> The reports from 1777 and 1787 were reprinted in *Reports from Committees of the House of Commons* (1803), vol. IX, pp. 297-539 ('Report from the Committee appointed to inspect and consider the Returns made by the Overseers of the Poor ... Together with Abstracts of the said Returns', 1777) and pp. 543-731 ('Report from the Committee on certain Returns, relative to the state of the Poor, and to Charitable Donations', 1787). These reports, along with the report in 1803, were summarised in *Abstract of Answers and Returns under the Act for Procuring Returns Relative to Expense and Maintenance of the Poor in England* (Parliamentary Papers, 1803-4, no. 175).

<sup>11</sup> Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act* (9 vols; 1906-29), VII ('The Old Poor Law'). The scholarship produced since then is vast, but key books from the past two decades that have informed my thinking include Ben-Amos, *Culture*; Lynn Botelho, *Old Age and the English Poor Law, 1500-1700* (Woodbridge, 2004); Healey, *Welfare*; Hindle, *Parish*; David Hitchcock, *Vagrancy in English Culture and Society, 1650-1750* (London, 2016); Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge, 2015); Peter King, *Poverty and Welfare in England, 1700-1850: A Regional Perspective* (Manchester, 2000); Steven King and Alannah Tomkins (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850* (2003); McIntosh, *Poor*; K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging, 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2006); Alannah Tomkins, *The Experience of Urban Poverty, 1723-82* (Manchester, 2006); Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and the Life-Cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760-1834* (Woodbridge, 2011).

localities.<sup>12</sup> By examining changes in poor relief in these specific local contexts, they have been able to offer a much more complete account of the causes and consequences of such changes at a parochial level than is possible at a regional or national level. Moreover, in many cases they have generously shared the data that they collected, adding substantially to the new dataset. Without the many local studies of this sort, it would be much more difficult to attempt to construct estimates and explanations of the rise of parish relief in England as a whole.

National figures are much rarer than parochial data simply because the central state did not even attempt to collect information on the amount spent on the poor except on a handful of exceptional occasions. There are, however, contemporary estimates such as Andrew Willet's polemical claim in 1614 that thanks to the 'excellent laws' of Queen Elizabeth and the 'godly and peaceable government' of King James 'there cannot be lesse gathered yeerely ... then 30 or 40 thousand pounds' for parochial relief.<sup>13</sup> Later in the seventeenth century, various commentators suggested £400,000 in 1680, £665,362 in 1685, and £700,000 in 1692, but none of these were particularly well-grounded in evidence.<sup>14</sup> It was only in 1696, when the new Council of Trade and Plantations attempted to survey every parish in the country, that the first plausible estimate emerged. The Council, despite only receiving responses from about half of England's parishes, concluded that approximately

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<sup>12</sup> John Broad, *Transforming English Rural Society: The Verneys and the Claydons, 1600-1820* (Cambridge, 2004); Henry French, *The Middle in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007); Healey, *First*; Steve Hindle, *The Birthpangs of Welfare: Poor Relief and Parish Governance in Seventeenth-Century Warwickshire* (Stratford upon Avon, 2000); Joan Kent and Steven King, 'Changing Patterns of Poor Relief in Some English Rural Parishes, circa 1650-1750', *Rural History*, 14:2 (2003); Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (1988); Tim Wales, 'The Parish and the Poor in the English Revolution' in Stephen Taylor and Grant Tapsell (eds), *The Nature of the English Revolution Revisited* (Woodbridge, 2013); Williams, *Poverty*; Jeremy Boulton, 'The Poor among the Rich: Paupers and the Parish in the West End, 1600-1724' in Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (eds), *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester, 2000); Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *Lives*; D.A. Baugh, 'The Cost of Poor Relief in South-East England, 1790-1834', *Economic History Review*, 28:1 (1975). Note that this list does not include publications that examine spending in only a single locality.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Willet, *Synopsis Papismi, that is, A Generall View of Papistrie* (1614), p. 1220.

<sup>14</sup> Slack, *Poverty*, pp. 171, 185 (citing Petyt in 1680, Davenant in 1685 and Mackworth in 1694).

£400,000 was spent in 1695.<sup>15</sup> Parliamentary investigations in the second half of the eighteenth century produced further plausible figures, especially from the 1770s onwards when parish-level returns survive. From 1812 onwards, such surveys were conducted and published annually.<sup>16</sup>

Most historians seem to accept the national surveys that begin in the 1690s, but they rightly distrust earlier contemporary claims. A few scholars have offered their own guesses based on intuition or ambitious extrapolations. For the mid-seventeenth century, the Webbs suggested that ‘no more than’ £250,000 was likely to be disbursed on the poor.<sup>17</sup> However, most scholars instead cite Slack’s more recent estimate of £100,000 to £150,000 for the 1650s, which he extrapolated from Valerie Pearl’s estimate of £15,000 for the City of London in this decade.<sup>18</sup> For earlier in the century, estimates are rarer still. For 1614, Slack regards Willet’s claim of £30,000 to £40,000 as ‘almost certainly exaggerated’ and instead suggests that, based on selected figures for individual towns, it would ‘not be unreasonable to suppose’ that £10,000 was raised for parochial poor relief at that time.<sup>19</sup> Although Slack’s figures for the 1610s and 1650s are clearly very rough estimates, they serve as useful points of comparison. Crucially, however, we lack even the sketchiest figures for spending at the outset of the century, at the time of the key statutes of 1598 and 1601.

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<sup>15</sup> The National Archives [hereafter TNA], CO 388/5/194-210.

<sup>16</sup> All the returns from 1747-49 to 1828 are summarised in *Local Taxation: Poor Rates, County Rates, Highways, Church Rates* (Parliamentary Papers, 1830, no. 52).

<sup>17</sup> Webb and Webb, *Government*, VII, p. 152. For other historians’ figures, see W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660* (New York, 1959), pp. 139-41 (47 unspecified parishes disbursed £4,306 in 1650, but extrapolation would be ‘pointless’); J.F. Hadwin, ‘The Problem of Poverty in Early Modern England’ in T. Riis (ed.), *Aspects of Poverty in Early Modern Europe* (Sijthoff, 1981), pp. 238-40.

<sup>18</sup> Slack, *Poverty*, p. 172; Valerie Pearl, ‘Social Policy in Early Modern London’ in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden (ed.), *History and Imagination* (London, 1981), p. 130 (£15,000 was ‘an informed guess’ for ‘the mid-seventeenth century’).

<sup>19</sup> Slack, *Poverty*, p. 172.



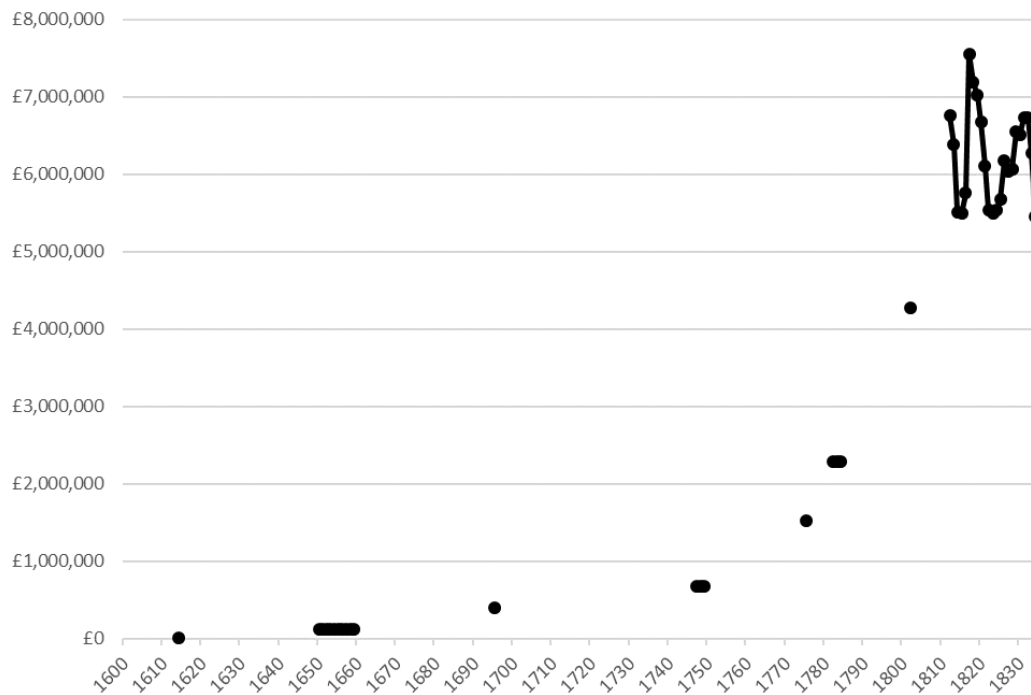


Figure 1: Plausible previous estimates for national poor relief spending, 1600-1834

Taken together, the estimates of historians and the government surveys give us plausible ‘snapshots’ for 1614, the 1650s, 1695, 1747-9, 1775, 1782-84, 1802 and 1812-34 (Figure 1). Although the figures from the 1740s onwards are likely to be reasonably accurate, the estimated national totals for the first century and a half of the Old Poor Law are built on much narrower evidence and show the need of further investigation. Moreover, none of these static totals can show year-on-year changes, for which we require a dynamic series. Finally, the absence of an estimate for 1600 makes it impossible to assess the development of the relief system across the whole of period of its operation. There is, then, a need for new data and new methods.

## 2. A NEW ESTIMATE FOR PUBLIC RELIEF SPENDING IN 1600

No historians or contemporaries offered estimates for spending on poor relief at the time of key statutes of 1598 and 1601. However, the work of McIntosh and Hindle has shown that rate-funded spending on relief at the end of the sixteenth century was already substantial and

they have provided figures for many specific jurisdictions at this time.<sup>20</sup> By combining plausible totals for London, other large cities, small towns and the rest of England, we can create new national estimate for disbursements in 1600, when the new index begins.

For London, Archer has found that parishes were spending £2,579 per year in 1570-3 and £2,908 in 1594-7.<sup>21</sup> He also found ‘very substantial increases’ in the poor rates in parishes with records immediately following the 1598 statute, and accordingly believes that even the latter figure is likely to be an underestimate for 1600.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, a total of about £3,000 serves as a firm minimum level for the five percent of the national population that lived in the metropolis at this time.

Recorded relief spending per capita in other Elizabethan cities and towns tended to be somewhat higher than in the metropolis, ranging from £14 to £37 for every 1,000 people in the seven urban centres with surviving records. Given that most of these figures came from earlier decades, this is again likely to be an underestimate for 1600, but still provides a solid minimum level of £1,100 in total for these seven towns. If the thirty-one other towns that lacked specific relief figures were spending at least as much as Exeter in 1563 or Ipswich in 1597, which had the lowest recorded rates per capita, their collective total would be about £2,100 annually.<sup>23</sup> So, England’s substantial towns and cities were together spending at least £3,200 at the beginning of this period. If we assume, more plausibly, that towns without recorded totals were spending roughly the same as those with quantifiable records, then they were collectively disbursing about £4,400 in 1600, which can be added to the figure for London to reach over £7,000 for all urban areas.

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<sup>20</sup> McIntosh, *Poor Relief*, ch. 8; Hindle, *Parish*, ch. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 181. This total includes ‘poor rate disbursed in parishes’, ‘endowments for relief disbursed in parishes’ and ‘poor rate’ received by Christ’s Hospital, which coordinated interparochial relief at this time. It excludes much ‘private’ charity that might have been administered by parish officers.

<sup>22</sup> Archer, *Pursuit*, pp. 162-3.

<sup>23</sup> McIntosh found 62 active parishes before 1598 in the 39 towns with populations of 3,000 or more, so it is very unlikely that there were any completely ‘inactive’ towns in 1600.

	population	relief	per capita	years	source
<b>cities and towns (n=39)</b>					
London	200000	£2,908	£0.0145	1594-7	Archer, Pursuit
Colchester	5000	£108	£0.0216	1582-9	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Exeter	9000	£128	£0.0142	1563	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Ipswich	5000	£71	£0.0142	1597	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Norwich	15000	£437	£0.0291	1578-9	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Salisbury	6000	£187	£0.0312	1600	Slack, Salisbury
Southampton	3000	£53	£0.0178	1575	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Warwick	3000	£112	£0.0374	1587	VCH Warks, VIII
31 others	146000	£3,287	£0.0225		
<i>all cities and towns</i>	<i>392000</i>	<i>£7,292</i>	<i>£0.0186</i>		
<b>market centres (n=715)</b>					
Bishop's Stortford	1046	£12.20	£0.0117	1561-69	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Faversham	1802	£44.30	£0.0246	1577-97	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Framlingham	489	£5.30	£0.0108	1567-71	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Hadleigh	2467	£91.99	£0.0373	1598	McIntosh, Hadleigh
Harlow		£13.50		1599	Hindle, Parish
Milton Mowbray	1269	£7.40	£0.0058	1564-96	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Plymstock		£18.55		1608	archival
Wivenhoe	631	£7.10	£0.0113	1576-94	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Wrotham		£20.90		1600	archival
26 others with unspecified recorded relief	33381	£639.14	£0.0191	1552-98	
681 others without recorded relief	0	£0.00	£0.0000		
<i>all market centres</i>	<i>41084</i>	<i>£860</i>	<i>£0.0209</i>		
<b>villages (n=8000)</b>					
Broadclyst		£16.60		1590-99	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Churston Ferrers		£10.06		1600	archival
East Knoyle		£7.72		1607	archival
Eaton Socon	1038	£8.00	£0.0077	1597	Emmison, Two Rural Parishes
Frampton		£9.36		1607	archival
Leverton	307	£2.30	£0.0075	1563-99	McIntosh 2014
Northill	972	£8.10	£0.0083	1595	Emmison, Two Rural Parishes
Pitminster	645	£8.60	£0.0133	1563-98	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Roydon		£21.50		1599	Hindle, Parish
Sheering		£23.50		1599	Hindle, Parish
Slinford		£0.50		1597-98	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
Whitchurch	360	£0.60	£0.0017	1567-86	McIntosh, 'Poor Relief'
102 others with unspecified recorded relief	67762	£993.14	£0.0147	1552-98	
c. 7900 others without recorded relief	0	£0.00	£0.0000		
<i>all villages</i>	<i>71084</i>	<i>£1,110</i>	<i>£0.0156</i>		
<b>TOTAL RELIEVING PARISHES</b>	<b>504168</b>	<b>£9,262</b>	<b>£0.0184</b>		
<b>TOTAL ADJUSTED</b>	<b>616336</b>	<b>£11,232</b>	<b>£0.0182</b>		

Table 1: Estimates for relief spending in 1600

Estimating the spending in England's thousands of market towns and villages is much more difficult as records are far patchier. However, McIntosh has found evidence of rate-funded relief in scores of parishes before 1598, including 34 from market centres and 112 from villages. Quantifiable information about Elizabethan expenditures survives for nine of the former, averaging £25 annually, with the lowest level in Framlingham (Suffolk) which disbursed only £5 6s per year in 1567-71. In the twelve villages with solid figures, the average was £10 per year, with the minimum found in Slinford (Sussex) where only 10s was spent in 1597-8. Again, the Elizabethan averages almost certainly understate the totals in 1600 as McIntosh – like Archer – found 'the sums raised in many parishes increased considerably' as soon as the new act was passed.<sup>24</sup> Extrapolating from these 21 cases, this suggests that these 146 active parishes in small settlements collectively spent at the very least £527 or, using averages rather than minimums, a more plausible total of around £2,000.<sup>25</sup>

At the national level, then, English parishes already devoted thousands of pounds to poor relief at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Using only solid records and minimum figures, the total was over £6,500. A more realistic calculation, based on average recorded spending but again only including market centres and villages with firm surviving evidence of poor rate assessments, suggests that parishes spent about £9,000 in 1600. Yet even this is likely to be an underestimate. The number of other active parishes among the many thousands without surviving relief records is unknowable, but they accounted for over 90 percent of the English population at this time. According to McIntosh, the couple of hundred parishes with solid evidence of rate-funded relief are 'probably a small fraction of the total number' that had official 'Collectors for the Poor' before 1598.<sup>26</sup> If so, then the totals for market centres and villages based on parishes with extant records should be multiplied to

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<sup>24</sup> McIntosh, *Poor Relief*, pp. 282-3. See also the very useful discussion of rural relief c.1600, from which additional figures have been drawn, in Hindle, *Parish*, pp. 240-44.

<sup>25</sup> Of course, none of these parishes were relieving across the whole Elizabethan period, but it seems safe to assume that virtually all with pre-1598 evidence of relief would be active in 1600.

<sup>26</sup> McIntosh, *Poor Relief*, p. 225.

account for unrecorded active parishes. Merely doubling these subtotals, the minimum adjustment implied by McIntosh's statement, adds an additional £1,700 to the estimate and yields a plausible total of approximately £11,000 in 1600. In this scenario, about 15 percent of the population were living in active parishes, still concentrated mostly in urban areas. These jurisdictions were, according to the adjusted estimate, collectively spending about £18 per thousand inhabitants to relieve their resident poor, roughly equivalent to the per capita disbursements in the middling port of Southampton in a quarter century earlier.

This new estimate of £11,000 for England's parochial poor relief disbursements in 1600 integrates data from McIntosh and others for both urban and rural areas with new figures from several manuscript sources. It is built on conservative assumptions about the scale and spread of relief in the final years of the sixteenth century, so it may still undercount the national total, but it provides a solid enough baseline for further analysis. It is notable, for example, that it is not far from Slack's estimate of £10,000 for the 1610s. More importantly, it is a reminder that people living in cities, small towns and even some rural parishes already had a strong institutional mechanism in place to redistribute substantial sums of money to the poor at the very beginning of the era of the 'Old Poor Law'.

## **2. SOURCES AND METHODS FOR MEASURING POOR RELIEF**

If we hope to measure the rise of the poor relief system across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we need a new survey of welfare spending. Because national figures are almost entirely unreliable or unavailable before the late eighteenth century, only a wide-ranging sample of local records can provide the data needed to construct an annual series.

To this end, Jonathan Healey and I have collected the annual totals of relief spending for 184 parishes and townships, including localities in all forty English counties, from 1600 to

1812.<sup>27</sup> The overwhelming majority of this data was manually transcribed from the manuscripts held at local record offices and other repositories. Of the reminder, figures for 28 parishes were drawn wholly or partly from data generously provided by other scholars.<sup>28</sup> An additional 18 were transcribed from published editions or secondary sources. Collectively, the new dataset includes over 12,000 individual years of disbursements.

The figures are, for the most part, taken from the annual summaries of total disbursements recorded in account books of the parish overseers of the poor or, less often, the yearly audits recorded in vestry books.<sup>29</sup> Each annual total includes, therefore, many regular pauper pensions and irregular discretionary payments to distressed individuals, which together usually comprised the bulk of the year's spending. They also often included one-time spending on 'binding out' poor children as apprentices, legal fees for litigation over pauper settlement, payments to workhouse contractors in later years, and many other occasional costs. For example, in the account book for Great Gransden in Huntingdonshire beginning in April 1673, the overseers recorded fortnightly payments to four widows of 6d or 1s each, as well as extra payments to mend one widow's roof (6s 4d), to buy two others fuel 'in the cold Sharp winter' (2s 10d), to obtain a unspecified warrant and other administrative 'charges' (3s 6d), and to a scribe for writing bonds, inventories and 'our Accounts' (4s 6d). Together the disbursements for 1673-4 amounted to £5 16s 4d for this small parish (Figure 2).<sup>30</sup> While the individual items may appear more interesting than the annual total in such cases, the yearly sums become much more illuminating when totals from many parishes are aggregated over a long period.

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<sup>27</sup> The term 'parish' is used here as short-hand for whatever local poor relief unit is used in the records. The figures sometimes apply to a township within a larger parish or, in the case of Norwich, to the combined total of 14 city centre parishes.

<sup>28</sup> I am extremely grateful to Jeremy Boulton, John Broad, David Carmichael, Henry French, Steve Hindle, Steve King (for Joan Kent's data), Anne Mealia and Kate Woolcombe.

<sup>29</sup> One could collect figures for income rather than expenditure, but as Baugh noted many years ago this would raise even more problems: Baugh, 'Cost', p. 55.

<sup>30</sup> Huntingdonshire Archives, HP36/12/1, pp. 42-45. As these figures show, about seven percent of the total was devoted to administration rather than relief.



Figure 2: Extract from overseers' accounts for Great Gransden (Hunts), 1673-4. Note the key line on the bottom right: 'Our Disbursements are 05 16 04'.

The practicalities of early modern recordkeeping inevitably create some problems for the historian. In these documents, for example, the accounting year began at Easter or Lady Day (March 25), so the figure for each year actually includes three quarters of the calendar year and the first quarter of the next.<sup>31</sup> There will also inevitably be faults in the raw data due to both the poor arithmetic of the parish officers and our own occasional transcription errors, though it is extremely unlikely that these will materially affect any conclusions we might draw from the dataset as a whole. There are, however, more substantive methodological issues that must be addressed.

The first serious issue is that none of these parishes cover the entire period of the 'Old Poor Law'. Instead, each covers a different stretch of years, ranging from about two decades

<sup>31</sup> When Easter was used annual figures will cover slightly less or slightly more than 52 weeks.

to nearly two centuries. For example, the records for the village of Feering in Essex only include disbursements for the years 1684 to 1713, whereas the accounts of Churston Ferrers in Devon include 165 years of totals between 1600 and 1802.<sup>32</sup> As can be seen in Figure 3, coverage is weakest in the first few decades of the period, since relatively few accounts survive from this era. During the data collection, the decades after 1750 were not prioritised due to the substantial existing historiography on this period and the availability of the parliamentary surveys, so the size of the sample also abates from that point, though it still remains larger than any previous study.



Figure 3: Number of parishes in sample, 1600-1812

Archival attrition means that any sample will include large gaps in many parish series, making it impossible to simply aggregate all the nominal figures in order to find annual totals for the sample as a whole. When attempting to construct an index running through the whole period, various methods can be used to compensate for these gaps in individual series. For

<sup>32</sup> Essex Record Office, D/P 231/12/1; DRO, 1235A add 2/PO1-PO6 (I am grateful to Lucy Huggins for supplying digital images of PO3 and PO4).



this article, an index was created by measuring the year-on-year change in total disbursements in the sample between each pair of years, excluding any parishes that lacked data for that particular pairing so as to ensure a like-for-like comparison. So, for example, the disbursements for the 104 parishes in the sample that have figures for both 1690 and 1691 are added together into a total sum for each year which are then compared, revealing a year-on-year growth rate of 2.39 percent. Once the annual growth rate for each year has been calculated, this can be indexed to any of the nominal national totals in order to estimate relief disbursements in England for every year included in the dataset.<sup>33</sup>

The second significant issue is the geographical imbalance in the sample of parishes. Although this dataset is well over ten times larger than any previous study, it is still not fully representative of England as a whole. There are certain regions – especially the north-east – where we have collected few figures due to both a lack of surviving records and the practicalities of access. More specifically, comparing the number of parishes in the sample to number of parishes recorded in the parliamentary returns show that some areas – namely London and the East – are substantially overrepresented whereas others – especially the East Midlands and the North East – are underrepresented (Table 2). Existing work on geographical variation in relief shows that spending patterns in one region are unlikely to mirror those in others.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> An alternative method was also tried, whereby the year-on-year growth rate was calculated for each individual parish in the sample, and then the median growth rate for each year determined. This produces similar figures but is likely to be less accurate as it does not account for differences in the sizes of parishes, meaning that a small parish spending little is weighted equally to a large parish spending much more. This alternative index diverges substantially more from the eighteenth-century parliamentary surveys.

<sup>34</sup> King, *Poverty and Welfare*.

Regions	Sample	Total	Sampled
East	43	2177	2.0%
East Midlands	15	1996	0.8%
London	14	358	3.9%
North East	3	1017	0.3%
North West	14	1051	1.3%
South East	34	1897	1.8%
South West	29	2199	1.3%
West Midlands	18	1231	1.5%
Yorkshire	14	1598	0.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>13524</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Table 2: Regional proportions of parishes in the sample

Nonetheless, the sample has been drawn from as wide a geographical range as is practicable and includes about 1.4 percent of the 13,524 ‘parishes or places’ listed the parliamentary survey of 1802. The dataset encompasses a broad mix of localities – including London, large towns, small towns and rural areas – with at least one parish from every county in England. For example, it includes nearly two hundred years of figures for the wealthy City of London parish of St Andrew by the Wardrobe, which spent more than £100 per year on relief at the end of the seventeenth century, but it also includes well over a century of data from the tiny village of Howsham in Yorkshire, which rarely spent more than £2 annually at this time.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the balance between urban and rural parishes is not unreasonable.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, a simple test to counteract this imbalance by overweighting parishes from underrepresented regions did not dramatically change the index and slightly lowered its accuracy.<sup>37</sup> The geographic spread of the sample seems, therefore, to be sufficiently extensive for calculating ‘national’ figures.

<sup>35</sup> London Metropolitan Archives, P69/AND1/B/032/MS02089/001-002; Borthwick Institute for Archives, PR/HOW/2.

<sup>36</sup> The sample includes 23 highly urban parishes in towns with over 5,000 inhabitants in 1700, amounting to 13 percent of the total sample, whereas 17 percent of the English population as a whole lived in such localities: E.A. Wrigley, ‘Urban Growth and Agricultural Change: England and the Continent in the Early Modern Period’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 15:4 (1985), pp. 686-688.

<sup>37</sup> Specifically, multiplying the disbursements for parishes in the regions of the North East, East Midlands and Yorkshire to compensate for their underrepresentation in the sample resulted in an average of a 10 percent divergence from the parliamentary figures, compared to 8 percent for the unweighted index.

The third problem is that there may be a bias in the sample due to the nature of record survival. The account books most likely to survive may be unusually over-burdened parishes – thus tilting the sample towards higher disbursements. Moreover, some parishes initially did not provide formal poor relief at all – despite the statute of 1598 – and thus left no early records. Analysis by Jonathan Healey, Steve Hindle and others suggests that these ‘inactive’ parishes were probably not significant in number or size after the mid-seventeenth century, yet before this date the sample is likely to be biased by excluding parishes that did not formally collect rates and distribute relief.<sup>38</sup> It is therefore necessary to gradually deflate the index as it moves back towards the year 1600 from 1650, which in turn requires an estimate of national spending at the beginning to this period. This new estimate has been set out in Section 2, though using Slack’s estimate for 1614 as an alternative index point does not alter the early seventeenth century annual totals very substantially.

Finally, even once a satisfactory index of change is created, it must be linked to a nominal national figure to produce estimates of annual spending. The official totals for 1695, 1747-49, 1775, 1782-84 and 1802 were all tested, but 1747-49 provided an index which matched most closely to the other reliable national figures. The mid-eighteenth-century figures have, therefore, been used as the initial index point in the analysis that follows. In addition, the final version of the index has also been adjusted to intersect with the other parliamentary figures and, as noted above, with the new estimate for 1600 for the first half of the seventeenth century. This ‘corrected’ index provides a more accurate measure of disbursements for the pre-1650 and post-1750 periods.

The messy initial data and significant methodical issues mean that the analysis that follows is necessarily provisional. Further data collection and statistical manipulation might modify the patterns found here, especially for the beginning and end of the period. But the

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<sup>38</sup> Healey, *First*, ch. 2; Hindle, *Parish*, ch. 4. For the substantial number of parishes already active before 1600, see Section 2 above.

new dataset certainly provides enough material to revisit our understanding of the rise of parish relief from a new perspective.

#### 4. REVISED ESTIMATES OF RELIEF SPENDING

Comparing the new ‘uncorrected’ index to previous figures for national relief spending provides two useful opportunities. First, it allows us to assess the reliability of the index itself, by measuring it against the figures collected by the state in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Second, if reasonably accurate, it can be used to query the estimates for earlier periods made by historians and contemporaries.

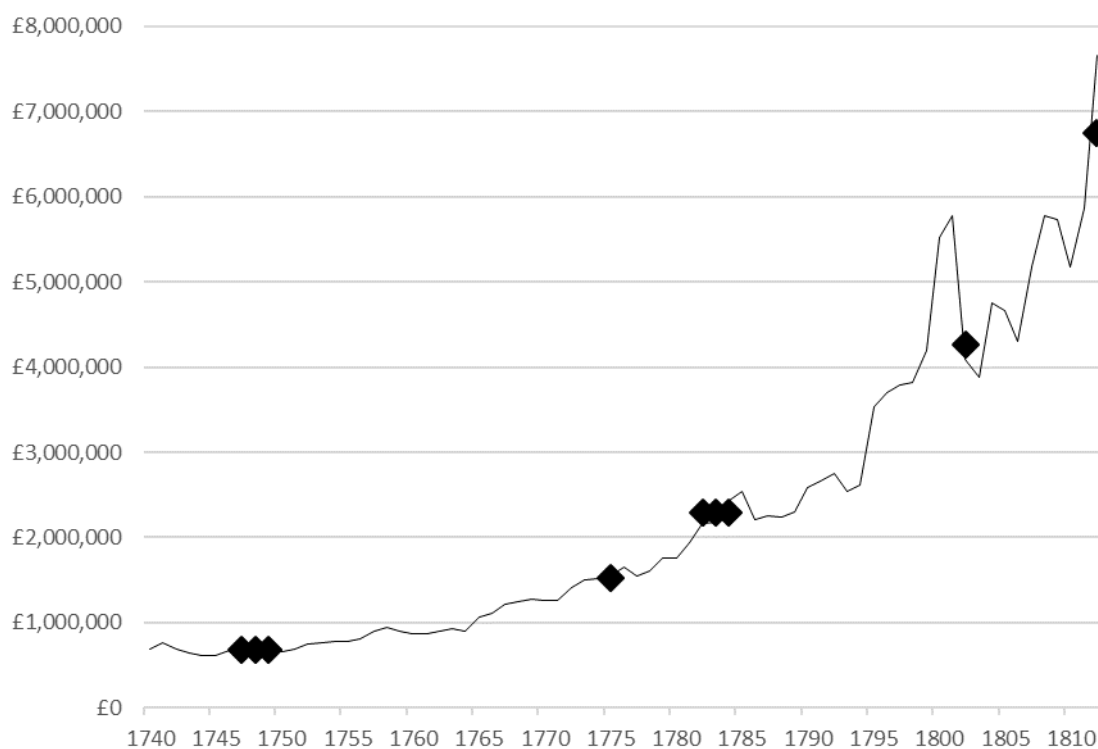


Figure 4: Previous estimates compared to the new uncorrected index, 1740-1812

The new index’s robustness is suggested by its reasonably close correlation with the official figures produced by large-scale parliamentary investigations, even though the size of the sample declines after 1750 and shrinks dramatically after 1800 (Figure 4). The figures for

1782-84 are the least correlated to the parliamentary findings before 1812, though even here the difference is only about 16 percent and the larger variation may be partly due to the fact that these figures were an average of three years rather than a straightforward single-year survey. The estimates for individual years over the course of the second half of the eighteenth century should, therefore, be reasonably accurate, erring by no more than about 15 to 20 percent and presumably much less in most years. Given that the sample size is much larger from c.1650 to c.1750, the new index should be equally if not more accurate over this earlier period.

If so, this means that previous estimates from the late seventeenth century are in need of revision (Figure 5). Slack was correct that we can safely dismiss the contemporary estimates for 1680, 1685 and 1694 as highly exaggerated at best. More importantly, the official and oft-cited figure of £400,000 for 1695 itself is likely to be a significant overestimate, perhaps by £100,000 or more. This conclusion is reinforced by an examination of the patchy surviving documentation relating to the Council of Trade's enquiry. The official figure was produced by extrapolating from the total of £186,031 spent by the 4,461 parishes – about half the total in England – that responded to the Council's request for figures.<sup>39</sup> A scrappy note about the calculations for London shows that they assumed that the average for the 75 parishes 'within the walls' that returned totals would be the same as the 22 parishes 'within the walls' that did not return totals, and then repeated this process for the 16 parishes 'without the walls', the 15 'out parishes', and the 7 parishes in Westminster and liberties, to create an estimated metropolitan total of £40,847.<sup>40</sup> However, while it is certainly possible that the more than 4,000 parishes that did not respond to the survey spent over £200,000 in

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<sup>39</sup> TNA, CO 388/5, f. 209-210.

<sup>40</sup> British Library, Sloane MS 2902, f. 238.

1695, it seems more likely that most non-responding parishes spent less than the national average, making the index total of circa £300,000 much more plausible.<sup>41</sup>

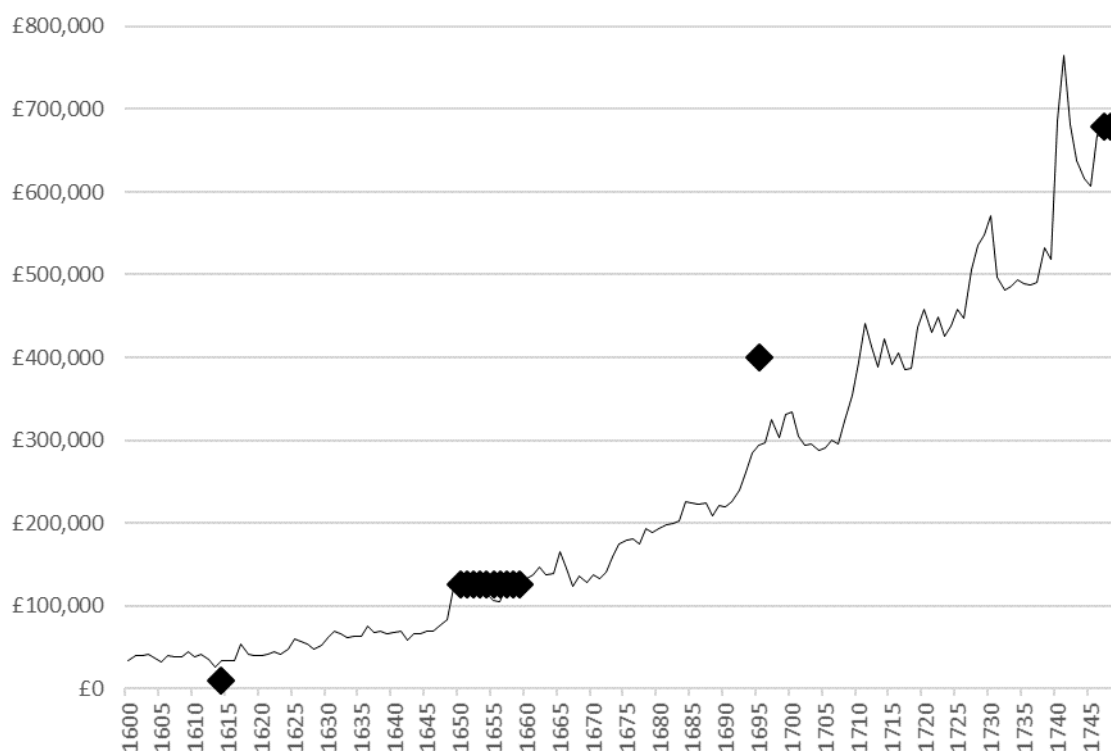


Figure 5: Previous estimates compared to the new uncorrected index, 1600-1750

Comparisons with estimates from earlier in the seventeenth century are more problematic due to the smaller size of the sample and the greater distance from the 1747-9 index point. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Slack's national estimate of £100,000 to £150,000 for the 1650s, extrapolated from Pearl's for the City of London at that time, is remarkably consistent with the new index which shows an average of about £120,000 for this decade. The figure of £20,000 to £30,000 from Willet for the mid-1610s also matches the new index, but as noted in the previous section, the uncorrected index for these early years is almost certainly inflated significantly. As such, Slack's estimate of £10,000 at this time is

<sup>41</sup> This presumption is reinforced by the fact that the 46 parishes which belatedly returned their surveys spent only £1,295 (£28 per parish) compared to the £42 per parish for the initial 4,415: TNA, CO 388/5, f. 210.

likely to be closer to the truth, though this figure may be somewhat too low. As shown earlier, a total of approximately £11,000 seems plausible for 1600, which again shows that the index needs to be deflated to account for inactive parishes in these early years.<sup>42</sup>

So, in addition to demonstrating the reliability of the new index, these comparisons confirm historians' suspicions that contemporary estimates for the seventeenth century were almost certainly overblown. Even the official figure of £400,000 in 1695, cited regularly in current scholarship, is likely to be significantly too high. However, the data also suggests that the figures for the 1610s and 1650s produced by Slack and Pearl are entirely plausible. By undermining some past estimates while confirming others, the new index suggests that previous scholarship on the scale of poor relief in the seventeenth century should be revisited with a critical eye.

#### **4. TRENDS IN RELIEF SPENDING**

The new dataset, when indexed to reliable figures for England as a whole, provides the first annual series of poor relief spending at the national level over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>43</sup> Bearing in mind the important caveats outlined above, this new series reveals some significant if provisional findings about trends in spending under the Old Poor Law.

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<sup>42</sup> For the problem of inactive parishes in the first half of the seventeenth century, see the discussion in Section 2 above.

<sup>43</sup> In the remainder of this article, all references to national relief spending are to the 'corrected' series produced by indexing the new dataset to the 1747-49 parliamentary total, adjusted by deflating or inflating before 1650 and after 1750 to intersect with the new total for 1600 and the parliamentary totals for 1775 onwards. As shown in Figures 4-5 above, this correction has minimal impact on the figures for 1750-1812, but a much more significant impact on the figures for 1600-1650.

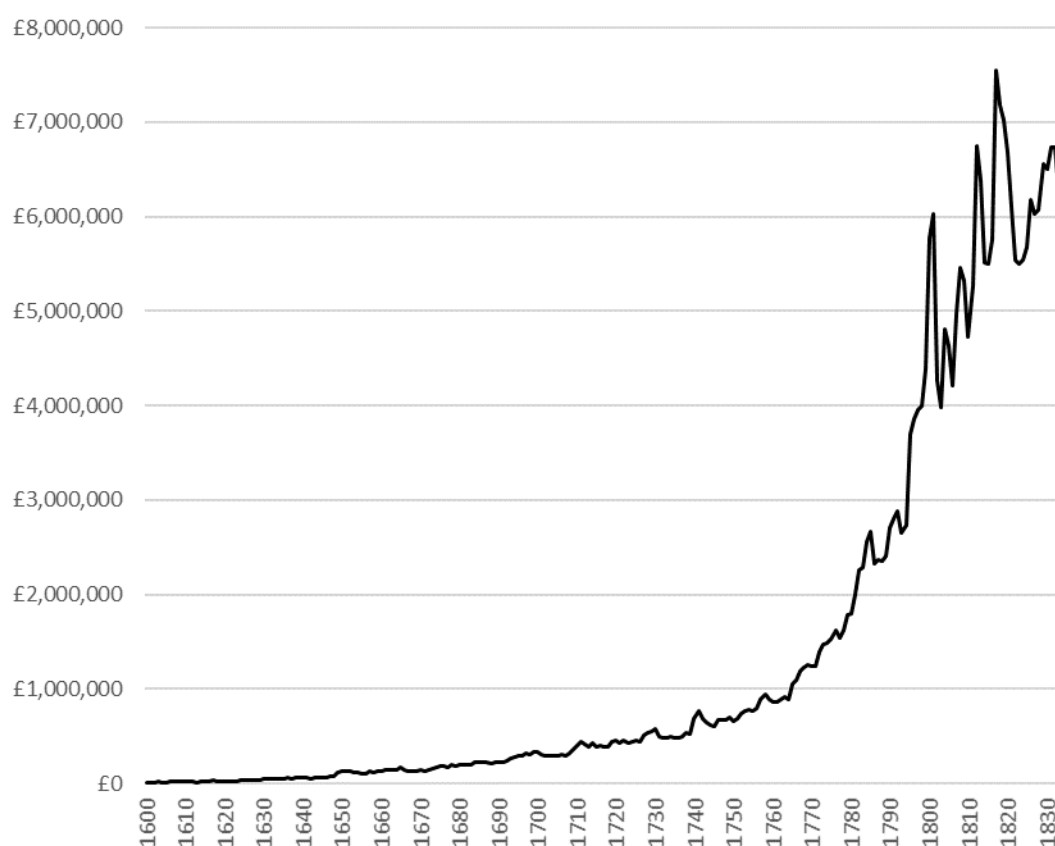


Figure 6: Annual nominal disbursements, 1600-1834

The long-term upward trajectory is unmistakeable and unsurprising. Moreover, as is immediately apparent from Figure 6, rates of growth in the late eighteenth century were high enough to make identifying long-term trends difficult if focusing simply on total spending. The well-known rapid increases from the 1770s onwards render earlier changes almost invisible. To get a sense of longer trends, it is therefore more useful to examine annual growth rates rather than nominal totals. Here, several patterns can be discerned (Figure 7).



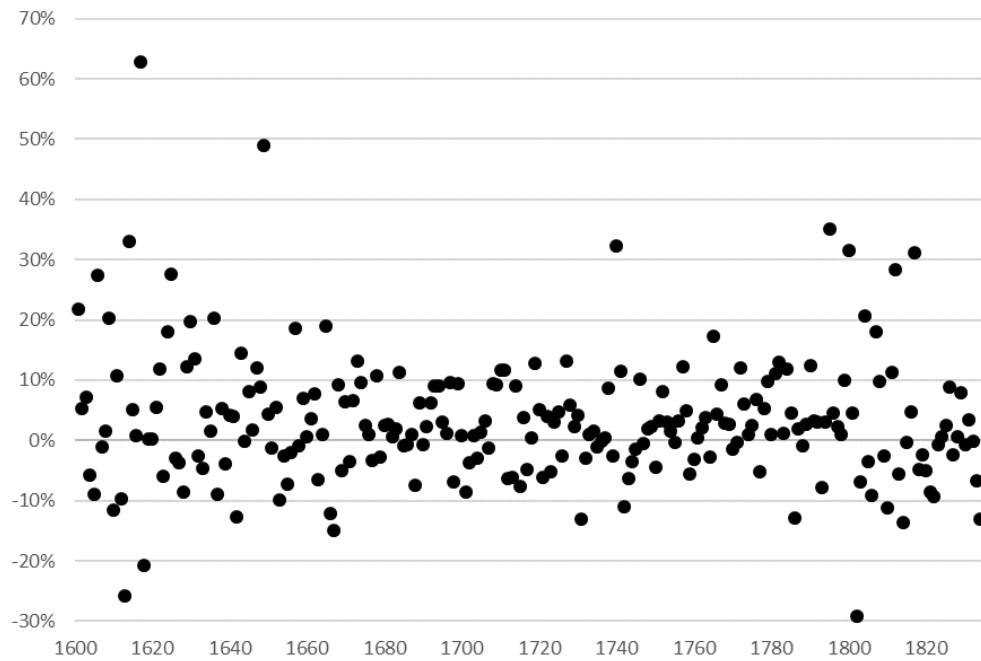


Figure 7: Annual nominal growth rates in disbursements

Over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the average rate of growth for national relief expenditure was approximately 3.5 percent per year. Rates of growth nonetheless varied immensely from year to year. There were, in fact, only a few periods when rapid growth or decline was maintained for more than a couple years in a row. The longest runs of above average increases in spending came in 1647-50, 1692-95 and 1708-11. Equally long runs of slow growth were slightly more common, though the years 1651-56 and 1700-07 stand out as exceptional. The next section will consider the reasons for these occasional concentrations of rapid or slow growth, but for now it will suffice to note that they rarely lasted very long.

The long-term annual growth rate would imply that total poor relief spending doubled every 20 years, but such growth was not spread evenly. All the evidence suggests higher growth rates at the beginning and end of the period. Moreover, when we examine growth rates by decade, this nature of this trend emerges more clearly (Figure 8).

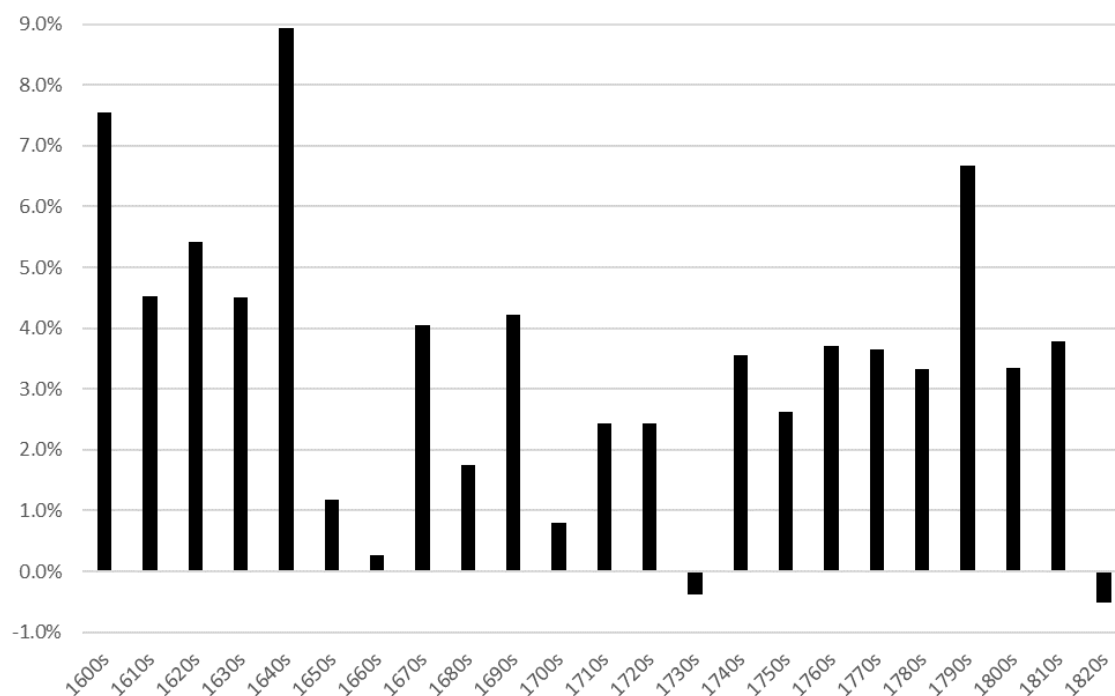


Figure 8: Annual nominal growth rates in disbursements by decade

The data for the first half of the seventeenth century is not as robust and outliers are thus likely to be exaggerated. Still, in the few decades of the seventeenth century, the small number of parishes in the sample spent moderately increasing sums and once these raw figures are adjusted to allow for the expanding number of parishes instituting formal relief for the first time, the growth rate for this period is very high. National levels of expenditure rose rapidly across the reigns of James I and Charles I, accelerating even more during the Civil Wars of the 1640s. Apart from the first decade of the century, when the data is thinnest, the most notable peaks came in 1629-31 and 1647-49.<sup>44</sup> Overall, the first half of the seventeenth century witnessed the fastest growth rates seen until near the end of the eighteenth century.

From around 1650 onwards, alternating phases of moderation and expansion can be demarcated with reasonable confidence thanks to the size of the dataset. It is clear, for example, that growth during the Interregnum and Restoration era was very slow, despite a handful of brief ‘crisis’ years such as 1657 and 1665. By contrast, the last three decades of

<sup>44</sup> For detailed discussion of the peaks before 1750, see Healey, ‘Response’.

the seventeenth century saw more substantial growth, with a particularly striking bursts of rapid expansion in 1672-74 and almost the whole of the 1690s. The overall trend of significant growth in the later seventeenth century masks some short phases of contraction such as the late 1680s, but the divergence from the preceding and succeeding decades is obvious.

The first forty years of the eighteenth century were a time of comparatively moderate growth as poor relief disbursements rose by an average of only 1.3% per year. This elides some very rapid increases in 1708-11, but these decades were generally a period of moderation or outright retrenchment in spending. After this, sustained growth returned, including an exceptional peak in 1740-41. Moreover, rates of growth continued to rise in the second half of the eighteenth century. Spikes in disbursements in 1765-67, 1781-82 and several years in the 1790s ensured that these decades were a period of rapid and sustained expansion that carried on into the early nineteenth century. The later period has already justifiably received much attention from historians of the poor relief system, but the new dataset provides a helpful quantitative confirmation of what contemporaries and scholars have long suspected about the acceleration of growth at this time.<sup>45</sup>

This data makes it possible to tell a new story about the rise of poor relief spending that stretches across traditional historiographical divides. The long-term growth over the course of the Old Poor Law was not gradual. Instead, it varied sharply from year to year and it rarely sustained uninterrupted increases for more than a few years in a row. However, stepping back from the annual fluctuations, we can see that growth was propelled forward by several phrases of markedly rising spending, including extraordinary bursts in its first and final decades. These periods were interspersed by decades of modest or even stagnant rates of

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<sup>45</sup> As Baugh noted with regard to the end of this period, annual data shows that simply relying on the official surveys from the 1770s onwards to track growth in spending misses the peak in 1801 and much other short-term variation: Baugh, 'Cost', p. 54.

expansion, but their cumulative effect was to ensure that the poor relief system became a powerful engine of wealth redistribution.

## **5. CONTEXTUALISING AND EXPLAINING TRENDS IN RELIEF SPENDING**

The parish relief system was not isolated from the wider social, economic and political changes of seventeenth and eighteenth-century England. Showing its expanding size and its shifting rates of growth is only a first step towards understanding its role in English society at this time. Although the system was not merely the product of law, demography, prices or economic conditions, such factors had a major influence on its emergence and development. Measuring the scale and speed of the relief system's expansion makes it possible to revisit the question of causality: how can we explain its rise? This issue has been debated by scholars for decades and no definitive answer can be expected here, but the new data presented in this article means that the range of possible contributing factors can now be assessed.

The series of 'Poor Laws' enacted under by the Tudors established the structure of parish relief and enabled its extraordinary expansion. As McIntosh has shown, the statutes of 1552 and 1563 led to hundreds of villages and small towns appointing officers to collect rates and distribute relief, while Slack's work has demonstrated that most larger cities set up similar arrangements well before the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Thus, by the time the famed statutes of 1598 and 1601 were passed, many parishes had considerable experience with a publicly funded relief system, raising and distributing sometimes substantial sums each year. As shown in Section 2, parish overseers spent upwards of £10,000 per year on relief by 1600. This meant that the local machinery of redistribution was already extensive by

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<sup>46</sup> McIntosh, *Poor*; Slack, *Poverty*, ch. 6.

the start of the seventeenth century, so levels of disbursement could rise rapidly from the very beginning of our period.

The Elizabethan legal framework was vitally important to facilitating the long-term growth in relief spending, and it was reinforced by many of the new statutes and much of the case law that followed.<sup>47</sup> There were, however, several attempts to impose a more restrictive regime, such as the laws encouraging the ‘badging’ of the poor in 1697 and the setting up of workhouses in 1723. While these may have had some effect in particular parishes, it is difficult to find evidence of an impact on the national level and they certainly did not succeed as attempts to stabilise spending for any sustained length of time.<sup>48</sup> There was a very slight decline in nominal spending in the 1730s which may have been partly due to the new workhouses, but – as discussed below – that decade also experienced a price deflation, so ‘real’ spending rose even then. Rather than lowering the trajectory of spending, each new law or judicial directive probably increased the ‘lawmindedness’ of local officeholders and encouraged further bureaucratisation of the relief system, as traced by Tadmor through the rise of the printed forms.<sup>49</sup> Such developments eventually ensured that practically every English person had a place of ‘settlement’ where they would be eligible for relief if absolutely required, even if the location and quantity of relief was often disputed.

The capacity to provide that relief came from long-term economic growth. During these centuries, the economy expanded considerably, though at varying rates across the period, and the trading network that supplied basic foodstuffs to different parts of the country expanded as well. This ensured that many parishioners had enough surplus income to pay ever-growing poor rates and meant that paupers could usually find provisions in local markets even in periods of regional scarcity, thus avoiding the famine conditions that struck

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<sup>47</sup> Charlesworth, *Forgotten*; Slack, *Poor Law*.

<sup>48</sup> For the 1697 Act, see Hindle, *Parish*, pp. 433-445. For the 1723 Act, see Tomkins, *Experience*. Both are usefully summarised in Slack, *Poor Law*. For their potential quantitative impact on spending, see Hindle, *Parish*, p. 276.

<sup>49</sup> Tadmor, ‘Form’.

much of England in the 1590s and more isolated regions such as Westmorland and Lancashire in the 1620s.<sup>50</sup> To get a sense of the significance of the poor relief system in the economy as whole, we can measure disbursements as a proportion of England's nominal Gross Domestic Product, as estimated by Stephen Broadberry et al.<sup>51</sup> In 1600, the proportion of economic production spent on relief was negligible (0.06 percent). By 1650 it was 0.27 percent and it had nearly doubled by 1700 to 0.47 percent and then doubled again by 1750 to 0.93 percent. By the end of the eighteenth century it was more than triple that level, with poor relief spending comprising about 3.0 percent of the whole domestic economy. So, although the rise of poor relief undoubtedly depended on economic growth, it was far from limited by it.

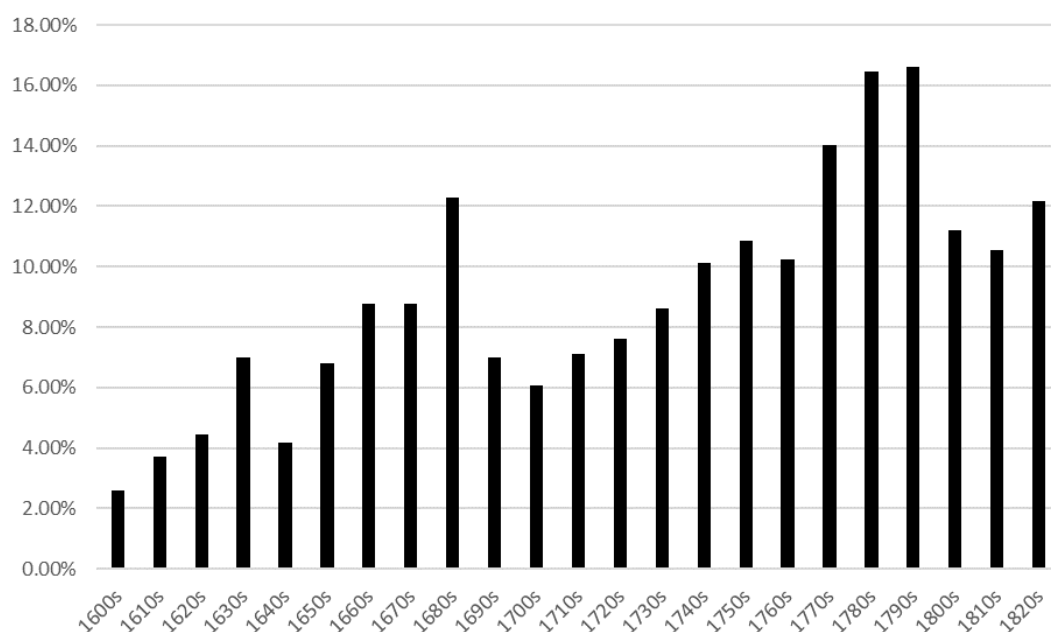


Figure 9: Annual nominal disbursements compared to national state revenue

<sup>50</sup> Jonathan Healey, 'Land, Population and Famine in the English Uplands: A Westmorland Case Study, c.1370-1650', *Agricultural History Review*, 59:2 (2011); Richard Hoyle, 'Famine as Agricultural Catastrophe: The Crisis of 1622-4 in East Lancashire', *Economic History Review*, 63:4 (2010).

<sup>51</sup> S.N. Broadberry et al., *British Economic Growth, 1270-1870* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 205 (Table 5.6).

The growth of the so-called ‘parish state’ was accompanied by parallel growth in the fiscal power of the national state. Many historians have suggested a mutually reinforcing dynamic between the growth of central and local state institutions, whereby local officeholders took on an increasing range of roles in their communities. The new dataset indicates that this qualitative change accompanied a quantitative rise in both local and central revenue extraction.<sup>52</sup> Data on the revenues of the English crown gathered by O’Brien and Hunt show that the resources claimed by the national state expanded from about £0.6 million in 1600 to about £5 million in 1700 and £30 million by 1800, though this varied hugely due to wartime peaks and peacetime troughs.<sup>53</sup> When compared to the parish-level expenditures on poor relief, it is apparent that both series rose together, with poor relief generally increasing at a slightly faster rate over the long term (Figure 9). However, national taxation increased dramatically during major wars, leaving poor relief as a smaller proportion of total public spending. For example, although relief expenditure rose considerably in the 1640s and 1690s, it was dwarfed by the expansion of the ‘fiscal-military state’ during the Civil Wars and the Nine Years War.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, when peace led to lower national revenues in the 1680s, welfare spending continued to slowly rise, resulting in relief reaching its highest proportion of public spending until almost a century later. Despite these short-term fluctuations, the long-term trends suggest that there was a reciprocal relationship between the institutions and expectations of taxation at local and national levels. Still, as with economic growth, the expansion of the national fiscal state was outpaced by the growth in local relief expenditures.

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<sup>52</sup> Hindle, *State*; Braddick, *State Formation*.

<sup>53</sup> For discussion of these figures, see Patrick O’Brien and Philip Hunt, ‘England, 1485-1815’ in Richard Bonney (ed.), *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> For analysis of the English fiscal-military state, see Braddick, *State Formation*, Pt. III; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London, 1989); D’Maris Coffman, *Excise Taxation and the Origins of Public Debt* (Basingstoke, 2013).

We might regard the long-term strengthening of legal support, economic productivity and state capacity as ‘supply’ factors. They primarily contributed by expanding the tax base and enabling rising relief spending. However, ‘demand’ factors – especially the number of poor people and the cost of living - were also crucial.

The population of England grew considerably during this period, so assessing the impact of the poor law on society requires calculating expenditure on a per capita basis. When compared to England’s population, the expansion of the poor relief was slightly less dramatic than it appeared in the total national figures (Table 3). Unsurprisingly, disbursements per capita grew more slowly than total disbursements in periods of substantial population growth, especially the second half of the eighteenth century when nominal growth of 4.0 per cent per year hid per capita growth of only 3.2 per cent per year. Likewise, in demographically stagnant decades such as the 1660s and 1680s, disbursements per capita rose slightly faster than total spending. In both cases, however, poor relief spending outpaced population growth, so rising costs did not simply track the rising number of people who might contribute or receive these funds. The population was growing, but relief spending was growing faster still.



	<b>nominal disbursements</b>	<b>per capita disbursements</b>	<b>real disburs. (CPI)</b>	<b>real disburs. (wheat prices)</b>	<b>real per capita disburs. (CPI)</b>
1600s	7.56%	6.83%	8.16%	5.37%	7.43%
1610s	4.53%	3.96%	5.62%	-1.79%	5.04%
1620s	5.43%	5.00%	3.37%	2.41%	2.99%
1630s	4.52%	3.85%	6.47%	1.78%	5.78%
1640s	8.93%	8.70%	6.61%	5.99%	6.38%
1650s	1.18%	1.14%	2.62%	1.26%	2.58%
1660s	0.27%	0.71%	0.21%	-1.56%	0.65%
1670s	4.04%	4.13%	4.93%	3.60%	5.02%
1680s	1.71%	1.92%	2.63%	-5.07%	2.85%
1690s	4.25%	3.98%	2.36%	8.76%	2.09%
1700s	0.81%	0.38%	2.57%	4.73%	2.14%
1710s	2.43%	2.27%	1.66%	-5.30%	1.49%
1720s	2.44%	2.29%	2.64%	5.21%	2.49%
1730s	-0.41%	-0.69%	0.80%	-1.49%	0.53%
1740s	3.51%	3.21%	3.51%	1.73%	3.21%
1750s	2.61%	1.92%	2.98%	2.06%	2.29%
1760s	3.71%	3.26%	2.75%	3.95%	2.30%
1770s	3.66%	2.81%	4.83%	-0.45%	3.96%
1780s	3.32%	2.46%	1.62%	4.87%	0.78%
1790s	6.66%	5.39%	3.83%	4.80%	2.59%
1800s	3.35%	2.04%	0.21%	7.36%	-1.07%
1810s	3.77%	2.28%	4.53%	-0.71%	3.02%
1820s	-0.52%	-2.00%	0.61%	-0.18%	-0.89%
<i>Average</i>	3.38%	2.86%	3.28%	2.06%	2.77%

Table 3: Annual growth in nominal relief disbursements compared to per capita and real (inflation-adjusted) growth in disbursements

The cost of living, like population, rose over the long-term. Indeed, for the poor, this was undoubtedly the most important variable in determining the tangible impact of relief spending, because rising welfare expenditures were ineffective if they lagged behind the prices of food and other essentials. Although price indices for this period are problematic, they still provide a useful way to check for obvious divergences.<sup>55</sup> When examined at the decadal level, we can see that per capita relief expenditures rose faster than Allen's composite 'consumer price index' throughout the whole period, even in the 1660s when inflation very nearly matched rising relief spending (Table 3). Indeed, during periods of

<sup>55</sup> For the problems with published inflation indices, see John Hatcher and Judy Stephenson (eds), *Seven Centuries of Unreal Wages* (2018).

stagnant or falling prices such as the 1680s and the 1730s, the ‘real’ value of poor relief grew much faster than nominal spending. However, this comparison also shows that the rapid expansion in nominal spending in the 1640s, 1690s, 1780s and 1790s was significantly mitigated by rising consumer prices. When compared to wheat prices – the most volatile of the main price series but also perhaps the most important for labouring people – the results are more ambiguous (Table 3). There are several decades when spending rose less rapidly than the cost of wheat. These must have been especially difficult periods for paupers relying on parish pensions to buy their daily bread. Nonetheless, broader measures of inflation almost always rose more slowly than nominal or even per capita relief spending. Although spikes in bread prices unsurprisingly contributed to higher relief spending, inflation was not the sole driver of rising rates.

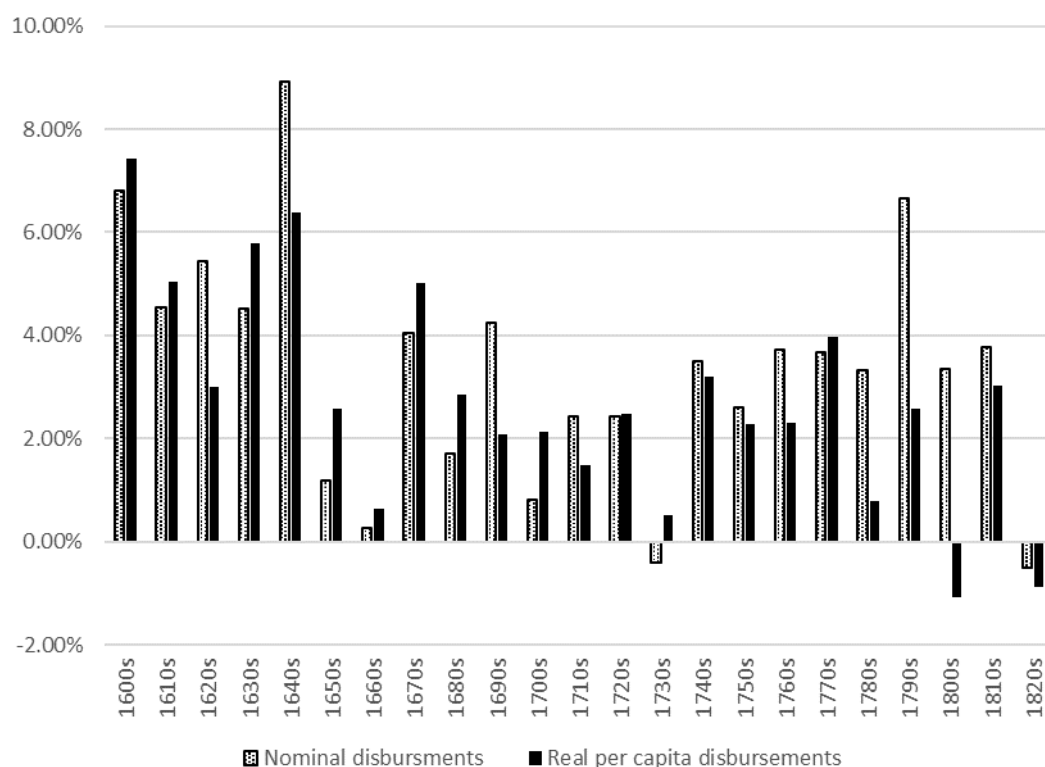


Figure 10: Annual growth in nominal disbursements and real (CPI) per capita disbursements

When nominal national totals are adjusted for both population growth and inflation to create an index of real per capita disbursements, the long-term trend remains one of considerable growth (Figure 10). The average annual growth rate for these 120 years was approximately 2.8 percent using this measure, rather than the nominal average of 3.4 percent. Inflation-adjusted disbursements per capita rose fastest in the first half of the seventeenth century, much like the nominal national figures. However, growth in ‘real’ spending per capita was more evenly spread across the period, with rises in decades such as the 1640s, 1690s and 1790s no longer appearing so spectacular and the deceleration in the 1650s-60s also less abrupt. On this measure, the 1670s also emerge as a decade with the highest growth in expenditure until the 1790s. This nuance is very important for historians studying the social impact of poor relief in particular periods, though it does not fundamentally change the main trend of strong long-term growth across both centuries.

To more fully contextualise the expansion of the parish relief system, we can look beyond possible contributors to growing disbursements. For example, the scale of parish relief becomes clearer when spending is compared to local wages or the levels of relief found elsewhere in Europe.

Daily wages for agricultural labourers – the largest group of workers in early modern England and the ones most likely to require poor relief at some point during their lives – offer a potentially illuminating comparator for the new data. Such wages increased only gradually and intermittently over this period, in contrast to the more rapid and steady growth in relief disbursements.<sup>56</sup> One way to measure this divergence is to calculate the number of days of farm labour that could be hired by the annual per capita spending on poor relief. Doing so shows that, for example, parish overseers annually disbursed the equivalent of only about a half day’s male wages per person in the 1650s, rising to about one day’s worth in

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<sup>56</sup> For the problems with published wage series, see Hatcher and Stephenson (eds), *Unreal Wages*.

1680s, then two by the 1720s, and reaching over six days' worth of wages by the 1790s.<sup>57</sup> Measured against a women's daily wage, which was usually only about half of the men's rate, the equivalents were about one day's wage in the 1650s, nearly two days in the 1680s and nearly 15 days in the 1790s. In other words, by end of the eighteenth century, overseers were spending enough to pay a labouring women's wage to every single person in the country for more than two weeks each year.

Statutory relief was far from the only source of support for the poor in this period, so comparison with the sums distributed through charity and informal support would also be valuable. While measuring 'the culture of giving' at the national level is impossible, scholars have shown that it remained important long after the establishment of the poor law.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, a quantitative analysis of spending per capita between 1785 and 1815 found no evidence of statutory welfare 'crowding out' charitable relief.<sup>59</sup> Yet, even if private charity was growing in nominal terms throughout the whole period, an array of evidence suggests that it grew more slowly than public relief. In late seventeenth-century Colchester and Lancashire, for example, charitable disbursements from bequests and endowments was only a fraction of the equivalent sums spent by parish overseers.<sup>60</sup> So, the rise of the latter was not a simple shift from 'private' to 'public' relief, but it did mean that the former grew comparatively less central to the support of the poor as rate-funded expenditures continuously expanded.

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<sup>57</sup> Gregory Clark, 'Nominal and Real Wages, England, 1209-1869', data series (2014) <<http://faculty.econ.ucdavis.edu/faculty/gclark/data.html>>; Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf, 'The Wages of Women in England, 1260-1850', *The Journal of Economic History*, 75:2 (2015), 405-47.

<sup>58</sup> Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*.

<sup>59</sup> Nina Boberg-Fazlic and Paul Sharp, 'Does Welfare Spending Crowd Out Charitable Activity? Evidence from Historical England under the Poor Laws', *The Economic Journal*, 127:599 (2017).

<sup>60</sup> Nigel Goose, 'The Rise and Decline of Philanthropy in Early Modern Colchester: The Unacceptable Face of Mercantilism?', *Social History*, 31:4 (2006); Healey, *Welfare*, pp. 165-6. For direct comparison of relief from rates and endowments in the seventeenth century using very rough national estimates, see Slack, *Poverty*, pp. 169-73. The general trend by which 'parish relief came to supplant (though never of course to entirely displace) informal charitable arrangements' is summarised by Hindle, *Parish*, pp. 295-99.

The growing scale of the system can also be seen through international contrasts, which confirm the distinctiveness of trends in relief spending in England. Unfortunately, direct comparisons to trends in welfare provision elsewhere are nearly impossible due to the very different nature of the relief systems overseas.<sup>61</sup> However, in the eighteenth-century Low Countries, there was a system that resembled the English ‘Old Poor Law’ in many ways and recent work by Thijs Lambrecht and Anne Winter has provided a data series which includes formal spending on poor relief in 11 parishes in coastal Flanders from 1740 to 1796.<sup>62</sup> Over that period, disbursements there rose by an average of only 1.9 percent per year, substantially lower than the 3.4 percent annual growth in the English sample. Although nominal spending in the Flemish villages more than doubled over this half century, the rise in England from under £700,000 in 1740 to nearly £4 million in 1796 was much faster.

Placed in context, the long-term growth of welfare spending is remarkable. Relief disbursements grew faster than the population, the economy, national taxation, and consumer prices. They also outpaced agricultural wages and, at least in one case, welfare spending overseas. The messiness of the data means that attempting to measure precise correlations between these indices would be unhelpful. For example, the financial years used by the parish overseers usually began at Easter and thus diverged by about six months from the harvest years used in the wheat price series which began at Michaelmas. However, as seen above, direct comparisons at the decadal level still reveal the importance of going beyond merely tracking trends in nominal spending.

The range and overlapping nature of the factors that contributed to rising relief costs show that any monocausal explanation would be foolhardy. The system was buttressed by increasingly solid statutory authority and institutional structures, while being supplied with

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<sup>61</sup> For some ‘snapshot’ comparisons between English and continental towns, see Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 141.

<sup>62</sup> Lambrecht and Winter, ‘Old Poor Law’. I am grateful to these authors for providing me with their annual figures.

resources by expanding commercial activity and rising economic productivity. Attempts to slow down this growth through new legal restrictions may have partly succeeded for a few years, but any such impact at the national level was short-lived and may have inadvertently reinforced the institutional strength of the system. Meanwhile, demographic growth and price inflation gradually pushed up nominal spending on poor relief, as the number of paupers and the price of their necessities both increased. When population growth slowed or stagnated so too did overseers' disbursements, though never to the same degree. Sudden spikes in the cost of provisions due to bad harvests were the most common cause of rapid short-term increases in relief spending and, although such 'crisis' moments are not the focus of this article, they also seem to have contributed to the long-term trajectory.<sup>63</sup> Much like wages, relief levels rose more easily than they fell, displaying partial downward rigidity.<sup>64</sup> This meant that there was a 'ratchet effect', whereby sudden increases in disbursements to compensate for price spikes were not matched by equally rapid falls when prices declined. Each dearth year thus slightly raised the 'normal' level of relief spending. When these various factors are considered together, it is hardly surprising that the new dataset shows such substantial long-term growth. Both 'supply' and 'demand' pushed overseers to spend ever-rising sums on relieving the poor.

## CONCLUSIONS

Over the long term, there was a vast expansion in both the capacity and the pressure to redistribute resources from the wealthy to the poor through the parish relief system. The basic institutional infrastructure was already in place in many parishes by 1600, making it possible for welfare provision to expand rapidly over the course of the seventeenth century. Insofar as

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<sup>63</sup> For an assessment of the relationship between poor relief and a short-term shocks, which draws on the data used here: Healey, 'Response'.

<sup>64</sup> For wages, see Peter Howitt, 'Looking Inside the Labour Market', *Journal of Economic Literature*, 40 (2002). For an early allusion to this 'ratchet mechanism', see Slack, *Poverty*, p. 179.

parliamentary efforts aimed to restrict the growth in relief spending, they had minimal impact at the national level before the nineteenth century. Instead, an expanding economy, population growth and price inflation pushed disbursements to higher and higher levels. As has been seen, this growth was concentrated in specific periods, with sustained and substantial growth in nominal spending from 1600 to c.1650 which returned again from c.1740.

More importantly, even after accounting for demographic growth and inflation, the sums devoted to poor relief still rose reliably every decade until the early nineteenth century. This suggests that the system did more than merely track the growing needs of the English poor. We might be tempted to attribute this to growing generosity on the part of the country's governors, though their public complaints about rising rates and the supposed 'idleness' of their 'inferiors' suggest that this might be too charitable an interpretation.<sup>65</sup>

Instead, it seems more likely that this 'excessive' growth was driven by the poor themselves. Pressure 'from below' increased though the rise of innumerable formal petitions for relief and the routinisation of requests for 'settlement certificates' proving their eligibility in their 'home' parish. Historians such as Healey, Hindle, Hitchcock and Shoemaker, Howard, Tadmor, and Sokoll have demonstrated the power of these practices and, in some cases, their growing prevalence over time.<sup>66</sup> Thanks to the institutional support provided by the local magistracy, this pressure from the poor and their allies in the parish community could have made a direct contribution to the growth in relief spending.

It is perhaps fitting, therefore, to conclude with one such supplication, sent by Thomas Dufty to magistrates of Worcestershire in 1694. The petition claimed that because of an ongoing dispute about his legal place of 'settlement', he 'must be constrained to Lye in the

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<sup>65</sup> For innumerable examples of such complaints, see Paul Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>66</sup> Healey, *First Century*; Hindle, *Parish*, pp. 405-432; Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*; Sharon Howard, 'The Petitions Project' (2019) <<http://london.sharonhoward.org/llpp/>>; Tadmor, 'Form'; Thomas Sokoll, *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837* (Oxford, 2001); Waddell, *God*, pp. 126-138.

Open Lanes or Field’ and would soon ‘be utterly lost for want of Succor’. Dufty was, of course, unaware and unconcerned about the nine percent rise in national relief costs over the previous year and the doubling of total disbursements over the preceding two decades. Instead, this self-declared ‘poor petitioner’ simply wanted some ‘allowance ... towards his maintenance [so] that he perish not’. As in so many other cases, the county magistrates agreed and ordered the parish overseers to ‘pay the Petitioner twelve pence per weeke towards his Relief’.<sup>67</sup> Decades of legal and institutional refinement had created a system in which requests like Dufty’s were unremarkable and often granted. As a result, parishioners in every corner of the kingdom devoted ever larger sums to meeting the needs and demands of the poorest among them.

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<sup>67</sup> Worcestershire Archives, 1/1/168/61.



## Appendix 1: Parishes in Sample

Clifton (Beds), 1685-1735	Toppesfield (Essex), 1654-1720
Flitwick (Beds), 1671-1727	Kings Stanley (Glos), 1666-1711
Podington (Beds), 1616-1715	Slimbridge (Glos), 1635-1738
Potton (Beds), 1638-1726	Stinchcombe (Glos), 1667-1755
Roxton (Beds), 1683-1741	Westbury-on-Trym with Stoke Bishop and
Turvey (Beds), 1639-1726	Shirehampton (Glos), 1656-1699
Bray (Berks), 1622-1733	Basingstoke St Michael (Hants), 1668-1734
Chilton (Berks), 1657-1719	Chawton (Hants), 1618-1741
Cholsey (Berks), 1681-1746	Holdenhurst (Hants), 1685-1750
Sulhamstead Abbots (Berks), 1693-1750	Ibsley (Hants), 1688-1750
Warfield (Berks), 1695-1755	Kingsclere (Hants), 1635-1697
Amersham (Bucks), 1611-1740	Old Alresford (Hants), 1653-1750
Drayton Beauchamp (Bucks), 1665-1735	Timsbury (Hants), 1680-1729
East Claydon (Bucks), 1718-1791	Wolverton (Hants), 1679-1750
Little Marlow (Bucks), 1663-1739	Almeley (Heres), 1662-1800
Middle Claydon (Bucks), 1674-1794	Aldenham (Herts), 1630-1801
Stoke Poges (Bucks), 1639-1745	Ashwell (Herts), 1676-1750
Bourn (Cambs), 1653-1776	Aston (Herts), 1679-1747
Cambridge, Great St Mary (Cambs), 1648-1810	Bishops Stortford (Herts), 1656-1809
Cambridge, Holy Sepulchre (Cambs), 1649-1720	Little Hadham (Herts), 1667-1809
Guilden Morden (Cambs), 1678-1818	Little Munden (Herts), 1714-1741
Orwell (Cambs), 1664-1750	Thundridge (Herts), 1653-1674
Trumpington (Cambs), 1663-1780	Great Gransden (Hunts), 1664-1779
Barthomley (Ches), 1728-1813	Great Staughton (Hunts), 1644-1778
Lymm (Ches), 1690-1812	Kimbolton (Hunts), 1650-1773
Nether Alderley (Ches), 1724-1813	St Ives (Hunts), 1677-1743
Sutton in Runcorn (Ches), 1719-1826	Biddenden (Kent), 1653-1726
St Stephen-in-Brannel (Cornwall), 1655-1724	Monkton (Kent), 1690-1727
St Stephen's-by-Saltash (Cornwall), 1675-1812	Sandhurst (Kent), 1640-1730
West Looe (Cornwall), 1754-1808	Staplehurst (Kent), 1648-1670
Torpenhow (Cumb), 1679-1729	Tonbridge (Kent), 1731-1790
Ault Hucknall (Derbys), 1734-1813	Wrotham (Kent), 1600-1682
Derby, All Saints (Derbys), 1636-1687	Bury (Lancs), 1692-1760
Great Barlow (Derbys), 1626-1726	Cheetham (Lancs), 1693-1760
Kniveton (Derbys), 1730-1802	Duxbury in Chorley (Lancs), 1688-1817
Buckland-in-the-Moor (Devon), 1783-1819	Goodshaw (Lancs), 1692-1742
Churston Ferrers (Devon), 1600-1802	Halsall (Lancs), 1698-1755
Holne (Devon), 1711-1798	Hawkshead (Lancs), 1690-1760
Honeychurch (Devon), 1682-1808	Liverpool (Lancs), 1688-1705
Kingston (Devon), 1648-1704	Prestwich (Lancs), 1645-1760
Plymstock (Devon), 1608-1631	Leicester, St Mary (Leics), 1653-1721
Widecombe (Devon), 1683-1809	Seal (Leics), 1748-1800
Cerne Abbas (Dorset), 1632-1765	Frampton (Lincs), 1608-1799
Puddletown (Dorset), 1683-1750	Grantham (Lincs), 1685-1702
Sherborne (Dorset), 1659-1729	Paris Garden, Southwark (London), 1609-1638
Wyke Regis (Dorset), 1685-1750	St Alban Wood Street (London), 1626-1674
Stockton on Tees (Durham), 1718-1731	St Andrews by the Wardrobe (London), 1614-1810
Beauchamp Roding (Essex), 1691-1809	St Bartholomew by the Exchange (London), 1600-1790
Black Notley (Essex), 1644-1803	St Clement Danes, Westminster (London), 1711-1800
Braintree (Essex), 1619-1779	St Dionis Backchurch (London), 1729-1790
Earls Colne (Essex), 1723-1740	St Dunstan in the West (London), 1602-1806
Feering (Essex), 1684-1713	St Helen Bishopgate (London), 1614-1715
Finchingfield (Essex), 1612-1760	
Heydon (Essex), 1617-1644	

St James, Westminster (London), 1686-1720  
St Martin in the Fields, Westminster (London), 1670-1720  
St Michael Cornhill (London), 1600-1812  
St Paul's Covent Garden, Westminster (London), 1659-1720  
St Thomas, Southwark (London), 1672-1805  
Staines (Mddx), 1645-1771  
Felbrigg (Norfolk), 1618-1695  
Gissing (Norfolk), 1641-1732  
Great Yarmouth (Norfolk), 1611-1653  
Hanworth (Norfolk), 1618-1730  
North Creak (Norfolk), 1613-1657  
Norwich, 14 parishes (Norfolk), 1621-1719  
Shelton (Norfolk), 1671-1733  
Great Houghton (Northants), 1660-1700  
Kings Sutton (Northants), 1652-1701  
Wellingborough (Northants), 1650-1713  
Bedlington (Northumb), 1733-1782  
Clayworth (Notts), 1674-1806  
Edwinstowe (Notts), 1630-1764  
Nottingham, St Peter (Notts), 1681-1741  
Enstone (Oxon), 1660-1750  
Kidlington (Oxon), 1684-1740  
South Leigh (Oxon), 1672-1755  
Whitchurch (Oxon), 1665-1755  
Ashwell (Rutland), 1701-1750  
Habberley (Shrops), 1744-1782  
Butleigh (Somerset), 1673-1776  
High Littleton (Somerset), 1754-1786  
Taunton St James (Somerset), 1667-1702  
Alrewas (Staffs), 1671-1749  
Ashley (Staffs), 1683-1747  
Cheadle (Staffs), 1655-1750  
Cowley (Staffs), 1679-1750  
Gnosall (Staffs), 1678-1750  
Hamstall Ridware (Staffs), 1692-1750  
Knightley (Staffs), 1680-1749  
Moreton (Staffs), 1679-1750  
Patttingham (Staffs), 1655-1724  
East Bergholt (Suffolk), 1686-1759  
Ipswich, St Lawrence (Suffolk), 1600-1644  
Ipswich, St Mary at Quay (Suffolk), 1600-1644  
Lavenham (Suffolk), 1689-1718  
Stoke-by-Nayland (Suffolk), 1670-1720  
Lingfield (Surrey), 1706-1722  
Beckley (Sussex), 1705-1749  
Harting (Sussex), 1619-1749  
Pyecombe (Sussex), 1672-1750  
Steyning (Sussex), 1666-1750  
Birmingham (Warks), 1676-1810  
Farnborough (Warks), 1654-1750  
Leamington Hastings (Warks), 1655-1733  
Brampton (Westmor), 1741-1769  
Underbarrow (Westmor), 1720-1748  
Cliffe Pyppard (Wilts), 1653-1704  
Donhead St Andrew (Wilts), 1653-1743

East Knoyle (Wilts), 1607-1756  
Ham (Wilts), 1683-1760  
Littleton Drew (Wilts), 1745-1834  
Seend (Wilts), 1666-1722  
Stockton (Wilts), 1660-1749  
Wroughton (Wilts), 1650-1750  
Beckford (Worcs), 1660-1750  
Old Swinford (Worcs), 1667-1726  
Shipston on Stour (Worcs), 1634-1708  
South Littleton (Worcs), 1617-1750  
Howsham (Yorks ER), 1658-1810  
Kirby Grindalyth (Yorks ER), 1662-1732  
Kirby Underdale (Yorks ER), 1684-1740  
Millington (Yorks ER), 1661-1773  
Farlington (Yorks NR), 1694-1764  
Attercliffe with Darnall (Yorks WR), 1675-1786  
Batley (Yorks WR), 1695-1815  
Bingley (Yorks WR), 1701-1749  
Carleton in Craven (Yorks WR), 1713-1744  
Heptonstall (Yorks WR), 1693-1795  
Holbeck (Yorks WR), 1662-1751  
Hooton Pagnell (Yorks WR), 1766-1805  
Langfield (Yorks WR), 1699-1776  
Rawmarsh (Yorks WR), 1682-1812

## Appendix 2: Annual Disbursements (corrected)

		1645	£65,122	1691	£225,434
1600	£10,667	1646	£66,243	1692	£239,320
1601	£13,001	1647	£74,201	1693	£261,161
1602	£13,703	1648	£80,832	1694	£284,960
1603	£14,684	1649	£120,408	1695	£293,939
1604	£13,848	1650	£125,618	1696	£297,264
1605	£12,600	1651	£124,064	1697	£325,891
1606	£16,064	1652	£130,953	1698	£303,159
1607	£15,885	1653	£118,094	1699	£331,515
1608	£16,144	1654	£115,062	1700	£334,280
1609	£19,415	1655	£106,722	1701	£305,694
1610	£17,190	1656	£104,637	1702	£294,047
1611	£19,046	1657	£124,177	1703	£296,026
1612	£17,213	1658	£122,998	1704	£288,061
1613	£12,773	1659	£131,614	1705	£291,340
1614	£16,992	1660	£132,466	1706	£300,286
1615	£17,874	1661	£137,204	1707	£296,702
1616	£18,005	1662	£147,780	1708	£324,059
1617	£29,333	1663	£138,208	1709	£354,547
1618	£23,275	1664	£139,458	1710	£396,125
1619	£23,320	1665	£166,041	1711	£442,183
1620	£23,360	1666	£145,887	1712	£414,044
1621	£24,631	1667	£124,235	1713	£389,109
1622	£27,559	1668	£135,704	1714	£424,037
1623	£25,937	1669	£128,995	1715	£391,839
1624	£30,627	1670	£137,294	1716	£406,268
1625	£39,052	1671	£132,506	1717	£386,942
1626	£37,880	1672	£141,363	1718	£388,392
1627	£36,461	1673	£160,090	1719	£437,662
1628	£33,366	1674	£175,423	1720	£459,977
1629	£37,475	1675	£179,788	1721	£431,997
1630	£44,851	1676	£181,468	1722	£449,974
1631	£50,943	1677	£175,373	1723	£425,714
1632	£49,626	1678	£194,126	1724	£438,165
1633	£47,289	1679	£188,739	1725	£459,982
1634	£49,575	1680	£193,333	1726	£447,949
1635	£50,321	1681	£198,492	1727	£507,163
1636	£60,559	1682	£199,396	1728	£536,394
1637	£55,105	1683	£203,397	1729	£548,795
1638	£58,067	1684	£225,943	1730	£570,791
1639	£55,838	1685	£223,959	1731	£497,087
1640	£58,126	1686	£222,693	1732	£483,028
1641	£60,394	1687	£224,819	1733	£487,800
1642	£52,716	1688	£208,688	1734	£495,098
1643	£60,343	1689	£221,495	1735	£489,398
1644	£60,212	1690	£220,178	1736	£488,540

1737	£491,697	1785	£2,670,494	1833	£6,272,717
1738	£531,309	1786	£2,327,449	1834	£5,451,537
1739	£519,650	1787	£2,370,294		
1740	£684,968	1788	£2,349,335		
1741	£763,765	1789	£2,410,302		
1742	£684,127	1790	£2,707,451		
1743	£639,897	1791	£2,795,436		
1744	£615,161	1792	£2,879,451		
1745	£608,908	1793	£2,655,175		
1746	£665,256	1794	£2,737,951		
1747	£665,314	1795	£3,697,108		
1748	£678,927	1796	£3,863,867		
1749	£694,145	1797	£3,954,825		
1750	£663,570	1798	£3,990,889		
1751	£685,134	1799	£4,387,153		
1752	£741,021	1800	£5,768,268		
1753	£764,355	1801	£6,025,557		
1754	£776,659	1802	£4,267,963		
1755	£772,528	1803	£3,977,240		
1756	£796,295	1804	£4,802,748		
1757	£894,242	1805	£4,633,683		
1758	£939,054	1806	£4,212,758		
1759	£887,130	1807	£4,970,525		
1760	£860,145	1808	£5,462,150		
1761	£864,471	1809	£5,326,886		
1762	£883,440	1810	£4,726,461		
1763	£916,533	1811	£5,263,007		
1764	£890,990	1812	£6,752,968		
1765	£1,044,347	1813	£6,377,867		
1766	£1,090,120	1814	£5,513,613		
1767	£1,191,061	1815	£5,494,789		
1768	£1,225,565	1816	£5,756,982		
1769	£1,259,411	1817	£7,552,087		
1770	£1,241,476	1818	£7,186,613		
1771	£1,237,980	1819	£7,020,363		
1772	£1,387,421	1820	£6,674,939		
1773	£1,471,659	1821	£6,102,255		
1774	£1,485,787	1822	£5,534,556		
1775	£1,523,163	1823	£5,497,152		
1776	£1,628,125	1824	£5,535,190		
1777	£1,542,647	1825	£5,676,328		
1778	£1,625,384	1826	£6,179,879		
1779	£1,783,260	1827	£6,031,200		
1780	£1,799,588	1828	£6,068,270		
1781	£1,999,519	1829	£6,553,443		
1782	£2,258,768	1830	£6,509,466		
1783	£2,287,083	1831	£6,731,131		
1784	£2,556,419	1832	£6,727,739		

