

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
IN THE 18th CENTURY



UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
DEPARTMENT OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

GLOUCESTERSHIRE IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Studies in Local Historical Records
by the University Extra-Mural Class
at Gloucester, 1965-66

Edited by
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EDITORIAL PREFACE

These five papers, based on historical manuscripts in the Gloucestershire Records Office, have been presented by members of the "Records Class" in Gloucester, organised by the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Bristol and the W.E.A.

Their length and style varies according to the experience of the writer. The longest, "Vagrancy in Gloucestershire" by Mr. & Mrs. J. Wyatt, is the fruit of much work, some of which was done during the previous year's course, and some in out-of-class time. It is obviously a valuable study on this neglected subject. Mrs. J. Whiting's research on G.G. Ducarel has shed much new light on that important East India Company official, and with myself she is contributing a longer article and catalogue of the papers to the Journal, Indian Archives. It may seem invidious to single out these two papers for comment, when all are equally the results of much hard work on hitherto unexplored documents coupled with complex searches into background sources. I might add that the interesting discoveries about farming in north-west Gloucestershire, a subject needing further work, have been made by a class member with no previous experience of historical research.

Such research is largely valueless if it remains hidden in students' notebooks. I am, therefore, particularly grateful to the class for writing up the result of their searches, mostly in out-of-class time. (Despite my protests, they would not sacrifice their evenings in the Records Office to do this!). Mrs. M. Robertson has made a most helpful contribution to the work of the class by typing some of the articles. One or two studies outside the period or incomplete have been excluded. Nevertheless the booklet clearly shows that even in the limited time available constructive historical studies can be undertaken by amateur historians. Provided the subject matter is wisely restricted the research can be of a high standard. I hope that this booklet will encourage local historians to continue such work within the framework of Adult Education, and that this publication will prove that their efforts are appreciated.

These achievements of the class would have been impossible without the use of our meeting place in the Gloucestershire Records Office. Our thanks are due to the Gloucestershire County Council for giving permission to work in the Records Office, where Mr. I. E. Gray, the County Records Officer, has allowed us to use its many facilities.

Brian S. Smith
July 1966

THE AFFAIRS OF A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN 1780-1790

THE PARSONS CORRESPONDENCE

(Gloucestershire Records Office, D 214/F 1)

The little village of Kemerton lies at the foot of Bredon Hill and even now no main road goes through it or its immediate neighbours, which are almost hidden among rich fields and fine trees. Until 1931 it was just within the Gloucestershire border and Tewkesbury is the nearest market town, some four miles away as the crow flies.

In 1757 John Parsons succeeded his father as Lord of the Manor and in addition to managing his property he had a solicitor's practice with extensive business in North Gloucestershire and South Worcestershire. The family acquired a coat of arms, which was used on a monument in the Church in 1785, and had purchased the Lygon share of the manorial rights some years after 1608, but when they became sole owners is not clear. Even then the Parsons were not newcomers in the village, as two successive marriages were recorded in the second half of the sixteenth century. Over more than two centuries they had prospered in a modest way.

John Parsons put aside the letters he received, methodically noting on the outside the dates and names of his correspondents. The series of letters begins before 1780 but there are about a hundred between then and the beginning of 1791, which provide the material for this study. These letters are concerned with personal rather than professional affairs and reveal more of Parsons' relationships and activities than of his character. His friends did not hesitate to enlist his help and sometimes this must have put him to considerable trouble, whether in buying a horse or finding a servant.

During those eleven years, forty four people wrote to Parsons and only four of them wrote more than three times. The thirty letters from Charles Edwin of Clearwell, his brother-in-law, cover the whole period and are very informative. He gives the impression of one not easily ruffled, although he was a fairly busy man. Once, in 1780, he was hard-pressed as he could not find time to go to the Epsom races. He has a gentle but distinctive sense of humour, writing for instance "I lost my directions as well as my wife." By contrast Oliver, an army ensign, wrote seven letters. He had some claim on Parsons which was known to both so well it is not mentioned.

These are the begging letters of a frequently impoverished young man who finds himself beset by bills. In 1788 he asked for "as much money as you can conveniently spare" - and by return of post. Five letters from James Martin are largely devoted to parliamentary affairs, and four from J. W. Franklen of Llanvihangle (in Monmouthshire) are dominated by agricultural matters. He was a prosperous gentleman farmer, keen to improve his methods, and expressed the wish that his son would break his journey to Oxford at Kemerton, and there learn from Parsons "the noble and most useful and ancient art of farming." That Parsons' brother wrote only twice and his sister once is more indicative of continuous personal contact than estrangement in the family.

In spite of the quantity of miscellaneous detail the absence of important family information is apparent in the letters and can perhaps be attributed to the frequent meetings these people enjoyed, in each other's homes and less frequently in London and Gloucester, where news was exchanged. For instance, Edwin wrote "I was glad to hear by your friend Smith that you are so well...." The one letter from Harding of Monmouth underlines the importance of verbal exchange of news. He wrote to congratulate Parsons on his second marriage as he had heard of it belatedly from Edwin. This is the only reference to the event in the correspondence. Such meetings depended on frequent and sometimes long journeys about the country and there are constant references to such comings and goings, especially between Clearwell and Kemerton. There is nothing unusual about Edwin's report that "We arrived here (Tolworth, from Tunbridge) all on Monday last, where we intend remaining till the beginning of next month when we intend going to Bath." Even relatively minor matters involved time-consuming journeys; Parsons was notified of the meeting to elect an apothecary at Gloucester Infirmary. There were two meetings, the first "being undecided"; the appointment was postponed for a week and one of the candidates wrote informing Parsons of this and obsequiously asked for the continued "protection of my friends."

"As dogs chiefly occupy the thoughts of a country squire..." is both the opening of a letter and much more than that, it confidently sums up the eighteenth century gentleman, busy with his dogs, horses and property, incidentally keeping his lesser neighbours in their place and attending to the affairs of the county. During 1783 Parsons was in correspondence with the Duke of Beaufort and Rowland Berkeley about the purchase of hounds. In the one case Parsons was acting as intermediary for some mutual acquaintance who had made overtures for the transaction at Cirencester Races. Selling dogs was not done lightly and Beaufort's huntsman would "not send them unless definitely directed." Berkeley was more breezy "always happy to help another sportsman" but Parsons had to send "a careful

Person" for them. But Edwin reported the price of dogs at Tattersalls was so low they were being sold for glove-leather. It follows that presents of venison and partridges were mentioned from time to time, and that race meetings conveniently combined sport with an occasion for informal business. The Assemblies held at the time of the Cheshire races were "the first line for gaiety and respectability", and Edwin found it incumbent upon him to go to the Lydney races.

The serious tone and precision with which business affairs are discussed does something to indicate a lively appreciation of the importance of property, in all its ramifications, which was the foundation of the social and political dominance of the landed classes. Legal claims, the sale or supervision of houses and land, the transfer of money, niceties of interest payments and the privileges of the Lord of the Manor all called for Parsons' attention. The nature of some of the legal matters is a mystery as the letters take them up where conversation had left them. More informative than usual was Edwin's reference to a delay in the courts which was due to "Bolton's counsel's faults." A trying situation was explained when Edwin was having trouble with a "flashy" gentleman who would neither pay promptly for furniture nor be definite about when he would return it. The same letter showed anxiety to sell estates in Northamptonshire to pay off a bond with the proceeds. Edwin's domestic expenses had outstripped his means as he said they needed to "live within themselves" and cut down the expense of entertaining by restricting it to fewer people. Perhaps the London house he was about to move into in October 1780 had brought about this situation. Retrenchment did not lead him to forego a pipe of Madeira, a hogshead of claret and the plan to buy an expensive pair of horses (£80-£100).

Parsons heard one of his own houses was in a state of collapse and the poor were helping themselves to the timber. He attended to the payment of rent and transfer of a farm. One letter relates entirely to the particulars of a house and estate of 170 acres at Chacely which the owner wished to sell. He considered it would "suit any gentleman of moderate fortune," by which he meant £2,000 - £3,000 to spend. The house had the advantage of a turnpike within a mile and a fine outlook with more than twenty churches and the River Severn to be seen. There were preferential rights of common at Corse Lawn and a family pew in the Church.

Two letters give quite another view of the man of property. Nind of Overbury, a farmer, had to write an apology,

but at the same time he made it clear he considered that he was the more injured party. Nind had inadvertently pursued one of his own hares across the parish boundary into Parsons' territory. He took the opportunity to point out that in the past he had raised no objection when Parsons' game-keeper had beaten across his land. Though Nind was implying a measure of equality which Parsons could hardly deny even if he found it distasteful, a deferential distance was kept in the letter by the recognition that "Gentlemen have a wright to have their favourites and act accordingly." Nind signed himself "Your obedient (but unworthy) servant." The second letter was from Dudfield of Kemerton who was probably a small farmer or cottager of the village. He had suffered a series of wrongs at Parsons' hands which he felt had been totally overlooked and he could stand the situation no longer, but he made no demands for restitution as he was socially inferior. One of his dogs had been shot, six of his ducks had been killed, presumably by Parsons' dog, which had just stolen the family joint from his table! In each of these cases Parsons had offended against the accepted forms of the social order.

By the end of the eighteenth century, farming was not simply a matter of age-old routine for those who could afford improvements. It was an absorbing practice as well as a profitable interest. Franklen of Llanvihangle suggested to Parsons they should exchange seed "by way of experiment." He had in mind two or three bags of barley and early peas. He was anxious to secure the services of an English shepherd so that the sheep would be folded on turnips in winter and the fallows in the summer, instead of being left to roam as was the custom of his neighbourhood. Parsons had already had a hand in his purchase of a double plow and was his guide, philosopher and friend on farming matters. He made the choice of the shepherd for him and was later consulted about the terms of service, which amounted to 8/- per week with travelling expenses in addition. In Franklen's opinion the good points of a farm he had to let were supplies of limestone and coal, a nearby harbour and no tithe to pay.

For those who could afford it and had a taste for the fashionable social round there were Assemblies and Race meetings up and down the country, the Opera in London, and Bath, which catered for varied tastes; the London season is not mentioned even though the

gentlemen were there in strength for the parliamentary sessions. George Wyndham, Parsons' nephew, and a gay young spark who found "the scarlet is the only colour to attract the females, and had I remained much longer (in Monmouth) you would have heard of my conveying a sea nymph to Gretna Green," enjoyed himself "exceedingly" in Bath where he stayed a fortnight by which time he had finished his "Bank". He and his party took a house, which was usual; they went to a ball or play each night and there was "no mean living..... but all liberality and good humour." Another correspondent liked Bath so well he would have been happy to spend the rest of his days there. His purpose was to find a cure for violent spasms and pains, "but he was not so ill that he could not enjoy the comforts of a hostess who kept them like fighting cocks." There were the pleasant formalities of taking tea and successfully following up an introduction by leaving cards and each waiting upon the other. He commented with interest on the extravagance of the ladies' clothes, "great coats something like a coachman's at the cape which are three or four deep, the other part resembles much the old Joseph that my mother used to wear forty years back buttoned down to the toe." Edwin was twice reported to be about to go to Bath, and once this was because of his rheumatism. There was another letter from a writer in Bristol where husband and wife were taking the waters, but their thoughts were occupied by such domestic matters as having ten or twelve tons of coal ordered at home, and the cauliflower and broccoli in the garden. Their lodgings in Bristol were two and a half guineas a week and coal there was 14/- or more a ton.

Many of the letters give details of everyday life. There was no effective police force and the difficulty of securing any action was often acute. While Parsons was away from home he heard that a newly hung fitch of bacon had been stolen from a loft above his stables. The writer had tried, unsuccessfully, to find three gentlemen in Tewkesbury and then was quite at a loss as to what to do next. There is the occasional reference to home brewing of cider, curing fitches of bacon and sending such supplies to each other. Goods were often sent by the regular wagon services which operated from inns, or the "market boat" from Gloucester to Tewkesbury. Even now there are some items which can only be readily obtained in London and a few other cities, but at the end of the eighteenth century this difficulty was more apparent in what we should regard as rather more everyday commodities. Parsons bought port from a London supplier with a brother in Gloucester who sent him a firm

request to pay a bill for £16. 9. 0 which was outstanding. His brother sent on request twelve flasks of oil, capers and anchovies, and on another occasion strange medicines like "Godfrey's Jesuits Bark in Powder". Parsons complained to a smart London tailor, recommended by Wyndham, that his charges were too high, but he had little satisfaction as no significant reduction was made. Edwin was more successful when he went in person to pay a bill for Parsons in London, for "your wife's headdress."

The people who wrote these letters took the presence of estate and domestic staff for granted and their horses received more frequent anxious thought. Only those subordinates who had some particular responsibilities were mentioned with few exceptions. Edwin's cook died and an unsatisfactory man-servant had to be replaced. He had a **steward**, "worthy Terrett" on whom he relied most justifiably as his few letters show. At other times Edwin was in need of gardeners. Parsons mentions a gardener and Blomer, who wrote about the stolen bacon, was probably the man he normally left in charge at home. These people made possible the lives of gentlemen who were sometimes heavily involved in public affairs. However, the general run of such matters was pleasantly varied, not too strenuous and yet kept them in touch with each other and local developments.

Parsons was an annual subscriber to the Gloucester Infirmary and in 1787 he was sent a reminder that his two guinea subscription was overdue. The Infirmary fund was opened in 1756 and received such wide support that medical services began almost immediately and a fine new building in Southgate Street was soon underway. The purpose was to provide treatment for those, nominated by subscribers, who could not afford to pay for medical attention. Subscribers of two guineas or more were governors and managed the charity. Parsons was canvassed for his support by a surgeon and an apothecary when appointments were to be made. The erection of the new county gaol, opened in 1784, was also due to the determination of enlightened local opinion, led by the Justices, and Edwin mentioned that he intended going to Gloucester to a meeting about the gaol which had been advertised in the newspaper.

By 1780 the desire to improve the state of the roads and rivers, and to construct **canals** was in full swing. The landed gentry

were interested both for the benefits they could derive from more convenient transport and for the need to guard their property rights. They even hoped to profit financially by investing in such schemes. Parsons belonged to a Road Society, which in giving notice of a meeting, was precise about the time of dinner ordered at the Red Lion, Beckford, but not about any agenda. He received a printed notice of a meeting of the Severn Humane Society, and an invitation to a committee to oppose proposed legislation for the construction of locks and weirs on the Severn. In 1790 he was approached with a view to his taking command of the Winchcombe Infantry; a gentleman was required but he was assured the real work could be left to the Lieutenants. All this varied business was directed by the men who were vigorous in the political management of their county, securing their commanding position in every significant respect.

There are references to elections in 1780, 1783, 1787 and 1789, but only on the first occasion is it really clear there was a general election when local party feeling ran so high that a very great effort was made to organise the campaign and thirteen letters relate to it. There were general elections in 1784 and 1790, but there is surprisingly little evidence of them as they made no local stir.

The first definite intimation of the 1780 election comes in four letters written between 2nd and 9th September. Guise of Rendcomb sent a courtly request for Parsons' vote in the county, his support was sought for Lord Ward's "interest" in the City of Worcester and for the candidates of Mr. Chester's connection in the City of Gloucester. As a Freeman of Gloucester, Parsons was asked by Webb, one of the candidates, to act quickly with his neighbouring Freemen. He seems to have had the right to vote in three or four places, thanks to the distribution of his property.

The county contest only became significant when Mr. Chester, one of the two sitting members, died about 12th December, and only then was Parsons canvassed by his successor, Mr. Dutton.

Edwin, who was re-elected at Cardiff, wrote of the prospect of a "warm contest" in Gloucestershire between

George Berkeley and James Dutton. The latter "stands upon Chester's interest." Thus the death of an established member could be responsible for a sudden and vigorous campaign, and this also happened in Gloucester City in 1789. However, in the end Berkeley withdrew - "Huzza, Dutton for ever!". He had not had sufficiently influential support organised, the Duke of Beaufort was against him and the rival force of Lord Berkeley was not expected to interfere. Berkeley's agent and helpers refused to stir themselves as their previous expenses had not been fully met. No chances were taken as a long letter shows how voters were carefully canvassed, by letters to freeholders, through the post and by hand, and special attention was paid "to some of the principal persons." Parsons had some responsibility for this in Hell Corner(!) where he was known. The influence of principal persons is recognised in the report that "Lady Mill and Snell (of Guiting) have agreed the Freeholders shall go according to their own will.... they will all go together and whoever can make Giles Carter will have a fair chance for the rest." Mr. Dutton made a great effort to establish himself "attended by great numbers of gentlemen" and was ultimately returned.

The last one hears of the 1780 election is in two urgent letters asking for payment of expenses, one being for chaises, presumably to bring in outlying voters from Worcestershire. Mr. Chester's previous election expenses had not been fully paid by January 1780 and he had already spent almost £18,000. Dutton's expenses at the end of the year must have been very heavy as there was so much activity on his behalf. Edwin paid £1,100 for his expenses and in 1790 Martin expressed the view that such expenditure was bad for all concerned, which is hardly surprising.

There were disputed elections in Monmouthshire and Tewkesbury in 1789 and 1790 but neither Wyndham nor Martin seemed in danger of losing their hold. Wyndham's 1787 campaign at Monmouth had been positively enjoyable, and provided the opportunity to make a great impression on the ladies.

Singularly little light is thrown upon the hotly contested elections of 1780 and 1789 in Gloucester where Parsons had varied connections as well as a vote. Passing reference was made to the possibility the Sheriff might interfere to end the 1780 county contest by an arrangement with the City to provide

Berkeley with a seat. This was never seriously taken up and the county Tory interest was not in favour of it. None of the four candidates' names nor the result were mentioned. An invitation to a dinner (price 2/6d) on 4th February 1790 at the Bell to celebrate the election of Mr. Pitt was to mark the end of the 1789 campaign which the Tory interest helped to win, carrying one of the city seats by one vote for Mr. Pitt, against the traditional influence of the Duke of Norfolk, Lord North and the Corporation. There is no other evidence in the letters of what must have been an unusually lively campaign.

Although Parsons received letters from six different Members of Parliament as well as the even more influential leaders of county politics like Lord Ward in Worcestershire and the Duke of Beaufort in Gloucestershire, no policy was ever mentioned. But a copy of verses making a political attack on Fox and the Regency Bill by Richard Hill Esq. is included among the letters. The strength of the personal associations is indicated by the report on the Gloucestershire Anniversary meeting held in London where some fifty people were present including the county members, Mr. Estcourt and the Duke of Beaufort. Edwin went to Badminton for Lord Worcester's birthday and wrote "I shall do everything in my power to support my benefactor, the Duke of Beaufort, and am glad to find Dutton takes that part."

Even more obviously misleading is the evidence of national affairs as they emerge in various letters. The general background of events was always assumed and all that is provided is the immediate detail as it affected the writer; "had to damnd long nights at the house" at the time of the Westminster Election, which Edwin mentioned by name. He supplied some graphic information about the Gordon Riots, but without identifying them. The fact that Lord Sandwich narrowly avoided death by taking refuge in the Treasury was as relevant for the interested contemporary as the presence of soldiers in the park (Hyde Park) with orders to fire, and the existence of a mob of 20,000, burning and pulling down houses. Only a letter from Powell Snell of 1781 gives any indication England was at war, as he was stationed at Okehampton expecting an invasion with orders "chiefly not to risk a general battle." Active service had created personal difficulties, which were of much greater moment. The end of the war in 1783 passed without comment. Oliver's military career took him to various politically troublesome places; he was about to embark for Jamaica

with recruits in 1785 and was stationed in Dublin in 1789 where the troops were used to disperse an unco-operative populace after a bull-baiting. The troops were called "the bloody 64th" as a result. International tensions and Irish unrest were passed over, but the procedure of buying an army commission from a broker is fully explained. This absence of any order of priorities other than the personal provides fresh and vivid moments of insight into the lives of the writers. One must not make the mistake of concluding that they failed to take the great issues of the day seriously, but rather that they mulled them over in company.

CHARLES COXWELL OF ABLINGTON

(papers and correspondence, Gloucestershire Records Office,
D.269B/F13-107, 119, and B 2-14)

Charles Coxwell, parson, magistrate and squire, lived from 1740 to 1829. His long life was mainly uneventful, but he kept several notebooks and journals dealing with himself and his family, so that it is possible to trace his life in some detail, and to give some estimation of his character. Among these papers is a notebook, rather quaintly entitled "A Short Narrative of the life of the Rev. Charles Coxwell, A.M., written by himself; which though little interesting to others may not be wholly so to his widow and children." At this distance of time it is possible that others may find it so.

Charles Coxwell was born at Ablington, near Bibury, where his father John was Lord of the Manor, in a house built by his ancestor which still stands. He was the second son of a family of eleven children. At the age of "nearly six", he was put to school at South Cerney under the care of the Rev. Mr. Remington." Later he attended two other schools also run by clergymen, and then to the Free School at Witney. In 1754, when he was fourteen, his father died suddenly, leaving the estate to be divided between Charles and his elder brother. He entered the Grammar School at Northleach, "for the sake of an Exhibition of Townshend's Foundation, at Pembroke, Oxford." The impression seems to be of a clever boy, from a family not over-endowed with wealth, as Charles and his brother were trying to raise a loan on the estate as a marriage portion for their sister, when it was discovered that the estate was entailed. Charles, as the second son, lost his inheritance. He obtained his B.A. in 1760, when he was twenty. Later he became an M.A. He remained at Oxford, resigning his exhibition for a scholarship, when in 1762 his elder brother died of the smallpox, and Charles inherited the family estate.

The following year he was ordained deacon and preached his first sermon in Enstone Church, Oxfordshire. He now became curate of Cotes in Oxfordshire, until in 1764 he was ordained priest, and moved back to Gloucestershire, where he became for short periods curate of Chedworth, Compton Abdale and Bibury, where he was one day to be Rector. In 1766, when he was 26, he became curate, and shortly afterwards, Rector of Barnsley, not far from his

family home. He continued to hold this office until his death, a period of sixty-three years. During the early period, he lived at Ablington, but paid a servant 2/6d a week to mind his house at Barnsley, obviously the Rectory. When the servant died, Charles Coxwell paid his funeral expenses and engaged the man's wife in his place.

He practised other charities, too. Two cottages in the village which belonged to the Rector, he let rent free as parish houses for the poor, although Coxwell decided who should live in them, and the parish paid for the repairs. Later Coxwell rented them to the overseers of the poor. He started a dame school for the children in the village to be taught how to read. He employed several women over the years, but Elizabeth Keen, first employed in 1768 was to continue until her death in 1828. Over the years, Coxwell calculated he paid her a total of £245.18. 6d, not an overpaid profession!

Another interesting point about these early years at Barnsley are references to the letting of Rectory land for droves of Welsh cattle. This took place about Michaelmas every year, and no doubt the cattle were making their way to London for the Christmas market. The amount paid for them seems to have varied according to the amount of grass in the field, as much as 4d a head for one night. In 1767 Coxwell records "I made this year of the grounds for the use of the travelling cattle £5.17. Od." In later years, however, the grounds were let locally.

In 1770, Charles Coxwell married Mary Small of Cirencester, the daughter of a magistrate. This was to be a long and fruitful marriage, lasting nearly sixty years, and producing thirteen children. To quote Coxwell himself : "February 1771. Left Ablington, and went to live at Barnsley, where he continued for the space of 12 years and four months, during which time he had ten children born, viz: Charles, John, Mary, Anne, Joseph, Eleanor, Thomas Tracy, Elizabeth, William and James. After his return to Ablington on 20th June 1783, he had three children more, viz: Catherine Frances, Henry and Edward." These thirteen children were all born within seventeen years and twelve grew to adults. Their father kept details of the boys' health and education. He paid a guinea to have each inoculated for smallpox, but they seem to have contracted nothing worse than the usual

childhood illnesses. "The numerous branches around about my table", as their father described them, when replying to a letter from one of his curates requesting a rise in salary, must have proved an expense, as in fact their father admitted.

In 1778, he temporarily held the curacy of Winston in addition to his own parish, and was also appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Bangor, although he leaves no record of his duties. The same year he also undertook to hold the Rectory of Coberley, during the minority of the Rev. William Wright. He only visited Coberley at his induction as there was a curate in residence, and at the end of the period of four years, he calculated he was £504. 8. 5¹/₂d in pocket, which was not a bad return for so little effort. During the next few years he was appointed a Commissioner of the Land Tax, and became perpetual curate of Marston Maysey in Wiltshire. He held this living, which was a poor one, for thirty-five years, and leaves no record of ever visiting it. However, his conscience seems to have troubled him, for in later years when his circumstances improved, he resigned on the grounds he was "unwilling longer to retain the Cure of Souls whom he could not benefit by his doctrine."

In 1787, Coxwell qualified as a J.P. As a magistrate he attended the sessions no more than once a year, but he heard minor cases in his home. A number of papers dealing with convictions for poaching have survived. The culprits were mostly fined five pounds, and afterwards their goods were seized for payment. However, if a miscreant was caught on the estates of the local landed gentry, Coxwell first consulted their Lordships as to what punishment should be given.

In 1789, Mrs. Tracy of Sandywell Park, the godmother of his son Thomas Tracy, presented him with the joint livings of Badgeworth and Shurdington. He held this living seventeen years, and visited it eight times. His interest seems to have been almost wholly financial. The curate had livings of his own to attend and the churches seem to have been very badly served. Later, his son Tracy became the curate. Charles calculated his profits from this living were £45 a year. As Coxwell and the century grew older, his duties increased, and he was appointed to several commissions, became a Deputy Lieutenant of the County, Rural Dean of Fairford, and Chaplain to the Bishop of Bristol.

For three years he held the living of Bibury. It belonged to his neighbours, the Cresswells. Coxwell's daughter, Elizabeth, had married into this family, and Coxwell was to hold the living until a younger son could take Holy Orders. He resigned the livings of Badgeworth and Shurdington in order to do so, but must have felt it worth while, as the income from the living of Bibury was at least £1,000 a year.

In contrast to the indifference in which he held his more distant livings, Charles Coxwell had more interest in the parishioners near his home. During the years he held the Bibury living, he spent £20 a year on sheep to be divided amongst the inhabitants of Bibury, Arlington, Ablington and Winson "soon after Christmas." As he had done at Barnsley, he paid for the local children to be taught to read, and bought them books. He paid particular attention to the children of motherless families and the daughter of his clerk. His wife and daughters also paid for the schooling of individual children.

He gives a list of the local inhabitants for 1806, and includes himself. He was living with his wife and four unmarried daughters, and kept three servants, one a man, quite a modest establishment. However, in 1814 Charles Coxwell was to have a stroke of good fortune, when he inherited "considerable property in both land and money" from a distant relative, a Mrs. Katherine Long of South Wroxhall in Wiltshire. He even received congratulations from his Bishop. It enabled him "to pay off many debts for himself and others, and to make ample provision for his family." There are references to the purchasing of "a chariot", and his four unmarried daughters, though decidedly middle-aged, soon found themselves husbands.

From now until his death at the age of eighty-eight, in 1829, Charles Coxwell lived quietly, gradually relinquishing his various posts. His health was not good; in the later years of his life he suffered from gout and asthma. Five of his children pre-deceased him, two of his younger sons dying within six months of each other, one of a fever and the other "slain by a cannon ball," in Bengal.

Charles Coxwell left a delightful pen picture of himself in his old age; he writes in the third person : -

"He passed with peculiar pleasure the time which he devoted

to the reading of the scriptures or in other useful learning in his study, and a turn for Mechanics afforded him at proper seasons no small amusement in his laboratory. He was never fond of cards; though he would sometimes join with his friends and family in playing them; but chose rather when he could be excused, to dedicate his evening hours to reading and the improvement of his mind.

Being but a timid rider, he declined the exercise of hunting though situated in the Neighbourhood of hounds, but was fond of shooting, albeit he was a very indifferent Marksman as being near-sighted and obliged to make use of glasses. He had some knowledge of Music and performed but poorly on the Violin, having never had the benefit of any regular Instruction, nor opportunities for playing in concert through his residence in a country village; and for singing he had no talent at all.

Having been blest with a good and prudent wife, he left the management of domestic affairs chiefly to her care, that he might have the more leisure to attend to his other engagements.

"In his department as a magistrate, he was accessible to all and gave the meanest complainant a patient hearing. In every case which would admit of it, he inclined to Mercy and never signed but with reluctance a Warrant of Commitment to Prison.

"How he discharged his duty as a Husband, Parent and Master, it were better for his Widow, children and servants to speak than himself.....

"In the later part of his life when by age and infirmity he was confined to his bed or chamber, he amused himself with writing lines of very humble Poetry on various subjects and Occurrences, and applying many of them to the purpose of Religious Instruction. And lastly from the time when he ceased through bodily infirmity to preach his sermons in church, he derived a pleasure from perusing them in his study or reading them to his family on Sunday evenings as at once reminding him on the Doctrines and duties they inculcated and of the pains he had taken in composing and writing them."

There is a final note:

"Mr. Coxwell died in the year 1829 in the 89th year of his age, greatly lamented by his family, and a large circle of friends."

Marjorie Joy

FARMING AT OXENHALL

The late 18th and early 19th Centuries were a time of great changes in farming. Improvements in agricultural practices, machinery, breeding and crops, together with the movement for enclosing the open fields and the encouragement for better farming during the Napoleonic Wars led to immense changes throughout England. In Gloucestershire the extent of the enclosure movement and the topographical changes it caused have already been partly explored. This study was an attempt to find if any comparable changes could be traced in a parish west of the river Severn where enclosure had already taken place centuries earlier.

Oxenhall is a small parish in the north west of the county, at least a quarter of which is dense woodland and much of the remainder was orchard. It is a parish of scattered farms and houses, and the church stands in isolation. Coal was worked at two places on Peters Farm and White House, but by the late 18th Century the ironworks at The Furnace had been closed for some time. Almost the whole parish was part of the estate of the Foley family of Stoke Edith in Herefordshire, and an estate map of 1775 and the Title Apportionment and map of 1842 were the main sources for this study.

The intention was to compare the two maps to see if any changes had been made in the extent of the farms - a cursory glance suggested there were not many - to discover if the farmers had altered their fields much, to work out land-utilisation maps, and to plot field-names. Although some exploration of each of these topics was carried out, the first and basic task of comparing the extent of each farm took up nearly all the time available.

The chief farms in Oxenhall in 1775 were Pound Farm, Greenaways, Pella, Lower Pella, Peters, White House, Oxenhall Court, Old House, Holders, Hilter, Marshalls, Winters and The Furnace. Of these, all were owned by the Foley estate except for Oxenhall Court (Maynard Colchester) and Marshalls (Mr. Clarke). They varied a great deal in size, the largest being Old House, Holders with Hilters (farmed by the same man) and Pella with Greenaway. Each of these was well over 100 acres, but in contrast

there were other smaller and scattered holdings.

The tithe map of 1842 reveals a surprisingly large number of changes. Only the Oxenhall Court and Marshalls farms remained the same size as before. The Foley estate had carried out large scale re-organisation, which had resulted in all their farms being made about the same size of 100 acres, and improving their shape and convenience. For instance, Old House was greatly reduced and some of its lands transferred to Holders - now one of the principal farms with a large house rebuilt about 1800. Hilter farmhouse was also rebuilt about that time, and in 1842 was farmed by William Cummings, who as tenant of Pella as well, was the biggest farmer in the parish. (The family now own Oxenhall Court.) Pella had been completely transformed in shape by exchanges of lands and the inclusion of the old Lower Pella Farm, whose house was demolished. Another farmhouse was destroyed north of Peters Farm and its lands thrown in with the latter, while nearby a similar demolition gave the White House additional land. On the whole estate there were many similar changes revealed by the maps but difficult to express in words. One may safely conclude, however, that the Foleys pursued a policy of consolidating their Oxenhall farms, making them all a similar size, doing away with the smaller ones, and rebuilding the houses.

There is further evidence from the maps of agricultural reformation in Oxenhall. There was a widespread alteration in the shape and size of fields. Although there was no time to investigate this, a preliminary study showed that between 1775 and 1842 field boundaries were completely altered, with the aim of making the minute fields of 1775 larger. (They have been enlarged again greatly since 1842). Two further points were noticed. In the same period commons and roadside waste adjoining the woodlands in the west of the parish were enclosed in small holdings, completing a process already begun in the mid-18th Century, and enclosure of the last traces of the open fields was also carried out.

Oxenhall certainly had open fields in the Middle Ages, but by 1775 the only sign of them was half a dozen long narrow fields called The Common Fields between Peters Farm and Oxenhall Court. One of these "strips" belonged to the latter farm and was retained as an access to Peters Farm lane until it was cut off from the Court when the railway was built in the 1880s.

There is scope for further work on the field changes to see their full extent and whether all the farms made such changes or not. Equally the tithe apportionment and field-names of the 1775 estate map could tell much about the use of the land - there was, for instance, some new planting of orchards at least, - while the field-names themselves call for further work, allied with field-work to trace the origin of some of the names (Moat Field, for example) or vanished buildings. A comparison with the detailed sale particulars of the estate in 1912 would throw some light on 19th Century changes, and an up-to-date survey would show what had happened to the estate farms when they passed into the ownership of the farm tenants.

D.M.Kay

B.S.Smith

Principal sources: estate map, 1775 (Gloucestershire Records Office, D.603) tithe apportionment and map, 1842 (G.R.O., D.645).

The Correspondence of G. G. Ducarel in the Service of the East India Company 1764 - 1784. (G.R.O., D.2091/C)

The private correspondence of Gustave Gerard Ducarel extends from the year 1764 when he was preparing to set sail for India as a writer with the East India Company and ends soon after his appointment as Collector for the district of Purnoa to the north east of Calcutta. The letters illustrate several interesting facets of 18th century life. Since most of the letters are to Ducarel's mother, we are naturally told a good deal of the young man's routine occupations and activities, in the unusual circumstances of departure for and arrival in India, while the fact that the Ducarel family were intimates of Lord Clive and his family and that Gustave was in Bengal at a time of much administrative upheaval, adds some political interest to the letters.

In 1764 Gustave Ducarel was a young man of about 20 and he was to sail to India with his younger brother, an army captain, where Gustave hoped to make his fortune as "nabobs" like "Diamond" Pitt and his own patron, Robert Clive, had done before him, while brother James had hopes of speedy promotion.

There are some twenty letters describing the preparations the brothers made in London for their voyage and their slow departure along the south coast until favourable winds should allow them to strike out into the Atlantic. The brothers reserved a passage on the ship "Pacific" which cost Gustave £50, then James proceeded to make their cabin more habitable by converting, amongst other things, trunks into a table with a hole in it "for a timing device or a bowl of water". The Captain of the "Pacific" regretted that they would have to share the Great cabin with 24 others - 22 gentlemen and "2 ladies out for a venture and their maid, viz, a virgin by name Miss Dixon and a widow of 40". Next they had to see to the assembling of their luggage. This all had to be listed (including Mama's gingerbread), and sent to India House whence it would be taken in a cart to the ship. Then followed a visit to the dentist by Gustave to have his teeth scraped and to buy a pot of dentifrice, and another essential purchase - some Tincture of Bark to mitigate the possible ill effects of the hot climate.

However, these preparations did not absorb all their time in London, since they first arrived there in January 1764 and until they finally put out from Portsmouth on 10th April. Much of the intervening time was spent in making visits, some purely social, others to transact financial business, here drawing a bill, there selling stocks,

trying to negotiate the restitution of family estates through the Parliament of Paris, for the Ducarel family had earlier in the 18th century left their native Normandy and settled in London, though Mrs. Ducarel, in her widowhood, had gone with her unmarried daughter to live in Bath.

Some of the letters are addressed to Maria, their sister, and a good many of them are concerned with her conduct and possible marriage, for which Gustave, as her nearest male relative, was responsible. It is soon apparent that she has become attached to some unsuitable gentleman and both Gustave and James write her stern letters, recalling her to the path of duty and bidding her to obey her family's wishes in this matter. Gustave then goes on as to his own marriage - "I believe you are pretty safe with regard to any of the transported ladies, who I am told are so haughty and high-minded in India, that they will not condescend to look down on a man of 5 feet and a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch". Maria also gave cause for alarm in her attitude towards Lady Clive. The two brothers had been careful to call on Lady Clive as soon as they had reached London and had honoured her by writing her letters in Italian since she was learning that language. Then a month or so before they sailed, the East India Company were to vote for new members on the Board of Directors and since Mrs. Ducarel was a shareholder, she could show by her vote her attachment to Clive's party. However, Mrs. Ducarel had been ill and Maria argued that to ask Mama to make the journey at such a time was foolish, and at the same time she expressed a low opinion of Lady Clive. Gustave immediately wrote back on 16th March in great alarm explaining the extent of Clive's power in Bengal and how much "it is in his power to make our fortunes or ruin us in Bengal. He is there more absolute than his Majesty here. Even his Council is formed of Officers entirely his own people..... My brother can get no Company nor any employment till he pleases to give it, nor can I have any Place or even the Liberty of trading but from the Governor and Council". On April 3rd he wrote again on this topic enquiring whether his mother had voted and James added a P.S. urging her to make the journey to London. Thus it is with some relief that we learn in a letter of the 6th that Mrs. Ducarel had, in fact, made the journey. During this crisis the "Pacific" was lying at Portsmouth and on the 10th the wind at last changed and the long and hazardous voyage began.

There seems to have been no opportunity to send letters en route from Lisbon or the Cape and the next letter is from Madras on October 6th, 6 months after their departure from Portsmouth and 3 days

after their arrival in Madras. This letter gives some indication of how some of that 6 months was spent. They both enjoyed good health and during the voyage James studied the art of fortification, while Gustave read works on Indian trade and made some attempt to learn Persian, the court language of Bengal and they both studied Indian history from the earliest times, unlike many other young clerks sailing at this time, who tended to use the time perfecting their game of whist, which was a dominant and often profitable part of social life in Calcutta.

Gustave described Madras as "a small well-built town, and the Governor and the gentlemen live in splendid town houses and have country houses with the gardens laid out in the English fashion. There is no extravagance but order, economy and great politeness..... The Ladies here are really Queens as there are very few in this settlement. Even Harridans are made much of Ladies do not appear much before 8 on their verandahs and then the whole settlement parades before them".

The voyage from Madras to Calcutta took about a month because of delays caused by the monsoon and the Great cabin was mostly in 6 inches of water. However, by 30 December Gustave was sufficiently recovered and established to write a letter about his new country, which was to absorb his energies for the next twenty years. On arrival he dined with Clive "en famille" and they talked of old Bath friends. Then he had to find accommodation. He followed the usual practice of setting up house with other newly-disembarked gentlemen. On this occasion four of them rented an unfurnished 3-bedroomed house at £300 p.a. and he then goes on to describe the staff which they acquired. "A very considerable grievance, there are vile customs here established that no man can do anything but the particular business he professes. One man will undertake the care of your linen cloths, etc..... for your Palanquin you have 8 bearers, a boy to carry your umbrella and a boy or running Footman to run before you and clear the way with a large Scimitar. But the most extraordinary person of any that serves you is the Banyan, these are a sect of brokers, who profess it from father to son..... it is through these people that all trade is carried on". He then goes on to say "We have found the language extremely useful and have the satisfaction to see we speak it better than many people who have been here 10 or 12 years and the Black people are exceedingly surprised."

At first Gustave worked in the secretary's office just copying, but this must have been for a very short period since by

30 December 1764, Clive had already appointed him Deputy Paymaster to the army, which had good pay and prospects, while his brother was promised a command of sepoy. Meanwhile James was stationed at Patna and Gustave went to the military headquarters at Monghyr. He then concluded this first Bengal letter with a description of the great entertainment given by Clive to celebrate the signing of the Peace treaties at the end of the Seven Years War, with its great receptions, theatricals, and gladiatorial combats between various unlikely animals. All this must have seemed very remote and exotic to the household in Bath and Mrs. Ducarel and Maria probably felt more sense of contact with Gustave's new world when the muslin chintz and keg of mangoes arrived as he had promised.

Between 1766 and 1769, the brothers seem to have travelled much in Bengal, though they rarely met. During this time James saw several minor military actions and lost his right arm in one encounter, so that from 1767 onwards he had to learn to write with his left hand. In 1767 Clive left Bengal and although he recommended his proteges to his successor, Mr. Verelst, James received no great promotion and his scanty letters take on an embittered tone and in his last in the collection dated 14 March 1769, he said that if he did not get promotion soon "I must contract my views and think of retirement, whilst I have an arm remaining". It was probably soon after this that his health failed more rapidly and he died in India.

Gustave's fortunes on the other hand seem to have been unaffected by Clive's departure. In 1767 he was made Cash Keeper and lived in the Governor's house. This period is always regarded as a particularly discreditable one in the East India Company's conduct of Bengal affairs. In Indian history it is known as "the Shaking of the Pagoda tree", when the English traders made immense fortunes in a very short time, using methods which were to bring the Company and the country on the edge of bankruptcy in the next decade. Mrs. Ducarel had obviously heard with concern of the corrupt practices of the Company's servants and her son wrote in April 1767, assuring his mother that he himself used only honourable methods in business and that James paid strict attention to his military duties. Even so the condition of the East India Company is ideal: "If only a young man writes a good hand he may be useful though he were as stupid as a block..... The spirit of party resentment here and the opposition of interests at home are now the only things to be dreaded." By September Gustave had reaped the fruits of his language studies on the voyage out

and was made Persian translator at Moorshedabad, under the Company's Resident at the Durbar, the Nawab's Court, a post which he believed held great promise. It certainly enabled him to travel about Bengal a good deal, particularly by water and he described such a journey by large boats called 'Budgerones' which had a large room in each. It was usual to cover 50 miles in 2 days and it took 2,000 servants to transport 7 or 8 people 100 miles.

The penultimate letter in this collection was written on 1 December 1769 after his appointment as Supervisor of the district of Purnea, for which position he was chosen because of his knowledge of Persian and of the Bengal fiscal system. He then expounded his conception of the task ahead in an 18th century rhetorical style but expressing a 19th century concern for the inhabitants of his district. He wrote as follows to his uncle, Dr. A.C.Ducarel, "An immense task is allotted to us. We are to investigate the state of our respective provinces under the different heads of History, Trade, Revenues and Administration of Justice - I am Historians and Legislators most probably - but certainly it is that We have in our Power to perform the noblest Task that can be allotted to Men of Honour and Humanity, that of changing the condition of the People from a state of Oppression to Happiness and the Country from Desolation to Prosperity, and that the Scheme will in general have this effect is undoubted by the Advantage English Gentlemen have over Natives of the Country in Education, Principles and Disposition." However, this attitude was frowned upon in the days of Dual Control and in a letter to his mother on 15 December 1769 he refers jokingly to "his government, but the Court of Directors would not be well pleased to hear of their Writers setting themselves up for Governors".

From Purnea, Ducarel went on as Collector in the district of Burdwan, where he became to be regarded as an authority on revenue matters. This expertise was largely put at the disposal of Philip Francis in his struggle against Warren Hastings. Ducarel finally returned to England in 1784, a man of property and family, since at some time in the 70s he had married a Native Indian lady, who bore him several children and they all went to live in comparative seclusion at Exmouth. One son, Philip, came to live at Newland in the Forest of Dean, where his descendants have lived until recently.

J. Whiting

VAGRANCY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE (1730 - 1834)

PART I

by John W. Wyatt

A cursory examination of the County Treasurer's Accounts about the middle of the 18th Century is sufficient to show that the principal item of expenditure in most normal years was what were termed Vagrancy Bills.

"Pd The Constable of Southropp. 4 Vagrancy Bills	£7.15s.10d."
"The High Constable of Longtree Hund. 2 Vagrancy Bills	£1. 4s. 4d."
"The Constable of Marshfield, 6 Vagrancy Bills	£3. 4s. 0d."

- Such are the most common type of entry in the accounts presented for audit at each quarter-sessions.

A Vagrancy Bill was a bill presented by the Constable of a parish, the High-Constable of a hundred, or the Keeper of one of the Bridewells for expenses incurred in removing a vagrant to his or her place of settlement and for the subsistence of the constable and vagrant during the journey.

The laws concerning vagrancy stemmed from The Repression of Vagrancy Act (39 Eliz. c4), 1597. This act contained a lengthy list of various types of person who were to be "taken, adjudged and deemed Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars." It included, amongst others, any of the following who were found begging or without means of subsistence: wandering scholars seeking alms; fortune-tellers, bearwards, jugglers, tinkers; shipwrecked seamen; discharged prisoners; wanderers pretending to have suffered loss by fire; able-bodied wandering persons or labourers without means who refused to work for current rates of wages. If one of these persons was found begging he or she was, by order of any Justice of the Peace, to be "stripped naked from the middle upwards and openly whipped till his or her body be bloody, and then passed on to his or her birthplace or last residence, and in case they know neither, they are to be sent to the House of Correction for a year, unless someone gives them employment sooner." The act was not aimed against vagrancy in its literal sense of wandering from place to place, but against persons "going about begging", "not being able to give a good account of themselves", or earning a living by what was considered to be an undesirable way.

The Act of 1597 was amended many times and was eventually repealed in 1713 when it was replaced by the Act of 13 Anne c26 which consolidated and amended the existing laws. This act was also amended and replaced several times. The Vagrancy Laws were also affected by the Settlement Act of 1662. In essence, however, the laws concerning vagrancy remained much the same from 1597 till the passing of The Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834, though certain changes will be referred to later.

In ENGLISH POOR LAW HISTORY, Chapter 6, "The Repression of Vagrancy" Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote:

"There are no materials for even an approximate estimate of the volume of vagrancy in England and Wales at any time prior to the nineteenth century; and we know of no contemporary judgements of value as to the waxing or waning at particular dates of the unending flow of a nomadic population in which all sorts of elements were mingled."

This study was undertaken in the hope that the total number of Vagrancy Bills paid by the County Treasurer in each quarter from 1730 to 1834 might give some indication as to the waxing or waning of vagrancy at any particular period. It was hoped also that the number of Vagrancy Bills might indicate how the volume of vagrancy was affected by war and peace, summer and winter, bad harvests, economic depression or changes in the law.

The number of Vagrancy Bills paid in each quarter does not, of course, tell us the number of vagrants in the county at the time. A bill might cover the expenses of removing a single vagrant or a number. Two bills might relate to the removal of the same vagrant. For example a vagrant ordered to be removed from Bristol to Worcester would be conveyed by the Constable of St. Philip and St. Jacob to Gloucester; from there the Constable of Kingsholm would convey him to the Worcestershire border. Also the bills are only concerned with vagrants who were apprehended and removed; they tell nothing of the number of vagrants left unmolested. If constables were lax in apprehending vagrants - a duty with which they were strictly charged, and for neglect of which, under various acts passed in the period, they could be heavily fined - the number of vagrancy bills, would, obviously, be small. A sudden burst of activity

in the apprehension of vagrants would send the number of bills soaring. Nevertheless, if the authorities suddenly started putting the laws into more rigorous execution, it would be reasonable to assume that vagrancy had increased to such an extent that it had become an intolerable nuisance. Conversely, a small number of bills could indicate either that there were few vagrants or that constables were lax in apprehending them. But if constables were lax it would be reasonable to suppose that vagrancy was no great nuisance at the time; in other words there were not many vagrants. Thus, despite qualifications, the rise and fall in the number of Vagrancy Bills should give some indication of the waxing or waning of vagrancy at particular dates.

It is not possible to find the number of Vagrancy Bills in any period before 1730 because before that date the Treasurer's Accounts state only the amount of any disbursement and the name or office of the person to whom it was paid, e.g. "Pd The Constable of Kingsholm £11. 3s. 4d." There is no indication as to why the money was paid. Payment to a Constable might have been for a Vagrancy Bill - indeed it probably was - but it could have been for conveying a prisoner to gaol or some other purpose.

In 1834, by the Poor Law Amendment Act, the financial and administrative - though not the legal - responsibility for vagrancy was taken away from the Justices at Quarter Sessions and handed over to the newly-elected Boards of Guardians.

Some difficulties were encountered in extracting the information from the account books. Occasionally the number of bills to which a payment refers is not given "Vagrancy Bills" or "Several Vagrancy Bills" being substituted for a definite number. Such entries, however, are not common enough to make any substantial difference to the total for each quarter.

The Treasurer's Accounts from Michaelmas 1773 to Trinity 1797 have been lost or destroyed, leaving a gap of 24 years. In the accounts for 1797 onwards the number of bills for which a payment was made is not given. For these years therefore the amount of money expended had to be substituted in this survey for the number of bills. To make the survey uniform throughout it was necessary to

return to the accounts for earlier years and find the total amount of money expended in addition to the total number of bills. This task has not been completed. It will be noticed by looking at the chart which shews the number of bills or the amount of money expended on them, that, whether the number of bills or the amount of money is used, the resultant graph is much the same.

The total number of Vagrancy Bills in each of the four quarters of the year from 1730 to 1772, inclusive was:

Quarter ending at Easter.....	5,093
" " " Trinity.....	4,948
" " " Michaelmas.....	4,629
" " " Epiphany.....	5,770

The total number of bills for the summer months (Easter to Michaelmas) was 9,577; for the winter months (Michaelmas to Easter), 10,863. The figures suggest that there was slightly more vagrancy in winter

during <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=17.2&lat=51.72055&lon=-2.47957&layers=168&b=1&o=100&marker=51.720044,-2.478532>

From 1798 to 1820, inclusive, the amount of money disbursed for Vagrancy Bills in each quarter was:

Quarter ending at Easter	£3,398
" " " Trinity	£3,199
" " " Michaelmas	£3,783
" " " Epiphany	£4,874

Total for the summer periods: £6,983; for the winter £8,273. Again, the figures suggest slightly more vagrancy in winter than in summer.

After 1820, however, a change in the seasonal pattern occurs. From then till the end of 1833 the amount expended each quarter was:

Quarter ending at Easter.....	£2,764
" " " Trinity	£3,820
" " " Michaelmas	£4,542
" " " Epiphany	£2,771

Total for the winter: £5,536; for the summer £8,362.
The figures suggest that in these years there was considerably more vagrancy in summer than in winter.

In 1834 The Poor Law Inquiry Commissioners reported that vagrancy had "actually been converted into a trade, and that not an unprofitable one," and the report implies that a considerable proportion of the vagrants were idle scroungers who chose begging as an easy way of obtaining a livelihood. It is difficult to believe that this was so before 1820 when vagrancy appears to have increased in winter. It is hard to imagine many people wandering by choice along the roads of those days in an English winter, hoping to obtain a precarious living by begging, if they could obtain a living in any other way. In the quarter ending Easter, 1763, a period of particularly severe weather, the number of vagrancy bills rose from 94 in the previous quarter to 163. The change in the seasonal incidence of vagrancy after 1820 is probably accounted for by the great influx of vagrants from Ireland.

Irish vagrants were a problem in Gloucestershire early in the 18th Century. At the Trinity Quarter Sessions, 1716, complaints were made about the sending of Southern Irish vagrants from Chester to Bristol to be transported to the south of Ireland, and Northern Irish vagrants from Bristol to Chester for transportation. All these Irish vagrants passed through Gloucestershire between Twynning and Bristol. At the Easter Quarter Sessions, 1718, the magistrates around Gloucester were requested to consider whether action should be taken in the Court of King's Bench against the Mayor of Chester for issuing "illegal passes" to these Irish vagrants. It was, of course, cheaper for the Mayor of Chester to send these vagrants out of his city into the county of Cheshire en route for Bristol than to pay their passage to Ireland.

After 1820 the number of Irish and, to a lesser degree, Scottish vagrants increased almost every year. Here are the figures for Irish vagrants passed by sea from Bristol in the year ending 25th March, 1832

1823.....	999	1828	1,033
1824	863	1829	1,300
1825	934	1830	2,105
1826	1,116	1831	3,548
1827	1,643	Total	38,964

The County Treasurer's Accounts from Trinity 1833 to Epiphany 1834 list the number of Irish and Scottish vagrants passed by constables. The totals for the three quarters were: -

	Irish	Scottish
Twynning	405	284
Deerhurst	409	-
Barrington	8	-
Cheltenham	-	6
Kingsholm	-	215
Littlewcrth	350	-
Marshfield	167	31
Didnarton	8	-
Cold Aston	-	23
Pucklechurch	-	24
Thornbury Upper Hundred	2,366	-
St. Philip and St. Jacob	1	117

The Irish vagrants were, obviously, being passed to Bristol to be shipped to Ireland. If we count only those entering the county and disregard the numbers at the intermediate stages of transit (Deerhurst and Littleworth) we find that about 405 were coming from Worcestershire and the north but the vast majority, 2,550, from London and the east.

It is impossible to determine from these figures the number of Scottish vagrants until we discover by what route they were passed. Mention of Kingsholm suggests the road route to the north. The following entry in the accounts for Easter, 1834, - the last quarter in which vagrancy bills occur - shews that some vagrants were returned to Scotland by sea from Bristol.

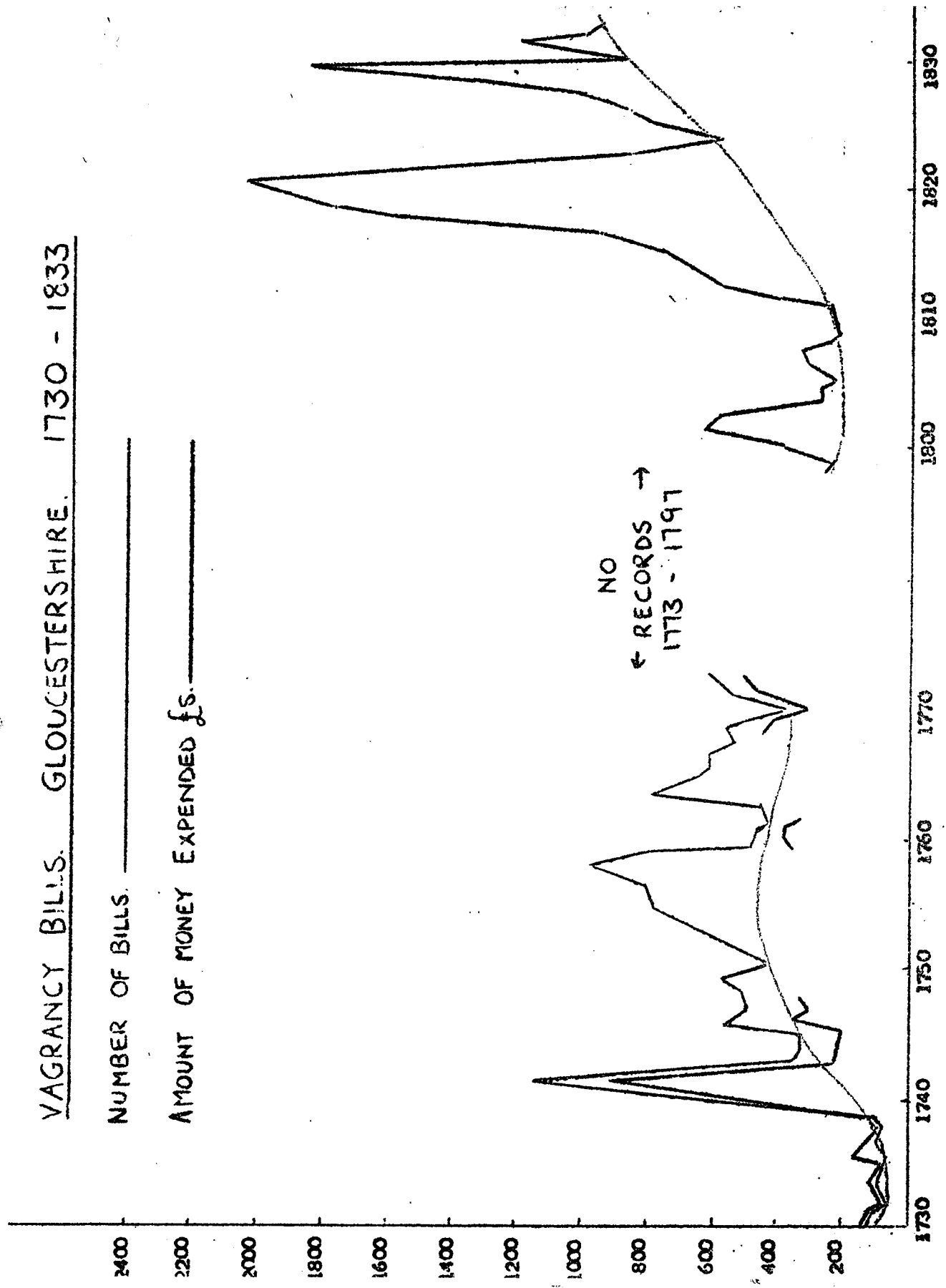
"Conveying Vagrants, under the new law.
Cheltenham. 9 Scotch to Bristol and pay^d their passage to Dublin, there being no vessels from Scotland. £9. 6s. 2d." Incidentally, this entry epitomises the whole system of dealing with vagrants: Get rid of them and don't be too fussy as to how or where.

The number of vagrancy bills for each year, or the amount of money expended on them, is shewn on the graph.

VAGRANCY BILLS. GLOUCESTERSHIRE. 1730 - 1833

NUMBER OF BILLS. _____

AMOUNT OF MONEY EXPENDED £s. _____



← RECORDS →
1773 - 1797
NO

The outline of the graph is very irregular and the most noticeable features are the six high "peaks" of 1741, 1757, 1763, 1801, 1820 and 1829. Perhaps a clearer picture as to the waxing or waning of vagrancy is given by the green line on the chart which passes through the base of the troughs between the high peaks. If the figures obtained are of any value it should be safe to assume that vagrancy was at a low level from 1730 to 1739 after which it rose considerably until 1757 and remained approximately at that higher rate until 1773. When the chart begins again in 1798 vagrancy was at a rather lower level until 1811, after which it rose rapidly till 1834.

We can now consider possible explanations for the high peaks on the graph.

There happens to be a rise in vagrancy bills on the outbreak of both the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War. Further study suggests that these rises are purely coincidental. For two reasons the outbreak of war should cause a decrease in vagrancy. First is the increased demand for man-power, not only for the armed forces but for the industries supplying their needs. Secondly, by the Acts 2 & 3 Anne c 6, "all lewd and disorderly men servants, rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars" could be pressed into the Royal Navy, and by 17 Geo. 11 c 5 (1743-4) any vagrant over 12 years of age could be pressed into the navy or army, so most able-bodied male vagrants would quickly be disposed of on the outbreak of war. The Royal Navy's press-gang was always active in Bristol and during the Seven Years' War was operating in Gloucester and district in 1759 and 1761. The calendar of prisoners in Winchcombe Bridewell, April 27th, 1756 lists "John Dennis of the County of Bucks committed March the 21 by Robbart Tracy Esqe for want of giving a good account of himself but senses listed in to his Maggists Sarvis and discharged." (He deserted later from the 59th Foot). On January 10th, 1757, it records that Richard Allard of "Hunnibun" and Peter Green of "Weston Subbidg" have been committed for being "Idell and disorderly but senses enlisted into his Magestis Sarvis and discharged."

Soldiers' wives and widows were often forced into vagrancy, as the following article shows, and at the end of a war discharged soldiers and sailors were landed at any port and left to beg their way home, so adding to the volume of vagrancy.

There is a rise in the graph about the end of each of the three major wars in the period; less marked at the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1748; more marked in 1763 after the Seven Years' War; most marked at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. This is as one would expect as the 1939 - 45 war was probably the only war not followed by economic depression and unemployment or vagrancy.

Now, taking each of the peaks in turn, we will consider what factors were operating and what events happened from 1739 to 1742 which might have caused an increase in vagrancy. First, there was depression in the cloth industry in the west of England. Secondly, there was a dearth of corn. In January, 1739, the price of wheat in Gloucester market was 3s. to 3s.8d. a bushel. In September it was 4s.6d. to 5s. By June 1740 the price had more than doubled at 7s. to 8s. In July rioting was reported in East Anglia, and at Newcastle rioters destroyed the Guildhall. In the Forest of Dean a mob attempted to destroy the dwelling house and corn-mill of Joseph Sayer of Redbrook. At the July Assizes four women were fined and one of them ordered to be whipped "for riotously entering the dwelling House of Robert Shirley of Moreton-in-Marsh, and taking by Violence a large Quantity of Wheat." By September wheat cost from 8s. to 9s.6d. a bushel. In October the Gloucester Journal reported: "We hear from Stroud and other Clothing Places, that the Poor are starving for Want of Work." (The reasons given were the exportation of wool and the great number of alehouses!). At Chipping Campden "the chief inhabitants" set unemployed labourers to work on the roads at wages of 8d. a day plus 1d. for small beer. By January, 1741, wheat had reached its peak price of 8s.6d. to 10s. a bushel and it remained at almost that price throughout the winter. By July it had fallen slightly at 7s.6d. to 8s.9d. and when harvest came at the end of August was down to 4s.8d. to 5s., though early in February 1742 wheat was still at the comparatively high price of 5s. to 5s.6d. a bushel.

To add to the hardships of the poor, the winter of 1739-40 was severe. To alleviate distress funds were raised in Gloucester city and at Eastington and Stroudwater. On January 12th the Gloucester Journal reported that a sheep was roasted whole on the Severn near the Quay. Not till February 23rd did the Journal report that the weather had abated and that ships were using the river again.

There was a third factor causing the increase in Vagrancy Bills. In the year 1739-40 a new Vagrancy Act, 13 Geo.11 c 24, came into

operation. This, like most Vagrancy Acts, started by stating that the number of rogues, vagabonds and other idle and disorderly persons was increasing daily. It then divided them into three classes:

1. **IDLE AND DISORDERLY PERSONS.** This included anyone who threatened to run away and leave his wife or children chargeable to the parish; anyone unemployed and without means of support who refused to work for the usual wages; all persons found begging - who could be sent to hard labour for a period not exceeding one month.

Anyone could apprehend a beggar and a reward of 5s. was offered for each apprehended. Any beggars who resisted apprehension, or escaped from it, were to be punished as rogues and vagabonds.

2. **ROGUES AND VAGABONDS.** This class included, amongst others, people collecting money by false pretences as sufferers by fire, etc; fencers, bearwards, minstrels, jugglers, fortune tellers, etc; actors without licence from the Lord Chamberlain; unlicensed pedlars and chapmen; any person running away and leaving wife or children chargeable to the parish; persons wandering and living in barns, outhouses, etc., and not giving a good account of themselves; beggars pretending to be soldiers or sailors or pretending to work at harvest.

Exemptions were made of soldiers needing subsistence and having a certificate from an officer or the Secretary of War, and of marines or seafaring men bearing a licence from a Justice of the Peace setting down the time and place of landing or discharge, the place to which they were to pass, and limiting the time of passage. People travelling to work at harvest, or any other time, were also exempt if they carried a certificate from the minister or one of the churchwardens or overseers of the poor of the place where they lived declaring that they had a dwelling there.

Anyone could apprehend a rogue or vagabond and a reward of 10s. was offered. Rogues and vagabonds could be sent to hard labour till the next Quarter Sessions, or such shorter time as the Justices felt fit, and then passed to their last place of legal settlement.

3. **INCORRIGIBLE ROGUES.** This category included prison breakers; end-gatherers; rogues and vagabonds escaping from custody or committing any offence under this act after a first conviction.

Incorrigible rogues could be sent to hard labour for a time not exceeding six months, and corrected by whipping as the Justices thought fit.

Magistrates were ordered to command a privy search for vagrants in the night four times a year and to pass any found to their last place of legal settlement.

Officers who refused to use their best endeavours to apprehend vagrants were liable to a penalty of 10s. to £5, and a penalty of 10s. to £2 could be imposed on any person harbouring a vagrant.

Masters of ships bringing any rogue, vagabond or beggar, or anyone likely to live by begging, from Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands, was liable to a fine of £5 and the cost of re-conveying the vagrant. Masters of ships were obliged to accept the rates offered by magistrates for conveying vagrants.

Before this Act was passed the reward for apprehending a vagrant was 2s. and there is little evidence in the Treasurer's Accounts that it was claimed. The increase in the reward to 5s. for an "idle and disorderly person" and 10s. for a rogue and vagabond was an important factor in causing the steep rise in the number of vagrancy bills in the period 1739-42. Sometimes payment of the reward is specifically mentioned in the accounts e.g. "the Master of the House of Correction at Cirencester, 5 Bills for taking up Vagrants, £2.10s.", but other entries such as "The High Constable of Barton Regis, 52 Vagrancy Bills, £26," or to the same person in the next quarter, "82 Vagrancy Bills, £41," obviously refer to payments of the 10s. reward. In 1740, 13 such awards appear to have been made, 73 in 1741 and 153 in 1742. Bills and money expended on them which appear to be payments of the reward are not included in the graph, but the bills for passing the vagrants so apprehended are.

From the passing of the Act till Easter 1742 all vagrants for whose apprehension a reward was paid were classed as rogues and vagabonds and the 10s. reward was paid, but at the Quarter Sessions at Easter, 1742, the Gloucestershire Justices stipulated that not more than 5s. should be awarded for apprehending vagrants. From 1749 to 1773 these rewards are recorded in the Treasurer's accounts as "Five Shilling Bills." During these twenty four years 913 of these "Five Shilling Bills" were paid and it is interesting to note that 715 of them were paid in Cirencester, some to the Constable but most to the Keeper of the Bridewell. Whether the Bridewell Keeper received these personally or whether he was the agent through whom they were paid is not clear.

In 1821 a Select Committee appointed to consider the laws concerning vagrancy reported:

"The county reward of 10s. at present payable, has in some instances converted the apprehension of vagrants into a regular trade, so disgraceful in all its branches as even to prevent the more respectable constables from interfering with vagrants from a dread of sharing the obloquy attached to their apprehension."

The report stated that in some places the reward had led to a system of collusion between apprehender and vagrant in which "the latter has voluntarily entered, or been invited, into the district of the informer, and even been bribed to commit an act of Vagrancy with the view of procuring the reward of 10s, which in some cases has actually been divided between the parties."

Perhaps something like this was happening in Cirencester. As an average of £7 10s a year was being paid out in Cirencester in rewards it is certain that some person - or persons - there made a profitable part-time occupation of apprehending vagrants.

When we consider the second of the high peaks on the graph from 1753 - 58, we find that the causes appear to be similar to those which caused the first peak. There was again a depression in the woollen industry, culminating in a strike of the Gloucestershire weavers in 1756 with riots in the Stroud area. James Wolfe, then an acting-colonel, who was in command of the troops sent to control the rioters, wrote to his mother from Chipping Sodbury on October 24th, "I hope it will turn out a good recruiting party, for the people are so oppressed, so poor, and so wretched, that they will perhaps hazard a knock on the pate for bread and clothes, and turn soldiers through sheer necessity." In a further, undated, letter from Stroud he added, "They beg about the country for food, because, they say, the masters have beat down their wages too low to live upon; and I believe it is a just complaint."

The end of 1756, like the end of 1739, began a period of famine and high prices for corn. The summer of 1756 was a wet one and in some parts of England the harvest was ruined by rain. In January 1756 wheat cost from 5s. to 6s. a bushel in Gloucester market; in June it cost 6s. to 7s; by November 7s. to 8s., and it reached a peak price of 9s 6d. to 11s.6d. a bushel in April, 1757. Again there were riots in many parts of England including Gloucestershire, particularly on the banks of the Severn and Wye, where boats carrying corn to Bristol were stopped and plundered. Funds were once more raised in Gloucester and other places

to supply corn to the poor at considerably under market price. By mid-March more than 700 people in Gloucester and its out-hamlets had benefited in this way.

The third peak on the chart, from 1763 to 1768, with its summit in 1763, is less marked but has factors in common with the previous two. 1764-7 was, again, a period of high prices for food. There was a dearth of corn early in 1765 and a fund was raised in Gloucester so that rice - a food little used in England at that time - could be sold to the poor at one-third of the shop price. The Gloucester Journal reported that in one day 2,024 pints of rice were sold. In the winter of 1766 - 7 the price of wheat in Gloucester market rose to between 9s 6d. and 10s.11d. a bushel. Once more there was rioting - this time in the Stroud area - and troops were called in.

The Seven Years' War ended in 1763 and there were many discharged soldiers and seamen making their way through the county. As will be seen in Part 2 of this article, soldiers' wives and widows formed a considerable proportion of the vagrants after the war.

The weather at the beginning of 1763 was very severe. In mid-January the Severn was frozen sufficiently to allow people to cross it on foot. A fund was raised to provide coals for the poor. The cold spell was followed by heavy rain and floods. In mid-February there was heavy snow followed by floods when the snow thawed. This was hardly the weather when people would take voluntarily to a vagrant life, yet the number of Vagrancy Bills rose from 94 in the previous quarter to 163.

To summarise the findings in the first period studied (1730 - 72): There is strong evidence to show that vagrancy was mainly the result of genuine hardship and that the vast majority of vagrants did not resort to this way of life and an easy "and not unprofitable" trade. That the principal causes of the hardship were trade depression, bad harvests and a high price for corn. That severe winters, the post-war discharge of soldiers and sailors, and lack of any provision for soldiers' and sailors' widows were contributory causes. That there was a steep rise in the number of vagrants apprehended when the new Vagrancy Act of 1739 - 40 came into operation.

The second period on the graph begins in 1798 when the cost of vagrancy bills was at a comparatively low level - presumably because of the period of near full - employment during the Napoleonic

Wars. The full cost, however, is not shewn on the chart because in this period the expenses incurred by the Bridewells are not included. To 1773 many of the Vagrancy Bills were submitted by the Keepers of the Bridewells. Of 2,554 bills submitted from Trinity 1758, to Easter 1763, for example, 244, almost 10 per cent were from the Bridewell Keepers at Cirencester and Winchcombe. (For some obscure reason none were submitted from Berkeley or Lawford's Gate). After 1798 no vagrancy bills are recorded from the Bridewells. All the Bridewell expenses, except the wages of the masters, chaplains and surgeons, were recorded in one sum for each Bridewell; "Paid to the Keeper of ----- Bridewell." Obviously a considerable proportion of the Bridewell expenses was attributable to vagrancy.

The graph for the period 1798 - 1834 again shows three high peaks; a smaller peak about 1801, two very high peaks with summits in 1820 and 1829. Even the troughs between the peaks shew a steep rise in the expenditure on vagrancy from 1811 to 1834.

There has not been time during the last session of University Extension Classes to consider adequately the causes of these peaks or the local conditions which may have affected them. There are some obvious reasons: Disbandment of the navy, army and militia regiments after 1814; the period of economic depression after the Napoleonic Wars; high price of corn at periods; hardship amongst the Gloucestershire hand-loom weavers as a result of the Industrial Revolution; the invasion by Irish vagrants as a result of near, or actual, famine conditions in that country. It is hoped to do more research on this next session.

The Treasurer's accounts record occasional payments of a fee of one shilling for whipping a vagrant. The first, for Trinity, 1732, reads "Payd the Biddle for whipping a vagrant, 1/-." The others, all between 1746 and 1765, were mostly paid to one Benjamin Baker. (Who he was remains to be discovered). The accounts record the whipping of only 17 vagrants, but whipping must have been much more frequent than this. The Order Book for 1740 records that Anne Smith, a vagrant and incorrigible rogue, was sentenced to remain in Gloucester Bridewell for six months and to be whipped once a month. The Treasurer's accounts record no fee for these whippings. The law was quite definite about the whipping of vagrants. The Act of 1713 (13 Anne c 26) re-affirmed that any person found after obtaining a settlement was to be whipped till the back was bloody and then sent to hard labour in the House of Correction before being passed home. It also ordered that rogues and vagabonds apprehended

in a privy search could, if judged at Quarter Sessions to be dangerous and incorrigible, be ordered to be publicly whipped on three market days in succession at some market town. At Trinity Sessions, 1716, the Gloucestershire magistrates were requested to examine the backs of vagrants passed into the county to see if they had been whipped and, if not, to see whether the reasons for omitting it were expressed in the pass. In 1792 the Act 32 Geo. III c. 45 recited that all rogues and vagabonds ordered to be conveyed by pass were first to be publicly whipped or sent to the House of Correction and that no reward was to be paid for apprehending rogues and vagabonds until they had been punished. It added, however, that no female vagabond was to be whipped, though it is interesting to note that in 1800, according to "The Annals of Winchcombe and Sudeley," six women were publicly flogged for "hedge-pulling." This was under an Act of 1766 "For the better Preservation of Timber Trees, and of Woods and Underwoods" to prevent "idle and disorderly persons" going into woods to make poles, walking sticks, etc.

According to Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whipping was fairly common early in the 18th Century but there is no evidence of any really continuous attempt to carry out the intentions of the Vagrancy Acts, which, by their severity, defeated their own purpose. Whipping was barbaric and the sending of wretched beggars "to the physical horror and moral contamination of the eighteenth century gaol was abhorrent to the thoughtful Justice of the Peace." They state however that in 1787 "a regular epidemic of whipping appears to have broken out." This is in the period for which the Treasurer's accounts are missing.

References to payments for the burial of a vagrant occur eleven times between 1743 and 1767, three at Kingsholm, two at Highnam, three at Cirencester Bridewell, one at Minchinhampton and two at places unspecified. The five on the outskirts of Gloucester had obviously been sent out of the city - probably because they were ill or dying. In 1752 and 1753 the Constable of Kingsholm was paid the expenses of a woman lying-in, and there were occasional payments for maintaining sick vagrants.

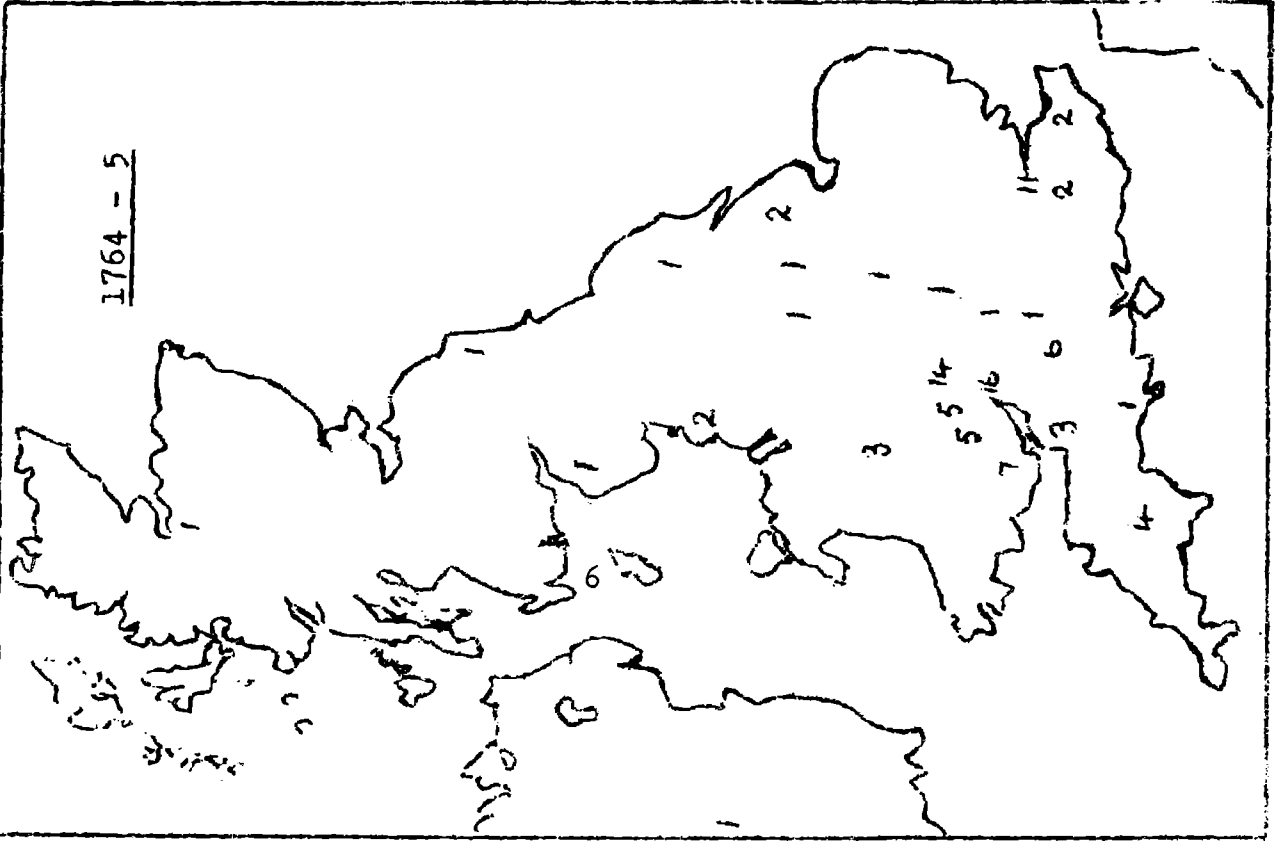
The Act of 1795 stated that "Poor Persons are often removed or passed to their place of settlement during the time of their sickness, to the great danger of their lives." It ordered Justices to suspend execution of removal orders until satisfied that they could be executed safely. The expense of the delay was to be paid by the parish to which they were ordered to be removed. A further act of 1809

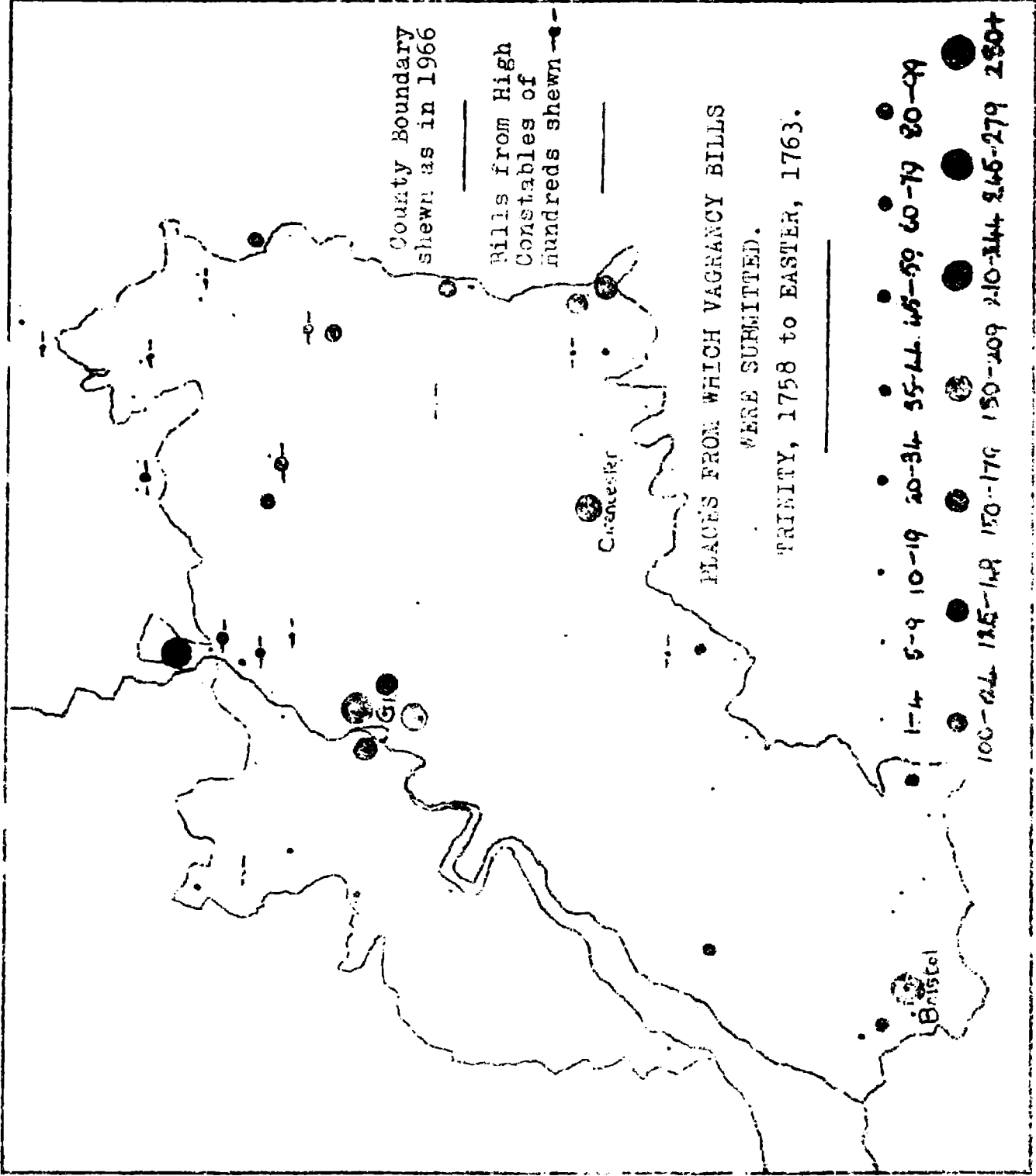
VAGRANTS' PLACES OF SETTLEMENT. (COUNTIES)

1746 - 53



1764 - 5





County Boundary
shewn as in 1966

Bills from High
Constables of
hundreds shewn

PLACES FROM WHICH VAGRANCY BILLS
WERE SUBMITTED.

TRINITY, 1758 to EASTER, 1763.

- 1-4 5-9 10-19 20-34 35-44 45-59 60-79 80-99
- 100-114 115-149 150-179 180-209 210-244 245-279 280+

VAGRANCY BILLS

TRINITY 1758 to EASTER 1763

Submitted by Constables of: -

Parishes on outskirts of Gloucester

Littleworth	196	
Over (52) Highnam (76)	128	
Kingsholm	253	
Wotton (38) North Hamlets (64)	<u>102</u>	679

Parishes on outskirts of Bristol

S. Philip and S. Jacob	284
------------------------	-----

Parishes on County boundary

Tidenham	1	
The Lea	12	
Preston (Near Dymock?)	18	
Newent	5	
Corse	2	
Deerhurst	11	
Twyning	240	
Tewkesbury	8	
Aston-under-Hill	1	
Hinton on the Green	1	
Willersey	2	
Welford	3	
Clifford Chambers	6	
(Chipping) Campden	3	
Moreton in Marsh	1	
Little Compton	64	
Adlestrop	1	
Barrington	98	
Little Barrington	8	
Southrop	122	
Lechlade	147	
Ampney (Down?)	2	
Minety	4	
Tetbury	26	
Shipton (Moyne?)	2	
Didmarton	2	
Marshfield	58	
Cold Aston	2	
Wyck and Abson	1	
Westbury on Trym	41	
Henbury	<u>10</u>	902

VAGRANCY BILLS

(2)

Other Parishes

Bourton on the Hill	6
Condicote	1
Winchcombe	4
Cowley	1
Chedworth	1
(Minchin) Hampton	1
Stonehouse	1
Newnham	1
Fairford	15
Siston	2
Pucklechurch	1
Langlyde (? Langley Hundred)	1
Stone	1
Slaughter (Hundred?)	82
Thornbury (Hundred ?)	<u>39</u>

157

High Constables of Hundreds

Westminster	23
Westminster Upper	10
Tewkesbury	38
Tewkesbury Upper	4
Kiftsgate	69
Kiftsgate Upper	17
Kiftsgate Lower	6
Deerhurst	11
Deerhurst Upper	11
Bradley	3
Slaughter	29
Longtree	15
Tibblestone	32
Crowthorne	3
Brightwells Barrow	14
Botloe	<u>3</u>

288

Keepers of Bridewells

Cirencester	186
Winchcombe	<u>58</u>

244

Total: - 2,554

(49 Geo.III c 124) ordered that when husband or wife, or any persons closely related were moved by a Removal Order or Vagrant Pass and the order was suspended because of the illness of one, the suspension should apply to the other persons also.

The Act 5 Geo.IV c 83 (1824) stated that Visiting Justices of Gaols might grant certificates to discharged prisoners to receive alms when on the way to their place of settlement. At Trinity Sessions, 1832, payments are recorded to the High Constable of Westminster Upper (£7. 17s.7d) and the Constable of Littlecrth (£11. 8.11d) for relieving discharged prisoners on pass. Thereafter, until the end of the period, such payments occur each quarter. These sums are not included in the totals of Vagrancy Bills on the chart.

There are numerous interesting references to gratuitous payments to vagrants. According to the law certain people such as discharged soldiers or sailors, could be given a pass permitting them to beg on their homeward journey.

Sufferers from fire could be given a similar pass. These gratuitous payments usually refer to such people. Typical examples are:

"To Eight poor Miserable Seamen as per order, 10s." (Mich.1750)

"Paid to Poor Soldiers and Seamen as per order, 9s." (Mich.1753)

"Gave to Several poor Disabled Soldiers and Seamen and Poor Distressed Women and their Children to help them on their way home, £1.13s." (Easter, 1755)

"Paid to Several Foot passes Begging by order of Mr. Bell."
(Trinity, 1757)

"By an Old Soldier to pass him on his **Jorney** being Ill,
2s.6d." (Easter, 1766)

An interesting item appears in the accounts for Easter, 1749: "To 224 Discharged Soldiers Seamen Wives and Children, £13.16s." Evidently some regiment had been discharged at the end of the War of the Austrian Succession. A rather hurried perusal of the Gloucester Journals for this period revealed no reference to such a regiment being brought into Bristol, but the Journal of January 17th reported that Lord Loudon's Highland Regiment had been disbanded at Yarmouth and that 400 of the men had been given 1s. each as they passed through Norwich. A fortnight later the Journal stated

that letters from Yorkshire reported that the men ■ have suffered extremely by Cold and Want, being retarded by the Severity of the Weather, and not having Sufficiency to carry them Home, and that they make very grievous Complaints as they pass along, some of their Habitations being beyond Inverness." In a callous age, in few ways was the nation more callous than in its treatment of old soldiers and sailors, their wives or their widows. The government could be generous at times; John Churchill got a dukedon and Blenheim. His old soldiers got a permit to beg.

THE MAP shews the places from which the Vagrancy Bills recorded in the Treasurer's Accounts in the five years from Trinity, 1758 to Easter 1763, originated. It will be noticed that they are not distributed evenly over the county; in fact, of all the towns and villages in the county, the constables of only 53 submitted a bill during the whole five years. Bills were submitted by the High Constables of 11 Hundreds and by the Keepers of the Bridewells at Winchcombe and Cirencester. It was, obviously, not possible to place accurately on the map the bills submitted by High Constables of Hundreds. These have been placed somewhere near the centre of the hundred and are distinguished by a red line on either side.

As can be seen, almost all the bills were submitted from the Constables of parishes either on the outskirts of Gloucester or Bristol, or near the county boundary. Those submitted from the county boundary may have been for conveying vagrants apprehended there, or - and probably mainly - for vagrants apprehended in other counties and being passed either into Gloucestershire or through Gloucestershire to some other county. As the bills no longer exist it is impossible to say which, but obviously the bills were for the expense of conveying vagrants into the county.

The bills from the parishes on the outskirts of Gloucester were for conveying vagrants turned out of Gloucester - either apprehended there or being passed through. Those from Kingsholm were for vagrants being sent northwards; from Littleworth to the south, etc. It will be noted that most vagrants were being passed along what is now the A38 from

Worcestershire through Twynning to Gloucester, Bristol and the south and vice-versa, or from London and the South-East through Cirencester, Lechlade, etc.

It must be remembered that a vagrant made two journeys: the first to the place where he was apprehended; the second when he was conveyed back by the constables. The bills only concern the second journey. The first journey he made either at his own expense or - and much more likely - by begging. There seems to have been little attempt in most places to apprehend a vagrant on this first journey. It will be noted, for example, that many vagrants were being passed back from Gloucester through Over or Highnam to Wales and the west. They must have come into Gloucestershire yet almost no vagrants were apprehended on the western boundary of the county.

It seems that so long as a vagrant was making his or her way to some definite place, either in search of employment or for some other reason, he was left unmolested. It was usually when he or she reached that destination, tried to settle there and, finding no work, was reduced to begging, that the vagrant was apprehended. The law was not intended to prevent people going in search of work. The settlement Act of 1662 stated that it was lawful for a person to go to any parish to work in time of harvest, or at any time to work at any other work, if he carried a certificate from the Minister and one of the Churchwardens and one of the Overseers of the Poor in his place of settlement stating that he had a dwelling place there and had left his wife and children, or some of them, there. Such work was not to procure a settlement in another parish. An Act of 1696-7 confirmed this and stated that only when chargeable to the parish to which they had come were they to be removed. The intention of the law was very different from its effect, for an Act in 1795 (35 Geo. III c 101) states that "many industrious Poor Persons chargeable to the place where they live, merely from Want of Work there, would in any other Place, where sufficient Employment is to be had, maintain themselves and their families without being burthensome to any parish, and SUCH POOR PERSONS ARE FOR THE MOST PART COMPELLED TO LIVE IN THEIR OWN PARISHES. etc." It goes on to re-enact that "no poor person shall be removed until he has become actually chargeable to the parish he then inhabits."

Most vagrants in search of employment would, naturally, make for a town and if there was employment available for them they would be welcomed. In the first half of the 18th century, and possibly later, deaths in the towns exceeded births, so some influx of people from outside was necessary to keep up the population, more if the industry and population of the town were to expand. The Industrial

Revolution would not have been possible without the migrants who became "rogues and vagabonds" if, through finding no employment or falling ill when they arrived, they were reduced to the necessity of asking alms.

The map suggests that most of the vagrants apprehended were apprehended in the towns. This suggestion is strengthened by the evidence in Part 2 of this article. The towns were, in effect, able to rid themselves of some surplus workers who were not actually settled there at the expense of the county. It cost little for the city of Gloucester to hand over a vagrant to the Constable of Kingsholm; it cost the county considerably more to convey him from Kingsholm across the county border. The county would also have to pay the expense of conveying a vagrant settled in Gloucester who was apprehended in, for instance, Oxford, from Barrington to Gloucester. The townspeople received some benefit from a nomadic population; the country folk paid the cost.

This is not a finished piece of work. It will be necessary to search the Quarter Sessions Order Books for more information as to the methods and routes employed in passing vagrants, and the rates of expenditure authorised by the magistrates. Were the vagrants "farmed" as in some counties? The accounts and reports of the Bridewells might give more information. It may be possible to read the reports of government Committees appointed from time to time to consider vagrancy, and to note any evidence submitted from Gloucestershire.

In the interests of accuracy some of the figures given need checking, though they are substantially correct.

VAGRANCY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE (1730 - 1834)

PART 2

by Irene Wyatt

Much has been written about vagrancy and about the laws governing vagrants but little about vagrants as people rather than statistics. To find out who the vagrants were and how they came to be vagrants, this study was undertaken.

Gregory King, whose figures are generally regarded as reliable, estimated that in 1688 out of a population of $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions, 2,825,000 received an income less than their expenditure. In other words, at some period in his life, one person in two was dependent on private charity or poor law relief. These were classified by Gregory King as: common seamen, labouring people and out-servants, cottagers and paupers, common soldiers, and vagrants.

The documents which I studied, Vagrants Passes and Duplicate Examinations 1746 - 53 and 1764 - 5 (Q/RV 1 and 2) and Depositions 1766 - 70 (Q/SD) showed that even artisans (of whom there were 240,000 in 1688) could easily become vagrants as a result of unemployment - seasonal or otherwise. Vagrants were not a class apart.

The Passes and Examinations for 1746 - 53 comprised 45 documents referring to vagrants apprehended in the City of Gloucester. 28 of these vagrants were taken up in the Parish of St. Nicholas. 32 were passed to Kingsholm "being the first parish through which they ought to pass in their way to" (their last place of settlement.)

The Passes and Examinations for 1764 - 5 (95 documents) covered a period of six months from October to April and referred to vagrants apprehended in various parts of the county. 32 of these were taken up at Cirencester; 22 at Chipping Campdon.

Four statements by vagrants I found in the Depositions.

An analysis of these documents revealed that the majority of these vagrants were women who, for the most part, were the wives or widows of artisans, soldiers and seafarers. The accompanying charts give the figures.

Soldiers' wives usually travelled with the regiment. A certain quota accompanied their husbands abroad. The rest were apparently left at the port of departure to fend for themselves. Rebekah Sharp, who was born near Exeter and had married there about a year previously, was the wife of "a Private Centinel in the Royal Welsh Fuzileers now lying at Plymouth Barracks." Her husband was probably about to be sent abroad. She was on her way to Flower, in Northamptonshire where she believed her husband had a settlement. When apprehended in Gloucester on January 15th, 1765 she stated that she "hath sold her Cloaths to defray her Travelling Expences and is now quite destitute of Money and hath nothing to Support her." No legal provision appears to have been made for them until 1803 when 43 Geo. III c 61 stated that wives of non-commissioned officers or soldiers, on making proof of not being permitted to embark with their husbands, should receive from the nearest Chief Magistrate a certificate of their place of settlement which would entitle them to ask for relief when on the route and within the time limit set by the magistrate. Widows do not appear to have been included.

Soldiers' widows suffered much hardship. Mary Hawley, a soldier's widow, with her fourteen-month old daughter, was apprehended in Gloucester on April 8th, 1752. She stated that her husband had "lately died at Bristol" and that "being unwilling to beg she with great Difficulty and Fatigue Travelled on Foot from Bristol to this City where being quite destitute of Necessaries and ill of an Ague she was obliged to beg....." She was sent to Carlisle, her place of settlement. This instance is typical of many.

From the nature of their occupations soldiers and seafaring men had difficulty in establishing a place of settlement. They would then inherit their fathers' place of settlement. This created few difficulties if the father had lived a settled life in one place, but the soldier who was himself the son of a soldier might find that his legal place of settlement was a parish in which he had never set foot. Since a woman upon marriage took her husband's place of settlement, wives and widows might find themselves sent to parishes with which they had no real connection and where they were probably most unwelcome. Here are three examples: Katherine Haldane, a soldier's widow was passed from Berwick-on-Tweed to Gloucester where she believed her husband had been apprenticed and established a settlement. The authorities made an enquiry but no evidence of her husband's apprenticeship was found so she and her two children were sent back to Berwick-on-Tweed.

Mary Brandwood, a soldier's wife, who "hath heard and

believes she was Born in Germany, "was apprehended with her fifteen-month old son at Minchinhampton." She stated that she had married in Exeter two and a half years previously and that she believed her husband's settlement was in the parish of Leigh in the County of Lancaster. Although it is more than likely that she had never before been to Leigh nevertheless that is where she was sent.

Anne Hedges, apprehended at Upper Slaughter....." says that she was born in New York, that about five years ago she married with one John Hedges a private man in his Majesty's 22nd Regiment at Albany in North America. That she accompanied her husband to many places abroad in the late war and was wounded at Martinico and was detained in the hospital there as a Nurse 'till the Island was restored on the late peace. That about three months ago she came from West Florida in the Solebay Hospital Ship and landed at Leith in North Britain. That before she left Florida her said Husband was found dead near the Post where he had been placed Centinel. That she has often heard her said husband declare that he was born in the Parish of Ross in the County of Hereford and enlisted as a soldier when he was seventeen years of age....." She was sent to Ross where, obviously, she had never before set foot.

Parish authorities were always anxious to rid themselves of women vagrants, particularly those who were pregnant. Bewildered, unhappy and sometimes ill, they were shunted about from parish to parish. Jane Symmonds, a Trowman's wife, was apprehended in the parish of St. Nicholas. She believed that her husband's settlement was in the parish of Brosely in Shropshire"..... And she further saith that she hath one Child by him named Joseph upwards of Six Years and that she is now Big and Pregnant with Child." Needless to say, she was sent to Brosely.

Scottish women who married Englishmen were, perhaps, more fortunate. The authorities apparently ignored the settlement laws and sent them back to their own country. Margaret Dix, a soldier's widow (one presumes he was English) "..... was taken violently ill and dropt down in the Street as she was going through this City (Gloucester) in her way towards Scotland and hath been confined to her Bed and hath also been relieved in the Workhouse ever since." She stated that she had been born and had worked in Inverness so presumably being sent back there would present no hardship.

The one Irish woman mentioned in these documents, Bridget Loxley, was the widow of a Scottish soldier whose place of settlement she declared she did not know. She had been born in Athlone "in the Kingdom of Ireland." She was sent to Bristol where she was to be put on board any ship going to any port in Ireland.

In some cases the strict letter of the law was observed. Ten year old Elizabeth Walmsley, an orphan, was apprehended in Cirencester in April 1765. The next day her sister and her sister's husband were also apprehended. Elizabeth had evidently been travelling with them for some time. Nevertheless she was taken from them and sent to her place of settlement at Cripplegate, London. Her sister and her husband were sent to his place of settlement in Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Women deserted by their husbands also suffered under the settlement laws. There was no opportunity of "going home to mother." If apprehended as a vagrant the deserted woman was sent back to the husband's place of settlement. Mary Glover lived at Alcester in Warwickshire until she married a Chimney Sweeper whose settlement was at Chadwell in London. They were moved to Chadwell "by an order" shortly afterwards but "her Husband brought her again into the country, turned her adrift and took to another woman." She was apprehended at Chipping Campden on December 12th, 1764 and sent back to Chadwell.

Ill-treatment was often given as the reason for "wandering and asking Charity and behaving in a vagrant-like Manner." Elizabeth Porter, aged 17, bound by Parish Indenture to a Bucklemaker in Wolverhampton two years previously, ran away from her master because of "her Mistress's frequent ill-using of her, and a few Weeks ago beating of her." She was apprehended in Gloucester in December, 1752, and returned to her Master. Three months later she was again found in Gloucester and once more sent back to Wolverhampton. Ann James, aged 19, a Mercer's daughter whose home was in Taunton, Somerset, was found in the churchyard at Upton St. Leonards in a fit and afterwards "supported by the parishioners" for a fortnight, during which time she had several fits. She stated that she had run away six weeks previously after her father had kept her "Locked up and Confined in a Room..... for Three Years and a Quarter..... That in her Confinement her father often Whipt her with a Horse Whip in her Shift and during her whole Confinement she always lay upon Straw." She also declared that her father had kept her locked up because he wanted to prevent her marrying a Naval Lieutenant. She was returned to her father. Richard Sugar, a ten-year old orphan, ran away after a beating. He made his way to Gloucester where, according to his statement, he arrived in December, 1748. He was apprehended in June, 1749, and sent back to the parish he had run away from;

Churchponderbach in Shropshire. These instances are representative of many.

Ex-soldiers could obtain a pass from their officers or the Secretary of War permitting them to beg on their homeward way for a specified time. Mariners and seafaring men could obtain a similar pass from a Justice of the Peace. These passes gave the time and place of discharge or landing, the place to which they were to pass, and set a limit to the time of passage. Despite this a number of ex-soldiers and discharged seamen appear in these documents. Possibly their permits to beg had expired. Perhaps permits had not been obtained in the first place. Whatever the reason some had been "wandering the country" for some time. Among them was John Farrington who had been in the "King's Sea Service" for seven years. When apprehended in December, 1764 at Cirencester, he stated that he was discharged in 1761 and that he had been "wandering from home" for nearly a year seeking work. He had been apprenticed by Indenture nearly fifteen years previously at Farrington in Lancashire and was sent back there.

Whether this parish would welcome him or not is a debatable point. Some parishes, apparently, were having difficulty in supporting the poor they already had. Richard Motley was apprehended at Chipping Campden on November 30th, 1764. His settlement was at Randwick where he had a wife and three children but he had been refused relief there as the "Hamlet was burthened with a number of poor which it is unable to support." However, he was sent back there.

A man could easily find himself classed as a vagrant as a result of financial failure or ill-health. For example George Richards, described as "elderly", had farmed his own estate but had got into debt and taken "to strolling the country." Benjamin Warren, aged 53, who had worked at Flaxdressing in Gloucester for some time said "That having a bad Cold and a very bad Asthma and Shortness of Breath and being unable to work any longer he was obliged to begg and asked for and Received Relief in this City." Thomas Davis "hath been driving Cattle into Kent and by reason of illness he hath been detained Six or Seven Weeks in the Road and is reduced by that means to ask for Charity for a Subsistence."

Two more points of interest are perhaps worth mentioning.

Out of the 140 vagrants who made statements 13 men and 3 women were able to sign their names. They were drawn from a variety of trades. Two vagrants had been married in the Fleet, London. One was a Scotswoman whose husband deserted her at Tewkesbury, and the other was a Pinnaker who had his wife and twelve-day old baby with him.

The accompanying maps show the vagrants' places of settlement. Noting the distances some of them must have travelled, often in severe weather on poor roads, one is led to the conclusion that the private conscience must have been more active than the public conscience. They must have been helped along the way. How else could they have survived?

This statement found in the Depositions seems to bear out this view.

"This examinant being sworn saith that he does not know when he was born but has heard his Mother say that he was born in a pigstye in a village, that he never knew his Father nor where his Father or Mother were born, that his Mother us'd to travel the country with a Lottery and never had any settled place of Residence, that his Mother died about a Month ago at Bladen a Market Town about Six miles from Portsmouth where she had been but three Days before she died of a sore Throat & Fever and was buried the next Day by the Nurse who sold her Lottery and Trinketts & paid for the Funeral & what was due to herself with the money arising therefrom but gave him this examinant nothing.... (He) further saith that his late Mother died at the Sign of the Magpye in Bladen.. & that the next Day he.. apply'd to the Parish Officer of Bladen for relief who advis'd him to go out of the Town into the Country & told him that he could there better get employment amongst the Farmers, that he afterwards went to Wantage Fair & supported himself by the way by standing at People's Doors without begging & that when He was ask'd what he did there he answered that he was in Distress & so was reliev'd, that at Length on the 24th of October last He came to Stow on the Wold..... alone & has been there ever since, that he has been taken in by Susan Fletcher to lodge in her House for nothing ever since Fryday & that before that Thos. Merriner a Farmer of Stow let him lodge on Night Just after the Fair which was on the 24th of October aforesd. in his Tallet & that the Bellman's son let him lodge one night since that in his Tallet & that the Ostler at the White Hart in Stow gave the sd examinant Leeve to lie one Night in the Tallet there for clening the Horses & that he had a supper given Him in the Kitchin at

the White Hart by some Woman either the Mistress or the Maid & that he also lay one Night at the Unicorn at Stow by Leeve of the Ostler there. And also that the Mistress of the Greet Inn gave him money to procure Lodgings & that the Day before Yesterday when he came to Adlestrop to complain to a Magistrate for Want of Relief He had a penny given him by a Servant there, & that Yesterday He had Victuals sent him by a Butcher's wife at Stow to the sd Susan Fletcher's House. And... (he) saith that he does not know that He has any place of Settlement & has no Home but lives by Wandering about & further saith that he is about twelve years of age."

One wonders what became of this boy, James Aires. He must have possessed considerable intelligence and a certain amount of charm or else he was particularly fortunate in his acquaintances. Whichever it was, I believe that many of the vagrants I have mentioned must have received this kind of help along the way. Richard Sugar, the ten-year old boy from Shropshire, had travelled a long way before reaching Gloucester. We do not know how long it took him to make the journey, but we do know that he lived in Gloucester for six months before being apprehended. It is possible that he supported himself by stealing but one imagines that if this had been so, he would not have remained undetected for so long.

It would be naive to suppose that all the vagrants mentioned in these documents were, truly, the victims of cruel circumstance. Possibly there were some who found it "a not unprofitable trade." But, even allowing for this, the fact that most of them were women leads me to believe that the inflexible settlement laws and their rigid application caused much of the hardship which led to vagrancy.

These two studies were made independently but one seems to confirm the findings of the other.

ANALYSIS OF VAGRANTS' PASSES 1746 - 53

	<u>ALONE</u>	<u>WITH CHILDREN</u>	<u>CHILDREN AGED</u>	<u>NO. OF CHILDREN</u>
Married Couples	3	4	12 days to 10 yrs.	9 (5/2/1/1)
Men	10			
Women	12	17	2 mths to 9 yrs.	27
Boys	1			

CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN VAGRANTS 1746 - 53

	<u>ALONE</u>	<u>WITH CHILDREN</u>	<u>CHILDREN AGED</u>	<u>NO. OF CHILDREN</u>
Soldiers' widows		3	2 mths upwards	4 (1/1/2)
Other widows	2	1		1
Soldiers' wives	3	4	2 yrs to 7 yrs	6 (1/1/1/3)
Ex-soldiers' wives		2	9 mths to 5 yrs	4 (1/3)
Army deserters' wives		1	8 mths	1
Deserted by husbands	1	3	9 mths to 9 yrs	7 (3/2/2)
Others	6	3	2 yrs upwards	4 (1/1/2)

ANALYSIS OF VAGRANTS' PASSES 1764 - 5

	ALONE	WITH CHILDREN	CHILDREN AGED	NO. OF CHILDREN
Married Couples	7	8	6 wks to 18 yrs	13
Men	25	1		1
Women	30	20	2 yrs to 20 yrs	34
Boys	2	(aged 15 yrs and 16 yrs)		
Girls	2	(aged 10 yrs and 14 yrs)		

CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN VAGRANTS 1764 - 5

	ALONE	WITH CHILDREN	CHILDREN AGED	NO. OF CHILDREN
Soldiers' widows	2	2	8 mths to 10 yrs	3
Sailors' widows		1	2 yrs	1
Other widows	4	13	2 yrs to 20 yrs	23
Soldiers' wives	2	1		3
Deserted by husbands	4	2	3 yrs to 14 yrs	3
Others	18	1	3 yrs	1

VAGRANTS' TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS 1746 - 53

Silk-Weaver's widow	Ex-soldiers (2)
Sail-cloth Weaver's widow	Pin-makers (2)
Ostler's widow	Glover
Soldiers' widows (3)	Seafarer.
Soldiers' wives (6)	Waterman
Ex-soldiers' wives (2)	Whitesmith
Deserter's wife	Flaxdresser
Trowman's wife	Bucklemaker's apprentice
Woolcomber's wife	Metal-Button maker
Lirner's wife	Taylor
Skinner's wife	
Coalminer's wife	Others (10)
Leadminer's wife	
Shoemaker's wife	

1764-5

Chimney Sweep's wife	Ex-soldiers (2)
Mercer's daughter	Ex-marine
Labourers' wives (2)	Ex-seaman (5)
Soldiers' widows (4)	Labourer
Sailor's widow	Cattle drover
Joyner & Carpenter's widow	Fiddler (aged 15)
Soldiers' wives (3)	Farmer
Servants (2)	Hatter
Ex-prisoner	Seller of Books, Ballads, etc.
Widows (16)	Brass Foundor
Singlewoman (7)	Servant
Seller of Laces & Song Books	Gardener
	Bucklenodor & Pedlar.

Others (37)

VAGRANCY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE (1730 - 1834)

PART I

SOURCES

- Primary: -
1. County Treasurers Accounts (Q/FAC 1-5) and Summary of Q.S. Orders. (Glos. Records Office)
 2. Gloucester Journals. (Gloucester City Library)
- Secondary:
1. English Poor Law History by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.
 2. A History of Vagrants and Vagrancy by C. J. Ribton-Turner (Chapman & Hall, London 1887)
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PART 2

SOURCES

1. Vagrants Passes and Duplicate Examinations 1746 - 53 and 1764 - 5. (Q/RV 1 & 2) (Glos. Records Office)
2. Depositions 1766 (Q/SD 1) (Glos. Records Office)