

The state of Gloucestershire tenant farmers and their labourers in the Victorian years up to 1872

by Michael Martin

The repeal of the Corn Law in 1846 was a significant event in Gloucestershire, on a level perhaps with the introduction of the New Poor Law and its workhouses after 1835.¹ This Act had, for some decades, protected the local farming community from the expanding foreign corn trade.

However the repeal may not always have succeeded in bringing cheap bread even to the distressed mill workers in the Stroud Valleys; and for the tenant farmer and his labourer it dealt a severe blow which lasted several decades. The annual wheat harvests in the county, mainly grown on the thin, exposed soils of the North Cotswolds, were frequently poor and inferior during the period 1838-1872 and beyond. Weather damage was also frequently accompanied by uncontrollable crop disease, a blight which savaged the all important potato crop² as well as barley, roots and fruit crops. The consequent frequency of deficient and poor harvests in Gloucestershire is shown in annual harvest records. (see appendix)

The Vale pasture farmers were sometimes as hard hit as those in the hill country of the Cotswolds by these conditions, made worse by the appearance of uncontrollable foot and mouth infection in the county. In 1851 the agent to the Berkeleys (the largest Vale estate) observed that 'the value of stock was now down by 40 per cent and the labourers wage down in the same proportion'.³

Even good harvests frequently brought little advantage to the Victorian corn farmer. Thus, following the poor harvest of 1850, and the refusal of landlords to lower rents and unable to quit, due to rent arrears,⁴ the 'bountiful' harvest of 1851 brought no profit. The Winchcombe Agricultural Association recorded that this was due to a price 'depression' which affected the whole community particularly the local labourers⁵ who were not employed by the farmers and ended up in the workhouse.⁶ (For frequency of winter farming 'depressions' in the County see appendix)

Good harvests had further consequences as desperate farmers resorted to various tactics including enforcing the closure of Gloucester Docks in the winter of 1846-7. An angry Eastington baker wrote 'the farmers may withhold their wheat through the winter with impunity'.⁷ Following the 'abundant' harvest in 1854, local prices stayed at their 'highest since 1819', a pattern seen on a number of occasions over the years.⁸ It was also claimed that even if prices were allowed to fall 'the farmer suffers, but the labourer still gets no benefit – the price of bread remains the same, and in reality the prison inmate feels better than our honest labourer'.⁹ Local Poor Law Unions' correspondence with the Commission also indicate that lower prices failed frequently to make up for the farmers 'previous reduction in wages', which was the practice in such events.¹⁰

In 1841 the millworkers of Wotton-under-Edge petitioned the Queen for help to get affordable food.¹¹ The 1846 Act was intended to accomplish this but owing to the state of the local farmers it may not always have been an easy thing to achieve. The vast majority of the county's tenancies remained small to medium in 1854 and as late as 1893-4 the Commission Report criticised the poor state of cultivation of the smaller tenancies which remained significant in number, even in the Cotswold corn growing district.¹² (For statistics on farm size in the County see appendix)

The 1846 Act, however, damaged not only the livelihood of the local farmer and his labourer, but also dealt a further blow to relations between landlord and tenant. The mutual hostility over the decades following the Act, in the corn districts especially, had not been seen on this scale since the agricultural labourers' riots of 1830-1. That occasion had seen the setting up of a 'political union' at Stow, modelled on that at Birmingham, and some 400 farmers attended the meeting and 'raised no objection' to the proceedings. Landlords were attacked at a later Stow public meeting for their failure to pay poor rates on

part of their estates (reserves of larch and fir) and in 1844 a 'Protection Society' appeared in town to fight for the farmers.

A sign of the new times was the winding up of the Cirencester Agricultural Society following attacks by the wheat farmers on their landlords, which had led, in November 1847, to the break-up of the meeting by the latter.

Old fashioned 'paternalists' like the Rev. E Cripps had also taken the opportunity at these meetings to severely criticise the treatment of the labourers since 1836, under the New Poor Law regime. In a colourful consequence, their remarks at Cirencester were taken up by the *London Times* which had a record of pouncing on county workhouse and other scandals. With its Dickensian mission and Tory instincts it had been led, claimed the *Gloucester Journal* 'to excite odium' of a workhouse system controlled from Somerset House, London, being itself 'enamoured still of the Old Poor Law' of the 'fatherly' squire.¹³

Some of the more active gentry had however been giving valuable assistance to their parish labourers. In the wake of the 1830 riots paternalists like Colonel Kingscote, Lord Sherborne and D. Ricardo Esq., following in the footsteps of the Estcourts in the early 1800s, had staked out allotments in a number of parishes, and an agent of the Labourers Friend Society had addressed meetings at Uley, Stroud, Wotton-under-Edge and Cirencester all in one winter of depression, 1833-4.¹⁴

Following the repeal of the Corn Law relations, especially in the corn growing districts, were deteriorating. At one of the last Cirencester Agricultural Society meetings the intention had been to discuss the recent setting up, at Cirencester, of the County's first agricultural college with the aim of encouraging improved farming.¹⁵ Ironically, the event was overshadowed by the bitter speech of one of the leading tenant farmers, R. Beman, who was vice-chair of the Stow Union.¹⁶ He was now, without any disagreement, on six month's notice to quit, having put £10,000 into improvements on his land. These basic needs of security of tenure and improvement reimbursement remained unresolved for decades.

A similar sense of injustice and betrayal came out at all these local meetings in the mid century. In 1849 J. Kearsy noted his rent had stayed fixed for ten years but the rates had meanwhile increased by 250 per cent. The Church and Poor Rates were wholly paid by the tenant, 'the landlord MPs who deserted us have made no reduction in either rent or taxation', complained another speaker. The labourer also suffered, he added 'the poor rate imposed on his miserable cottage gave him an inducement to get into prison, where he's fed much better'.¹⁷

The ordinary Gloucestershire labourer's wage was indeed very low, even when compared with other Western counties. For family men the rate was 6s. per week (outside the ten weeks of summer) in the two corn districts of the North Cotswolds and 'Over Severn'. In three neighbouring South Western counties the worst districts recorded a wage of 6s 6d in the same years (1851-52).¹⁸ Judging by the local Poor Law Commission papers in 1857-58 the local rate remained low and even outside the 'worst localities', a large group of Vale parishes suggested a rate of 7s plus cider.¹⁹ In one of the Estcourt estate parishes over eighty per cent of a large group of heads of household (under sixty years of age) was on 5s to 6s and one in five heads had been without work for at least three weeks in February 1850. These casual wage rates can be compared with the minimum 'real' wage of 8s 1d per week needed to keep the smallest Gloucestershire labourer's family of two children as worked out by a Cheltenham newspaper in 1843.²⁰ A *Guardian* leader of twenty years later pointed out that labouring families were wholly dependent on the pitiful earnings of young children 'who ought to be at school'. The situation was made worse by some misleading Victorian wage surveys like that of F. Purdy in 1860.²¹ Recording one figure for whole counties based on the wage of senior men hired by the year they ignored the majority of casual labourers taken on by the week. This reality came out in 1872 when the local secretary of the new union wrote 'not one farmer in twenty employs his labourers when wet or winter'. A statement never challenged.²²

Though rarely commented on by the *Gloucester Journal*, it is clear that apart from low wages, labouring families were further devastated by this casuality of employment in the Victorian years. In a chance

remark at a meeting in June 1849 the Cirencester Union chairman described entering three villages where one hundred labourers had been unemployed over three winter months, a pattern repeated in the following year.²³ The insensitivity of the *Gloucester Journal* came out in a rare leader on the 'Evils of the Poor Law' when it was denounced as mainly about 'keeping the idle and criminals of the most worthless class'.²⁴

What is also clear from the above is that many farm labouring families were living below 'subsistence level' in the decades after 1836. Thus, under the 'fatherly squire' of the Old Poor Law, the Cirencester Union chairman reminded the farmers that the parish overseer had made up a family's income to a living wage of 1s 6d per head, an approach showing up in local parish vestry records. The condition of the ordinary labourer was now actually worsened by the introduction of a new poor law regime in 1846 which was meant to do a favour to embittered landowners as well as local manufacturers. So, as the law then stood, the cost of any poor relief needed for non-native labouring families (in place at least five years) was to be paid by the slum open parish into which they had gone, now 'irremovably' to live. Neither their native parish, nor the numerous surrounding close estate parishes where they often found work would contribute to this relief. Even the *Gloucester Journal* hit out at landlords refusing labourers back into their native close parish. "In public its [it is] 'protection' for the sake of the labourer, but in the parish its [it is] cottage demolition to get rid of them". Stow-on-the-Wold, one such open impoverished parish, let the public know that by 1850 its rate bill was 150 per cent above that under the Old Poor Law and 30 per cent of this arose from relief to irremovable non-native families. In a petition to Parliament, Stow claimed to have experienced the worst unemployment and destitution since the Cotswold labourers rising of 1830-31.²⁵ The 1851 census throws light on the town's plight: non-natives accounted for half of the male household heads recording their occupations as agricultural labourer in the parish of Stow as a whole, 62 out of 125, and 20 out of 46 in Upper Oddington, a neighbouring "open" parish. It is clear such evidence has to be set against any claims of labouring wage rises between the 1850s and 1870s.

Other traditional family work opportunities were also fading away by the 1840s. The farm servant had become a 'degraded class'. 'Gone are the old days when the servant sat at the master's table' lamented the *Gloucester Journal*,²⁶ and the scope for women's work had similarly diminished with even the ancient custom of harvest gleaning under serious threat (it was worth 10 per cent of a family's income). The Gloucestershire magistrates declared it a 'trespass', a view acted on from the 1820s by the new parish 'Select Vestries'.²⁷ By 1840 Gloucestershire farmers were often confining customs like 'gleaning' to senior labourers, and excluding the 'riff-raff' of the nearby open parish. As Henry Bubb, a local villager and Gloucester bridge keeper wrote in his 'Commonplace Book' in the 1840s, 'don't speak to me of women's work, it will make things worse'. Its loss was 'the Crying Evil of our day' said the *Gloucester Journal* in 1859.²⁸

Poor wages and insufficient food took their toll in frequent outbreaks of disease which were also linked to damp insanitary cottages. As the *Gloucester Journal* put it 'we have heard of typhus fever arising on the heels of famine'.²⁹ This deprivation was also reflected in evidence of rising infant, child and adult mortality rates from 1825 up to the late 1870s.³⁰

What a distinguished Gloucester surgeon and writer, H.W. Rumsey condemned as the 'Evil identity of medical provision with the relief of destitution' added to this distress.³¹ It meant many able bodied family men were only eligible for treatment at the Poor Law medical dispensary, while the link to this 'workhouse dispensary' increased the deep rooted prejudice against smallpox vaccinations (which was already hindered by 'Old Wise Women' carrying out 'secret inoculations').³²

Another important health loss after 1836 was the village 'poor rate', used by parish overseers under the Old Poor Law to keep up 'basics' like water pumps. Equally devastating was the selling up of the village owned cottages maintained, until 1836, by each parish for the use of its poor and sick.³³

In addition, under the new Union system, the cost of buildings like the much needed 'fever wards' to protect the workhouse residents fell, as the Cirencester Guardians complained, wholly on the hard pressed tenant occupiers with landlords contributing nothing to this vital outlay.³⁴

The state of health in the villages and small towns was also rarely mentioned in the Gloucester Journal leaders. Obsessed with conditions in Gloucester (boasting only a single street sewer in 1847)³⁵ the 'severely insanitary state of cottage housing' reported on by the Poor Law Unions in villages like Oddington and Naunton, and small towns like Bourton-on-the-Water were ignored³⁶. As one correspondent complained 'the ordinary fevers of our towns (and villages) excite little attention – but they attract contagious diseases which stay prevalent'. As late as the 1894 Royal Commission Report cottage housing inspected in Cirencester Union was recorded as 'much inferior to other districts outside Gloucestershire with many 'totally unfit for habitation'.³⁷

The condition of Cirencester offers one example of this neglect, and the admitted failure of earlier initiatives like the 'local boards of health' set up in small towns like Stow in the 1830s.³⁸ In 1894 Commissioner R.C. Richards found 'gross overcrowding' in the 'Old Town' with 186 families occupying 54 houses; despite a decline in population below that of 1841.³⁹ The infant mortality rate is an index of these conditions and that recorded for 78 labouring and 50 trading families in Cricklade Street (301 infants 0-11 months baptised over the years 1837-60) came out at 159.5 per 1000. The figures for all labouring families in the whole town baptising infants in the single decade 1860-70 (533 infants 0-11 months) came out at 150.1 per 1000.⁴⁰ This can be set against the infant mortality rate for the whole country (excluding all towns of over 10,000) in the decade 1851-61 of 137.7 per 1000 for infants.⁴¹

Following the loss of staple industries, such information suggests that the conditions in this small Cotswold town were not much better, in these Victorian decades, than in the cities. Similarly, Gloucester itself, in a visitation of smallpox of 1892-93 recorded the highest number of unvaccinated cases (768) and deaths (314) in the country (higher than London).⁴²

Between the 1850s and 1871 the county's farm labourer's weekly wage rose to between 8s and 10s helped by migration and emigration.⁴³ However root problems remained unresolved so that at a labourers' meeting in 1871, just over the border in Herefordshire, the first of three cases mentioned a family man on 11s per week who paid out 6s a week on bread alone.⁴⁴ Similarly, an 1872 newspaper report (in the Estcourt Estate archive) went even further: 'twelve shillings per week was not sufficient to support even a moderate sized family'⁴⁵ it stated. In the severe winter of 1871-72 even the *Gloucester Journal* broke its silence, 'the poorer labourers are getting short of work' it noted.⁴⁶ This casualty of employment, and failure to find work in the winter months remained a fact of life at the time of the 1894 Commission.⁴⁷ The farmers were also struggling as disappointing corn harvests and severe winters went on hitting Gloucestershire in, for example, the years 1860-61 and 1869-72.⁴⁸ Foot and mouth spread rapidly across the county in 1869-70⁴⁹ and was said to have ruined the Stow and Chipping Norton autumn fair in the following year.⁵⁰ As already observed, basic tenant needs also remained unsecured until later in the century⁵¹ and land use reflected farmers' problems. Local tenants had been threatening to abandon both wheat and potato cultivation from the early 1850s,⁵² and by 1894 the acreage under wheat had noticeably declined in the North Cotswolds. Complaints also about the land being in a poor state of cultivation in this district in the 1870s anticipated the remarks of the 1894 Commission.⁵³ In the meantime, the state of both farmer and labourer continued, in the decades after 1846, to be determined by devastatingly uncertain wheat harvests responsible for sharp winter price surges like that of 1870-71, and 'depressions' like that following both wheat and potato crop failure in the summer of 1872.⁵⁴

The bottom line was a willingness to sacrifice the interests of both Gloucestershire farmers and labourers in order to assist the manufacturers like those in the distressed clothing and Forest districts. With only half the number of males over 20 years of age working on the land as in neighbouring counties like Wiltshire and Herefordshire by 1860 (15 per cent compared with 30 and 33 per cent), the *Gloucester Journal* was a willing mouthpiece for this new political climate of the Victorian era.⁵⁵

APPENDIX

The underlying factors influencing the state of Gloucestershire tenant farmers and their labourers in the Victorian decades

1a The continuing predominance of small to medium low capital farms even in the North Cotswolds (which had undergone substantial enclosure by Private Act post 1730)

Investigation year 1875

Total holdings		74% of occupiers with average of 9 acres
Holdings over 50 acres	50-100 acres	33% of occupiers with average size of 71 acres
	50-500 acres	93.6% of occupiers with average size of 150 acres

(See J P Dodd Gloucestershire Agricultural 1801-1854, *BGAS Transactions XCVII*, 1979, pp101-16. Evidence of Select Committee of 1882)

1b High Farming in Gloucestershire

New, innovative turnip and clover rotations came to the “Hill Country” in the late 18th century. Further significant advances were seen on the land of large “Hill” farmers in the 19th century, notably the use of machinery, new purchased fertilisers, and intensive feeding. The reward was a doubling of wheat yields, and halving of the time needed for the market fattening of stock.

However, as both Dodd and Miller make clear these wealthy County improvers were wholly untypical of the vast majority of Gloucestershire farmers who remained small, low capital tenants. It says something that even the local prize winning farmer (J Bravendar of Cirencester) had been unable to afford to drain over two thirds of his land in need of it. Another wealthy tenant (R Beman of Broadwell) had been hit like many others by a short insecure tenancy and lack of compensation right for his £10,000 investment (see above).

The reality was that the typical Gloucestershire farmer struggled to survive. In addition to the above, he was hit by a doubling of rates (in various forms) and sharply rising rents between 1815 and 1850. To cap it all he faced frequent harvest failure and winter market depression (see below).

2 The state of Gloucestershire annual harvests (evidence taken from reports in Gloucester Journal)

- (a) In the years 1840-1872 some 14 of 33 corn harvests were poor and deficient (frequently seriously deficient) taking the county as a whole.
- (b) Some 19 of these 33 years also saw winter depression in farming trade in Gloucestershire (which not infrequently extended into the early summer) following both a failed harvest like those of 1860 and 1867, or even in some years a good harvest which set off a price collapse as in 1851 and 1857 (for the latter see *Gloucester Journal* 17.4.1852, and 30.1.1858).
- (c) In addition, 4 of the 20 years 1850-1869 saw farming depressions descend on the Vale (predominantly pasture) due largely to the decimation of animal stocks by uncontrollable foot and mouth, sheep rot and pneumonia (this reflected failure to carry out expensive draining of Vale grasslands, though a common feature of the “High” farming programme)

References

¹ For a very perceptive study of the workings of the New Poor Law see E A Christmas *The administration of the Poor Law in some Gloucestershire Unions 1815-47* MLitt thesis, Bristol (1973)

² The county’s potato crop failure in 1860-61 was described as the worst since 1847, and cultivation by then was “often restricted to the Gloucestershire farmers’ own needs.” See *Gloucester Journal* 2 January 1858; 1Dec 1860. The cost of bread in the “worst” years was “alone double family earnings” admitted the Journal, *Ibid* 18 December 1846

³ *Ibid*, 1 June 1851, 7 June 1851

⁴ *Ibid*, 21 June 1851

⁵ *Ibid*, 7 April 1852

⁶ *Ibid*, 11 May 1850

- ⁷ See *Gloucester Journal* 6 February 1847, 7 October 1854. Even before the Act farmers were “preventing liberation while price of wheat still moderate” *Ibid*, 30 August 1943
- ⁸ *Ibid*, 6 February 1847, 13 March 1849, 7 October 1854, 6 October 1855, 13 January 1856; example of volatile local wheat price, 1852-54: winter 1852-53 market price “depression”; 1853 harvest “poor”; 1854 very abundant; winter 1854-55 price at highest since 1819 (due to “forestalling” and holding back by farmers).
- ⁹ *Ibid*, 6 October 1849, also 20 October 1849
- ¹⁰ Gloucestershire Archives (GA) Poor Law Commission papers ref D149, X35, dated 25 January 1858
- ¹¹ Petition to Queen, *Ibid*, 18 September 1841
- ¹² For the continuing significance of small to medium tenancies in 1854, (even in the North Cotswolds) see J P Dodd, Gloucestershire Agriculture 1801-1854, *Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* XCII, 1979 pp.100-3. Also Royal Commission on Labour: the Agricultural Labourer Report of R C Richards on Union of Cirencester, vol 1^a pp.53-56 [BPP 1894, vol XXXVI, 49 Pt V]
- ¹³ For the Stow-on-the-Wold “political union” see *Gloucester Journal* 3 April 1830, 4 December 1830. For the later meeting *Ibid* 4 April 1840. First intervention see *London Times* 13 December 1837, also Christmas *op cit* p.255. For report, without comment on ‘scandals’ like “starvation diet” at Cirencester and regime of disease and death at Westbury, nicknamed “the pest house” see *Gloucester Journal* 16 December 1843, 14 December 1844, 13 May 1848. Later “scandals” reported in GA G C1 89/7 p.58, and *Gloucester Journal* 11 March 1870. For examples of angry tenant farmers’ speeches *Gloucester Journal* 2 December 1845, 17 February 1849. For speeches of Mr Bowley and Rev E Cripps, both of local gentry families see: *Gloucester Journal* 8 December 1849 and earlier criticisms 31 March 1849, 11 June 1849. The Hill Farmers’ Society was merged with that of Gloucester see: *Ibid*, 25 December 1847, 1 October 1855. Reference to *London Times Ibid*, 26 December 1842. For parish help to the poor and labourer by gentry in winter 1833-34 see *Gloucester Journal* 19 October 1833, 26 October 1833, 2 November 1833, and 21 December 1833. Society at Stow to fight loss of “Protection” for corn *Gloucester Journal* 9 March 1844
- ¹⁴ *Gloucester Journal* 11 January 1847
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, 2 November 1848
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, 11 June 1849
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, D Mathews, another leading tenant, 11 June 1849
- ¹⁸ *Gloucester Journal* 18 October 1851, quoting survey reported in *Morning Chronicle*; five years earlier when defending the 1846 Act the Journal did also mention families of 6-8 persons in the locality getting 6-7 shillings, and on bread only. *Ibid*, 28 December 1846
- ¹⁹ Local Poor Law Commission Papers GA D149 X35 (25 January 1858). See also estate parish survey Gloucestershire Estcourt archive, *Ibid*, D1571; E24 and D149 X35. This parish lay over the Gloucestershire Wiltshire border but Purdy’s wage rate (1860) was the same for both counties (see below). ‘Policy’ of wage reduction in low price years preceded loss of ‘Protection’ see *Gloucester Journal* 7 December 1844
- ²⁰ For minimum real wage of small family with large garden, see figures of *Cheltenham Examiner* quoted *Gloucester Journal* 23 December 1843. Food and fuel above cost 6s 7d per week and rent a further 1s.
- ²¹ F Purdy, *Journal of Statistical Society* (1860) p34; GA D1571 X96. Records 9s Glos and 8s Wilts in 1837, and 9.5, 9.6 shillings in 1860 (C Miller also found such reports “too all embracing and misleading” in some instances. See her *Farming, farm work and farm labour in Victorian Gloucestershire* PhD thesis Bristol (1980) pp.137-38, 157-8, 160-79. An earlier survey by J Caird (1850-51) recorded 6 to 7 shillings for North Cotswolds and 7 to 8 shillings for the Vale, see Miller *Ibid*, p.138. For comments on the situation in 1872 see leader from *Guardian*, 21 August 1872, in Estcourt Collection, GA, D1571 X165
- ²² Local secretary of Union, to Sotherton Estcourt D1571 X165, 25 September 1872. See also the account by N Scotland *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire 1872-1950* (1991) pp.14-26
- ²³ *Gloucester Journal* 16 June 1849; also Estcourt Collection *op cit*; D149 X35 and Royal Commission Report, 1894; *op cit* p53
- ²⁴ *Gloucester Journal* 14 April 1849
- ²⁵ The anger forced unions to begin taking over part of non-native family “relief” from individual parishes [under 2nd new Act 1848]. For Petition to Commons by Stow *Gloucester Journal* 7 June 1849. For the town’s statement on rates and “irremovable” non-native families. *Ibid* 7 April 1849; 13 April 1850. For condemnation of landlords’ destruction of cottage housing *Ibid* 8 December 1849, 2 February 1850. For basic need of 1s 6d per head *Ibid* 16 December 1843. Example Toddenham’s Select Vestry policy (pre 1836) GA, P336 VE2/1
- ²⁶ *Gloucester Journal* 23 September 1843
- ²⁷ For chief magistrates ruling *Ibid* 19 August 1818, also 31 August 1819. For value of gleaning in Gloucestershire parish: P King “Customary rights and women’s earnings: the importance of gleaning to the rural labouring poor 1750-1879” *Econ Hist Rev* XXIV (1991) pp.463, 473
- ²⁸ Commonplace Book GA D4264 p185 *Gloucester Journal* 19 February 1859
- ²⁹ *Ibid* 18 December 1846
- ³⁰ Stow and three other North Cotswold (corn district) ‘open’ parishes were shown to have all seen similar dramatic rises in infant and child mortality rates between 1838-44 and 1845-54 (and also 1845-70). See family reconstruction exercises M Martin “Mortality patterns and labouring living standards in Gloucestershire 1760-1879” typescript, Gloucestershire Archives (appendix IX)
- ³¹ *Gloucester Journal* 21 August 1847
- ³² *Ibid*, 24 June 1845. The 1834 Commission unbelievably wanted even medical “relief” on the poor rates to the able bodied labourer wound up and replaced by payments to ‘sick clubs’ which many labourers in the poorer districts could certainly not afford. See 2nd Annual Report Poor Law Commission (1836) pp.25,217

³³ Toddenham parish sold 13 cottages (seven on the 'waste') in 1838 alone, see GA P336 VE21; (14 June 1838). For selling off stocks by number of other parishes see Stow Guardians Minutes G/STO 8^a/2 p188. For loss of parish overseers rate money see Christmas *op cit* (1973) p.256 and *Ibid*, "The Poor at Stow in 1836" *Gloucestershire Historical Studies B Smith* (ed) III, (1969) pp.65, 71, 78

³⁴ See GA Guardians Minutes, G/CI 8^a/7 p65, 5 July 1850

³⁵ *Gloucester Journal* 9 January 1847

³⁶ See evidence of Stow Union medical reports. For example Guardians Minutes G/STO/8^a/9 p119; 8^a/10 p.237; 8^a/12 pp.126, 272, 325

³⁷ See comment *Gloucester Journal* 13 June 1846. For Cirencester Union in 1894 see Summary Report of R C Richards (1894) Cirencester & Monmouth Unions, vol i^a pp.53-58. Royal Commission on Labour: *op cit*

³⁸ For "total failure" of Local Boards of Health, *Gloucester Journal* 12 February 1848. The first meeting of Cirencester Improvement Commissioners as a specific Sanitary Authority was recorded in 1872 *Ibid* 7 Sep 1872 (following its worst mortality crisis years since 1830)

³⁹ Royal Commission 1893-94 *op cit* pp.53-58

⁴⁰ Based on family reconstitution exercises by the present writer: see typescript deposited Gloucestershire Archives *op cit*. As early as 1839 it was observed of Cirencester that "the line of demarcation between rich and poor is more clearly drawn than in many places." *Gloucester Journal* 15 June 1839. The Union sent strong letters of protest at the state of the town to the Commissioners in 1851 (G/CI 8^a/7 p.142). Recording also a very high rate of burial for children aged one to nine years – it suggested that four in ten children died under 10 years in Cirencester in these years, amongst labouring families at least

⁴¹ See N Williams & C Galley 'Urban-rural differentials in infant mortality in Victorian England' *Population Studies* 49, 3 (1995) pp.407-11

⁴² See P Razzell *The Conquest of Smallpox* (1977) p.133

⁴³ See N Scotland *op cit* p.41 note 23, quoting Yeats, the local union secretary (for the Stroud area). It is very unlikely that rates in the poor corn districts were higher than in this district

⁴⁴ See *Gloucester Journal* 22 April 1871

⁴⁵ GA D1571 X165. Leader in *Guardian* newspaper 21 August 1872

⁴⁶ *Gloucester Journal* 9 December 1871

⁴⁷ See Royal Commission Report (1894) *op cit* pp.53-55

⁴⁸ See for example *Ibid* 18 March 1871

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 19 February 1870. Ruined both animal stocks (and milk supply, see *Ibid* 27 August 1859)

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 11 September 1871

⁵¹ See report of farmers' continuing grievances (North Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce) *Ibid*, 23 November 1872

⁵² *Ibid*, 18 October 1851

⁵³ *Ibid*, 9 December 1871

⁵⁴ See *Ibid*, 15 April 1871, 7 September 1872, 7 December 1872

⁵⁵ See F Purdy "The earnings of agricultural labourers" (1860) *op cit* p.34