

WORKHOUSE POPULATIONS IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY : THE CASE OF HERTFORDSHIRE

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Introduction

Despite the centrality of workhouses to the New Poor Law as established in 1834, the contemporary controversy to which they gave rise, the hostility towards them of so many potential recipients of their hospitality, and considerable historical interest in their organization, administration and the living conditions they provided, it is remarkable how little we know about the inmates they accommodated. Although the New Poor Law generated a considerable weight of statistical data, there is nothing in the published Poor Law Reports before 1891 that provides the level of detail with respect to age, sex and marital condition that can be found in the unpublished Census Enumerators' Books (CEBs), a source that remains largely neglected.¹ This neglect is particularly surprising as the CEBs also give additional information on occupations, status and place of birth, open up opportunities for analysis of family structure, and are readily available for every one of the 595 Poor Law Unions that existed in 1851, providing an ideal point of departure in any attempt to produce a demographic and social profile. For this reason the article by Hinde and Turnbull in *LPS* 61 discussing the population of two Hampshire workhouses in the mid-nineteenth century is welcome, but it also serves to highlight our continued ignorance, drawing attention to the paucity of comparative evidence available, and in particular to the lack of studies which are firmly rooted within the local or regional economic and social context.²

What is needed is a means by which poverty can be embedded within the specific circumstances of local communities, to provide a perspective which is so often lacking in the often politicized general accounts of workhouse conditions, or hidden beneath bald statements regarding the different circumstances of the 'rural south' and 'industrial north'.³ This can best be achieved through a regional approach, which will avoid the excessive localism of studies of individual institutions or parishes, permit intra-regional as well as extra-regional comparison, but still allow the poor to emerge as individuals within specific economic, social and geographical contexts. Fortunately the data upon which to base such a study, for one county at least, is ready to hand. For the past ten years the Centre for Regional and Local History at the University of Hertfordshire has been co-ordinating the activities of an army of volunteer transcribers and data

inputters to produce a database of the 1851 census for the county. To date this has resulted in the publication of two volumes focusing upon different regions, providing a detailed analysis of various features of their economic, social and demographic structures in comparative perspective.⁴ Thematic interests have developed out of these broad surveys, particularly in household structure, farm service, women's work and, most pertinently to the subject under discussion here, poverty and ageing. In pursuit of these last two topics, the data contained in the census enumerators' books of 1851 for all Hertfordshire workhouses has been collated and processed, and the results of this analysis are presented here.

The economy of mid-nineteenth century Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire in the mid-nineteenth century was the epitome of a southern, agrarian, corn growing county, described in 1795 as 'the first corn county in the kingdom'. It was ideally placed to serve the ever expanding London market for both corn and hay, as well as to receive manure in return, at least prior to the development of artificial fertilizers during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a development in which Hertfordshire took the lead.⁵ Sheep and cattle rearing and fattening were not unknown, but this was very much a subsidiary activity compared with the main business of arable cultivation which focused upon wheat production organized along 'improving' lines, on substantial farms which employed a variety of crop rotations and substantial inputs of fertilizer.⁶ The county was bereft of large towns, undoubtedly due to its proximity to the capital, and exhibited one of the lowest levels of urbanization of all the English counties, with just 24 per cent of its population living in its nine towns. The largest of these was St Albans, with a population of just 7,000 in 1851.⁷ It was not, however, wholly without industry. Not only was there a considerable and long established malting industry centred upon the town of Ware, but the south-west of the county possessed a handful of small silk factories and paper mills. The brewing industry also grew in scale in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ubiquitous across the county but with many larger concerns situated in towns such as Hitchin, Baldock, Hoddesdon, Hertford, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and elsewhere.⁸ More impressive than any of these, however, were the straw plait and hatmaking industries, forming a major source of employment over a wide area of southern and eastern Hertfordshire, straw plaiters alone numbering 8,753 at mid-century, rising to 12,089 at its height in 1871.⁹ This created an additional dimension which impacted upon the structure of poverty.

The Poor Law Unions that were established in 1834 were coterminous with the Superintendent Registrars' Districts as recognized by the General Register Office, which took over responsibility for census taking in 1840. The boundaries of these Unions and Districts did not always correspond with county boundaries, but many of them did fall within the confines of ancient counties, which was indeed the case in Hertfordshire.¹⁰ In 1851 ten Superintendent Registrars' Districts fell wholly, or very largely, within the county — Berkhamsted, Bishops Stortford, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, Hertford, Hitchin, Royston, St Albans, Ware and Watford — and each of these possessed a workhouse situated within the county boundaries. Two more straddled this boundary, Barnet and Edmonton, and although neither could be regarded as primarily of Hertfordshire, the Barnet Union Workhouse was situated at the edge of Chipping Barnet on the southern

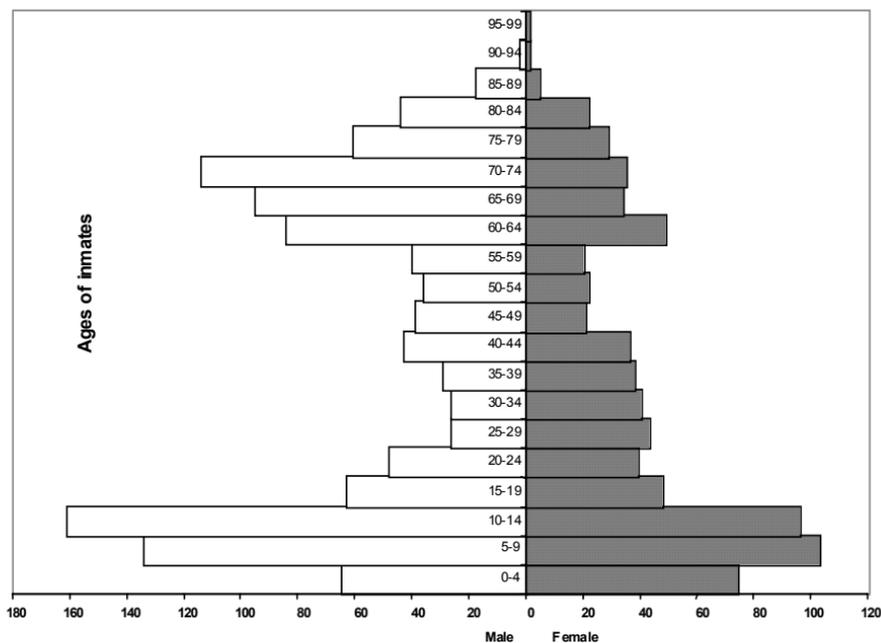
fringe of the county and has thus been included in the analysis which follows. In 1851 these 11 workhouses housed collectively a pauper population of 1,884 individuals.

The composition of Hertfordshire workhouse populations: age and sex structure

The age profiles of workhouse inmates that can be ascertained from the census enumerators' books take on special significance in view of the failure of the Poor Law Commission's annual reports to provide any statistical breakdown of paupers by age before 1890, even if they did recognize the prominence of the aged, widows and the infirm amongst recipients of outdoor relief.¹¹ At the same time, many contemporaries emphasized the large number of elderly people and orphaned or abandoned children amongst workhouse inmates, while what little statistical evidence there is from local studies generally supports this view.¹² Workhouses, of course, were supposed to operate according to the principle of 'lesser eligibility', and hence were designed to deter the able bodied poor from applying for relief unless they were truly in dire circumstances, in which case they would be 'offered the house' but refused outdoor relief. In practice, these rules were not always rigidly applied, particularly in cases of seasonal or cyclical unemployment, or where the refusal of outdoor relief to a household head might involve the additional expense of the maintenance of an entire family in workhouse accommodation: policy and parsimony could thus pull in entirely different directions. But while we know that across the country at mid-century outdoor relief remained far more common than relief in the workhouse, with approximately one workhouse inmate for every seven in receipt of outdoor payments, the precise effect of these competing aspirations upon the composition of workhouse populations requires clarification.¹³

The Hertfordshire data, arranged according to age and gender, are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. The prominence of children, defined as those under the age of 15, and of the elderly, defined as those aged 60 or over, is immediately apparent. Taking all 11 workhouses, children accounted for almost exactly one-third of their inmates, while the elderly constituted marginally less than one-third. This leaves a little over one-third (35 per cent) in the categories that we might regard as of prime working age, between 15 and 59, the figure for women standing at 41 per cent and that for men at just 31 per cent. For the Basingstoke and Winchester workhouses Hinde and Turnbull found 39 and 40 per cent respectively in this age category, compared to 46 per cent of the population of the county as a whole.¹⁴ For Hertfordshire, therefore, the proportion is significantly lower still, and compares with a higher proportion in this age group across the county as a whole of 55 per cent.¹⁵ One would not, of course, expect poverty to be equally spread across all age categories, particularly as sickness, large families and ageing itself have all been identified as instrumental causes of poverty in the nineteenth century, and hence these percentages are perhaps unsurprising. When national figures become available after 1890, workhouse inmates in the age groups between 15 and 44 formed substantially lower proportions of the total workhouse population than did these categories in the population at large, just a slightly higher proportion in the age group 45–54, with the reverse picture only clearly emerging for age 55 and over.¹⁶ Indeed, proportions as high as those found in

Figure 1 Age profile of Hertfordshire workhouse inmates in 1851



Sources: Public Record Office, CEBs Hertfordshire: HO107/1701-1716

Hampshire, standing so close to the figures for the county as a whole, might be taken to indicate, not the deterrent effect of the workhouse in operation, but the success of efforts to withdraw outdoor relief to the able bodied, leaving entry to the workhouse as the unavoidable last resort. Karel Williams has, of course, argued strongly that there were concerted and successful attempts to withdraw outdoor relief to able-bodied men after 1834.¹⁷ The relatively low proportion of workhouse occupants in Hertfordshire of prime working age, men in particular, might thus indicate that the Hertfordshire unions collectively were less successful in this respect than were those in Hampshire.

The Poor Law Commission of 1834 had found in the parishes of Hatfield and Welwyn, and to a lesser extent in Hitchin, 'a system of parochial management, of some originality and extraordinary rigour and efficiency', destined to produce 'great pecuniary and moral benefit.' Able-bodied men applying for relief were provided with work, 'on such terms as to labour and wages as to make it the least desirable of any in the parish', out-relief was given in goods rather than cash, while 'relief on account of a numerous family is confined to admission of one or more of the children to the workhouse.' The result was that, in Welwyn, 'the house is tenanted only by the old, infirm and by children.'¹⁸ Elements of this strategy may thus have survived through to 1851, but such complete success

Table 1 Age profile of Hertfordshire workhouse inmates 1851

Union	Under 15						
	All	%	M	%	F	%	Sex ratio
Barnet	58	40.0	34	41.0	24	38.7	142
Berkhamsted	10	16.4	7	17.9	3	13.6	233
Bishops Stortford	130	39.8	63	34.6	67	46.2	94
Hatfield	39	36.1	18	30.0	21	43.8	86
Hemel Hempstead	27	24.8	20	27.0	7	20.0	286
Hertford	37	31.6	22	32.4	15	30.6	147
Hitchin	55	31.8	40	33.9	15	27.3	267
Royston	87	37.0	53	34.2	34	42.5	156
St Albans	60	25.8	38	28.6	22	22.0	173
Ware	50	39.4	24	36.9	26	41.9	92
Watford	80	32.1	41	27.2	39	39.8	105
TOTAL	633	33.6	360	31.9	273	36.1	132
Hertfordshire	64,662	37.2	32,576	37.7	32,086	36.7	102

	15–29						
	All	%	M	%	F	%	Sex ratio
Barnet	20	13.8	14	16.9	6	9.7	233
Berkhamsted	9	14.8	4	10.3	5	22.7	80
Bishops Stortford	74	22.6	30	16.5	44	30.3	68
Hatfield	11	10.2	6	10.0	5	10.4	120
Hemel Hempstead	9	8.3	3	4.1	6	17.1	50
Hertford	22	18.8	7	10.3	15	30.6	47
Hitchin	16	9.2	8	6.8	8	14.5	100
Royston	44	18.7	26	16.8	18	22.5	144
St Albans	17	7.3	11	8.3	6	6.0	183
Ware	8	6.3	4	6.2	4	6.5	100
Watford	37	14.9	24	15.9	13	13.3	185
TOTAL	267	14.2	137	12.1	130	17.2	105
Hertfordshire	45,078	25.9	22,589	26.1	22,489	25.7	100

	30–59						
	All	%	M	%	F	%	Sex ratio
Barnet	31	21.4	12	14.5	19	30.6	63
Berkhamsted	12	19.7	6	15.4	6	27.3	100
Bishops Stortford	60	18.3	39	21.4	21	14.5	186
Hatfield	27	25.0	13	21.7	14	29.2	93
Hemel Hempstead	20	18.3	15	20.3	5	14.3	300
Hertford	25	21.4	15	22.1	10	20.4	150
Hitchin	34	19.7	20	16.9	14	25.5	143
Royston	49	20.9	32	20.6	17	21.3	188
St Albans	50	21.5	16	12.0	34	34.0	47
Ware	35	27.6	18	27.7	17	27.4	106
Watford	47	18.9	27	17.9	20	20.4	135
TOTAL	390	20.7	213	18.9	177	23.4	120
Hertfordshire	50,840	29.2	24,947	28.9	25,893	29.6	96

Table 1 Age profile of Hertfordshire workhouse inmates 1851: continued

Union	All	%	60 +		F	%	Sex Ratio
			M	%			
Barnet	36	24.8	23	27.7	13	21.0	177
Berkhamsted	30	49.2	22	56.4	8	36.4	275
Bishops Stortford	63	19.3	50	27.5	13	9.0	385
Hatfield	31	28.7	23	38.3	8	16.7	288
Hemel Hempstead	53	48.6	36	48.6	17	48.6	212
Hertford	33	28.2	24	35.3	9	18.4	267
Hitchin	68	39.3	50	42.4	18	32.7	278
Royston	55	23.4	44	28.4	11	13.8	400
St Albans	106	45.5	68	51.1	38	38.0	179
Ware	34	26.8	19	29.2	15	24.2	127
Watford	85	34.1	59	39.1	26	26.5	227
TOTAL	594	31.5	418	37.1	176	23.3	238
Hertfordshire	13,382	7.7	6,353	7.3	7,029	8.0	90

Union	TOTAL				No. Per 1,000
	All	M	F	Sex ratio	
Barnet	145	83	62	134	9.9
Berkhamsted	61	39	22	177	4.9
Bishops Stortford	327	182	145	126	16.1
Hatfield	108	60	48	125	12.7
Hemel Hempstead	109	74	35	211	8.3
Hertford	117	68	49	139	7.8
Hitchin	173	118	55	215	7.0
Royston	235	155	80	194	8.9
St Albans	233	133	100	133	12.9
Ware	127	65	62	105	7.7
Watford	249	151	98	154	13.2
TOTAL	1,884	1,128	756	149	10.0
Hertfordshire	173,962	86,465	87,497	99	

Sources: Public Record Office, CEBs Hertfordshire: HO107/1701-1716. Census of Great Britain 1851, *Population Tables II. Ages, civil condition, occupations and birth-place of the people*, vol. 1 (London, 1854), British Parliamentary Papers 1852-3, LXXXVIII Pt. 1, 139.

proved impossible to sustain, foundering on the twin obstacles of an overstocked labour market and seasonal unemployment. Clearly, the prediction of the Ware Union clerk in 1836 that 'able-bodied pauperism will soon be but a name', was, to say the least, unduly optimistic.¹⁹

A similar comparison with the county profile for the age group 0-14 puts the situation of children in clearer perspective, for there were in fact proportionally

fewer children in the workhouses than in the population of the county at large, 34 per cent compared to 37 per cent. Given the emphasis so often placed upon the plight of the poor orphan or abandoned child, and the influence of large families upon susceptibility to poverty, this figure is surprisingly low, and may well reflect a general reluctance to admit large families to the workhouses except as a last resort. For six of our eleven workhouses families are grouped clearly and consistently together in the census returns, and hence it is possible to test this proposition.²⁰ In these six, population 1,069, there were just 14 married couples with children, totalling 75 individuals or just 7 per cent of all inmates. Royston and Hatfield, with six and three families respectively, had more than their share in proportion to their size, whilst in the large St Albans workhouse there was not a single married couple with children, and just two in Watford. A number of these were clearly burdened with a great charge of children, such as Joseph and Ann Martin at Ware, with their seven children aged from six months to 10 years, their namesakes William and Elizabeth Martin at Hatfield, with six children aged from one to twenty, or the Bunn family at Royston, also with six children. On the other hand, 7 of the 14 included just one or two children. Unsurprisingly, agricultural labourers feature prominently, heading at least 9 of the 14 families, and possibly also two more.²¹

This does not, however, imply that the majority of children in these institutions were orphans. Four workhouses clearly identify orphans, and here they constituted just 15 per cent of all children, the proportion ranging from 7 per cent in Hitchin to 39 per cent in Hertford, suggesting that the problem posed by orphans may have been overstated.²² Children were far more commonly found with a lone parent. In the six workhouses for which it is straightforward to identify family groups, as many as 73 families were comprised of one or other parent with one or more children. Thirty-seven were headed by an unmarried woman, 11 by a married woman and 25 by a widow or widower, and in the latter respect it is interesting to find that 9 of these 25 were men. The prominence of unmarried mothers in these workhouses testifies both to the association of single parenthood with poverty and no doubt also to their moral standing in the eyes of the poor law boards of guardians.²³

Regardless of how it is constituted, the Hertfordshire figure for children of 34 per cent is particularly low compared to the Hampshire total of 40–44 per cent, and requires an additional local explanation. Over a wide region of south and west Hertfordshire the straw plait and straw and Brazilian hatmaking trades provided substantial employment, for women and also for children from as young as four years. In the Berkhamsted Union, for example, incorporating a total population of 11,578, 16 per cent of boys and 26 per cent of girls aged 5–9 were employed in 1851, whilst for the age group 10–14 the figures stood as high as 45 and 56 per cent for boys and girls respectively.²⁴ In the adjacent St Albans region, total population 17,991, 10 per cent of boys and 14 per cent of girls aged 5–9 were employed, and 51 per cent of boys and 50 per cent of girls aged 10–14.²⁵ These figures stand well above the national totals calculated from the published census report, for across England and Wales just 2 per cent of boys and 1 per cent of girls aged 5–9 were employed, and 37 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls aged 10–14.²⁶ In these areas, therefore, employment opportunities both for women and for

children must have acted as a powerful antidote to the potential poverty that could afflict large families.

This argument receives support from analysis of the sex ratio of children and young adults found in Hertfordshire workhouses, as well as from further consideration of regional variations in both age and sex profile. For the age group 0–4 there were just slightly more females than males in Hertfordshire workhouses, but the balance shifts decisively towards males for those aged 5–9, the age at which the Berkhamsted and St Albans data indicates a considerable discrepancy in employment opportunities between the sexes in favour of girls. In the subsequent age category, 10–14, there are proportionally even more boys than girls in the workhouses, despite more equal employment prospects, and this may well reflect fundamental difficulties in employment in the agricultural sector that dominated male employment in this age group, either of a long term or of a seasonal nature. Males continue to predominate through to age 24, with the position reversed through from 25 to 39, and the balance in favour of males restored for every age cohort thereafter. With respect to the figures for young adults, this represents a marked contrast to the situation in Hampshire, for in Winchester females form a clear majority of workhouse inmates aged 15–24 and in Basingstoke aged 20–24.²⁷

The four Hertfordshire unions to exhibit the lowest proportions aged under 15 in their workhouses were Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Hitchin, and in each of these the sex ratio in this age range was heavily skewed towards male inmates. It can be no coincidence that these were the very areas where the straw plait and hat industries were primarily located.²⁸ If we compare the proportion under the age of 15 in these four together compared to the remaining seven institutions, they amount to 26 as compared to 37 per cent, and the proportion would most probably be lower still if it were possible to split the Hitchin union in two. The sex ratio (males per 100 females) of those aged under 15 in these four workhouses is even more distinctive, standing as high as 223 compared with just 117 in the remaining seven. Local and regional economic opportunities were thus a potent factor helping to determine the age and sex profile of nineteenth century workhouse populations, and to explain the substantial variations that could be found both within and between counties.²⁹

The final age category to be considered is the elderly. Here the high proportion aged 60 and over is in no sense misleading, for the figure of 32 per cent in the Hertfordshire workhouses compares to under 8 per cent in the population of the county as a whole. The proportion of inmates in Hertfordshire who were elderly stands well above the 20 per cent discovered for Hampshire and the mere 9 per cent at Colyton in Devon 1851–81, although it was exceeded by the figure for Leicester in 1881. In the four straw plait areas of Hitchin, St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted, however, the proportion who were elderly was higher still, reaching 49 per cent in Berkhamsted and Hemel. This is partly the statistical product of the far lower proportion under 15, but it also reinforces the fact that whilst all workhouses for which we have information housed disproportionate numbers of elderly inhabitants, these proportions could vary quite dramatically from one to another, even within a fairly circumscribed geographical area.³⁰

One respect in which the Hertfordshire data decisively reinforces previous analyses is in terms of the pronounced skew towards men amongst elderly inmates, echoing the situation in Hampshire whilst differing from the workhouses of east Kent only in terms of the extent of the bias.³¹ Whilst the sex ratio for all age categories in the 11 Hertfordshire workhouses stood at 149, for those aged 60 or over it reached 238, despite the fact that elderly women outnumbered men in the population of the county at large, producing a sex ratio of just 90. Viewed from another perspective the figures appear almost startling, for whilst the workhouse population in 1851 accounted for just 1 per cent of the county's total population, nearly 7 per cent of men aged 60 or over were workhouse inmates.³² Men's prospects declined further still with advancing years: the 239 men aged 70 or over in Hertfordshire workhouses in 1851 represented fully 10 per cent of males in this age group in the county at large.³³

In this respect there is no distinction between the straw plait and hat areas and the rest of the county: the skew towards men is universal, though it was far less marked in Ware, possibly due to general labouring employment opportunities in the malting industry, and particularly pronounced in Royston, which was very heavily reliant upon agriculture. The prevalence of this skew may partly reflect the greater ability of elderly women to look after themselves as compared to men, as well as the greater usefulness of elderly females for the purposes of child care and other domestic tasks, as Tufnell suggested as long ago as 1836.³⁴ A first approach towards testing such propositions is through analysis of family structure, which is possible for the St Albans Superintendent Registrar's District in 1851, which included a population of 17,991 individuals in 3,576 households.³⁵ Of these 112 were vertically extended to include parents or parents in law, involving a total of 119 individuals, but just 34 of these were men compared to 85 women, producing a skew towards women that exceeds that revealed in Anderson's national sample, and which was particularly marked in the town of St Albans itself.³⁶ Siblings and siblings in law of the household head were more common, numbering 319 in total, but just 85 of these were men while 234 were women, again with a more pronounced skew in town than in countryside. The potential contribution of these female kin to household chores and perhaps particularly to child care must surely have had a bearing upon this disparity between the sexes, although the vulnerability of widowed females may also have played a part, as well as, in this area at least, their potential contribution to family budgets through employment in the straw trade.

In Hertfordshire, despite the lack of a clear contrast between the straw plait and other regions of the county, the trade must still have served to keep considerable numbers of elderly females a step or two away from destitution, and in this regard it is interesting to note that in 1851 in the rural parishes of the St Albans region, 78 per cent of widows were recorded as occupied and 94 per cent of single women aged 60 plus, whilst in the town of St Albans itself the figures stood at 70 per cent and 79 per cent respectively.³⁷ Amongst these were the likes of Sarah Smith, a widow aged 50 years and living alone in St Peters Street, occupied as a straw bonnet maker, and Mary Attwood of Turnpike Lane in Harpenden, also living alone at the age of 67, a spinster, employed in sewing bonnets. In other instances elderly females were supported by daughters or other kin employed in the straw and hat industry. Hence Jane Salmon, a widow aged 72 years who lived

in Fishpool Street, St Albans, had no recorded occupation, but her two unmarried daughters Eliza and Sarah, aged 28 and 24, were employed as a trimming weaver and hatmaker respectively. Similarly Martha Loggan of Pound Field in the same town, a 76 year old widow and former laundress, lived with her 16 year old granddaughter Georgiana, who was occupied as a bonnet sewer. Many more examples of similar mutual support between female family members, in the absence of a male breadwinner, could be cited, and many more women used this strategy to combat potential poverty than struggled along on their own.

There are clearly many other factors that might have helped produce this predominance of elderly men in the workhouse, including the lack of family support for lone males, their inability to plead sickness in the family as a reason to be granted outdoor relief, the difficulties that old age brought to agricultural labour or other predominantly male occupations requiring considerable physical exertion compared to, for example, plaiting or needlework, the reduced financial incentive to keep them out of the workhouse, as well as the fact that unmarried men both young and old were generally less favoured by employers than were family men, particularly in times of seasonal scarcity of work.³⁸ The Reverend Carmalt, reporting on Stoke in Buckinghamshire, was not alone in his belief that 'farmers very considerably reserve their piece-work for the most deserving of their workmen, and particularly for those who have families'.³⁹ There can be no doubt that agricultural labourers were particularly vulnerable. Nine of the 11 Hertfordshire workhouses provide reliable occupational information, and of the 640 males with an occupational designation as many as 461 (72 per cent) were agricultural workers. To put this into perspective, in the St Albans Union at large 5,596 males are recorded as occupied, and of these 2,160 (39 per cent) were agricultural workers, which compares with 67 out of 90 (74 per cent) in the St Albans union workhouse. Agricultural labourers feature just as prominently amongst the elderly workhouse inmates, again accounting for 72 per cent of those aged 60 or over with an occupational designation.⁴⁰ Labourers could indeed, in some instances, work on to a ripe old age, and some half a dozen are recorded in the St Albans district as still employed in their eighties or beyond, including James Wood of Marshall's Heath, Wheathampstead, aged 86, and William Beckley of Smug Oak in St Stephens parish, aged 93, but one must wonder about their ability to work with any regularity at these advanced ages. In all 200 of the 2,160 agricultural workers in this district were aged sixty or over, while there were 49 in the workhouse, and hence one in five of all elderly agricultural labourers were receiving indoor relief on census night in 1851.

The relative provision of almshouse accommodation for men and women may also help explain why more elderly women were able to avoid the workhouse, at least in towns where the opportunities for alms relief were most substantial but frequently biased in favour of women in general, and women of good character in particular. In this respect the example of Martha and Matthew Gower is particularly interesting. In 1851 Martha Gower, recorded as a lacemaker, aged 75 and married, resided in Church House Almshouses in Northchurch, along with 10 other women and just three men, but her spouse was not amongst them. She had married Matthew Gower in 1798, and in 1851 Matthew, aged 77, married and an agricultural labourer, was an inmate of the nearby Berkhamsted Union Workhouse, where he was still living at his death in 1860.⁴¹ The sex ratio of the

population at risk may have a bearing too, for while in the parts of Hertfordshire where the straw industry was prominent the overall sex ratio was skewed towards women, in areas where it was largely absent and agriculture more clearly dominant, such as Royston, there was an overall skew towards men and less of a predominance of women amongst the elderly than in the county as a whole. The most recent national estimates suggest that almost exactly twice as many women as men were relieved from the poor rate in 1850, indoors and outdoors, and hence the predominance of men in workhouses reinforces the view that they were considerably less likely than were women to receive relief outdoors.⁴² Whatever the reason for their presence in such numbers, the Hertfordshire workhouse evidence has clearly highlighted the plight of a hitherto largely neglected category amongst the poor, for whilst we often hear of the difficulties experienced by elderly widows in the mid-nineteenth century, very little attention has as yet been paid to the problems of poor, old men.⁴³

The composition of Hertfordshire workhouse populations: marital structure

The marital condition of Hertfordshire workhouse inmates aged 20 and over is shown in Table 2. Immediately apparent is the relatively small proportion who were married, at just 18 per cent an identical figure to that for the Basingstoke workhouse and very close to that for Winchester.⁴⁴ By contrast, 499 of the 1,128 adults were single, fully 44 per cent. These figures stand in stark contrast to those for the county as a whole, where 62 per cent were married and just 28 per cent were bachelors or spinsters. Single people of both sexes were clearly more vulnerable to destitution in nineteenth century English society, lacking the support of a spouse or children, less favoured by employers, sometimes disqualified from almshouse accommodation, often less well established in their communities than family units and perhaps also generally regarded as less deserving than the married or widowed. Many of these were old, but surprising numbers were of prime working age, for 348 of the 499 unmarried adults were aged between 20 and 59, 56 per cent of them men. Just 91 of the 1,872 (5 per cent) individuals identifiable by marital status were married persons aged 20–59, 41 men and 50 women. Married men in this age category, therefore, accounted for a mere 2 per cent of the total workhouse population, which would not only underline the greater vulnerability of the single, the elderly and the widowed, but would also appear to indicate a positive policy of exclusion of married people, men in particular, from the workhouse, unless they were elderly.

We have already seen that there were relatively few married couples with children in the six institutions where family groups could be readily identified.⁴⁵ In the same six there were 19 childless couples, 10 of which were found in St Albans, and all but two of these were elderly. Interestingly, more married inmates were over 60 (112) than under 60 (91). Indeed, in 6 of the 11 institutions married men aged 20–59 numbered two or less, whilst only at Royston did the number reach double figures. Here married men formed fully 33 per cent of all male inmates aged 20–59 compared to just 14 per cent in the 11 workhouses combined. The St Albans figures are also interesting, in that there were twice as many married men as women in the workhouse, not a single married couple with children, but 10 married couples without children. These features again underline the

Table 2 Marital condition of Hertfordshire workhouse inmates aged 20+

Union	Unmarried						Married					
	All		M		F		All		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%								
Barnet	33	44.0	17	42.5	16	45.7	8	10.7	4	10.0	4	11.4
Berkhamsted	11	25.6	6	21.4	5	33.3	11	25.6	7	25.0	4	26.7
Bishops Stort'd	102	63.8	67	64.4	35	62.5	12	7.5	4	3.8	8	14.3
Hatfield	25	37.9	17	40.5	8	33.3	13	19.7	7	16.7	6	25.0
Hemel Hemp'd	31	40.3	16	32.0	15	55.6	11	14.3	7	14.0	4	14.8
Hertford	33	48.5	18	47.4	15	50.0	3	4.4	1	2.6	2	6.7
Hitchin	42	37.2	24	32.0	18	47.4	28	24.8	16	21.3	12	31.6
Royston	50	39.7	34	39.5	16	40.0	29	23.0	15	17.4	14	35.0
St Albans	67	39.9	28	30.8	39	50.6	36	21.4	24	26.4	12	15.6
Ware	33	43.4	21	51.2	12	34.3	20	26.3	10	24.4	10	28.6
Watford	72	46.2	50	50.0	22	39.3	31	19.9	20	20.0	11	19.6
TOTAL	499	44.2	298	42.9	201	46.4	202	17.9	115	16.5	87	20.1
Hertfordshire	25,423	27.6	13,005	28.8	12,418	26.4	57,052	61.9	28,489	63.2	28,563	60.7

Union	Widowed						TOTAL		
	All		M		F		All	M	F
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
Barnet	34	45.3	19	47.5	15	42.9	75	40	35
Berkhamsted	21	48.8	15	53.6	6	40.0	43	28	15
Bishops Stort'd	46	28.8	33	31.7	13	23.2	160	104	56
Hatfield	28	42.4	18	42.9	10	41.7	66	42	24
Hemel Hemp'd	35	45.5	27	54.0	8	29.6	77	50	27
Hertford	32	47.1	19	50.0	13	43.3	68	38	30
Hitchin	43	38.1	35	46.7	8	21.1	113	75	38
Royston	47	37.3	37	43.0	10	25.0	126	86	40
St Albans	65	38.7	39	42.9	26	33.8	168	91	77
Ware	23	30.3	10	24.4	13	37.1	76	41	35
Watford	53	34.0	30	30.0	23	41.1	156	100	56
TOTAL	427	37.9	282	40.6	145	33.5	1,128	695	433
Hertfordshire	9,677	10.5	3,590	8.0	6,087	12.9	92,152	45,084	47,068

Sources: Public Record Office, CEBs Hertfordshire: HO107/1701-1716.
 Census of Great Britain 1851, *Population Tables II. Ages, civil condition, occupations and birth-place of the people*, vol. 1 (London, 1854), British Parliamentary Papers 1852-3, LXXXVIII Pt. 1, 139.

local differences that could arise from differing economic conditions or social policies.⁴⁶

Finally, these figures again underline the plight of poor, elderly males who lacked a spouse. Forty-one per cent of all men in these workhouses aged 20 and over were widowers, although they formed only 8 per cent across the county as a whole. There were only half as many widows as widowers in the workhouse, accounting for 34 per cent of the female inmate population, despite the fact that they formed a substantially higher proportion, 13 per cent, of the female population of the county.

Admissions and discharges to the Hatfield Union Workhouse

The census returns, of course, provide only a snapshot at one point in time, and a fuller insight requires the type of information that can only be provided by a complete record of admissions and discharges, such as that available for the Hatfield Union from the 1830s forwards, presented in Table 3.⁴⁷ A preliminary analysis for the period 1836–61 confirms the predominance of men in the workhouse, for a total of 2,366 males were admitted over this period compared with 1,290 females, 65 per cent and 35 per cent respectively.⁴⁸ This represents a more pronounced skew towards men than revealed in the 1851 census for Hatfield workhouse. Of the 3,658 for whom an age could be calculated, 1,025 (28 per cent) were under 15, 1,866 (51 per cent) were aged 15–59 and 767 (21 per cent) were 60 years or over. Again this shows a disparity with both the county and the Hatfield Union Workhouse age structure for 1851, when a considerably larger proportion fell into the dependent age groups whilst those of prime working age were fewer in number. Analysis by sex reveals a further aspect to this disparity, for in 1851 there was an equal number of males and females aged 15–59 in the Hatfield workhouse, and in institutions across the county males formed 53 per cent of this age group and females 47 per cent. Admissions to the Hatfield workhouse over this 25 year period, however, reveal a decided skew towards men, who represented 65 per cent of the 1,866 aged 15–59 compared with just 35 per cent women, exactly the same proportions as for workhouse admissions of all ages. Finally, although the admissions register reveals that the elderly formed a lower proportion of all men than was found in the census data, either for Hatfield or for the county as a whole, the discrepancy between elderly men and women is even more marked, producing a sex ratio as high as 408.

These disparities are partly a product of the different biases of the respective sources, for the elderly were more likely to be long term residents and hence liable to be caught in the snapshot that the census provides, while men of prime working age entered and left the workhouse more frequently in response to seasonal fluctuations in agricultural employment.⁴⁹ They may also partly be due to changes in policy and practice over time, but undoubtedly reflect fluctuating economic conditions too. The 3,659 admissions over a 25 year period represent an average of 146 per year, but the annual intake could vary markedly. Hence during the 'Hungry Forties', now recognized to be hungry in parts rather than consistently depressed, average admissions rose to 177 per annum, peaking in 1842 at 213, falling off, and reaching new heights in 1847 at 289.⁵⁰ It is no coincidence that in 1842 overcrowding was reported in the Hitchin workhouse, requiring the removal of 24 old men to Stevenage, the Board defending its record by explaining that this temporary problem had resulted from 'a concurrence of want of employment amongst mechanics and agricultural labourers through the

Table 3 Admissions to the Hatfield Union Workhouse 1836-61

	Under 15		15-59		60+		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
M	540	22.8	1,210	51.1	616	26.0	2,366
%	52.8		64.8		80.3		64.7
F	483	37.4	656	50.9	151	11.7	1,290
%	47.2		35.2		19.7		35.3
Sex ratio	112		184		408		183
Total	1,023	28.0	1,866	51.0	767	21.0	3,656

Source: Herts CRO, BG/HAT

wetness of the season, with a particular depression of the straw plait manufacture'.⁵¹ In years such as these the proportion of males admitted rose even higher, reaching 71 per cent at Hatfield in 1847. Furthermore, in such years a far higher proportion than usual are recorded as able bodied, as opposed to wholly or partially disabled, reflecting the impact of the spread of unemployment through the labouring classes. Seasonal unemployment, therefore, was another factor that could cause disparity between the admissions data and the census, for when the census was conducted at the end of March the winter peak of unemployment, amply reflected in workhouse admissions, was over, even if the halcyon summer months were still to come. There were 123 admissions to the Hatfield workhouse in March during the 1840s out of a total of 1,772, less than the average monthly share and well below the winter peak. By contrast, the decadal total for August was just 90, and in the depressed year of 1847 there were only six admissions to the workhouse in August out of the annual total of 289, five of whom were described as 'tramp'. Not every August exhibits such favourable figures, but in some years it would appear that the harvest season saw the virtual eradication of involuntary destitution, if only briefly.

Workhouse admissions declined during the 1850s as economic conditions improved and we enter the 'Golden Age' of English agriculture, the decadal intake of 1,372 representing an average of 137 each year.⁵² Again, however, there were peaks and troughs, numbers rising close to 200 in both 1853 and 1854, and dropping to just over 100 in 1852 and 1858. With 141 admissions in 1850 and 140 in 1851, the two years closest to the March 1851 census were average years, but a considerable amount of short term movement lies hidden behind the census total of 108. That much of this was the product of male seasonal unemployment is again suggested by the sex ratio of those admitted, for in 1840 65 per cent were male and in 1841 63 per cent, compared to the figure of 56 per cent derived from the census. And whilst in the census just 35 per cent of workhouse inmates were aged 15-59, an equal number of each sex, the admissions register for 1850-1

shows that 53 per cent fell into this age category, just over two-thirds of them men.

The Hatfield admissions and discharges register is pregnant with possibilities for further exploitation, and only the most preliminary of analyses has been presented here, for not only does it include information on age, sex, marital condition, occupation, disability, date of admission and discharge, and parish of settlement, but many entries also provide reasons for admission and discharge, as well as observations on both the physical and moral condition of the inmates. Hence we meet James Ansell, born in 1824, an orphan who had been deserted by his father and mother, variously recorded as a labourer or of no occupation, in 1840 described as with 'no work and subject to fits', and being admitted in August 1840 he absconded two months later, having been notably 'ill behaved'. In July 1843 he was admitted 'in a very dirty state', but these were only two of a total of 35 admissions of the same James Ansell between 1835 and 1847. On one occasion of his discharge he apparently 'went to sea', but his sea legs cannot have taken him far as he was readmitted to the workhouse just two days later. Four times he was discharged 'to prison', and the last we hear of him was in 1847 when he was taken by a police constable to Hertford, having broken open a letter and stolen a silver sixpence.

Conclusion

There are four main outcomes of this exploration of Hertfordshire workhouse populations. First, a substantial body of data for a southern agricultural county has been presented that can be used as a reference point for comparative purposes, and will constitute a small step towards filling a very large gap in the available literature.

Second, the Hertfordshire data has revealed that, whilst there may often have been very broad similarities in the age, sex and marital profiles of the inhabitants of mid-nineteenth century workhouses, there was considerable variation too, amounting in some respects to significant contrasts. These variations may partly have been due to the pursuit of different policies in different localities, but they clearly also reflected basic disparities of economic structure, in Hertfordshire most notably the opportunities available in some parts of the county for child and female employment in the straw plait and related trades. Economic realities were influential too in the shorter run, through the impact of fluctuations in both the trade cycle and seasonal unemployment, whilst in the long run secular changes in the prosperity of the agricultural sector or the rise and decline of cottage industry also exerted an impact.

Third, these profiles have been put into better perspective through comparison with data for the population of the county at large, reinforced by analysis of family and household structure, and in particular have emphasized the under-representation of married people in the workhouses, the considerable skew towards men which appears to have been more marked in Hertfordshire than elsewhere, the vulnerability of the single and widowed, the over-representation of agricultural labourers, and above all the plight of poor old men, both widowed and single. If we add the evidence from Bedfordshire, Kent, Hampshire and

Devon to that from Hertfordshire, it begins to appear that this skew towards men may have been widespread, in southern agricultural counties at least. If this was the case, then workhouse populations in the mid-nineteenth century contrast sharply with those of eighteenth century London, for at St Luke's in Chelsea in the years 1743–69 and 1782–99 it was women who formed a clear majority, constituting 2,795 out of 4,352 entrants, fully two-thirds of the total, whilst the elderly formed a far smaller proportion than they did in mid-nineteenth century Hertfordshire.⁵³ On the evidence presented here, David Thomson's generally rosy view of the prospects for the elderly in mid-nineteenth century English society is highly questionable, whilst his suggestion that workhouses 'were not especially important in providing care for the aged' is simply not acceptable, certainly for men, and particularly for male agricultural labourers.⁵⁴

Finally, consideration of census and admissions data together has shown that each source has its own bias. The census provides us with information at one fixed point in time, a perfectly valid historical perspective in its own right but one that masks the considerable comings and goings that the admissions register reveals, either through seasonal fluctuations or as a result of the activities of incorrigible individuals such as James Ansell. As the census will capture a higher proportion of long term residents, it will undoubtedly tend to understate the proportions of individuals of prime working age, which feature in greater numbers in the admissions register but who individually remained in the workhouse for much shorter periods. The admissions register shows an even greater skew towards men than the census data, evident across a wider age range, but it must be remembered that it is admissions that are being counted rather than individuals, still less length of workhouse occupancy. And whilst an admissions register as detailed as that which survives for Hatfield is clearly a far more fertile source than the census enumerators' books, the census has the advantage that it is available for every locality, once every ten years, through to 1891. The present survey has benefited considerably from the availability of machine readable census data for the whole county in 1851, providing the necessary context to help explain the composition of workhouse populations. Hopefully we can look forward to further local and regional analyses, not conducted in a vacuum, but firmly situated within the communities whose economic and social structures and trends generated the poverty that these institutions epitomize.

NOTES

1. Before 1891 the reports provide only fairly crude divisions by age and sex, distinguishing children under 16 for example, but the data improves considerably after 1891: Poor Law Board, 4th Annual Report, British Parliamentary Papers (hereafter BPP) 1852, XXIII, 94–105; K. Williams, *From pauperism to poverty*, (London, 1981), 72, 183, 196–7; M.A. Crowther, *The workhouse system 1834–1929*, (London, 1981), 235.
2. P.R.A. Hinde and F. Turnbull, 'The population of two Hampshire workhouses, 1851–61', *Local Population Studies*, 61 (1998), 38–53.
3. Williams, *From pauperism to poverty*, chapter 2, 59–90; A. Digby, *Pauper palaces*, (London, 1978), 112. Digby's account of Norfolk is, of course, one of the few studies to provide a firm regional economic and social context. A valuable recent article which is firmly rooted in its local context, focusing upon the casual poor, is A. Tanner, 'The casual poor and the City of London Poor Law Union, 1837–1869',

- Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), 183–206. See also S. Page, 'Pauperism and the Leicester workhouse in 1881', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 63 (1989), 85–95.
4. N. Goose, *Population, economy and family structure in Hertfordshire in 1851. Volume 1 The Berkhamsted region*, (Hatfield, 1996); N. Goose, *Population, economy and family structure in Hertfordshire in 1851. Volume 2 St Albans and its region*, (Hatfield, 1999).
 5. D. Walker, *General view of the county of Hertford. Presented to the Board of Agriculture (1795)*, quoted in W. Page ed., *Victoria county history of Hertfordshire*, 4 vols. (London, 1908–14), Vol. 2, 129; G.V. Dyke, *John Bennet Lawes: the record of his genius*, (Taunton, 1991), viii, 1–9.
 6. J. Caird, *English agriculture in 1851*, 2nd edn (London, 1968), 459–64; H. Evershed, 'Agriculture of Hertfordshire', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 25 (1864); N. Agar, 'The Hertfordshire farmer in the age of the agricultural revolution', in D. Jones-Baker ed, *Hertfordshire in history*, (Hertford, 1991).
 7. Goose, *St Albans and its region*, 32–3.
 8. W. Branch Johnson, *Industrial archaeology of Hertfordshire*, (Newton Abbot, 1970), 28–70.
 9. Goose, *The Berkhamsted region*, 34–46; Goose, *St Albans and its region*, 70–4, 83–5; L. Grof, *Children of straw. The story of a vanished craft industry in Bucks, Herts, Beds and Essex*, (Buckingham, 1988), 14–31.
 10. E. Higgs, *Making sense of the census*, (London, 1989), 7, 127–32.
 11. M.E. Rose, *The relief of poverty 1834–1914*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke, 1986), 20.
 12. Rose, *Relief of poverty*, 35; Crowther, *The workhouse system*, 193, 226–35; Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', 48–9; Page, 'Pauperism and the Leicester workhouse', 88–9; Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, (1837), *Little Dorrit*, (1857).
 13. Crowther, *Workhouse system*, 43.
 14. Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', 41.
 15. County age profiles here and below calculated from *1851 Census Report. Population Tables II, BPP 1852–3, LXXXVIII*, vol. 1, 139.
 16. Crowther, *Workhouse system*, Fig. 4, 235.
 17. Williams, *From pauperism to poverty*, 68–90.
 18. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law, Appendix (A)*, BPP 1834 vol. XXIX Pt. III, 156a–157a.
 19. N. Longmate, *The workhouse* (London, 1974), 76. In the absence of data on outdoor relief this is, of course, speculative, but unfortunately this evidence does not survive for Hertfordshire.
 20. The six are Hatfield, Hertford, Royston, St Albans, Ware and Watford.
 21. The occupational information for Ware is confusing, and it is possible that the term 'general labourer' so frequently used here refers to agricultural labourers.
 22. The four are Barnet, Hatfield, Hertford and Hitchin. This compares to 40 per cent in Winchester in 1847: Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', 48.
 23. Longmate, *The workhouse*, 156–7.
 24. Goose, *The Berkhamsted region*, Table 5, 41.
 25. Goose, *St Albans and its region*, Table 9, 97.
 26. H. Cunningham, 'The employment and unemployment of children in England c. 1680–1851', *Past and Present*, 126 (1990), 142–5.
 27. Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', Fig. 1, 40.
 28. Hitchin was a hybrid, for substantial parts of the Union offered relatively little employment in the straw trade, perhaps explaining why the proportion in the Hitchin workhouse under the age of 15 was higher than in the other three straw areas.
 29. From an analysis of female pauperism across the country in 1851–6, Lees has recently concluded that economic opportunity exerted a strong influence upon the likelihood of pauperism amongst women, for in purely demographic terms there was very little difference between counties: L.H. Lees, *The solidarities of strangers. The English poor laws and the people, 1700–1948* (Cambridge, 1998), 197–9.
 30. Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', 41; calculations from J. Robin, 'The relief of poverty in mid-nineteenth century Colyton', *Rural History*, 1 (1990), Table 10, 212; see also Crowther, *Workhouse system*, 228, 232–4. At Leicester 38 per cent were aged 61 or over: Page, 'Pauperism and the Leicester workhouse', 89.
 31. Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', Fig. 1, 40; Crowther, *Workhouse system*, 234. All the elderly in Colyton were men: Robin, 'Relief of poverty', 212–13.
 32. The proportion of women aged 60 plus in the workhouses was 2.5 per cent.

33. To be precise, 9.8 per cent. There were 93 women aged 70+, representing just 3.3 per cent of the relevant age group for the county. Interestingly, fully 25 of these were in the St Albans workhouse, 14 of them described as either 'charwoman' or 'washerwoman'.
34. Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', 7, 18; Crowther, *Workhouse system*, 234. Working class autobiographies indicate how rare it was for husbands to contribute significantly to housework: J. Burnett ed., *Destiny obscure. Autobiographies of childhood, education and family from the 1820s to the 1890s* (London, 1982), 219.
35. Goose, *St Albans and its region*, Table 31, 175.
36. M. Anderson, 'Households, families and individuals: some preliminary results from the national sample from the 1851 census of Great Britain', *Continuity and Change*, 3 (1988), 426.
37. Goose, *St Albans and its region*, Tables 7 and 8, 90, 95.
38. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws*, BPP XXXII, 1834, 217–27.
39. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law 1834, Appendix (A)*, BPP, XXIX, 152.
40. The range lies within the narrow band 65–76 per cent across the nine institutions. For similar difficulties in an agrarian county see W. Apfel and P. Dunkley, 'English rural society and the New Poor Law: Bedfordshire, 1834–47', *Social History*, 10 (1985), 39, 54.
41. PRO, CEBs Berkhamsted and Northchurch, Herts., reproduced in Goose, *The Berkhamsted region*, 175, 188; Herts CRO, Great Berkhamsted parish registers, D/P 19/1/11, D/P74/1/9. I am very grateful to Mark Collins, an undergraduate student at the University of Hertfordshire, for this example.
42. Lees, *The solidarities of strangers*, 196; Apfel and Dunkley, 'English rural society', 51.
43. For example, S. Pennington and B. Westover, 'A hidden workforce: homeworkers in England', *Journal of Family History*, 9 (1984); P. Thane, 'Women and the poor law in Victorian and Edwardian England', *History Workshop Journal*, 6 (1978).
44. Hinde and Turnbull, 'Hampshire workhouses', 7
45. See page 58, paragraph 2.
46. Of 29 married inmates at Royston, 25 were aged 20–59 and just four 60 or over; at St Albans 36 were married, but only five were aged 20–59 and 31 were 60 years old or more.
47. Herts CRO, BG/HAT. This documentation is currently being more fully analyzed by Mr Nigel Percy as part of his postgraduate work on poverty in nineteenth century Hertfordshire.
48. Two more were unspecified infants. The total of 3,659 includes a handful admitted prior to 1835.
49. It is individual admissions that are being counted, of course, not individuals. Two of unspecified gender, and one of unspecified age, have been excluded from Table 3.
50. W.H. Chaloner, *The hungry forties: a re-examination* (London, 1957); F. Crouzet, *The Victorian economy* (London, 1982), 54. The data for 1859 is incomplete: if this year is ignored the annual average number of admissions rises to 149. For a similar situation in Bedfordshire see Apfel and Dunkley, 'English rural society', 52.
51. R. Gutchen ed., *On the sanitary condition of the Hitchin Union Workhouse - 1842* (Hoddesdon, 1972), no pagination.
52. Crouzet, *Victorian economy*, 159–66.
53. Calculated from T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *Economic growth and social change in the eighteenth-century English town*, History Courseware Consortium, Core resources for historians. I am grateful to Tim Hitchcock for drawing my attention to the valuable database included in this CD, and for a sight of his unpublished discussion of the occupants of St Luke's workhouse. This contrast raises the whole issue of the notion of a transition from workhouses as 'refugial' to 'deterrent' institutions: P. Mandler, 'The making of the New Poor Law *redivivus*', *Past and Present*, 117 (1987), 142.
54. D. Thomson, 'The welfare of the elderly in the past: a family or community responsibility?', in M. Pelling and R.M. Smith eds, *Life, death and the elderly* (London, 1998), 207.