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Supplying London's workhouses in the mid-nineteenth century

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Abstract

London's workhouses bought vast quantities of provisions to feed and clothe their pauper populations. This article explores the business of supplying these institutions. Several large suppliers dominated the markets for goods required in bulk. These businesses also sold to other institutions such as hospitals, barracks and prisons. But poor law unions were also keen to buy from smaller local suppliers such as high-street retailers. This can be seen in the provisioning arrangements of a central London union, St Saviour Southwark, and a peripheral parish, St John Hampstead. Guardians wanted to keep rates low by buying from large dealers, but also liked to keep the poor rates circulating within the local economy if possible. There was not significant geographical variation in pricing across London, but some suppliers charged different amounts to different unions. Possible reasons for these disparities include transport costs, sizes of orders, the quality of goods and anti-competitive behaviour.

Suggested keywords:

Poor law; workhouse; provisioning; food; business; retail.

Poor law supply in London

Poor law reform in 1834 both encouraged and reflected an increased emphasis on the institution of the workhouse.¹ To deter the poor from applying for relief except in cases of destitution, central government pushed unions of parishes to relieve as many of their paupers as possible inside the workhouse, rather than providing 'outdoor' relief in the form of bread or money. London was at the forefront of this institutional provision, with many of the capital's parishes tightening relief policies and expanding indoor capacity before and after 1834.² The capital had a dense concentration of workhouses compared to the rest of England and Wales, some of which were exceptionally large, and their capacities increased dramatically over the second half of the nineteenth century. On average, London unions in 1850 maintained 3.4 times as many indoor paupers as non-London unions maintained, rising to 6.2 times by 1871.³ As more paupers were given indoor relief, workhouses had to spend more to feed them, clothe them and keep them warm – and these organisations consumed enormous quantities of goods. Take, for example, Wandsworth & Clapham union's workhouse, which accommodated about 450 people: it held in its cellars and stores on 22 March 1851 some 443 lb of cheese, 280 lb of oatmeal, 1,307 pints of beer, 70 tons of coal, 728 lb of soda, 1,680 lb of potatoes, 16 tons of wheat and flour and over a mile of cloth.⁴ Workhouse dietaries varied from union to union, but able-bodied indoor paupers typically ate porridge, gruel or bread and cheese for breakfast and supper, and either a meat or soup-based midday meal on alternate days supplemented by seasonal vegetables.⁵ A workhouse of that size following a recommended dietary for metropolitan unions in the middle of the century would have consumed over a ton of bread and half a ton of meat in a week. Of all goods and services, food was the most significant item of expenditure for workhouses. Around half the costs of running a London workhouse in 1881 went on food for paupers, of which the greatest single item of expenditure – nearly 20 per cent of total workhouse costs – was meat.⁶ Flour and bread made up just under 10 per cent of total workhouse costs, but were also an important element in outdoor relief costs with over 26 per cent of outdoor relief in the capital given in kind in 1881.⁷

The scale of goods consumed by workhouses raises important questions which this article addresses. It examines how large suppliers of poor law unions had to be to provide them with the required goods, and shows that several large suppliers dominated the markets for certain goods, in particular those required in bulk. These businesses were themselves supplied by local and national producers, and they were suppliers not only to poor law unions but also to other institutions such as hospitals, barracks and prisons. However, unions also bought where possible from smaller local suppliers, including minor producers and high-street retailers. This is supported by the evidence of provision for a central metropolitan union (St Saviour

Southwark) and a peripheral one (St John Hampstead). It was in the interests of the guardians not only to keep rates low by buying from large dealers, but also to keep the poor rates circulating within the union economy. (Indeed, one of the objects of poor law amendment was to reduce the opportunities for 'jobbing'.⁸) In looking at the prices unions paid for their goods, it can be seen that there were not significant geographical differences in pricing across London, but that the same suppliers charged different amounts to different unions at the same time. Potential reasons for these disparities include transport costs, sizes of orders and, potentially, collaboration between suppliers. Together, the evidence presented here helps us to understand better how the supply of goods was organised within the metropolitan poor law system.

This fills an important gap in the historiography. Historians have rightly focused on the administration of poor relief and the impact of the new regime on paupers.⁹ However, the provisioning of workhouses and similar institutions in the nineteenth century has received little attention, despite being such a significant business. Most approaches have focused on the provision of welfare, such as medical contracts, rather than on the supply of goods.¹⁰ Yet the bulk of indoor relief expenditure went on buying goods for maintaining the poor – much more so than on, for instance, officers' salaries.¹¹ The amount spent on workhouse supplies in England in 1872-3 was just over £1.5 million, behind only the Army (£3.6 million) and Navy (£2.0 million), and more than the India service, prisons, police, lighthouses or Post Office.¹² There has been little research on how this money was spent. Meanwhile the historiography of London's food supply has tended to concentrate on retail – fixed shops, department stores, municipal markets and the like – and the industrial production of food.¹³ The lack of analysis of institutional procurement means we have not so far grasped the importance of these institutions as customers for their local economies. This article, therefore, demonstrates the key role London's workhouses played as consumers. It thereby sheds light on the sorts of businesses capable of supplying the workhouse; the patterns of purchasing that existed; and how these differed between unions and between types of goods.

Competition for poor law supply

Rules for contracting were set out by the Poor Law Commission in 1842 and reissued in similar form in its 1847 consolidated general order, from this point remaining largely unchanged.¹⁴ Any contract worth £50 or more was to be put out to tender and advertised in a local newspaper by the guardians, the elected officers responsible for poor relief. Bidders submitted sealed bids to be opened on a given day at a meeting of the guardians, who chose the most appropriate. Importantly, though, the guardians were not bound to accept the cheapest. Thus they could

avoid being obliged to buy poor quality goods or to contract with suppliers they knew were unreliable or unsuitable. Other significant regulations stipulated that guardians could not have interests in businesses profiting from poor law supply, and that district auditors could rule items of expenditure unlawful, but once a supplier had been paid it was generally impossible to recover the money. Disallowed sums were usually remitted to the guardians on appeal to the central authority.¹⁵

By investigating London workhouse suppliers for two periods, 1849-51 and 1870-71, it can be seen that size was a striking feature. These years were chosen as they provided a suitable interval for examining changes during the maturity of the new poor law system at a time when indoor pauperism was increasing steadily. Some trades were dominated by large firms more than others, though in every trade there were many smaller businesses, or suppliers holding contracts with only one union at a time. Some of these structural differences between trades can be seen by comparing the numbers of unions on the books of the three suppliers for each trade who supplied the most London unions in 1849-51 (Figure 1) and the numbers of businesses who supplied different numbers of unions for each trade (Table 1). These data are derived from the minutes of boards of guardians or directors of the poor. There are surviving records of suppliers for twenty-six unions and single parishes for 1849-51.¹⁶ (The word 'union' is used in this article to describe both sorts of administrative unit collectively, unless otherwise specified.) These data encompass all the traders listed as having supplied a union either by fixed-term contract or by ad-hoc arrangement, or who bid for a contract but were not necessarily successful. This reflects the relative ability of traders to supply unions, i.e. the number of unions a given trader was prepared to supply simultaneously. The vast majority of traders did in fact supply that number of unions, though. Many unions bought particular types of goods from more than one supplier over the period. Some were consecutive contracts, but in almost every case unions bought a certain amount from their contractor and additionally bought from other suppliers. A union might therefore have had a contract for vegetables with one supplier while also buying smaller quantities from a local farmer.

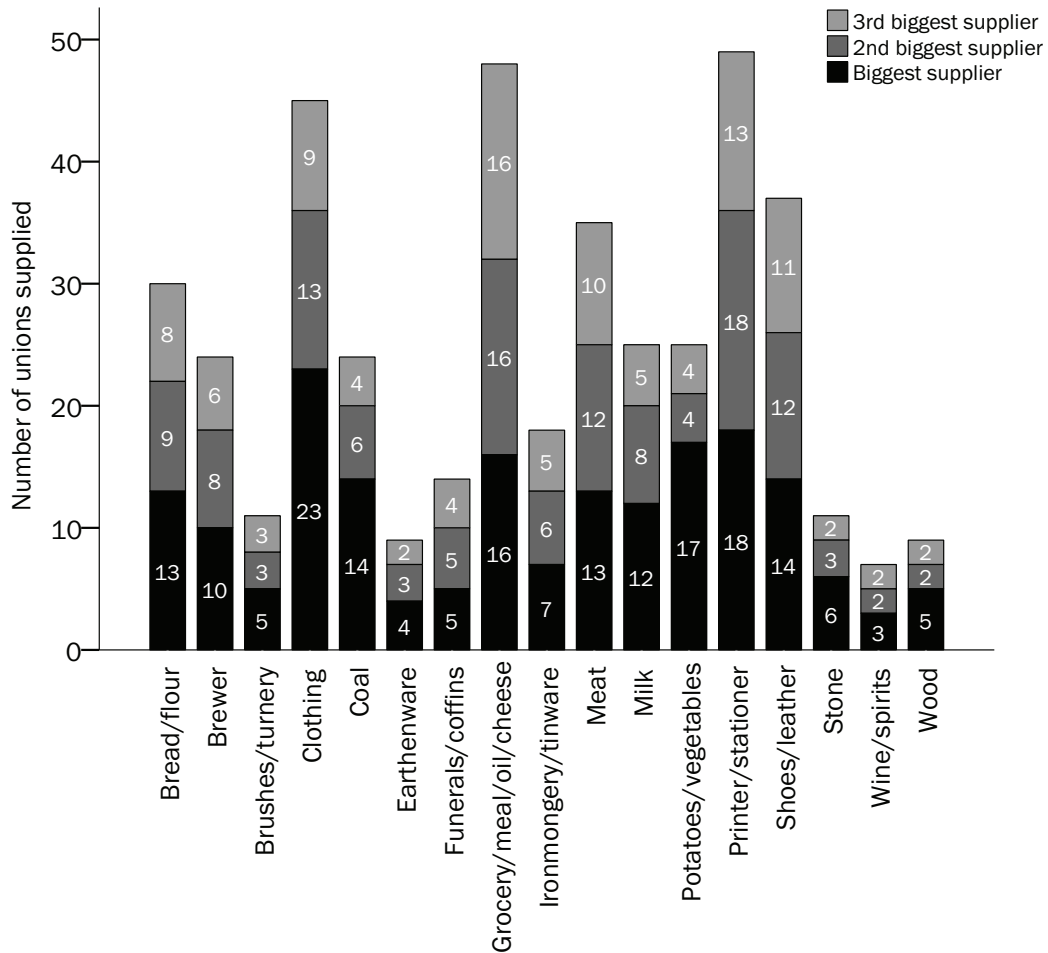


Figure 1. Number of unions supplied by top three suppliers for each business type, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians. (See note 16.)

Occupation/goods	Number of business supplying:		
	5+ unions	2-4 unions	1 union
Bedding	0	8	8
Bread/flour	7	17	116
Beer	4	15	38
Brushes/turnery	1	7	20
Clothing	5	10	90
Coal	2	18	70
Earthenware	0	5	26
Funerals/coffins	2	11	59
Grocery, meal, oilman's goods, cheese	18	23	129
Ironmongery, tinware etc.	5	17	133
Meat	11	8	46
Milk	3	17	63
Potatoes and other vegetables	1	16	63
Printing/stationery	3	19	88
Shoes/leather	7	9	38
Stone	1	3	14
Wine/spirits	0	5	66
Wood	1	5	42

Table 1. Numbers of poor law unions supplied by businesses, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians. (See note 16.)

Certain types of supply were dominated by a small number of large enterprises. In the clothing trade, from 1849 to 1851 twenty-three unions had contracts with William Smith & Son of Pimlico. Thirteen contracted with Charles Roope of Sloane Street, Chelsea, and nine with William Lunn of St Mary at Hill, City of London. Twelve traders supplied between two and five unions, and another eighty-nine traders supplied only one union during the period. Among grocers and general provision merchants, three businesses each had sixteen unions on their books: Ambridge & Andrews and George Penson (both with offices in the City of London) and Pinchin & Johnson (based in New Road, St George in the East). James Percival of Blackfriars supplied fifteen unions and another six traders supplied between ten and twelve. A further thirty supplied between two and nine unions, and another 128 just one union. The large-scale provision of potatoes and other vegetables was almost entirely in the hands of Charles Evans of Hampstead Road, who had seventeen London unions among his customers during the period. The two next biggest had just four unions apiece.

These trades have in common the sheer bulk of goods to be supplied by individual contractors. It is unsurprising that only a handful of businesses could supply goods which were capital- and labour-intensive, requiring large warehouse facilities, complex transport arrangements and extensive networks of supply. Drapers like Smith had the resources to supply poor law unions in all parts of London, and they provided both ready-made uniforms and cloth for paupers to make up (Figure 2). They are likely to have passed parts of their contracts with unions to subcontractors who in turn divided the work among members of London's enormous pool of outworkers, including workhouse paupers. Given the necessity for low prices demanded by the guardians, it is also likely that these workers were paid little and performed 'sweated' labour.¹⁷ Henry Mayhew described – somewhat sensationally – the conditions in which such labourers worked in his reports for the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849-50.¹⁸ He did not specifically discuss the manufacture of workhouse uniforms, but did examine the pay and conditions of those making clothes for the 'army, navy, police, railway, customs and post-office servants, convicts, and other such articles of wearing apparel as are made either by contract or in large quantities'.¹⁹ Those responsible for purchasing clothes for the army were keen to keep workers' conditions humane, Mayhew reported, and pointed out that army clothier William Shaw in 1845 told his contractors to pay their workers a living wage. Shaw wrote to the Committee on Army, Navy and Ordnance Estimates in 1848 urging the abandonment of the contract system of supply as it stood 'as being one of false economy, as a system most oppressive to the poor, and being most injurious, in every way, to the best interests of the country'.²⁰ Nonetheless, neither the army nor any other institution examined by the *Morning Chronicle* bought clothing in a way that appropriately paid the pieceworkers who made the goods, Mayhew reported.

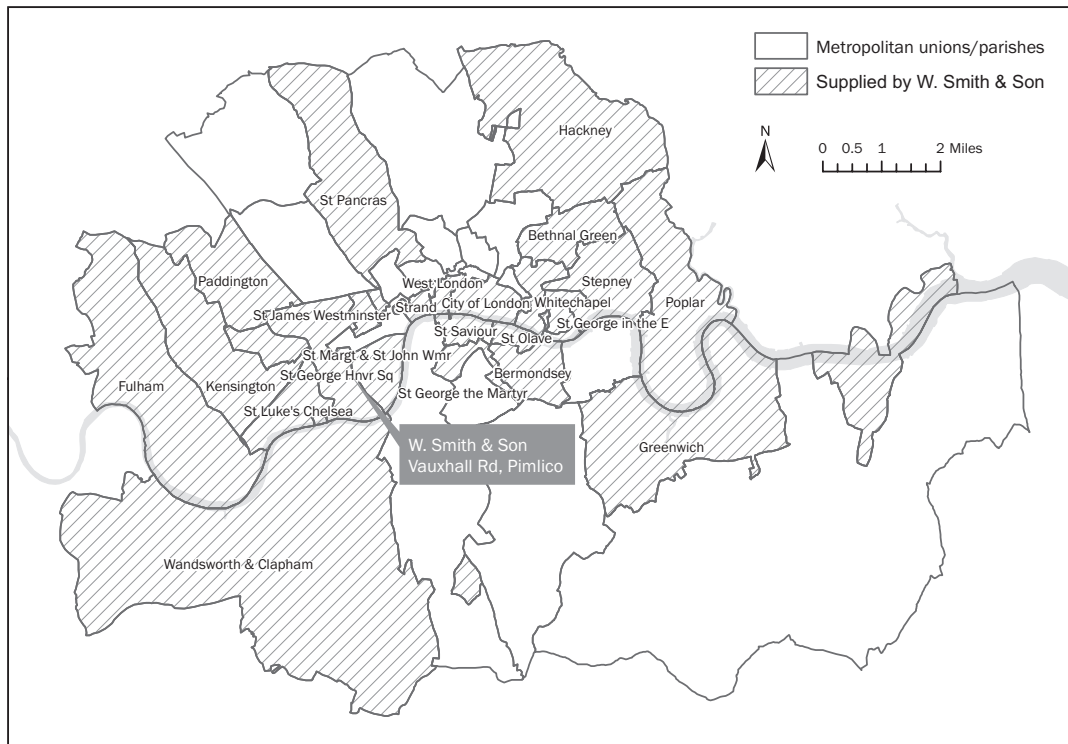


Figure 2. London unions supplied by William Smith & Son, drapers, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians. (See note 16.)

The grocery trade was unusual in that many businesses supplied a large number of unions each. Eighteen such businesses had contracts with five or more unions in 1849-51. This high number is partly because of the provisions merchants in this sector who described themselves as cheesemongers, grocers or mealmen but in fact dealt in a much wider range of goods than these terms traditionally signified. The six businesses with the most union contracts at the time all supplied oatmeal, cheese, butter, oilmen's goods, cornchandlery, tea, sugar and other groceries – though not necessarily all to the same unions. These were big businesses: George Penson, one of the biggest, supplied unions in all parts of London (Figure 3). He was also a wholesale dealer to grocers across the south-east of England.²¹ He was so successful in the trade that he was able to invest heavily in property in Kensington in the 1840s.²² In 1866 he incorporated his business as Penson & Company with share capital of £120,000, and on his death in 1879 his estate was valued at a similar sum.²³

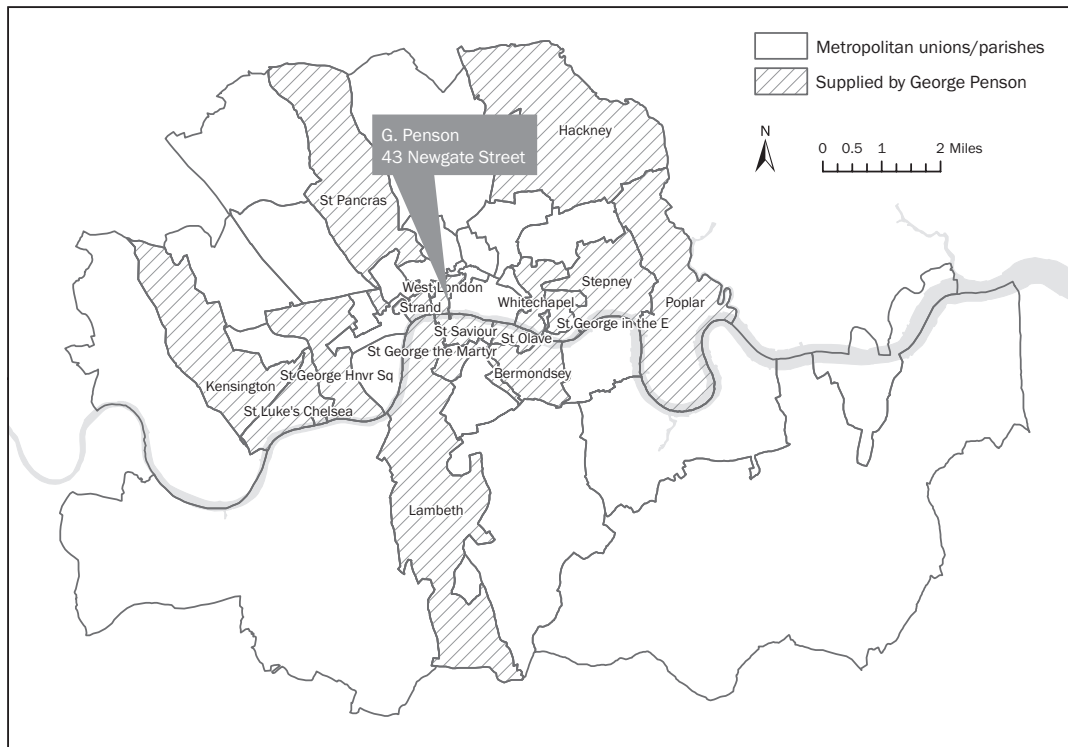


Figure 3. London unions supplied by George Penson, provisions merchant, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians. (See note 16.)

Printing and stationery was another trade dominated by a few large enterprises, but this was something of a special case. From its earliest years, the Poor Law Commission insisted on unions' books being kept in the same way by all local authorities in an effort to impose conformity with the new system.²⁴ The majority of unions bought books and forms from Charles Knight & Co of Ludgate Street, who from September 1835 were publishers 'by authority' to the Poor Law Commission (PLC), the central government department responsible for poor relief.²⁵ John Shaw & Sons of Fetter Lane and James Truscott of Blackfriars Road also specialized in government printing, pro-formas and ledgers. No other printers supplied nearly as many unions: nineteen served between two and four unions, and eighty-seven had only single customers. Knight's official status was a point of contention: the central authority had not granted Knight a monopoly, and told unions in 1835 that they were welcome to buy their books and forms from any supplier who could match Knight's price. Nonetheless Shaw complained to the Home Office in 1847 about the PLC's imprimatur, and although Knight maintained he derived no particular financial benefit from it, he complained in turn that Shaw faithfully copied his publications and prices. Knight had prepared his forms and account books in collaboration with PLC officials but Shaw, he alleged, 'copied [them] in every particular... but of course without incurring any of the labour'.²⁶ Poor law business was highly lucrative for Knight,

nonetheless. For instance, he also published the monthly PLC official circulars, on which he made 15 per cent margin.²⁷ All the unions in London were supplied with their forms and books either by Knight, Shaw or Truscott, but the unions also had many small printing and stationery requirements, such as notepaper, letter-heads, cheque books, bills and notices and so on. For these, they could use London's many small printing businesses, of which there were 423 according to the London Society of Compositors' 1855 guide.²⁸

Other trades characterized by a large number of small businesses were those in wine and spirits, earthenware and turnery. Unions did not need very large quantities of these goods, but all unions required some. Fortified wine and gin or brandy were usually provided to sick paupers with the approval of workhouse medical officers, but not as a matter of course to the elderly or infirm, who would generally be given half-pints of porter. These sorts of quantities in many cases could be provided by local public houses. The brushes, baskets and other such materials used by paupers to clean the workhouse could easily be bought by the dozen from local small businesses. Earthenware was used in larger quantities by workhouses, which needed stock of several hundred plates for meals, but unions tended to buy from London's earthenware dealers who themselves bought from the manufacturers elsewhere, especially in the Midlands.²⁹ Unions could therefore easily obtain the goods from a local supplier who might not keep the stock in a warehouse but simply arrange for its delivery.

By the 1850s a great deal of milk was brought to London by rail, and many unions bought milk produced outside the capital.³⁰ Collinson Hall of Bowers Farm, Havering, Essex, supplied four unions in 1849-51 and had premises in Finsbury, the City and Shoreditch. He also supplied the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury with milk in 1846.³¹ He was credited by contemporaries as 'the first to introduce the supply of country milk to London'.³² William Jones, who sold to five unions at the time, was described as a 'cowkeeper and grazier' of Ham Park, Upton, Essex, as well as a 'dairyman, and dealer in eggs and bread' from his premises at 3 New Road, Whitechapel.³³ Richard Sockett and John Roberts, who in partnership ran Cranbrook Farm, Dagenham, Essex, supplied twelve unions with milk. They had premises at 3 Mitre Square, Aldgate. James Tilling had a farm in Hendon, Middlesex and premises at 80 Earl Street, Lisson Grove, from which he supplied Strand union and the parish of St James Westminster.

The direct sale to unions by dairy farmers somewhat qualifies historians' common conception of the way the business was organised. Fussell, for example, suggests that the distribution of milk sent by rail to London 'was completely in the hands of the wholesalers [with] no competition between them.'³⁴ Nonetheless, there is evidence of metropolitan unions being supplied by these milk wholesalers too, including James Allen, junior, and James Allen, senior, both of Lambeth,

and Edward Jutsum of Aldgate.³⁵ However, many unions – especially those on the fringes of the metropolis – also bought directly from local farms, with no need for rail transport. St John Hampstead bought milk from nearby farmer William Collins, for example, and Kensington was supplied by Henry Holmden, a farmer in Turnham Green.

The adulteration of milk was something of an open secret in the dairy industry. Unions paid such low prices for their milk that it had to have been diluted with water, many commentators complained. Agricultural reporter John Chalmers Morton quoted an anonymous correspondent ‘recently in the trade’ as telling him: ‘We have tendered for five or six workhouses at a price which would have given us a profit of less than one farthing a quart, and yet we have not been accepted... The fact that a dealer offered to buy a large quantity of our “skim,” avowedly to supply a workhouse contract for “new,” shows what the paupers really get.’³⁶ And a director of the Dairy Reform Company, whose stated aim was to sell pure milk, told a meeting of the Society of Arts that he knew an East End dealer with a workhouse contract for 1s 6d per gallon, which was 2d less than he paid for the milk.³⁷

The concentration of poor law business among small numbers of suppliers changed somewhat for different trades between 1850 and 1870, judging by the numbers of contracts held by certain suppliers in 1870 (Table 2). These data show only the contracts between unions and suppliers, and not other types of provision (e.g. ad hoc small purchases). In 1850 there were several butchers supplying a large number of unions but by 1870 the trade appears to have become less consolidated, with many unions buying from suppliers who had only one or two other contracts and none with more than three. For the supply of flour, most of the poor law contracts were held by Messrs Kingsford or by John Gillett & Sons (described as an ‘army contractor’ in the Post Office directory, and supplying both flour and meat), continuing the dominance of a few large suppliers.³⁸ Grocery and meal are divided in these data, as the supply of meal was increasingly controlled by Neill & Waugh and was less in the hands of general provision merchants as it had been in the 1850s. Several of the traders who supplied poor law unions in 1849-51 were still doing business with them in 1870. These long-standing suppliers included John Gillett, the Kingsford family, grocer John Eddison Craney, butchers Henry Lee and William Masters, mealmen Edwards Brothers and butcher Charles Baker and his son Benjamin Bloomfield Baker. Meat, clothing and groceries therefore increasingly were provided by large suppliers with contracts with several unions, as bulky goods required greater capital and labour. Local purchases, though, could be made when goods were less bulky or came in smaller quantities, or when they were required less frequently, as in the cases of turnery or wine and spirits. Changes are apparent in the organisation of some markets over time, and meat supply became more competitive whereas larger suppliers increasingly dominated the flour market. By

the 1870s, meal supplies emerged as distinct from grocery. Possibly the nature and meaning of grocery developed over the period to emphasise retail, and mealmen came to represent the wholesale part of the market by this point. The retail market was increasingly dominated by multiples such as Lipton's, squeezing out more modest high-street traders even in relatively small towns.³⁹ These single high-street traders may in earlier decades have been capable of supplying goods to workhouses, distributing from their own wholesalers, but the multiples who replaced them were organised differently and focused on retail.

Goods	Supplier	Contracts held
Meat	Morris & Oakes	3
	James Blofeld	3
	Henry Lee	3
	John Gillett	2
	George Barth	2
	Joseph Cockrill	2
	B.B. Baker	2
	11 others	1
Grocery	George T. Cox	6
	William Topley	2
	16 others	1
Flour	Messrs Kingsford	9
	John Gillett	6
	S. Kidd & Co	3
	Henry Ward	2
	Thomas Hadden	2
	4 others	1
Meal	Neill & Waugh	12
	Edwards Brothers	3
	S. Hebbardine	2
	13 others	1

Table 2. Numbers of poor-law contracts held by suppliers, six months to Michaelmas 1870. Source: British Parliamentary Papers 1870 LVIII 563. Metropolitan Boards of Guardians (Contracts). Return of the Contracts Made By the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians for the Supply of Certain Articles for the Six Months Ending Michaelmas 1870.

Poor law unions in their local economies

The great quantities of goods supplied to poor law unions, the large sums spent on buying them and the longevity of some of the suppliers suggest that workhouse provisioning could be a lucrative type of commerce. However, the number of suppliers in the various trades for different unions indicates that poor law work did not necessarily bring large revenues for individual businesses. In other words, some unions spread their spending on certain items more thinly than others (Table 3). Six unions, for instance, bought their bread and flour from just one

supplier each – in most cases a supplier who also contracted with many other unions. On the other hand most unions bought bread and flour from a few more suppliers, and in some cases from very many – such as the unusually high number (53) who did business with St Pancras. St Pancras, a parish under a local act, possibly ran a ticket system of relief by which outdoor paupers could buy bread from any local baker, and the bakers would then present their invoices to the guardians. Meanwhile some unions were well placed to choose between many suppliers for certain goods, such as St Olave’s nineteen coal suppliers between 1849 and 1851. The multitude of coal wharves on the south bank of the Thames enabled the union to buy directly from wholesalers more readily than other unions.

Union	Bread/flour	Clothing	Coal	Grocery	Meat	Milk	Potatoes	Printing	Shoes	Wine/spirits
Bermondsey	3	4	6	19	3	2	3	4	4	1
Bethnal Green	3	4	2	9	3	2	2	8	1	1
Camberwell	1	1	4	4	3	1	2	1	3	0
City of London	12	5	15	15	8	6	2	7	3	0
East London	6	5	1	10	5	6	5	9	5	0
Fulham	2	8	5	11	8	2	2	3	2	4
Greenwich	14	8	5	19	16	4	11	9	11	12
Hackney	8	6	8	10	2	2	3	3	1	1
Kensington	13	7	3	16	6	8	7	8	9	4
Lambeth	2	4	2	10	1	4	6	6	2	3
Lewisham	1	2	2	5	2	2	2	2	3	2
Paddington	1	2	1	8	4	5	1	4	2	3
Poplar	5	6	3	7	5	4	5	6	6	3
St George Hanover Sq	1	5	0	9	3	2	2	0	0	2
St George in the East	19	12	9	21	12	13	9	15	12	10
St George the Martyr	1	5	2	9	2	2	5	7	4	2
St James Westminster	4	3	0	11	3	6	2	3	1	0
St John Hampstead	3	7	4	6	6	3	3	3	2	2
St Luke's Chelsea	5	5	5	20	10	6	3	8	3	4
St Margaret & St John	7	2	5	22	8	5	5	7	5	3
St Martin in the Fields	1	4	1	8	3	4	2	5	0	3
St Olave	7	11	19	21	8	8	6	2	9	3
St Pancras	53	11	10	24	9	9	6	9	6	4
St Saviour Southwark	3	11	5	14	3	3	3	9	6	2
Stepney	8	6	2	10	4	4	5	10	6	7
Strand	8	11	2	11	6	4	4	4	3	2
Wandsworth & Clapham	7	2	2	8	3	3	8	7	2	2
West London	3	7	3	7	1	3	1	13	3	4
Whitechapel	10	8	8	17	8	10	4	11	9	1
Mean	7.3	5.9	4.6	12.4	5.3	4.6	4.1	6.3	4.2	2.9
Trimmed mean*	5.8	5.9	4.3	12.3	5.1	4.4	4.0	6.2	4.1	2.7
Median	5	5	3	10	4	4	3	7	3	2

* Trimmed mean excludes greatest and smallest value.

Table 3. Numbers of suppliers from which unions bought, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians. (See note 16.)

By examining the locations of suppliers to a single union in London, St Saviour Southwark, we not only gain an understanding of the importance of poor law custom to local economies, but also see the effects of the concentration of certain markets among a small number of big suppliers. In the year to 25 March 1850 St Saviour spent £4,966 on workhouse supplies including bread and flour, meat, groceries, soap, candles, cloth and clothing, coal, milk, beer, vegetables, ironmongery, stationery, cleaning chemicals, coffins and so on. Seventy-three suppliers are listed in the guardians' minutes as having received cheques for these goods.⁴⁰ Of those, forty-seven – some sixty-four percent – had premises within the union, with the other twenty-six almost entirely within a couple of miles of the union's boundaries. Of the total of eighty-seven suppliers mentioned in the minutes (i.e. including those whose payments were not recorded), fifty-three were inside the union (Figure 4). St Saviour spent £3,621 on goods from businesses based in the union, though £1,509 of this went to one supplier, baker Thomas Field of Blackfriars Road. Field ran a large enterprise, holding contracts with six other London unions or parishes at the time: City of London, Fulham, Hackney, St James Westminster, St Margaret & St John Westminster and St Olave. The number and geographical spread of these unions indicates that he was not simply a small-scale local baker, and it seems likely that he was selected by St Saviour not just because he was based in the union but rather because he could fulfil the contract. The union preferred to do business with local traders, but it was prepared to contract with large bakers outside the union, such as Joseph Goldsworthy of St Luke's Middlesex, Thomas Hunt (either of Cheapside or of Bermondsey, but in either case outside the union), Thomas Bowditch of Deptford and James Murray of Fleet Street. St Saviour was fortunate in having two big bakers within its boundaries and the choice of Field therefore appears incidental to his being local.⁴¹

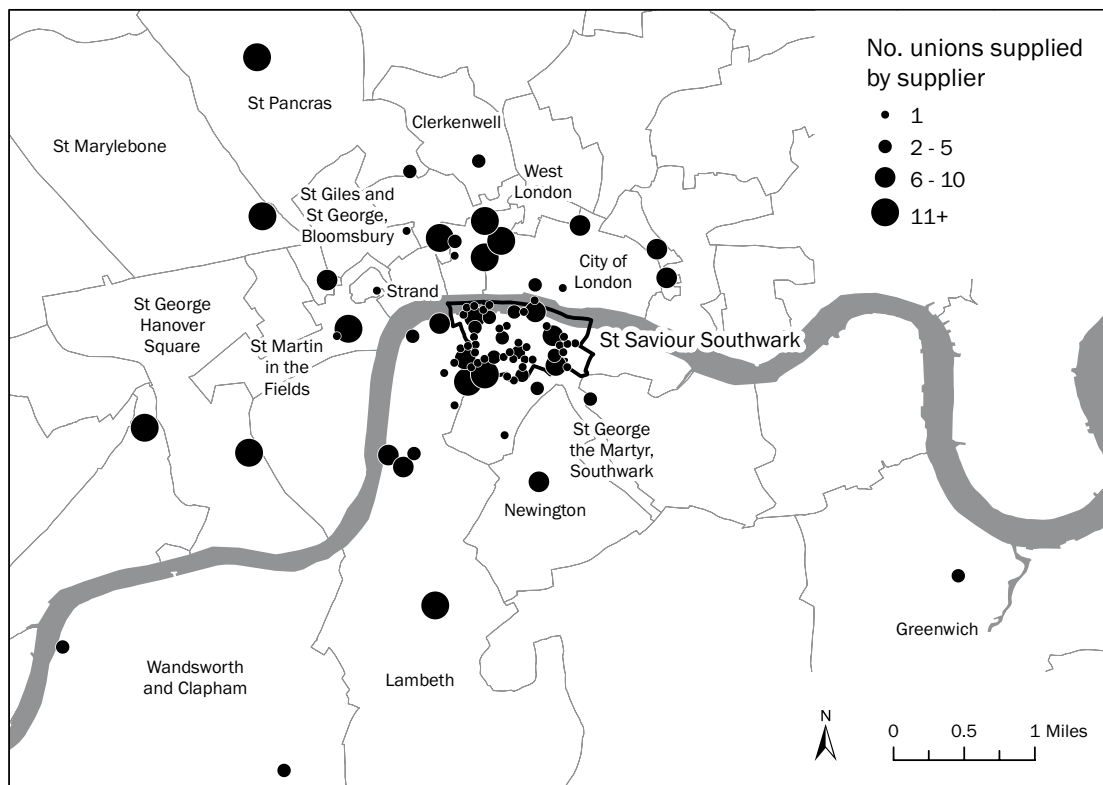


Figure 4. Suppliers to St Saviour Southwark, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians; *Small Edition of the Post Office London Directory* (London: Kelly, 1852); *Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex* (London: Kelly, 1855).

On the other hand, St Saviour did buy large-scale goods from other suppliers who did not have contracts with other unions. For meat, groceries and oilman's goods (e.g. soap and candles), St Saviour spent large amounts on suppliers from within the union, despite much bigger businesses dominating these markets.⁴² Of the top ten suppliers to St Saviour, only half were based in the union, though the guardians did buy from competing suppliers, such as groceries from John Parr and Nicholas Yarrow, and meat from John Beale and Henry Attfield (Table 4). Thus it would appear that the St Saviour guardians were willing to buy from large suppliers outside the union, but not without giving some business to local suppliers too. The guardians' minutes for 18 July 1850 record that "The attention of the Board having been called to several Tradesmen having had the orders from the Union continuously for a long period, It was Resolved, That in future where this has been the case the orders be periodically given to other Tradesmen residing in the Union".⁴³ This resolution had no effect in practical terms, however: within two months the bread contract was awarded to James Murray of Fleet Street; clothing to William Smith & Sons of Pimlico and Charles Roope of Chelsea; meat to John Williams of Walworth Road; leather to Alfred Rymer of Soho; and milk to James Allen Jr. of Lambeth.

Supplier	Goods	Amount paid (£)	In St Saviour union?	Total unions supplied
Thomas Field	Bread and flour	1,509	Yes	7
John Beale	Meat	721	Yes	1
John Parr	Groceries	301	Yes	1
George Penson	Butter	282	No	16
Henry Attfield	Meat	234	No	13
W.W. & R. Brook	Soap, candles etc.	174	Yes	1
William Smith & Son	Clothing	169	No	23
Rusby, Brown & Co.	Granite	157	Yes	1
Charles Roope	Blankets etc.	102	No	13
Nicholas Yarrow	Groceries	97	No	11
Other suppliers		1,220		
Total		4,966		

Table 4. St Saviour Southwark union's biggest suppliers, 1849-50. Source: LMA SOBG/039/009.

For large items, therefore, guardians were to some degree restricted in choice to a few large enterprises who had the resources to fulfil big contracts. This was not true of the smaller businesses, who in many cases did not win tenders for contracts but nonetheless had opportunities to supply workhouses. Only purchases of over £50 were required by law to be put out to tender and advertised widely (though it was not unknown for guardians to split up contracts so their individual values would fall below this level).⁴⁴ We have seen that around half of St Saviour's large-scale suppliers were from within the union, but a much higher proportion of the smaller suppliers came from inside the union. Of the fifty-four suppliers who received *less* than £50-worth of business from St Saviour in 1849-50, thirty-seven (i.e. sixty-nine per cent) were local. These sub-£50 deals amounted to £614, of which £413 (i.e. sixty-seven per cent) was spent on local businesses.

There were a number of advantages in buying from local businesses, and St Saviour was not the only authority which explicitly preferred them: St James Westminster parish asked for tenders from 'Rated Inhabitants' in April 1849.⁴⁵ Local sources were practical for many types of small, cheap items. Union officials were likely to know local suppliers well, and could judge their reputations for quality and reliability. Guardians were keen to keep the rates circulating within the union, largely because such a policy could help their re-election. There was also a strong sense of local attachment to parish, even to some degree in dense urban areas of central London – and by extension, perhaps, to unions, especially those like St Saviour composed of just two parishes.⁴⁶

St Saviour therefore bought in bulk from large suppliers from across London, and in smaller quantities from local suppliers; but it also bought in small quantities from some businesses

outside the union. These purchases tended to be for specialized items, from traders with good reputations and where there was no local alternative. For instance on 29 March 1849 the guardians spent £4 14s on hammers for use by casual paupers breaking stone.⁴⁷ They were bought from Richard Levett of 10 Museum Street, Bloomsbury, whose entry in the 1852 Post Office directory described him as 'stone hammer maker to the Metropolitan unions, & general smith.'⁴⁸ Levett supplied seven unions in London from 1849 to 1851, and this reference was clearly meant to advertise to other potential customers the suitability of his tools for constant heavy use. There were few other products which could be sold on the basis of their suitability for paupers.

It could be argued that St Saviour was an unusual union in respect of its suppliers, as it was centrally located with excellent communications. Goods could cross the river via Blackfriars road and rail bridges and Southwark bridge; Blackfriars Road was a major thoroughfare housing several large enterprises; and the south bank of the Thames, which formed the union's northern border, was lined with busy wharves. It is therefore worth comparing St Saviour's suppliers in 1849-51 with those of a less central poor law authority, such as the parish of St John Hampstead. At 2,252 acres, the parish was nearly ten times the area of St Saviour, which was 250 acres. However, it had less than a third of the population (11,986 for St John Hampstead, 35,371 for St Saviour in 1851). Most of its inhabitants lived in Hampstead village. A goods railway ran nearby and a major road connected it to London, but despite being a 'metropolitan' union it was separated from the new housing developments of north-central London by a belt of fields. The parish's guardians' minutes for 1849-51 list seventy traders who supplied the workhouse or outdoor poor, the addresses of fifty-seven of which can be readily ascertained.⁴⁹ Of these fifty-seven, thirty-six had premises in Hampstead and twenty-one did not (Figure 5).

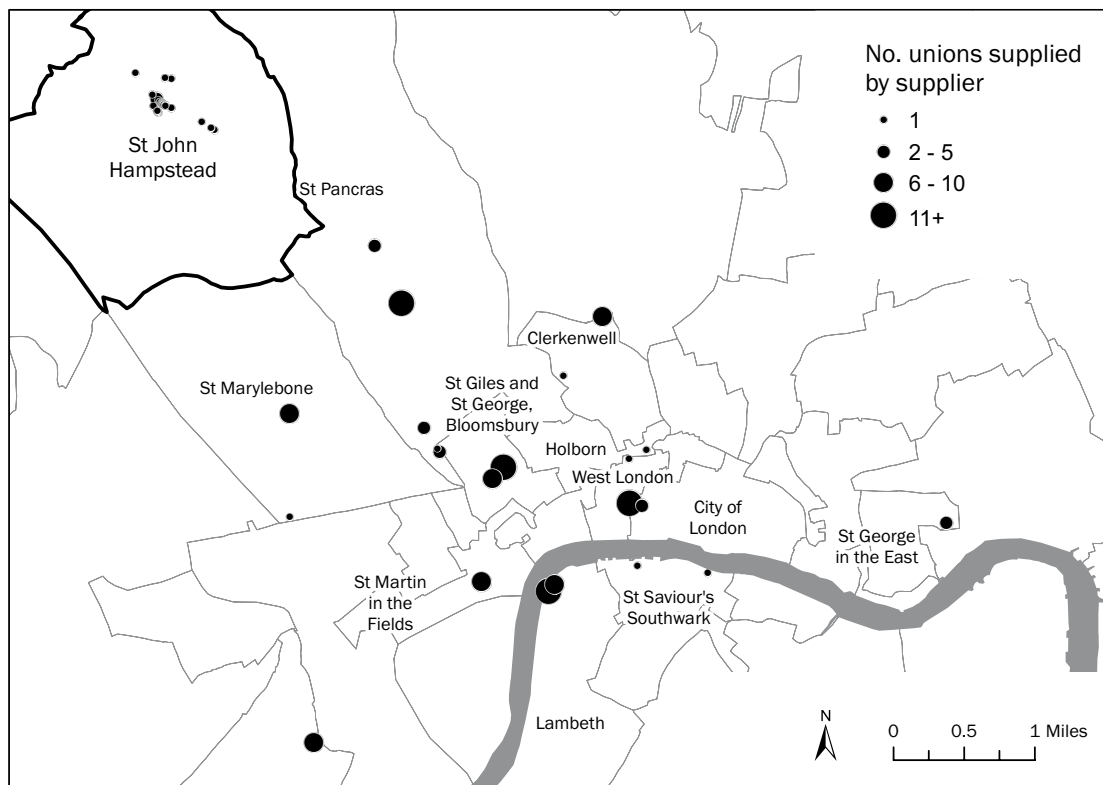


Figure 5. Suppliers to St John Hampstead, 1849-51. Source: Minutes of boards of guardians; *Small Edition of the Post Office London Directory* (London: Kelly, 1852); *Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex* (London: Kelly, 1855).

Like St Saviour's suppliers, those who were outside St John's parish fall into two categories. First, the sellers of specialist goods such as tool-maker Richard Levett of Bloomsbury, mangle-manufacturers Baker & Co of the City, engraver W.V. Wingrove of Smithfield and scale-makers T. Burchfield & Son, also of Smithfield. Second, the large enterprises capable of supplying in bulk who supplied unions across London, such as draper William Lunn of the City, butcher Henry Rogers of Islington, potato-dealer Charles Evans of Camden, flour-factor/baker John Gillett of Bloomsbury, and coal-merchant Coles Child & Co and brewers Goding & Co, both of Lambeth. Of the twenty-one suppliers to St John Hampstead which were not in the parish, just seven supplied no other workhouses. St John Hampstead, like St Saviour, occasionally also bought the sorts of goods sold by these large suppliers from smaller local traders, like brewer Thomas Buckland, draper William Brett and baker Ebenezer Jobbins. As it was surrounded by farmland Hampstead could also benefit from local milk, buying only from farmers and dairy-keepers John Culverhouse, William Collins and Lucy Roach, all of whom lived in the parish. There was one important difference between St Saviour and St John Hampstead, however: Because of its location, St Saviour benefitted from a higher number of potential suppliers than St John for more types of goods. St Saviour had an above-average number of suppliers for five out of the ten

goods shown in Table 3 (above): clothing, coal, grocery, printing and shoes/leather. St John Hampstead, in contrast, had an above-average number of suppliers only for clothing and meat. But of the thirty-six suppliers within the parish of St John Hampstead, only one supplied any other workhouses.

Nonetheless, most of the same characteristics of supply are apparent for both St Saviour and St John Hampstead. For the goods they required in bulk, metropolitan unions had a choice of a small number of large businesses based across the capital. These large businesses were not to be found in every union, limiting the ability of guardians to spend the poor rates only on local traders. Nonetheless, guardians did take the opportunity to spend locally where possible, when smaller quantities of goods were required or if there was no suitable large supplier. Where unions needed certain specialist goods, they had a much more restricted choice.

Supplying other institutions

Some of the traders who supplied multiple poor law unions were also in a position to contract with other large institutions. William Smith & Son, the Pimlico linendrapers who supplied or bid for contracts with twenty-three of the metropolitan poor law unions in 1850, also had a contract to supply shirts for the Royal Marines quartered at Deptford.⁵⁰ Thomas Slater, described in the *Quarterly Review* as 'the well-known butcher of Kensington and Jermyn Street,' reportedly killed '200 sheep and from 20 to 25 oxen' per week on average, supplying not only the army but also five unions in 1849-51.⁵¹ When troops were encamped at Chobham Common, near Chertsey, in 1853 before their departure for Crimea, the contract to supply bread and fifty sacks of flour a day was won by John Gillett of Silver Street Bloomsbury, who had contracted with thirteen poor law unions in 1850.⁵² He also provided 600 sacks of corn, eighty loads of hay and sixty loads of straw for the cavalry horses. The contract to provide the camp with 6,000 lb of fresh meat per day was won by Charles Baker & Son of Newgate market, who supplied seven unions in 1850. The Commissary-General, according to the *Morning Post*, first offered the contracts to local tradesmen but they had not generally taken up the proposal.

Poor law suppliers who also won contracts with the army included William Jackson & Co and William Lunn, who both supplied contracts to supply clothing to troops going to Crimea in 1854.⁵³ St Saviour union bought buttons from Philip Firmin & Sons, described as '[wholesale] army & navy button, military & naval ornament manufacturers & sword cutlers to the Queen & royal family, 153 Strand, & 13 Conduit Street Bond Street'.⁵⁴ It seems likely that the buttons

bought by St Saviour were for the uniform of an official, such as the porter, rather than for paupers.

Insane asylums had much in common with workhouses in terms of size and contracting arrangements, and it is unsurprising that they shared suppliers. Chelsea linendrapers Charles Roope & Son, for example, frequently advertised in the *Asylum Journal*, offering to tender for contracts 'from a single item to the furnishing of an Establishment throughout', and claiming to have supplied the Hanwell and Colney Hatch asylums since they were founded.⁵⁵ Prisons were also a good source of business for workhouse suppliers. A sample of contracts entered into by Middlesex prisons in 1862 were won by workhouse suppliers James Percival of Blackfriars for oilman's goods, Mary Evans of Bloomsbury for potatoes, Thomas Warne of Covent Garden for leather, Benjamin Bloomfield Baker of the City of London for meat and Neill & Waugh of the City for oatmeal, barley and split peas.⁵⁶ Benjamin Bloomfield Baker told the Old Bailey in 1849 that he and his father Charles supplied the 'Model Prison' (i.e. Pentonville) with 800 to 1,000 stone of meat a day.⁵⁷ Nine years later he was running the business and, as his agent James Green told the same court, was a contractor for the troops at Woolwich.⁵⁸

Prices

There was no significant geographical variation in prices across London for most goods. Central unions were likely to pay neither more nor less than peripheral unions, and nor were there north-south or east-west divisions. It is unsurprising that prices did not generally show a geographic pattern given that unions in all parts of London bought their goods from the same suppliers. However, suppliers often contracted with different unions at different prices for the same goods. This can be seen, for example, in the prices paid by London unions in the six months to Michaelmas 1870.⁵⁹ Messrs Kingsford contracted with nine London unions for flour in this period (Table 5). Their prices per 280-pound sack of best seconds wheaten flour ranged from 27s 6d (St Pancras) to 33s 6d (Strand), and only two unions were charged the same price (St Marylebone and St Giles & St George both paid 30s 6d). Gillett & Sons contracted with seven unions for flour for the same period. Each paid a slightly different price, ranging from 29s 9d (St Olave) to 32s (Fulham). S. Kidd & Co supplied three unions with flour, two of which (City of London and St Leonard's Shoreditch) paid 30s and one of which paid 32s (Mile End Old Town).

A similar disparity is evident for meat. Butchers Morris & Oakes and Henry Lee each supplied three unions in the six months to Michaelmas 1870, and each union paid a different amount. The highest price charged by Morris & Oakes was lower than the lowest from Lee, and the mean

price per pound of beef from Morris & Oakes was 6.1*d* and from Lee was 6.5*d*. There was less variation in the contract prices paid by customers of mealmen Neill & Waugh for oatmeal, but there was by no means a fixed price: The partnership supplied twelve unions in the same period, five of which paid 13*s* 6*d* for a hundredweight of best Scotch oatmeal. Four unions paid 14*s*, two paid 14*s* 6*d* and one paid 15*s*. Meanwhile Edwards Brothers contracted with four unions for oatmeal, all at different prices, the lowest being 13*s* 3*d* and the highest 16*s* 9*d*.

These inconsistencies in price show that the largest suppliers did not necessarily charge lower prices than the smaller suppliers. The cheapest flour bought by a union for the half-year came from W.E. Westrup, who supplied only Stepney during the period. The sixteen unions who bought their flour from either Gillett or Kingsford paid on average two-thirds of a penny more per sack than the customers of the rest of the suppliers. This is only a small difference which had little impact on total relief costs, but it shows that large businesses did not necessarily supply at lower prices. Unions were prepared to buy from a supplier who was not the lowest bidder where they had, for instance, a reputation for a reliable standard of goods or for punctual deliveries. When the Poor Law Board engaged Admiralty provisioning expert Francis Rowsell to report on supply arrangements in London unions in 1871, Camberwell's clerk told him that decisions were made 'partly by prices, and partly by the repute of the parties tendering. The guardians do not accept a tender solely on account of price.'⁶⁰ In fact, of the twenty-six unions who answered Rowsell's query as to whether the lowest bid was always accepted, only two replied yes without qualification, the other twenty-four mostly saying that they took into account the quality of goods previously supplied and the character of the supplier. The larger suppliers might well have managed to achieve reputations for reliability and punctuality more readily than smaller traders. Larger businesses may also have had the ability to absorb the costs associated with late payments, for which poor law unions were notorious. Although unions were supposed to delay payment to creditors for no longer than twenty-one days after the end of the quarter, payments made after this time were not generally ruled unlawful by the auditors. There was, after all, no fair way of recovering money from suppliers once they had been paid by the union. Delayed payments were such a common practice, and early payments so inconvenient for unions, that it was difficult for the central authority to end them.

Why were prices different for different unions? One reason might have been the expected quantities to be bought. A supplier would be contracted with for a price per item or weight, but the quantity actually needed by the union would not be specified. It would simply order as required, and the supplier would send in the goods and invoice the union at the end of the period of the contract. A flour dealer might be more willing to tender at a lower price for a contract with a workhouse he expected to supply with a large amount of flour, than with

another whose orders tended to be smaller. This would have been a judgment made by the dealer on a case-by-case basis, and it is not easy to see this from the available evidence. It does not appear that unions with larger workhouse populations were charged less, for example.

A supplier might have bid at relatively high prices where he believed unions were likely to change their contractor at regular intervals as a matter of policy. He might also have offered prices depending on how likely he felt the unions were to accept. The knowledge that he had few competitors might prompt him to bid at a slightly higher level, for instance. This, too, is not easy to discern in the data. Aside from the subtle judgments suppliers might have to make about their customers and competitors, they had to adjust their prices to accommodate transport costs. Some unions were easier to reach than others. All would have had deliveries by horse-drawn carts; some were near railways, wharves and canals. A coal-merchant whose goods never needed to come off the canal to reach a workhouse might be expected to charge less than he would for a workhouse at the top of a hill which could only be reached by road.

It is very possible that dealers colluded with each other to organize price levels – an illegal practice which would be highly unlikely to leave evidence. Francis Rowsell was convinced that such behaviour did happen, reporting that certain groups of businesses arranged ‘to a very large extent, in whose hands particular contracts shall be. The meat dealers... are intimately associated for this purpose, and guard their ring fence with very strong trade sanctions.’⁶¹ Suppliers might also have bid very low prices at tender – perhaps even loss-making – to discourage competition. With a product like milk, very low costs could be achieved through adulteration.⁶² The director of the Dairy Reform Company who complained about milk dilution told the Society of Arts that ‘the company had been applied to for tenders for various places, but on ascertaining the prices usually paid they refused, as it was impossible to supply pure milk on such terms’.⁶³ Other milk dealers tried to bribe company officials to retire from the business, and their retail customers were ‘subjected to personal interruption by a number of rough people employed to molest them’.⁶⁴ In the cases of other products, suppliers could try to find cheaper sources than those used by their competitors. George Penson, for instance, was able to dominate the supply of butter to unions by buying from a buttery in Normandy.⁶⁵ From 1855 to 1860 the estimated average value of a pound of imported French butter was three pence cheaper than the butter usually sourced from Wales, Ireland or Dorset.⁶⁶ Butter was also suspected of being adulterated, which would account for its low price: Rowsell was especially damning of workhouse butter in his 1871 report, suggesting that a ‘considerable proportion’ was horse fat.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The poor law offered significant opportunities in London both for large contractors and for local suppliers. London's workhouses were unusual in being amid commercial, industrial and residential activity, unlike in many rural and other urban or semi-urban unions where the institutions tended to be located away from built-up areas. The spatial proximity of workhouses therefore engendered close working relationships between buyers and sellers. It also meant that some contractors could benefit from economies of scale, and they could also supply other large institutional purchasers such as the army, hospitals, schools and asylums. The concentration of such institutional markets no doubt helped some contractors expand their businesses in ways that would have been more difficult to achieve in other parts of the country. However, at the same time, the local basis of the poor law meant that guardians had a vested interest in keeping rates circulating within their union, and this also presented opportunities for local businesses to take on the job of supplying the workhouse. Buying locally was good for guardians' relations with the ratepayers whom they represented, and was facilitated by their knowledge of local businesses. Moreover giving work to local traders ultimately kept people in employment and off the relief lists. Guardians bought not only from large suppliers of bulk goods and small-scale local businesses, but also from traders who could provide specialist goods. Makers of scales, cooking apparatus and the like were not to be found in every union, and for these specialist suppliers poor law unions were no doubt an important source of business.

The balance of supplier sizes depended, in part, on the kinds of goods that were supplied. Trades such as clothing, grocery, shoes and meat were dominated by a relatively small number of very large enterprises who had the resources to supply workhouses, hospitals, prisons and barracks. The goods they supplied were required in bulk by workhouse and other institutions, and smaller traders could not readily procure and provide the quantities needed. Although for most of these trades there were several big suppliers, guardians had a fairly limited choice in practice.

The prices paid by unions for their supplies differed across London, but in most cases without a discernable geographical pattern. Prices also often differed between unions who had the same supplier. The causes for this are not easy to judge from the available evidence, but might well include transport costs and the gamesmanship involved in the submission of sealed bids. Because guardians were not obliged to accept the cheapest bid, poor-law contracting must be seen a social practice: A matter not concerned only with the lowest tender but rather with the most appropriate. Judging the appropriateness of bidders was in the hands of a few guardians, based on personal knowledge and taking into consideration social relationships between them.

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¹ 4 & 5 Will. IV c. 76. An Act for the Amendment and Better Administration of the Laws Relating

² D.R. Green, 'Icons of the New System: Workhouse Construction and Relief Practices in London Under the Old and New Poor Law', *London Journal* 34:3 (November 2009), 264-284.

³ The mean number of indoor pauper in London unions was 593 on 1 January 1850 and 1,225 on 1 January 1871. For the rest of England and Wales the figures were 176 and 198 respectively. Source: Poor Law Board and Local Government Board annual reports.

⁴ London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) WABG/010, 22 March 1851.

⁵ British Parliamentary Papers (PP) 1867 LX 57. Workhouse Dietaries.

⁶ PP 1882 XXX Pt. I. 1. Eleventh annual report of the Local Government Board. 1881-82, Appendix D, no. 66.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xiv.

⁸ G. Nicholls, *A History of the English Poor Law in Connection with the State of the Country and the Condition of the People* vol. I (London: P.S. King & Son, 1904), 252.

⁹ The literature on the new poor law is extensive. Recent analysis focusing on London includes P. Ashbridge, 'Paying for the Poor: A Middle-Class Metropolitan Movement for Rate Equalisation 1857-67', *London Journal* 22:2 (1997), 107-122; M. Brodie, 'Artisans and Dossers: The 1886 West End Riots and the East End Casual Poor', *London Journal* 24:2 (November 1999), 34-50; D.R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); L. Marks, 'Medical Care for Pauper Mothers and Their Infants: Poor Law Provision and Local Demand in East London, 1870-1929', *Economic History Review* 46:3 (August 1993), 518-542; E. Murphy, 'The New Poor Law Guardians and the Administration of Insanity in East London, 1834-1844', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 77:1 (2003), 45-74; A. Tanner, 'The Casual Poor and the City of London Poor Law Union 1837 - 1869', *Historical Journal* 42:1 (March 1999), 183-206; A. Tanner, 'The City of London Poor Law Union, 1837-1869' (Unpublished PhD thesis: Birkbeck, University of London, 1995).

¹⁰ Such as D. Brunton, *Vaccination: Practice and Policy in England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland 1800-1874* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008); A. Digby, *Making a Medical Living: Doctors and Patients in the English Market for Medicine, 1720-1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); M.W. Flinn, 'Medical services under the New Poor Law', in D. Fraser (ed.), *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 45-66; D.R. Green, 'Medical Relief and the New Poor Law in London', in O.P. Grell, A. Cunningham and R. Jütte (eds.), *Health Care and Poor Relief in 18th and 19th Century Northern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 220-245.

¹¹ Expenditure was enumerated annually in the poor rate returns published in the central authorities' annual reports.

¹² F.W. Rowsell, 'The Public Stores: Their Purchase and Administration', *Macmillan's Magazine* 26 (May - October 1872), 478-485.

¹³ See, for example, G. Shaw, 'Recent Research on the Commercial Structure of Nineteenth-Century British Cities', in D. Denecke and G. Shaw (eds.), *Urban Historical Geography: Recent Progress in Britain and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 236-49, which focuses almost entirely on retail; R. Perren, 'The Marketing of Agricultural Products: Farm Gate to Retail Store', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. VII (1850-1914) Part II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 953-998; C. Smith, 'The Wholesale and Retail Markets of London, 1660-1840', *Economic History Review* 60:1 (2002), 31-50; R.S. Metcalfe, *Meat, Commerce and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

¹⁴ PP 1842 XIX 1. Eighth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, With Appendices, 84, appendix A, no. 7: General order on Proceedings of Boards of Guardians, articles 15-20; J.F. Archbold, *The Consolidated and Other Orders of the Poor Law Commissioners, and of the Poor Law Board, With Introduction, Explanatory Notes, and Index* (London: Shaw and Sons, 1859), 37-140, articles 44-47.

¹⁵ PP 1882 XXX Pt. I 1, liii.

¹⁶ *Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre: St Pancras: UTAH 663* (microfilm). *London Metropolitan Archives: Camberwell: CAGB/007, CABG/008; City of London: CBG/013; East London: CBG/005; Fulham: FBG/004, 005; Greenwich: GBG/012, GBG/013; Kensington: KBG/012, KBG/013; Lambeth: LABG/006; Lewisham: LEBG/009; Paddington: PABG/003; Poplar: X090/005* (microfilm); *St Luke Chelsea: CHBG/008; St Mary Bermondsey: BBG/006; Stepney: STBG/L/014, STBG/L/015, STBG/L/016; St George the Martyr: SOBG/011; St John Hampstead: HPCG/002; St Martin in the Fields: WEBG/SM/015, WEBG/SM/016; St Olave: BBG/028, 029; Strand: WEBG/ST/011, WEBG/ST/012, WEBG/ST/013; St Saviour Southwark: SOBG/039/010; Wandsworth and Clapham: WABG/010, WABG/011; West London: CBG/016; Whitechapel: STBG/WH/011. *City of Westminster Archives: St George Hanover Square: MF 601, MF 602; St James Piccadilly: MF 2117, MF 2118; St Margaret & St John Westminster: MF 2139.**

¹⁷ For subcontracting in sweated industries, see J.A. Schmeichen, *Sweated Industries and Sweated Labor: The London Clothing Trades 1860-1914* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1984), chapter 3. Army clothiers including Charles Prater & Son, Skinner, Turner & Co and Benjamin Hewitt sent in material to be made up into uniforms by paupers in Holborn workhouse in 1836: See trial of Eliza Jenkins at Old Bailey, 12 December 1836. Online at <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18361212-230> (accessed September 2014).

¹⁸ Collected in *The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts* (Firle: Caliban Books, 1980-1982), in particular volumes 1 and 2.

¹⁹ Mayhew, Letter VII, *Morning Chronicle* 9 November 1849.

²⁰ Mayhew, Letter VII.

²¹ The National Archives (TNA), C16/884/P30.

²² *P.O. London Directory* (1852), 922; 'The Ladbroke estate: The 1860s onwards', in F.H.W. Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London: volume 37: Northern Kensington* (1973), 235-51. Online at: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=49877> (accessed 17 March 2013).

²³ TNA, BT31/1205/2727C; *Morning Post*, 25 April 1879, 8.

²⁴ The PLC's first annual report contained an order for keeping accounts with *pro formas*: PP 1835 XXXV 107. First annual report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales, Appendix A, no. 11.

²⁵ TNA, HO45/2049.

²⁶ TNA, HO45/2049.

²⁷ TNA, HO45/2049.

²⁸ P.G. Hall, *The Industries of London Since 1861* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1962), 102.

²⁹ There were relatively few manufacturers of earthenware in London: J.P. Cushion, *Handbook of Pottery and Porcelain Marks* (London: Faber, 1980), 108-10.

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- ³¹ Essex Record Office, D/DQ 14/88.
- ³² 'Mr Collinson Hall' (obituary), *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 31 March 1880, 3.
- ³³ Bankruptcy notice, *Edinburgh Gazette*, 3 February 1860, 163.
- ³⁴ G.E. Fussell, *The English Dairy Farmer 1500-1900* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966), 311.
- ³⁵ *P.O. London Directory* (1852), 829.
- ³⁶ J.C. Morton, 'Town Milk', *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 2nd series, 4 (1868), 69-98, 72.
- ³⁷ 'Food Committee', *Journal of the Society of Arts* 15:753 (26 April 1867), 355-358.
- ³⁸ *P.O. London Directory* (1852), 752.
- ³⁹ F.G. Pennance and B.S. Yamey, 'Competition in the Retail Grocery Trade 1850-1939', *Economica* 22:88 (1955), 309.
- ⁴⁰ LMA, SOBG/039/009.
- ⁴¹ The other was Thomas Hadden who had premises at 37 High Street, Poplar, and 15 Bridge Street, Southwark.
- ⁴² See Chart 5.1, above.
- ⁴³ LMA, SOBG/039/010, f. 57, 18 July 1850.
- ⁴⁴ General Consolidated Order, article 45, in W. Cunningham Glen, *The General Consolidated and Other Orders of the Poor Law Commissioners and the Poor Law Board; With Explanatory Notes Elucidating the Orders, Tables of Statutes, Cases, and Index to the Orders and Notes*. 6th ed. (London: Butterworths, 1868), 36.
- ⁴⁵ City of Westminster Archives, D2148, microfilm 2117, 46.
- ⁴⁶ K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 49, 57.
- ⁴⁷ LMA, SOBG/039/009, f. 176.
- ⁴⁸ *The Small Edition of the Post Office London Directory, 1852. Comprising, Amongst Other Information, Official Directory; Commercial Directory; Court Directory; Parliamentary Directory; Postal Directory; Banking Directory; &c.* (London: Kelly, 1852), 850.
- ⁴⁹ LMA, HPBG/002; *P.O. London Directory* (1852); *Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex*. (London: Kelly, 1855).
- ⁵⁰ TNA, J117/32, contract bond 25 April 1850.
- ⁵¹ Anonymous, 'The London Commissariat', *Quarterly Review* 95 (1854), 271-308, 284.
- ⁵² 'The military camp at Chobham', *Morning Post*, 23 May 1853, 4.
- ⁵³ PP 1854-55 XXXII 307. Army Clothing (Crimea). Return Showing the Number and Description of Articles of Clothing Supplied From This Country By the Government Since the 1st Day of October 1854, for the Troops Serving in the Crimea; &c.
- ⁵⁴ *P.O. London Directory* (1852), 731.
- ⁵⁵ For example *Asylum Journal*, 15 May 1855, 208.
- ⁵⁶ Percival: LMA, MA/DG/056/12, 20 June 1862; Evans: MA/D/G/056/16, 20 June 1862; Warne: MA/D/G/056/17, 12 December 1862; Baker: MA/D/G/056/31, 12 December 1862; Neill & Waugh: MA/D/G/056/6, 20 June 1862.
- ⁵⁷ Benjamin Bloomfield Baker's evidence to Old Bailey in prosecution of William Wildgoose, 18 September 1849. Online at <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18490917-1709> (accessed 17 March 2013).
- ⁵⁸ James Green's evidence to Old Bailey in prosecution of Thomas Forsdick, 22 November 1858. Online at <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18581122-65> (accessed 17 March 2013).
- ⁵⁹ PP 1870 LVIII 563. Metropolitan Boards of Guardians (Contracts). Return of the Contracts Made By the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians for the Supply of Certain Articles for the Six Months Ending Michaelmas 1870.

⁶⁰ PP 1872 LI 599. Workhouses, Metropolis (Supply of Provisions). Copy of Report of Francis W. Rowsell, Esquire, Superintendent of Contracts, Admiralty, to the Right Honourable James Stansfeld, M.P., President of the Poor Law Board, Dated the 20th Day of July 1871, Relative to the System of Supply of Provisions and Stores for the Workhouses of the Metropolis, 35.

⁶¹ PP 1872 LI 599, 12.

⁶² For the changing regulatory environment regarding food adulteration see E.J.T. Collins, 'Food Adulteration and Food Safety in Britain in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries', *Food Policy* 18:2 (1993), 95-109.

⁶³ 'Food Committee', 355.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ TNA, C16/884/P30.

⁶⁶ Prices derived from B. Afton and M. Turner, 'Prices', in E.J.T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. VII (1850-1914) Part II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2038-105; PPs for annual statements of trade and navigation; PP 1881 XCII 521. Trade (United Kingdom and France). Return Showing the Trade Between the United Kingdom and France, in Each of the Years From 1861 to 1879, Inclusive, According to the Respective Official Statistics of the Two Countries, With an Explanatory Memorandum Thereon.

⁶⁷ PP 1872 LI 599, 5.

Notes on Contributor

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