Ely Industrial Schools and Scattered Homes: Pauper Children in the Cardiff Poor Law Union 1893-1905

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Ely Industrial Schools and Scattered Homes
Pauper Children in the Cardiff Poor Law Union 1893-1905

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For the Degree of
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Abstract

In 1893 the Ely Industrial Schools in Cardiff were entering the final ten years of their forty year history. In building the schools the Cardiff Board of Guardians intended to extract pauper children from the malign influence of adult paupers in the workhouse, many of whom exerted a corrupting influence on the young. At the end of the century the guardians, in keeping with changing attitudes to the care of pauper children, decided to adopt the Sheffield Union’s ‘Scattered Homes’ system, which established small children’s homes run by a Foster Mother in rented houses in respectable districts. The two systems overlapped for four years as children were gradually transferred to the Homes. Ely Schools closed in 1903.

This study examines the everyday lives of the children, their treatment and preparation for their future in the world of work and seeks to chart the evolution of the policies, ideas and attitudes of the guardians in their care of the children. Details of their experience were located in CPLU Admissions and Discharge Registers and Yearbooks, and in guardians’ committee minutes which cover my chosen period. The guardians had to grapple with the long-standing issue of the ‘ins and outs’ – children who, despite the best efforts of the guardians, maintained contact with their relatives to whom they returned after brief stays, disrupting the organisation of the institutions and unlearning the good habits acquired there. Boys received training for jobs that were often unavailable and were often sent to work in coal mines or on fishing boats. Domestic service was the likeliest destination for girls and they were given rudimentary training which often amounted to no more than laundry work, hardly sufficient for them to become the wives and mothers of ‘respectable’ labourers. The scattered homes offered a more hopeful future as the children were introduced to a form of family life with the chance to gain a more rounded education in local schools where they could learn social manners. With better awareness of the world, for those able to make the most of opportunities, the prospects seemed brighter.
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**Abbreviations**

**BoG**  Board of Guardians

**CHC**  Cathays Heritage Centre

**CHVC**  Children’s Homes Visiting Committee

**CPLU**  Cardiff Poor Law Union

**CPLUBoG**  Cardiff Poor Law Union Board of Guardians

**CPLUR**  Cardiff Poor Law Union Records

**CRI**  Cardiff Royal Infirmary

**CSS**  Children in Service Sub-committee

**ES**  Ely Schools

**ESEC**  Ely Schools Education Committee

**ESHLS**  Ely Schools House Sub-Committee

**ESVC**  Ely Schools Visiting Committee

**FGS**  Friendless Girls’ Society

**FM**  Foster Mother
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Appendix 1  Cardiff Ragged School – Rules, March 1855

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I confirm this dissertation is all my own, unaided work. No part of this dissertation has previously been submitted for a degree or other qualification at any university or other institution. Part of this dissertation refers to the draft chapter completed for EMA A825, History Part One (submitted in January 2022).

Acknowledgements:

With thanks to the staff at the Glamorgan Archives for their expertise, assistance and patience. Similarly, thanks to the staff at the Cathays Heritage Centre.
Chapter 1 - Introduction

In 1893 the Ely Industrial Schools had been in existence for thirty years. By the 1890s the actions of social reformers and sympathetic parliamentarians had together brought about fundamental alterations to the way in which poverty and its causes were regarded by popular perception and, consequently, to the way in which its victims were treated. In particular, reformers were re-examining the experience of children of all classes and the nature of childhood. In this context, the twelve years of my chosen period were a period of dramatic changes in the lives and treatment of the Ely pauper children but also in the philosophy of the guardians. The final ten years of Ely Schools overlapped with the radically different Scattered Homes system, borrowed from the Sheffield Union.

This study is primarily concerned with the experience of the children in the care of the Cardiff Union and how they were affected by the fluctuations in poor law policy and its implementation. Firstly, how did the guardians react to changing attitudes in the last decade of the nineteenth century and did their action benefit the children? Secondly, were the children’s life chances enhanced by the attempts to create a ‘family’ environment in the scattered homes? The guardians acted in loco parentis and the study examines their interpretation of the notion of ‘family’ within the context of ‘the discipline of kindness’.

The fundamental purpose of the Ely Industrial Schools was to instil virtuous habits of industry so that the children could avoid dependency on the poor law as adults. However, during its last years the focus became less on industrial training and more on academic education. It was reported that ‘industrial training, except in the girls’ department, had been practically abolished, but this had been made up by an improvement in the scholastic

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attainments of the children’. Some domestic training was considered as a necessary preparation for girls whose destination was likely to be a labourer’s wife and a mother.

**Primary Sources**

The dissertation studies the years 1893 to 1905. The Ely Schools finally closed in 1903 and the site was divided into the HQ for the scattered homes and, behind high walls, additional workhouse accommodation for the elderly, known as the Ely Workhouse. The scattered homes system was introduced in 1899 and by 1905 twenty-four homes had been opened with capacity for 350 children, including the HQ cottage homes. The CPLU Pauper Lists and the Admissions and Discharge Registers for the twelve years were examined. On entry into the care of the union, a standardised one page form was filled in with basic individual information (if known at the time): age and/or date of birth, religion, admission date, name of two nearest known relatives (usually father and mother, even if they were dead), last known address and the identity of the person who committed the child. Information about the location of each parent was also recorded, as well as (for most) a date of discharge. In almost all cases, each child is recorded as ‘wearing own clothes’ or ‘in workhouse uniform’. Some entries include on the same form siblings received at the same time.

Murdoch observed that poor law registers tended to be more complete and consistent than those of other charitable institutions. Bryant, however, is less convinced – she uses poorly maintained creed registers as evidence of a lack of ‘administrative efficacy’.

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3 *Evening Express* 6 December 1897, p. 3.

4 Sheldon, p. 264.


appear that the Cardiff authorities valued bureaucratic efficiency and accuracy. The forms were consistently updated as new information was received – missing dates of birth were added later, dates of discharges and readmissions were painstakingly annotated and, where applicable, destinations for as many as ten or twelve years in the future were inserted – as in Figure 1, which catalogues the ‘in and out’ progress of Florence Dyer from first admission in May, 1903 through six re-admissions to November, 1906.

Figure 1    Florence Dyer (Entry 353) CPLU Admissions and Discharge Register 1903

Additionally, analysis of the ESVC Minutes (1893 to 1903) for ES and the CHVC Minutes (1898 to 1905) for the Scattered homes produced a great deal of detail about the day-to-day management and running of both institutions, as well as evidence of communication between the BoG and other institutions, families and other care providers. Local newspaper reports provided corroboration and critical commentary. The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian was for most of the nineteenth century the most important local weekly. Other ‘weeklies’, The Cardiff Times and The Weekly Mail, representing the views of Tories
and Liberals, were joined by ‘dailies’, the *Western Mail* and the *South Wales Daily News*.  

**Secondary Sources**

Hulonce states that the wellbeing of the children rescued from the debilitating corruption of the workhouse ‘depended on the policy, the child, and the “school” or “home” to which the children were sent’ – in other words, chance, but one thing that they all shared was an uncertain future. The intention of the system in which they found themselves was to enable them to achieve a respectable future through education and training, both moral and academic. The idealised life of the Victorian family and the changing notion of childhood are recurring themes in accounts of the care of pauper children. Linda Mahood provides an overview of attitudes regarding children in the nineteenth century and suggests that changes occurred in successive stages while Marianne Moore and Gillian Gear focus on Industrial Schools and examine whether they were intended for ‘child protection or social control?’ Nicola Sheldon examines the development of pauper institutional care whilst the harshness of life in pauper institutions is detailed by Jane Humphries. For analysis of Poor Law Union registers Lydia Murdoch’s *Imagined Orphans* offers an instructive model but also, interestingly, identifies a contradiction in the assertion by the authorities that the majority of children in care were orphans. At the same time, they were effectively creating orphans by completely separating them from parents and family, a policy made redundant by the continuing contact between parents and children as evidenced by the number of ‘ins and outs’. Cardiff was not alone in introducing scattered homes, as Susan Cottam’s illuminating account of the Leeds Union’s system draws interesting parallels with the Cardiff Union over a similar timescale, as does Nina Bryant’s account of Camberwell.

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8 Murdoch, p. 2.
Overall, Lynn Hollen Lees’ *Solidarities of Strangers* is the key work for policy, philosophy and context of nineteenth century Poor Law.

**Background to Ely Schools and Scattered Homes**

The nineteenth century industrial boom in south Wales, based on iron-making and on deep-mined steam coal, drew in thousands of immigrant workers, attracted by the abundance of well-paid largely unskilled employment. From all over Britain, but mainly from the counties of south-west England, men and their families poured in to the towns of the Taff, Rhondda and Cynon valleys. Cardiff, as the main outlet for coal exports with its extensive modern docks and as the nexus of the railway network, experienced unprecedented growth – from 1801 to 1911 the population grew ninety-nine fold, as Table 1 demonstrates. An important factor was the arrival of large numbers of destitute Irish people, especially after the famine of the late 1840s. They became the poorest stratum of Cardiff society and formed close-knit communities in the notorious ‘courts’ of the town centre. Children from these families often ended up in ES and represented a significant Catholic element. While some children were the victims of violent and abusive families, others were the hapless casualties of their parents’ plunge into destitution as a consequence.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>1,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>2,457</td>
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<td>1821</td>
<td>3,521</td>
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<td>1831</td>
<td>6,187</td>
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<td>1841</td>
<td>10,077</td>
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<td>1851</td>
<td>18,351</td>
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<td>1861</td>
<td>32,954</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>39,536</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>82,761</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>128,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>164,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>182,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Martin Daunton* *Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914*
of sickness or loss of income. The last decade of the century was a period of industrial unrest – trade unions and mine owners clashed over pay and conditions, which provoked regular strikes in the coal mines and which affected related sectors, such as the railways and docks, both major employment sources in Cardiff. The result was an increase in both the number of paupers who had to seek relief or enter the workhouse and the numbers of children in ES.

Chapter Two focuses on the Ely Industrial Schools, and in particular on the impact of major shifts in the notions of childhood and pauperism on the management of the schools and, as a consequence, on the experience of the children there. Chapters Three and Four concentrate on attempts to replicate a ‘pseudo family life’ in the new system of Scattered Homes. Chapter Three looks at the bureaucracy involved in establishing the Homes with details of the houses, the staff, and the children. Chapter Four examines the way the children were prepared for their future through training and work. Throughout, the study seeks evidence that supports the theory that the lives of the ‘forgotten ones’ were changed for the better.
Chapter Two – The Ely Industrial Schools

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the background to the establishment of the Ely Industrial Schools in the years before my chosen period. It also attempts to identify changes for the better treatment of the children of ES in the context of the shifting ideas about the notion of childhood, the role of the state and the style of provision of care and welfare during the last decade of the Ely Industrial Schools. The principal primary source is the Minute Books of the Visiting Committees (ESVC/CHVC) held at the Glamorgan Archives (GA), the surviving examples of which begin in 1893.

The historiography of pauper children suggests that the metamorphosis of the prevailing attitudes towards children in the nineteenth century fell into several largely chronological stages. Mahood, argues that, from the introduction of the 1834 Act until about mid-century, the prevailing attitude revealed an absence of concern to prevent children from being abandoned to life in the streets.¹ Measures to try to remedy their appalling circumstances included attempts to offer a basic education in Ragged Schools and, belatedly, a realisation that the workhouse was not a suitable place in which to keep children for whom life was ‘less colourful, less enjoyable, less worth living, and left them perhaps permanently wounded’.² The principle of ‘less eligibility’ was gradually replaced by one which emphasised reformation of character rather than abandonment.³


³ Sheldon, p. 265.
Consequently, strategies were devised to move children out of workhouses across England and Wales.⁴

The national debate about children in the workhouse concerned south Wales too. In 1850, the editor of the Cardiff and Merthyr Gazette wrote a scathing article condemning the continued presence of children in the workhouse:

‘It would be better to drown them in the deepest pool in the Taff or shovel them down the nearest abandoned coal-pit, than educate them in this way in infamy and wretchedness. It would be far cheaper and more humane to do such a thing.’⁵

The writer was referring to Merthyr’s guardians, but he was well aware of the acrimonious exchanges between the rural and urban Guardians taking place in the Cardiff Union.⁶ Although the country guardians did not deny the potential benefits of the proposed separate Industrial School – the Chairman stated: ‘I cordially approve of the measure and regret that it has not been adopted’ – they maintained their objections to having to contribute towards the expense.⁷ By the end of the 1850s the pressures of rapid population growth were beginning to affect numbers in the workhouse which had risen to well above capacity and the guardians had had to resort to drastic measures to reduce them, by offering outdoor relief to paupers who really should have been in the workhouse.⁸ Even so, it was clear that the workhouse required further extension and ‘it would be very desirable if the extension were

⁴ Hulonce, p. 8.
⁶ Bedminster and Cardiff Unions. Return of all communications which have taken place between the Poor Law Guardians of the unions of Bedminster and Cardiff, relative to the separation of the rural from the urban parishes. 1852-3 BPP 959, LXXXIV, 481, pp. 27-41.
⁸ Cardiff Times 13 December, 1861, p. 5; 20 December 1861, p. 5.
such as to separate the children as had been done in Newport’. J. Graves, Inspector, stated: ‘The plan of detached schools appears to me to be as good as any which can be devised. At Caerleon (Newport Union school), it has already borne excellent fruit, and there is a fair prospect of success at Ely’. The Poor Law Commissioners ‘received the intimation with the greatest pleasure, believing such schemes to answer a noble purpose’. A sub-committee recommended ‘a piece of ground, of six acres, situated on the south side of the road leading from Ely to Cowbridge’.

**Figure 2** Ely Industrial Schools 1893

The local press approved: ‘The board decided this question on the only ground which humanity, reason, and justice combine to suggest - that of common responsibility’.

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9 *Cardiff Times* 20 December 1861, p. 5.

10 *Reports by Poor Law Inspectors on Workhouses in their Districts, in pursuance of Instructions, 1867-68* BPP 35, LXI.171

11 GA/CPLUR/UC/2/9 Minutes Cardiff Poor Law Union Board of Guardians (CPLUBoG), 25 January, 1862

12 GA/CPLUR/UC/2/9 Minutes Cardiff Poor Law Union Board of Guardians (CPLUBoG), 15 February 1862

13 *Cardiff Times* 10 January 1862, p. 5
The children were transferred from the workhouse to the Ely Industrial Schools in 1863. **Figure 2** shows the layout of the site as it was in 1893.

It is important to note that the term ‘industrial school’ was used for different establishments at different times. Ely Industrial School was, in fact, a workhouse ‘separate’ school – distant from the main workhouse and catering for the orphans, abandoned children, ‘bastards’ and the offspring of both permanent and ‘casual’ adults lodged in the Cardiff workhouse.14

The desire to confront the problem of neglectful parents meant that intervention became acceptable and ushered in a period of ‘rescue, reform and reclamation’.15 Maintaining children in institutions was considered the best way to protect them. However, changing ideas about the nature of childhood began to inform the opinions of officials and campaigners alike, who started to criticise the institutional systems of the time. Jane Nassau Senior condemned the large barrack district and separate schools for their failure to resolve the issue of ‘permanent’ and ‘ins and outs’ children and lent her support to family models, such as foster homes and separate cottage homes.16 Florence Hill argued that the absence of female influence meant that the ‘permanent’ (orphans and the deserted) suffered from a lack of family influence.17 Menella Smedley extolled the virtues of ‘boarding-out’

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as an alternative.\textsuperscript{18} In the last decades of the century, the view began to emerge that separate and industrial schools were denying to pauper children the warmth of the sort of family atmosphere enjoyed by middle-class children. Boarding-out, cottage and scattered homes now represented the future.

Partly as a result of compulsory schooling and of an increasing concern about the impact of poverty, the debate about children’s welfare turned to a wider discourse about children’s physical and mental condition.\textsuperscript{19} The vilification of ‘neglectful’ parents led to the notion of a child’s right to protection, to an ‘innocent’ childhood and a secure family home, rights which only the state was in a position to guarantee.\textsuperscript{20} The notion of childhood came to be seen as a universal concept.\textsuperscript{21} In fact, the state upheld the right of the child to be protected and cared for above any biological rights of parents or families.\textsuperscript{22} These ideas represented a major change of emphasis, a move away from the status quo of ‘rescue, reform and reclamation’ which had dominated the treatment of pauper children in previous decades.\textsuperscript{23} Healthy, educated children were now seen to be of vital importance to the ‘national interest’ for the future integrity of the state.\textsuperscript{24} Consequently, the regimes of the large barrack schools and separate poor law schools began to be regarded as unsuitable for the care for poor children because they were unable to offer the ‘family’ environment then

\textsuperscript{18} Menella Smedley, ‘Comparison between boarding-out and pauper schools’ Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, 8, (1879), 31-37, [p. 32]; see also Col. C. W. Grant, ‘Pauper Education; District Schools and Workhouse Schools’, Examiner; 3205, (1869), 422.


\textsuperscript{20} Moore, p. 362; Sheldon, p. 256.

\textsuperscript{21} Moore, p. 379.

\textsuperscript{22} Moore, p. 379.

\textsuperscript{23} Hendrick, p. 42; Sheldon, p. 267.

\textsuperscript{24} Hendrick, p. 42.
deemed to be more beneficial for children. The 1894 Industrial School Amendment Act, established that the age of eighteen separated childhood from adulthood and, in so doing, acknowledged that children had particular needs.\textsuperscript{25} Further, Murdoch states that ‘childhood was a life stage characterized by school rather than work’. Poor Law guardians had to adapt to the 1897 ruling of the Local Government Board which set strict guidelines about school attendance and artisanal training in their institutions.\textsuperscript{26} The 1890s were a time of fundamental re-alignment of attitudes towards the care and welfare of children in general but, particularly, of institutionalised pauper children. The authorities began to recommend better food, facilities and educational provision and managers were urged to embrace ‘the discipline of kindness’ – more treats and praise rather than punishment.\textsuperscript{27}

**Health**

One element of the ‘national interest’ of particular concern, besides education and responsible parenthood, was health. The latter half of the nineteenth century had witnessed significant improvements in public sanitation, the introduction of effective vaccinations, and advances in preventive medicine which made the improvement in the health of institutionalised children an imperative. From the 1880s, encouraging habits of cleanliness formed part of a broader national movement which urged acceptance of preventive public health measures in everyday lives, and advocated ‘citizenship’ and the ‘health of the race’.\textsuperscript{28} As Hendrick notes, the emphasis in children’s health changed from ‘sickly survival to the realisation of potential’.\textsuperscript{29} Ensuring good health presented a great challenge

\textsuperscript{25} Moore, p. 379; Hendrick, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{26} Murdoch, p. 129.

\textsuperscript{27} Sheldon, p. 266.


\textsuperscript{29} Hendrick, p. 42.
in residential schools where children lived in close proximity. The condition of new arrivals was rarely good; previous privation often left them underdeveloped both physically and mentally, and improvement was not helped by a monotonous routine and diet.

Despite progress in medical science, the absence of effective treatment for childhood illnesses persuaded MOs that ‘a change of air’ would be most helpful for the well-being of the children. Occasionally, the Cardiff guardians would send a sickly child to a rented house (‘The Rest’) in Porthcawl but for some time they considered the idea of buying their own convalescent home. Eventually, the proposal was dropped in favour of building the Grouped HQ Homes. However, the guardians remained conscious of the benefits of fresh air away from both ES and, later, SCHs, and began to accept the notion of holidays, as children in ‘normal’ families might enjoy. With the MOs support, they sanctioned trips to the seaside at Barry Island during the summer, a ‘treat’ which was repeated annually.30 The children at ‘Shamrock’ scattered home in the middle of Cardiff, swapped with the residents at Park Crescent in Barry for the summer.31 The guardians extended this policy – at the MO’s request, boys in the Church Lads’ and the Boys’ Brigades were allowed to attend the respective summer camps with expenses paid by the Master.32

Scabies (the ‘itch’) and ophthalmia were endemic in pauper schools and recent arrivals in ES rapidly spread infection to the healthy. In a report on the disease in London, Stephenson noted that ophthalmia ‘is probably the most serious malady against which the Poor Law schools have to contend’. The seriousness of the illness was real – it was painful, highly infectious and carried the risk of permanent eyesight damage whilst, long-term, it

30 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/3 ESVC Minutes, 3 June 1902
31 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/2 CHVC Minutes, 27 May 1902
32 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 CHVC Minutes, 28 June 1904
could affect the ability of the sufferer to earn a living. Its prevalence interfered with the smooth running of the institution and the education of the children.\textsuperscript{33} The disease was a constant presence in ES - at various times it was recommended that children diagnosed with ophthalmia should be sent back to the workhouse, to the Infirmary for specialist treatment or should be boarded out.\textsuperscript{34} Children transferring to ES were to be lodged in the WH Probationary Ward so that they could be examined by the MO until certified as fit.\textsuperscript{35} In September, 1895 there was a serious outbreak of ‘sore eyes’, ascribed principally to the sharing of beds.\textsuperscript{36} An inquiry was carried out by the LGB with the major recommendations insisting on separation - of beds, towels and flannels (each to be numbered and allocated to each child), fresh bathwater for each and portable baths for infants. A properly trained nurse was to be employed in place of the untrained incumbent.\textsuperscript{37} A specialist examined all the children and found fifty-two cases of infection (19.2 percent). His comments betrayed a remarkable complacency – apparently there were ‘few serious cases, the condition was exaggerated and ophthalmia was “common” in the WH’.\textsuperscript{38} Isolation of the affected children in an entirely separate hospital ward hadn’t been a feasible option previously but, in late 1895, a new hospital wing with an isolation ward had been opened on the ES site which made the idea possible. The guardians accepted the recommendations, having already introduced most of them, but went further and appointed a specialist ophthalmic surgeon, Dr. Ensor, at twenty guineas per annum, who was to carry out quarterly

\textsuperscript{32} Report by S. Stephenson on Inquiry on Ophthalmic State of Poor Law Children in Metropolis, BPP 1897 C.8597, pp. 1-245 (p. 3).

\textsuperscript{34} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 7 January 1894; GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 3 March 1896; GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 7 July 1896

\textsuperscript{35} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 20 February 1894. (See Appendix 5, items 1-4).

\textsuperscript{36} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 3 September 1895

\textsuperscript{37} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 2 February 1897

\textsuperscript{38} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 2 March 1897
examinations of all children. An extra advantage of the doctor’s regular examinations was the identification of children suffering from ‘squint’. He offered to operate on these children at the rate of two guineas a time, which included anaesthesia, an offer that was accepted. In all, he carried out twenty-seven such operations.

Table 2  Ophthalmia Cases 1897-1904

He was also able to diagnose other types of eye and sight problems, prescribing spectacles or sending individuals to CRI for further treatment. Table 2 follows the progress of the efforts to deal with ophthalmia in ES and in the SCHs – in June, 1900 Dr. Ensor, for the first time, was able to announce that there were no cases at all. Despite occasional lapses in the MOs’ precautions, the success of the Scattered Homes System had led to the virtual eradication of the disease. Consequently, the guardians decided that Ensor’s services were no longer required – they terminated his contact in April, 1904.

Source: GA/CPLUR/UC/ 10/2 -3 ESVC Minutes; GA/CPLUR/UC/ 6/1-3 CHVC Minutes

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39 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 7 June 1898
In line with the policy of separation to avoid the spread of ophthalmia and to facilitate the recovery of afflicted children, boarding-out was adopted by the Cardiff guardians.

Boarding-out generally had not been widely adopted in Wales – indeed, Hulonce suggests that it was a contested policy, one which reclaimed children at the expense of a loss of control by the authorities.\(^{40}\) The guardians tried several private homes without success until three children were boarded out with a Miss Pyle in Penarth, near Cardiff.\(^{41}\) The children seemed to make good progress, which led to further allocations. As her house had room for just five children, discussions were held with the guardians about renting a larger house which, although reluctant to take on a higher rent, she agreed to do after receiving assurances about the guardians’ confidence in her care.\(^{42}\) However, the successful reduction of the incidence of ophthalmia meant that there were fewer children needing ‘a change of air’ and eighteen months later the guardians decided to end the arrangement.\(^{43}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Boarded-Out Children Cardiff Union</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Half Yearly Returns Graph" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{41}\) GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 2 January 1900

\(^{42}\) GA/CPLUR/UC/10/3 ESVC Minutes, 6 November 1900

\(^{43}\) GA/CPLUR/UC/10/3 ESVC Minutes, 4 March 1902
Generally, boarding-out in the Cardiff Union remained at a modest level until a dramatic increase began at the turn of the century - the unpredictable state of the local economy led to an increase in paupers which stretched the capacity of the workhouse and ES. Table 3 illustrates the change. The households that took in pauper children were a mixture – whilst some were undoubtedly attracted by the money, others acted out of a sense of responsibility. Thomas Lindsey’s mother was dead and his father had deserted him when he was first boarded-out at the age of four. For the next ten years he was looked after by his community at different addresses in Gwaelod-y-Garth. When Gwendoline Quarrell’s mother died, she was cared for by her kin – her widowed grandmother in Tongwynlais - from the age of seven until she was fourteen, although it is likely that she stayed there until she married when she was twenty-four.

One story encapsulates the precarious nature of pauper life and the efforts of guardians to safeguard the well-being of individual children. Kate Maskell and her sister were abandoned by their parents and entered ES in 1894 when Kate was five. When she was ten and beset by ophthalmia, she was one of the first children to be sent to Miss Pyle and for the next two years she alternated between Penarth and ES. In 1901 she was diagnosed with incipient phthisis – tuberculosis. She was eventually admitted to Bourne Castle, Sanatorium, Worcester, which waived half the fee of three guineas. She stayed for over a year and then returned to Shamrock scattered home where she was appointed Elder Girl. A year later she was at GHQ Home and, as she was now sixteen, it was recommended that she should go to the workhouse - the WH Visiting Committee ‘should be specially directed to her’ and she should be given ‘light work’. She died in the WH infirmary in March, 1907, aged eighteen.

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44 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 CHVC Minutes, 20 April 1905; GA/CPLUR/UC/18/6 WHVC Minutes, 16 May 1905
The MOs had to cope with other common diseases of the era – scabies and scrofula. **Table 4** shows that in 1893 about 25 percent of the children had some level of scabies, a contagious skin infestation. Following the appointment of a competent nurse to oversee the children’s bathing with regular cleanliness examinations, the ratio had fallen to just under 6 percent by the end of the year.

**Table 4  Prevalence of Scabies in ES – July, 1893**

An investigation into the uncertified transfer of John Patrick Smith from the WH to ES, even though his brother had the ‘Itch’, uncovered failings by medical and other staff at both institutions. The inquiry’s recommendations led to a review of practices, which included increasing MO visits to ES from two to three times per week with examination of Probationary Ward children on each occasion.45

Little was known about how to treat scrofula, a bacterial infection of the lymph nodes in the neck causing unsightly swelling. The MO paid particular attention to the diet and

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45 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 4 October 1898
exercise regime of those afflicted and recommended boarding out in rural fresh air.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESV Minutes, 4 June 1895}

Hardy suggests that ‘children's’ infections began to lose their potency for different reasons towards the close of the nineteenth century.\footnote{Jo Hays, ‘Anne Hardy, “The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventive Medicine, 1856-1900” (Book Review)’ \textit{The American Historical Review}, (1995) 1252-3.} Nevertheless, the occasional outbreaks of each in ES and SChs prompted serious efforts to isolate the afflicted children (and, occasionally, staff members). There were outbreaks of scarlet fever in 1901 and in 1904; two outbreaks of measles in 1902, all in SChs. Diphtheria appeared in ES in 1898 when some children were sent to the Cardiff Sanatorium for longer isolation.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESV Minutes, 5 April 1898}

‘At present it is a lamentable fact that the vast majority of the children in pauper schools throughout the country have no dental supervision at all.’\footnote{Richard Pedley, \textit{The Teeth of Pauper Children} (London: J P Segg, 1893), p. 7.} This was the finding of Richard Pedley, a dental surgeon, who examined the teeth of children in Metropolitan schools. His findings indicated the ‘prevalence of bad teeth among the working classes’.\footnote{Pedley, p. 2.} The Cardiff guardians, however, did nothing about their children’s dental health until 1900 when the MO began to treat bad teeth, although there was still no attempt to pre-empt problems of decay. There were occasional references to individual cases until, in 1905, all the children at one scattered home were sent to CRI for treatment.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 CHVC Minutes, 25 July 1905}

One of the advantages claimed for the scattered home system was that children with health issues and ‘special educational needs’ could be identified at a younger age so that suitable treatment could be found more quickly. As Table 5 indicates, the number of referrals to specialist medical institutions suggests that the Cardiff guardians and medical officers
acted effectively in this area. One boy, George Hunt, moved scattered homes so that he could be near an Elementary school that ran an innovative (for the time) special needs class, as did Minnie Thomas who was partially paralysed and weak-minded. ‘Feeble’ or ‘weak-minded’ children (to use the harsh-sounding terminology of the day) were often sent to Starcross, the Western Counties Idiot Asylum in Devon instead of simply being returned to the WH.

Table 5  
Alternative Homes – Cardiff Poor Law Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOME TYPE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Home</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformative Home</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Ship</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphanage</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Children’s Home</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanatorium – Consumptives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes for Cripples</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes for Epileptics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes for Blind</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes for Deaf and Dumb</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum for Feeble-minded</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Homes – Cardiff Poor Law Union</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GA/CPLUR/UC/33 Register of Children Maintained by the Guardians in Institutions and Schools Other than Those Provided by the Guardians

**Dietary**

52 GA/CPLUR/UC/33 Register of Children Maintained by the Guardians in Institutions and Schools Other Than Those Provided by the Guardians 1885-1915

53 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/2 Minutes CHVC 25 November 1902 [Marlborough Road Board School]; GA/CPLUR/UC/11 Minutes ESEC 7 June 1901

54 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 6 March1900
Good health depended on an adequate provision of nutritious food, the definition of which has engendered debate amongst historians. In the Poor Law system, the question of diet was an essential element of the principle of ‘less eligibility’ – the paupers’ dietary was to be inferior to that of the common worker.\textsuperscript{55} Dietary tables were issued for the guidance of guardians and as an effort to maintain centralised control.\textsuperscript{56} Yet some historians suggest that some Unions’ practices diverged from the official guidelines and were inadequate – ‘the autobiographers all complain about the scantiness and dullness of the food’.\textsuperscript{57} Against this, some describe the popular depiction of inadequate and poor quality food as portrayed in Dickens’ ‘Oliver Twist’ as a ‘myth’ as they insist that, in practice, institutional diets were, in fact, often superior to those in working-class homes. Edward Smith first introduced the measuring of paupers’ food by its nutritional content rather than by its crude weight, in the process suggesting that guardians could diverge from the LGB Dietary Tables by using more varied ingredients appropriate to their locality.\textsuperscript{58} He also underlined the importance of the involvement of Medical Officers in the decisions concerning diet. Historians have indicated that the management of conditions in Poor Law institutions was increasingly influenced by MOs who used their expertise for improvement.\textsuperscript{59} In the Cardiff Union the MO at ES recognised the need to vary the diet of ‘weakly’ children and the role of malnutrition in the common diseases of scabies, scrofula and scarlet fever.\textsuperscript{60} Female guardians often advised on issues about which they were thought to have special

\textsuperscript{55} Sheldon, p. 258.

\textsuperscript{56} Dietary Tables (See Appendix 3).

\textsuperscript{57} Ian Miller, ‘Feeding in the Workhouse: The Institutional and Ideological Functions of Food in Britain, ca. 1834–70’ Journal of British Studies 52, (2013) 940–962, (p. 941); Humphries, p. 127.

\textsuperscript{58} Edward Smith, Workhouse Dietaries: Papers relating to Workhouse Dietaries, Accounts and Papers, BPP,1867, 435, LX.57, p. 9. (See Appendix 3).


\textsuperscript{60} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 4 June 1895
knowledge, such as health, diet or cleanliness, and in 1898 an all-female sub-committee reported on the ES dietary.\textsuperscript{61} Their aim was to introduce variety into the diet in order to reduce the monotony. The BoG, in response, cited difficulty in re-arranging the suggested daily order of dinners but accepted the other ideas which they introduced at once, even though any alterations were supposed to be approved by the LGB.\textsuperscript{62} After a three months’ trial of the new dietary the MO reported that the ‘children enjoy the food better’ and ‘their health is very good’. The BoG asked the LGB to sanction the new arrangement permanently.\textsuperscript{63} This episode provides an example of the instinctive resistance to the centralised Poor Law authorities in Wales generally - the BoG often introduced initiatives without the LGB’s sanction.\textsuperscript{64} When the use of dripping in suet was rejected, the Master went ahead and tried dripping on bread instead of butter occasionally.\textsuperscript{65} Other trials included the use of mutton and bacon instead of the unvarying beef, brown bread occasionally and meat stew to replace the rather bland boiled beef. Some alterations to the children’s dietary might appear to be mean-spirited but were allegedly made for their benefit – milk and jam together were considered ‘too rich’ whilst pea soup was to be omitted during summer months because ‘the children cannot eat both soup and pudding during hot weather’.\textsuperscript{66} Occasionally, enquiries into the quality of the bread or the meat were made – the Master, in a report on meat, recorded that the quality was satisfactory but that a few FMs ‘order expensive joints too frequently’, perhaps as ‘perks’.\textsuperscript{67} Gradually, the

\textsuperscript{61} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 5 July 1898

\textsuperscript{62} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 21 July 1898

\textsuperscript{63} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 1 November 1898


\textsuperscript{65} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 5 October 1897

\textsuperscript{66} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 7 April 1896; GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 6 July 1897

\textsuperscript{67} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/2 CHVC Minutes, 27 June 1903
children began to experience a more healthy variety in their diet. However, they eagerly welcomed any occasion which might break up its monotony. The celebrations of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, the Coronation of King Edward VII and the visits to Cardiff of successive Princes of Wales were all occasions marked by a special meal, fruit and sweets (and sports with prizes) and a holiday! The ‘special fare’ at Christmas was especially enjoyed - roast beef, vegetables, plum pudding, mince pies, Christmas cake, fruit and sweets were all served at ES and in SCHs. At each home ‘nothing was wanting to make the day a specially enjoyable one for the youngsters’. Much of the food was donated by the well-to-do who also arranged gifts of fruit to individual SCHs and even two hundredweight of hot-cross buns, sent to ES by a baker from Newport.

**Punishment**

Despite the guardians’ attempts to improve the children’s experience, there were always rebellious individuals. Children in ES and SCHs came from a background of neglect, privation and, often, domestic violence. They were not angels and some, unsurprisingly, were driven to break the rules and risked the inevitable punishment. Some mothers requested the release of their children back to the family or protested about the type of work to which the guardians were sending them, but the administration of the disciplinary rules was largely an internal affair. Analysis of ESVC committee minutes shows that corporal punishment was the exception rather than the rule. Yet, George Bowering received twelve strokes of the birch, and two companions six each, for ‘gross cruelty to a cat’. When three older boys threw Thomas Young, aged seven, over dormitory beds, and

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68 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 CHVC Minutes, 3 October 1899

69 *Evening Express* 26 December 1905, p. 2.

70 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/3 ESVC Minutes, 3 April 1902

71 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 4 August 1896
his arm was broken, two were given three strokes of the birch but the ringleader, John Jones, too old at sixteen to be birched, was severely reprimanded, put on bread and water for forty-eight hours, then returned to the workhouse where he was to be ‘put to work as much as possible’. However, in 1900 when three boys were birched for ‘wearing socks in bed’ contrary to instruction, an enquiry decided that, although the Master was fully entitled to impose this punishment, four strokes on one lad who had also lied were considered to be excessive. The BoG instructed that the Master should not inflict corporal punishment on the ‘naked body of any boy’ in future. The use of the cane was approved when necessary. When the SCHs were established each FM had to keep a Punishment Book available for inspection and had to receive the consent of the BoG to carry out any sanction. Children absconded, some regularly, and repeat offenders were described as ‘incorrigible’. Pilfering from the FMs and ‘dishonesty’ at work, wilful disobedience, ‘malicious habits’ and bullying of younger children were the most usual offences. The first response of the guardians was removal of the child – being returned to ES or to the workhouse was intended as an example to deter other children, as each was perceived as transfer to a less attractive alternative. The CHVC minutes reveal a darker side of Homes life – antisocial behaviour. Some girls are described as ‘quite unmanageable’ or ‘a bad influence’; boys were ‘troublesome’ or ‘refractory’. Guilty children were transferred to a reformatory home or returned to ES or the workhouse. Occasionally, badly behaved boys in need of firmer discipline were sent to Certified Industrial Schools, including HMS Havannah in Cardiff. Girls, such as Bessie Ellard and Dora Harris, who were ‘too bad to keep’ or ‘very difficult to deal with’, were sent to ‘reformatory’ institutions as shown in Table 5.

72 GA/CPLUR/UC/ 10/2 ESVC Minutes, 18 September 1895. (See Appendix 2 - Punishment Rules).
73 GA/CPLUR/UC/ 10/2 ESVC Minutes, 6 March 1900
74 GA/CPLUR/UC/ 6/3 CHVC Minutes, 30 August 1904 (George Lloyd for ‘malicious habit’ and John Lee ‘refractory’).


**Conclusion**

The Cardiff Union was one of the first to introduce a ‘separate school’ which reflected well on the guardians who had to respond decisively to the pressure of a rapidly growing population. In the 1890s, in keeping with the changing attitudes towards paupers, there is a great deal of evidence that the Cardiff guardians responded positively and, in some cases, enthusiastically, to the altered environment, despite one or two lapses. It took the shock of a major outbreak of ophthalmia to stir them to radical action but their overhaul of domestic arrangements, the employment of specialist medical staff and the building of a proper hospital on the ES site brought about rapid improvement in the treatment of this pernicious disease. These improvements continued in the SCH system with isolation facilities and regular MO examinations, together with increased use of boarding-out, which made significant improvements to the general health of the children. Their diet too gradually improved, with increased variety of food, efforts to reduce its monotony and the psychological benefits of the ‘feasts’ on special occasions. The phasing out of the birch was a humanitarian improvement and, whilst the threat of punishment for misbehaviour remained as a real and necessary deterrent, the punishment system became more visible and accountable with the emphasis less on the physical and more on the threat of removal to a less attractive situation for serious offences.
Chapter Three: Children’s Homes

This chapter will examine the impact of transfer from the Ely Schools to the ‘pseudo family’ of the Scattered Homes on the physical and psychological experiences of the children involved.\(^1\) In particular, the BoG’s intention that the Scattered Homes would provide ‘the nearest approach to home life’ will be compared with the lived experience. Was the quality of the children’s lives improved sufficiently to enable them to forget ‘the rock from which they were hewn’ and how close did the children’s experience approach that of a ‘home life’?\(^2\) The relentless growth of Cardiff’s population and, contiguously, that of paupers required extra workhouse capacity and, at the Ely Schools, the guardians had a ready-made solution.\(^3\) The inevitable transformation of the site into a workhouse extension meant a search for alternative accommodation for the children - the efficacy of cottage homes was already being questioned and boarding out was used in a limited way but could not absorb the large numbers in the Schools.\(^4\) Favourable reports convinced them that the Sheffield Union system of isolated homes (renamed Scattered Homes) suited their purpose.\(^5\) The ideal of Victorian domesticity emphasised the unique care provided by a mother, a relationship denied to many poor children by economic or family circumstance. A foster mother in a small scattered home was thought to be the best way to compensate for this lack and contrasted vividly with the chaotic homes of the poor.\(^6\) An indication of the growth of the Scattered Homes system will include quantitative analyses of family

\(^{1}\) Bryant, p.11.

\(^{2}\) *Weekly Mail* 8 July 1899, p.7.


\(^{4}\) Sheldon, p. 272.


\(^{6}\) Sheldon, p. 263.
backgrounds and admissions and discharges. Study of the children’s experience will focus on the efforts of the authorities to protect, encourage and prepare the children for their uncertain future.

**Houses**

Once the decision was taken to adopt the Sheffield system, the guardians acted with commendable speed and within three months the first houses were opened. However, the Homes and the Ely Schools had to continue side-by-side until the Headquarters Grouped Homes were built and the Schools closed in 1903. A Children’s Homes Visiting Committee (CHVC) was created to oversee the initiative, taking on the responsibilities of identifying suitable addresses in respectable districts which had to be near a local Elementary School, with appropriate places of worship in the vicinity and with access to a public park, and of negotiating leases. They took care to involve Clerks of Works, Medical Officers and Local Government Board Inspectors.7

There was to be a maximum of two Homes in close proximity so as not to worry neighbours, nor to overwhelm local schools. The first pair was opened in Cowbridge Road, on the western side of the town in 1899. The initiative received an early positive response from the local press, which emphasised a cordial acceptance by neighbours.8 This was certainly an over-optimistic description because the residents in several neighbourhoods objected strongly. Despite the guardians’ reassurances about supervision of the children, the LGB caved in to the strength of public feeling. However, the guardians pressed ahead in the belief that ‘the fears of these gentlemen will not be realised’.9

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7 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 6 December 1898; GA/CPLUR UC/6/1 Minutes CHVC 12 December 1898, ‘LGB Rules for Isolated/Scattered Homes’ (see Appendix 5 – LGB Rules).

8 ‘Scattered Homes’, *South Wales Echo* 18 July 1899 p.3

9 *Weekly Mail* 14 May 1900, p.4
By February, 1900, the Board’s initial target of creating twelve new children’s homes had been achieved. **Figures 3 and 4** provide representative examples of the style of houses chosen by the guardians as scattered homes. Typically in adjoining pairs with a door knocked through, the substantial three-storied houses were located in the newly constructed middle-class suburbs of an expanding Cardiff. The attic rooms, formerly servants’ quarters, were usually left unoccupied as potential ‘isolated’ sick rooms.
Table 6 provides details of the allocation of scattered homes in my chosen period. In subsequent years, the system was extended outside Cardiff to Penarth and Barry, though not every house was in use throughout the period as some leases were not renewed.

Table 7 clearly shows the growth of the Scattered Homes system as measured in the number of days maintenance provided in each half year. This method of counting draws no
distinction between permanent and casual inmates. As an indicator I have included the number of children in residence on the half-yearly census days.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Days in Homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>148</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
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<td>1904</td>
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<td>1905</td>
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<td>1906</td>
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<td>1907</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UC/47/2-3 CPLUR Year Books and Admissions and Discharges Registers 1898-1909

Staff

In approving the Sheffield Union’s scheme, the BMJ pointed out, ‘The corner stone of this scheme will be the selection of the foster parent, on whose uprightness the child's well-being will depend’. This belief was echoed by FT Bircham. Selection was left to the CHVC who would make enquiries into capabilities and character. A Foster Mother (FM) was to be granted a great deal of discretion in dealing with her children, but she would remain under the supervision of the Lady Visitor Inspector and guardians. The CHVC was careful to appoint FMs according to creed (of the first four there were one Catholic, one

10 ‘Cottage Homes for Pauper Children’, British Medical Journal, 2, 1770 (1894), 1262-63.

11 Bircham, Report on the Sheffield Union, p. 13

Nonconformist and two Church of England). Recruitment was limited to single women or widows between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five without dependent children and who lived within the boundaries of the Union.

**Table 8  
Age of Relief/Foster Mothers on Appointment**

![Staff Ages Chart]

Source: GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1-3 Minutes CHVC

**Table 8** shows that, with the exception of three younger women, recruitment of RM and FMs matched the age stipulation. Some of the women appointed had prior experience of working with children but the majority seemed to have no specialist knowledge. The salaries of FMs and RMs were £22 a year, rising by £1 a year to £26, with emoluments valued at £26 a year. By the end of the first year, with the numbers required at eight Homes, the Guardians were forced to drop the geographical restriction on recruitment.

Despite the Guardians’ care in selection, there was a regular turn-over of staff. The lack of prior experience and the unrelenting nature of her duties surprised new appointments, some of whom could not cope with the demands. Mothers left the service – occasionally family issues or marriage was the reason – but there were also disciplinary issues. Visits by committee members or the Lady Visitor revealed lapses – Foster Mothers deemed
unsatisfactory were told bluntly to improve or resign. An admonishment that she should ‘perform duties in a more satisfactory manner’ was often followed by a month’s notice.\textsuperscript{13} The Guardians appeared reluctant at first to dismiss Mothers but, when failings continued, they acted ruthlessly, understandably given that their first responsibility was to the welfare of the children. Some found the workload too physically or emotionally demanding which caused them to resign. One FM took refuge in alcohol; another was prescribed ‘stimulants’ by the Medical Officer after a strenuous year coping with two separate epidemics in her Home.\textsuperscript{14} Occasionally, they were treated sympathetically. Miss Coles was to receive her salary whilst recovering from diphtheria ‘contracted in discharging her duties’.\textsuperscript{15} The Guardians’ enquiry into charges of misconduct against Miss Dingle, ‘one of their best FMs’, quickly found that they were trivial and based on hearsay.\textsuperscript{16} She had been a FM for nearly five years. Besides Minnie Dingle, ten other FMs provided the stability of a settled household, remaining in the same house from the day of opening, including Mary Murphy, Lillie Christodolo and Mary Thomas. Maintaining an upbeat stance in claiming early success of the system, the Chairman stated that the Board ‘had been fortunate in their foster-mothers’.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Children}

From the start, children were carefully chosen based on antecedent and character because the Homes were intended to house the ‘deserving’ pauper children, who were regarded as permanent inmates.\textsuperscript{18} The distinction between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ was an

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 Minutes CHVC, 26 January 1904
\item \textsuperscript{14} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 Minutes CHVC, 24 October 1905
\item \textsuperscript{15} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/2 Minutes CHVC, 27 August 1901
\item \textsuperscript{16} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 Minutes CHVC, 22 July 1904
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Weekly Mail} 28 April 1900, p.10.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Rees Jones, \textit{The Advantages of Home Life and Training for Pauper Children: A Paper Presented to the Ninth Annual Poor Law Conference, Cardiff, 12 September 1900} (London: PS King, 1900), p. 4.
\end{itemize}
integral feature of Poor Law provision. The ‘undeserving’ casual children, or ‘ins and outs’, were to be housed at the Grouped Head Quarters Homes although the records show that children in SCHs were just as liable to withdrawal by parents. The composition of each ‘family’ and the domestic routine were carefully considered. Children below the age of three were not sent to the Homes but often an infant from ES was included to provide a focus of ‘family life’ for all the children and to give the older girls experience of maternal training. In order to imitate as natural a family as possible, genders were mixed until the age of ten and siblings were kept together in the same house, an indication of changing attitudes. There were no more than twelve children in each house and each FM was assisted by an Elder Girl, usually fourteen or fifteen years old and specially selected for her character and intelligence, who gained domestic training and experience before going out to domestic service, regarded as a necessary preparation for girls destined to be working-class wives and mothers. All the children attended local elementary board schools – the teachers at Lansdowne Road Board School stated that the only difference between ‘ordinary’ children and Homes children was the ‘cleanliness and neatness of the latter’. Children were encouraged to visit school friends’ houses and to invite them to the Home. All children attended a local place of worship accompanied by the FM, the Relief Mother or by the Elder Girl – another opportunity for her to experience responsibility. Meals were taken together – FMs were occasionally admonished for eating separately – and a dietary record was kept for checking by committee members. The LGB Rules demanded that the ‘fullest liberty be extended to children consistent with discipline and moral welfare’ and

19 Bryant, p. 20.


21 Sheldon, p. 264.

22 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 Minutes CHVC 27 February 1900
that children should have time for recreation with no chores after school hours. The guardians bought playground equipment for SCH’s gardens and children were allowed to play in the park. Any punishment for minor indiscretions had to be approved by CHVC and a punishment book was kept in each house. For major failings, removal to HQ or even to the workhouse was a real threat. Supervision by women - Matron, Lady Visitor and CHVC members - was important (they were thought to understand domesticity better than men) and they checked the logs to ensure the children were properly fed, were attending school and place of worship, and that punishments were within the rules. Complaints by neighbours against the children’s behaviour or the FMs were rigorously investigated and acted upon. A neighbour complained of the treatment of the children by Harriett Robbins, FM in Cadoxton, and that she had made the elder girl, Bertha Sutton, work outside for two hours without hat or coat in very cold weather. The guardians’ enquiry found no undue harshness by Miss Robbins but ‘a want of judgement’. Despite being offered the chance to withdraw her resignation, she left.

_Bureaucracy_

Who were the children who were consigned to institutional care? Murdoch states that only a minority of the children in English public and private welfare institutions were true orphans. In an attempt to reveal a reasonably accurate picture of the condition of the children admitted to children’s homes in my chosen period, I have adopted Murdoch’s methodology in compiling a quantitative analysis of admissions. The calendar year 1903

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23 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 Minutes CHVC 12 December 1898, ‘LGB Rules for Isolated/Scattered Homes’. (See Appendix 4).

24 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 Minutes CHVC 25 July 1899

25 Murdoch, p. 73.
was pivotal in the evolution of childcare in Cardiff and provides a representative snapshot of the children admitted first to the workhouse and then transferred to either the schools or the scattered homes. The 127 entries provide details of 212 children. In this year the Ely Schools finally closed - the children were accommodated either in Scattered Homes, Headquarters Probationary Homes or were boarded out.

In Hulonce’s opinion, ‘pauper children were seen as being damaged by their parentage’.\textsuperscript{27} As Murdoch points out, the majority of children in Poor Law institutions were not orphans or deserted by parents but had at least one living parent – as \textbf{Table 9} shows, in the Cardiff Union about eighty-three percent of the children admitted in this year.\textsuperscript{28} The numbers of children with two known parents or a lone father are in the minority, in fact very similar to the number of orphans. The largest group of admissions is that from lone mothers who struggled to provide for the family, as is seen by the large proportion of mothers often condemned to the workhouse for lack of any alternative. The existence of parents actively trying to provide some sort of care for their children ran counter to the portrayal preferred by the authorities who insisted that ‘parents had forfeited their privileges through idleness and neglect’.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} Hulonce, p.30.

\textsuperscript{28} Murdoch, p. 79.
Table 9  Analysis of Family Background of Child Admissions 1903

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Background of Child Admissions to the Ely Schools, 1 January, 1903 - 31 December, 1903</th>
<th>Child Admissions</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child has two living parents with known address(es):</strong></td>
<td>31 14.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents at residential address</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) in prison:</td>
<td>10 4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3 1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>5 2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>7 3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father in workhouse</td>
<td>3 1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father in asylum, mother in residence</td>
<td>1 0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Child of lone mother with known address (father dead, deserted, or no information given):** | 109 51.4 |
| Mother at residential address | 20 9.4 |
| Mother in workhouse | 78 36.8 |
| Mother in infirmary | 2 1 |
| Mother in Asylum | 7 3.3 |
| Mother in service | 2 1 |

| **Child of lone father with known address (mother dead, deserted, or no information given):** | 36 17.0 |
| Father at residential address | 15 7.2 |
| Father in workhouse | 8 3.8 |
| Father on ship | 13 6.1 |

| **Child has no parents listed as nearest relative:** | 36 17.0 |
| Sibling(s) listed as only nearest relative (not siblings in poor law schools) | 11 5.2 |
| Sister | 4 1.9 |
| Step-sister | 1 0.5 |
| Grandparent(s) listed as nearest relative | 10 5 |
| "Friend" listed as nearest relative | 7 3.3 |
| Blank entry or no information about relatives | 3 1.5 |

Source: UC/47/2-3 CPLUR Year Books and Admissions and Discharges Registers 1898-1909

Table 10 demonstrates that lone mothers (widows, unmarried and deserted women) were by far the most likely to commit their children to the Ely Schools, outnumbering lone fathers at a ratio of six to one. The percentage at Cardiff matches exactly the figure that Murdoch calculated in her study of London poor law schools at 56 percent and which indicates the depths of desperation endured by women struggling to survive; kin referrals also outnumber those of lone fathers. Although Murdoch states that accounts of parental
violence and wilful neglect were rare, in Cardiff, in this one year, just over 15 percent of children were brought in by the NSPCC, the police or Relieving Officers which indicates an unfortunate level of parental negligence, which is corroborated by the number of prosecutions and imprisonments for child neglect. One also wonders at the circumstances that led to four children requesting the asylum of the workhouse for themselves.

Table 10  Informant committing children to care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning Officer</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UC/47/2-3 CPLUR Year Books and Admissions and Discharges Registers 1898-1909

Of the 212 children received in children’s homes from the Cardiff workhouse in 1903, about 46 percent were discharged within months of admission, the majority, 38 percent, to one or both parents. Very often at least one parent (usually the mother) had been registered as an inmate of the workhouse when the child entered the home but, often, she would discharge herself from the workhouse to claim her child in an attempt to maintain a semblance of family unity. The Admissions and Discharge Registers record all too often that children were readmitted within a relatively short time of their discharge and, often, for a short stay as shown by Table 11. The records show repeated re-admissions and

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30 Murdoch, p. 80; South Wales Echo 19 November 1898, p. 2; Evening Express 23 February 1903 p. 3; Evening Express 19 July 1904 p. 3.
discharges extending, sometimes, over years. These children were the ‘ins and outs’ that were a significant feature of Poor Law provision throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – Joanna Hill’s ‘ever swelling stream’. The figures lend credence to Lynn Hollen Lees and Lydia Murdoch’s arguments that poor families regularly turned to poor law resources as part of their daily survival strategies.

Table 11 Admissions to and Discharges from Scattered Homes within 1 year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCHARGES from CHILDREN'S HOMES</th>
<th>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions to Children's Homes</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions to Workhouse</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharges to Parents (within 1 Month)</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(within 3 Months)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(within 6 Months)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(within 9 Months)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(within 12 Months)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Kin</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Place of Settlement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Asylum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UC/47/2-3 CPLUR Year Books and Admissions and Discharges Registers 1898-1909

Others take the view that pauper adults were incapable of parental affection and their use of residential care was an economic arrangement. The efforts of mothers to save their sons from employment in coal mines suggests not. Whatever the truth (probably with elements of both views), this continual flux of children not only disrupted the running of the scattered homes, but also harmed the chances of the children involved of gaining any

32 Hollen Lees, p. 283; Murdoch, p. 70.
33 Murdoch, p. 17; Bryant, p. 34.
continuity of education. However, the belief that parents were still a threat, even while the children were in the schools, persisted. Family members often tried to maintain contact with the children, not just by regular discharges but also by finding out where they were in service. There are numerous examples of Relieving Officers having to admonish individuals not to ‘interfere’ with children through attempts to persuade or induce them to leave their place of employment. Kate Daley’s mother was warned on several occasions – she would take Kate to ‘objectionable neighbourhoods’.

Table 12 ‘Ins and Outs’ Grouped and Scattered Children’s Homes 1899-1905

![Graph showing the number of children in half yearly returns from 1899 to 1905 for Ely Industrial Schools.]

When the Guardians felt that a child was at risk, they ‘assumed control’, as sanctioned by the 1889 Poor Law Act, thus relieving parents of legal responsibility for their child.

34 Dept. Committee to inquire into Systems for Maintenance and Education of Children under Charge of Managers of District Schools and Boards of Guardians in Metropolis. Report Volume I, 1896 BPP C.8027, XLIII.1, pp. 72-3

35 Moore, p. 376.

36 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 Minutes CHVC 4 June 1901

37 Bill for Better Prevention of Cruelty to Children 1889 BPP 87, 1.501 (52 Vict.)
Table 12 indicates how, as the number of scattered homes children increased, the casual population grew at a similar rate as the permanent, occasionally outstripping it.

**Conclusion**

On balance, despite the absence of a true family environment, life in a scattered home offered some advantages when compared with the children’s experience of life in the Ely Schools, and, certainly, it was infinitely better than the workhouse. The shared experience of children with siblings in the same house was a step forward as was the opportunity for all children to share their lives with a small coterie of fellows and with a mother figure which they would not have had elsewhere. The opportunity to mix ‘more with non-pauper life’, to form friendships and ties with other children and adults in school and church communities, to acquire an education, and to play were all more life-enhancing than not and represented opportunities to escape the pauper stigma. The policy also enabled Catholic children to be housed near Roman Catholic schools.\(^{38}\) Learning social skills and the rules of companionship represented a form of social preparation for the ‘real’ world. For orphans, the abandoned and deserted ones, this approximation to family life was surely better than the life they would have had without the physical and emotional comfort of a settled home.

\(^{38}\) Hulonce, p. 44.
Chapter Four: Training and Work

This chapter moves outside the institutions and examines the efforts of the guardians to prepare children for their future as wage earners as labourers or domestic servants. How useful was the training and were the children effectively equipped for the transition to adulthood and the world of work? For girls, domestic service was practically the only option, but reformers warned that ‘without proper training girls would likely lose their positions and return to the workhouse as adults’.¹ Young girls, in particular, were regarded as vulnerable and this chapter also looks at the arrangements put in place by the guardians to protect the wellbeing of the children outside ES and the scattered homes. Were the guardians sufficiently conscious of the need for the effective supervision of children sent out to work and beyond?

Work

The Chair of Cardiff Guardians warned that ‘an ordinary institution could never be in the proper sense of the word a home’.² Accepting that life in the Homes was a skewed version of family life, how far could the children be prepared for making their way as young adults in the outside world? The day-to-day experience of school, church, household chores and play provided some sort of framework but the records do not reveal much about how the children were prepared for adulthood and the real world. Hulonce comments that ‘life appeared to be better for the children themselves’ and she surmised that scattered homes children must have learned some valuable life lessons from their house mothers.³ The Cardiff Admissions and Discharge Registers throw no light on the eventual destinations of the children. The only real clue is their experience when sent out to work from the age of

¹ Murdoch, p. 58.
² Weekly Mail, 16 May 1903, p.2.
³ Hulonce, p. 44.
fourteen to sixteen when they would be discharged for good. Children were sent out to work to keep them from their families yet inevitably they frequently sought out their kin.⁴

**Table 13** Final Discharges Scattered Homes and Ely Schools 1899-1905

While Table 11 shows the short-term discharges from the Scattered Homes, for those who stayed beyond the first year discharge usually meant employment or training. However, in the six years from the opening of the first Home, Table 13 shows that about 27 percent of the children were removed from the Homes (9 percent to mothers, 18 percent to adoption and kin) the remainder were sent out to work.

**Age**

Table 14 displays the age distribution of children to the age of thirteen during the last stage of the transfer from ES to the SCHs – overall, there were more boys than girls with younger children in the majority. Of the older children, 70 percent of girls going out to

⁴ Sheldon, p. 267.
work from Ely Schools were fourteen years old; girl from the Scattered Homes, however, tended to be older – 71 percent were fifteen, 20 percent were aged sixteen. This discrepancy is probably a reflection of the better domestic training opportunities in the Homes for girls. Boys were less likely to benefit from extended industrial training, especially when they were transferred to scattered homes. 80 percent of boys were aged fourteen when they were sent out to work, the usual age for leaving school at the time.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN’S AGES (SCHOOLS and HOMES) 1903</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UC/47/2-3 CPLUR Year Books and Admissions and Discharges Registers 1898-1909

Domestic service was practically the only option for girls so about 86 percent of all girls in work were placed in private homes. A further 6 percent were sent to work on farms, which must have been a severe shock to the system of girls who were used to urban surroundings. Four girls began dressmaking apprenticeships, an appropriate use of the needlework training they had received and a real opportunity to acquire a respectable livelihood in the future. Registers are inconsistent in giving the educational standard of the girls but, generally, 80 percent of the girls had achieved at least standard five which made them more likely to be responsive servants and, in some cases, gave girls the ability and confidence to exercise agency in their situation. Girls were ‘given notice’ for a variety of
reasons but some chose to leave their situation themselves. Instead of being punished, these girls were often simply found another situation, an action which suggests that the authorities believed that there may have been some justification for the girls’ decision.\(^5\) Girls entering service in a family home were vulnerable, unaccustomed as they were to male adults. Daniels cites Seth Koven who saw them as ‘sexually endangered’, a charge which could be very real.\(^6\) ‘Child savers’ were firmly convinced that there was a connection between domestic work and prostitution.\(^7\) Keeping children’s homes’ girls under surveillance through visiting officers was the norm for the times although there is no reference in the Cardiff records of sexual impropriety concerning girls in service.\(^5\) Even so, the claim by several employers that a girl was ‘unsuited to domestic service’ probably covered a wide range of possible scenarios. Girls who were in need of more thoroughly supervised domestic service training were sent to one of eleven dedicated Training Homes. Around the turn of the century, there was a shortage of openings in skilled trades and many boys ended up as unskilled general labourers.\(^9\) Industrial training for boys was intended to instil economically useful skills but in many industries the workforce was gradually becoming downskilled.\(^10\) The effectiveness of the children’s training acquired in the institution was sometimes doubtful. When Harold Lloyd was found a situation with a shoemaker his employer found that he knew very little about the craft and questions were

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\(^5\) GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 Minutes CHVC 30 August 1904


\(^8\) Bryant, p. 59.

\(^9\) Murdoch, p. 136.

asked about his instruction.\textsuperscript{11} It was explained that he had missed much tuition because of his physical disability – he had lost a leg. Physical disability was not necessarily a barrier to paid work – Mary Ann Groves was described as a ‘cripple’ but she successfully completed an apprenticeship with high-class dressmakers who kept her on at the end of her training.\textsuperscript{12} Both Murdoch and Sheldon suggest that farm work, the armed forces and the sea were the most common alternatives for boys.\textsuperscript{13} Some attempts were made to send boys to the army or the Royal Navy, but most failed because of age or physical unsuitability. Naval training was costly and the LGB refused to pay the prohibitive charges on the grounds that Cardiff was an important seaport where there were plenty of prospective merchant line employers. Subsequently, the Master acquired a licence to act as a recruiting agent for the Merchant Marine. The Sea Fishing Industry became an acceptable alternative.\textsuperscript{14} Nine boys were apprenticed to Brixham trawler skippers by the end of 1905. A six-year apprenticeship on trawlers offered boys a good chance to better themselves. The life, although potentially dangerous (about 6 percent of apprentices lost their lives), seems to have been acceptable, with good food afloat and ashore, and pocket money boosted by the chance of a share in salvage payments and a percentage of the value of the catch.\textsuperscript{15} There was plenty of farm work available but one of the main sources of placements in south Wales was the coal-mining industry. The Guardians found situations in the Rhondda, Rhymney and Ely valleys – twenty-eight boys were sent from the scattered homes to remote and, in the eyes of the boys, alien communities where often Welsh was the first language. The boys were expected to go underground where the work was very hard and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/2 Minutes CHVC 6 January 1903
\item \textsuperscript{12} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 Minutes CHVC 27 February 1900
\item \textsuperscript{13} Murdoch, p. 136; Sheldon, p. 269.
\item \textsuperscript{14} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/3 Minutes ESVC 4 February 1902
\item \textsuperscript{15} Report by Mr A.D. Berrington and Mr J.S. Davy on an Investigation of the Fishing Apprenticeship System, 1894 BPP LXIX, pp. 6-7.
\end{itemize}
dangerous. Some dismayed mothers successfully objected to this fate for their sons and promised to find them alternative situations even though they were often still in the workhouse.\textsuperscript{16} William Harrington was to be sent to a collier in Deri, Caerphilly but his mother protested. Two months later she found him a position with a bootmaker in Cardiff.\textsuperscript{17} John Lloyd’s mother also protested but he told the Relieving Officer that he wanted to stay. Only occasionally did Guardians question the suitability of mines work – after one boy’s physical examination by the Medical Officer it was decided that colliery work ‘did him no harm’ and boys were rarely rejected as physically incapable.\textsuperscript{18} Though the decision to send boys to this most inhospitable environment might seem harsh, one possible justification could be that there they would be out of reach of interference from family as recommended by Mr Mozley, Inspector.\textsuperscript{19} In my chosen period about 44 percent of boys were found situations in mines, on farms or at sea. Some 20 percent were either apprenticed to local artisans or worked for grocers, ironmongers and professional men. Ten boys absconded and some were never traced. Some, however, made their own way. Arthur Williams left his employer and went off with ‘persons of the neighbourhood’.\textsuperscript{20} A month later the Master received a letter from Arthur - he was now working for a grocer in Weymouth, was doing well and was disinclined to return – the Guardians pragmatically recommended that he remain.\textsuperscript{21} Anna Davin regards children ‘not solely as victims but as persons who used their skills and ingenuity to influence and enhance their environment’.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{16} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 Minutes ESVC 12 December 1896
\textsuperscript{17} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 Minutes ESVC 23 February 1897
\textsuperscript{18} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/2 Minutes CHVC 23 June 1903
\textsuperscript{20} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 Minutes CHVC 26 January 1904
\textsuperscript{21} GA/CPLUR/UC/6/3 Minutes CHVC 24 February 1904
In Cardiff boys and girls were prepared to take the initiative to take charge of their own lives.

Some children felt more prepared than others for their future. Boys working in the harsh environments of colliery or fishing boat could soon learn valuable lessons in self-preservation, financial prudence and physical stoicism but they were largely deprived of emotional preparation for forming relationships, especially as they had been raised from the age of ten in boys-only homes with limited experience of females. Farm work was hard for girls as well as boys, but at least they could observe, and even possibly participate in, an example of family life, that of their employers.

**Supervision**

With the changing attitudes towards the welfare of children under the care of the Poor Law unions, the concern of the guardians turned to the wellbeing of the children who were no longer under their immediate supervision – those sent out to work. In early 1895, besides recommending that the Ladies Visiting Committee (LVC) should visit children in work, a sub-committee was constituted to examine the best way to arrange ‘systematic visitation to children in work’.\(^{23}\) The report recommended stricter enforcement of the Agreement between the BoG and employers, an enhanced role for Relieving Officers, better individual records of each child’s progress, and the involvement of other agencies in supervision.\(^{24}\) Crucially, a special permanent sub-committee was to look after the welfare of children in work, to receive reports of visits by ROs and to report to ESVC – the Children in Service Sub-Committee (CSS). Later, an officer was appointed specifically to seek out placements for children ready for work and to visit them on site for at least twelve months after starting and to check that the Wages Book was accurate. Mr. Pritchard became a sort of

\(^{23}\) GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 2 April 1895

\(^{24}\) GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 7 May 1895. (See Appendix 4).
Warrant Officer whose remit was the investigation of any aspect of employment – non-payment of wages, allegations of mistreatment, checking on attendance at the place of worship and admonishing both employers and children for infractions of the Agreement.25 The care of young girls gave particular cause for concern. A worried guardian questioned the effectiveness of the system which led the CSS to report.26 It found that the measures in place were inadequate. It was felt that supervision by a female was preferable to that of a male, especially in the two years after the age of sixteen when young girls were ‘exposed to the difficulties and temptations which previous training may have only partly prepared them for’.27 The arrangements employed by the GFS were approved and regular reports on girls in domestic service were agreed. The ability of ES to train girls of fourteen had been compromised by the LGB’s insistence on longer hours in the classroom at the expense of domestic training.28 In another example of defiance, CSS recommended that such girls be withdrawn from schoolwork and should receive six months training either at ES or a Training Home before being placed in work. Domestic service was regarded as ideal work for poor girls because their contact ‘with "unrespectable" parents and kin’ would be restricted, although that ambition was often thwarted when girls refused work as live-in servants, preferring ‘daily work’ so that they could live with their family.29 The committee also recommended that the LGB should petition for legislation to give guardians greater legal control of girls after the age of sixteen. This was achieved by the 1898 Act which extended the provision of the 1889 Act to all children in the care of guardians.30 With the

25 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 4 May 1897. (See Appendix 4).
26 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 1 June 1897
27 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 28 September 1897
28 Dept. Committee to inquire into Systems for Maintenance and Education of Children 1896 BPP C.8027, XLIII.1, pp. 55-6.
29 Murdoch, pp. 139-140.
30 Poor Law Act 1889 BPP 338, VI.439, pp. 3-4; Poor Law Act 1898 BPP 130, VI.353, pp. 2-3.
opening of the scattered homes, these supervisory arrangements continued - children were visited regularly by ROs, the Lady Visitor Inspector (LVI) who replaced the LVC, and clergymen in the locality, especially in the colliery districts.

**Creed**

According to LGB rules, children should have been sent to work with an employer of the same creed. However, sometimes there were insufficient prospective employers for the children available for work and vice-versa. In about 16 percent of placements there was a mismatch of creed, especially among the later arrangements. Each child’s creed was made known to employers who were regularly reminded to ensure that the child attended an appropriate place of worship – when this didn’t happen, vigorous enquiries were made and employers were admonished. The Master was instructed to ensure a work placement was within a reasonable distance of church or chapel – Elizabeth Davies’ placement was cancelled when it was realised that no RC church was anywhere near her prospective employment.  

The question of religion or ‘creed’ was one issue that both children and their parents shared. During the nineteenth century, non-conformism began to challenge the Established Church for supremacy in both rural and industrial Wales. The unprecedented growth of Cardiff was swollen by a large influx of Irish immigrants, the majority being of the Catholic faith. Religious sensitivity was a serious issue in the debates about education with claims that Catholic poor law children were denied instruction in their chosen faith.  

Nevertheless, as early as 1865 it was noted that twelve children from ES were confirmed with several more from HMS Havannah. In 1866 a Father Cacchia began instructing

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31 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 1 October 1895
32 Murdoch, p. 111.
33 Murdoch, p. 111.
Catholic children at ES and a year later it was recorded that twenty-one children there received confession.  

Philanthropists had set a good example when they set up the Cardiff Ragged School in 1855. Their rules expressly forbade discrimination against the sizeable Irish Catholic contingent and the school was run on purely ‘secular principles’. The requirement to maintain a ‘creed register’, introduced by the 1868 Poor Law Amendment Act, was accompanied by instructions to guardians to ensure the religious rights of pauper children, including the duty to send children if so requested to an institution of their chosen creed. The failure of the LGB to enforce legislation meant that local priests and Catholic locals were often at odds with poor law establishments and management concerning religious instruction in poor law institutions. In 1893 local clergy expressed their concerns that for the Catholic children in ES ‘their religion had been neglected’. It was claimed that the guardians were opposed to the requirement to transfer Catholic children to certified Catholic Homes, whereas the guardians, in fact, were guilty of dragging their heels – whilst they agreed with the principle, they decided that they would comply only when there was ‘a surplusage over accommodation’. It wasn’t until the LGB ruled against them that they conceded. Subsequently, the Cardiff guardians became more willing to


35 CHC, ‘MS Prospectus of the Cardiff Ragged School, Old Barracks, opened January 8, 1855’ 948.2(392.5)CAR. (See Appendix 1, Rules II and III).


38 Western Mail, 3 November, p. 4 and 8 December 1893, p. 4.

39 South Wales Echo 7 April 1894, p. 3.

40 Western Mail 7 November 1894, p. 6.
accommodate the wishes of parents, children and clergy. Children were regularly 
transferred – girls to Nazareth House in Cardiff (which cared for ‘crippled, deformed and 
incurably afflicted’ girls as well as for some elderly patients), boys to St. Michael’s in 
Pontypridd. Nazareth House was supported by donations of food and, financially, by both 
Catholics and non-Catholics, including the Marquess of Bute, who donated land and 
£1,000 towards the building of the convent in 1875. Table 15 shows the numbers of 
children of each creed in 1903.

Table 15 Scattered Homes Children’s Creeds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creed</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonconformist</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The creed register was scrupulously maintained by the Cardiff guardians, though an 
enquiry found that genuine mistakes had been made in recording thirty-five children in the 
wrong creed. The guardians introduced measures to facilitate the religious instruction of 
non-Anglican children at ES. Arrangements were made to enable Non-conformist children 
to attend a local chapel and, later, RC staff members were paid to accompany RC children,

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41 CHC, ‘Foundation of Nazareth House Cardiff’, (pp. 257-8).


43 GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 24 October 1898
who were even provided with mackintoshes to protect against the weather, to church services.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/10/2 ESVC Minutes, 7 December 1897; 2 December 1898} The guardians established an RC sub-committee to assist in decision-making.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 4 August 1896} When the SCH system was established, the guardians were very careful to allocate Homes to different creeds and to recruit FMs and RMs appropriately.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 CHVC Minutes, 12 December 1898 – LGB Rule 12. (See Appendix 5).} RC Homes were provided with Catholic books and the walls were hung with pious pictures and a crucifix.\footnote{GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 CHVC Minutes, 21 August 1899} Children were encouraged to participate in church activities – Boys’ Brigade members took part in local gatherings, RC children were allowed to attend the diocesan Corpus Christi procession and NC children were allowed to join in the chapel Whitsun Treats.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Going out to work taught the children about the harsh realities that awaited them in making their own way and reminded them of their place in society. The guardians realised quite early that sending children out at the age of fourteen (fifteen for girls from scattered homes) from a relatively sheltered existence into the harsh reality of the world of labour required adequate safeguards. Studies of the prevailing arrangements revealed shortcomings which enabled effective improvements to be made, especially for girls. By employing a variety of agencies to visit and engage with the children, and by displaying a willingness to investigate and remedy examples of employer neglect, the guardians gradually established a system of supervision that served to remind the young people in their care that they were not abandoned or alone. A note of caution, however, is necessary when judging the guardians motives – were boys sent to distant colliery districts simply to be rid of them or were they really being protected from interference by kin?
The large number of Catholic and Non-conformist children, and the promptings of non-Anglican guardians in the BoG, led to a commitment to respect religious rights. A concern to accurately record creed, to provide suitable provision in ES, to ensure that the scattered homes could meet religious needs, and to monitor regular attendance at places of worship by children in work meant that the children could continue to practise their religion, even after leaving the institutions, often a source of comfort in their quest for respectability.
Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The relative absence of detailed studies of the effects of the New Poor Law in Wales means that a huge amount of archive material is awaiting exploration. This dissertation scratches the surface of the wealth of records that Victorian authorities painstakingly amassed, much of which merits discussion in much more detail. The study focuses on the children, the ‘forgotten’ unfortunates whose individual struggles against, poverty, hunger, disease, abuse and neglect emerge in fragments from the archives and which deserve to be more widely known.

Were the lives of the pauper children in this study really improved over the course of my chosen period and were they adequately prepared for when they might be finally discharged? Judgements about the success of any policy must be measured against its aims and objectives. One of the principal objectives of the BoG and the LGB was ‘to diminish pauperism’, however, it is unclear how many children succeeded in making a respectable life for themselves after they left the poor law institutions.1 Their institutionalised life, together with the often less than adequate training and experience of work, was often not a suitable preparation for the reality of ‘outside’, nor was it likely to ‘instil virtuous habits of industry’ in many children, though for those able to absorb the guidance offered, the future seemed a little brighter.2

The Chair of the BoG drew attention to ‘a prejudice which, I think, has been entirely removed since the homes have been established’; he was, of course, referring to the stigma

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1 Weekly Mail 16 May 1903, p.2.
2 Vickery, p.1.
of pauperism. At the opening of the first scattered homes, the intention was clear - ‘to make the workhouse child forget, so far as possible the "rock out of which he had been hewn"’ so that he could have ‘an equal chance with his more favoured brother’. The Guardians were keen to ensure that Scattered Homes children should not be marked out by their appearance – they even insisted that the Ely Schools stamp on the bed linen was ‘obliterated as far as possible’. They objected to the LGB’s decision to install external fire escapes at some houses on grounds of not wanting to make the Children’s Homes conspicuous by appearing different to neighbouring houses. The attraction of the Sheffield Scattered Homes system was underlined by Hulonce who writes that, ‘Certainly, the children appeared free of the supposed “taint” of the workhouse and fitted into everyday working-class life’. Some children carried a double burden as they were both paupers and illegitimate - Deborah Hatcher, a poor law child, recalls ‘the stigma of being illegitimate and not realising why I was despised because of it’. It was also hoped that the ‘almost universal stigma, the red-rimmed eyelids, the result of ophthalmia, will in time disappear from amongst them for ever’. In this endeavour the guardians were successful – by 1904 the disease was eradicated from the GHQ and the scattered homes. Indeed, the general health of the children was improved by early identification of disease, better treatment from well-qualified professionals in purpose built infirmary wards, an improved and healthier diet and raised morale.

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3 *Weekly Mail* 14 May 1900, p.4.
4 *South Wales Daily News* 8 July 1899, p.3.
5 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 CHVC Minutes, 25 July 1899
6 GA/CPLUR/UC/6/1 CHVC Minutes, 27 February 1900
7 Hulonce, p. 45.
9 *South Wales Daily News* 22 August 1899, p.6.
The scattered homes were intended to give the children the nearest approach to home life possible – children were to be ‘brought up as in an ordinary home’ so that they could learn for their future how a home should be.\textsuperscript{10} The guardians seem to have made genuine attempts to reproduce a version of home life, within the obvious practical limitations, by providing comfortable houses in respectable neighbourhoods staffed by mostly dedicated and caring FMs – when there were failures by individuals, the guardians had effective policies in place to make speedy substitutions. The homes also ‘solved the religious difficulty which was previously found in "barrack" [and separate] schools’.\textsuperscript{11} The importance of the question of ‘creed’ was accepted by the guardians who, after early recalcitrance, acted decisively to uphold the religious rights of the children. The guardians had to win the approval of the LGB; it soon became clear that, in most eyes, ‘they [the scattered homes] had been an unqualified success, and had won the approval of Mr. Bircham’, LGB Inspector.\textsuperscript{12}

One experience the children shared was separation, which was employed as a further means of maintaining less eligibility.\textsuperscript{13} In the workhouse, families were separated – husbands from wives, children from parents and even brothers from sisters.\textsuperscript{14} In 1893 the Cardiff guardians were quite prepared to send their orphans to Bristol, leaving younger siblings in Cardiff.\textsuperscript{15} However, attitudes were changing as the end of the century approached and guardians realised that, to prepare them for work, the children needed education and training fitting for their station in life and appropriate to their age, gender,

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Weekly Mail} 16 May 1903, p.2.

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Weekly Mail} 16 May 1903, p.2.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Evening Express} 17 May 1902, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{13} Sheldon, p. 266.

\textsuperscript{14} Humphries, pp. 130-1.

\textsuperscript{15} GA/CPLUR/UC/10/1 ESVC Minutes, 5 December 1893
religion, and physical capabilities.\textsuperscript{16} Total separation from the influence of their parents and kin was believed to be in the best interests of the children and essential to their chances of being transformed into respectable citizens.\textsuperscript{17} Residence in the separate Ely Schools or, later, in scattered homes was intended to reinforce this disconnection.\textsuperscript{18} Despite the guardians’ strategies to keep the children away from their parents, it is probable that many of them, on being finally discharged, sought the comfort of family support. The hope of preventing them from ‘becoming dependent on the poor law as adults’, although a worthy aim, was often made redundant by reality.\textsuperscript{19} Work placements were arranged at a distance to deter ‘interference’ from kin. Yet it was this so-called interference that demonstrated the true meaning of ‘family’ – despite the most debilitating destitution, parents and children still felt the ‘pull’ of kinship. Mothers requested the return of their offspring and some protested against sons being sent to work in dangerous coal mines and desperately promised to find an alternative, as soon as they left the workhouse! Disabled children, blind children and Roman Catholics could be sent to certified schools which served different needs and recalcitrant children were often sent to correctional institutions.\textsuperscript{20} Serious diseases led to isolation in infirmary or separate bedrooms in scattered homes. Attempts were made to soften the blow of separation – in scattered homes a conscious decision was made to keep siblings together and children were encouraged to participate in church activities or to join organisations such as Boys’ Brigade or the ES band to foster a sense of belonging. With the increase in boarding-out, orphans could be fostered by relatives, a way to re-kindle family ties.

\textsuperscript{16} Hollen Lees, p. 276.


\textsuperscript{18} Vickery, p.1.

\textsuperscript{19} Vickery, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{20} Hollen Lees, p. 276.
What of the guardians? The Cardiff guardians were mostly drawn from the gentry, middle-class entrepreneurs and the clergy, as in most unions. Evidence points to a gradual softening of attitudes in response to the prevailing mood and direction of opinion, especially with the inclusion of female guardians, and Catholic and Nonconformist clergy. Most guardians were willing to spend a great deal of time and energy attending monthly meetings and serving on the time-consuming sub-committees created to consider every aspect of union business. In short, the guardians were essential to the smooth running of the union and instrumental in improving the children’s experience.

The long-standing aim of the Cardiff guardians was ‘to remove all children from the baleful influence of corrupting adult paupers’, in particular, to keep children from the workhouse.\(^2\)

**Table 16**   
**Children in the Cardiff Workhouse**

![Graph](image)

Unfortunately, in this case they can be judged to have failed. Despite the creation of ES, numbers of children still remained in the ‘house’ as the decennial census totals of **Table 16**

\(^2\) Rees Jones, p. 4.
indicate. Although a significant number of these children were aged five years and under, nevertheless a number of older children remained susceptible to the malign influence of workhouse adults. Rees Jones described the figures as ‘dispiriting’ as Cardiff had one of the worst records amongst Poor Law Unions.\textsuperscript{22}

**Ely Homes – the Legacy**

The Grouped Homes, built on part of the Ely Schools site and opened in 1903, were intended as a form of probationary ward for new arrivals and for those children considered to be ‘recalcitrant’ or ‘troublesome’ and who needed special supervision. Along with children sent back from a scattered home as a punishment, they were accommodated at the Ely Homes, as they came to be called. This almost reformatory aspect created a sinister reputation for the Homes and, long after they were closed in 1930, the parental threat of

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{grouped_homes_1905}
\caption{Grouped Headquarters Homes 1905}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{22} Rees Jones, p. 6.
being ‘sent to Ely Homes’ acted as a salutary warning to any local children who were tempted to mis-behave, certainly to a child in the 1950’s.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1  Cardiff Ragged School – Rules

March 1855

RULES.

I. The Cardiff Ragged School is intended for the gratuitous instruction of such young persons as cannot attend other schools—either from want of character, insufficient clothing, poverty, or any other cause which renders them fit objects for gratuitous instruction.

II. It having been proved that religious instruction, given in schools where there is a diversity of creed, not only fosters proselytizing and sectarian tendencies, but also frequently engenders bitter enmity and strife among the children, the Cardiff Ragged School shall be conducted upon purely secular principles.

III. In pursuance of Rule II., and in consideration of the numerous Irish who attend this school, the children shall be carefully guarded against making slighting or irritating allusions either to the religion or nationality of their school-mates. The teachers, also, shall strictly regard the observance of this Rule, as any deviation from it would tend greatly to diminish the usefulness of this school, which is intended for the improvement and instruction of destitute children of all denominations.

IV. The business of the school shall include the simpler branches of useful knowledge, instruction in some industrial occupation, and the inculcation of cleanly and orderly habits. The routine shall be left to the discretion of the teacher.

V. No corporal punishment, or holding up to public shame or ridicule shall be made use of; but public discipline must be maintained by the teacher’s own firmness, order, and kindness.

VI. No books or other publications shall be introduced into the school, or distributed to the scholars, which have not received the sanction of the Committee.

VII. The hours of attendance shall be regulated by the Committee, according to circumstances.

VIII. A register of names and attendance shall be kept, and the teacher shall endeavour to become acquainted with the parents and homes of the children.

March, 1855.
Appendix 2  
Cardiff Union – Ely Schools  
Regulations as to Punishments in the Orders of the Local Government Board  
2 January 1864
Appendix 3  
Cardiff Union Dietary Tables for Ely Schools

in use in 1893
### DIETARY TABLES—SCHOOLS

ADOPTED 29th JANUARY, 1853

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS OF INMATES</th>
<th>DAY OF THE WEEK</th>
<th>BREAKFAST</th>
<th>DINNER</th>
<th>SUPPER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Rye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet for Children from 4 to 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>or pt</td>
<td>pt</td>
<td>ce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sick and Infants under 2 years of age to be dined under the direction of the Medical Officer.

###-forms-for-the-preparation-of-food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUP</th>
<th>BROTH</th>
<th>MILK PURSE</th>
<th>BEST PUDDING (Boiled or Blended)</th>
<th>TEA</th>
<th>COCOA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name and Description of Ingredients</td>
<td>Quantity of each Ingredient in Gallon</td>
<td>Name and Description of Ingredients</td>
<td>Quantity of each Ingredient in Pint</td>
<td>Name and Description of Ingredients</td>
<td>Quantity of each Ingredient in Pint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Peas</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oatmeal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Oatmeal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Vegetables</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fresh Vegetables</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Lard</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Forest Lard</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried Herbs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dried Herbs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 4  Ely Schools – Children in Work Employer’s Agreement

Ely Schools – Children in Work
The attention of applicants for Children from Ely Schools is specially drawn to the following points:

1. **WAGES**  
   Boys 1/6 Girls 1/0 per week for first six months  
   “ 2/0 “ 1/6 per week for second six months  

The wages must be paid regularly to the child and entered in the Wages Book supplied. Employers are specially urged to encourage and assist children to open a Post Office Savings Bank Account.

2. **CLOTHING**  
   A complete outfit and a trunk are supplied to each child. Any further clothing must be supplied at his own expense.

3. **RELIGION**  
   There must be no interference with the religion of the child, who must be allowed to attend his or her own place of worship, and also, as far as possible, the Sunday School. The local Clergyman or Minister is always advised of the child’s new residence.

4. **AGREEMENT**  
   The Guardians expect the Employer to enter into an agreement embodying the above points and stipulating for one month’s notice on either side.

5. **VISITATION**  
   Every child in work is visited by an Officer of the Guardians every month for the first three months, and once a quarter afterwards, to ascertain if everything is satisfactory.

6. **COMPLAINTS**  
   Complaints should be made at the time of the visits referred to and sent to the Master of Ely Schools or to the Clerk to the Guardians.

7. **GENERAL**  
   Nearly all children belong to the Ely Schools Band of Hope and Employers are asked to kindly allow them to continue their membership in the nearest Band of Hope connected with their own place of worship.

The Guardians earnestly hope that Employers will take a personal interest in the children entrusted to their care and do all they can to give them a good start in life.

ARThUR J. HARRIS

Queen’s Chambers, Cardiff  
Clerk to the Guardians

January 9th 1897

**Appendix 5**  
LGB Rules for Isolated/Scattered Homes as issued to the CHVC of  
Cardiff Poor Law Union, 12 December 1898.
1. Probationary Wards or Headquarters Homes to provide for up to fourteen days detention of children, either separate from the workhouse or using a separated part of the workhouse.

2. Adequate number of staff to be provided for the supervision of children in Paragraph 1.

3. There should be a separate Infirmary.

4. Medical examination of children to be carried out before admission to, or transfer from, Headquarters Homes.

5. Any order for the transfer of a child should be issued only by the Superintendant of the Headquarters Homes or the Master of the workhouse and which is to contain full particulars of the child.

6. The Superintendant of all Homes should visit each at least three times per week and should record the visits in a Book at the Home.

7. The Visiting Committee should visit each Home at least fortnightly and should record the visits as in (6).

8. The Ladies Visiting Committee should visit each Home at least weekly and record visits as above.

9. A Foster Mother should be appointed for each Home.

10. No more than fifteen children should be accommodated in each Home.

11. No child under three years of age should be sent to a Home; boys and girls should not be mixed after ten years of age.

12. Each child should attend a place of worship and Sunday School of their own denomination. Children attending Board School will receive adequate religious instruction.

13. Children should have sufficient time for recreation. They should not be given work to do after school hours.

14. The Foster Mother should provide a weekly Dietary Table.

15. The Foster Mother should maintain a journal of meals served.

16. The Books at each Home should be submitted for inspection to the guardians.
17. Rules concerning Corporal Punishment should be published.

18. The District Medical Officer should visit each Home.

19. Children should be provided with classes of Technical Education.

20. Relief Mothers should be appointed to allow Foster Mothers half a day off each week.

21. Children should be allowed the fullest liberty consistent with discipline and moral welfare.

22. Each Home should be visited by the LGB Inspector before approval is granted.

The CHVC requested that the LGB accept some adjustments to the list:

a. Items 1-4 - ES to be the Headquarters Homes until a suitable site is found to build a new HQ.

b. Item 5 - Order to be issued by the Master as directed by ESVC.

c. Item 10 - No more than twelve children in each Home.

d. Item 11 - Children to be mixed until age of thirteen.

The LGB accepted all alterations except the last – they insisted on the age of ten.23

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