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**Huguenot poor relief in Hanoverian London:
assistance to widows in the period
1735-1750**

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He koha aroha teenei.

Introduction

By the end of the seventeenth century London's French Protestant community numbered over 20,000, constituting some five per cent of the capital's population.¹ Many had come during the 1680s and 1690s, fleeing from religious persecution in Louis XIV's France and arriving destitute, thus creating extra demands for poor relief.² The present research investigates what assistance was still needed some two generations later when the community might be thought to have settled down after the turmoil of the refugee period.

Little work has so far been done on immigrant populations in eighteenth-century England, and the women of immigrant communities have received even less attention.³ The category of widows is used as a sample for this study because they form an identifiable group of manageable size within the female Huguenot population. Widows also figure prominently as recipients of poor relief under the old English Poor Laws, so there is a rich store of comparative literature.

Many of the mid-eighteenth century Huguenot widows appear to have been elderly, and knowledge about relief to the elderly poor is particularly lacking for the Early Modern period, "the most neglected era of this generally neglected subject".⁴ Furthermore, this study examines relief provided through a number of channels: the French Protestant Church (which could be approximated to parish relief in the host community); Royal Bounty payments; the French Protestant Hospital; a charity soup kitchen; and one of the community's benefit societies. This facilitates an analysis of what has been called the "mixed economy of welfare" and permits a contribution to the debate on both parish relief and voluntary charity - debates

¹ Robin D. Gwynn *Huguenot Heritage: The History and Contribution of the Huguenots in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1985) p.36

² Poor relief provided to widows of this community (both newly-arrived and longer-established) during the period 1681-1695 has already been the focus of a previous study: Eileen Barrett "Poor Relief Provided to Huguenot Widows, 1681-1695, through the French Church of London: a Preliminary Study" (Unpublished BA Hons research essay, Massey Univ., 1996)

³ Anne Laurence *Women in England 1500-1760: a Social History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994) p.25

⁴ Lynn Botelho "Aged and Impotent: Parish Relief of the Aged Poor in Early Modern Suffolk" in Martin Daunton *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: UCL Press, 1996) p.93

which are all too often conducted in isolation from each other.⁵ The study will also contribute to a knowledge of the London Huguenot community in the eighteenth century, a period which has been virtually ignored in Huguenot research to date.

The documents which form the basis of this research [see table following p.4] are largely in manuscript form. The largest body of material comes from the archives of the French Church of London. This church, situated at the time in Threadneedle Street and the oldest of the French churches in the capital, also had the largest membership, and was seen as the principal source of church relief for Huguenots in the London area. The contributing manuscripts include the Deacons' accounts of money disbursed to the poor, and the records of their deliberations on poor relief.⁶ The latter documents [Mss 58 and 59] are especially interesting because they often give some clue as to why a pension rate changed or a particular grant was given, specifying for example that the recipient was now very old, or had fallen sick, or that her children had left home. The financial accounts themselves are exemplary in their fullness and indicate a familiarity with accounting and administrative practice on the part of those who had put the systems in place - a legacy, no doubt, of Huguenot involvement in London's financial and commercial community.⁷ In addition to 'case-books' [Mss 83 and 81] which record information under a person's name, there are day-books [Mss 110-113 and Ms 309] which record, by date, the distribution of monies, and monthly accounts [Mss 120 and 121] which show income as well as outflow. Thus, although some parts of one manuscript may be faint or damaged, it is generally possible to retrieve the missing information through recourse to one or more of the other documents.

⁵ Joanna Innes "The 'Mixed Economy of Welfare' in Early Modern England: Assessment of the Options from Hale to Malthus (c.1683-1803) in Martin Daunton (ed.) *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: UCL Press, 1996) p.141

⁶ In the Huguenot church, Deacons were lay-people who had particular responsibility for poor relief. As the organisational rules of the "Église Française de l'Artillerie de Londres" state: "l'Office de Diaconat ... consiste à recevoir [sic], et à distribuer les deniers des Pauvres, des Prisonniers, et des Malades, de les visiter et d'en avoir soin". *Register of the Church of the Artillery, Spitalfields, 1691-1786* edited by Susan Minet [Quarterly Series of the Huguenot Society (hereafter HSQ), vol.XLII] (London, The Society, 1948) p.xii

⁷ For Huguenot/Walloon involvement in finance and, particularly, the founding of the Bank of England, see (e.g.) A.C. Carter *Getting, Spending and Investing in Early Modern Times: Essays on Dutch, English and Huguenot Economic History* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975); F.M. Couzet "Walloon, Huguenots and the Bank of England" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society*, vol.XXV, no.2 (1990), pp.167-178

The manuscripts recording the relief known as the Royal Bounty payments to poor French refugees [B.Mss 54-57] are generally well-preserved but are often less detailed, particularly with regard to payments to the 'common people'. They also include payments made to people outside London, so for the purposes of this study information from this source has been used only when it can be tied with some certainty to London residency.⁸ This may have resulted in greater emphasis on relief in the eastern end of the area because, while 'Spitalfields' is generally mentioned specifically, no place of residence is entered for those within the City area so that, unless recipients can be identified as London residents by other sources, they have not been included in this research. Furthermore, Bounty records contain numerous amendments and annotations, many of which are undated. These factors combine to limit the usefulness of the documents, although much can still be gleaned.

The records of two benefit societies - namely the *Société de la Province de Normandie*, founded in 1703, [NS.Ms D2] and *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois* [H/M1/Mss 1-4] - offer similar difficulties. Use of the former had to be discounted, owing to the very sketchy nature of the records for the period in question, but the latter manuscripts, while lacking in detail on many of the recipients of relief, have nevertheless yielded information which is particularly important given that this type of assistance was in its infancy at the time.

Apart from these manuscript sources, two other primary sources have been used: the case book of the 'Maison de Charité de Spittlefields' for the period 1739-1741, which has been published as volume LV of the Quarto Series of the Huguenot society,⁹ and extracts from the archives of the French Protestant Hospital and the

⁸ 'London', for the purposes of this research, includes what might be termed the 'eighteenth-century greater London area' - that is, it is not limited to those parishes covered by the 'Bills of Mortality' or bounded by the city walls.

⁹ HSQ, vol.LV: *The Case book of 'La Maison de Charité de Spittlefields' 1739-41* edited by Charles F.A. Marmoy (London: The Society, 1981)

Coqueau Charity, also published in the Quarto Series.¹⁰

The study does not include any consideration of payments made by royal warrant. Nor does it include any detailed discussion of poor relief provided by the various trade organizations and livery companies. It seems unlikely, however, that the London companies played a large part in the provision of assistance to the Huguenot community given that most admitted few foreign members at this time.¹¹ Also omitted is poor relief administered through any French churches other than that in Threadneedle Street. It should be noted that this last omission may have further biased the results in favour of relief in the eastern part of the greater London area, since although the church was geographically situated in the City, it had an annexe in the east and its poor relief activities were weighted towards that end of town.¹²

¹⁰ HSQ, vol.LII: *The French Protestant Hospital: Extracts from the Archives of 'La Providence' relating to Inmates and Applicants for Admission 1718-1957 and to Recipients of and Applicants for the Coqueau Charity 1745-1901: vol.I; entries A-K* (London: The Society, 1977); HSQ, vol.LIII: *The French Protestant Hospital: Extracts from the Archives of 'La Providence' relating to Inmates and Applicants for Admission 1718-1957 and to Recipients of and Applicants for the Coqueau Charity 1745-1901, vol.II: entries L-Z, appendices* (London: The Society, 1977)

¹¹ The Weavers' Company, for example, had an active programme of assistance to its members and, given the importance of weaving in the Huguenot community, one might expect it to be a major provider of poor relief to them. However, foreigners were at first admitted only to the lower orders of membership, and it was not until August 1740 that any French liverymen were elected. [Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers' Company 1600-1970* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) pp.16 & 126] Significantly, there are scarcely any French names appearing among its lists of pensioners in the period 1735-1750 and, of those that do, only three are women. [Personal communication from John Chapman, London]

¹² In confirmation of this, the Deacons' records show that the majority of the church's poor relief districts were on the eastern side of the city. [See page 30 for more detail.]

Chronology of manuscript coverage

	1735	1736	1737	1738	1739	1740	1741	1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	1748	1749	1750
Mss 58, 59 - Decisions on grants	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mss 83, 81 - Reg. of poor + relief granted	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mss 110-112 - Monies disb. to poor refs	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
Mss 309, 113 - Monies disb. to poor refs												•	•	•	•	•
Mss 120, 121 - Mnthly csh a/cs, poor rlf	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
B.Ms 54 - Pymts to gentry & bourgeoisie		•	•	•	•	•	•	•								
B.Ms 55 - Pymts to refs in Wmnstr/Soho							•	•	•	•						
B.Ms 56 - Pymts to common people										•	•	•	•	•	•	•
B.Ms 57 - Pymts to gentry & bourgeoisie											•	•	•	•	•	
H/M1/Mss 2 and 3 - Soc. Poitou a/cs	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
'La Soupe' case book [HSQ, vol. LV]					•	•	•									
'La Providence' [HSQ, vols LII & LIII]	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Coqueau Charity [HSQ, vols LII & LIII]											•	•	•	•	•	•

Chapter 1: The London Huguenot community, and factors affecting poverty in the mid-eighteenth century

When the flood of refugees had arrived in the 1680s and 1690s, they came to a city that already had a settled French-speaking community. There were families whose ancestors had arrived as early as the mid-sixteenth century, and they included those of Walloon as well as French descent - although the community became more French and less Walloon as the seventeenth century progressed.¹ Many were now well-established and respectable citizens, holding positions of influence in the financial and commercial world or with reputations as skilled craftsmen. They were scattered all over London but there were particular concentrations in the west around Leicester Fields/Soho and in the east towards Spitalfields, the former involved more often (but not exclusively) in the luxury trades, the latter in textile production and especially silk weaving.

While some had doubtless intermarried with the host population and lost their close ties with the Huguenot community, many seem to have maintained their French identity. A significant factor in this was probably the founding of French Protestant churches in London - firstly the French Church of London in Threadneedle Street in the sixteenth century which, retaining the Calvinist liturgy, was described as 'nonconformist', and later (in 1661) the church usually known as 'the Savoy', which used the Anglican liturgy translated into French and which was therefore termed 'conformist'.

With the arrival of so many new refugees in the late seventeenth century, keen to continue practising the religion for which they had sacrificed so much, more places of worship were needed and new churches and chapels soon sprang up in and around London. Initially, the new congregations were entirely nonconformist in Spitalfields but predominantly conformist in the Westminster area. However, the last decade of the century saw the establishment of additional nonconformist churches in the west so that by 1700 it was the Calvinist liturgy that predominated.

¹ Robin D. Gwynn *Huguenot Heritage ...* p.33

In total, at least twenty-eight French congregations existed in and around the capital as the new century dawned, including one each at Greenwich and Wandsworth, although by 1730 the number had settled to about twenty.² Services at all of them were conducted in French.

The reason for such a decline in the number of congregations between 1700 and 1730 is not clear. At least one historian has suggested there was rapid assimilation into the host community during the eighteenth century,³ so it is possible that many Huguenots were now attending English churches. It is also possible, given the waning importance of religion in the lives of many eighteenth-century English people,⁴ that the Huguenot population had simply lost its enthusiasm for church attendance, but this seems extremely unlikely given the hardships and dislocation that refugees had endured precisely in order to maintain their faith.

Indeed, new refugees were still arriving: although the flow had stemmed significantly in comparison with the great flood of the 1680s and 1690s there was nevertheless a constant trickle, and occasional larger influxes such as that caused by the renewed persecution of 1724. In that year the Duc de Bourbon was appointed Regent to the young Louis XV and a new edict was issued imposing life imprisonment on all who attended conventicles. It also declared marriages of Huguenots illegal, denied Protestants the rites of Christian burial, made Catholic baptism of infants compulsory within 24 hours of birth, and condemned Protestant preachers to suffer death by hanging. As a result of such measures, the next two years saw the flight of an estimated 10,000 more Protestants from France - although not all sought refuge in England.⁵

² Robin D. Gwynn "The Distribution of Huguenot Refugees in England, II: London and its Environs" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society*, vol.XXII, no.6 (1976), pp.561-567

³ Peter Clark "Migrants in the City: the Process of Social Adaptation in English Towns 1500-1800" in Peter Clark and David Souden (eds.) *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p.275

⁴ Peter Earle *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London, 1650-1750* (London: Methuen, 1994) pp.177-178; George Rudé *Hanoverian London, 1714-1808* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1971) pp.105-106

⁵ David Ogg *Europe of the Ancien Régime, 1715-1783* (London: Fontana, 1965) p.258; also Arthur G. Browning "The Early History of the French Protestant Hospital (La Providence), Continued from the Death in 1737 of Philippe Menard, the First Chaplain and Secretary, to 1760, the End of the Reign of George II" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.VII, (1901-1904) p.200

While it is true that not all the new arrivals in London remained in the city - some moved on to other towns or even other countries - the Huguenot population in the capital cannot have diminished to any great extent if one judges by the number of people seeking poor relief. In the restricted study carried out in 1996, some 350 widows were identified as receiving assistance through the Threadneedle Street Church in the period 1681-1695.⁶ Bearing in mind that, in the late seventeenth century, the French Church of London was, if not the only, then certainly the *main* source of assistance to those in need, and that the study examined records dealing with both the settled and the refugee poor, it seems unlikely that this figure would represent less than half the total number of widows in receipt of relief.⁷ In the present study, some 1,200 widows are found to have been receiving help, from various Huguenot sources, between 1735 and 1750. This suggests that the population identifying as Huguenot had certainly not diminished and that their poor relief needs may have been greater than ever - in corroboration of which, other research has pointed to a large increase in people receiving money, through the French Committee, from Civil List funds, with numbers assisted almost tripling between 1696 and 1721.⁸

What, then, were the factors affecting the need for poor relief in the first half of the eighteenth century? While there were no longer huge numbers of totally destitute new arrivals, especially in the period 1735-1750 on which this study principally focuses, there were other adverse conditions that came into play. Most notable of these, especially in their effects on the eastern districts, were the over-supply of weavers and the decline in the demand for traditional textiles such as wool and silk. Many of the refugees that had fled France were weavers by trade (although not all of them silk-weavers as is sometimes implied⁹), and they obviously sought to earn a living from their skills in their new-found home - mostly gravitating to the eastern suburbs such as Spitalfields where there was a very high density of them. There

⁶ Eileen Barrett 'Poor Relief Provided ...' pp.9-10

⁷ The French Church of London was responsible not only for the distribution of its own funds but also, in conjunction with the Savoy, the money collected through the royal briefs.

⁸ Roy A. Sundstrom "French Huguenots and the Civil List, 1691-1727: a Study of Alien Assimilation in England" in *Albion* vol.8, no.3 (1976) p.233

⁹ Although the main centre of silk-weaving in France was Lyons, Poitou also had a silk industry and was far more important as a source of Huguenot refugees to London. The textile industry in Normandy, an equally important source of refugees, was based not on silk but on fibres such as linen and wool, and on the production of fine lace.

were soon complaints to the Weavers' Company about the "excessive numbers of strangers" in the industry¹⁰ and, although 'strangers' was used to mean anyone from outside the parish, it does show that contemporaries felt there had been a sudden and uncontrolled increase in numbers. Indeed, in silk production alone, there were over 7,000 independent masters by 1700¹¹, yet the records of the Weavers' Company show that membership (presumably from all branches of weaving) never exceeded 6,500¹², which indicates how much the guild system was breaking down and how unregulated the weaving industry was becoming.

Compounding the problems created by this over-supply of weavers in the capital was the decrease in demand for silk and (to a lesser extent) woollen cloth, as the new printed cotton calicoes came into fashion - fabrics which, when not imported, were increasingly produced in areas such as Lancashire rather than in the workshops of London. The new tastes had already begun to make an impact at the end of the previous century but "the great calico controversy" reached its height between 1719 and 1721. In June of 1719 there were riots in Spitalfields which soon spread to neighbouring districts. Women wearing calicoes were attacked and insulted in the streets. Bills were posted, asking "Must the poor weavers starve?" and "Shall the Ingy [East India] calicoes be worn whilst the poor weavers and their families perish?"¹³ A Calico Bill was introduced into parliament at the end of 1719 but was not approved by the House of Lords before parliament rose and had to be re-introduced at the next session. When it at last passed into law it forbade "the use or wear in Great Britain, after Christmas Day 1722, of all printed, painted, stained and dyed calicoes (but not linens) in any garment, or apparel, or on any bed, chair, cushion, under-cushion or other household purpose".¹⁴ It is evident, however, that the wearing of the forbidden fabrics still continued and, indeed, it even seems that a few of the more opportunist Huguenots may themselves have been involved in the production of the new cloth: the Royal Bounty records for 1740 list two widows in the Westminster/Soho area whose late husbands are described as having been

¹⁰ G.E. Mingay *Georgian London* (London: Batsford, 1975) pp.101

¹¹ Lee Davison, et al. (eds.) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992) p.xxiv

¹² Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers' Company* ... p.32

¹³ George Rudé *Hanoverian London*... p.186

¹⁴ Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers' Company*... p.305

'imprimeurs de toile'.¹⁵ Even as late as June 1745, the Weavers' Company felt it necessary to set up a special committee to combat the problem, with powers to act on information received and to press prosecutions, at the Company's expense, against the sellers and wearers of printed calico.¹⁶

That problems in the weaving industry were causing real stress amongst the workers is evidenced by petitions submitted to the Weavers' Company. In July 1728, a crowd of journeymen had presented a petition arguing that the recession in trade and the mounting unemployment of the previous three years had left them in the utmost poverty and want, and asking "what will it be when the Winter comes on?". In the middle of 1745 journeymen were still petitioning for action, complaining that they were truly in danger of starving.¹⁷

The reference to winter underlines how critical the weather could be to the needs of the poor (and even the not-so-poor). Those involved in outdoor occupations such as building were frequently unable to work when the weather was bad, and it must not be forgotten that there were a significant number of people in the capital whose livelihoods depended on the sea.¹⁸ Even indoor workers could be affected: tailors, silkweavers and shoemakers could not work when temperatures were very low, because the silk deteriorated and the wax and glue used by the tailors and shoemakers froze.¹⁹ Land transport was also affected by adverse weather conditions, and this in turn affected supply and demand for all sorts of commodities. Orders often dwindled because of difficulties in communication, and goods that had been produced could not be despatched. At the same time, household expenditure increased because food prices were higher and there was a

¹⁵ The husbands of Marie Maillard [B.Ms 55, f.23] and Elizabeth Launay [B.Ms 55, f.20]. Other calico-printers are noted by Natalie Rothstein in her article "The Successful and the Unsuccessful Huguenot, Another Look at the London Silk Industry in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries" *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXV, no.5, (1993) p.446-447

¹⁶ Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers' Company...* pp.307-308

¹⁷ Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers' Company...* pp.307-308

¹⁸ Several of the widows in this study had husbands who were described as 'maître de vaisseau' or 'capitaine de vaisseau'.

¹⁹ L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age of Industrialisation: Entrepreneurs, Labour Force and Living Conditions, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992) p.111

need to purchase supplies of fuel for heating. More babies were abandoned during the winter (although this involved a variety of factors),²⁰ and more people died.²¹

Such difficulties were to be expected every year, but the winter of 1739/40 was exceptionally cold. The first frost came in December and, to make matters worse, a severe wind storm struck a few days later, damaging houses and wrecking moored ships, many laden with corn and coal, not to mention sinking numerous smaller craft.²² With the severe cold, the Thames froze over and remained solid throughout January and February, while on land the ice in St James' Park reached ten and a half inches thick.²³ The price of butter rose from 2½d to 7d a pound, potatoes from 2s 6d to 10s the load, and the Assize price of a peck loaf increased from 23d to 39d. Coal was selling at 70s the chaldron instead of the 25s of previous months.²⁴ To make matters worse, the particularly severe winter was followed by a very cold summer so that food supplies were affected the following winter as well.²⁵

Ongoing in the background, throughout the whole of the period 1735-1750, was the problem of drink. Beer had long been consumed in large quantities in England, and in the 1730s nearly 2 million barrels of ale per year were being sold in London.²⁶ On an individual basis, that meant amounts such as the 28 pints a week that were allowed to each of the Greenwich pensioners.²⁷ However, for many the problem was not beer but spirits. The production of spirits, and notably gin, from home-grown wheat and barley had first been promoted by William and Mary, and was further encouraged under the Hanoverians, as a way of utilising surplus grain. By 1743, the output of British spirits had reached over eight million gallons per

²⁰ Valerie Fildes "Maternal Feelings Re-assessed: Child Abandonment and Neglect in London and Westminster, 1550-1800" in Valerie Fildes (ed.) *Women as Mothers in Pre-industrial England* (London: Routledge, 1990) p.149

²¹ John Landers *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London 1670-1830* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993) p.264

²² Arthur G. Browning "The Early History ..." pp.198-199

²³ L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* p.112

²⁴ John Burnett *A History of the Cost of Living* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969; repr. Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1993) p.138

²⁵ John Landers *Death and the Metropolis...* p.278

²⁶ George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.70

²⁷ Richard B. Schwartz *Daily Life in Johnson's London* (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. Wisconsin Pr., 1983) p.74

year,²⁸ and in some districts of London one in every five houses contained an outlet of some sort for gin, be it a dram shop or a chandlers.²⁹ Indeed, chandlers, as small stores that stocked necessities such as candles, soap and cheese, were particularly important in spreading the gin habit because they were frequented on a daily basis by housewives and maidservants, and it has been noted that women were prominent in the gin trade both as vendors and consumers. Significantly, the other main group of consumers were men involved in more sedentary trades such as weaving - heavy labourers retaining their preference for beer.³⁰ Gin's main attraction was that it was cheap, and oblivion was thus easily attainable by even the poorest. A Bow Street tavern even advertised that "Here you may get drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and get straw for nothing."³¹ Unfortunately, the heavy drinking also tended to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

This, then, was the background against which poor relief to widows of the Huguenot community will be examined. The various sources of relief, and the use made of them, will each be investigated in turn, and an attempt will then be made to synthesise an overview and to draw some conclusions.

²⁸ T.S. Ashton *An Economic History of England: the 18th Century* (London: Methuen, 1955, repr. 1961) p.243

²⁹ M. Dorothy George *London Life in the XVIIIth Century* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925; repr. London Sch. of Economics and Political Science, 1951) p.40

³⁰ G.E. Mingay *Georgian London ...* p.134-135

³¹ George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.70

Chapter 2: The French Church of London - relief in kind, and 'use-specific' payments

Relief available through the French Church of London was wide-ranging. It covered items such as medical care, boarding arrangements and lodgings, assistance with travel costs, schooling and apprenticeships for children, tools, clothing, burial costs, and, above all, pensions and non-specific grants.¹ During the early eighteenth century, however, the church seems to have modified the organization of some of this assistance because items such as clothing and medical care were now being administered *en bloc*, rather than the Deacons making separate entries under the name of each individual recipient, as was earlier the case.

In the area of **medical care**, for instance, while the records still show individuals being given special grants "étant malade" (presumably to compensate for loss of earnings), the church also retained a medical practitioner on a permanent basis and paid him directly for his services.² The monthly accounts show that an honorarium of £9 was paid each quarter, which, in the case of Charles Villeneau (*chirurgien* until 1743), was supplemented by a bonus payment of £14 a year "pour les soins extraordinaires qu'il s'est donné au sujet de nos Pauvres".³ There are few figures available with which to compare this, but one guinea per visit (not including travel) has been quoted as the fee for a physician⁴ - physicians being more highly

¹ The term 'non-specific grants' is used to describe those grants made 'par extraordinaire' or 'en passant', without any specified purpose. 'Use-specific grants' is intended to mean payments that were made for a designated purpose such as travel.

² In English parishes, too, it was customary for an allowance to be paid during sickness and, over time, it became the practice to enter into a contract with a local doctor for the provision of medical attendance, medicines and nursing. [Dorothy Marshall *The English poor in the eighteenth century: a study in social and administrative history* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1926) pp.2 and 115]

It is possible that other medical practitioners working for the Huguenot community were paid for out of the Bounty funds (see pages 47-48).

³ Ms 120: See, for example, the entry for 11 July 1737

[Note: old style dates (e.g. Jan. 1739/40) are consistently converted to new style for the purposes of this study.]

⁴ John Burnett *A History of the Cost of Living ...* p.172

qualified than surgeons.⁵ The fee paid by the Deacons would not seem to be particularly high given the likely workload, and it is certain that Charles Villeneau was not a wealthy man: when he became too old to work and the Deacons accorded him a pension of £20 a year, it was given “en consideration de ses services et pauvreté”.⁶

There are only five cases where medical care is mentioned under the names of particular widows, and four of these involved paying for a nurse-attendant. In August 1746, Jeanne Eve Dancre was to be placed “chez quelque personne pour La soigner pendant sa maladie” (although they may have been too late as, four days later, she was dead),⁷ and in July 1750 the Deacons expended 12s on behalf of Marie Vaché “pour Une garde pour l’avoir soigné pendant Quinze jours”.⁸ Marie Baschard was also provided with a nurse-attendant for six weeks, before she was admitted to Bedlam,⁹ but, in the case of Esther Petit, the payments were evidently made after the widow’s death and, indeed, out of the proceeds of her own (probably meagre) estate: an entry notes that Deacon Sabatier is to see whether she has left any effects, presumably with a view to selling them, “pour satisfaire aux deux personnes qui lon soignee pendant sa maladie”.¹⁰ The fourth case of medical treatment involved the provision of a “bandage” for the daughter of Widow Deltour.¹¹

In addition to retaining the services of a *chirurgien*, the Company of Deacons also covered costs for any poor members needing admission to one of the London

⁵ Dorothy and Roy Porter *Patients’ Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge: Polity Pr., 1989) pp.17-18

⁶ Ms 81, f. 414’

Note: many of the folios in Ms 81 have damaged corners, so that the pagination is either missing or illegible. It is evident that numbering jumps by 10 somewhere around f.210, and there are also at least three places where two consecutive folios bear the same number, but it has not always been possible to assign folio numbers with any certainty. Where there is doubt, the convention has been adopted of putting numbers in single inverted commas, to indicate their somewhat approximate nature.

⁷ Ms 58, entries for 20 and 24 Aug 1746

⁸ Ms 113, entry for 1 July 1750

⁹ Ms 83, f.244 and inserted note of costs

¹⁰ Ms 58, entry for 28 May 1746

¹¹ Ms 58, entry for 22 March 1741. Nearly all the other cases involving the provision of ‘bandages’ concern men, which would suggest they were generally hernia trusses rather than simple bandages, especially as, on one occasion, a Deacon was instructed to have one repaired. [Ms 58, entry for 1 Oct 1740]

hospitals. Elizabeth Gilberton, for example, had been put into Guy's in December 1731, but came out on 27 February 1732 and was subsequently assisted with a pension of 1s a week,¹² and in July 1744 Deacon Delavau was instructed to organise the admission of Judith Niel to St Thomas's.¹³ Louise Sorleux had also been at St Thomas's, before she was discharged as incurable and admitted to "La Providence", but it is not clear whether the hospitalisation in this case was at the church's expense.¹⁴

Many who were mentally disturbed were put into "La Providence", which is examined in a separate chapter, but some - possibly the more severe cases - were sent to Bedlam. Marie Baschard, for example, seems to have been in danger of harming herself and was accorded a nurse-attendant until a place could be obtained for her at Bedlam.¹⁵ There is a separate note recording the expenses incurred in her admission to the institution, which makes interesting reading:-

Mai 23	Pour une Requête	-: 3: -
24	payé a G. Browne un des tesmoins	-: 1: -
	payé pour 2 serments faits devant deux Magistrats	-: 2: -
Juin 2	Pour la Boëte	-:10: 6
	pour l'obligation	-:10: 6
	pour le lit[?], chevet, couvertures & Draps, suivant leur reçu	1:14: -
	pour le portier	-: 1: -
	pour les autres domestiques	-: 5: 6
		<hr/> 3: 7: 6

¹² Ms 83, f.162

¹³ Ms 58, entry for 25 July. It has been noted that St Thomas's was "visibly pro-Whig and dissenter", whereas Bart's (which, significantly, is nowhere mentioned in the present manuscripts) was high church and Tory. [Roy Porter "The Gift Relation: Philanthropy and Provincial Hospitals in Eighteenth-century England" in Lindsay Granshaw and Roy Porter *The Hospital in History* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.155]

¹⁴ HSQ, vol.LIII. It was not unusual at this time for London hospitals to discharge patients who could not be cured. Guy's, founded in 1725 specifically as a hospital for incurables, was the only exception to this, until the founding of the Middlesex Hospital in the 1740s. [George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* pp.84-85; J.L. and B. Hammond "Poverty, Crime, Philanthropy" In A.S. Turbeville (ed.) *Johnson's England: an Account of the Life and Manners of His Age, vol.I* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933, repr.1967) p.282]

¹⁵ Ms 83, f.244

As has been noted by others, putting parishioners into Bedlam was an expensive process¹⁶ - and not mentioned in the above account is the ongoing cost of the weekly pension that was usually given. The allowance accorded to another of the Huguenot patients was £1 5s 0d for 4 weeks, which is considerably more than the ordinary pensions given out to the poor.¹⁷ However, there are unlikely to have been any treatment costs because the care was custodial rather than curative.

Marie Bills, too, was at Bedlam and the Deacons were kind enough at one point to expend 5s to obtain “quelque douceurs” for her during her stay there.¹⁸ Further entries indicate that she was subsequently classified as incurable and transferred to the ‘maison des fous’ run by one Mrs Wright at Bethnal Green¹⁹ - stays at Bedlam being limited to one year maximum.²⁰

Clothing was dealt with by the Deacons themselves and there are numerous entries on the subject in Mss 58 and 59.²¹ Such entries reveal that by this time the Deacons were ordering cloth in bulk - some of it, at least, purchased raw and dyed as necessary. Flannel, serge and ‘dowlas’ (a plain-woven coarse linen fabric) seem to have been the main types of cloth purchased, but some concession was evidently made to fashion since there is also reference to “du gallon pour les jupes”, and “des doublures pour doubler les robes de nos pauvres & des gallons pour atacher”.²² It seems likely, however, that the clothing was something in the nature of a uniform since there is reference to some white bodices which were to be taken from the

¹⁶ See, for example, Dorothy Marshall *The English Poor* ... p.119

¹⁷ Pension agreed for Marie Bills. See Ms 112, entry for 7 July 1745. For ordinary pension rates, see next chapter.

¹⁸ Ms 81, f. '449'

¹⁹ Ms 58, entry for 22 May 1745: “Il a passé par la Compagnie que les frères Aubert & Morin régleront avec les Gouverneurs de l’Hopital de Bethlem pour la pension necessaire pour mettre Marie Bills fille naturelle de feu Monsieur Mathurin Guignard* aux Incurables & fairont les frais nécessaires ...”: also

Ms 121, entry for 5 June 1745: “Paié aux frères Morin & Aubert pour divers frais quil ont fait en habillant & Transportant Marie Bills fille naturelle de feu Mathurin Guignard* de L’hopital de Bethlem a la maison des fous de Mrs Wright a Bethnal Green - £2:11:10”

(*In passing, one might note that, despite being widowed and having children of her own, Marie Bills is still described in terms of her illegitimate birth.)

²⁰ Jack Lindsay *The Monster City: Defoe's London 1688-1730* (London: Granada, 1978) p.51

²¹ These two documents comprise, for the period in question, some 370 pages of manuscript which are generally well-preserved except for some very faint passages. Entries are made in date order, and they record the decisions taken at meetings of the Company of Deacons. These meetings were usually twice weekly.

²² Ms 58, entries for 9 Dec. 1739 and 7 Dec. 1740

hospital store-room “pour les faire teindre de la Couleur du drap dont sont habillé nos pauvres”, and in the following year two of the Deacons were instructed to see to the ordering of some cloth from the north of England, which was to be “de la couleur ordinaire”.²³ That the colour was probably brown is suggested by an entry for 1 February 1749, when one of the Deacons was paid £4 6s 2d to cover the cost of various items including “28 Robes Et 83 Jupes Et pour de La Toille brune”.²⁴ This would be in line with the English practice of requiring those in receipt of poor relief to bear some visible distinguishing mark - although in English parishes, in accordance with the law of 1697, this took the form of a badge worn on the right shoulder, bearing a large ‘P’ together with the first letter of the name of the parish.²⁵

The cloth having thus been obtained, the Deacons were then responsible for seeing it was made up into garments, and in an entry dated 29 August 1739 six Deacons were instructed to “prendre Chacun 5 pieces de Toille pour les faire faire en Chemises”.²⁶ Other Deacons, meanwhile, were responsible for the purchase of ready-made items such as shoes and stockings. At least occasionally, such expenses were met out of the Deacons’ own pockets in the first instance and then reimbursed by the church. Jean Luc Landon, for example, was reimbursed £3 6s 7d in January 1740 “pour la façon des Robes & Jupes des Serges, pour nos pauvres”.²⁷

Another method was to pass fabric to the French charity school, where the female pupils made it up into garments during their sewing lessons. An entry for 24 May 1741, for example, notes that two Deacons were to buy “Dix pieces de toile pour faire des Chemises pour les pauvres de Leglise de Londres pour faire travailler les filles de Nostre Echole”.²⁸ Indeed from late 1737 until early 1741, the church employed the school mistress’s daughter as an extra teacher specifically to teach

²³ Ms 58, entries for 17 Aug. 1737 and 10 Sept. 1738

²⁴ Ms 121

²⁵ Stephen Macfarlane “Studies in poverty and poor relief in London at the end of the seventeenth century” (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Univ. Oxford, 1982) pp.157, 189: Dorothy Marshall *The English Poor ...* p.103

²⁶ Ms 58

²⁷ Ms 120, entry for 20 Jan. 1740

²⁸ Ms 58

sewing for two hours a day to those girls aged 12 and over.²⁹ This was not in itself an innovation: in 1710, the charity school of St Margaret's Westminster was already teaching children to make and mend shoes, spin wool, sew and knit,³⁰ and a few years later the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge circulated a letter praising the example of a working charity school at 'Artleborough' (Irthlingborough) in Northamptonshire which, by 1725, was claimed to be earning some five to six hundred pounds profit a year for the town, thanks to the children's long hours of labour.³¹ Nevertheless, such 'schools of industry' were expensive to set up, especially on a large scale, and many poorer parishes found it beyond their means to buy the initial stock.³² Perhaps, therefore, the innovation lay in finding a judicious balance between practical work and book learning.³³ Certainly, the French school must have been unusual in some respect because William Maitland seized on its example and wrote in his *History of London*:

This is a Management so laudable, that it well deserves to be copied after by the Trustees of our Parochial and other Charity Schools, to inure the young Hands of their Children to Labour; which early Application to business, will be a great Means of their persevering therein during the Remainder of their respective Lives.³⁴

²⁹ See Ms 58, entry for 30 Oct 1737, also quarterly entries Dec. 1737-March 1741 in Ms 120. As from the June quarter 1741, the mother, Widow Isambert, became a pensioner of the church and the daughter, Mme Savoie, took over as schoolmistress. A replacement sewing teacher does not seem to have been hired.

³⁰ M. Dorothy George *London Life ...* pp.218-219 and p.380 n.14

³¹ Tim Hitchcock "Paupers and Preachers: the SPCK and the Parochial Workhouse Movement" in Lee Davison, et al. (eds.) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive ...* p.155 and p.165, n.46. The burgeoning of workhouses, especially during the second quarter of the eighteenth century after the passing of the 1723 Workhouse Act, was an extension of the working charity school idea, and was indicative of a new mood which decried the ever-increasing outpouring of resources on the poor without any input from them in return. It has been suggested that both institutions were initially seen as a way of recouping some of the costs of poor relief, but that workhouses subsequently came to be used as a deterrent to even seeking relief. [Tim Hitchcock "The English Workhouse: a Study in Institutional Poor Relief in Selected Counties, 1696-1750" (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Univ. Oxford, 1985) p.6]

³² M. Dorothy George *London Life ...* pp.218-219 and p.380 n.14

³³ At a 'spinning school' set up by Thomas Firmin in the 1670s, the emphasis had been exactly the opposite, with manual labour taking up most of the children's time and only two hours of reading instruction. [Stephen Macfarlane "Studies in Poverty ..." p.251]

³⁴ from William Maitland's *History of London* (1739), quoted in "The Churches, Chapels, Schools, and Other Charitable Foundations of London in 1739" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.III (1888-1891) p.573

When the clothes made by the girls at the *École des Filles* were finished, they were generally stored until the Deacons had carried out their annual visitation to the poor to establish specific clothing requirements. This visit took place in late September or early October, and was regularly followed by a “repas des hardes” for all the Deacons involved - presumably as a reward for their efforts.³⁵ From the records, it would seem that various people were then responsible for the distribution of different items of clothing. The entry for 29 October 1738 reads:

Il a passé par la Compagnie que tous les frères adresseront
cette année leurs Pauvres pour les hardes dont il auront besoin
sçavoir
Chez Madame Joyeuses[?] pour les Chemises Bas & flanelles
Chez le Frère François Paumier pour justauCorps Veste &
Culotte de Draps
Chez le frère Jean Deheulles pour les Robes & Jupes de sarges³⁶

New clothing was therefore available to the poor, according to their need, before the winter set in, but it was not an unconditional gift. The following spring, a second visitation was carried out to verify that the poor were making good use of the clothes they had been given³⁷ (which being, no doubt, a somewhat onerous task, was a good excuse for a second “repas des hardes” for the Deacons!). There is no indication that the church’s charity was being abused on a wide scale but the follow-up visit was probably a wise precaution since there are one or two references to people having put clothes into pawn. Widow Cochoir, for example, was refused further assistance after she pawned her children’s clothes,³⁸ and Widow Agombard was likewise found to have ‘mis engage les hardes qu’on lui avoit donné au Noel Dernier’ although no punitive action seems to have been taken in her case.³⁹ Again, just outside the period under study, Pierre Coffrier and his family had their pension cut for pawning clothes and being drunkards.⁴⁰

³⁵ The meal was held variously “chez Cox” at the Green Man, in Dulwich, or at Widow Champion’s “a l’Enseigne des Trois Tonnes”, Church Street, Spitalfields. [See entries for late Sept. each year in Mss 58 and 59]

³⁶ Ms 58

In passing, one should note the presence of a woman’s name among this list. She was obviously not a Deacon, since Deacons were always men, and it is not clear what her particular role was in poor relief.

³⁷ See, for example, Ms 58, entry for 29 April 1744

³⁸ Ms 81, f. ‘477’

³⁹ Ms 81, f. ‘506’

⁴⁰ Ms 81, f. ‘459’

There is also a possibility that some of the poor might have had to pay for their clothes, since an entry for 2 December 1739 reads:-

“Il a passé par la Compagnie que tous les Freres Chargeront les hardes qu’ils fourniront aux pauvres aux prix suivants, savoir -	
une Casaque d’homme	£1. - . -
une habit d’homme	14. -
une Veste d’homme	18. -
une Culotes	6. -
une Chemise d’homme	2. 6
une Chemise de femme	2. 6
une Camisole de flanelle pour homme ou pour femme	2. -
une Jupe de flanelle	1. 8
une robe de Serge	5. -
les bas d’hommes & de femmes	10
les bas d’Enfants	6
la flanelle a 1/- la verge”	

On the other hand, these may have been notional values for accounting purposes since there would, after all, seem to be little advantage to the poor in buying clothes from the church, in a limited range of styles and, apparently, in only one colour, when they could be had at similar cost from the numerous ‘slop-shops’ and second-hand clothing outlets that had come into being - the latter, in particular, burgeoning during the course of the eighteenth century and offering great variety at minimal cost.⁴¹ The list does, however, give an indication of the range of clothing available to the poor through the auspices of the church.

From the amount of cloth ordered, it is evident that clothing formed an important part of the church’s poor relief provision, as it did in English parishes,⁴² but due to the practice of distributing clothing in bulk in this way, there are few instances where the assistance can be related to specific widows. The individually-named cases that do exist mostly involve clothing supplied for widows’ children, and a common time for children to be clothed at church expense was when they were

⁴¹ Beverly Lemire “Peddling Fashion: Salesmen, Pawnbrokers, Tailors, Thieves and the Second-hand Clothes Trade in England, c.1700-1800” in *Textile History* vol.22, no.1 (1991) pp.67-82; also “Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: the Trade in Secondhand Clothes” in *Journal of British Studies* vol.27, no.1 (1988) pp.1-24.

Depositions to the Consistory Court, in the early part of the century, give detailed information on the provenance of clothing worn by at least three relatively humble people of Huguenot descent, including a forty-two-year-old nurse, and show that sources included street pedlars and gifts from employers. [Peter Earle *A City Full ...* pp.254-255 and p.301 n.3]

⁴² Dorothy Marshall *The English Poor ...* p.112. The author further notes that it was regular pensioners who generally received the bulk of clothing distributed by the parish.

being put into apprenticeship, but there are also cases such as Edouard Bills, aged about nine, who was given clothing while his mother was in Bedlam.⁴³ The Deacons also supplied items of clothing to various named individuals at the French Hospital - among them, Jeanne Lalande, the widow of Pierre Lalande, who was given “une Jupe de serge et une Camisolle de flannelle”.⁴⁴

The Bills case is also of interest in that it is one of the few where the cost of **schooling** for specific children is mentioned. While there are frequent references to supplies, particularly of fabric, and items of uniform, being obtained for the *École des Garçons* and the *École des Filles*,⁴⁵ it is unusual for the payment of school fees for individual children to be recorded. However, it is noted that fees were paid in 1746 for Elizabeth Bills, then aged about six, and there is a subsequent entry to the effect that Edouard was to be sent to “LEcole a High Street”, presumably also at the church’s expense, until he was “En Etat de Le Mettre En Apprentissage”.⁴⁶

Other forms of individual assistance also receive scant mention in the particular records under examination, although it is likely that the church was involved in their provision. For example, Mss 58 and 59 show that **coal** was regularly supplied to institutions such as the *École des Filles* and *École des Garçons* (both run under the auspices of the church) and the French Hospital, but Pierronne Marouzé is the only widow who is noted as having received an individual allocation.⁴⁷ This bears out findings in the earlier period, which similarly lacked reference to individuals.⁴⁸ However, it has been suggested that the provision of fuel was a fairly common form of assistance in English parishes,⁴⁹ and this tends to

⁴³ Ms 58, entry for 6[?] July 1746

⁴⁴ Ms 58, entries for 3 Aug 1735 and 1 Nov 1738.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Ms 58, entry for 17 Feb 1745, where it is decided that “l’on donnera des Bonnets aux Garson [*sic*] Comme les Enfants des Ecoles de Charite des Anglois les Porte”

⁴⁶ Ms 81, f. 449’. The latter phrase tends to bear out the claim that, at this time, education for the children of working people was seen only as a preliminary to some form of apprenticeship. [M. Dorothy George *London Life ...* p.220]

⁴⁷ Ms 58, entry for 10 Nov 1745

⁴⁸ Eileen Barrett “Poor Relief Provided...” p.27

⁴⁹ Dorothy Marshall *The English Poor ...* pp.3, 87-88, and 114; also Anne Laurence *Women in England ...* p.138. However, it is to be noted that, in parishes such as Poslingford, Suffolk, such assistance was apparently available only to younger people not on pensions. [Lynn Botelho “Aged and Impotent ...” p.98]

argue in favour of similar assistance on the part of the French Church of London.⁵⁰ Possible explanations are that coal distribution to individuals was organised separately or that cash doles to pay for it were given instead. The latter is perhaps more likely given that at least one writer has suggested that, despite assertions of provision in kind being common, cash doles for various purposes were in fact by far the most usual form of relief even in English parishes.⁵¹

Tools of trade were another form of material assistance that was sometimes supplied but, perhaps not surprisingly, they were more often given to men than women. There are, however, few instances of this kind of help in the period 1735-1750, perhaps because the refugee community was now more established, and there is only one case where tools were supplied to a widow: in 1746, 1s 6d was paid to buy 'un rou et un Guindre' for Susanne Agombard,⁵² a woman in her mid-forties, whom we have already encountered in connection with the pawning of clothes. That the Deacons were prepared to assist her in this way, despite her earlier transgression, suggests that they were both humane and pragmatic in their administration of relief. Equipped for work and with at least one of her children now off her hands,⁵³ she seems to have needed scarcely any assistance from the church over the next two or three years.

Travel costs were paid occasionally, but such payments are not nearly as common as they had been in the earlier period, presumably because the community was now more settled. Only eight widows received assistance of this kind during the period 1735-1750 (as compared with twenty-six identified during the earlier study),⁵⁴ the grants being distributed fairly evenly over the period. Seven of the eight grants were for travel away from London but the remaining case is

⁵⁰ Calvinist churches placed particular emphasis on the social welfare of their members, the office of Deacon having been created specifically to undertake such work. [See, for example, Jeannine E. Olson *Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the 'Bourse française'* (London: Associated Univ. Presses, 1989)]. Their provisions are therefore unlikely to be *less* than those of other churches.

⁵¹ Joanna Innes "The 'Mixed Economy of Welfare' ..." p.145

⁵² Ms 58, entry for 15 June 1746; also Ms 81, f.'506'

⁵³ The registers of the French Church of London for the early eighteenth century [reprinted in the Quarto Series of the Huguenot Society, vol.XXIII (1916)] show that Susanne and her husband Abraham had had four children baptised, but it is not evident how many survived, other than Elizabeth who was put *en pension* by the Deacons [Ms 81, f.506'].

⁵⁴ Eileen Barrett "Poor Relief Provided ..." p.22

ambiguous: Susanne Daire was given 10s 6d “pour faire Le Voyage d’Hollande”, which rather suggests an inward journey, although there is no subsequent evidence of her in the accounts so, if she *was* a new arrival in London, she clearly needed no further poor relief after the initial payment of her fare.⁵⁵ Four of the grants were for journeys between England and Holland, three involved travel to Jersey, and one was for a widow to go to Portsmouth.⁵⁶ Interestingly, all but three of the recipients are described as non-members of the French Church of London. It thus seems that there was a willingness to facilitate, if not an eagerness to encourage, the departure of those with no firm commitment to the church - people who might, nevertheless, turn to it and expect relief since, unlike English parishes which usually gave relief only to those paupers with settlement, the French Church assisted both members and non-members.

The payment of **rent for lodgings** is another form of relief which appears to have dwindled in importance, in comparison to the earlier period when numbers of refugees were arriving penniless and with little more than the clothes on their backs. There are only two references to rent being paid for widows, and one of these was for rent apparently owing after the widow’s death: in November 1741, £2 0s 6d was paid for the “enterrement & Rente de Maison” of the widow of Jacob Hesse.⁵⁷ In the other case 10s 6d rent was paid for Widow Toillier but then recouped at 2s a month out of her pension so, again, it was not rent that was being paid on a regular basis by the Deacons and, in fact, it was not at additional cost to the poor relief budget. There are, however, some intriguing references to houses in Kingsland Road which, at least for a time, were held conjointly with the parish of St Leonards, Shoreditch, possibly for lodging the poor.⁵⁸ An alternative explanation is that they were, or became, a source of rental income, since later

⁵⁵ Ms 81, f. '488'; also Ms 112, entry for 3 March 1745

⁵⁶ Holland: Marie Black [Ms 83, f.292; also Ms 111, entry for 7 Sept. 1737]; Susanne Daire [Ms 81, f. '488'; also Ms 112, entry for 3 March 1745]; Susanne Rainchand [Ms 110, entry for 10 Sept. 1735].

Jersey: Elizabeth Bonneau [Ms 81, f. '431']; Elizabeth Etienne [Ms 113, entry for 7 Feb. 1750]; Elizabeth Fauconnier [Ms 83, f.288 (amended to 289)].

Portsmouth: Anne Benoist [Ms 81, f.146]

⁵⁷ Ms 121, entry for 29 Nov 1741

⁵⁸ Ms 58, entries for 31 July 1737 and 1 March 1738. Macfarlane notes that, in the late seventeenth century, the parishes of St Gregory by St Paul and All Hallows Staining both had properties where they lodged their pensioners. [Stephen Macfarlane “Studies in Poverty ...” p.153]

entries refer to rent money received from Mark Ward and Thomas Dixon for the properties,⁵⁹ and the church seems to have owned other rental housing in Church Street and Brick Lane, in Spitalfields.⁶⁰

Burial costs were met from a variety of sources apart from the French Church and will be mentioned again in connection with the French Protestant Hospital and the Royal bounty payments. In the Deacons' records they feature only rarely. On 29 September 1742, for example, Deacon Louis Chauvet was instructed to put widow Anne Teissier into St Thomas's hospital and, should she die, to cover the cost of her burial - for which he would be reimbursed by the church.⁶¹ This evidently came to pass because Ms 121 records that such a reimbursement, in the amount of £1, was made on 13 October. Another widow, Marie Cornu, had also been in hospital but subsequently died *en pension* at the house of Isaac Audouy, and Deacon Zacharie Agace was reimbursed 16s for her burial.⁶² The only other cases mentioned are those of Marie Hesse, Jean Eve Dancre and Anne Lonjas, the last-mentioned burial costing 16s and being paid by the Deacons on 1 October 1735.⁶³ There is no indication why the Company of Deacons should have paid for the burial of these five particular widows, although where burial costs are specified they are slightly higher than those paid by the French Hospital, so a question of status may be involved.

Much more common in the Deacons' records are **boarding arrangements**. These generally involved the fostering out of children, but in some cases it was adults for whom board was found. Widows were the beneficiaries of both forms of help, although the assistance tended to be age-specific: those widows who were put *en pension* themselves were generally more elderly women. For example, of the four widows boarding with Isaac Audouy in October 1744,⁶⁴ one was aged 81, one about 67, and a third, Catherine Isambert, is known to have had a married

⁵⁹ See, for example, Ms 58, entry for 8 July 1739

⁶⁰ Ms 58, entries for 15 July and 26 Aug 1739, and 16 July 1740

⁶¹ Ms 58. (Only "Anne Ve de Jaques ..." is visible on the microfilm because of the tight binding of the original manuscript, but the entry in Ms 121 reveals that it was Anne Teissier.)

It was not unusual for a hospital to demand a deposit or security as an indemnity against burial costs before allowing a patient to be admitted. [M. Dorothy George *London Life ...* p.50]

⁶² Ms 58, entry for 24 Aug 1746; Ms 59, entry for 29 April 1747; also Ms 113, entry for 17 May 1747

⁶³ Ms 110

⁶⁴ See Ms 112, entry for 7 Oct. 1744

daughter. The age of the fourth, Marie Pilon, has not been established.⁶⁵ Another widow, Judith Renaud, *en pension* with Marie Warking in April 1746, was aged 84.⁶⁶ Of those widows *en pension* whose ages are known (and they are the majority), the youngest was the 54-year-old Esther Berland who was suffering from rheumatism and almost blind (and who had, in fact, earlier applied for admission to “La Providence” but does not seem to have been accepted).⁶⁷

When widows had children put into care, the intention was presumably either to ease their financial burden or to permit them to work (as, for example, in the case of Susanne Agombard⁶⁸). Sometimes, however, it may have been for the sake of the children. Not long after the discovery that Widow Cochoir had pawned her children’s clothes, the Deacons put the two of them, aged 7 and 12 years, *en pension*. As the church had already been paying 8s a month towards the cost of the children’s keep, and as they were not of an age that would have hindered the mother’s capacity to work, one must assume they were removed for their own wellbeing.⁶⁹ Similarly the mental illness of Marie Bills obviously necessitated finding foster care for Elizabeth, aged 4, and Edouard, aged 7 - the latter, it would seem, being placed with his aunt, since an entry for 3 July 1744 reads: “La Tante fait des plaintes que Bills n’est pas bien propre mais rongé de Vermin d’une maniere insupportable”.⁷⁰ (That she should have complained about it to the Deacons rather suggests she was expecting them to intervene and solve the problem!)

In another case, a widow was given assistance with her stepchildren, and it is perhaps surprising that there are not more cases of this kind: in English parishes, at

⁶⁵ Records of Huguenot institutions, including the church, are rewardingly detailed, so that a widow is nearly always specified by her first name plus the full name of her deceased husband (for example, ‘Marie, veuve de Philippe Cornu’). Wrigley, in his chapter on family reconstitution, asserts that having the names of both partners offers a high degree of certainty of identification [D.E.C. Eversley, et al. *An Introduction to English Historical Demography from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966) p.103.] It therefore permits the correlation of information from several different sources. The records of the ‘Maison de Charité de Spittlefields’ (“La Soupe”) [HSQ vol.LV] have been particularly useful in establishing the ages of these women.

Note: ‘Catherine Isambert’ is not specified as a widow in this particular case but is almost certainly the former school mistress of the ‘École des Filles’.

⁶⁶ Ms 81, f.’520’

⁶⁷ Ms 81, ff.215 and ‘507’; Ms 309, entry for 5 Nov 1746; HSQ, vol.LII.

⁶⁸ see earlier, p.18

⁶⁹ Ms 81, f.’477’ and Ms 81, f.’529’; also HSQ, vol.XXIII pp.176 and 201

⁷⁰ Ms 81, f.’449’; and Ms 112, entry for 3 July 1744.

least, step-parents were not expected to be responsible for children from previous marriages and provision for their care was seen rather as a duty of the churchwardens and overseers.⁷¹ One could argue that the rate for remarriage was declining in the eighteenth century,⁷² but nevertheless poor widowers were the likeliest to remarry, and to do so after the shortest interval,⁷³ and the existence of young children would doubtless make this something of an imperative. Thus there must have been a number of women bringing up stepchildren - children who would be left in need of care should their father subsequently die. However, in the present records, the only obvious case of stepchildren being put into foster care involves the widow of Pierre Henry Joly who, when her husband died, was given 4s a month to help with the upbringing of four of his children, while a fifth child, Mathieu, was put *en pension* with one Daniel Yon.⁷⁴

Several widows also took in children. Judith Baudouin, for example, fostered a total of six children between 1736 and 1740, although four of these were very short-term and a fifth child was evidently a problem and had to be removed: in June 1737, the Deacons threatened to put Jeanne, daughter of Jean Baptiste Achain, in the House of Correction if she did not behave better, and some weeks later she was removed from the care of Judith Baudouin and placed with Jean Grosse and his wife, who also regularly took in children.⁷⁵ Similarly, the widow Susanne Leroux took in the son of Gilles Molé when the latter had to go into Greenwich Hospital - and this despite the fact that the child's mother was evidently still alive at the time. One must presume that the cause was extreme poverty, since father and son had hitherto been in the workhouse together.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Mary E. Fissell *Patients, Power, and the Poor in Eighteenth-century Bristol* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) p.101

⁷² Peter Razzell *Essays in English Population History* (London: Caliban, 1994) pp.181 and 217

⁷³ B.A. Holderness "Widows in pre-industrial society: an essay upon their economic functions" in Richard M. Smith (ed.) *Land, Kinship and Life-cycle* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) p.431: S.J. Wright "The Elderly and the Bereaved in Eighteenth-century Ludlow" in Margaret Pelling and Richard M. Smith *Life, Death, and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1991) p.106

⁷⁴ Ms 111, regular 4-weekly payments for Anne Joly Oct 1739 - March 1740, and boarding payments for Mathieu Joly 16 March 1740 - ; also HSQ, vol.XXIII for birth and baptismal information.

⁷⁵ Ms 83, f.269; Ms 58, entry for 1 June 1737; Ms 81, ff.80 and '257'

⁷⁶ Ms 83, f.298; Ms 111, entry for [e.g.] 8 March 1738; HSQ, vol.LV. It is worthy of note that although Gilles Molé and his son were admitted into a workhouse, which implies recognised settlement in an English parish, the family was still granted assistance by the Huguenot church.

In some cases, it is clear that there was a family connection between the child and the care-giver to whom it was entrusted, as, for example, between Edouard Bills and his aunt. Similarly, the widow Esther Villet took in her two grandchildren, Jeanne and Benjamin Paris (aged 15 and 12 respectively), at a rate of 12s for four weeks,⁷⁷ and the children of the widowed Susanne Cossart were apparently “en pension Chés Leur Beau Pere”.⁷⁸ There was likely a connection, too, between Susanne Mariauge and the six-year-old Angélique Liotard in her care, since the maiden name of the child’s mother is given as ‘Marioge’ in the baptismal record.⁷⁹

The normal rate paid for children *en pension* seems to have been 2s per week which, as will be seen, compares quite favourably with the sums being paid out as pensions to the adult poor. It also compares favourably with payments that had been made for fostering at the end of the previous century, when rates appear to have varied more and were sometimes as low as 6d a week.⁸⁰ Indeed, it has been asserted that, in English parishes at least, wet-nursing and fostering could be a useful supplement to the family income, especially for those able to take two or more children at a time.⁸¹

Apprenticeship still features in the records, despite the fact that the practice had begun to decline in importance during the previous century and continued to do so throughout the eighteenth century.⁸² Weaving, in which many of the Huguenots were involved, would seem to have been part of this trend, to judge from the official apprenticeship figures of the Weavers’ Company which show numbers

⁷⁷ Ms 83, f.263

⁷⁸ Ms 81, f.’234’

⁷⁹ Ms 110, entry for [e.g.] 19 Jan 1735; B.Ms 54, f.100; HSQ, vol.XXIII p. 137, entry for baptism of Angélique Liotard

⁸⁰ Eileen Barrett “Poor Relief Provided ...” p.26

⁸¹ Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.136; Stephen Macfarlane “Studies in Poverty ...” p.169

⁸² R.A.P. Finlay *Population and Metropolis* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981) pp.66-71; John Landers *Death and the Metropolis ...* p.48

declining from 102 new apprentices in the period 1730-1739 to only about 30 in the ten years between 1780 and 1789.⁸³ However, with the gradual loss of guild control, it is probable that many apprenticeships were not declared to the Company⁸⁴ and it seems that, even within the Company, some masters were taking more apprentices than they should.⁸⁵ Certainly, the weaving trade was still a prime absorber of pauper apprentices in the London area,⁸⁶ and it is not surprising that these should have included some from the Huguenot community, several of whom are named in the records under examination.

From a remark in the Deacons' deliberations, it is evident that preference was given to pupils of the French schools: on 23 March 1739 it is recorded that Antoine Coulon, aged 14, was to be provided with clothing but not his apprenticeship costs, "la Compagnie n'ayant pas jugé apropos de l'engager ellememe parce qu'il n'a pas été élevé a notre Ecole".⁸⁷

Of the twenty-four apprenticeships and placements involving children (and step-children) of widows in receipt of relief, nine were for girls and fifteen for boys.⁸⁸ Two of the girls were apprenticed to women,⁸⁹ but the remaining cases (except three for which there are no details) all involve men. It has been suggested that when girls were apprenticed it was most commonly in the 'needle trades', such as mantua-making or millinery,⁹⁰ but unfortunately the majority of the cases examined here give no information about the occupation involved. In 1739, Thomas Philpot, a weaver, took on Catherine, the daughter of Esther Né, for a premium of £1 14s 10d,⁹¹ and in September 1742, another weaver, Gabriel Bernardin, took on Marie

⁸³ Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers' Company ...* p.79

⁸⁴ Dorothy George claims that a *majority* of apprenticeships were not entered upon through the medium of a City company [M. Dorothy George *London life ...* p.226]

⁸⁵ G.E. Mingay *Georgian London ...* pp.98-99

⁸⁶ Dorothy Marshall *The English Poor ...* p.196

⁸⁷ Ms 58

⁸⁸ Another, rather odd, case not included in these figures seems to involve the apprenticeship of the widow herself since it reads: "Sauzé Marie Ve Samuel payé pour son Engagement & Habillement £1.14s.10d" [Ms 81, f.216]

⁸⁹ Marie, daughter of Marguerite Sauzé (widow of Etienne Sauzé), was put into apprenticeship with Judith Albert [Ms 58, entry for 21 Dec 1737], and the daughter of Anne and the late Jean Ferré was bound to Sara, wife of Jacques Danscours [Ms 58, entry for 15 June 1737]

⁹⁰ Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.118

⁹¹ Ms 83, f.330

Dupré⁹² - although it cannot be guaranteed that either actually learned weaving because some masters apparently took on female apprentices but put them to domestic work rather than teaching them a trade.⁹³ The trades are not given for the other female apprentices.

Of the boys, the young Jean Cossart was apprenticed to Pierre Fargues, the schoolmaster of the *École des Garçons*, at a cost of £3 6s 4d,⁹⁴ and in January 1743 Widow Lardent's son, Isaac, commenced a seven-year apprenticeship with Pierre Gay, "pour etre ouvrier en Soye", for a premium of £1 14s 10d.⁹⁵ Jaques Lemery was also bound to a silk manufacturer,⁹⁶ and three other boys were apprenticed to weavers.⁹⁷ Jean Deltour was provided with clothing and bound to 'Jean Brown', a fisherman,⁹⁸ while Jacques, the son of Jeanne Levalois, was not formally apprenticed but, instead, was found a place on a ship, and one of the Deacons was authorised to advance up to one and a half guineas to the boy, to provide whatever he might need before starting.⁹⁹ No trade is specified for the remaining four boys.¹⁰⁰ It should be noted that the most common premium paid, for both boys and girls, was £1 14s 0d.

In the case of the two Paris children, put *en pension* with their grandmother by the Deacons, only the boy was found an apprenticeship.¹⁰¹ The girl, Jeanne, was instead put into service by her grandmother - an increasingly common occupation for young girls and women in London in the eighteenth century.¹⁰²

As with boarding arrangements, there may have been family relationships involved in some of the apprenticeships. In the case of Isaac Lardent, "Gay" was both the

⁹² Ms 58, entry for 22 Sept

⁹³ Anne Laurence *Women in England ...* p.113; L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* p.20

⁹⁴ Ms 121, entry for 10 Jan 1742

⁹⁵ Ms 81, f.'286', and Ms 121, entry for 1 Jan 1743

⁹⁶ Ms 58, entry for Dec [no date] 1747

⁹⁷ Ms 58, entries for 18 Dec 1734, 1 March 1738, 20 May 1741, 8 April 1744

⁹⁸ Ms 121, entry for 15 Aug 1741. Ms 112 shows that his widowed mother was receiving a four-weekly pension of 2s 6d.

⁹⁹ Ms 58, entry for 19 July

¹⁰⁰ Ms 58, entries for 2 Nov 1737, 20 July 1739, 4 Jan 1743

¹⁰¹ Ms 83, f.263; and see earlier, p.12

¹⁰² Patty Seleski "Women, Work and Cultural Change in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-century London" in Tim Harris (ed.) *Popular Culture in England, c.1500-1859* (London: Macmillan, 1995) p.144

name of the master and the maiden name of the apprentice's mother.¹⁰³ Similarly, Guillaume Vendome, whose mother's maiden name was Lock, was apprenticed to a weaver of that name.¹⁰⁴ In another case, Marie, daughter of Judith and the late Etienne Warquin was apprenticed to a Jean Warquin.¹⁰⁵ Although these are only three cases, they do suggest a certain solidarity in the Huguenot community, in comparison with English parishes which sought, rather, to export their poor relief problems whenever possible by apprenticing children to masters in other parishes, so that the children would gain settlement there and no longer be chargeable on the parish of origin.¹⁰⁶

In addition to these twenty-four cases involving widow's children, there are two instances where widows themselves took on apprentices. Marie Blondel, who had been in receipt of poor relief while she was bringing up her children, apparently lost her last child to illness in November 1734 and the next year took on Marie Madelaine Roy, whose clothes and premium were paid for by the Deacons.¹⁰⁷ Marie Pilon, too, seems to have had several apprentices in April 1738, although a little over a year later she was put into the French Hospital and given a weekly pension, which suggests she had to cease whatever economic activity she was involved in. She is the same Marie Pilon who, in October 1744, was put *en pension* with Isaac Audouy.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Baptismal record in HSQ, vol.XXIII, p.129

¹⁰⁴ Ms 58, entry for 20 May 1741

¹⁰⁵ Ms 58, entry for 10 June 1739

¹⁰⁶ George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.140; M. Dorothy George *London Life ...* pp.224 and 227

¹⁰⁷ Ms 83, f.'153', and Ms 58, entry for 21 May 1735

¹⁰⁸ Ms 83, f.314; Ms 58, entry for 22 July 1739; and see earlier, p.10

Chapter 3: The French Church of London - pensions and non-specific grants

The French Church of London managed a considerable amount of money in the course of its regular activities, and the Deacons were responsible for sums which often exceeded £400 a month in their role as the church's social workers. This money would be held by one of the Deacons who acted as treasurer, an office which rotated each month. Amounts were then disbursed by him to pay various accounts and distributed to the other Deacons as necessary for the poor in their areas.

In the period 1735-1750, the Deacons numbered eighteen, with each being responsible for poor relief in a different district.¹ In April 1735, for instance, the list stood as follows:-

La Ville	David Coussirat
Sainte Heleine	André Girardot
Blackfryars	Jean Lions
Blanc Chapiton	Philippe Chabaud
Commun Jardin	Samuel Sharp
Temple Barr	Pierre Saulnier
Shoreditch	Nicolas Lamy
Nouveau Shoreditch	Nicolas Delamare
Houndsditch	Jaques Grellier
Nouveau Houndsditch	Claude Bosanquet
Aldgate	Pierre Bourdon
Nouveau Aldgate	Jean Ouvry
L'Hopital	Gabriel Paumier
Nouveau Hopital	Isaac Roberdeau
Bishopsgate	Nicolas Clerembault
Cripplegate	Jaques Kinge
Sainte Catherine	Jean Saure
Southwark	Jean Pierre Blaquiére ²

¹ The number of Deacons had been increased from 13 to 18 in April 1688. [Robin D. Gwynn "The Ecclesiastical Organization of French Protestants in England in the Later Seventeenth Century, with Special Reference to London" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1976) - Appendix 1: "Officers of the French Church of London, 1650-1700"]

² Ms 120. It will be noted that the majority of the districts are in the eastern end of the London area.

That responsibilities should be recorded in this way each month is extremely useful, because it is then possible to geographically situate many of those in receipt of poor relief. On 20 April 1735, for example, Susanne, widow of André Petain, was to be placed on the *billet du mois*³ of Jaques Grellier, so it is reasonable to assume, by referring to the above list, that she was resident in the district of Houndsditch.⁴ Given more time, it would be interesting to plot the distribution of all the widows in receipt of poor relief from the French Church of London and see which areas had the highest numbers.

The sources of funds used for poor relief were quite diverse. A typical month shows income from church collections (including collections at services held in the *Église Neuve* and the *Église Flamande*)⁵, money from poor boxes held by various church members and from the alms box in the Threadneedle Street church, plus whatever had been taken in fines - the Deacons being liable to fines if they did not perform the duties allocated to them. In addition, there were often miscellaneous donations, and legacies and bequests from wealthier members which could be as high as £600.⁶ There was also income from rental housing such as the properties held in Church Street and Brick Lane.⁷

Some of these monies were disbursed immediately. For example, a sum of £250 left by Monsieur Charles Joye for the benefit of the poor was all distributed over a period of about three months,⁸ and most of the regular income from church collections and so on would have doubtless been used to meet current needs. However, any surplus (such as bequests and legacies) was invested at interest, and there are frequent entries such as that for 13 April 1743 showing that £3 had been received “pour un dividend sur un Capital de £200 d’Annuités de 1731 Echeu a Noel passé, pour 6 mois”, or the entry for 22 February 1747 recording that six £100 East India company bonds had been redeemed for a total of £622 1s 8d.⁹ Compared with English practice, where references to the investment of poor relief

³ The *billet du mois* was the list of regular poor for whom the Deacon was responsible.

⁴ Ms 58

⁵ The *Église Flamande* was used for French Church of London services once a month, while the *Église Neuve* was an annexe of the Threadneedle Street church.

⁶ e.g. Ms 120, entry for 5 Feb 1738

⁷ see, for example, Ms 121, entry for 16 Jan 1743

⁸ Ms 111, entries for Feb-April 1738; Ms 58 entries for 25 and 29 Jan 1738

⁹ Ms 121

funds are minimal,¹⁰ this shows an unparalleled degree of sophistication and good management, and indeed many of the French Church's officers, both Elders and Deacons, were men of proven business skill.¹¹

Records of expenditure were maintained equally carefully, and it seems unlikely that there was the degree of dishonesty or corruption that has been alleged for some English parishes.¹² The day-books, for example, give the full name of each person accorded relief, and the amount given on each occasion - adding "par extraordinaire" or "en passant" if it was an occasional grant rather than a pension payment. Vague entries such as 'a poor beggar' simply do not occur, and the inclusion of fictitious names would scarcely have passed unnoticed, given that the books became liable to the scrutiny of a new treasurer each month.

The books also indicate whether the person was a "membre" or an "étranger",¹³ a member being someone who had been vouched for by the minister of his or her previous church, or by another member of the Threadneedle Street congregation, and then formally admitted. Thus it is recorded that Marie, widow of Pierre Linet, was received as a member on 25 September 1748, on the *témoignage* of Monsieur Lardent, and, in the day-books, her name then moves from the 'étrangers' column

¹⁰ Many parishes were probably more like East Hoathly in Sussex, where the difficulty was usually in collecting sufficient money, rather than in having a surplus. Thomas Turner was overseer of the poor there for four years in the period 1756-1765, and only once does he mention investing any money for the parish. [David Vaisey (ed.) *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765* (Oxford: OUP, 1985) p.270 entry for 25 April 1763, p.295 entry for 4 June 1764 and footnote]. The Bristol and the London Corporations of the Poor both received significant amounts in gifts and bequests (up to 30 per cent of the latter's income being from these sources in its early years [Joanna Innes "The 'Mixed Economy of Welfare' ..." pp.150-151]), yet the secondary literature makes no mention of these funds being invested.

¹¹ Robin D. Gwynn *Huguenot Heritage ...* pp.151-152

¹² George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.139

¹³ In his otherwise-authoritative handlist of the archives of the French Church of London [HSQ, vol.L pp.62-63] Raymond Smith refers to "the term 'Membres étrangers'", but the two words are in fact headings for two separate columns, as can be seen on the first page of Ms 112, where they are separated by a comma, and also on the second page of the same document, where a line is clearly ruled down between them.

to that reserved for members.¹⁴ Once admitted, members were expected to take communion on a regular basis, and the Deacons were responsible for distributing the communion tokens to those eligible. Members were also expected to contribute financially to the church, as their means allowed, and one sometimes finds notes such as “ils ont toujours contribué” and “a Contribué cy devant honêtement” among the case records of those applying for relief.¹⁵ Indeed, one widow in receipt of occasional relief from the Threadneedle Street church was apparently still contributing to another of the French churches, and when this was brought to the notice of the Deacons they recorded the decision “de ne plus rien faire pour Elle parce quelle est Membre de l’Eglise de Wheeler Street & quelle y contribue”.¹⁶ This incidentally implies that, while the Threadneedle Street church would assist those Huguenots who were not members of any congregation, it did expect those with other affiliations to apply to their own churches for relief. As a further example, when the Deacons discovered that Marie Gooding, a non-member, had already been “fort assisté de son Paroisse” (and, to make matters worse, “quelle fait Profession de mendier”), all help ceased forthwith.¹⁷ Only one widow is noted as

¹⁴ Ms 81, f. '569'; HSQ, vol. XXI: *Livre des tesmoignages de l’Eglise de Threadneedle Street 1669-1789* transcribed and edited by William and Susan Minet (London: The Society, 1909) p.179; Ms 113, entries for 3 Aug and 9 Oct 1748.

Ms 11: *Régître [sic] des Actes du Consistoire de L’Eglise Française de Londres Commencé le 3e Avril 1745*, entry for 25 Sept 1748 shows that M. Lardent was currently serving as an Elder of the church.

The example of Marie Linet also proves that women could be members in their own right, although an entry for Anne Broche, widow of Daniel, notes that “el a perdu son droit de membre etant marié” [Ms 83, f.213]. As there is no information about the marriage, it is not clear why it precluded her continued membership, but presumably it was to someone outside the church.

¹⁵ Ms 83, f.45, entry for Pierre and Susanne Genu; Ms 83, f.215, entry for Jean Obrisset

¹⁶ Ms 83, f.321, entry for Madelaine Roy

¹⁷ Ms 81, f. '196'. The use of the word ‘Paroisse’ in this example suggests that an English parish was involved, since the French churches were usually specified by name. In passing, it should be noted that there appears to have been little formal co-operation, or even contact, between the French Church of London and the English parishes. Apart from the houses in Kingsland Road which were, for a time, jointly owned with the parish of St Leonard’s Shoreditch [see page 22], there are only three references to the Deacons contacting English parish authorities directly. The first concerns one Jacob Marmoy whom the Deacons sought to have cared for at parish expense [Ms 58, entry for 8 Nov 1738] and the second involved a Huguenot pauper (possibly the same man) whom they wished to place in the Spitalfields workhouse [Ms 58, entry for 14 May 1740]. The third occasion was when they were seeking assistance for Marthe and Anne, children of the late Elie Cotreau [Ms 58, entry for 15 May 1745]. They were apparently unsuccessful, because an entry the following week indicates the Deacons themselves were to provide the children with a pension of 3s 6d a week.

being in receipt of relief from the Threadneedle Street church and another French church simultaneously.¹⁸

All these individual payments, then, were recorded in the day-books and, at the end of each month, the figures were totalled and carried forward into the monthly accounts, where they were recorded as payments “a plusieurs pauvres réfugiés pendant tout le mois”. Using these two sources, it is possible to construct a graph of monthly poor relief expenditure over the entire sixteen-year period [Charts 1 to 4, following page 44], and to examine the variations.¹⁹ One of the most obvious features is the impact of the legacy left by Monsieur Charles Joye, particularly in February 1738 when poor relief payments rose to over twice the average for that month. Indeed, to judge from the sample of widows, a number of recipients may have received relief from the Threadneedle Street church only on this one occasion. More interesting, however, are the evident long-term effects of a crisis such as the severe winter of 1739/40: payments first rose with the onset of the crisis, in January 1740, and then, with few monthly exceptions, remained above average for three whole years after that. This suggests that, once the fragile budgetary equilibrium of many poorer families had broken down, it was extremely hard to re-establish. Another crisis seems to have occurred in 1749/50, when payments again climbed. The reasons for this need further research, but may well be linked with the discharge of over 70,000 men from the armed forces in 1749, after the cessation of hostilities with France in the previous year.²⁰ Many Huguenots, as ardent Protestants, had fought in the war and their discharge may well have created an extra demand for poor relief. Certainly, a correlation has been posited between morbidity statistics and the expansion and contraction of the armed forces, which suggests that the discharge of large numbers of men had significant social impact.²¹

¹⁸ Judith Allard had been receiving 4s a month from the Threadneedle Street church but had the pension reduced to 3s “Etant assisté de l’Eglise de WillStreet” (presumably Wheeler Street). [Ms 83, f.310]

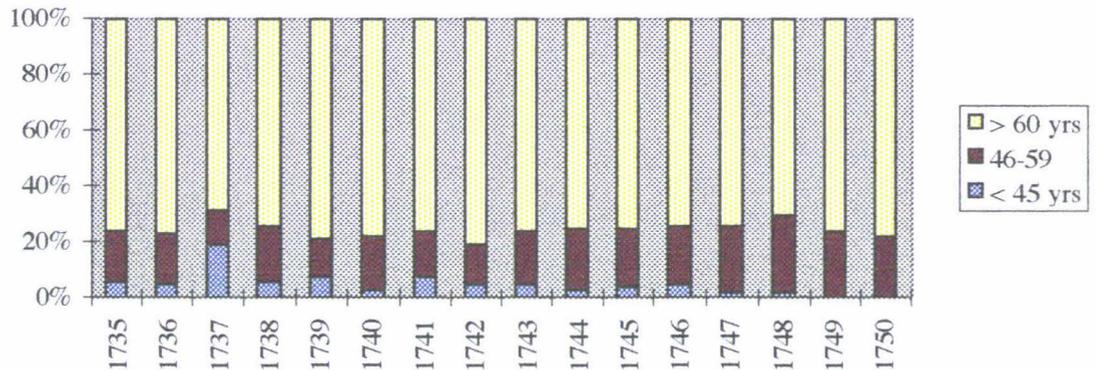
¹⁹ Parts of Ms 309 are in fact missing, but given the correspondence between the documents the monthly totals can be recovered by referring to Ms 121. It should be noted that Ms 113, although listed as a day-book, in fact records only occasional grants in detail and merely summarises the amount expended on pensions. The other day-books all itemise individual payments, with names of recipients, for both pensions and occasional grants

²⁰ Nicholas Rogers “Confronting the Crime Wave: the Debate over Social Reform and Regulation, 1749-1753” in Lee Davison, et al. (eds.) *Stilling the Grumbling Hive ...* p.78; L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* p.95

²¹ John Landers *Death and the metropolis ...* pp.286-297

As regards *widows* in receipt of church poor relief over the period 1735-1750, in cases where approximate age can be established, by far the largest number appear to be older women, as can be seen from the following chart:-

Percentage of widows in each age-group, 1735-1750



[Chart 5]

A word of caution is necessary here, however, because it is possible old age was thought worthy of mention in the records whereas youth was not, which would skew the sample towards the elderly. Certainly, it is evident that a good number of those *not* included in these figures still had young children, which would tend to situate them in the under-45 age-group. On the other hand, it is true that advancing years are often cited as a reason for granting (and also increasing) a pension. For example, Marie Olive was granted a pension of 6s a month “en consideration de Son age de 76 Année”, and Elizabeth Prevost had her pension increased because of her “grand age”.²² (In contrast, when Daniel Lesade died in September 1730, the Deacons “Ne [trouvaient] pas sa veuve digne Daitre assité[sic] aitant jeune”.²³) On balance, therefore, it does seem likely that the widowed elderly received more assistance from the church than their younger counterparts.

²² Ms 81, f.'377'; Ms 83, f.252

²³ Ms 83, f.32

It is also evident that the majority of widows in receipt of assistance, at least in cases where their place of origin is known, were born on the continent: 97 gave European birthplaces (overwhelmingly French, but also some Belgian, Dutch and Swiss localities) whereas only 22 indicated that they were born in England.²⁴ This clearly accords with the majority of those assisted being in the oldest age-group, since many of the elderly would be people who had arrived with the great wave of refugees in the 1680s and 1690s.

A further point is that the assisted widows were predominantly church members: of the 597 cases where status could be established, 70.7% were “membres” compared with 28.5% described as “non-membres” or “étrangers” - and it should be noted that the latter figure was inflated by a number of widows who appear only once in the records, as recipients of grants from the legacy of Monsieur Charles Joye. In addition, there were three widows described as lapsed members, and a further two who became members while they were in receipt of relief.

Amounts given seem low. The most usual rates are from 1s to 1s 6d a week (paid at four-weekly intervals), which is somewhat lower than at the end of the previous century when 2s a week was more common. Indeed, by the 1730s and 1740s it appears that 6d a week was by no means unusual, whereas only two widows received amounts this small in the earlier study.²⁵ Ten widows identified in the present research even received pensions of 1s a *month* - an amount which, it has been suggested, must have been “very much in the nature of a mockery” for parishes in the south and midlands, where the cost of living tended to be higher.²⁶ It is certainly not without significance that these latter women were all non-members.²⁷

²⁴ The latter figure includes one or two widows who are specifically referred to as English, but who had been married to Frenchmen and who were obviously accepted as part of the Huguenot community because they were receiving assistance from the French Church.

²⁵ Eileen Barrett “Poor Relief Provided ...” p.17 and p.14

²⁶ Dorothy Marshall *The English Poor ...* p.101

²⁷ That non-members were given lower pensions is further attested by the case of Marie Bireau. She was normally given 1s 6d a month but then, on 25 April 1733, she was given 5s instead: “mais le 23 May on ne luy a donné que 1/6 come par le Passé *n’etant point membre*” [Italics supplied] [Ms 83, f.29]

In contrast, top pensions in London parishes around this time were only 2s to 2s 6d a week,²⁸ yet the Threadneedle Street records show one or two widows receiving more than 3s 6d a week. While it may be thought that these widows were therefore more needy, it is more likely that they were, on the contrary, among the more well-to-do since it was assumed that people of higher status needed more money. In corroboration of this, it should be noted that the higher pensions were all paid quarterly rather than four-weekly, which suggests the recipients were *not* working-class people struggling to survive on a daily basis. It is quite likely, for example, that Elizabeth Gambier's late husband Henry is the same Henry Gambier who had been dealing in tea and coffee a few years earlier, and that she was therefore from a reasonably comfortable background,²⁹ and Catherine Isambert, as a former schoolmistress on a salary of £20 a year, would probably have acquired a certain status of her own.

In the latter's case it is recorded that her pension of £2 10s 0d a quarter was to be further supplemented by £1 5s 0d a quarter from her daughter (who replaced her at the *École des Filles*).³⁰ This raises the question of filial responsibility - a subject that has been addressed on several occasions in the secondary literature on poor relief, with some writers suggesting that parish relief was more important, and others proposing that, although official records give scant information on the subject, most people probably did what they could to help elderly parents, within the limits of their own circumstances.³¹ In the French church, there is evidence that offspring did help voluntarily when they could, and that the Deacons supported them in their endeavours if necessary: Marie Lelong, for instance, was granted 4s a month in June 1741 in recognition of the fact that she was caring for a mother-in-law who was by this stage both elderly and senile.³² By the same token, however,

²⁸ Peter Earle "The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries" in *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. vol.XLII, no.3 (1989) p.342

²⁹ Ms 83, f.230; Peter Earle *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London: Methuen, 1989) pp.136-137

³⁰ Ms 81, f.'326'

³¹ See, for example, David Thomson "The Welfare of the Elderly in the Past: a Family or Community Responsibility?" in Margaret Pelling and Richard M. Smith, (eds.) *Life, Death, and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1991) pp.194-221; Pat Thane "Old People and Their Families in the English Past" in Martin Daunton (ed.) *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare ...* pp.113-138; Richard Smith "Charity, Self-interest and Welfare: Reflections from Demographic and Family History" in Martin Daunton (ed.) *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare ...* pp.23-49

³² Ms 81, f.324

the Deacons also applied pressure to secure a financial contribution towards a parent's upkeep if this was not readily forthcoming. For example, apart from the money which Catherine Isambert's daughter was "Obligé de donner hors de son Sallaire", it is noted that the Deacons stopped Esther Renié's pension of 2s a week specifically because she had a son "en état de Lassister" - although they relented a little the following year, agreeing to give 1s 6d a week while the son contributed an equal amount.³³

As an alternative to weekly contributions, the Deacons sometimes accepted lump sums, either from the widow herself or a family member, in return for a regular pension. Thus, they accorded Arabella Vandensteyn a pension of 8s a month "En consideration de Ce quelle nous a Donné Vint guinée".³⁴ Similarly, André Le Faux gave the Deacons £19 3s 6d on condition that his widowed mother should receive 2s 6d a week for the rest of her life.³⁵ On occasions, the Deacons would instead take an inventory of personal effects, apparently as surety against the relief to be offered. For example, it was recorded on 12 November 1738 that "le frère Jean Luc Landon mettra sur son Billet du Mois Susanne veuve de Louis Proteux & la reglera à 1/6 par semaine & rendra avec ajoint un Inventaire du tous ses Meubles & Effets dont il se fera donner une obligation pour l'apporter a la Compagnie",³⁶ while the sale of the personal effects, including jewellery, of Catherine Jourdain (who had been receiving a joint pension, with her sister, of 3s 6d a week) realised £43 15s 0d for the replenishment of poor relief funds.³⁷

The latter case again emphasises that not all recipients of poor relief were working-class, or totally destitute, and another example is Anne Cailleau who had evidently lived reasonably comfortably in her earlier years, possibly even possessing money of her own, until she was "ruinée par son mari qui étoit allé a la Caroline".³⁸ Again, in the case record for Jean and Susanne Obrisset, it is specifically noted that

³³ Ms 83, f.169

³⁴ Ms 81, f.'525'

³⁵ Ms 83, f.231 and Ms 120, entry for 26 Oct 1737

³⁶ Ms 58

³⁷ Ms 58, entres for 6 April 1740 and 13 Sept 1741; also Ms 120, entry for 30 Sept 1741.

Catherine Jourdan was the widow of an ivory turner. [B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.82]

³⁸ Entries for Anne Cailleau, widow of Jean Jacob, in B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.31 and Ms 81, f.'380'

“on doit les Considerer Comme des Pauvres honteux”³⁹ - a phrase implying that they were from among the more well-to-do but had fallen on hard times. This concept of the ‘shamefaced poor’ was particularly strong in Italy but also existed in Germany and France.⁴⁰ It is far less significant in English poor relief,⁴¹ but the example of the Obrissets shows that it was still meaningful to the Huguenot community in London, and the phrase occurs again in the records of the French Protestant Hospital.⁴²

Information on occupations, which might give a clue as to social status, is for the most part lacking in the Deacons’ records, and what little can be gleaned about the situation of widows receiving assistance from the church has largely been retrieved from corresponding entries in the Bounty manuscripts. This has tended to introduce a bias in favour of the bourgeoisie, since the Bounty manuscripts give much fuller information on people classed as ‘bourgeoisie’ and ‘gentilhommes’ than on those (far more numerous) who fall among the ‘common people’. It is notable, however, that the Deacons were giving relief to the widows of three merchants, four master weavers, two army officers, two clockmakers, an engraver, an ivory turner, and a hatter (to name but a few). Nevertheless it is safe to assume that the majority of recipients would have been from much more humble backgrounds.

On the occupations of the widows themselves there is virtually no information, yet most probably worked, if they were physically capable, whenever there was work to be had. For example, in research done on depositions to the Consistory Court of the Bishop of London, it was established that 85% of the widows appearing as witnesses were either wholly or partly maintained by their own employment.⁴³ Other research has emphasised the popularity of going into service as a means of

³⁹ Ms 83, f.215

⁴⁰ Sandra Cavallo “Charity, Power, and Patronage in Eighteenth-century Italian Hospitals: the Case of Turin” in Lindsay Granshaw and Roy Porter *The Hospital in History* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.99; Brian Pullan “Charity and Poor Relief in Early Modern Italy” in Martin Daunton (ed.) *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare...* p.66; Marco H.D. Van Leeuwen “Logic of Charity: Poor Relief in Preindustrial Europe” In *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* vol.XXIV, no.4 (1994) p.593

⁴¹ Martin Daunton (ed.) *Charity, self-interest and welfare ...* p.11

⁴² Marie Louvet, widow of Jacques, is described as a “pauvre honteuse ... digne Objet p^r. etre admise aux Externes du moins” [HSQ, vol.LIII]

⁴³ Peter Earle “The Female Labour Market ...” p.336

support for older widows, noting that a woman would have had to earn 8s 6d every week of the year to better her situation as a servant on the average £5 a year plus 'diet and lodging'.⁴⁴ Furthermore, it would seem that in Normandy, the home area of many refugees, it was quite common for women to alternate between domestic employment and spinning, sewing, or lace-making.⁴⁵ However, among the several hundred widows receiving relief from the French Church of London, there are only four for whom we have any information on occupation and, of these, only one appears to have gone into service: on 7 September 1744 it was noted that Catherine Mege had "Remercié la Compagnie ayant trouvé une place pour gagner sa vie".⁴⁶ The other three widows all worked in the textile trade: namely, Susanne Agombard, to whom the Deacons supplied a wheel and winding frame,⁴⁷ Jeanne Creté who, it was noted, could "deuide un peu de Soye" despite her rheumatism,⁴⁸ and Marie Mulot, a maker of "persienne" (a fine silk fabric used for lining bonnets, pelisses, and suchlike).⁴⁹

Most widows probably worked only intermittently. Anne Samain, for instance, was given 5s in May 1738, "Estant sans ouvrage",⁵⁰ and the entry for Marie Mulot shows that, although she could earn reasonable money when she was working, she was often ill and needed extra assistance at these times.⁵¹ An entry for Esther Michon suggests that she was given extra money in the winter because her eyesight was weak and she could not see well enough to work when the light was poor.⁵²

The latter example raises the question of the seasonality of labour, and it is evident that several widows had their pensions cut back over the summer months, which may mean they found work during the better weather. The reduction was usually of about 1s to 2s a month. In one case the Deacons tried to reduce a pension by 3s but this lasted only two months before the widow was reinstated at her former

⁴⁴ D.A. Kent 'Ubiquitous but Invisible: Female Domestic Servants in Mid-eighteenth Century London' in *History Workshop Journal* vol.28 (1989) pp.114-5 and p.124

⁴⁵ Sarah C. Maza *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-century France: the Uses of Loyalty* (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Pr., 1983) p.64

⁴⁶ Ms 81, f.106

⁴⁷ See earlier, pp.18-19

⁴⁸ HSQ, vol.LII

⁴⁹ Ms 83, f.10; Eric Kerridge *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England* (Manchester: MUP, 1985) p.130

⁵⁰ Ms 83, f.157

⁵¹ Ms 83, f.10

rate,⁵³ and two widows, Marguerite Sauzé and Jeanne Teissier, had their pensions stopped completely - although the latter must have protested because only two weeks later she, too, was reinstated at her former 4s a month.⁵⁴ Despite these seasonal reductions, reference to charts 1 to 4 reveals that there was no noticeable seasonal pattern to *overall* expenditure on pensions and occasional grants, and the reasons for this remain something of an enigma, although two factors may partially explain the low level of variation. Firstly, while detailed studies of the seasonality of employment in eighteenth-century London are lacking,⁵⁵ it is evident that different occupations followed different patterns. For example, people involved in outdoor work tended to be busy during the summer when the weather was good, whereas silkweavers had little work in July and August, and those in the luxury and needle trades also suffered a low period at this time because the gentry left for their country estates as soon as 'the season' ended in May or June.⁵⁶ Thus, one group needing less assistance would be counterbalanced by another group needing more - although, given that many Huguenots were employed in textile-related occupations, one would not in fact expect numbers to balance evenly.

The other factor is that illness also tended to be seasonal. As is still the case today, many people were likely to be off work in winter because of airborne infections. However, in the eighteenth century, water- and food-borne illnesses took over in the summer and there was also an unidentified 'autumn disease'. The latter was first recorded in London late in 1739 and seems to have been connected with an epidemic of 'putrid sore throat' - probably some form of streptococcal infection.⁵⁷ Occasional grants to compensate for sickness-related loss of earnings would therefore have been an ongoing feature, as one seasonal illness gave way to the next - although perhaps with occasional surges depending on the virulence of a particular disease.

From time to time, a widow evidently felt she could manage without further assistance from the church because the case book records that "elle a remercié la

⁵² Ms 83, f.271

⁵³ Ms 81, f.'352', entry for Marie Boulleux

⁵⁴ Ms 81, f.'424'; Ms 81, f.141

⁵⁵ John Landers *Death and the Metropolis ...* p.75, n.29

⁵⁶ Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.142; R.W. Malcolmson *Life and Labour ...* p.54; L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* pp.104-106

⁵⁷ John Landers *Death and the Metropolis ...* pp.236-238 and p.363

Compagnie". To judge from baptismal records, such a widow was typically one whose children were old enough for her to devote more of her time to paid work and, indeed, may even have been of an age to contribute to the family income themselves. For example, the youngest child of Anne Bauquier would have been six-and-a-half (assuming it survived) by the time she 'thanked the Company' in May 1737, and she had at least one older child still surviving who could have looked after it.⁵⁸ In another case, the Deacons reduced the widow's pension because "il y a deux de ses Enfants qui travaillent" and then, three months or so later, she came and thanked them and her pension was discontinued completely.⁵⁹ Three of the widows, however, were older women who no longer needed assistance because they had been admitted to 'La Providence' - the French Protestant Hospital.⁶⁰

In other cases, the move to stop assistance came rather from the Deacons. In April 1744, for example, they were to visit Jacqueline Delbart "pour voir sy ell [ne] pourrait pas ce passer de la Charité q[u'elle] recoit", and in the account book her April payment is annotated: "Examiner son cas parceque on croit luy retranchè".⁶¹ In this case the widow was evidently able to plead her case because the assistance continued, but Elizabeth Gilberton had been less fortunate in 1731: on 13 December of that year the Deacons told her not to come back again "parçe que ses enfans sont tous grands Et pourvous Et quelle Est angloise Et d'un aage[sic] a sen passer".⁶² Similarly, Charlotte Demedes had her pension stopped when they discovered she had resources of her own amounting to £30.⁶³

At other times widows risked losing their benefits because the Deacons did not approve of their behaviour. Sara Lecluse, for example, was reported to be unworthy of assistance "Etant tout jour Malade par sa faute ... estant un

⁵⁸ Ms 81, f.69; HSQ vol.XXIII. The latter shows that she and her husband Pierre had children baptised in 1719, 1722, 1724, 1727, 1728 and 1730. It should be noted that Huguenot baptismal records also include birth dates in most cases. An examination shows that birth and baptismal dates are not usually separated by more than three weeks, so even when a birth date is *not* included the child's age can be gauged with reasonable accuracy.

⁵⁹ Ms 81, f.'376', entry for Anne Samson.

⁶⁰ Ms 112, entries for Judith Brisset for 13 Nov and 11 Dec 1743; Ms 83, f.319, entry for Marie Favry; Ms 83, f.202, entry for Anne Touchart

⁶¹ Ms 58, entry for 1 Apr 1744; Ms 112, entries for 1 April, 29 April, 27 May

⁶² Ms 83, f.162

⁶³ Ms 81, f.'397'

buveuse”,⁶⁴ while in December 1750 it was recorded that Esther Larmet “est allée ... chez le frere Agace très ivre & la insulte en consequence de quoi la compagnie a resolu de la retranché”.⁶⁵ Similarly, Elizabeth Barbier, who had been in receipt of relief even before her husband died, lost this assistance when it was discovered that she was hiring out her children for begging.⁶⁶

It should be noted, however, that whether the cessation of assistance was voluntary on the part of the widow or imposed on the part of the Deacons, relief payments were eventually resumed in nearly all cases and, once a widow was older, she generally remained on assistance for the rest of her life. Furthermore, pensions increased in value as the widow aged. This is in line with findings for English parishes.⁶⁷

But what of the money a widow could earn for herself? Information on incomes, like that on occupations, is very sparse. When Marie Saillant was widowed and left to bring up three children, she was given a pension of 8s a month. There is no indication that she herself was working (although it seems likely she would have needed at least part time employment if the family was to survive), but the case book shows that the oldest child was bringing in 2s a week.⁶⁸ Wage rates for women were sometimes not much higher than those for children. A silk winder, for example, might earn only 3s a week, and spinners about the same. Needlewomen were somewhat better paid at between 5s and 8s a week, with specialist needleworkers sometimes earning as much as 12s. Marie Mulot, when she was not ill, could earn 6s or 7s a week making ‘persienne’, but the average for women was probably about 5s a week. By comparison, men’s wage rates ranged from just under 10s a week to £1 a week or more. One must, of course, bear in mind that many workers received perquisites of various kinds which would have contributed to their individual economies - servants were often allowed to take

⁶⁴ Ms 83, f. '133'

⁶⁵ Ms 81, f. '625'

⁶⁶ Ms 81, f.83. This practice was not uncommon and could bring the mother at least sixpence a day and sometimes as much as three shillings, depending on her child’s capacity for inspiring pity in passers-by. [Richard B. Schwartz *Daily life ...* p.40]

⁶⁷ Richard Smith “Charity, Self-interest and Welfare ...” pp.41-42; David Thomson “The Welfare of the Elderly ...” pp.202-203; Tim Wales “Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-cycle: Some Evidence from Seventeenth-century Norfolk” in Richard M. Smith (ed.) *Land, Kinship and Life-cycle* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984) pp.363-364

⁶⁸ Ms 81, f. '347'

home the used tea leaves, for example, and weavers might keep the weft ends left in the loom when the cloth was removed⁶⁹ - but the perquisites lasted only as long as the job, and even the best-paid work tended to be intermittent.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Richard B. Schwartz *Daily Life ...* p.48; M.J. Daunton *Progress and Poverty: an Economic and Social History of Britain 1700-1850* (Oxford: OUP, 1995) pp.423-424

⁷⁰ D.A. Kent "Ubiquitous but Invisible ..." p.114; Ms 83, f.10; Peter Earle "The Female Labour Market ..." pp.342-343; Peter Earle *A City Full ...* pp.120-121, p.139

Expenditure on pensions and occasional grants, French Church of London

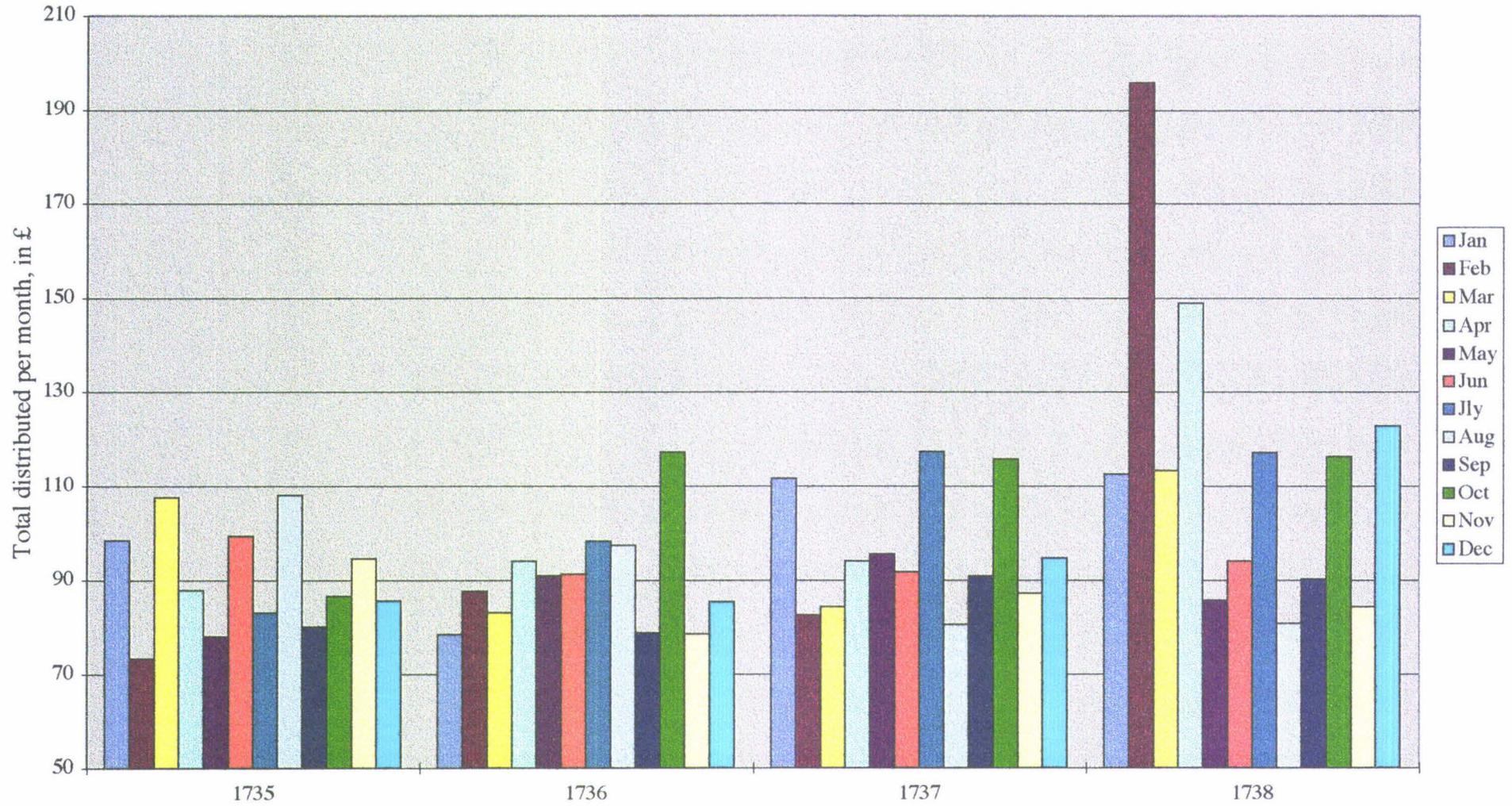


Chart 1

1735-1738

Expenditure on pensions and occasional grants, French Church of London

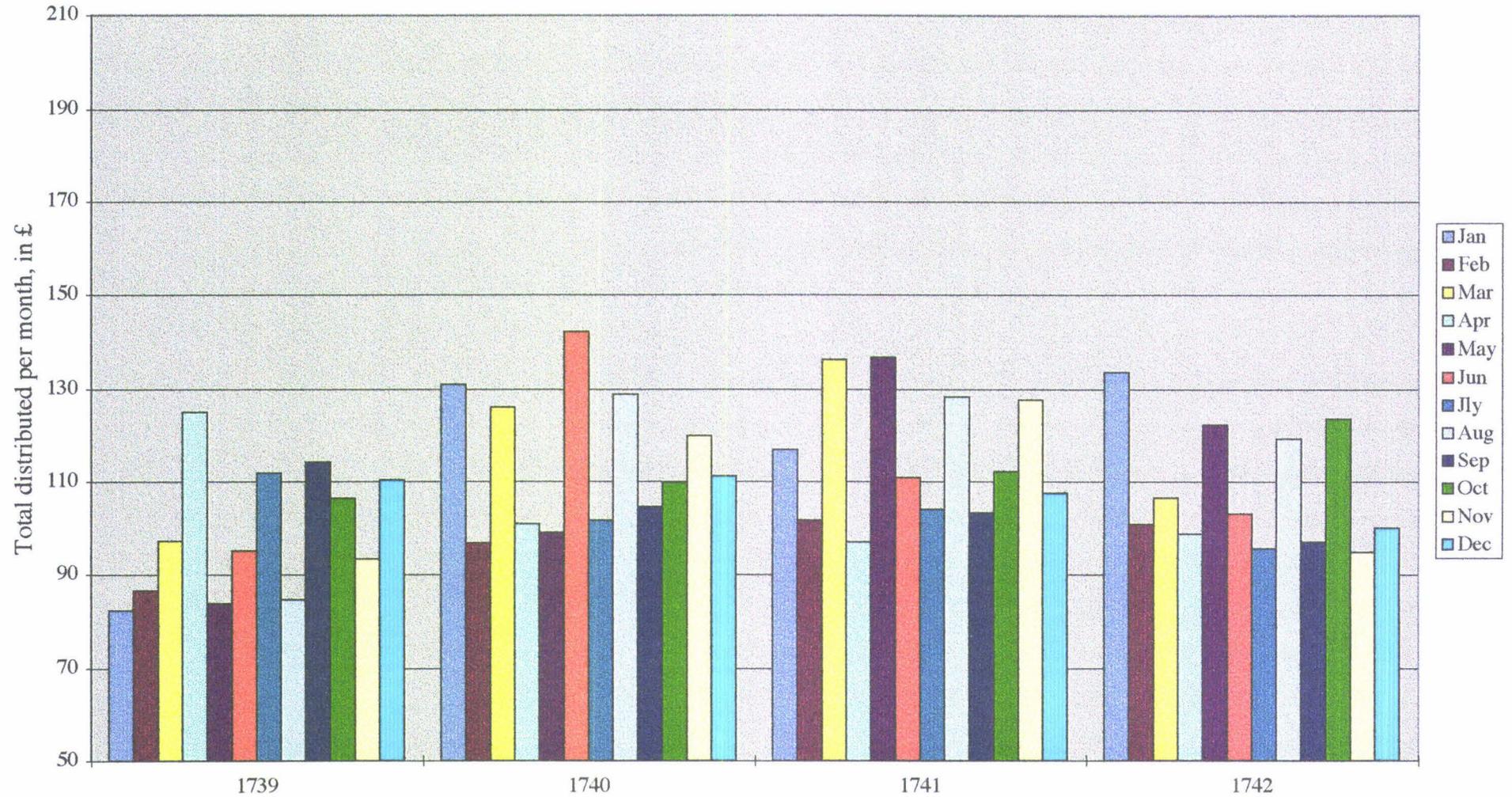


Chart 2

1739-1742

Expenditure on pensions and occasional grants, French Church of London

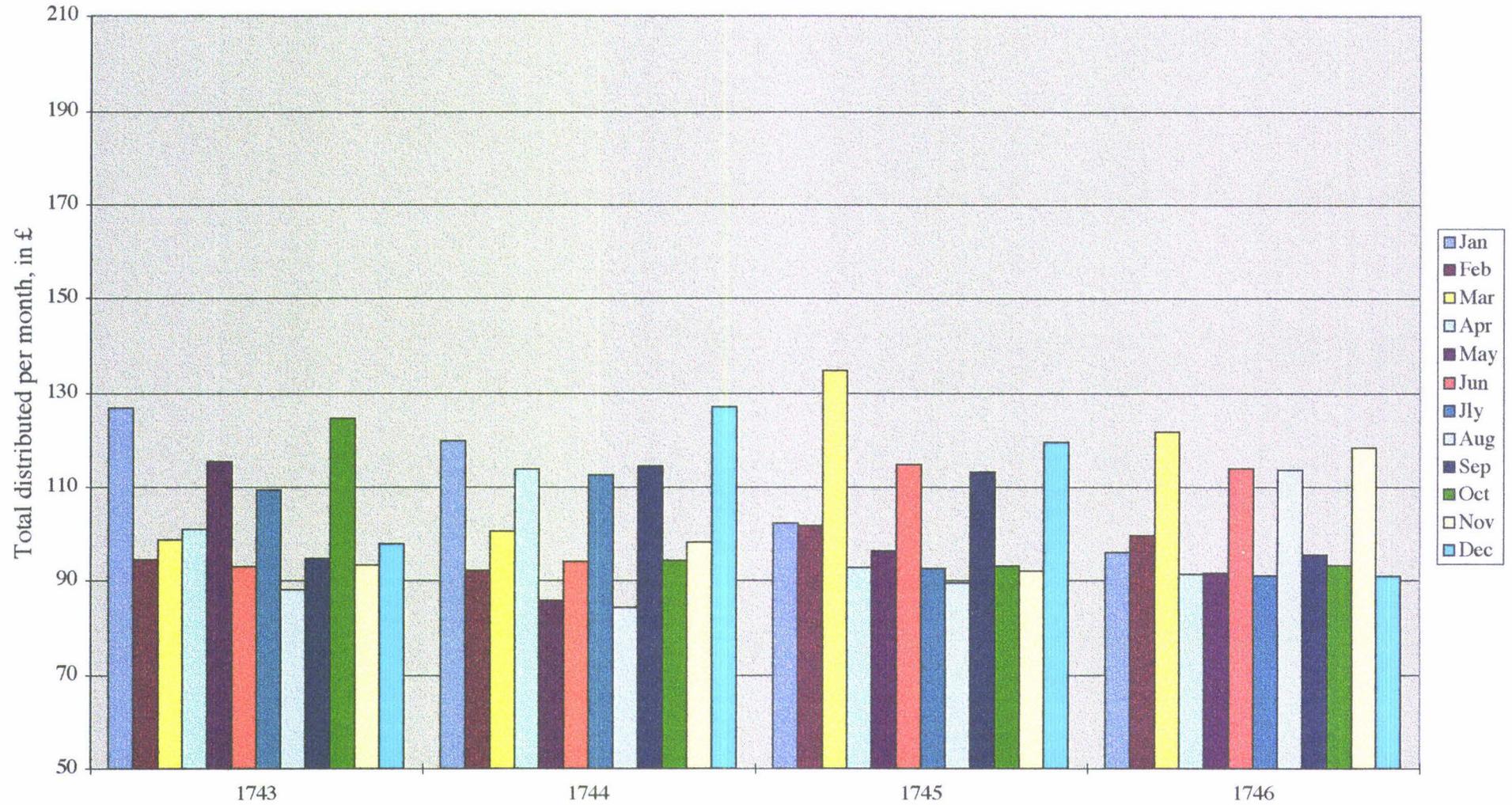


Chart 3

1743-1746

Expenditure on pensions and occasional grants, French Church of London

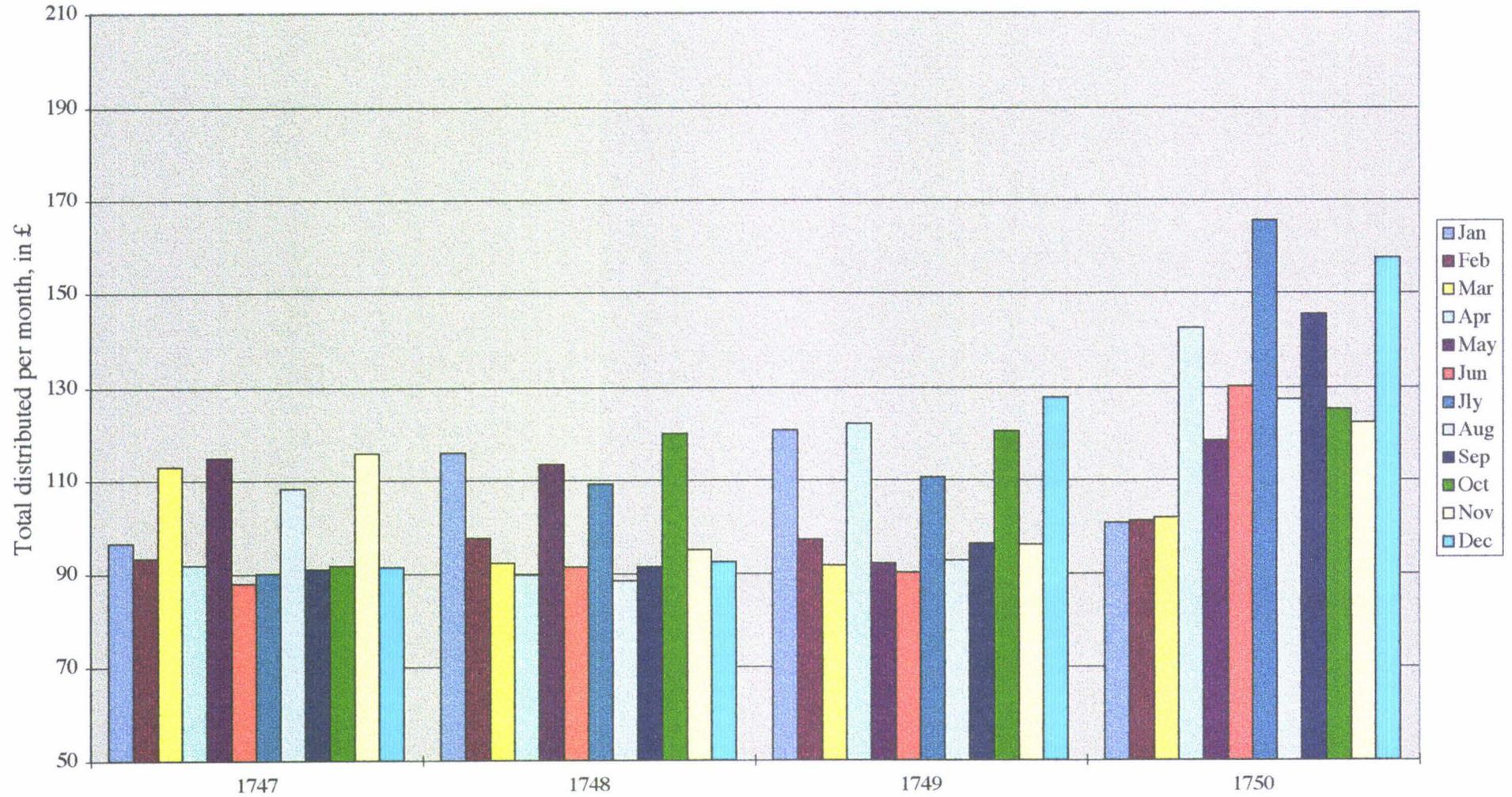


Chart 4

1747-1750

Chapter 4: The Royal Bounty Funds

Royal assistance to the Huguenot refugees of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries began with a brief issued by Charles II in 1681 and was continued by another under James II, in 1686.¹ The money collected under these briefs was passed to the Chamber of London, as the city's treasury, and then distributed to the refugees with the assistance of the French Church of London and the Church of the Savoy. When William and Mary came to the throne, they not only issued a further brief but granted the refugees some £15,000 a year out of the privy purse. This 'Royal bounty' continued until early 1701 when it was suspended by royal warrant.² Under subsequent sovereigns, the bounty in fact came from money supplied under the civil list, but the amount granted was still issued as if by the sovereign. Some monies were distributed in July 1702 under Queen Anne but payments were not properly resumed until the end of that year and were again suspended in the latter part of her reign. When the matter was investigated at the accession of George I, payments were found to be over two years in arrears. George reinstated the payments (somewhat irregularly at first) and then, by a warrant of 1726, reduced them to some £8,500 a year. Payments continued at this rate under his successor, George II.³

Distribution of the money made available through the Royal bounty was the responsibility of three main bodies. The Lords Commissioners, appointed by the monarch, oversaw the distributive process and transmitted royal instructions, the French Committee carried out the actual distribution of the funds, and the English

¹ Briefs were "letters patent of the Sovereign as head of the Church of England authorizing the making of collections in churches and parishes throughout England and Wales for specified objects of charity." [Raymond Smith "Financial Aid to French Protestant Refugees 1681-1727: Briefs and the Royal Bounty" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXII, no.3 (1973) p.249]

² It should be noted here that 'Royal bounty' is sometimes used more loosely to include money collected through the Royal briefs.

³ William A. Shaw "The English Government and the Relief of Protestant Refugees" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.V (1898) pp.343-355; Roy A. Sundstrom "Aid and Assimilation: a Study of the Economic Support given French Protestants in England, 1680-1727" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Kent State Univ., 1972) pp.31-91; Raymond Smith "Financial Aid to French Protestant Refugees ..." pp.249-252

Committee was responsible for scrutinising the accounts.⁴ (It would appear, however, that part of the money, earmarked for ministers and proselytes, was administered separately.⁵) Relief was not confined to refugees living in the capital but was distributed on a nationwide basis to persons of all social classes.⁶ As an exercise in poor relief administration it was therefore unique.

Payments from the Royal bounty were divided according to 'états'. Those to the nobility and bourgeoisie share the same manuscripts, with the 'gentilhommes' listed first and recipients of the second estate following, in rough alphabetical order. Entries are often quite detailed, recording such information as marital status, place of origin, age, infirmities, occupation and number of children. Payments to the 'common people' are recorded separately and were evidently paid from two different locations since they are divided under 'bureau de Londres et Spittlefields' and 'bureau de Westminster et Soho', with a different manuscript for each. Information is generally limited to just a first name and a surname, which makes positive identification difficult unless the names are unusual, although the Westminster and Soho manuscripts do sometimes give an indication of marital status.

A somewhat conservative number of women have been drawn from these manuscripts for use as a sample. In the case of the bourgeoisie, while most of the people listed were probably resident in London, widows have been included only where the information mentions a specific street or area, or where it corresponds to

⁴ Roy A. Sundstrom "Aid and Assimilation ..." pp.56-60. One notes from this work that the 'English' Committee, at least as it existed in 1705, also included several men of Huguenot descent.

⁵ HSQ vol.LI: *Records of the Royal Bounty and Connected Funds, the Burn Donation, and the Savoy Church, in the Huguenot Library, University College, London: a Handlist* compiled by Raymond Smith (London: The Society, 1974) p.2

⁶ For example, the last page of B.Ms54 (which covers payments to 'gentilhommes' and 'bourgeoisie' for the period 1736 to 1742) includes block payments forwarded to the churches in Barnstaple, Bedford, Bristol, Canterbury, Dartmouth, Exeter, Jersey, Norwich, Plymouth, Rye, Stone House (in Devon, on the outskirts of Plymouth), Thorp (-le-Soken) and Wandsworth.

that for widows identified from some other source.⁷ It is surmised that many widows living in London proper may therefore have been omitted since the Committee evidently did not deem it necessary to mention the City area by name. Widows for whom the entry was annotated “Sp.” or “Spittle.” (Spitalfields) are presumed to have been living in that district, although there are some anomalies: Elizabeth Bigot, for example, was recorded as “à Plymouth, Sp.”, which suggests that the money may have been paid in Spitalfields while the widow herself was resident in the southwest of England.⁸ Nevertheless, entries marked Spitalfields have been included in the sample unless there is evidence (as in this case) that the widow may *not* have been locally resident. Hoxton and Wandsworth have been included as part of the greater London area. Using these criteria, a sample numbering 406 widows has been drawn from the records on the bourgeoisie.

With the ‘common people’, it has been assumed they were mostly living in the district where they were receiving relief, and they have all been regarded as London residents. The problem with this group, because of the sparse information, is rather in identifying which of the women were widows. The sample of ‘common people’ has therefore been restricted to the 95 cases where widowhood is reasonably certain.

Ages are given for about three-fifths of the widows from both groups and were sampled at 1736 and 1745 for the bourgeoisie and 1740 for the ‘common people’. They reveal an interesting distinction. In both samples of bourgeoisie, over 70% of the widows were aged 60 and over. This coincides with the findings for the French Church of London.⁹ However, significantly fewer (63%) of the lower class women fall into this category. There are also more women in their fifties, and considerably fewer aged over 80, in the working-class sample. A possible explanation for this is that the ‘relief period’ simply occurred earlier for working-

⁷ While widows resident in some centres would presumably have received assistance out of the above-mentioned block grants to provincial churches, it is not known whether there were other widows who may have received relief direct from London. A prudent approach has therefore been adopted.

⁸ B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.18

⁹ see Chart 5, p.35

class women because they did not survive as long.¹⁰ However, such a theory does not account for the jump in numbers between the under-60s and over-60s, in both bourgeois samples, which is not echoed on the more rounded working-class curve [see chart 6].¹¹ It is therefore possible that ‘old age’ featured as an important criterion when deciding grants for bourgeois women, whereas lower class women may have been assisted more on grounds of necessity. Results of an earlier study, profiling recipients in the period 1686-1709, offer no insights on this point as figures are not differentiated by class. Rather, the author combines both factors by describing those assisted as “an increasingly elderly and economically disadvantaged subgroup of society who had proved desert according to criteria commonly applied in cities throughout western Europe.”¹²

Distribution of funds to widows, by age-group

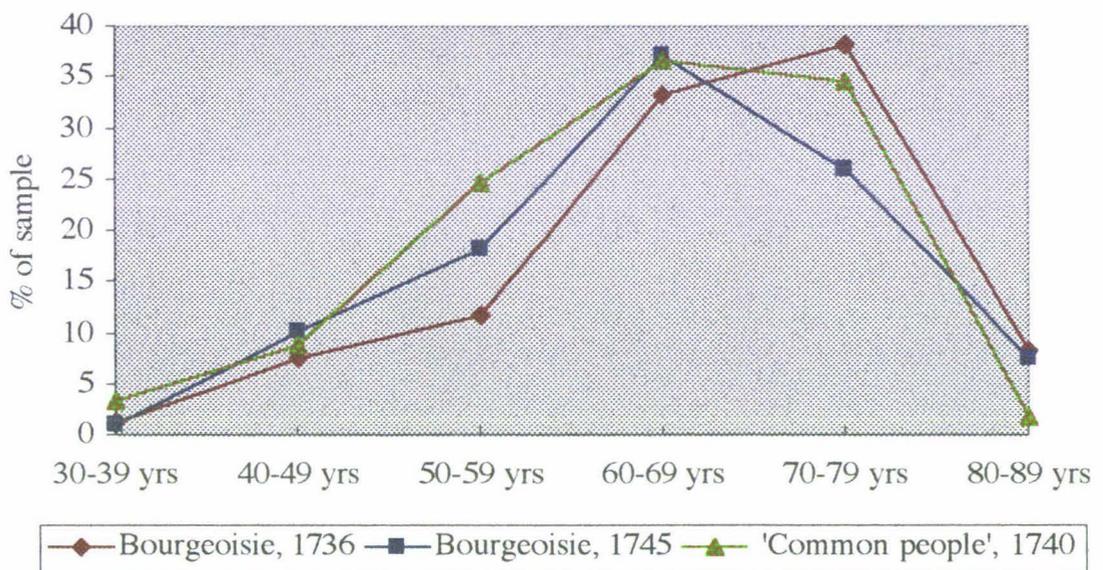


Chart 6

¹⁰ There seem to be no class-differentiated figures for life expectancy in the eighteenth century, but poorer diet and more cramped living conditions would have certainly contributed to higher disease rates and poorer health generally among the lower classes, which would in turn have raised the likelihood of early death. Landers discusses the impact of restricted living space in *Death and the Metropolis ...* p.86

¹¹ Ages given in manuscripts are notoriously approximate and ‘rounding’ was frequent, but this cannot explain the difference as it should affect both populations equally.

¹² Margaret M. Escott “Profiles of Relief: Royal Bounty Grants to Huguenot Refugees, 1686-1709” in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXV, no.3 (1991) p.262

As regards commonly-accepted 'criteria of desert', ill health was widely regarded as a 'worthy' reason for assistance, and indeed illness was not infrequently the trigger that first brought a person into contact with poor relief.¹³ The circumstances of the widows in this study would confirm that incapacity and poor health were common factors in the allocation of relief in the Huguenot community. In the present sample of some 400 widows receiving assistance from the Royal bounty funds, fully one quarter are described as incapacitated in some way, although often there is no detail other than the bald statement "infirme" or "fort infirme". Of 37 cases where the widow's difficulties are spelled out in any detail, by far the most frequently-cited problem is poor eyesight, with more than a dozen cases ranging from weak vision to complete blindness. This seems to suggest that many widows were employed in occupations involving close work, such as tailoring, lace-making and the 'needle trades' generally, since eyesight problems have been noted as being particularly prevalent in these trades.¹⁴

One widow with 'sore eyes' also suffered from rheumatism,¹⁵ a complaint shared by four other women in the sample, while the next most common problem was crippled or maimed limbs - hands and arms, in particular, being critical to an ability to work and be productive. Also mentioned several times are paralysis and dropsy. Other afflictions included asthma, colic, hernias, a urinary tract infection, and a leg ulcer. Although occurring only once in the present records, the latter problem was apparently very common in the eighteenth century - by some reports, affecting almost one person in five. Catherine Thebaud was not a typical case, however, as, at age 63, she was considerably older than most sufferers, who were more usually aged between twenty and thirty.¹⁶

Information on widows' employment is virtually non-existent in these documents, only one of the widows, of any class, having occupational information recorded beside her name. Marie Baron, listed among the bourgeoisie, is noted as being

¹³ Mary E. Fissell *Patients, Power, and the Poor ...* pp.100 and 106

¹⁴ Robert W. Malcolmson *Life and Labour in England, 1700-1780* (London: Hutchinson, 1981) p.77

¹⁵ Jeanne Charvau. B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.37 and B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.29

¹⁶ B.Ms 55 (Westminster/Soho), f.32); E.S.L. Loudun "Leg Ulcers in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" in *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* vol.31 (1981) pp.262-266

“Portiere de l’Egl. franc. de Greenwich”¹⁷ which is likely to have earned her a regular, if modest, income: the widow Jeanne Albert, ‘portière’ at the Threadneedle Street church (which was much larger than the church at Greenwich), received monthly payments that ranged between £1 6s 0d (January 1735) and £2 11s 10d (December 1736), and an English widow who appeared as a witness at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the early part of the century claimed she had supported herself for many years “by opening and shutting the pews in Shadwell Church”.¹⁸

Occupations of husbands are recorded much more frequently and were not always an indication of social class. While it is true that the bourgeois sample includes the widows of five merchants, two goldsmiths and four ship’s masters, and that nobody in these categories appears in the sample of ‘common people’, the situation is not so clear-cut for other trades and professions. Three wigmakers, for example, were working-class, but another was classed as bourgeois. Similarly, two master hatters were listed among the bourgeoisie but, of four other hatters, two were bourgeois and two working-class. Again, the five master weavers were all bourgeois, but there are three working-class men among the other fifteen listed as ‘weavers’. This raises the question of whether status could be acquired by skill-level alone. Had the master hatters and weavers risen to the ranks of the bourgeoisie as a result of their own endeavours, or were they already bourgeois by birth?¹⁹ A particularly intriguing case is that of Marguerite Guillon, widow of an arquebusier, who is listed among the ‘common people’ of Westminster and Soho in 1740 but appears among the bourgeoisie in 1745 (where the entry is annotated “Spittalfields”).²⁰ As these appear to be the only references to an arquebusier, and as the widow’s name is the same in both cases, one can only assume it is indeed the same person.

¹⁷ B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.13

¹⁸ Ms 120; Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.202. Pew-openers were often women. On 3 June 1784, five of the six pew-openers on duty at Christ Church, Spitalfields were female, including two who would appear to be of Huguenot descent, namely Mary Cossar and Susan Bruges. [Alfred Plummer *The London Weavers’ Company ...* p.272]

¹⁹ It seems likely that the ‘self-made man’ was becoming more common: Earle notes that the term ‘gentleman’ was being applied much more freely by the 1700s and quotes one source dating from 1730 which claimed that “In our days all are accounted Gentlemen that have money”. [Peter Earle *The Making ...* p.6]

²⁰ B.Ms 55 (Westminster/Soho), f.16; B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.69

As regards places of origin, there is often ambiguity. In an entry such as “Marie Mad^{ne} Adam V^e de Michel de Perche”²¹ it is impossible to tell, without punctuation, whether the region mentioned relates to the widow or her late husband. However, taking the 230 or so entries that give a geographic location, the greatest number (approximately one-third) show a connection with Normandy. This accords with the findings of the earlier study on Bounty records for the period 1686-1709.²² In the present sample, the Poitou/Saintonge/Aunis area furnishes almost another third of references and, some distance behind, is the île de France/Champagne area (which figured rather higher in the earlier study). The only other notable group is Picardy/Artois/Flanders. The remainder are few in number and geographically scattered. Only one widow of Huguenot descent is recorded as born in England, but another ten were English women who had been married to French men. While it may at first seem surprising that English people should have had access in this way to funds intended for the relief of French Protestant refugees, the French Committee was in fact only following English practice since, under the Poor Law, a wife or widow was regarded as having her husband’s settlement.²³ By the same token, a Huguenot woman marrying an Englishman lost her entitlement to relief from Huguenot sources. Thus, the entries for Marianne Coupé and Louise Cochoir are both annotated “mariée à un Anglois” and no further grants are recorded.²⁴

These, then, were the background and circumstances of the recipients, but what of the money distributed? Firstly, it must be observed that grants were usually annual. Furthermore, as payments from the Crown were sometimes delayed, monies would not always have been paid promptly or even regularly. They were not, therefore, income that could be relied upon, like a regular pension, but more in the nature of a ‘bonus’ that would have bought, perhaps, much-needed clothing, or paid off a debt.

Secondly, as in Margaret Escott’s earlier study, it is evident that the amounts varied according to status.²⁵ Grants to ‘common people’ generally ranged between 7s and

²¹ Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.7

²² Margaret M. Escott “Profiles of Relief ...” p.263

²³ James S. Taylor “The Impact of Pauper Settlement, 1691-1834” in *Past and Present* vol.73 (1976) p.47

²⁴ B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.34

²⁵ Margaret M. Escott “Royal Bounty Grants ...” p.263

10s 6d, but in a few cases were as low as 2s 6d. Only three lower class widows from the sample, all in the Westminster/Soho area, were given more than £2. Of these, Jeanne Papot, aged about 80 and with four grandchildren to support after the death of her daughter, was given £2 10s 0d a year.²⁶ Another, the widow of a calico printer, was initially given £2 2s 0d and then, in 1744, raised to £3.²⁷

By contrast, these top rates for the lower classes were the most common rates for the bourgeoisie, and several bourgeois widows received grants in excess of £6. The elderly Judith Genotin, for example, was given £7 after the death of her husband (a barber/wigmaker), and this amount was again granted in 1745.²⁸ The highest payment was awarded to Anne Pirou, whose late husband, rather significantly, had been Director of the French Committee: she was paid £6 on 30 July 1735, and subsequently raised to £7 7s 0d.²⁹ A third example is also worthy of note: Colombe Trillet, widow of a ship's captain, was granted £5 in 1736, raised to £6 in 1745, and then raised again to £7 in 1747. She is of particular interest because she was also awarded one of the highest pensions from the French Church of London. In 1738, her total annual income from the two sources would thus have been £15, rising to £17 by 1747.

This raises the question of how frequent it was for widows to receive relief from more than one source, and it is a matter that will be examined again in subsequent chapters. As far as relief from the French Church of London and the Royal bounty was concerned, it is difficult to draw a firm conclusion because of the nature of the samples. Some 31% of the bourgeois widows received assistance from both sources, whereas the figure is only a little over 8% for lower class widows. It must be remembered, however, that the church records were one of the sources used for cross-checking information on the bourgeois widows and thus, in part, determined which of them were included in the sample. A higher correlation for

²⁶ B.Ms 55 (Westminster/Soho), f.27; B.Ms 56/3 (Common people - Soho), f.12

²⁷ Elizabeth Launay. B.Ms 55 (Westminster/Soho), f.20; B.Ms 56/3 (Common people - Soho), f.9

²⁸ B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.69; B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.60

²⁹ B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.111

this group is therefore to be expected. Nevertheless, even taking the lower figure of 8%, it can be said that it was not unusual for widows to receive relief from both the church and the Royal bounty funds.

As a last point, it should be noted that, although this chapter has been confined to relief paid to individuals, Bounty funds were also used to maintain orphans, to assist the French schools and the hospital, and to cover the cost of physicians. However, while Bounty manuscripts for earlier periods apparently include information on payments for such purposes,³⁰ the present manuscripts make no mention of them - although some do list payments for burials. These burial payments relate to the period from August 1743 to January 1747, and were all lump sums, presumably paid for pauper burials since they appear only in the documents referring to the 'common people'. They vary from £26 19s 0d for burials between 25 August 1743 and 16 June 1744, down to £14 for the six-month period from 16 June to 31 December 1744. Three of the payments were in response to accounts from one François Guiot, and seem to refer specifically to burials in Soho. The existence of such payments doubtless helps to explain why burial costs feature so rarely in the accounts of Deacons of the Threadneedle Street church³¹ although, as will be seen, the French Protestant hospital was even more involved in this area of assistance.

³⁰ HSQ, vol.LI pp.38-39

³¹ see page 23

Chapter 5: The French Protestant Hospital - "La Providence"

When large numbers of refugees began arriving in the 1680s and 1690s, it became necessary to find immediate accommodation for the most destitute until they could be properly settled, and the City of London made available a building in Bunhouse Fields, in the parish of St Giles', Cripplegate, that had formerly housed plague victims.¹ Having thus been acquired as emergency lodgings for new refugees, the 'Pest House' (or 'Bunhill Hospital', as it was sometimes called) went on to become a charity house primarily for the elderly in the Huguenot community, and it continued to fulfill this function until around 1718, being finally demolished in 1736-1737.²

Accommodation at the Pest House was limited, housing only 30 or 40 residents, and the buildings were old, so Jacques de Gâtigny, who had been involved in distributing relief to the refugees, bequeathed £1,000 to the institution with a view to it being enlarged. This money, together with other donations, was to permit the building of a whole new hospital. In March 1716, a meeting of the French Committee (the same committee responsible for distributing the Royal bounty money) recorded the names of nearly 60 subscribers to the hospital, and encouraged others to follow their example.³ Buildings rose on a piece of land adjacent to the old Pest House and, in July 1718, the new hospital was duly incorporated by Royal charter. It became known as "La Providence" and, as far as can be ascertained, was the earliest subscription hospital to be founded in England.⁴

¹ A.P.D. Hands and Irene Scouloudi *French Protestant Refugees Relieved Through the Threadneedle Street Church, London, 1681-1687* [HSQ, vol.XLIX] (London: The Society, 1971) pp.13-14

² C.F.A. Marmoy "The 'Pest House', 1681-1717: Predecessor of the French Hospital" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXV, no.4 (1992) p.385

³ Arthur G. Browning "On the Origin and Early History of the French Protestant Hospital (La Providence)" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.VI (1898-1901) pp.61-62

⁴ It should be noted, however, that medical staff at "La Providence" were paid, whereas those at the voluntary hospitals were not. [John Woodward *To do the Sick no Harm: a Study of the British Voluntary Hospital System to 1875* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) pp.8-9]. Outside the capital, the first provincial foundations appeared in the 1730s. [Roy Porter "The Gift Relation ..." p.150] In Bristol, Huguenots were among those dissenters who established both the workhouse and the hospital. [Mary E. Fissell *Patients, Power, and the Poor...* p.79]

The purpose of the hospital, according to the minutes of the March 1716 meeting, was to shelter and assist those who were “ou affligés dans leur Esprit, ou attaqueés de maladies longues & incurables, ou accableés de vieillesse & d’autres infirmitéz”. It is evident, therefore, that the institution was still to be more of a charity house for the elderly and infirm (the old meaning of ‘hospital’) than a place where the sick could go for cure, although the records show that it did employ a physician and a surgeon (probably not full-time) and, as with other hospitals, there was to be an increasing trend towards ‘medicalisation’ during the course of the century⁵.

It is not without significance, however, that those who were ‘affligés dans leur esprit’ should come first in the list of those for whom the French hospital was to care: in this respect, at least, the Huguenot institution was well ahead of its time, for it is evident that the mentally ill were a prime concern of the founders of the French hospital. The builders’ accounts clearly show that nine rooms were specially constructed for “the Madd Pepell”,⁶ and the number was later increased to eighteen⁷. Clean straw was provided twice a week and, by the 1730s, there even seems to have been some primitive form of central heating.⁸ There were also occasional attempts at treatment.⁹ The care may not have been enlightened, by modern standards, but it was nevertheless more humane than anything else available at the time. Indeed, until 1725 when Guy’s opened, Bedlam was the only English institution that would even accept the mentally ill.

⁵ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts: a Descriptive Catalogue of the Remaining Manuscripts in the Huguenot Library* [HSQ, vol.LVI] (London: The Society, 1983) p.3. Historians such as Eduard Seidler [“An Historical Survey of Children’s Hospitals” in Lindsay Granshaw and Roy Porter *The Hospital in History* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.181] have noted that the eighteenth century saw a radical transformation of the old ‘hospital’/home of refuge into an institution for the care of the sick. At this point in time, however, St Thomas’s and St Bartholomew’s were the only institutions that had made any move in this direction - the former having been founded as an almonry in 1213 and rebuilt as a hospital between 1701 and 1706. Medical hospitals such as Westminster and Guy’s were not built until the 1720s and others followed later still. [George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* pp.84-86]

⁶ Arthur G. Browning “On the Origin ...” p.75

⁷ Arthur G. Browning “The Early History ...” p.203

⁸ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.60

⁹ C.F.A. Marmoy “‘La Providence’: the French Hospital During Two and a Half Centuries” in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXI, no.4 (1969) pp.342-343

At its inception, “La Providence” admitted about 60 people (probably including the 30 or 40 people who had been in the Pest House). By 1723 there were 125 inmates, and the number rose to around 225 after the construction of two additional wings in the 1730s. In the early decades, young people were admitted as well as the elderly and infirm.¹⁰ Thanks to additional monies such as the Dufour legacy, the hospital was able, in October 1739, to extend its assistance to cover a monthly grant for some of those waiting for admission.¹¹ The timing was particularly fortunate, given the harsh winter that followed, and by March 1740 the number of people on external assistance had risen to 80. Numbers remained at this level for the next eight years, with grants being paid at a rate of 10s a month for the four winter months, and 8s a month for the rest of the year.¹² From January 1742, the hospital was also able to give grants to couples who, being married, were not eligible for admission as inmates. This assistance amounted to 12s per couple per month.¹³ Another bequest saw the establishment of the Coqueau Charity which, from 1745, provided pensions of 10s a month to “ten poor Maids or Widows, aged upward of fifty years”.¹⁴ Apprenticeships were also paid for by the hospital, out of money left by Étienne Seignoret,¹⁵ but information on these is not given in the documents under examination and they do not form part of the present study.¹⁶

Under the terms of its charter of incorporation, admission to “La Providence” was to be restricted to “Poor French Protestants and their descendants” who had been resident in Britain for at least six months. A further stipulation was that those admitted to relief should take the oaths of allegiance, supremacy and abjuration.¹⁷ However, in this respect, those assisted were no different from those administering

¹⁰ Arthur G. Browning “On the Origin ...” p.56; C.F.A. Marmoy “The ‘Pest House’ ...” p.399; C.F.A. Marmoy “‘La Providence’ ...” p.342; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.3

¹¹ C.F.A. Marmoy “L’Entraide des Réfugiés Français en Angleterre” in *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français* vol.115 (1969) p.596

¹² C.F.A. Marmoy “‘La Providence’ ...” p.346

¹³ HSQ vol.LII, p.xii

¹⁴ HSQ vol.LII, p.xiii

¹⁵ Étienne Seignoret had been an Elder of the Threadneedle Street church in 1694-97, a Director of the Spitalfields soup kitchen in 1695 and a foundation Director of “La Providence”. [Robin D. Gwynn “The Ecclesiastical Organization ...” pp.457-458]

¹⁶ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.87; Arthur G. Browning “On the Origin ...” p.49

¹⁷ Arthur G. Browning “On the Origin ...” p.53. The oaths in question are likely to have been those contained in the Second Test Act (1678) and the Bill of Rights of 1689 - the latter oaths having superseded the Oath of Supremacy of 1 Eliz., c.1 and the Oath of Allegiance or Obedience of 3 James I, c.4 [E. Neville Williams *The Eighteenth-century Constitution, 1688-1815* (Cambridge: CUP, 1960) pp.29-30 and 39-41]

the assistance since it was also stipulated in the regulations that all Directors of the hospital should be born or naturalised English¹⁸ - the latter process involving the swearing of virtually the same oaths.

In addition to the residency qualification and the oaths, those seeking admission also needed to secure the recommendation of an eminent person in the Huguenot community, often a hospital subscriber. This was to become standard for voluntary hospitals, and was one of the 'rewards' of subscription for it conferred on the donor an opportunity to exercise patronage. It also had the effect of reinforcing personal links (which, in an immigrant society, would have been particularly important). However, in the case of a mental patient, the requirement was rather to find a guarantor who would give an "Obligation d'Indemnité", which was a deed guaranteeing the hospital authorities against legal action for wrongful detention.¹⁹

Of the 1,200 or so widows forming the basis of the present study, over 230 (or nearly one in five) sought help from the French Protestant hospital and, of these, around 150 were actually admitted, sometimes after a period on external assistance. Included among the admissions is Madelaine Chamberlain, who had already applied some years earlier and been granted monthly external assistance. However, the assistance had stopped and her name had been struck off when it was discovered she had stolen some silk.²⁰ Her subsequent admission presumably indicates that the Directors relented on their decision not to help her. Also included is Marie Saunier who left the French Protestant Hospital in late 1739 or early 1740 "ay^t eu un heritage de £80.-.-d". However, "ayant dependé C'est[sic] argent dans tres peu de Temps", she had to be re-admitted.²¹ Another woman was not sure whether she was a widow or not, "n'ayant point eû de nouvelles de Son Mari qui est allé aux Indes". Although she had applied for relief, she was accepted not as a resident but as a domestic servant.²²

¹⁸ Arthur G. Browning "On the Origin ..." p.55; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* pp.64 and 66-67. Both the 'Serment de Naturalisation' and the oaths are reproduced in full at Appendix I, for comparison.

¹⁹ HSQ, vol.LII, p.xiv

²⁰ HSQ, vol.LII

²¹ Ms 83, f.202

²² HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Marie Brant

Apart from the 150 or so actual admissions, a further eight widows were offered places but declined them: there are no details of the circumstances behind these refusals but in one case the reason was accepted as legitimate and the widow's name was retained on the books for future consideration.²³

In addition to the admissions, eight widows were assisted through the Coqueau Charity, and 33 widows were granted external relief from the hospital but were never admitted as residents. From the records, it is evident that some of them died before admission could be effected. However, research in English poor relief shows that widows with family support were more likely to remain on external assistance from institutions than those without local kin, and this may have been the case with some of those on external relief from the French hospital.²⁴ One widow was granted external assistance but then declined it saying she could manage without for the time being.²⁵

Of those admitted, most were older women who had been born in France, with as many as 30 per cent being aged 75 or older. Very few were under the age of 50 years and very few had been born in England. Not surprisingly, the majority of admissions tended to occur in the January-March quarter when the weather was at its worst (see following chart).

Admissions to "La Providence"

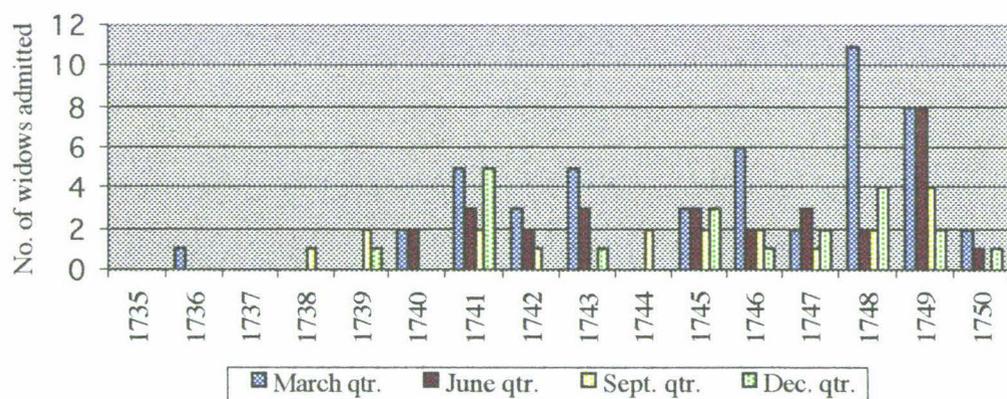


Chart 7

²³ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Catherine Godefroy

²⁴ Mary E. Fissell *Patients, Power and the Poor ...* p.105

²⁵ HSQ, vol.LIII, entry for Anne Perrier.

Also of interest on this chart are the two ‘bulges’ which occur 1739-1743 and 1745-1750, the latter including exceptionally high peaks in 1748 and 1749.²⁶ While numerous factors are likely to have been involved, such as health, age, economic situation, and level of family/community support - not to mention the number of places available in the hospital at any given time - it does seem there is some correlation between these figures and the expenditure on relief by the French Church of London [see charts 1 to 4].

The earlier bulge in admissions - showing a slight lag when compared with the curve for relief expenditure - could well be indicative of how economic hardship came to affect the health and wellbeing of the widows concerned. The later bulge is, however, more problematic since the trigger factors seem to be reversed - the bulge in hospital admissions *preceeding* the increase in poor relief payments. While this would accord with some sort of epidemic interfering with economic activity,²⁷ it must be noted that scarcely any admissions to “La Providence” seem to be disease-related and indeed most voluntary hospitals at the time specifically excluded people suffering from infectious diseases.²⁸ Furthermore, the increased mortality from fevers and smallpox observable for the period 1747-1750 affected young adults more than any other age-group,²⁹ whereas admissions of widows to the French hospital largely involved older women. However, the epidemics and the increased admissions could still be related if young adult offspring had been taking an active role in caring for their elderly parents: in such a case the demise or debility of the care-givers would certainly trigger a need for alternative arrangements.

Some slight evidence exists to support such a theory. In only seven of 79 admissions for the period 1745-1750 is there any mention of offspring being on

²⁶ There is no obvious reason for the paucity of admissions during the years 1735-1738. While it is true that not all petitions for admission have survived from the early years of the hospital, the Register of Inmates is nevertheless reputed to be complete from 1730 onwards. [Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* pp.32 and 35]

²⁷ Mortality related to fevers did indeed show an increase in London in 1747 and remained higher than usual until 1750, while deaths from smallpox rose sharply in 1749. [John Landers *Death and the Metropolis ...* p.287]

²⁸ John Woodward *To do the Sick no Harm ...* p.61

²⁹ John Landers *Death and the Metropolis ...* p.287

hand at or after the time of the widow's entry to hospital (and in one of those cases the offspring was probably a child because the French Church of London records mention finding a placement and clothing for him).³⁰ Furthermore, in two cases, the admission voucher was specifically noted as being given to the sister of the widow concerned, which rather suggests an absence of offspring. On the other hand, it must be granted that there is only one instance where filial care-giving had indisputably taken place and that is in the case of Marianne Coupé, widow of Collin Aubry, who was admitted to hospital in September 1749 but (at least until June 1745) had been living "chez Mr. Hué Son Gendre".³¹

As with the Royal bounty funds, the main reason for seeking relief from the hospital (other than age) was infirmity. In many cases, other details being absent, this may in fact have been a general infirmity associated with old age, but in others there were more specific difficulties. Again as with the Royal bounty relief, eyesight problems were a prime factor in generating requests for assistance, but in only half the cases did this complaint result in admission to hospital - the others being mostly assisted externally. Paralysis, however, seems to have been regarded with a much more sympathetic eye and most widows suffering from this condition were given a place, as were those with maimed or broken limbs (particularly arms) and dislocated joints. This suggests that central to decision-making was a consideration of how far the applicant's ability to work was compromised - a hypothesis supported by the number of applications which included a phrase such as "hors d'état de gagner sa vie". Another category favoured for admission were those with mental problems - all recorded cases having been accepted for entry. Other problems mentioned more than once in applications include fever, dropsy, asthma, gout, ulcers, and "oppression". Only two of the six fever cases were admitted,³² which tends to confirm a reluctance to treat people with potentially infectious diseases - although, despite this, one of the widows admitted was also known to be consumptive.

³⁰ Judith Neal was accepted for entry to hospital on 5 Jan 1745 [HSQ, vol. LIII]. Ms 81, f.'392' and Ms 58 (entry for 30 Jan 1745) show Pierre, son of Jean Niel (her late husband), being given clothing and placed with Pierre Le Comte at 4s a month.

³¹ HSQ, vol.LII

³² Marguerite Augier and Marie Dorsel, both in HSQ, vol.LII

Conditions in the hospital, for the majority of the residents, were probably basic but adequate. The preface to the *Orders and Rules* (1723) claims that the inmates were well fed and that their diet included wine, strong beer, sugar, fresh eggs and poultry.³³ Certainly the Steward's accounts for 1720 have entries for such things as flour, butter, cheese, meat, brandy, and barley for the hens, and another manuscript dating from 1739 shows the daily consumption of "soup, beef and mutton and of the Sunday roast, and Friday pork or salt cod".³⁴ Furthermore, the hospital had an extensive garden in which vegetables and fruit were grown and, in the autumn of 1739, 180 new fruit trees were planted, including mulberries, peaches, quinces, nectarines, apples, pear, plums and cherries, as well as some vines.³⁵ In addition, there was a brewery and bake-house where the hospital produced its own beer and bread - the latter, however, being the cause of some complaint in the early years until the Directors found a new baker.³⁶ Coal was evidently supplied at the expense of the French Church of London, and it was this body, too, that paid for "une anné de L'eau de la nouvelle riviere" in 1742.³⁷

Women and men were housed separately, and most rooms seem to have held two or three people (and possibly more), although there is no evidence that they were expected to share beds (as was sometimes the case in workhouses, inns, and even other hospitals).³⁸ Despite the crowded conditions to which many eighteenth-century Londoners must have been accustomed, this sharing of rooms could still be a source of conflict. In November 1748, for instance, Marie Grégoire was confined to the 'petites maisons' (normally reserved for the mentally ill) for having quarrelled with "toutes les autres personnes de Sa chambre",³⁹ and three women received a reprimand and threat of expulsion for an altercation that took place in February 1753:-

La Bertrand et La Chapelou [i.e. Marie Chapeloup,
widow of Jacob] ayant fait des plaintes contre La Mun qui
est dans la mesme Chambre avec elles, et la Compagnie

³³ C.F.A. Marmoy "La Providence' ..." p.346

³⁴ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts* ... pp.18 and 26

³⁵ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts* ... pp.3 and 61

³⁶ Arthur G. Browning "The Early History ..." p.205

³⁷ See, for example, Ms 58, entries for 29 April 1741, 28 April 1742 and 13 July 1743; also Ms 121, entry for 6 Nov 1742

³⁸ Richard B. Schwartz *Daily Life* ... pp.124 and 165; John Woodward *To do the Sick no Harm* ... pp.103 and 190. Woodward notes that, as late as 1771, the Manchester Infirmary authorized sharing if there was pressure on bed-space.

³⁹ HSQ, vol.LII

les ayant ouïes, et trouvant qu'elles ont toutes trois tort, elle leur a fait une Censure, et leur a recommandé de tacher de s'accorder, et de vivre mieux ensemble à l'avenir, et leur a donné avis que si elles continuent à se quereller, qu'on les mettra toutes trois hors de l'Hopital.⁴⁰

Elizabeth Le Manicher must also have been a difficult room-mate since, when she applied to enter the hospital in 1732, it was noted alongside her name that she had been in the hospital before and that she was “d’humeur turbulente”.⁴¹

There were, however, a few private rooms, probably for the more well-to-do,⁴² and residents were allowed to bring some of their own furniture and belongings. In the case of the poorer inmates, this probably consisted of little more than the clothes they stood up in, although even these had value at the pawn shop. In 1746, the hospital Steward paid 4s to redeem Forcie Borin’s dress from pawn, just after she entered as a resident,⁴³ and some years earlier Marianne Normand’s son-in-law (or possibly stepson) had been accorded permission to take the widow’s clothing when she died “en consideration de Sa pauvreté”.⁴⁴ Marie Barjeau and Catherine Pezé were probably a little better off than Widow Normand because there was more to claim when they died: in Marie’s case, furniture and clothing were given to her married daughter, and in Catherine’s a bed “& autres hardes” were taken by her nephew.⁴⁵ Other widows were even more affluent: when Marguerite Foulon applied for admission in 1730, she indicated a willingness to give the hospital £30 and asked to bring “Tous ses meubles”, while Marie Harne, a resident in 1748, actually drew up a will to “devise & bequeath what moneys or Effects” she possessed.⁴⁶

The above-mentioned case of Marguerite Foulon also raises the question of upkeep for the widows while they were in hospital. Maitland noted in 1739 that the hospital “at present contains two hundred and twenty poor helpless men and women, one hundred and forty-six whereof, who are upon the Foundation, are plentifully supplied with all the necessaries of life, at the expence of the Hospital;

⁴⁰ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Marie Chapeloup

⁴¹ HSQ, vol.LIII

⁴² Arthur G. Browning “The Early History ...” p.196

⁴³ HSQ, vol.LII

⁴⁴ HSQ, vol.LIII

⁴⁵ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Marie Barjeau; HSQ, vol.LIII, entry for Catherine Pezé

but the other seventy-four are paid for by their friends, at the rate of nine pounds per annum each.⁴⁷ Certainly the hospital did pay for the majority of inmates, but there are several examples of private sponsorship in the present records to bear out Maitland's statement. Mme Elizabeth Baudemont, for instance, seems to have paid for the upkeep of several of the inmates, giving the hospital £30 for Pierre Baudemont (presumably a relation) and £20 for the widowed Marie Le Soif, and offering another £30 for Widow Touchart "pour quelle soit Entretienue pendant sa vie". (In the event, the cost of the latter's upkeep was met by a donation of £30 from one Jacques Bernard.)⁴⁸ Marie Varnier, too, found a private sponsor in her son, the Sieur Jacques Varnier, with whom she had been staying: he promised to cover the entire cost of her pension if she were admitted.⁴⁹ In the case of Marie Charreron, the hospital took over paying the whole pension only when her husband, who had been contributing to it hitherto, died in 1738.⁵⁰

Nevertheless it is evident that, prior to the time Maitland was writing, there had been a number of other ways of covering the cost.⁵¹ In some cases, it was one of the French churches that paid. Marie Merceron, for instance, had 2s of her weekly pension paid by "Leglise de crispin setrit" (a church in Spitalfields also known as 'La Patente') and the hospital paid the balance of 1s 6d.⁵² There was also assistance from the French Committee, which paid for some inmates out of the Royal bounty funds, and, yet again, some of the benefit societies supported those of their compatriots who were admitted as residents. The *Société des Parisiens*, for example, paid 6d a week for its members, the *Société de Lintot* provided a pension of 1s a week, and a bequest by one Louis Desclouseaux also enabled the *Société de Poitou* to support a few Poitevin and Breton inmates - Louise Merle being one who had her pension "payé par la Corporation Sur l'Etablissement de Mr Descluzeaux

⁴⁶ Both women appear in HSQ, vol.LII

⁴⁷ From William Maitland's *History of London* (1739) quoted in "The Churches, Chapels, Schools, and Other Charitable Foundations ..." p.572

⁴⁸ HSQ, vol.LIII

⁴⁹ HSQ, vol.LIII

⁵⁰ HSQ, vol.LII. This is one of the rare cases where a married person was admitted, but her husband was the hospital's baker which doubtless explains why the exception was made.

⁵¹ Charles Marmoy gives a list of sponsors of all inmates (not only widows) in Appendix V to HSQ, vol.LIII (pp.80-83)

⁵² HSQ, vol.LIII

Société de Poitou".⁵³ It has been suggested, however, that these forms of sponsorship declined in importance as the hospital's endowments improved.⁵⁴

As in English hospitals, once a person was admitted, he or she was expected to meet certain standards of behaviour, and there were various penalties for those who did not. In St Thomas's, for example, an inmate might be expelled for swearing or taking God's name in vain, abusing his or her neighbour, stealing, or acting in any way 'immodestly'.⁵⁵ At "La Providence", punishments included: being put on bread and water for one or more meals; being kept within hospital boundaries for a time (instead of being allowed out during the daytime, as was normally the case); being confined in the 'petites maisons' for one or more days; and being expelled from the hospital.⁵⁶ In the period under examination, the most common 'crimes' were food-hoarding and drunkenness, and the most common punishment was being confined to the hospital. Five widows were involved in alcohol-related incidents, including Marie Grégoire who was caught trying to smuggle a small bottle of gin into hospital in her pocket.⁵⁷ Three of these women were found drunk on more than one occasion, with Jeanne Debuze being the most inveterate offender: she was punished for drunkenness on four separate occasions between 1752 and 1755, being 'gated' for periods ranging from two weeks for the first offence to three months for an incident in 1753. After the latter incident she was threatened with expulsion from the hospital, but the threat was evidently not carried out because two years later she was still there and still offending!⁵⁸

The incidence of food-hoarding tends to support the hospital's claim that inmates were well-fed, since one assumes that the food in question was surplus to immediate requirements. Certainly it suggests that inmates may have been better fed than some of their friends and family outside the hospital - a hypothesis backed by the case of Jeanne Boiseau who was punished because she had "donné du Pain,

⁵³ William C. Waller "Early Huguenot Friendly Societies" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.VI (1989-1901) pp.204 and 221; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* pp.91 and 93; HSQ, vol.LIII. Gray notes that 11 persons were admitted to the hospital under the terms of the Desclouseaux bequest between 1729 and 1784.

⁵⁴ Irvine Gray *Huguenot manuscripts ...* pp.17 and 34; also HSQ, vol.LII, p.vii

⁵⁵ George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.86

⁵⁶ Arthur G. Browning "The Early History ..." p.204

⁵⁷ HSQ, vol.LII

⁵⁸ HSQ, vol.LII

du Beurre & de la Viande a une parante qui venoit la voir”.⁵⁹ Similarly, Susanne Bailleul was caught trying to take butter and cheese out of the hospital on behalf of another inmate, Anne Suire: one can only assume the quantities of food involved were significant, because both women were confined to the hospital for six months, instead of the more usual one to three months.⁶⁰

In addition to the above cases, one widow was ‘gated’ for a fortnight “ayant insulté la Servante de la chambre ou Elle est”: she retorted that she would rather leave the hospital altogether, but was given a week to think about it and seems to have changed her mind.⁶¹ However, the only widow to be confined to the ‘petites maisons’ was Marie Delliott who was put there for an unspecified period “pour s’etre mal comportée”.⁶² Two women received a verbal reprimand for not attending the “exercices de pieté”, and the same two seem to have been implicated in an incident involving the pawning of clothes, which earned one of them six months confinement to bounds and the threat of expulsion.⁶³ In only one case did a widow actually leave the hospital for discipline-related reasons, but there are no details about what had taken place. It is simply recorded that Esther Jesset left “n’ayant pas voulu Se conformer aux ordres”.⁶⁴

Few widows were in fact discharged from the hospital for any reason once they had been admitted - only nine departures (including Esther Jesset) being recorded out of the 150 or so admissions. Of these, three left “en remerciant la Compagnie” (including one who had been admitted as a mental patient),⁶⁵ and another is described as leaving “de Son propre mouvement”.⁶⁶ A fifth departed “par Les ordre[sic] de monsieur du peron” (who had been paying her weekly pension),⁶⁷ but it is noted that Marie Anne Vinette “est sortie sans rien dire, emportant ses hardes”.⁶⁸ There are no details about the remaining two cases.

⁵⁹ HSQ, vol.LII

⁶⁰ HSQ, vol.LII

⁶¹ Ester Campart, HSQ vol.LII

⁶² Marie Delliott, HSQ vol.LII

⁶³ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Susanne Gonzal

⁶⁴ HSQ, vol.LII

⁶⁵ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Jeanne Bourdeille (who had been admitted as mentally ill); HSQ, vol.LIII, entries for Rachel Mirasson and Anne Vernier

⁶⁶ Judith Niel, HSQ, vol.LII

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Arnaud, HSQ, vol.LII

⁶⁸ HSQ, vol.LIII

Rather than being medical (or mental) cases capable of cure, it is quite clear that, once admitted, most widows remained at “La Providence” until they died, which confirms that the institution was still being used as a hospital in the old sense rather than the new. It is also evident that, at least during the period under consideration, the cost of burial was, more often than not, covered by the hospital, which suggests that the families of these widows were not able to meet the cost themselves, and again underlines the hospital’s role as an institution for poor relief. (Indeed, one widow’s letter of application for admission specifically refers to it as “Cette demeure des pauvres”.)⁶⁹

The burials paid for by the hospital seem largely to have been carried out by Anglican parishes since the account books generally refer to “Parish dues”. This is to be expected given that Huguenots did not normally maintain their own burial grounds⁷⁰ - although the hospital did have its own cemetery from 1737 onwards, occupying the land where the Pest House had been. Nevertheless, it is quite evident that the majority of Huguenots were buried in Anglican churchyards: Christ Church, Spitalfields, had a particularly high number of Huguenot burials, including many people who had been resident in other parishes, and even churches further afield, such as Hackney, had memorials to families like the Ogiers and the Creuzes.⁷¹

Not surprisingly, the accounts (which were all presented by English undertakers) suggest that most burials paid for by the hospital would have been very simple: they cost in the region of 14s 4d to 15s 4d, and were limited to such expenses as the shroud (either wool or crepe), the coffin, ground charges, an affidavit, and “bearers and searchers” - searchers being people who were employed to view corpses to determine the cause of death.⁷² In one case, the cost of burial was apparently shared, since the entry in the hospital accounts reads “Eliz. Hanneteau

⁶⁹ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Jeanne Bernard

⁷⁰ Robin D. Gwynn *Huguenot Heritage* ... p.180

⁷¹ Margaret Cox “The Huguenots Of Spitalfields: the Evidence from the Christ Church Project” in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXV, no.1 (1989) pp.21-38; Mrs Ogier-Ward “Notes on Hackney Churchyard and Some of its Refugee Monuments” in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.IV (1892-1893) p.467-471

⁷² C.F.A Marmoy “‘La Providence’ ...” p.349; Peter Earle *A City Full* ... p.202

Coffen & Shroud Paid for - Ground &c. 6s. Total 6s".⁷³ In another case the burial cost as much as £1 2s 10d,⁷⁴ but there is no evidence of any widow receiving the elaborate burial accorded to Jacques Duplessis, a paying inmate from 1729 to 1743, for whom the hospital provided a velvet pall, hired a hearse and two coaches, and bought mourning cloaks and gloves for the mourners and a silk scarf for the doctor - the whole costing a total of £13 16s 0d.⁷⁵

Of the widows receiving relief from the French hospital, either as inmates or through external assistance, a good number also received help from elsewhere. Over a dozen, for instance, received help from both the hospital and the French Church of London - although not usually simultaneously, especially in the case of inmates - and nearly 80 widows received financial relief from the Royal bounty funds as well as assistance from "La Providence". In addition to this, as many as 28 widows obtained relief from the hospital *and* the Royal bounty *and* the church - including some who are listed as 'bourgeoisie' in the Bounty records. Of the remainder, the majority received help only from the hospital. However, a few were also assisted by the *Société de Poitou* and by the soup kitchen.

⁷³ HSQ, vol.LII

⁷⁴ HSQ, vol.LII, entry for Marie Jay. The French Church of London records reveal that she was the widow of Jacques Geay. [Ms 83, f.194; Ms 120 entries for 29 May 1737 and 31 March 1739]

⁷⁵ HSQ, vol.LII; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.23. The gentleman concerned was a Chelsea pensioner who made over his pension to the hospital in return for his keep and an annuity. [C.F.A. Marmoy "'La Providence' ..." p.349]. The diary of Thomas Turner, a Sussex shopkeeper who served his parish not only as overseer but also as undertaker, is another work that gives an insight into burial customs of the middle class at this time and it, too, makes frequent reference to the distribution of gloves and other favours. [David Vaisey (ed.) *The Diary of Thomas Turner ...* pp.xxi-xxiii]

Chapter 6: The *Maison de Charité* in Spitalfields - “La Soupe”

For most of the period 1735-1750, the ‘Maison de Charité de Spittlefields’ was probably situated in Corbet’s Court, not far from Spitalfields market, although it moved several times during the course of its existence and its location at any particular time cannot always be pinpointed with accuracy.¹ It had been founded at the end of the previous century, during the winter of 1689/90, and was one of two soup kitchens run for the benefit of the Huguenot community, although there are no surviving records of the other which was situated in the Westminster/Soho area.

From the start there were close links between the French Church of London, the *Maison de Charité* and the French Protestant hospital, with several men serving as Directors of both the latter institutions simultaneously. However, whereas in the case of the hospital women are found as subscribers but never Directors, there was no such limit on their involvement in “La Soupe”, and several women served in this capacity during the course of its existence, with more being involved in its day-to-day running and in collecting funds for its upkeep. Among them was Mme de St Hipolite, who also features prominently in the records of the hospital as a subscriber and as a nominator of several inmates (including some of the widows in the present study).² Initially there were eleven *Directrices* on the Board of the soup kitchen, whose duties particularly included visiting and approving the applicants for the charity.³

Support for the soup kitchen came from a variety of sources. Apart from the many monetary donations received by the Directors, there were some people, especially in the earlier years, who gave donations in kind - a Captain Perez, for example, giving bread and flour and, in the period 1690 to 1693, a butcher by the name of Duprié donating a total of 346lb of beef. A few wealthier Huguenots also left money in their wills: Jacques de Gastigny was one of the earlier ones, but David

¹ C.F.A. Marmoy “La Soupe: la Maison de Charité de Spittlefields” in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.XXIII, no.3 (1979) pp.134-147; also HSQ, vol.LV pp.vi-vii.
Note: unless otherwise specified, the background information for this chapter is drawn from “La Soupe ...”

² See, for example, the entry for Marie Fage in HSQ vol.LII

³ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts* ... p.96

Bosanquet's legacy of £200 was bringing in about £5 annually in the late 1730s and early 1740s, and there is a receipt for another £200 bequest among the Dufour papers.⁴ Some of the French churches, too, evidently gave money from time to time as there is reference to a £3 donation among the records of the *Église de l'Artillerie* in Spitalfields,⁵ and the church known as "La Patente" (or "La Bassete") is also listed among the contributors.⁶ In addition, some of the bread for the soup kitchen was baked in the French hospital bakery, although this was not donated entirely free-of-charge.⁷ It would seem, however, that by September 1741 the charity was in some financial difficulty, possibly due to extra demands placed on it during and after the harsh winter of 1739/40, and thereafter it had to dispense with the purchase of meat.⁸

As regards practical organization, it seems likely that the food prepared at the soup kitchen was not eaten there but was taken away by the recipients for consumption at home, much as they would go out to fetch food from one of the multiplicity of cheap cookshops.⁹ An inventory dating from 1739 notes the existence of "a great cauldron holding 18 bucketsful", scales and large weights, and two double-handled knives for cutting up bread, but makes no mention of eating utensils or trestles. It also records that the premises contained a bedroom for the Steward, a meeting-room for the Directors, a kitchen and a "parlour". There is no reference to a dining-hall.¹⁰

The document studied for the present research is the case-book of "La Soupe" for the period 1739-1741. Being the only case-book to survive, there is no way of knowing if it is representative but, as mentioned above, it is reasonable to suppose that the level of assistance was probably higher than usual in these years. The book lists over 540 cases and, of these, 120 concern assistance to widows. Ages are

⁴ Ms 120, entry for 17 May 1738; Ms 121 entry for 27 Jan 1742; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.45

⁵ HSQ, vol.XLII p.xii

⁶ That is, "La Patente" in Spitalfields. (There was another church of this name in Soho.) [Robin D. Gwynn "The Distribution ..." pp.514-515 and 534-537]

⁷ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* pp.71, 98, 100; C.F.A. Marmoy "La Soupe ..." p.144

⁸ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.96

⁹ Peter Earle *A City Full ...* pp.171 and 240; Anne Laurence *Women in England ...* pp.149-150. As Earle notes, few poorer people, in their meagre lodgings, can have had the space or equipment to do much cooking for themselves.

¹⁰ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.99

given for all but eight of the widows and it interesting that the pattern of relief differs quite markedly from that given through the other sources discussed so far. It will be recalled that widows receiving assistance from the French Church of London, the Royal bounty funds and the French Protestant hospital were overwhelmingly from the oldest age-group, with only small numbers of young and middle-aged widows figuring in the records. In the case of the soup kitchen, however, elderly widows formed slightly less than half of those receiving help, while young widows represented as much as 25 percent and middle-aged widows made up the remaining 26 percent.

This distribution of food charity highlights the fact that there must have been many younger widows in need during the 1730s and 1740s, but that there was a marked reluctance to grant them financial assistance. Being younger and (for the most part) able-bodied, it was presumably felt they should be encouraged to find work and not come to rely on monetary hand-outs, and there was doubtless also a fear that money would be misspent. Indeed, Maitland claims that the *Maison de charité* had initially tried giving money but that this had been “wickedly dispos’d of ... in Brandy, Tobacco &c.” by many recipients, and hence the switch was made to food rations.¹¹ While this assertion has been disputed, it does illustrate a contemporary view that monetary assistance to some sectors of the community could be ineffective.

Of the widows in the youngest age-group (those aged 45 years and under), all but two in the study had children, with nearly half of them having three or more offspring still at home. Marie Goubert, with five children in her care including a small baby, initially received as many as six portions of food a week but was subsequently cut back to four.¹² The rest all received two, three, or four allocations, in roughly equal proportions - a ‘portion’ at this time consisting of eight ounces of dry bread, four ounces of bread in the soup, and half a pound of meat.¹³

¹¹ Quoted in C.F.A. Marmoy “La Soupe ...” p.134

¹² HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.256

¹³ HSQ, vol.LV p.v

Surprisingly, nearly half of the 46-59 year-olds also had pre-teenage children in their care, while another two or three apparently had older offspring still at home. This group, however, received noticeably less assistance, with most widows being granted only two portions of food a week. Of the five widows receiving four portions, two appear to have had physically unfit 17 year-olds living with them and one had a mentally ill 20 year-old (as well as another younger child).¹⁴ Another widow, who had her daughter and a small grandchild living with her, received three portions a week and it was noted that she also had a “Card de pain” from the Soho soup kitchen. This same widow appears to have had her allocation increased to four portions during the harsh winter of 1739, but it is not clear whether the daughter and grandchild were with her at that time.¹⁵ It seems, however, that rations were more often cut than increased: several widows had their allocations cut completely (including Marie Savoye, who had been found “Soulle Comme Une Bette Ce 16 Decemb^r 1740”)¹⁶ and others were reduced by either one or two portions a week. Among the latter was Madelaine Mollé who was granted “3 portions p^r May” but then reduced to two: she was also one of the widows who had her pension from the French Church of London cut back over the summer months, which suggests she may have found seasonal employment that lessened her need for assistance.¹⁷ One other interesting case is Anne Mollé, who was granted twice-weekly food rations for a few weeks when she broke her arm in 1741:¹⁸ this appears to be the only case where short-term assistance was given in this age-group.

As one would expect, very few of the older widows had children in their care, and such offspring as were still at home were often incapacitated in some way. Madelaine Prevost, for instance, is noted as having “une fille de 19 Ans Malade” and Jeanne Boudard also had “une fille Incommodée”, of unknown age.¹⁹ By far the greatest number of these widows received only two portions of food a week, and there were fewer adjustments to the number of rations than in the other two age-groups which perhaps suggests that their circumstances were less liable to

¹⁴ HSQ, vol.LV: Catherine Bachard, entry no.60; Marie-Anne Mallendain, entry no.97; Anne Sortenboc, entry no.416

¹⁵ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.89

¹⁶ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.22

¹⁷ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.374; Ms 83, f.271

¹⁸ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.467

¹⁹ HSQ, vol.LV, entries no.480 and no.199

fluctuation. Of those who did undergo adjustments, one was cut back when it was discovered she had “point denfant a Sa Charge”, and another was reduced from four portions to three and then had her rations stopped completely when she was granted external assistance by the French hospital.²⁰ As with the middle-aged widows, only one received short-term relief, although there are no details to explain the circumstances: she is simply recorded as being granted two portions a week during the spring of 1741 and then had the assistance stopped completely in May.²¹ Three older widows appear to have received four portions a week throughout the entire period, but there is no indication as to why their needs were seen to be greater than those of others.

In considering the value of this assistance to the widows concerned, it is obviously necessary to situate it in the context of what were normal levels of food consumption at the time, and to have some idea of the cost involved. For the working classes, it is generally accepted that bread was a staple part of the diet, and it has been calculated that, overall, Londoners consumed as much as eight pounds of bread per person per week.²² Indeed, in some of the poorest families, as much as half the total income may have been spent on the purchase of bread, perhaps supplemented only by cheese, beer and a little tea (which was becoming increasingly popular), and occasionally a bit of meat or fish if such could be had cheaply²³ - although it does seem that the Huguenot diet may have contained rather more vegetables than that of their English counterparts, because the refugees' consumption of “cabbage and roots” was commented upon by contemporary observers. Similarly, they are credited with the introduction of oxtail soup to England, which they made from bullocks' tails salvaged from offcuts of hide discarded by the fellmongers.²⁴ Nevertheless, despite such ingenuity, one can assume that the rations distributed at this time by the Spitalfields *Maison de charité*, including as they did both meat and vegetables in the soup, would have been a valuable and nourishing addition to the diet of the recipients.

²⁰ HSQ, vol.LV, entries no.388 and no.14

²¹ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.81

²² George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.89

²³ G.E. Mingay *Georgian London* p.137; Richard B. Schwartz *Daily Life ...* p.97

²⁴ Robin D. Gwynn *Huguenot Heritage ...* p.114

As regards the overall level of assistance, for 20 per cent of the widows frequenting the soup kitchen, their food rations were the only help they received (as far as can be ascertained) at any point during the 16-year period 1735-1750. A sizeable group (35 per cent) received assistance from one other source, with the Bounty funds accounting for nearly half of these - although it should be noted that in many cases the assistance was received *subsequent* to the relief from the soup kitchen, and not simultaneously. In another 30 cases (a quarter of the total), widows gained help from three different sources, and a small percentage (nearly all from the oldest age-group) were assisted by at least four.

Chapter 7: The *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*

Before looking at assistance provided through the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*, it is necessary to situate the organization in some sort of context, but this is difficult because, although founded at about the same time as a number of Huguenot friendly societies (and, indeed, often included among them in discussions of the topic), it appears to somewhat differ from them in character. A further difficulty is that the origin and nature of friendly societies are themselves matters of debate.

To begin with the latter problem first: some historians suggest that friendly societies had their beginnings in the guilds of earlier centuries. Others, however, see them more as a working class development of the early industrial, or immediately pre-industrial, era.¹ There is also confusion as to whether or not friendly societies and 'box clubs' are the same thing. In the main, historians write as if there is no difference between them,² yet one historian at least has implied that box clubs were more informal and had no legal standing.³ All of this leads to uncertainty about when the first friendly society can be said to have come into being. Several authors have claimed that it was the Huguenots who introduced the notion to Britain,⁴ yet there was already a Society of the Natives of Herefordshire in the middle of the seventeenth century, which may or may not have been a friendly society, and, in Scotland, the United General Sea Box of Barrowstounness and the Sea Box Society of St Andrews had existed since 1634 and 1643 respectively.⁵ The whole question would therefore seem to need further research and clarification.

¹ Martin Daunton (ed.) *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare ...* p.12

² See, for example, Joanna Innes "The Mixed Economy ..." p.144; P.H.J.H. Gosden *Self-help: Voluntary Associations in the 19th Century* (London: Batsford, 1973) pp.4-5

³ C.R. Dobson *Masters and Journeymen: a Prehistory of Industrial Relations 1717-1800* (London: Croom Helm, 1980) p.45

⁴ William C. Waller "Early Huguenot ..." pp. 201 and 203; *The Quiet Conquest: the Huguenots 1685 to 1985*, compiled by Tessa Murdoch (London: Alec Jolly, 1985) p.77; Robin D. Gwynn *Huguenot Heritage ...* p.17

⁵ Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.43; P.H.J.H. Gosden *Self-help ...* p.6; Joanna Innes "The 'Mixed Economy' ..." p.172, n.25

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Huguenot community in London was enthusiastic in its founding of mutual benefit societies. Among the earliest to appear was the Society of Parisians in 1687, and before long it was followed by the Norman Society (1703), the Society of Lintot (1708), the geographically non-specific "Friendly Society" (1720), and the Society of the Provinces of 'Poitou, Xaintonge, et Pays d'Aunix' (1722) - with still more societies being founded later in the century. There was also a rather mysterious society by the name of "The Bachelors", founded in 1697, but little is known about its history and purpose.⁶

In addition to these, there was another group that appear to have been something of a cross between a philanthropic society and a mutual benefit society - amongst them, the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois* (founded in 1714 but absorbing an earlier friendly society founded in 1696 for refugees from Niort).⁷ These 'hybrid' organizations do not appear to have had any direct equivalent outside the Huguenot community at that time, but a modern parallel would perhaps be some of the iwi bodies in New Zealand. No-one, to date, has done a detailed analysis of their structure and operation, but it would seem they were 'philanthropic' in that those who contributed did so mainly for the benefit of others, while being 'mutual' in the sense that the funds circulated largely within a specific community. Certain advantages can readily be identified in such a method of organization: it permitted wealthier people to support their compatriots in a practical way without face-to-face charity; it increased the pool of money available to the needy; and it promoted group cohesion across different social levels. On the other hand, it may also have served to emphasize class distinctions (the poor once again being differentiated from, and beholden to, the more wealthy), and to lessen working-class independence by taking away the self-help character of friendly societies proper.

All these various societies, however, of whatever nature, had certain aspects in common. For one, there was doubtless the sense of community they fostered among the dislocated refugees - and it must be remembered that, at this time, France was still more a collection of 'pays' than a nation. Allied to this may have

⁶ William C. Waller "Early Huguenot ..." p.204; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.90; C.F.A. Marmoy "L'Entraide ..." pp.600-602.

⁷ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.90; C.F.A. Marmoy "L'Entraide ..." pp.597-598. Two others were the Society of Nîmes (founded as early as 1683), and the Society of St Onge[sic] and the Angoumois (1701). [C.F.A. Marmoy "L'Entraide ..." pp.592, 597]

been a certain power-play, as there is evidence that ‘establishment’ bodies such as the French Church of London were felt to be favouring certain groups. Certainly this was the opinion of one Pierre Bonnel who, having been denied assistance by the Deacons of that church, retorted that “Sil Estoit Gascon il aurait receu quelque Chose”.⁸ Founding regional societies may thus have been perceived as a way of redressing the balance. However, the acknowledged reason for their creation was to increase financial security in an era when there were no social welfare payments for workers who fell ill or were too old to continue their employment, nor for families whose breadwinner had died. As the rules of the *Société des Provinces du Poitou, Xaintonge et Pays d’Aunix* noted:-

Le malheur etant commun a tous les Hommes, et le plus heureux ne pouvant sans Illusion se promettre un bonheur assuré pendant cette vie; nous le Membres de cette Société sommes Convenus de nous Soulager en cas de Maladie, avec tous les soins et toute l’amitié Fraternelle donc[sic] nous sommes capables; Dieu veuille Benir nos desseins et les faire reussir a sa Gloire, Amen.⁹

Membership was subject to certain restrictions. As one would expect from their names, the regionally-based societies generally limited membership to people from a particular province or area and, for the friendly societies, there was an entrance fee varying from 2s 6d to as much as £1, depending on the organization. Thereafter fixed contributions were payable each month, ranging from 4d to 1s 6d. In the case of the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*, it would appear funds were also raised by placing collection boxes in the different churches (the “Petite Savoie”, “La Patente” in Spitalfields, the *Église des Grecs*, and the Browns Lane church being specifically mentioned), and from legacies which were invested at interest.¹⁰

Sometimes there were age restrictions on admittance: the Friendly Society, for instance, stipulated that new members should be over twenty-one years but under thirty-five, while the *Société de Lintot* set the lower limit at eighteen and the upper at twenty-one - although older people could be accepted if they were recently-arrived refugees. In the case of the *Société des Provinces du Poitou, Xaintonge,*

⁸ Ms 81, f.’318’

⁹ C.F.A. Marmoy “L’Entraide ...” p.603

¹⁰ Ms H/M1/2, f.’77’; Ms H/M1/3, receipts listed at the end of the ‘Quartier occidental’ for the year 1748

et Pays d'Aunis, people in dangerous occupations were excluded from membership - for example, anyone who was an "Oreur, Vitrier, Plombier, Lapidaire" - and members had to be earning at least 10s a week. All societies required their adherents to be respectable citizens, and often imposed bans on gambling and swearing and insisted on regular participation in communion. However, in an age when water was not particularly clean and alcohol was part of the everyday diet, penalties for liquor-consumption were notably absent. Indeed, most meetings took place in taverns, and the members of the Norman Society, for one, paid 4d at every fortnightly meeting specifically to cover the cost of beer and tobacco.¹¹ In addition to these regular meetings, many societies held special church services two or three times a year - the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*, until 1738, holding a service at St Martin Orgars on the first Wednesday of June, and another at the "Petite Savoie" on the first Thursday in December, with a special sermon at each. (After 1738, their services were more irregular.¹²)

As regards benefits, the most common, at least among the friendly societies, was a regular weekly allowance during periods of illness or incapacity. In many of the societies this was not available during the first year of membership, although applicants to the Norman society could elect to pay a £2 entrance fee, instead of the usual £1, and have this restriction waived. Sick pay normally amounted to about 7s or 8s a week, although this was halved if the illness was prolonged, and payments might be similarly reduced, or suspended completely, if the society's funds dropped below a certain level. With the *Société de Lintot*, payments seem to have been limited to 2s 6d a week, but this same amount was also paid to elderly members who were no longer able to work. Societies also contributed to funeral costs, with payments ranging from £2 to £5.¹³

In the case of the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*, assistance was largely in the form of small pensions, although occasional grants were paid as well, and there were also a small number of apprenticeships - £10, for example, being paid to

¹¹ William C. Waller "Early Huguenot ..." pp.204-226; C.F.A. Marmoy "L'Entraide ..." pp.600-602. The Society of Poitou and the Loudunois held its meetings in a number of different taverns, including the White Hart in Bishopsgate. [Ms H/M1/2, f.'75'; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.92]

¹² C.F.A. Marmoy "L'Entraide ..." p.598; Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* pp.92-93

¹³ William C. Waller "Early Huguenot ..." pp.204-226

Anne Duchesne for the apprenticeship of Catherine, daughter of the late Jacques Texier, and another £5 to M. Ingrand for the apprenticeship of Marie, daughter of Marguerite Sauzé.¹⁴ As regards the pensions, it is evident that this was one society, at least, that gave pensions to women as well as men and, indeed, women also featured among the contributors - the records for the period 1735-1750 showing that these included some half a dozen widows contributing amounts varying from 4s to 10s a year (most notably, two widows from a well-known family of weavers by the name of Ogier). It was specifically noted, however, that widows re-marrying to non-Poitevins would be barred from assistance, as would daughters marrying non-French.¹⁵ During the years investigated for the present research, just under one hundred widows benefitted from pensions from the society, although information about them is scant. In many cases, the entry is limited to the designation 'veuve' plus a surname and, unless the surname is unusual, further identification has been impossible. Indeed, even where slightly more information has been given, it has not always been possible to relate these widows to others on the data-base, and for only half the cases has it been possible to fill in any background details at all.

Administratively, the Society divided the London area into two zones, the demarcation line passing north to south along the "Canal appelé Fleet Ditch",¹⁶ and each zone was further divided into four or five districts. Of the approximately one hundred widows receiving pensions, a third lived in the western zone and two-thirds in the east. It is remarkable that very few, if any, changed zone during the period examined,¹⁷ although several moved from district to district within their zone. In both areas of the city, the most common pension rates were 2s or 2s 6d a month, although a reasonably large group in the east received only 1s 6d. During

¹⁴ Ms H/M1/3, payments listed at the end of the *Quartier occidental* for the year 1748; Ms H/M1/2, ff.'75' and '78'

¹⁵ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.91

¹⁶ C.F.A Marmoy "L'Entraide ..." p.598

¹⁷ The few cases where a zone-change *may* have happened involve entries where the identity is uncertain. For example, 'La veuve Perrott' received 2s a month pension in 1740 when she was resident in District 2 of the Eastern zone. The following year, a 'Mme Perrott' was given 2s a month for three months but is recorded as living in District 2 of the Western zone. [H/M1/3] As the entries involve consecutive years and the monthly pension is the same, and as these are the only two entries for the name 'Perrott', it seems likely they involved the same woman - although the church registers show there may have been other women of the same name alive at the time.

the summer months, allowances were sometimes stopped completely for all pensioners, although the years 1736 to 1744 were an exception and most payments continued throughout this period without a break.¹⁸ The highest pension granted was the 5s 4d a month given to Widow Loyaut in the Western zone, but several widows in the east received as little as 1s a month. Eastern zone widows, on the other hand, were more likely to receive occasional grants. Bearing in mind that the eastern part of the London area tended to be poorer than the west, the above suggests not only that there were more poorer widows receiving assistance than bourgeois ones (which is as one would expect), but that, again, the better-off received higher pensions. The higher level of *occasional* assistance to eastern zone widows probably reflects their minimal capacity to absorb unexpected economic setbacks.

Given the lack of information on the widows in these records, it is difficult to construct any sort of profile for them. Of those who have been identified with a reasonable degree of confidence, less than 40 can be assigned even an approximate age. From this sample, however, it would seem likely that elderly widows again predominated, with the over-60 age-group outnumbering any other in thirteen of the sixteen years covered.¹⁹

As regards other assistance, it is likely that, for over half the widows, the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois* was their only source of relief, although they include a large number of women for whom no background information could be found.²⁰ Furthermore, of those receiving help from two sources (the next largest group), the other source was, in all cases except five, the Royal bounty funds. A salient feature of this group, however, is that, where church affiliation can be established, they frequented churches *other* than the French Church of London in Threadneedle Street. If this is also true of the first group, it may mean that in fact some of them

¹⁸ Gray suggests payments were continuous only in years of harsh weather, but the period indicated above extends well before and after the the difficult climatic conditions of 1739 and 1740. [Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.95]

¹⁹ It should be noted that, where an approximate age has been assigned (usually gauged from children's birth-dates), it has probably been under-estimated rather than over-estimated, so that the above results are conservative.

²⁰ Excluded from this calculation are certain widows who bear the same surname as other widows on the data-base but who cannot be identified with certainty. Their number is, however, very few.

were receiving help from these other churches, whose records have not been examined in the present research. Approximately one in nine widows received help from three sources - the most common combination being the Poitou Society, the French Church of London and the Royal bounty funds. Only four widows were assisted from more than three sources.

Chapter 8: Case studies

It will by now be evident that, although some widows received help from only one of the bodies discussed, a large number of women were not only aware that other sources existed but obtained relief from several over a period of time - sometimes, indeed, even simultaneously. It is therefore proposed to take a selection of five widows and examine the overall level of relief they received, and the forms it took. Included amongst these women are three French-born, one born in England to immigrant parents, and one Englishwoman married to a Huguenot. Their ages when first assisted range from around 35 to 65 years, and all except one had produced families of at least five children.¹ Three of them are working-class and two are from the bourgeoisie.

Case 1: Susanne Deltour. Born Susanne Coleman, this particular widow was probably English or part English, but she married a French Protestant, Guillain Deltour, who was a member of the French Church of London, and was therefore eligible for relief from Huguenot sources. The two had several children over the years, five being baptised at the Threadneedle Street church between 1731 and 1737.² A sixth child was due in May 1738 and the Deacon for the 'Nouveau Hopital' district was to visit and offer financial assistance to help meet the expenses associated with the birth.³ However, there is no record of any payment and nor is there evidence of a baptism.

By 1739, she was in her mid-thirties, widowed and living in George Street near the Black Swan. She had been granted an allocation of two portions of food a week by the Spitalfields soup kitchen but, having two children still at home, this may have been increased to three. (The entry is somewhat ambiguous.) She does not seem to have been receiving any other assistance at the time but later, in March 1741, Frederick Bernard, Deacon for the 'Hopital' district, was instructed to "faire faire un Bandage" for her daughter Susanne (then aged five and a half), and then the

¹ The total family size of the fifth widow is not known, although she had at least one daughter.

² HSQ, vol.XXIII

³ Ms 58, entry for 28 May 1738; Ms 120, list of districts for May 1738. The entry in Ms 58 refers to 'Guillaume' Deltour, but a similar entry on 27 March 1737 corresponds with a birth to Guillain and Susanne in HSQ, vol.XXIII

next month she began receiving a pension of 2s 6d every four weeks from the church.⁴ Perhaps as a result of this, the soup kitchen decided she no longer needed food rations and her allocation was stopped in June of the same year.

In August 1742 the church again intervened to help by providing clothing for her son, Jean, and the premium was paid for him to be apprenticed to a fisherman by the name of Brown, the whole coming to a total of £2 5s 4d.⁵ Perhaps surprisingly, given that she now had one less mouth to feed, she still continued to receive the same pension of 2s 6d a month. However, this seems to have been stopped in April 1744,⁶ at about the same time as a Susanne Deltour, probably the same person, was given a 6s grant from the Royal bounty money, at the *Bureau de Londres et Spittlefields*.⁷ No other assistance was forthcoming until August, when the Deacons gave her 1s, and then pension payments resumed in September, at the same rate as before.⁸ She was still receiving the pension in January 1747 but, as regular payments are not recorded in Ms 113, there is no way of knowing if they continued through to the end of the period under examination. She did, however, receive clothing for her daughter in March 1747, and a grant of 5s *par extraordinaire* in August 1750.⁹

Although this particular widow may have been English, she is nevertheless typical in many respects of the other younger widows in the study. For instance, help was not necessarily continuous, she seldom received assistance from more than one source at a time, and the financial payments she received were minimal: certainly she received a pension, and over a period of years, but at little more than 7d a week it was patently not intended to support her. Rather, the most significant assistance was the relief in kind, such as food, clothing for her children, and the apprenticeship for her son.

Case 2: Esther Né. Born in London around 1690, Esther was the daughter of refugee parents named Jean and Elizabeth Martinel. In April 1719 she married

⁴ Ms 58, entry for 22 March 1741; Ms 120, list of districts for March 1741; Ms 112, entries for 26 April, 24 May, etc, 1741

⁵ Ms 58, entry for 11 Aug 1742; Ms 121, entry for 15 Aug 1742

⁶ Ms 112, entries for 22 April and 29 April 1744

⁷ B.Ms 56/2 ('Common people'), f.8

⁸ Ms 112, entries for 22 Aug 1744, and 19 Sept-12 Dec 1744

⁹ Ms 59, entry for 8 March 1747; Ms 113, entry for 15 Aug 1750

Jacques Né, of Dieppe, at the Threadneedle Street church, and they had at least five children - the second child, Jacques, being apprenticed at the church's expense in 1735.¹⁰ Her husband appears to have died in April 1738, and at this point Esther was granted a pension of 1s a week from the church¹¹ - a pension which was to continue unchanged for at least the next six years and probably beyond.

In September and October of the same year, the children fell ill and she was given extra assistance - the Deacon of the 'Nouveau Hopital' district visiting her around 15 October to check on progress. By December they had obviously recovered because it was noted that, if she did not send them to school regularly, her pension would be stopped.¹² The same injunction was evidently repeated in January and February: on each occasion the entry is annotated "Voyez le Cas fo.330".¹³

In April 1739, her daughter Catherine, now aged thirteen, was put into apprenticeship with Thomas Philpot, a weaver in Angel Alley - the Deacons paying the premium of £1 14s 10d but, as in the case of her older brother, not providing clothing.¹⁴ By the end of that year she and her remaining child, Louis, were living in Phoenix Street, Spitalfields, in a court beside the 'Magpie' tavern, and receiving two portions of food a week from the soup kitchen. She was now aged 48.¹⁵

It is not known how long the food allocation continued but the institution's records note that at some point she moved to accommodation near the 'Golden Key' in Cock Lane, Shoreditch, and then later went to live 'chez Naylor' in Corbet's Court, a narrow lane immediately adjacent to the soup kitchen.¹⁶ At the latter address it is possible she took over the room or rooms occupied by another Huguenot woman,

¹⁰ HSQ, vol.XXIII; Ms 110, entry for 18 May 1735. There is no mention of clothing being provided.

¹¹ Ms 83, f.52

¹² Ms 83, f.52; Ms 111, entry for 24 Sept 1738; Ms 58, entry for 15 Oct 1738; Ms 111, entry for 18 Oct 1738; Ms 83, f.330

¹³ Ms 111, entries for 24 Jan and 21 Feb 1739

¹⁴ Ms 58, entry for 11 April 1739; Ms 83, f.330

¹⁵ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.299

¹⁶ Sources from the period do not often give street addresses like this, so little research has been done on localised migration. Such studies as exist, however, indicate that it was not unusual for people to move several times, and over relatively short distances, as family circumstances changed. [Jeremy Boulton "Neighbourhood Migration in Early Modern London" in Peter Clark and David Souden *Migration and Society ...* pp.107-149]

Anne Bichar, who had been living there with her two children before moving to Quaker Street.¹⁷

On 6 January 1740 Jean Luc Landon, the Deacon then responsible for the Aldgate district,¹⁸ was instructed to provide a shirt and a pair of trousers for Esther's son, who had just reached his seventh birthday, and on four subsequent occasions during the year she was provided with extra financial assistance, the biggest grant being 5s paid on 27 April.¹⁹ Another grant of 1s was given the following February, but thereafter she received no assistance, other than her pension, for nearly six years.

It is not clear whether her pension continued after October 1746, because the records are not sufficiently detailed for the later period, but in December an Esther Nez was given 5s from the Royal bounty funds, and the grant was repeated in March 1747.²⁰ Six months later, Jean Sabatier, the Deacon responsible for the Bishopsgate district, was instructed to visit her and assist her as necessary, but there is no corresponding record of any expenditure in the account books.²¹

By 1749 she was evidently finding life difficult because in May the French Protestant hospital received an application for admission which described her as "fort Infirmе depuis long tems & en tres grande pauvreté & hor d'Etat de gagner sa vie".²² Her age was given as 62 years, which may have been inflated slightly.²³ An impressive list of five well-respected Huguenots (including Jean Lamy, one of the Deacons)²⁴ supported her application, and it seems likely she would have been admitted once a place became available. However, she evidently fell ill shortly afterwards because the church records show several occasional grants being paid

¹⁷ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.43

¹⁸ Apart from being a Deacon of the French Church of London, Jean Luc Landon, of Norton Folgate, was a wealthy weaver whose business was insured for over £1,000. [Natalie Rothstein "The Successful ..." pp.440, 443]

¹⁹ Ms 58, entry for 6 Jan 1740; Ms 81, f.163; Ms 111

²⁰ B.Ms 56/5, f.14; B.Ms 56/5/2, f.13

²¹ Ms 59, entry for 20 Sept 1747; Ms 121, list of districts for Sept 1747

²² HSQ, vol.LIII

²³ Conversely, the age recorded in the soup kitchen records (see previous page) may have been an under-estimate.

²⁴ Ms 121, list of districts for May 1749

out between June and October, and the hospital records have a marginal note to the effect that she died.²⁵

Like Susanne Deltour, this widow received little in the way of regular financial help while younger but was given food, assistance with apprenticeships, and extra help when her children were ill. However, later in life she was able to obtain additional assistance from the Royal bounty funds and, as her health failed, several occasional grants from the church, and there was also the prospect of admission to hospital had she not died.

Case 3: Esther Berland. Born Esther George, in Lusignan in the 1690s, it is not known when she came to England, nor when and where she married her husband Jacques Berland, but they had at least five children between 1715 and 1729 who were all baptised at the Threadneedle Street church where she and her husband were members.²⁶ Jacques Berland evidently died in the few years following the last child's birth because, by 1735, Esther was widowed and was receiving a pension of 2s 6d every four weeks from the Deacons of the church.²⁷ This was supplemented by occasional grants "par extraordinaire"²⁸ and, in March 1738, by 5s from the legacy of Monsieur Charles Joye.²⁹

By 1739 she was living in Monmouth Street "proche de Mr Dechalas" and had "1 enfant ... age de 11 Ans" (probably Elizabeth, the youngest) who was attending school. Despite the fact that the address appears to be in Covent Garden, she was collecting two portions of food each week from the Spitalfields soup kitchen³⁰ and was still receiving her pension which, in January of that year, had been raised from 2s 6d to 4s.³¹ She subsequently moved to Black Eagle Street, which was much closer to "La Soupe", and her food rations seem to have continued at least until November 1740.

²⁵ Ms 81, f.163; Ms 113, entries for 28 June, 9 Aug, 6 Sept, 3 Oct 1749

²⁶ HSQ, vol.XXIII. Baptisms on 25 Dec 1715; 11 Jan 1719; 20 Oct 1723; 21 Nov 1725; 13 Apr 1729. For most of the children, dates of birth are given as well.

²⁷ Ms 110, entries for 12 Jan and 9 Feb 1735 and so on. The entries are all in the column for 'membres'.

²⁸ See, for example, Ms 110, entries for 22 June and 17 Sept 1735

²⁹ Ms 111, entry for 5 March 1738

³⁰ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.205

³¹ Ms 111, entry for 7 Jan 1739

Towards the end of 1741 she may have suffered a bout of ill health because, in addition to her pension, she received four occasional grants of 2s 6d each³² and in January of the following year she applied to enter the French hospital, being infirm, “ayant la viue foible”, and not in a fit state to earn her living.³³ The application further records that she had been born in Poitou and was now 50 years of age. However, a note in the margin reads: “M^r Marc S’etant informé de la Susd^{te}. on luy en a donné un fort mauvais caractere & doit en parler a M^e Marin” (Mme Marin being the Hospital Steward between 1727 and 1742).³⁴ It would appear the decision was unfavourable because there is no record of her being accepted for entry and she continued to receive her pension from the church.

Another two years elapsed, during which time she continued to receive 4s regularly every four weeks, plus occasional extra grants at times of illness,³⁵ and then, in 1744, two new sources of assistance were tapped. The records of the *Société de Poitou* show that “La veuve Berland” was given 18s in pension for the year,³⁶ and the Bounty records list an Esther Berland being granted 10s at the *Bureau de Londres et Spittlefields* in April and another 10s in November.³⁷ Thus, her total income for that year would have been £4 10s 0d, not including several more occasional grants from the church. While this was an improvement on previous years, it still amounts to less than 1s 9d a week on average, and one wonders how she survived if her state of health was as poor as her hospital application had stated - although, given the absence of records for “La Soupe” beyond 1741, there is no way of knowing if she was still receiving food rations, which would have helped.

Occasional grants increased in frequency in 1745 and the early part of 1746, which suggests her health was further deteriorating, and on 17 May 1746 she again applied for admission to hospital, being by this time “presque aveugle et affligée de rhumatisme”. She was still not accepted, so in November the Deacons decided to

³² Ms 112, entries for 27 Sept, 7 Oct, 25 Oct and 16 Dec 1741

³³ HSQ, vol.LII

³⁴ Irvine Gray *Huguenot Manuscripts ...* p.7

³⁵ Ms 112, entries for 19 Jan and 10 July 1743, and possibly 4 Sept and 23 Oct 1743

³⁶ Ms H/M1/3: 1744, ‘Quartier Oriental’, ‘Troisieme Departement’

³⁷ B.Ms 56/1 (‘Common people’), f.1

put her *en pension* with a Mrs Walking at a cost of 8s a month.³⁸ There is no further information on her in the church records, but she received another grant from the Royal bounty in March 1747,³⁹ and was still receiving her Poitou society pension in 1750.⁴⁰

Once again, then, there is a pattern of minimal financial assistance until most of the children had left home although, in this case, there seems to have been little other relief either, except the food rations from the soup kitchen. Her pension did rise a little after a time and she also received increasing amounts of help from the Deacons as her health deteriorated. Extra assistance was found towards the end of the period, in the form of money from the Royal bounty and the Poitou Society, but she had failed to gain entry to the hospital, and had to rely on the church to pay for boarding arrangements when she could no longer cope.

Case 4: Marie Baschard. Marie Bertrand was born in Dieppe, probably around 1680,⁴¹ but it is not known when or where she married David Baschard. However, they had at least five children, the last of whom was born on 20 March 1725, and they all seem to have been baptised at the French Church of London.⁴² The church records do not give her husband's occupation but they do note that he had served as both Deacon and Elder so he must have been a person of some standing, and it seems highly probable that he was the same David Baschard, a mercer of Cheapside, who was declared bankrupt on 17 February 1726, owing money to Gabriel Longuet and Samuel, both weavers, of the Liberty of Tower Hamlets.⁴³

By December 1730, Marie was widowed and seeking assistance from the church. It was noted that "Elle a deux Enfants de 11 & 5 ans, a Etée trouvé pauvre, Et Assistée en passent de 21s". In comparison to the meagre pensions and grants given in the cases already discussed, this was a large amount, and it exemplifies the different level of poor relief given to the bourgeoisie and to 'pauvres honteux' -

³⁸ Ms 309, entry for 5 Nov 1746. This may in fact may be an alternative spelling of 'Warquin' since there are several references to someone of that name taking in boarders.

³⁹ B.Ms 56/5/2, f.4

⁴⁰ Ms H/M1/3: 1750, 'Quartier Oriental', 'Troisieme Departement'

⁴¹ B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.13

⁴² HSQ, vol.XXIII

⁴³ Natalie Rothstein "The Successful ..." p.445.

although in this particular case, the late husband's position in the church would also have counted in the widow's favour. Significantly, it was noted in the records that she was still living in "un Louage de £13 par an", so she had evidently not reduced her standard of living to any great degree, despite her 'poverty'.⁴⁴

For the next five or six years she seems to have managed reasonably well, receiving only one occasional grant - albeit a large one - in December 1730.⁴⁵ However, in January 1735, "ayant représenté son cas a la Compagnie [des Diacres]", she was accorded a pension of £1 11s 6d a quarter (nearly 2s 6d a week) - this in recognition of her husband's past service to the church and of the fact that she had two children still at home of whom one was "fort infirme".

The following year, still receiving her pension from the church, she was also granted £4 from the Royal bounty funds - the records noting that her children were now aged "13 et 9 ans"⁴⁶ - and in February 1738 she received a payment of 10s from the legacy of Monsieur Charles Joye.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, however, her mental health began to deteriorate and, only three months later, the Deacons found it necessary to employ a nurse-attendant, at a cost of 5s a week, to stay with her because they felt she was in danger of doing harm to herself.⁴⁸ This lasted just three weeks before they applied to have her admitted to Bedlam, which she duly entered on 4 June.⁴⁹

It is not clear how long she remained at Bedlam, but there are two entries concerning payments to cover the cost of her laundry which suggest that she was there at least until January 1739, and then, in March of that year, there is a note to the effect that she was to be put on the *billet du mois* of Jean Dargent, the Deacon

⁴⁴ Ms 83, f.161. Rudé notes that people of the lower middle class would pay £8 to £10 per annum for rent and those at the upper end £40 or more. [George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.58]

⁴⁵ She was given a guinea, on the recommendation of several Deacons, on 30 Dec 1730. [Ms 83, f.161]

⁴⁶ B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.13. The ages do not seem to correspond to any of the children baptised at the French Church of London, and no stray baptisms have been found in the records of the other French churches. The most likely candidates would therefore be David, born in September 1720, and Jacques, born in March 1725 which, if correct, illustrate the approximate nature of the ages given in many records. [HSQ, vol.XXIII]

⁴⁷ Ms 111, entry for 15 Feb 1738

⁴⁸ Ms 58, entry for 21 May 1738

⁴⁹ Ms 83, f.244. A list of the expenses incurred in connection with this admission has already been given on page 14.

responsible for the district of Southwark.⁵⁰ In July she was granted another payment from the Royal bounty funds, this time of £5, but a note in the margin indicates that she died the following year - an approximate date being provided by the church records which include an entry for 23 April reading: “Paié a Mr Dupont 20/ pour aider a la faire enterrer y estant obligé par obligation”.⁵¹ The level of pomp and ceremony at the funeral was probably in keeping with her status if, as is implied, the 20s covered only part of the cost.

Here, then, is an excellent example of how higher status, plus a husband’s service to the church, commanded higher levels of financial assistance. Certainly, at around 52 years of age, she was older, when she first started receiving relief, than the other widows considered, but her family responsibilities were not much different: like them, she had had at least five children, and the youngest were still at home. Furthermore, the other widows never attained the level of relief extended to Mme Baschard, even in their later years. On the other hand, she did not receive food rations and nor was she given assistance with apprenticeship premiums.

Case 5: Jeanne Boudard. Jeanne de Senne evidently met and married Louis Boudard before leaving France, because when their daughter Marie married at the French Church of London in 1744, it was recorded that she (like her mother) was from Praille in Poitou.⁵² It is not known when the family arrived in England, nor how many other children there were, and nor is it known when Louis Boudard died, but by 1739 Jeanne was widowed, living in Quaker Street “chez Bernard”, and receiving two portions of food a week from the soup kitchen.⁵³ She was then aged around 64.

At some point after this (no date is given), her allowance was raised to three portions, and it is noted that she and her “fille Incommodée” had moved to George Street “chez Jean Joget”. She continued to receive three portions until 4 May 1741 when her rations were stopped completely. No reason is apparent for the decision,

⁵⁰ Ms 83, f.244; Ms 120, list of districts for March 1739. The Deacon’s *billet du mois* listed the people to whom he gave pension payments.

⁵¹ B.Ms 54 (Bourgeoisie), f.13; Ms 83, f.244

⁵² HSQ, vol.XXIII. Widow Boudard is noted as being from “la paroisse de Praille en Poitou” in the records of “La Providence” [HSQ, vol.LII]

⁵³ HSQ, vol.LV, entry no.199

but only four weeks later her allocation resumed - this time reduced to two portions a week.

In the meantime, on 29 October 1740, she had been given an occasional grant of 5s by the French Church of London and was again assisted in late November, December, and mid-March.⁵⁴ Two further grants followed in November 1741 and January 1742 and then, two months later, she was granted a pension of 4s every four weeks which was soon raised to 6s. This was quite low for a widow subsequently listed among the bourgeoisie in the Royal bounty records, but it was raised again, to 8s, in July of the same year, “en consideration qu’elle a une fille malade ... depuis long tems”, and she was also given several occasional grants over the summer. Rather oddly, an entry for 17 November again noted that her pension was to be raised from 6s to 8s a month, “pour paier le fraix que sa fille fera en entrant a l’hospital de St Thomas”.⁵⁵

In 1742 she was given £1 10s 0d in pension by the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*,⁵⁶ but her church pension was reduced to 6s in March, “sa fille etant a la Providence”,⁵⁷ so while she gained from one source she lost from another. This reduction lasted only until November, however, when it was decided that she should be restored to her former pension of 8s a month “etant fort agee & infirme”.⁵⁸

In February 1744, her daughter, Marie, married Pierre Danjon, son of Jacques Danjon of Ganaude and Marie Laval, his wife, at the French Church of London.⁵⁹ Only a week after the wedding, the widow again had her church pension reduced, this time specifically for the duration of the summer.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the pension from the Poitou Society continued throughout the year at the rate of about 7d a week.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Ms 81, f.'248'; Ms 111, entries for 26 and 29 Nov and 21 Dec 1740

⁵⁵ Ms 81, f.'248'

⁵⁶ Ms H/M1/3: 1743, 'Quartier Oriental', 'Troisieme Departement'

⁵⁷ There is, however, no corresponding entry in HSQ, vol.LII.

⁵⁸ Ms 81, f.'248'

⁵⁹ HSQ, vol.XXIII. It is not known whether this is the same daughter who had been hospitalised at St Thomas's and at "La Providence".

⁶⁰ Ms 81, f.'248'; Ms 112, entry for 7 March 1744

⁶¹ Ms H/M1/3: 1744, 'Quartier Oriental', 'Troisieme Departement'

Her church pension having been restored by the Deacons to a level of 8s a month in November 1744,⁶² Jeanne seems to have managed on this source alone, plus whatever she might have been earning, until the following summer when, on 30 July 1745, she was given £2 10s 0d from the Royal bounty funds.⁶³ She does not seem to have received any further assistance from the Poitou Society, but her church pension continued at 8s a month at least until May 1746 when she applied for admission to the French Protestant hospital.

By this time, the records of “La Providence” show her aged 69 years and now living in Pearl Street, Spitalfields, “chez P^{re} Daugeau”. She is described as an “objet fort pressé” and recommended by three respected members of the community, including one of the Ogier family. It is noted that she is “fort infirme et incapable de gagner sa vie”, which suggests she had formerly been supporting herself, at least partially, by some sort of employment.⁶⁴

In February of the following year she was granted £3 a year from the Royal bounty funds,⁶⁵ and four months later was put on external assistance from the hospital, possibly with a view to admitting her at a later date. However, she received only two monthly payments before her name disappears from the records. An annotation on the Bounty records indicates she had died, and the Deacons’ case-book situates the event in August.⁶⁶

Although listed among the bourgeoisie in the Bounty records, it would appear that Widow Boudard probably worked for her living and that she was lower- rather than upper-middle-class. Certainly, she is always described as living “chez” someone else, and in the poorer part of town, which suggests she was not particularly well-to-do. If this is so, it would accord with the level of assistance given to her which, while higher than that given to the working class widows discussed earlier, is not as generous as that provided to Mme Baschard. She also received food rations, which Mme Baschard did not.

⁶² Ms 112, entry for 14 Nov 1744

⁶³ B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.21

⁶⁴ HSQ, vol.LII

⁶⁵ B.Ms 57 (Bourgeoisie), f.21

⁶⁶ Ms 81, f.’248’

Chapter 9: “Old ladies of Threadneedle Street”? - some conclusions about poor relief to Huguenot widows in the period 1735-1750

Pour bien savoir les choses, il en faut savoir le détail, mais pource qu'il est presque infiny, nos Connoissances sont toûjours superficielles et Imparfaites.

[From Gregory King *Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England* (1696)]

Women in early eighteenth-century England had seven main ways of subsisting: by their own employment; by their husband's employment or fortune; by their relatives or friends; by their own financial means; by taking in lodgers or foster children; by help from the parish; or by a pension from the Crown - the latter mostly limited to widows of army officers and the like. Women often relied on more than one of these means and, for lower class women, working for money whenever possible - sometimes at several different jobs - was usually imperative to survival.¹ In this socio-economic group, even families needed more than one income in order to achieve financial viability.

Evidence suggests that employment opportunities for women had been narrowing in range since the seventeenth century, and had become more confined to housewifery/domestic service, the food-retailing sector, and clothing- and textile-related work.² In addition, the status of women's work was declining. Female apprenticeship was becoming less and less common except for pauper apprenticeships in poorly-paid occupations,³ and many guilds and livery companies limited female participation to ancillary and less-skilled work.⁴ By the third quarter

¹ Peter Earle “The Female Labour Market ...” pp.336-338; Olwen Hufton “Women Without Men: Widows and Spinsters in Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century” in *Journal of Family History* vol.9, no.4 (1984) pp.363-364; L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* pp.48-49

² Peter Earle *A City Full ...* pp.112-113; L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* pp.14-22

³ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos “Women Apprentices in the Trades and Crafts of Early Modern Bristol” *Continuity and Change* vol.6, no.2 (1991) pp.227-252; L.D. Schwarz *London in the Age ...* pp.20-21

⁴ The Weavers' Company, for example, allowed women and children to work on warping and quilling, but not on the looms. [Alfred Plummer *The Weavers' Company ...* pp.61-62]

of the eighteenth century, women were being excluded from artisan organizations which had previously accepted them,⁵ and even midwifery was being taken over by medical men trained in obstetrics.⁶ Furthermore the demand for female labour was often seasonal and erratic, and their work was poorly paid.⁷ It has been suggested that this “economic half-status” led to high suicide and mortality rates and, in London, increased prostitution.⁸

Middle-class women, too, saw their economic place redefined. Some historians have linked this to the influence of puritanism, with its emphasis on patriarchy and female domesticity although, given that the phenomenon has also been noted in overwhelmingly-Catholic France, such a link seems tenuous.⁹ Whatever the cause, women became increasingly marginalised from business and productive enterprise during the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, and found themselves expected instead to “sit above in the parlour, receive visits, drink Tea, and entertain [their] neighbours, or take a coach and go abroad”.¹⁰ They became consumers rather than producers - a process no doubt aided by (and probably contributing to) the burgeoning of retail shops during the course of the century.¹¹ These changes, however, placed many middle-class women in a vulnerable position when their husbands died because, without any business skills, a widow could quickly lose whatever estate had been left her.¹²

⁵ John Rule “Against Innovation? Custom and Resistance in the Workplace, 1700-1850” in Tim Harris (ed.) *Popular Culture ...* p.170

⁶ Dorothy and Roy Porter *Patient's Progress ...* p.174

⁷ Their remuneration was usually only one-third to one-half of the wage paid to men. [Lawrence Stone *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* rev.ed. (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979) p.418; Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.121]

⁸ Eric Richards “Women in the British Economy since about 1700: an Interpretation” in *History* vol.59 (1974) p.341

⁹ N.Z. Davis *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (London: Duckworth, 1975) p.126

¹⁰ Daniel Defoe *The Complete English Tradesman* (London, 1726) p.355, quoted in Margaret George “From ‘Goodwife’ to ‘Mistress’: the Transformation of the Female in Bourgeois Culture” in *Science and Society* vol.37 (1973) p.158. See also B.A. Holderness “Widows in pre-industrial society ...” p.425

¹¹ See Hoh-Cheung and Lorna H. Mui *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-century England* (London: Routledge, 1989). Prior to this, people had largely purchased goods direct from producers.

¹² Peter Earle *The Making ...* p.161

By the eighteenth century the average age at first marriage was around the mid-twenties for women and slightly older for men, but marriages were often of short duration owing to the early death of one of the partners. Among the poor, marriages frequently lasted less than twenty years, and it was by no means unusual for a woman to be widowed before her thirtieth birthday.¹³ This combined with the fact that widows were less likely to seek remarriage than widowers¹⁴ meant that the number of young widows was probably higher than it had been in earlier centuries, and that widows, overall, were a significant group the population. Some of them would have been wealthy enough to live off income from investments or from rental property,¹⁵ and some were cared for by friends or family, but the vast majority survived as best they could from their own labour - working until illness or declining strength made it no longer possible - supplemented by whatever other sources they could tap. This must be borne in mind when reading the secondary literature on poor relief, or the impression is easily gained that the parish was the main means of support, especially for elderly women.¹⁶ Research has also shown that widows were more likely than widowers to be living alone, rather than in households with others.¹⁷

For those who were obliged to supplement their income with poor relief, parish assistance was still the main source and, in the first half of the century, parish pensions mostly ranged between 1s and 2s 6d.¹⁸ However, non-statutory welfare was playing an increasing role by mid-century, especially for those who did not have settlement. This included a whole range of bodies, from private charities and

¹³ Lawrence Stone *The Family, sex and marriage ...* p.214; Richard B. Schwartz *Daily life ...* p.143; Peter Earle *A City Full ...* p.162

¹⁴ B.A. Holderness "Widows in Pre-industrial Society ..." p.431; Jeremy Boulton "London Widowhood Revisited: the Decline of Female Remarriage in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries" in *Continuity and Change* vol.5, no.3 (1990) pp.323-45

¹⁵ Widows were an important source of both small loans and rental property in Hanoverian London [Peter Earle *A City Full ...* pp.151-155; B.A. Holderness "Widows in Pre-industrial Society ..." pp.435-442]

¹⁶ Peter Earle "The Female Labour Market ..." p.345

¹⁷ Richard Wall "Woman Alone in English Society" in *Annales de Démographie Historique* (1981) p.312; S.J. Wright "The Elderly and the Bereaved ..." p.121

¹⁸ George Rudé *Hanoverian London ...* p.139; Peter Earle "The Female Labour Market ..." p.342. Macfarlane notes, however, that in the poor London parish of St Katherine Coleman, pensions were generally only from 9d to 1s 6d a week. [Stephen M. Macfarlane "Studies in Poverty ..." pp.149/150]

the London companies to newer sources like the voluntary hospitals and friendly societies. It also included relief from a small but growing number of Methodist societies, and assistance from other dissenting churches such as the Quakers who, by early in the century, had already built a workhouse for their poor.¹⁹

The Huguenot records analysed here show, simply by their diversity, that there were now more options available to the French refugees than there had been in the 1680s and 1690s. Relief in the earlier period had been mainly through the French Church of London and the Church of the Savoy (which also jointly administered the money from the Royal briefs), the 'Pest House' and, from the winter of 1689/90, the soup kitchen. However, the Huguenot community had been proactive in making new sources of assistance available to their less-fortunate compatriots and in many cases their charitable activities set an example to the host community. Their founding of the French Protestant Hospital, their treatment of the mentally ill, their administration of the French charity school, and their enthusiasm for benefit societies are all examples of this. Such community-generated activity may have stemmed from the 'collective impetus' evident in European poor relief - an impetus less noticeable in English relief which had been primarily centred on the parish and on private charity.²⁰

At the same time, it is possible the mechanisms of Huguenot poor relief may have slowed the process of assimilation, by promoting bonds within the French community and reinforcing a sense of separate identity.²¹ The French Church of London (while it did, it is true, give relief to 'étrangers') clearly favoured its own members. The French Protestant Hospital required applicants to be recommended by a respected member of the Huguenot community, and screening mechanisms were also in place for applicants to the soup kitchen, who had to be visited and approved by one of the *Directrices*. Meanwhile, the very nature of the benefit societies fostered solidarity within particular regional groupings. The Royal bounty relief perhaps relied less on personal links and recommendations but applicants had to establish eligibility which again meant proving a Huguenot connection.

¹⁹ Joanna Innes "The 'Mixed Economy' ..." pp.139-169

²⁰ Paul Slack *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988) p.206

²¹ Clark points out that there were also particular drinking houses where Huguenots gathered, which further reinforced communal bonds. [Peter Clark "Migrants in the City ..." p.275]

It is significant, too, that the records examined contain few references to contact between the Deacons of the French Church and the poor relief officers of English parishes - and there is even less evidence of cooperative action. In the sixteen years covered by the study, contact seems to have been limited to discussions over the property in Church Street, an attempt to have a parish take responsibility for a pauper of Huguenot descent, a move to place a pauper (possibly the same one) in the Spitalfields workhouse, and an attempt to obtain poor relief for two children.

In the administration of church poor relief, which was the nearest equivalent to statutory English parish relief, it is evident that the Deacons had far more autonomy and were much better organized than the majority of English overseers. Maitland noted, for example, that in 1727-1728 he could discover only 63 overseers in the City and liberties who acted independently of the Churchwardens, "the rest being chiefly nominal, or at best collectors for the Churchwardens",²² yet the Deacons carried out their poor relief duties with very little intervention from, or supervision by, the Elders of the French Church, and did so with admirable efficiency. When there were surplus funds the money was invested at interest, and both income and expenditure were carefully recorded in full and detailed accounts. In addition to money, they handled the supply of various goods and commodities, not only to individuals but also to other Huguenot institutions - coal for the hospital, for instance, and uniforms for the schoolchildren. Most onerous would have been the organising of clothing supplies for the poor which seems to have required considerable personal involvement on the part of the Deacons, ordering cloth, having it dyed, having the clothes made up, making house calls to ascertain clothing needs, distributing the clothing, and then making further house calls to check up on recipients. Nothing of a comparable scale has been reported in the secondary literature on English poor relief, although that is not to say it did not exist. One should perhaps remark, however, that the level of organization at the French Church of London was exceptional even among the Huguenot churches in the city.

The sheer number of widows in receipt of some form of relief in London indicates not only an increased population of Huguenot widows generally (taking into account those who were self-sufficient) but also suggests, in turn, that the

²² William Maitland, quoted in Stephen M. Macfarlane "Studies in Poverty ..." p.148

Huguenot population as a whole had in no way diminished since the end of the previous century. In contrast, a check of widows' surnames (including maiden names, where known), reveals fewer than 70 names common to both periods and it has not been possible to trace a direct family relationship between any of the earlier and later widows. This tends to suggest that poverty in the Huguenot community was brought about by circumstance (as, for example, by the slump in the weaving industry) rather than by being passed from generation to generation. Certainly, church poor relief shows an increase following the severe winter of 1739/40, and another marked rise in 1750, but the hypothesis of Huguenot poverty being caused by circumstance requires further research.

The records do not, by their nature, tell us much about widows who were self-sufficient, although the example of Marie Saunier, re-admitted to the French Protestant Hospital after spending all her £80 inheritance, suggests that some Huguenot women, like their English counterparts, now lacked the skills to cope on their own even when presented with the opportunity. Other widows not only provided for their own needs, but were in a position to give money to the less fortunate through organizations such as the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*, while the particularly well-to-do subscribed to the Hospital and nominated people for admission. There were also those who participated in the administration of the soup kitchen, and even served as *Directrices*, and others again who helped the French Church of London with the distribution of clothes to the poor.

Whilst we can learn more about the circumstances of those who sought relief, many gaps remain. Little is revealed, for instance, about the living arrangements of widows, although it is evident that some, at least, were cared for by offspring and some were found board (in some cases with nursing or supervisory care) by the church. Of those assisted by the *Société de Poitou et du Loudunois*, the majority were resident in the eastern half of the London area, and, to judge from the preponderance of eastern districts over western ones in the Deacons' records, it would seem that relief distributed by the French church of London also went largely to people from that side of the city. This would accord with the eastern side being the poorer area of London. However, it should be noted that, since the establishment of churches such as the Savoy in the west, the bulk of the Threadneedle Street church's congregation was in fact drawn from the east and

poor relief distribution may simply have reflected this. Similarly, since many Poitevins were weavers who had settled in the Spittlefields area, one would expect the Poitou Society's assistance to be concentrated in the east.

The overwhelming majority of widows had been born in France and therefore must have arrived as refugees, but some were born in England of immigrant parents, and there were also a few Englishwomen who had been married to Frenchmen.

Information on occupations and earnings is sketchy, yet, given the often small pensions and grants, it is certain that many widows (and probably most) must have had other income. Average church pensions to these women ranged from 1s to 1s 6d a week (slightly lower, in fact, than at the end of the previous century), Poitou Society pensions were even more modest, and Bounty payments were smallest to those who probably needed help most. One wonders how the poorest survived. Illness and disability were often a problem. Poor eyesight evidently troubled a good number, especially in the older age-groups, and, from the scattered but persistent references to drunkenness, it is obvious that drink was as much a scourge in the Huguenot community as it was in the host population.

Widows in receipt of relief were mainly older women, and old age appears to have been a definite criterion in allocating assistance to widows of the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, when older women were granted pensions the assistance generally continued until death, with amounts gradually rising. This accords with findings for English relief.²³ Similarly, older widows who were admitted to hospital generally spent the rest of their life there. In some cases, older widows (or their families) gave lump sums in return for regular pensions or care, and it also seems that some offered their furniture and belongings as surety for the assistance they received from the church - the goods subsequently being sold by the Deacons to recoup costs.

Younger widows, as in the English community, were by no means uncommon but the Deacons, at least, seem to have been somewhat reluctant to award them regular pensions, and those that did receive pensions were generally given very small

²³ David Thomson "The Welfare of the Elderly ..." p.202; Tim Wales "Poverty, Poor relief and the Life-cycle ..." pp.363-364

amounts. Widows of this group were more likely to receive food rations, occasional grants at times of illness, and assistance with apprenticeships, apparently because it was felt they and their children should be capable of earning sufficient money to meet most of their regular requirements. This also appears to have been the case with English relief, as is evidenced by an example from the end of the previous century:-

Elizabeth Dyer widdow Inhabitant in the p[ar]lish of St Margaret Pattens London complayneing unto his Lo[rdshi]p [the Lord Mayor], That shee is very poore & hath 3 Children to keepe & yet the Church wardens refuse to give her any allowance towards theire maintenance, & the Ch[urch] Wardens declareing that the eldest of the children is about 12 yeares old & fit to be put forth apprentice, And that the said Elizabeth may with her owne labour an estate shee hath in her hands very well keepe her selfe & the other two Children His lor[dshi]p upon heareing all P[ar]tyes doeth ordr the Ch[urch] Wardens to put out the eldest Child and the said Eliz[abeth] to keep the other two.²⁴

Widows on relief, irrespective of age, were expected to observe certain standards of behaviour, and both the hospital and the church imposed penalties if these standards were not met. It is also clear that social status was often a greater factor than need when determining the level of pensions - bourgeois widows receiving higher rates from all sources than did their lower-class compatriots - and that the Huguenot community was familiar with the concept of the "shame-faced poor".

Many widows clearly received help from more than one source. However, while relief from two or three sources was quite common, the number of widows gaining help from four or more was minimal. It is also evident that, even where multiple sources were tapped, the overall level of relief was not high, so that widows cannot be said, in general, to have been abusing the assistance available to them.

More research could be done using such sources as the Consistory records of the French church, information on Royal warrants, and archives of the London companies, not to mention checking wills and inventories, court records, and the poor relief records of English parishes in the London area. This would better situate the present group of widows in relation to their more self-sufficient

²⁴ Quoted in Stephen M. Macfarlane "Studies in Poverty ..." p.211

compatriots and to those who had been assimilated into the English population. Nevertheless, this study shows that life for many Huguenot widows in mid-eighteenth-century London, as for their English counterparts, must have been economically difficult and uncertain. Indeed, one suspects many of the women of the weaving community, at least, would have heartily endorsed the sentiments expressed in the twelfth-century “Complainte des tisseuses de soie”:-

Toz jorz dras de soie tistrans
 Ne ja n’an serons miauz vestues.
 Tos jorz serons povres et nues
 Et toz jorz fain et soif avrons;
 Ja tant gaeignier ne savrons,
 Que miauz an aiiens a mangier.
 Del pain avons a grant dangier
 Au main petit et au soir mains,
 Que ja de l’uevre de noz mains
 N’avra chascune por son vivre
 Que quatre deniers de la livre.
 Et de ce ne poons nos pas
 assez avoir viande et dras²⁵

[Chrétien de Troyes
Le Chevalier au Lion,
 vv.5298-5310]

²⁵ “We shall always weave silken cloth but never be better clothed. We shall always be poor and naked and always be hungry and thirsty: we shall never earn enough to eat better. We get our bread with great difficulty, [eating] little in the morning and less at night: Never from the labour of our hands shall each get for her livelihood more than fourpence [for] a pound [of cloth woven]. And with that we cannot get enough meat and clothing.”

Appendix I

Serment de Naturalisation (from the *Calandrier*, 1719)

Je, A. B., promets et jure sincerement, que je serai fidelle et obéissant à Sa Majesté le Roy George: ainsy Dieu m'aide.

Je, A. B., jure, que j'abhore, deteste, et abjure, comme impie, et heretique, cette damnable Doctrine et Maxime, que les Prince excommuniez, ou suspendus par le Pape, ou aucune autorité du Siège de Rome, peuvent être déposés ou mis à mort par leurs sujets, ou par aucune autre personne Quelconque; Et je declare qu'aucun Prince, personne, Prelat, Etat, ou Potentat Etranger, n'a n'y ne doit avoir aucune Jurisdiction, Pouvoir, Superiorité, Pré-éminence, n'i autorité Ecclesiastique ou Spirituelle dans ce royaume - ainsy dieu m'aide.

Je, A. B., reconnois, confesse, certifie & declare, en ma conscience devant Dieu et les hommes, que notre Souverain Sire le Roy George, est legitime Roy de ce Royaume, et de tous les autres, et Paÿs de Sa Majesté qui en dependent; Et je declare solennellement et sincerement, que je croi en ma conscience, que la personne qu'on pretendoit être le Prince de Galles, pendant la vie du Roy Jaques et qui depuis la mort d'iceluy, pretend être, se qualifie et prend le Titre de Roy d'Angleterre sous le nom de Jaques 3, our Roy d'Ecosse sous le nom de Jaques 8; ou se qualifie et prend le Titre de Roy de la Grande Bretagne n'a aucun droit n'y Titre quelconque à la Couronne de ce Royaume, n'i a aucun autre Domaine en dependant; et je renonce refuse, et abjure de luy rendre aucune fidelité, n'y obéissance; et je jure que je porteray et rendray toute fidelité et Loyauté a Sa Majesté le Roy George, et que je le defendray de tout mon pouvoir contre toutes Trahisons, conspirations, et attentats quelconques qui pourroyent êtrefaits, contre Sa personne, Sa couronne, ou Sa dignité; et que je feray tous mes efforts, pour decouvrir, et faire savoir a Sa Majesté et a Ses Successeurs, toutes Trahisons ou conspirations qui viendront à ma conoissance, contre luy ou aucun de Ses Successeurs; et je promets sincerement et de bonne foy que de tout mon pouvoir je soutiendray, maintiendray et defendray la Succession de la Couronne, contre le dit Jaques, et toutes autres personnes quelconques, ainsy que la dite succession est établie par un Acte qui est intitulé Acte pour declarer les Loix et Libertés des Sujets, et pour établir la Succession de la Couronne à Sa Majesté a present Reignant, et a Ses Heritiers, Issus de luy, pourvû quils soyent Protestants; toutes les quelles choses je reconnois et jure franchement, et sincerement dans le mêmes Termes et paroles par moi prononcées, et selon le veritable et ordinaire sens, des mêmes paroles, sans aucune Equivoque Evasion Mentale, ou secrette reservation quelconque; et je fais cette reconnoissance, confession, abjuration, renonciation et Promesse de tout mon coeur, franchement et sincerement et sur la veritable foi d'un Chrestien. - Ainsy Dieu m'aide.

Je, A. B., certifie, declare, et fais profession solennelle et sincere, devant Dieu, que je croi que dans le Sacrement de l'Eucharistie il n'y a aucune Transubstantiation des Elemens, du Pain et Vin, au Corps et au Sang de Jesus Christ, dans le tems de la consecration n'y apres (par qui que se soit quelle puisse être faite) et que l'Invocation et adoration de la vierge Marie, ou d'aucun autre Saint et le Sacrifice de la Messe, ainsy quon les pratique dans l'Eglise Romaine, sont Superstitieux et Idolatre. Et Je certifie déclare et affirme, que je fais cette Declaration, et toutes les

parties d'icelle dans un Sens ordinaire, et ingenu, des paroles dont il ma été fait Lecture, et de la même maniere quelles peuvent estre communément entendues, parles veritables Protestant Anglois. Sans aucune evasion équivoque, ou reservation mentale, et sans qu'aucune dispense m'aye été accordée par le Pape, ou aucune autre Authorité ou personne quelconque, et sans esperance d'aucune, et elle dispense de la part d'aucune personne ou autorité quelconque, et sans que je croy pouvoir estre dechargé n'y absous devant Dieu, n'y devant les hommes de cette Declaration, n'y d'aucune partie d'icelle, quand bien même le Pape, ou aucune autre Authorité, personne ou puissance quelconque m'en dispenseroit ou annuleroit cette declaration ou feroit la Declaration nulle par avance. - Ainsy Dieu m'aide.

[Reproduced from: Arthur G. Browning "On the Origin and Early History of the French Protestant Hospital (La Providence)" in *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* vol.VI (1898-1901) pp.74-75]

Oath of Abjuration (as contained in the Second Test Act, 1678)

I, *A.B.*, do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I do believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint and the sacrifice of the mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I do make this declaration and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope or any other person or persons or power whatsoever should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning."

Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy (as contained in the Bill of Rights, 1689)

I, *A.B.*, do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful, and bear true allegiance, to *their Majesties King William and Queen Mary*: So help me God.

I, *A.B.*, do swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, that princes excommunicated or deprived by the pope, or any authority of the see of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate hath, or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm: So help me God.

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 Ms 59: *'Livre des deliberations commencé le 28^e Fevrier 1746/7'* [Decisions on grants for the period 28 February 1747 - 27 June 1753]
 Ms 81: [Chronological register of poor with particulars of relief afforded 1740-1751]
 Ms 83: [Chronological register of poor with particulars of relief afforded 1729-1739]
 Ms 110: *'Livre des refugies, Octobre 1733'* [Day-book of monies disbursed to poor refugees and names of recipients, 11 November 1733 - 11 January 1736]
 Ms 111: *'Livre des réfugiés Fevrier 1735/36'* [Day-book of monies disbursed to poor refugees and names of recipients, 18 February 1736 - 25 February 1741]
 Ms 112: [Day-book of monies disbursed to poor refugees and names of recipients, 1 March 1741 - 1 January 1746]
 Ms 113: *'Livre des pauvres réfugiés assistez par extraordinaire'* [Details of occasional grants to named recipients; totals of money expended in pensions, 4 January 1747 - 16 October 1763]
 Ms 120: [Poor relief: rough cash accounts (monthly), July 1734 - October 1741]
 Ms 121: [Poor relief: rough cash accounts (monthly), November 1741 - September 1750]
 Ms 309: [Day-book of monies disbursed to poor refugees and names of recipients, 2 March - 9 November 1746; 7 January 1747]

Records of the Royal Bounty, held at the Huguenot Library, University College, London:-

- B.Ms 54: [Schedule of payments authorized by the French Committee for named 'gentils hommes' and 'bourgeoisie', 1736 (with annotations to 1742)]
 B.Ms 55: [Schedule of payments for named refugees in the department of Westminster and Soho, for the year beginning Christmas 1740 (with annotations to February 1744)]
 B.Ms 56: [Schedule of payments (with names) to the common people at the bureaux of London and Spitalfields and Westminster and Soho, in the years 1744-1751]
 Pts. 1-2 Spitalfields 1744: Pt. 3 Soho 1744: Pt. 4 Soho 1746: Pt. 5 Spitalfields 1746-7: Pt. 6 Soho 1747: Pt. 7 Soho 1748: Pts. 8-9 Spitalfields 1748: Pt. 10 Soho 1748-9: Pt. 11 Spitalfields 1751: Pt. 12 Soho 1751
 B.Ms 57: [Schedule of payments authorized for 'les gentilshommes' and 'la bourgeoisie', 1745 (with annotations to June 1749)]

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- Ms H/M1/2: [Accounts, 1720-1737, with names of contributors and recipients]
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