

Research Space

Lecture

Sheppey and the Poor Law Watts, M.

Sheppey and the Poor Law





Tudor System

- Elizabethan Poor Law of 1597 and 1601
- First mandatory system of public relief
- Parishes charged with raising money and administering relief – cash and work
- Annual appointment of Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor, by local Justices.
- Effectively run by local farmers and householders – 'middle class' ?

Settlement

- Act of Settlement 1662 regulating settlement status and liability for relief
- Removal for 40 days non-residence or in premises worth £10 per annum
- Continuous adjustment of settlement e.g.

Poor and Workhouse

- 1601 Poor Law 'places of habitation'
- Obliged local ratepayers to provide somewhere to live for the aged and sick, whose families could not support them – Poorhouse.
- Workhouses for the able bodied developed randomly - 1601 Act required the fit and idle to be set to work - more available in urban than rural parishes.
- 1723 Act Parishes able to build workhouses or outsource to private institutions for the indigent. Poor relief removed from those who declined to enter.

Outsourcing

 Outsourcing popular with parishes, reducing their financial and administrative burdens. Private establishments not always of a high standard.

Outdoor Relief

 Outdoor relief – payment to those who lived outside poor or workhouses, represented the bulk of recipients – aged, sick and children. Long term payment of 1 shilling per week typical and quite insufficient.

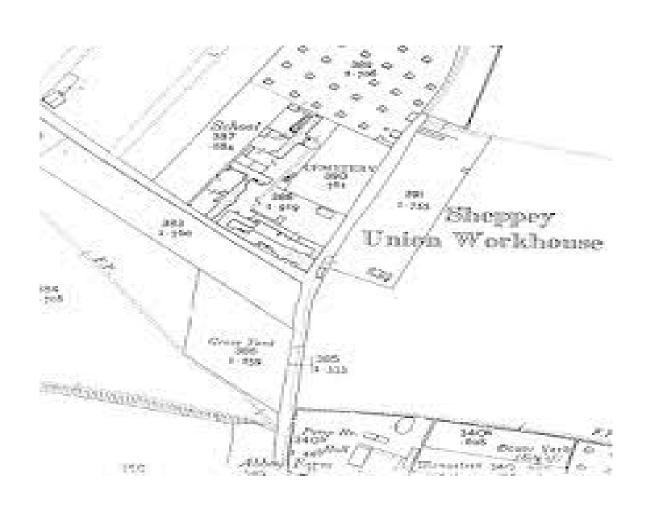
Gilbert Act 1782

- □ 1776-77 over 2,000 parish workhouses
- Gilbert Act authorised adjoining parishes to combine resources to provide workhouses for the old, sick and infirm
- Act required a two/thirds majority of local ratepayers to consent to Union
- Individual parishes could also take advantage of the Act
- 1785-1835 100 Gilbert Unions

Gilbert Administration

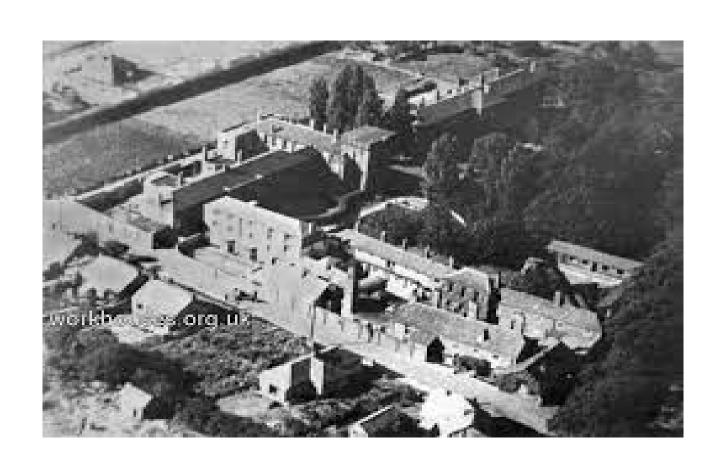
Poor Law Reform

- 1630 a poor house established on land of Sir John Haywood, continuing as a legacy charity. Old and homeless accommodated.
- Parliament reported in 1777 that there were 2 parish workhouses on Sheppey, Minster for 26 inmates and Eastchurch 40.
- 1784 New workhouse built at Wards Hill Road. Destroyed in a fire and rebuilt 1789/90



Sheppey Poor Law Union

Population in 1831 Census: 9,847



Sheppey Poor Law Union



End of Union

1930 Formal termination of unions

Sources