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**BA (Hons) History
The Open University**

**A329: The Making of Welsh History
Dissertation 2019**

**The Welsh were
'extremely resistant to an English imposition'.
How distinctive was pauper provision in Anglesey
and its implementation of
1834 Poor Law Amendment Act?**

Martine Chandler

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**The Welsh were ‘extremely resistant to an English imposition’.¹
How distinctive was pauper provision in Anglesey
and its implementation of
1834 Poor Law Amendment Act?**

‘I may observe that, as a general rule, the Poor Law is much less carefully administered in Wales than it is in England’.²

Andrew Doyle 1867

Poor Law Inspector, Andrew Doyle,³ writing in 1867, acknowledged thirty three years after ratification of the Poor Law Amendment Act,⁴ (hereafter PLAA), that the Welsh continued to resist full implementation of the central government reform. Prior to 1834 pauper provision was parochial, parish based, funded locally through property rates, intended as short term support during periods of under-employment. A Royal Commission reported to the Whig government early 1834;⁵ authors, Edwin Chadwick and Nassau Senior assessed the existing poor relief and identified its flaw, it relieved poverty not absolute destitution.⁶ This, it could be argued, set the overwhelmingly punitive tone of the PLAA, and alongside ‘historic antipathy to central government’, the scene was set for Welsh resistance.⁷

Working-class resistance to the PLAA was an aspect of the social unrest during the decade after 1834, delineated as one of ‘the most troubled in the history of Wales’.⁸ The Rebecca Riots in south west Wales reflected the fears and interests of rural farmers; increased toll gate fees, rents, rates and tithes, and the threat of the workhouse, jeopardised living standards. 1836-1842 the Chartist Movement opposed the injustice of the PLAA and became the conduit for discontent within industrial communities throughout Britain, although the most serious

¹ Stephen King, (2018) ‘The Poor Laws’, *In Our Time* podcast, BBC Radio 4.

² Andrew Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS. REPORT of Andrew Doyle, Esq.. Poor Law Inspector, (1867)*, pp. 1-6, *House of Commons Papers*, ProQuest U.K. Parliamentary Papers (2019) Available at: <https://parlipapers-proquest-com> Accessed: 18 March 2019.

³ Muriel E. Chamberlain ‘Doyle, Andrew (1809-1888)’, (2008), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2019). Available at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/> Accessed: 09 April 2019.

⁴ Anon., *An Act for the Amendment and better Administration of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales. [14th August 1834]* Available at: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/1834act.shtml>, Accessed: 27 March 2019.

⁵ Atkinson et al., *Report from His Majesty’s Commissioners for the Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws*, 21 February 1834 Available at: <https://parlipapers-proquest-com> Accessed: 10 April 2019.

⁶ Anne Digby, *The Poor Law in Nineteenth-century England and Wales*, (London, 1982) p. 11.

⁷ Megan Evans and Peter Jones, ‘A Stubborn, Intractable Body’: Resistance to the Workhouse in Wales, 1834-1877 in *Family and Community History*, 17/2 (2014) p. 103.

⁸ John Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London, 2007) p.358.

uprisings were in Wales.⁹ Incidents included an organised attack on Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, William Day, at Llanfair,¹⁰ a consequence of rescinding payments of pauper rents from the poor rates during 1837,¹¹ attempted arson at Narberth workhouse in 1839,¹² and an attack on the Carmarthen workhouse in 1843.¹³ Whilst there are signs of acquiescence as social unrest subsided, the Welsh nevertheless upheld administrative and ideological resistance to the PLAA, and continued to frustrate central government attempts to standardise poor relief. Although the PLAA was not greeted with violent protest in Anglesey, fundamentally nothing changed. The following chapters discuss the island's distinctive pauper provision, positioning factors that contributed to central administration's failure to prevent the system of out-door relief alongside the quiet rejection of the main tenet of the PLAA, the workhouse.

An extensive library of national and local Poor Law studies has accumulated and addresses many of its facets and intricacies. A.H. Dodd, writing in 1926 Wales whilst still under the administration of the PLAA, considered the act as one of the 'first-fruits of ... (the) era of 'scientific legislation'¹⁴ which attempted to overturn the 'diversities of practice in British law and administration'.¹⁵ Such diversities during the final years of the Old Poor Law, which Anne Digby examines through a socio-economic approach, meant that in some cases parishes and unions 'approximated to a welfare state in miniature'¹⁶ with expenditure requiring an increase in poor rates between 1802 and 1833 of 62%.¹⁷ Contemporary assessment of the increased rates was attributed to 'over generous welfare payments' which Digby refutes stating that it was 'economic depression (that) made the burden appear intolerable'.¹⁸ Digby's

⁹ An overview of Rebecca Riots and Chartists: Davies, *A History of Wales*, pp. 367-71.

¹⁰ A full report of the incident: Anon., 'Serious Outrage and Opposition to the Poor Law Amendment Act, at Llanfair, Montgomeryshire – the Military called out' in *The North Wales Chronicle and General Advertiser*, issue 513, 2 May 1837, p.1. Available at: <https://newspapers.library.wales> Accessed: 9 April 2019.

¹¹ Anthony Brundage, *The Making of the New Poor Law 1832-39*, (London 1978) p. 148.

¹² Chartist condemnation, in Anon., 'Movements in the Country' in *Charter*, 24 February 1839, issue 5, p. 68. Available at: *Gale Primary Sources*, <http://go.galegroup.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/ps/start.do?p=GDCS&u=tou> Accessed 9 April 2019.

¹³ A letter dated 19 June 1843 signed by 'Rebecca' states 'if you will not come out, with the Poor under your care... we are determined to destroy the whole' in Anon., 'The Riots at Carmarthen and the State of South Wales' in *The Times*, 24 June 1843, p. 7. Available at: *Gale Primary Sources*, <http://go.galegroup.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/ps/start.do?p=GDCS&u=tou> Accessed 9 April 2019

¹⁴ A. H. Dodd, 'The Old Poor Law in North Wales' in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* (1900-1999) 7th Series vol. 6 (1926), p.111.

¹⁵ Dodd, 'The Old Poor Law in North Wales', p.111.

¹⁶ Digby, *The Poor Law*, p. 8.

¹⁷ Digby, *The Poor Law*. p. 9.

¹⁸ Anne Digby, *British Welfare Policy, Workhouse to Workfare* (London 1989) p. 30.

contribution to Poor Law historiography is significant in terms of identifying areas for further investigation, in particular her approach in *Pauper Palaces* and research on Norfolk. Digby's 'pioneering approach' rejects the perceived assessment of the administrative function of the PLAA in favour of analysis of the political, social and economic context of nineteenth century Britain.¹⁹ Dot Jones' study of pauperism in Aberystwyth is a noteworthy contribution to local Welsh studies and in particular the extent to which the central administration limited the abilities of Welsh resistance.²⁰ Recent contributions to Poor Law historiography have attempted to shed light upon how the PLAA functioned in Wales. A paucity of Welsh focused studies created a 'for Wales see England' approach which failed to provide a sufficiently nuanced understanding of the PLAA. Challenges in terms of language, culture and geography are now being addressed and Wales is starting to receive the attention it deserves. John Davies²¹ (1994), Gareth Elwyn Jones²² (1994), Geraint Jenkins²³ (2007) and Philip Jenkins (2014)²⁴ place the implementation of the PLAA into a broad Welsh context. Historical journals such as *Rural History* and *Family & Community History* have published articles which contribute significantly to the Welsh centred historiography. Croll's assessment of Welsh distinctiveness is placed in the context of central government's 1870s initiative 'crusade against out-relief' asserting the Principality as different,²⁵ summarising the Welsh welfare provision historiography as 'remarkably thin' and unsophisticated'.²⁶ Whilst Evans and Jones provide a systematic study of Welsh resistance 'founded upon a long-standing and coherent antipathy to the punitive nature of the workhouse as an institution'.²⁷ Stewart and King provide a detailed historiographical review noting a lack of archival research in 'an empirical sense'²⁸ and asserts that 'more local work is needed to put flesh on [...] speculative bones'.²⁹ This paper therefore will attempt to contribute in a worthwhile way to these studies. This research will place a study of rural poor law provision alongside central government

¹⁹ Anne Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, (London, 1978) p. inside front dust jacket.

²⁰ Dot Jones, 'Pauperism in the Aberystwyth Poor Law Union 1870-1914' in *Ceredigion: Journal of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society*, vol 9 no1-4, (1983) pp.78-101.

²¹ Davies, *A History of Wales*, (London, 1994).

²² Gareth Elwyn Jones, *Modern Wales, A Concise History*, (Cambridge, 1994).

²³ Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, (Cambridge, 2007).

²⁴ Philip Jenkins, *History of Modern Wales 1536-1990*, (London, 2014).

²⁵ Croll, Andy, 'Reconciled gradually to the system of indoor relief': the poor law in Wales during the 'crusade against out-relief', c. 1870 – c. 1890' in *Family & Community History*, 20/2 (2017) p. 121.

²⁶ Croll, 'Reconciled gradually to the system of indoor relief', p.122.

²⁷ Evans and Jones, 'A Stubborn, Intractable Body' p. 101.

²⁸ John Stewart and Steve King, 'Death in Llantrisant: Henry Williams and the New Poor Law in Wales' in *Rural History*, 15 (2004), p. 69.

²⁹ Stewart and King, 'Death in Llantrisant', p.71.

legislation, to identify the extent to which pauper provision and implementation of poor law reform was distinctive in a remote Welsh society.

Analysis of the socio-economic context, alongside fundamental influencing factors, will reveal the singularity of Welsh rural society and pauper provision in Anglesey. Furthermore, the analysis will determine that the significant delay in workhouse provision and refusal to abolish out-door relief, ensured pauper provision and implementation of the PLAA was distinctive.

For the purposes of this analysis Holyhead is presented as a case study, a developing commercial centre blighted with poverty and deprivation, and yet sustained prolonged and successful resistance to the PLAA. The scope of this study comprises social and religious influences as well as geographical and economic factors, and evaluates the significance of each in relation to administration of pauper provision and resistance to the PLAA. Temporal boundaries are twofold, specifically 1830s-1840s and 1860s, timeframes considered significant in terms of pauper provision in nineteenth century Anglesey. 1830-1840s, prior to and immediately after ratification of the PLAA, whilst 1860s provide invaluable insight into the events that culminated in Holyhead Union's, albeit reluctant, implementation of the PLAA.

A broad range of primary and secondary sources have been incorporated into this study to provide an original and substantiated analysis of pauper provision and resistance in Anglesey. An extensive collection of government reports provide the foundation, the official records, of nineteenth century poor law provision. Newspapers provide accounts and contemporary opinions both nationally and locally. Trade directories and census data identify commercial and social developments. It is acknowledged that language is a limiting factor, sources will be necessarily restricted to those written in English and exclude those of the language spoken by the majority of the people of nineteenth century Anglesey.

The framework of this study is thematic and presented in the following chapters, 'Poverty and Pauper Provision in Nineteenth Century Anglesey' an analysis of the socio-economic factors of pauperism. 'Power and Influence. Local and National Interests Collide' an argument that analyses the influence of local and national interests. 'For Better for Worse. Doing Things Differently in Anglesey' an argument that analyses the extent of resistance to the PLAA, and the widely reported medical scandal, that brought about change to poor relief provision in Anglesey.

Chapter Two

Poverty and Pauper Provision in Nineteenth Century Anglesey

Anglesey 'bore that rugged and ill cultivated aspect which rises from poverty [...] the few houses which appeared matched the wretchedness of their tenants'

Henry Skrine 1790s³⁰

Gerald of Wales, in comparison, considered Anglesey to be 'rough and unattractive' and yet 'the richness of its soil' and 'its abundant produce' *Mon mam Cymru* supplied 'all Wales'.³¹ It is with these contrasting accounts in mind, an analysis of the socio-economic context, alongside contemporary theories and government assessments, will attempt to unravel the complexities of poverty and pauper provision in nineteenth century Anglesey. Factors will be identified within rural agricultural and industrial areas and also the harbour town of Holyhead; a thriving commercial centre, gateway to Ireland, and yet poverty and deprivation pervaded. An island of contrasts as Henry Skrine and Gerald of Wales witnessed.

Anglesey was predominantly agrarian, tenant farmers holding under fifty acres managed the land, although there were larger farms based on medieval settlement patterns.³² Malthus wrote in his *Principles of political economy*, the 'land does not produce one commodity alone, but in addition to that most indispensable of all articles, food, it produces the materials for clothing, lodging, and firing',³³ epitomised by 35,000 sheep and 9,850 cattle traded through Llanfair Pyllgwngyll.³⁴ Despite periods of good trading, and benefits to landowners from inclosure of common land, economic depression and extreme hardship was widely experienced. Agricultural labourers' wages were at barely subsistence levels, often dependent upon demeaning, seasonal, roadside recruitment when each sold their labour to the highest bidder.³⁵ Copper mining provided alternative employment. Almwich was a

³⁰ Henry Skrine [1798] in David W Moore, *The Other British Isles, A History of Shetland, Orkney, the Hebrides, Isle of Man, Anglesey, Scilly, Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands*, (London, 2005) p.148.

³¹ Gerald of Wales, in Moore, *The Other British Isles*, p.141.

³² David Pretty, 'Anglesey, The Concise History', in Catrin Stevens (ed.), *The Histories of Wales*, volume 1, (Cardiff, 2005), p.83.

³³ Malthus, 'Works of Malthus, V, Principles of political economy' (1836), in E. A. Wrigley 'Malthus on the Prospects for the Labouring Poor' in *The Historical Journal*, 31, 4 (1988) p.827.

³⁴ Pretty, 'Anglesey', p.84.

³⁵ Pretty, 'Anglesey', pp. 83-85.

significant mining area, during 1836 1,400 miners were employed, although depression ensued and by 1840 the town's paupers were suffering from malnutrition and typhus.³⁶ Dodd attributes migration and subsequent depression for the introduction in Alwch of poor rates, unnecessary before Parys Mountain mine opened.³⁷ Declining profits and production at the Mona Mine Company led to a reduction in the workforce from four hundred to eighty four between 1830 and 1850, leaving those still employed with subsistence level wages.³⁸

Although geographically remote, Holyhead's seaward location generated significant infrastructure and commercial development. The decision to designate Holyhead the link to Ireland increased employment at the quarries, harbour, railway works and secondary industries, providing employment for unemployed copper miners and farm labourers. Census returns indicate an unprecedented growth in the town's population which at 1841 was 3,869 and by 1851 had increased to 8,863. Migrants arrived after 1845 once preparation commenced for the breakwater and railway station, with further migration from 1848 with the harbour development. The Holyhead breakwater project created a workforce of over one thousand, although with long hours, dangerous conditions and subsistence level wages, poverty was ever present.³⁹ E. Parry wrote in 1848, 'The vast trading interest of America, and all the countries lying westward, will without doubt, avail themselves of the facilities of this port, and its railway communication with everywhere in Great Britain.'⁴⁰ Slater's 1868 trade directory provides a summary of Holyhead and states not only that the town 'derives its chief prosperity [...] being the station of the mail steam packets' but also benefits from 'visitors in the bathing season, during which period many families make it their residence'.⁴¹ Slater's directory provides a snapshot of the commercial enterprises within Holyhead which included

³⁶ C. Flynn-Hughes, 'Aspects of Poor Law Administration and Policy in Anglesey 1834-1848' in *Anglesey Antiquarian Society Transactions*, vol (1950) p.78.

³⁷ A. H. Dodd, 'The Old Poor Law in North wales' in *Archaeologia Cambrensis (1900-1999)* 7th series vol 6 (1926) p. 117.

³⁸ Pretty, 'Anglesey', p. 87.

³⁹ Angela Hennessey, 'Holyhead: 1845-1865: The town, and its people's health' in *Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club*, Anglesey Antiquarian Society Transactions (2000) pp.61-3.

⁴⁰ E. Parry, '*Parry's Railway Companion from Chester to Holyhead*' (London, 1848) in *Holyhead: Understanding Urban Character Llywodraeth Cymru*, p.13. Available at:

<https://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/historicenvironment/holyhead-understandingurbancharacter-eng.pdf>

Accessed: 2 March 2019.

⁴¹ Slater, I., *Slater's (Late Pigot & Co) Royal National Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of Gloucester, Hereford, Monmouth, Shropshire and North and South Wales, and of the City of Chester*, (Manchester, 1868,) p.53.

Available at:

<http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/91016/rec/16> Accessed: 2 April 2019.

businesses directly related to the harbour and rail facilities, and also a wide range of retailers, hotels, eating houses and professional services amongst an array of other trades.⁴² Despite Parry's optimism, distress and poverty pervaded throughout the town, food shortages, low wages, under-employment and associated health problems characterised the socio-economic context.⁴³ Cholera and typhus epidemics, inadequate medical care, insufficient accommodation, poor water supply and sanitation confronted a town incapable of managing such rapid change. ⁴⁴ Repercussions in terms of implementation of the PLAA and pauper provision in Holyhead are analysed in Chapter Four.

Holyhead was as an anomaly in terms of population growth, data analysis from 1851, 1861, and 1871 indicates an overall population decrease across Anglesey from 57,300 to 51,000. Additional data identifies a reduction in male and female agricultural employment from 1851-1881 which arguably accounts for an element of the population decrease. It could be concluded that the reduction in male agricultural labour from 49.2% to 39.6% and female labour 34.9% to 11.4%, indicates sustained and significant depression during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ Government Inspector, Stephen Walcott, assessed the condition of North Wales and reported to the Poor Law Commissioners in 1834 'The people, as a mass, are still industrious, honest and free from discontent'.⁴⁶ It is interesting that Pretty considers the labourers a 'docile workforce'; it has previously been noted that Anglesey did not experience civil uprisings, and therefore it could be argued that the poverty stricken population were compliant.⁴⁷ Although, the Commissioners may well have had Anglesey in mind when surmising if relieved labourer's 'subsistence does not depend on his exertion, he loses all that sweetens labour, its association with reward, and gets through his work, such as it is, with the reluctance of a slave'.⁴⁸ With that in mind it could be argued that labourers

⁴² Slater, I., *Slater's (Late Pigot & Co) Royal National Commercial Directory*, pp.54-7.

⁴³ Flynn-Hughes, 'Aspects of Poor Law', p.78.

⁴⁴ Hennessey, 'Holyhead: 1845-1865', p.61.

⁴⁵ John Williams, 'The move from the land', in Herbert, T. and Jones, G. E. (eds) *Wales 1880-1914* (Cardiff, 1988), pp.10-12.

⁴⁶ Stephen Walcott, 'Appendix (A), No27 REPORT of Stephen Walcott, Esquire. NORTH WALES', in Atkinson et al., *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring in the Administration and Practical Operation of The Poor Laws*, [1834], p.190. Available at: <https://parlipapers-proquest-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/parlipapers/result/pqpdocumentview?accountid=14697&groupid=95579&pgId=fbdf5dde-525e-438b-8354-76b32da9cf26&rsId=16A44D2411B#375> Accessed: 10 February 2019

⁴⁷ Pretty, 'Anglesey', p.85.

⁴⁸ John Atkinson et al., *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners*, p. 49. Available at: <https://parlipapers-proquest-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/parlipapers/result/pqpdocumentview?accountid=14697&groupid=95579&pgId=fbdf5dde-525e-438b-8354-76b32da9cf26&rsId=16A44D2411B#375> Accessed: 10 February 2019

were more akin to enslaved than a 'docile workforce'.⁴⁹ Evidently, a labourer's existence in Anglesey was precarious.

Whilst Brundage considers there was 'a broad social consensus', contemporary opinion indicates the extent to which pauper relief and associated costs were contentious.⁵⁰ Shropshire M.P. Robert Slaney, during a Parliamentary debate, questioned the increase in poor rates 'Was it in support an improved peasantry? Was it to ameliorate the condition of the industrious and independent population? Certainly not; the burthen increased, but the working population became more wretched and depressed'.⁵¹ Reflecting Slaney's view, Rev. W. Jones wrote in *The Characteristics of the Welsh as a Nation*, that ratepayers in North Wales complained of the immense rate burden and yet paupers complained of extreme hardship.⁵² Slaney's 1834 and Jones' 1841 comments raise concerns during the transition years when implementation of the PLAA was intended to relieve the burden on rate payers and provide adequate relief for those deemed in need. Anglesey's rates increased over subsequent decades, which Doyle concludes, in his 1867 report, a consequence of out-door relief and refusal to provide a workhouse. Arguably manipulation of statistics can provide whatever conclusion is required, although Doyle attempts to provide a worthwhile comparison for Union expenditure across North Wales, identifying differences between Unions with and without a workhouse. The average expenditure for North Wales was quantified at 7.1%, whereas Anglesey Union was 11%, and Holyhead Union at 12.4%.⁵³ Doyle reported that despite the high rate burden the Poor Law Board had received 'more complaints of insufficient relief [...] than during the same period from all the other unions in my district put together'.⁵⁴ An assessment of whether increased costs for pauper relief related to superior provision in Anglesey is analysed in Chapter Four.

Analysis of the socio-economic context alongside government assessments and contemporary theories has identified the complexities of poverty and pauper provision, complexities that John Shaw considers in terms of nature versus nurture. The causes of

⁴⁹ Pretty, 'Anglesey', p.85.

⁵⁰ Anthony Brundage, *The English Poor Laws, 1700-1930*, (Basingstoke, 2002), p.155.

⁵¹ Mr. Slaney, HC Debate, 'Amendment of The Poor Laws (England)', 09 May 1834, Volume 23, Column 817, Available at: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1834-05-09/debates/36c04b91-881b-4e45-ac4f-e33803791b94/AmendmentOfThePoorLaws\(England\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1834-05-09/debates/36c04b91-881b-4e45-ac4f-e33803791b94/AmendmentOfThePoorLaws(England)) Accessed: 26 March 2019

⁵² Rev. W. Jones, 'The Characteristics of the Welsh as a Nation 1841', in Flynn-Hughes, 'Aspects of Poor Law', p.79.

⁵³ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p.1

⁵⁴ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p.1

poverty defined as nature, the moral failings of the poor, as opposed to nurture, the lived environment pre-determining poverty and therefore beyond the control of individuals.⁵⁵ Arguably, nature can be identified in the theories of contemporary commentators, that indolent, under-employed labourers applied for relief rather than exert himself through labour. Labourers' voices are less evident, and therefore unable to provide testament to the nurture theory, that the desperate rural existence created an environment beyond the control of the poor. The following chapters attempt to unravel implementation of central government poor law reform across Anglesey and uncover the extent to which the theory of nature versus nurture can be applied to nineteenth century Anglesey.

⁵⁵ John Shaw, (2006) 'The problem of the poor, faith, science and poverty in 19th Century Britain', The National Archives [Podcast]. Available at: <https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/the-problem-of-the-poor-faith-science-and-poverty-in-19th-century-britain/> Accessed: 4 April 2019

Chapter Three

Power and Influence. Local and National Interests Collide

*'if the Commissioners make any regulations
which annoy or oppress the parish [...]
the vestry will serve as a rallying point
for all well-grounded discontent'.⁵⁶*

Mr Grote, 1834

The previous chapter identified the complexities of the socio-economic context of pauper provision in nineteenth century Anglesey, this chapter will attempt to position the people of power, alongside key influences that ensured distinctiveness. People of power are identified as Poor Law Commissioners and Boards of Guardians. Analysis of contemporary evidence, primarily government reports, Parliamentary debates and a collection of newspaper articles, will provide an understanding of the extent to which language and religion influenced implementation and administration. It is acknowledged newspaper content is inherently biased, English language copies arguably more so in this context, it is not intended therefore to present these sources of unequivocal fact. It is argued that newspapers provide opinion and observation, and despite limitations, offer insight into the power and influence that shaped Anglesey's pauper provision. Human frailties, motives, interests, ideas, strengths, weaknesses and allegiances created a milieu within which collisions occurred. It is with these human interactions in mind an argument is proffered that Anglesey's people of power frustrated implementation of the PLAA and navigated a path of distinctive pauper provision.

Reformed in 1847 and 1871, the Board of Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners were charged with poor law administration across Britain. Predetermined authority of the Commissioners generated lively debate, Parliamentarians including Buller confirmed 'the absolute necessity of having a controlling power, remote from local influence – free from local prejudices – that would have the will and the ability to administer the law firmly, impartially, and justly'.⁵⁷ Whereas, Brotherton considered 'the power of the Commissioners

⁵⁶ Mr Grote, HC Debate, 'Amendment of The Poor Laws', Column 813.

⁵⁷ Mr Edward Buller, HC Debate, 'Amendment of The Poor Laws', Column 828.

by far too great'.⁵⁸ Arguably a cautionary reference to a 'one size fits all' solution and over-regulation, Whalley declared, 'Look at the powers given to the Commissioners: was it to be supposed, that they were to say how much flannel was required for an old woman? Surely the quantity must depend upon the length and breadth of the old woman'.⁵⁹ With such divergence within Parliament the scene was set for the central and local powers to collide.

1837, Anglesey Poor Law Unions were formed; Anglesey Union comprised of fifty three parishes, Bangor and Beaumaris Union included sixteen Anglesey parishes, whilst Caernarvon Union included five. Reorganisation in 1852 amalgamated twenty five of the Anglesey Union parishes into the newly formed Holyhead Union.⁶⁰ Boards of Guardians were local administrators, which Nassau Senior considered 'a network of small autocracies'.⁶¹ Each Board comprised of local magistrates, unelected *ex-officio* members, alongside elected, unpaid members, often farmers, 'from a class little removed from pauperism',⁶² and subjected to pressure and influence from religious and political affiliations as well as public opinion.⁶³ Guardians routinely protected ratepayers' interests with considerable 'foot dragging' which Commissioners acknowledged was more apparent in Unions solidly opposed to implementation, an approach particularly successful in Anglesey.⁶⁴ Digby notes rural Guardians regarded the PLAA 'an alien, Saxon device to be subverted rather than administered',⁶⁵ arguably Anglesey, a predominantly Nonconformist, monoglot society had even more justification.

It could be argued that implementation and local poor law administration was influenced by, as Stephen Walcott reported, 'The prevalence of the Welsh language [...] and the temporary absence, in some of the parishes [...], of persons capable of communicating information'.⁶⁶ David Moore reflects that whilst Telford's Bridge 'hooked it back to the mainland' Anglesey remained a haven of non-English speech.⁶⁷ Welsh remained the predominant language of the

⁵⁸ Mr Brotherton, HC Debate, 'Amendment of The Poor Laws', Column 838.

⁵⁹ Sir Samuel Whalley, HC Debate, 'Amendment of The Poor Laws', Column 809.

⁶⁰ 'The Workhouse in Wales', *The Workhouse. The story of an institution*, (2019), Available at: <http://www.workhouses.org.uk> Accessed: 27 March 2019.

⁶¹ Anthony Brundage, 'The Landed Interest and the New Poor Law: A Reappraisal of the Revolution in Government' in *The English Historical Review* vol 87 no. 342 (1972) p.32.

⁶² Digby, *The Poor Law*, p.30.

⁶³ Jones. 'Pauperism in Aberystwyth', p. 88.

⁶⁴ Brundage, 'The English Poor Laws', p. 74; Stewart and King, 'Death in Llantrisant', p.75.

⁶⁵ Stewart and King, 'Death in Llantrisant', pp. 71-76.

⁶⁶ Walcott, 'Appendix (A), No27 REPORT', p.167.

⁶⁷ Moore, *The Other British Isles*, p.127.

home, community and worship, although contentiously Welsh was banned in schools.⁶⁸ During 1836 Parliamentary debate Mr Guest acknowledged he knew 'one parish in Wales, in which there was not one person who spoke English'.⁶⁹ Newspapers reported incidences of language difficulties. For example in 1867, Guardian William Chambers protested during an Anglesey Union meeting 'had the discussion been carried on in the Welsh language' he believed that the Chairman would have received greater support, continuing that he 'was sorry to say that he did not understand the greater part of what had been said'.⁷⁰ *The York Herald*, in a brief article titled 'Welsh V. English', referred to 'an amusing difficulty' during a meeting of the Holyhead Guardians when reportedly the Welsh and English members were unable to understand each other. The report concluded that 'After protracted discussions' each member would be allowed to speak and that on each occasion his comments would be 'translated for the benefit of those who do not understand'.⁷¹ Assistant Commissioner Clive reportedly stated 'I find the greatest difficulty in these Welsh unions from the language, which renders it necessary always to employ natives for relieving officers [...] and a wretched business they make of it'.⁷² These reports exemplify linguistic challenges Anglesey communities faced, contextualise these in implementation of the PLAA and it is appreciable the extent to which Welsh speaking administrators frustrated central authorities.

The Christian ideology of 'social responsibility' formalised the requirement for churches and congregations to take care of the poor.⁷³ This ideology was arguably recognised by Walcott when he reported on North Wales and the influence of religious belief and practice. Walcott declared magistrates 'less likely to be economical in the distribution of the parish funds than a layman' as they considered themselves 'the guardians of the poor or, as it is frequently expressed "the poor man's best friend"'.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Pretty, 'Anglesey', p. 100

⁶⁹ Mr Guest, HC Debate, *Hand-Loom Weavers – Established Church*, 12 July 1836, Volume 35, Column 157, Available at: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1836/jul/12/hand-loom-weavers-established-church#S3V0035P0_18360712_HOC_68 Accessed: 12 April 2019

⁷⁰ Anon., Llanerchymedd The Anglesey Board of Guardians' in *The North Wales Chronicle*, 7th September 1867, p. 6 Available at: <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4449172/4449178/40/Cholera%20AND%20Anglesey> Accessed: 24 April 2019.

⁷¹ Anon. 'Welsh V. English', *The York Herald*, 20th December 1884, Issue no. 10473, p.8, Available at: <http://gdc.galegroup.com>. Accessed: 24 April 2019.

⁷² Clive, cited in Dewar 1967, in Megan Evans and Peter Jones, 'A Stubborn, Intractable Body': Resistance to the Workhouse in Wales 1834-1877 in *Family & Community History*, 17/2 (2014), p. 110

⁷³ Shaw, (2006) 'The problem of the poor'

⁷⁴ Walcott, 'Appendix (A), No27 REPORT', p181

A translated editorial from the Calvinist Methodist *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* stated ‘Somehow or other Calvinistic Methodism does not seem to flourish at Beaumaris, nor indeed does any other denomination of Dissent [...] at Beaumaris the Church is in a very flourishing state’.⁷⁵ Epitomising complexities of the island’s society Beaumaris was exceptional, Anglesey was a Nonconformist stronghold. Beyond Beaumaris, Griffith states that by 1851 Calvinist Methodists had become the ‘religious establishment’.⁷⁶ Slater’s 1868 Directory lists nineteen Nonconformist chapels compared to one Catholic and two Anglican churches in Holyhead alone.⁷⁷ Pretty considers ‘aggrieved Nonconformist farmers made a formidable interest group’, a highly cohesive middle class power structure, with ministers and chapel deacons undisputed leaders of society.⁷⁸ Arguably the traders, merchants and bankers of Holyhead’s commercial centre typified Jenkins’ ‘Pious middling sorts’ who upheld ‘old fashioned Puritan virtues, [...] industriousness, self-help, sobriety and respectability’ and united against the social depravity brought about by ‘drunkenness and secular pleasures’.⁷⁹ Arguably Shaw’s nature theory is identified in the Nonconformist, evangelical view, the poor were inherently sinful and if they were to reform morally, become teetotal, industrious and less promiscuous, they would improve themselves and their living conditions. Many believed giving charity made the poor worse, and therefore their mission was spiritual, the power of prayer would provide redemption and improve material condition of the poor.⁸⁰

Although Jones notes some commercially minded tradesmen considered workhouse provision, not only beneficial to elderly and infirm poor, but was also a long term saving, it is also acknowledged middle class guardians were generally opposed to workhouse.⁸¹ Whilst not hostile to the workhouse, Dr O. O. Roberts, Nonconformist radical, considered the work needed to be meaningful and that ‘to keep men and children in the House, without providing some suitable and profitable employment for them, is contrary to Law, a great hardship upon

⁷⁵ Anon., Letters to the Editor, ‘The Church in Anglesey’, in *The North Wales Chronicle*, 24 April 1869, p. 3. Available at: <http://go.galegroup.com>. Accessed: 3 April 2019.

The *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, was a Welsh language weekly newspaper published 1857-1919.

⁷⁶ W.P., Griffith, *Studies in Anglesey History II, Power, Politics & Country Government in Wales. Anglesey 1780-1914*, (Llangefni Ynys Mon, 2006), p.75.

⁷⁷ Slater, I., Slater’s (Late Pigot & Co) *Royal National Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of Gloucester, Hereford, Monmouth, Shropshire and North and South Wales, and of the City of Chester*, (Manchester, 1868,) p. 56. Available at:

<http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/91016/rec/16> Accessed: 2 April 2019.

⁷⁸ Pretty, ‘Anglesey’, pp. 85-90.

⁷⁹ Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, pp.209-10.

⁸⁰ Shaw, (2006) ‘The problem of the poor’.

⁸¹ Jones. ‘Pauperism in Aberystwyth’, pp. 87-88.

the Ratepayers, and a premium upon idleness'.⁸² Llewelyn Jones notes opportunities, such as coffin production, shoe mending and selling oakum, were to a limited degree, profitmaking. Although, further local work is needed to identify the extent to which the wealthiest in Anglesey's Nonconformist society were reluctant philanthropists.

This chapter analysed the influencing factors which frustrated the implementation of the PLAA in Anglesey. Language has been identified as a uniquely defining, which it could be argued, with appropriate measures, the central administration could have mediated. Equally Nonconformists defined and shaped nineteenth century Anglesey. Although, there is scope for further local work to identify the degree to which evangelicalism, opinions and ideologies, adversely affected the island's pauper provision. It has nevertheless been argued local power successfully frustrated Commissioners' attempt to standardise and ensured pauper provision remained distinctive, the next chapter will determine whether that was for better or for worse.

⁸² David, Llewelyn Jones, 'The Fate of Paupers: Life in Bangor and Beaumaris Union Workhouse, 1845-71', *Trafodion Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society*, Volume 66 (2005) p.100.

Chapter Four

For Better or For Worse? Doing Things Differently in Anglesey

*'It is certainly a public scandal'*⁸³

Andrew Doyle 1867

The previous chapter identified the extent to which pauper provision in Anglesey was determined by a combination of opinions, ideologies and the actions of people of power. This chapter will argue not only Anglesey's pauper provision was distinctive, but also, failure to provide a workhouse and adequate pauper healthcare, Holyhead Union was negligent in its responsibilities, which Doyle considered 'a public scandal'.⁸⁴ Analysis of contemporary sources will identify differences between national requirements and local practice, and will locate pauper healthcare in the context of recurrent cholera, and typhus outbreaks. It is acknowledged sources, including newspapers, letters, government reports and Parliamentary questions, advance the argument each supports, and therefore, a range of sources will provide balance. A study of Bangor and Beaumaris Union workhouse, opened in 1845, will also prove a valuable source for comparable pauper provision within Anglesey. Sources will be used to shed light on local administration and the medical scandal in Holyhead during 1866-1867, a period considered to be the turning point for pauper provision across Anglesey and Holyhead in particular.

Prior to 1834 a parochial system of out-door relief supported paupers within communities. After 1834 the PLAA stipulated out-door relief was JPs' discretion and 'given to any adult Person who shall from old Age or Infirmity of Body be wholly unable to work, without requiring that such Person shall reside in any Workhouse'.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Commissioners were empowered 'to declare to what Extent and for what Period the relief to be given to able-bodied Persons or to their Families' out-door relief, authorised by Unions, was considered 'unlawful'.⁸⁶ Welsh Unions, including Anglesey, widely disregarded these clauses and

⁸³ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*. p.6.

⁸⁴ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p.6.

⁸⁵ Anon, *An Act for the Amendment*, 'Clause 27'.

⁸⁶ Anon, *An Act for the Amendment*, 'Clause 52'.

continued to provide out-door relief, although Bangor and Beaumaris, and Carnarvon Unions, constructed workhouses.

The workhouse was punitive, indiscriminate, and less eligible to deter the poor from applying for relief. Digby argues less eligibility 'was conceived in psychological rather than material terms, [...] conditions of life of the independent labouring poor were so low that further deprivation under a publically administered scheme could only have produced scandalous conditions'.⁸⁷ Although, it is also argued a deterrent was paupers' fear of living with the 'lawless, drinking and worthless part of the community', an environment corroborated by Walcott.⁸⁸ Prior to 1834, Walcott visited Holyhead's existing poor-house, amongst others in North Wales, and reported that 'little else is to be expected than a mass of poverty, misery, and vice [...]. These establishments [...] sacrifice of morality, and the spread of vicious habits which they occasion is incalculable'.⁸⁹ Walcott concluded with 'some necessary alterations in the poor laws, and the introduction of piece-work, matters would go very well without resorting to workhouses'.⁹⁰ Walcott's nuanced assessment is in stark contrast to Doyle's declaration despite Guardians' 'lavish' relief 'it is impossible to acquit them of the most serious neglect of duty so long as they refuse to provide proper accommodation'.⁹¹ Doyle reported that Anglesey and Holyhead Unions were the only ones in his district the 'Guardians refuse to provide workhouse accommodation, either as a test of destitution, as an asylum for the sick, or a means of educating pauper children'.⁹² Despite Doyle's protestation Anglesey and Holyhead Unions remained steadfastly resistant, until that is the workhouse became the only means to provide adequate pauper healthcare.

The complexities of health and poverty are acknowledged, Digby notes the majority of pauperism was a consequence of sickness,⁹³ whilst *The Lancet* reported in 1843 'The greatest foe to health and long life is poverty'.⁹⁴ Furthermore, that 'Not only do all epidemic visitations fall with tenfold severity upon the poorest classes of society, but all descriptions of disease

⁸⁷ Digby, *British Welfare Policy*, p.31.

⁸⁸ Digby, *The Poor Law*, p.33.

⁸⁹ Walcott, 'Appendix (A), No27 REPORT', p.173.

⁹⁰ Walcott, 'Appendix (A), No27 REPORT', p.173

⁹¹ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p.5.

⁹² Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p. 1.

⁹³ Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, p.166.

⁹⁴ Hennessey, 'Holyhead:1845-1865', p.69

find them their chief victims'.⁹⁵ The Commission stipulated medical relief should be administered only to workhouse inmates although the *PLAA* determined 'in Cases of sudden and urgent Necessity' out-door could be provided.⁹⁶ Guardians considered out-door medical relief to be cost effective, returning labourers to the workforce without the need for a workhouse; which Digby argues provided paupers with better healthcare than independent sick poor.⁹⁷

Brundage argues poor law provision created an unofficial Poor Law medical service, which to a degree Anglesey endorsed by appointing medical officers, including Dr William Walthew.⁹⁸ Early medical relief was not always provided by a trained doctor although, after 1852, medical and surgical training was essential to administer pauper healthcare. Llewelyn Jones notes in a study of Bangor and Beaumaris workhouse, that the medical officer's salary increased by twenty pounds to include patients within and outside the newly opened workhouse. Nurses were only employed during epidemics, although pauper inmates, Grace Hughes and Jane Edwards, were employed as nurse assistants during 1860s which contravened guidelines for employing inmates.⁹⁹ Medical care was delivered solely as out-door relief in Holyhead, and is identified, not only, as distinctive, but also, failing. Amidst a cholera epidemic Walthew wrote to the Holyhead Guardians of 'a very helpless condition. We have no place whatever for our sick poor', concluding whilst the neglect within the town invited cholera, respite was a consequence of 'a merciful interposition of Divine Providence'.¹⁰⁰

The *PLAA* determined temporary relief could be provided 'where any Case of sudden and dangerous illness may require it', such as cholera and typhus.¹⁰¹ Poor living conditions created the environment of recurrent epidemics, including cholera, caused by contaminated water or food, and typhus, transmitted by the body louse, prevalent in the insanitary conditions Walthew encountered.¹⁰² Bangor and Beaumaris workhouse delivered pauper healthcare,

⁹⁵ The Lancet, in Hennessey, 'Holyhead:1845-1865', p.69.

⁹⁶ Anon, *An Act for the Amendment*, 'Clause 54'

⁹⁷ Digby, *Pauper Palaces*, p.167.

⁹⁸ Brundage, *The English Poor Laws*, p. 96.

⁹⁹ Llewelyn Jones, 'The Fate of Paupers', p.109.

¹⁰⁰ Walthew, 'Holyhead Union' in *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 5th January 1867, p.5. Available at: <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4448856/4448861/44/Holyhead%20Union> Accessed 12 April 2019

¹⁰¹ Anon, *An Act for the Amendment*, 'Clause 54'

¹⁰² University of Nottingham, 'Manuscripts and Special Collections, Cholera, Typhoid and Typhus', Available [Online] at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/learning/healthhousing/theme3/diseases.aspx> Accessed 21 May 2019.

although during epidemics, out-door relief was also provided, once the epidemic subsided the emergency measures ceased.¹⁰³ This is in stark contrast to Holyhead's healthcare provision during 1866-1867. Incidences of cholera and typhus and associated medical scandals were widely documented and generated a significant catalogue of newspaper coverage and correspondence.

Published in the *North Wales Chronicle*, October 1866, Finch Edwards' letter from the Privy Council Medical Department, details Holyhead Guardians' negligence in dealing with a cholera epidemic 'as cases of any illness would be, and no special facilities [...], or precautions taken'.¹⁰⁴ The letter continues that the 'Board seems scarcely to be aware that after the putting in force of the Diseases Prevention Act it became legally incumbent upon them to take action'.¹⁰⁵ Anglesey M.P. W.O. Stanley's letter published the same day intended 'to bring to public attention' and 'have the effect of recalling the Holyhead Board of Guardians to a proper sense of their duties in a time of great peril and responsibility'.¹⁰⁶ Doyle's report, dated February 1867, states 'no cases have come under my notice of such neglect as in Holyhead [...] the want of hospital accommodation must at times entail great suffering upon the poor. In Holyhead, however, the condition of the sick poor is truly deplorable'.¹⁰⁷ The *North Wales Chronicle*, January 1867, published Walthew's letter to the Holyhead Guardians identifying not only growing public opinion stating 'when cholera appeared [...] every inhabitant cried out for an asylum for the sick' but also the extent of deprivation stating 'Under these circumstances we were compelled to attend the poor, without a proper nurse, in their miserable hovels, and to white wash and disinfect the houses with corpses in them, whilst others were lying on their deathbeds stricken down with the deadly disease'.¹⁰⁸ These sources testify to the condition of the sick poor, the negligence of the Holyhead Union and its distinctive pauper provision.

¹⁰³ Llewelyn Jones, 'The Fate of Paupers', p.109.

¹⁰⁴ Finch Edwards, in 'Holyhead Union. IMPORTANT MEETING', *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 27th October 1866, p.3 Available at: <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4448767/4448770> Accessed: 3 April 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Finch Edwards, in 'Holyhead Union. IMPORTANT MEETING', p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ W.O. Stanley, in 'Holyhead Union. IMPORTANT MEETING', p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Walthew, 'Holyhead Union' in *The North Wales Chronicle*, p.5. Available at: <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4448856/4448861/44/Holyhead%20Union> Accessed 12 April 2019.

Doyle's report brings particular attention to a scandal that became synonymous with the failure of Holyhead Union medical provision. Doyle, accompanied by medical and relieving officers, inspected a property occupied by the Martin family, husband, wife, daughter, Anne, and three illegitimate children. The house had 'no privy attached to the house, no yard, or back premises. [...] the stench in it [...] absolutely pestilential, with only one bed in the house'.¹⁰⁹ Anne contracted typhus, for seven weeks she lay across two chairs covered with 'bits of carpet', both parents succumbed with Anne's mother stretched across the same chairs for ten weeks.¹¹⁰ Stanley raised a Parliamentary question directed to Gathorne Hardy, Poor Law Board President, to enforce the Holyhead Guardians to provide a workhouse and hospital for the sick poor in the Union. Hardy responded the facts were of 'so dreadful and disgusting a character' and referred to 'people suffering from typhus fever [...] lain for weeks on chairs in common lodging houses for the want of proper accommodation.'¹¹¹ Hardy concluded that he intended 'to bring in a Bill to invest the Poor Law Board with a power they do not possess,' effectively at that time the Union could not be impelled to provide a workhouse, Hardy proposed change.¹¹² Mr. Neate added he 'would suggest that it was a question for the consideration of the Law Officers of the Crown whether persons who had been so far guilty of a breach of the trust placed in them were not punishable at Common Law.'¹¹³ It could be argued, therefore, the Guardians' negligence and resultant scandal provided the impetus which brought about change, not only in terms of the law, but also in pauper provision in Holyhead. A transformation reported in the *North Wales Chronicle* as the Guardians were 'unanimous and truly anxious to supply the serious defect at Holyhead in reference to the proper accommodation of sick poor and other destitute persons requiring medical treatment'.¹¹⁴

Administrative and ideological resistance to the *PLAA* continued to frustrate central government attempts to standardise poor relief. Central administration failed to prevent systems of out-door relief entirely and the quiet rejection of the workhouse until scandals

¹⁰⁹ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Doyle, *ANGLESEY AND HOLYHEAD UNIONS*, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Gathorne Hardy, HC Debate, Holyhead Union – Question, 22 February 1867, Volume 185, Column 810, Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1867/feb/22/holyhead-union-question> . Accessed 10 April

¹¹² Hardy, HC Debate, Holyhead Union'.

¹¹³ Mr Neate, HC Debate, Holyhead Union – Question, 22 February 1867, Volume 185, Column 811, Available at: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1867/feb/22/holyhead-union-question> . Accessed 10 April

¹¹⁴ Anon, 'Holyhead Union' in *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 5th January 1867, p.5. Available at: <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4448856/4448861/44/Holyhead%20Union> Accessed 12 April 2019.

became overwhelming. Attempting to ignore twenty first century sensibilities it is difficult to understand the rationale for the apparent neglect that can be so readily laid at Holyhead Guardians' door, evidently pauper provision in Holyhead was, distinctive, inferior, and even scandalous.

Chapter Five

The 1834 Royal Commission report concluded that early nineteenth century pauper provision relieved poverty and not destitution.¹¹⁵ Poor rates, designed to provide adequate relief, became increasingly burdensome to individuals, who for some were not far removed from poverty themselves. The Whig government enacted poor law reform, which and perhaps most controversially, included the requirement to provide a workhouse and cessation of out-door relief. This study has identified the PLAA was neither well received nor fully implemented in Anglesey.

Differences of opinion have been identified not only between national and local interests, but also within the central administration, arguably the most distinctive are those of Walcott and Doyle. Walcott provided a nuanced, even empathetic, approach to assessing pauper relief and poverty, arguably his judgement could be seen in terms of Shaw's nurture argument. Whereas, Doyle's dogmatic approach has been identified as being continually frustrated. The Anglesey Guardians administered a system of out-door relief rather than provide a punitive workhouse, only to finally capitulate as a consequence of widely reported medical scandals. Differences in local practice have also been identified, superficially it could be assumed that societies, culturally aligned, within a small geographical area, would administer poor relief in the same way. This study has demonstrated that a pauper in Beaumaris received significantly different relief to a pauper in Holyhead, and yet separated by a distance of less than thirty miles.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that through this research and analysis more questions need to be answered, leaving ample room for future studies, and as previously noted by Stewart and King, will 'put flesh on [...] speculative bones'.¹¹⁶ Questions perhaps include what lay behind the deplorable state of pauper healthcare provision in Holyhead; arguably this would provide sufficient ground for a single focus study. Equally, and with Shaw's nature versus nurture argument in mind, a detailed study of prevailing Nonconformist ideology and practice would illuminate the degree to which it was considered the poor were responsible for their own predicament. Anglesey would once again be a worthwhile focus, providing insight in to

¹¹⁵ Digby, *The Poor Law*, p.11

¹¹⁶ Stewart and King, 'Death in Llantrisant', p.71.

what extent Brundage's 'broad social consensus' prevailed with difference seen only in how relief was delivered rather than if relief should be provided at all.¹¹⁷

Analysis of the socio-economic context, alongside fundamental influencing factors, has revealed the singularity of Welsh rural society and pauper provision in Anglesey. Furthermore, analysis has determined the significant delay in workhouse provision and refusal to abolish out-door relief, ensured pauper provision and implementation of the PLAA was distinctive. This paper has attempted to contribute in a worthwhile way to the study of nineteenth century poverty and pauper provision. Research positioned a study of rural poor law provision alongside central government legislation, identified as a methodical, administrative endeavour to eliminate local difference and enshrine uniformity in poor relief practice. It has been demonstrated that despite the weight of the central authority, pauper provision and implementation of nineteenth century poor law reform was distinctive, and that the Welsh, and in particular those of Anglesey, were 'extremely resistant to an English imposition'.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Brundage, *The English Poor Laws*, p.155

¹¹⁸ King, 'The Poor Laws'

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