

Social History

Alex Craven & Beth Hartland

Social Structure

There is limited evidence of the social structure of medieval Chipping Sodbury until late in the period. For much of the town's medieval history the lord was an absentee.¹ The borough was not taxed as a distinct unit in 1327, and it appears that the wealthier of the town's inhabitants were taxed alongside individuals from Old Sodbury.² For instance, Nicholas Phelippes, whose 1327 assessment of 2s. was the sixth highest in the parish of Old Sodbury, was described in the following two decades as a merchant of Sodbury.³ Stephen Danyel, who was assessed at 18*d*. In 1327, was probably the same man whose corner shops in Chipping Sodbury were conveyed in a deed of 1344 by his son and heir Nicholas, a burgess of the borough.⁴ That Chipping Sodbury was not yet treated as a separate unit probably reflects its relative obscurity. Finberg ranked it nineteenth out of 24 towns in Gloucestershire for wealth in the early 13th century.⁵

Although the lords were absentees, from the 15th century the gentry of neighbouring parishes may have played an increasing role within the parish. The Fosters and Walshes of Little Sodbury, the Poyntzes of Iron Acton, and the Wykes of Dodington all farmed the manor during the 15th or 16th centuries.⁶ After the acquisition of the manor by John Walsh in the 1540s, the lord of the manor was usually resident at Little Sodbury or Lyegrove House for much of the ensuing period. The arrival of the Somerset marquesses of Worcester (later dukes of Beaufort) at Badminton after the Restoration brought an influential aristocratic family to the district, and Chipping Sodbury was often the backdrop to their local political activities and social engagements.

The founding of the town's guild in the middle of the 15th century may indicate increasing confidence and prosperity,⁷ possibly attracting the three Irishmen who resided in the borough during the reign of Henry VI.⁸ This prosperity, which by the early 16th century had placed Chipping Sodbury at the top of the assessment for the hundred for the 1523 lay subsidy,⁹ was presumably based on the cloth trade.

¹ See Old Sodbury, Social History.

² TNA, E 179/113/5, rot. 26

³ TNA, C 241/109/168; C 241/119/93.

⁴ GA, D2071/T/2/5.

⁵ H.P.R. Finberg, 'The genesis of Gloucestershire's Towns', *Glos. Studies* (Leicester, 1957), 81–2.

⁶ See Old Sodbury, Landownership.

⁷ See Religious History.

⁸ TNA, E 179/113/99; E 179/113/107.

⁹ *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 17, 141.

Certainly, by the 1520s those engaged in trading cloth were amongst the wealthiest in the town. These included Thomas Taylor,¹⁰ one of the wealthiest individuals resident in the hundred, who was assessed at £5 for £100 in goods in the early 1523, putting him on the same level as Sir John Walsh of Little Sodbury.¹¹ A year earlier, he had been assessed as owning £100 in goods and 20s. in land, placing him in joint first place for goods, and equal 14th for lands. The widow Edith Colymore was rated at £80 for goods in 1524, and presumably it was she or her late husband who had been assessed at £100 for goods two years earlier. Another member of the family, Richard Colymore, also a clothier,¹² was worth £13, and other clothiers who ranked amongst the wealthiest in the town included Richard Adams (£2 in lands in 1522 and £28 in goods in 1523–4), Edmond Monnar alias Peers (40 marks in goods in 1523–4), and Thomas Somers (£40 in goods in 1522).¹³ Other wealthy townsmen included the ironmonger Thomas Smyth (£40 in goods in 1523–4) and the baker Edward Burley (£18 in goods in 1523–4).¹⁴ Besides these inhabitants of the town, a number of wealthy outsiders owned significant amounts of land in the borough. Dorothy Codrington, the widow of John Codrington of Codrington, was assessed for £8 of land in the borough in 1522,¹⁵ presumably the six burgages that her father-in-law held a decade earlier.¹⁶ John Smyth of Bristol held 4 marks of land, Sir John Walsh 40s., and Nicholas Wykes of Dodington 35s.¹⁷ At the other end of the social scale were servants, perhaps apprentices, whose wages of 20s. were assessed at 4d. The assessment included two Frenchmen, one of whom was worth less than 20s. and so paid tax at the flat-rate of 8d.¹⁸ The land belonging to the church and guild was valued at £12 in 1523–4.¹⁹ In total 94 individuals were taxed within the borough in 1523–4, and the total sum owed by the borough came to £19 3s. 7d.²⁰

Later assessment rolls were less comprehensive, listing fewer individuals than the early 16th-century assessments: 15 in 1545–6, 12 in 1557–8, 11 in 1570–1, 18 in 1596–7, and 13 in 1609–10,²¹ but tend to be headed by the same family names of Adams, Colymore, Somers, and Taylor. The last two subsidy rolls can be compared with a muster roll of 1608, which listed the occupation of 99 inhabitants.²² Those on

¹⁰ TNA, C 1/585/65.

¹¹ *Military Surv. of Glos. 1522*; *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 8, 141; TNA, E 179/113/200/1.

¹² *The Ledger of John Smythe, 1538–50* (BRA, 28, 1975), 62.

¹³ *Military Surv. of Glos. 1522*; *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 142; TNA, E 179/113/200/1; *The Staple Court Books of Bristol* (BRS, 5, 1934), 154; Monnar: *L&P Hen. VIII*, I, 213; GA, GDR, Wills, 1553/89.

¹⁴ *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 142; TNA, PROB 11/30/416.

¹⁵ *Military Surv. of Glos. 1522*

¹⁶ *Trans. BGAS*, 21 (1898), 310–3.

¹⁷ *Military Surv. of Glos. 1522*

¹⁸ *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 141; TNA, E 179/113/200/1, m. 4.

¹⁹ *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 143.

²⁰ *Bristol & Glos. Lay Subsidy*, 17; TNA, E 179/113/215A, m. 4.

²¹ TNA, E 179/114/265, m. 4; E 179/115/346; E 179/115/383; E 179/116/439.

²² TNA, E 179/116 481; Smith, *Men and Armour*, 194–5. See Economic History.

either roll whose occupations can be identified included at least two clothiers (a third may alternatively have been a weaver), a mercer, a tailor, a tucker, a shoemaker, and an innholder, demonstrating again the relationship of the cloth trade with the town's prosperity.²³ In total, the muster roll describes two men as gentlemen and one as a yeoman, and lists a further nine as husbandmen. The majority were engaged in trades and crafts, including 16 weavers, nine tailors, seven glovers, five clothiers, four bakers, and four smiths.²⁴

Despite the prominence of the cloth trade in the 16th and early 17th century, its practitioners did not totally dominate the life of the town. Besides men described as clothiers, drapers and mercers, bailiffs of the 17th century included a butcher, a chandler, an innholder, saddlers, and a tanner. In the 18th century, this diversity increased as the role of the cloth trade diminished, and a number of craftsmen served as bailiff, including an apothecary, a baker, maltsters, a blacksmith, a butcher, a cheese factor, a currier, a leather dresser, a wig maker, a saddler, a shopkeeper, and a tanner.

In the early 19th century, the 1831 census revealed that 149 men, almost half of the adult male population, were engaged in retail and crafts, and another 79 (26%) were employed as non-agricultural labourers.²⁵ Of the remaining adult men, the 16 farmers and 20 labourers combined to make an agricultural sector representing almost 12% of the male population, despite the small size of the parish. There were 18 (6%) 'capitalists' and professionals. Besides this resident population would have been many travellers, and in 1833 the road through Chipping Sodbury was said to be 'infested by vagrants'.²⁶ Fifty years later, the 1881 census found that almost three-fifths of men, 160 in total, were employed in retail or crafts, as were 52 (16%) women.²⁷ More than a quarter of the whole population were employed in retail and trade, the sector dominated by dress, hostelry, and construction. More than a quarter of the women, 86 in total, were engaged in domestic service, an occupation that employed only 14 (5%) men. Agricultural work still provided employment for a large number of men, 37 (14%) occupied on farms, but no women apparently found work in the fields around the town. Twenty men and eight women, 5% of the total population, formed the professional and commercial sector of the town.

During the early 20th century, inhabitants of Chipping Sodbury and the neighbouring parishes were drawn to manufacturing jobs to the north of Bristol, particularly at Filton, for which special bus services were provided. At the same time, Yate and Chipping Sodbury were promoted as overspill for Bristol, and

²³ TNA, PROB 11/124/675; GA, D2071/E9-10; *EHR*, 57 (1942), 364, 367; Smith, *Men and Armour*, 194-5.

²⁴ Smith, *Men and Armour*, 194-5.

²⁵ *Census*, 1831.

²⁶ *1st Rep. of the Municipal Corporations Commissioners*, Appendix I (Parliamentary Papers, 1835 (38), V), 37.

²⁷ *Census*, 1881.

manufacturing jobs created in the area attracted workers from Bristol, and in 1967 it was found that only a third of those employed in the area were residents.²⁸ In 1981 the number of residents seeking employment outnumbered the availability of work, and more than half of the workforce commuted from the area to jobs elsewhere.²⁹ By the early 21st century this proportion had increased, and less than a third of the resident population of the two towns in 2006 worked in the area.³⁰ In the census of 2011, 40% of the working-age population of Sodbury parish were classified as holding managerial or professional roles.³¹ Middle-ranking jobs and small employers made up another quarter of the population, with technical roles and routine occupations comprising another 28%. Five per cent of the working-age population were students. There was little ethnic diversity in the population, with only 2% of Sodbury parishioners classifying themselves as black or another minority ethnicity.³²

Communal Life

As a market town, and from the late 19th century the site of the local court house, Chipping Sodbury was the focus of communal life not only for the townsmen but also for the neighbouring communities. Locals and travellers alike came to the town to enjoy its diverse amusements, such as concerts,³³ travelling menageries, its two annual fairs, the inns. It could also be the scene of lively hustings at the time of elections. The Town Hall and later the New Hall were often the venue for lectures and concerts.

Friendly societies

A friendly society was established in Chipping Sodbury in 1787, meeting in the Portcullis inn,³⁴ which had 181 members by 1803,³⁵ and 195 members by 1815.³⁶ Two more friendly societies were established in the 19th century, an annual benefit society in 1805 and a female friendly society in 1814, both based at the Royal Oak.³⁷ The Portcullis society submitted amended rules in 1832, and there was a reference to a society at the Swan inn in 1835.³⁸ The Portcullis society was the only one associated

²⁸ GA, C/CP/P/3/75, Yate and Chipping Sodbury Town Map, 1967, 12–3.

²⁹ Northavon District Council, *Yate and Chipping Sodbury Local Plan*, 1988.

³⁰ South Glos. Local Plan Written Statement, 2006.

³¹ *Census*, 2011.

³² *Census*, 2011.

³³ *Western Daily Press*, 18 Oct. 1864.

³⁴ *Bath Chron.* 13 Nov. 1788; GA, Q/RSf/2.

³⁵ *Poor Law Abstract*, 1804, 177.

³⁶ *Poor Law Abstract*, 1818, 150–1.

³⁷ GA, Q/RSf/2.

³⁸ GA, P300 VE 2/2.

with Chipping Sodbury in 1837.³⁹ It was re-established again in 1842, and had 43 members in 1850.⁴⁰

The 'Marquis of Worcester' Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows Manchester Unity friendly society was established in 1868,⁴¹ with the Grapes Hotel serving as the lodge.⁴² Originally founded with nine members, its number had grown to 60 within three years.⁴³ Besides the usual functions of a friendly society, the Lodge staged an annual fête on Whit Monday, with a procession through neighbouring villages, a banquet, and sports and games, which drew a large crowd to the town.⁴⁴ It had 87 members in 1906.⁴⁵

A branch of the Rational Sick and Burial Association was established in Chipping Sodbury in the late 19th century.⁴⁶ It took part in annual church parades with other friendly societies from the neighbourhood to raise funds for local charities.⁴⁷ Chipping Sodbury Union Real Benefit Society was established at the New Inn in 1842.⁴⁸ A lodge of the Bristol and West District United Ancient Order of Druids was established at the Bell inn in 1899, which had 20 members in 1906.⁴⁹

At the end of the 19th century the different friendly societies of the Sodburys and Yate held an annual church parade, marching from the British School in Yate to the parish church of Old Sodbury.⁵⁰

Social activities of religious organisations

A number of social activities were encouraged by the churches, particularly the Baptist church, during the 19th century. In the early 19th century, there was a Bible Association in Chipping Sodbury.⁵¹ Music was frequently employed by the churches as an alternative to the attractions of the towns many inns and beer houses. Both St John's church and the Baptist church had choirs.⁵² There was a band in Chipping

³⁹ *Return of Friendly Societies* (Parliamentary Papers, 1837 (71), LI), 9.

⁴⁰ *Abstract of Returns Respecting Friendly Societies, 1846–50*, (Parliamentary Papers, 1852–3 (31), C), 52–3.

⁴¹ *Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly societies, 1875* (Parliamentary Papers, 1876 (424), LXIX), 252; GA, D1610/Q9.

⁴² *Bristol Daily Post*, 30 May 1871.

⁴³ *Western Daily Press*, 30 May 1871.

⁴⁴ *Bristol Daily Post*, 30 May 1871.

⁴⁵ *Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, 1906* (Parliamentary Papers, 1907 (49), LXXVIII), Appendix, 50.

⁴⁶ *Wilts. & Glos. Standard*, 25 Sep. 1886; *Glos. Chron.* 23 May 1891.

⁴⁷ *Western Daily Press*, 29 July 1891.

⁴⁸ *Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, 1875* (Parliamentary Papers, 1876 (424), LXIX), 252.

⁴⁹ *Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, 1906* (Parliamentary Papers, 1907 (49), LXXVIII), Appendix, 54.

⁵⁰ *Western Daily Press*, 15 Aug. 1899.

⁵¹ *Bristol Times*, 13 Mar. 1841.

⁵² See Religious History.

Sodbury in 1851, led by the prominent Baptist A. J. Foxwell⁵³ and a Harmonic Society in 1853.⁵⁴

Tee-totalism was first introduced to the Sodbury area in 1843, when meetings were held and 17 people were said to have taken oaths of temperance.⁵⁵ A Temperance Society was established, meeting in the new Town Hall from 1858.⁵⁶ The society staged an annual fête from 1879, with processions, athletics, a sober tea, and a firework display.⁵⁷ A Coffee-house Club in the town in the 1880s may also have been part of a tee-total movement.⁵⁸ The new Baptist Sunday School, opened in 1886, was also intended to serve as a Temperance Hall.⁵⁹ A Band of Hope had been established by 1874.⁶⁰ In 1875 it had 160 members, and a benefit society had been established in association with the organisation.⁶¹ The Band continued to be active in the early 20th century.⁶² The Salvation Army was active in the town in the early 1880s, when they were branded a nuisance by attendees of the court leet.⁶³

Inns

As a 'thoroughfare' town lying on the main road from Bristol to the midlands, Chipping Sodbury had a number of inns and public houses. We only know of one such inn during the middle ages, a great inn (*hospitium*) called 'Brounsyn' which stood on the high street near the guild hall by 1439.⁶⁴ By 1548 it was known as the George,⁶⁵ and it would continue to be one of the town's principal inns for centuries. In the 17th century it was usually let with 14 a. of pasture land in Old Sodbury.⁶⁶ The Bear was established by Maurice Walshe c.1570, who rebuilt the premises at the same time.⁶⁷

Several other inns were first referred to by name in the 17th century, although it is likely they had been operating long before this time. They were Bell (1650),⁶⁸ the

⁵³ *Bristol Mercury*, 15 Mar. 1851.

⁵⁴ *Bristol Mercury*, 28 May 1853.

⁵⁵ *The Temperance Recorder*, 3rd sers. No. 13 (Aug. 1843), 213.

⁵⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 30 Dec. 1858.

⁵⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 16 Aug. 1879 & 19 June 1886.

⁵⁸ *Bristol Mercury*, 13 Apr. 1882.

⁵⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 18 Aug. 1886.

⁶⁰ *Bristol Mercury*, 25 Apr. 1874, 17 Nov. 1882 & 17 May 1894.

⁶¹ *Bristol Mercury*, 20 Nov. 1875.

⁶² *Bristol Mercury*, 24 Feb. 1900.

⁶³ *Bristol Mercury*, 9 Nov. 1883.

⁶⁴ GA, D2071/T18.

⁶⁵ *Cal. Pat.* 1548-49, 102-12.

⁶⁶ GA, D185/16/14.

⁶⁷ TNA, C 2/JasI/W7/54; C 8/17/23.

⁶⁸ GA, D2071/E15; TNA, C 8/101/257.

White Lion (1677),⁶⁹ the Crown (1682),⁷⁰ the Cap and Feather (1686),⁷¹ the Dog, the Goat, the Rose & Crown, the Swan, and the White Hart (all 1688).⁷² An innkeeper's inventory gives us a glimpse inside one of these inns, probably the Swan, in 1663.⁷³ Not including the innkeeper's own lodgings, there were eight rooms that could provide accommodation for travellers in 12 beds. Two of these beds were found in the dining chamber, alongside two tables and 14 chairs or stools. The other bedrooms provided private dining facilities, and there were also the hall and a room at the head of the stairs where food could be taken. Some level of luxury was provided by the damask table cloths, the leather upholstered furniture and the hangings around beds, while the cellars were stocked with both beer and wine. The whole contents of the inn were valued at over £153.

Besides inns there would have been numerous alehouses and beer houses, possibly maintained as a second source of income alongside another trade. There are few extant records of the court leet or quarter sessions from before the late 17th century, so it is not known how many premises were licensed or prosecuted for lack of a license in the earlier period. In 1596 a tiler was presented at the quarter sessions for keeping a tippling house without license, and for often being inebriated.⁷⁴ Similarly, in the early 17th century a butcher maintained both his shop and an alehouse at his house.⁷⁵

The Bell, the George, the Goat, the Hat & Feather, the Mitre, the Three Crowns, and the White Hart all mentioned in 1715.⁷⁶ With the exception of the Three Crowns, these were all still present in 1728, when they were joined by the Crown, the Horseshoe, the New Inn, the Portcullis, the Queen's Head, the Royal Oak, the Star, and the White Horse.⁷⁷ There were 21 public houses licensed in the parish in 1755: the Bear, the Bell, the Boot, the Crown, the Duke William, the George, the Grapes, the Horse Shoe, the Oak, the Pargeters' Arms, the Portcullis, the Queen's Head, the Star, the Swan, the Three Crowns, the Three Tuns, the White Hart, the White Horse, the White Lion, and two with no sign.⁷⁸

The Portcullis and the Swan were considered the principle inns for the accommodation of travellers in 1830, while there were also taverns and public houses called the Bell, the George, the Grapes, the New Inn, and the Royal Oak.⁷⁹

⁶⁹ GA, D2071/L10.

⁷⁰ *Butcher, Baker, Candle Maker.*

⁷¹ GA, D2071/E18.

⁷² GA, D185/16/14; D2071/E1.

⁷³ GA, GDR, Inventories, 1663/76.

⁷⁴ BL, Harl. MS 4131, 480.

⁷⁵ GA, D2071/L10.

⁷⁶ GA, D2071/A1.

⁷⁷ GA, D2071/A1.

⁷⁸ GA, Q/AV/2.

⁷⁹ *Pigott's Directory of Glos.* (1830), 385–7.

The Swan converted into a Catholic chapel and adjoining presbytery in 1838.⁸⁰ The license was transferred to the house on the north corner of Broad street and Horse Street, which also took the name of the Swan.⁸¹ The Portcullis was one of the regular meeting places of the Beaufort and Berkeley Hunts, and in 1868 had stabling for 20 hunters.⁸² It was a common meeting place for groups including friendly societies, public bodies such as the turnpike trust,⁸³ and political organisations such as the West Gloucestershire Conservative Association. In 1835 so many people wished to attend the annual dinner of the latter group, they had to be divided between the town hall, the Portcullis and the Swan.⁸⁴ In subsequent years the landlord of the Portcullis catered to the association in a specially constructed pavilion.⁸⁵ The Grapes Inn organised annual picnic parties during the 1850s.⁸⁶

The promoters of the new National School in the town complained in 1847 that the town 'abounds with beer houses, drunkenness and & immorality prevail to a great extent, and many of the children without education are growing up in habits of profligacy & vice'.⁸⁷ Chipping Sodbury apparently had one of the highest ratios of licensed premises to population within the county at the end of the 19th century, with one public house for every 90 people in the town.⁸⁸ In 1891 there were 12 premises licensed in Chipping Sodbury, more than any other parish in the area: they were the Bell, the Boot, the George, the Grapes, the Horse Shoe, the King's Arms, the New Inn, the Oak, the Portcullis, the Porter Stores, the Swan, and one with no name.⁸⁹ All but the last were still in operation 12 years later.⁹⁰ However, during the 20th century this number declined as the inns and pubs of the town were converted to other uses. The King's Arms had closed by 1914,⁹¹ and the Swan became a cycle shop of the same name in that year.⁹² By 1939 the number of licensed premises in the town had fallen to eight, besides two grocers' shops licensed as off-licenses: the Bell, the Boot, the George, the Grapes, the New Inn, the Portcullis, the Porter Stores, and the Royal Oak.⁹³ The Porter Stores was renamed the Beaufort Hunt in 1955,⁹⁴ and the

⁸⁰ See Religious Life.

⁸¹ *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, Nos. 97–100.

⁸² *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 20 June 1868, 4.

⁸³ *Salisbury & Winchester Journal*, 21 Mar. 1836.

⁸⁴ *Bath Chronicle*, 30 July 1835.

⁸⁵ *Bath Chronicle*, 4 Aug. 1836.

⁸⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 9 July 1859.

⁸⁷ TNA, ED 103/107/13, 246.

⁸⁸ *Glos. Echo*, 1 July 1891.

⁸⁹ GA, Q/AV/8/1.

⁹⁰ GA, Q/AV/8/2.

⁹¹ *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, No. 237.

⁹² *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, Nos. 97–100.

⁹³ GA, PS/SO/RL1/1.

⁹⁴ GA, PS/SO/RL1/1.

New Inn became the Squire in 1965.⁹⁵ To the west of the town centre, the Tern Inn was built c.1968 in Heron Way to serve the new Heron estate.⁹⁶

The Bell closed in 1973,⁹⁷ becoming the Royal British Legion club c.1975; in 1994 it was converted into a gallery.⁹⁸ By the early 21st century the Grapes had been partly converted into an Indian restaurant, called the Tudor Raj, and the restaurant occupied the whole premises in 2018. The former owners of the Grapes converted a stationery shop into a pub and named it the Horse Shoe, c.2014.⁹⁹ The Tern Inn was closed in 2017.¹⁰⁰ In 2018 the parish contained the Beaufort Hunt, the George Hotel, the Horseshoe, the Portcullis, the Royal Oak, and the Squire Inn in the town centre, and the Boot inn to the east of the town centre.

Leisure and sport

A winter assembly was established in Chipping Sodbury in the late 18th century, under the influence of James Mendenall, who moved in 1777 from Bath to take possession of the Bell inn.¹⁰¹ A subscription assembly was held at the Bell in October 1782.¹⁰²

A Conservative Association for West Gloucestershire was formed at Chipping Sodbury in 1835.¹⁰³ The annual dinner of the association was held in the courtyard of Mr Luce's house in 1836, in order to accommodate the large number attending.¹⁰⁴ In 1838 the Conservative festival for West Gloucestershire again held in a temporary pavilion due to the large number in attendance.¹⁰⁵

A Mutual Improvement Society was founded in 1851 to give weekly lectures on topics including science, history, geography, literature, art, and performances of music.¹⁰⁶ The society also maintained a reading room,¹⁰⁷ where readings from popular works could be heard for a penny,¹⁰⁸ and a library, which by 1866 held over 500 books.¹⁰⁹ A Literary Institute was founded in the town in 1862, and a new reading room and library were established at the Town Hall.¹¹⁰ The Mutual

⁹⁵ GA, PS/SO/RL1/2.

⁹⁶ GA, PS/SO/RL1/2.

⁹⁷ GA, PS/SO/RL1/1-2.

⁹⁸ *Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*, No. 66.

⁹⁹ Local information.

¹⁰⁰ *The Gazette*, 13 July 2017.

¹⁰¹ *Bath Chron.*, 26 June 1777, 1 & 16 Aug. 1781.

¹⁰² *Glouc. J.*, 14 Oct. 1782.

¹⁰³ *Worcester Journal*, 25 June 1835.

¹⁰⁴ *Glos. Chron.* 6 Aug. 1836.

¹⁰⁵ *West Kent Guardian*, 18 Aug. 1838.

¹⁰⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 13 Sep. & 22 Nov. 1851, 16 Oct. 1852 & 22 Oct. 1853.

¹⁰⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 14 Feb. 1863.

¹⁰⁸ *Bristol Daily Post*, 31 Dec. 1863.

¹⁰⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 20 Oct. 1866.

¹¹⁰ *Bristol Mercury*, 15 Feb. 1862.

Improvement Society and the Literary Institute, which had been using the same facilities in the Town Hall, amalgamated in 1867, continuing under the name of the Literary Institute.¹¹¹ The Literary Institute continued to hold its meetings at the Town Hall at the end of the century, where it also still maintained the reading room and library.¹¹² A series of lectures for working men were organised at the Friend's Meeting House in Brook Street in the 1920s.¹¹³

A branch of the Women's Institute was founded in 1896, and the parish library was removed from the vestry of the church to a new reading room maintained within the institute.¹¹⁴ After the Quakers ceased to use the meeting house in Brook Street, it was adopted for use in 1932 as the Institute Hall of the Women's Institute.¹¹⁵

There was a brass band associated with the Barnhill Quarry in the 1920s.¹¹⁶

The Lyegrove Lodge of Mark Master Masons, which met at the Town Hall, had been established by 1888.¹¹⁷ The Tyndall Lodge of Freemasons also met at the Town Hall in the late 1890s.¹¹⁸

Horse races were organised on the Ridings in 1852, when 2,000 people gathered to watch three races on both the flat and over hurdles over the one-mile course.¹¹⁹ Flat and hurdle races were again run on the common in 1853 and 1854.¹²⁰ Attempts were made to re-establish the races as steeplechases in 1867,¹²¹ and again in 1869.¹²² Three meets were held in 1870, steeplechases in the spring on a course south-west of the town, and races over flat and hurdles on the common in the summer.¹²³ Although another successful series of steeplechases were held in 1871, when a large grandstand was erected at the top of Wickham's hill near the town,¹²⁴ this appears to have been the last set of races organised for the town. Part of the course on Sodbury common, between Windmill Cottage and Starveall farm, was shown on Ordnance Survey maps.¹²⁵ A separate series of steeplechases were

¹¹¹ *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 8 May 1867.

¹¹² *Western Daily Press*, 8 June 1897.

¹¹³ *Western Daily Press*, 6 Mar. 1926, 28 Oct. 1926 & 27 Nov. 1926, 6 Jan. , 15 Jan, & 5 Feb. 1927.

¹¹⁴ *Bristol Mercury*, 25 Feb. 1896.

¹¹⁵ *Western Daily Press*, 18 July 1932.

¹¹⁶ Gavin Holman, *Brass Bands of the British Isles 1800–2018: A Historical Directory* (self-published, 2018).

¹¹⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 22 Mar. 1888,.

¹¹⁸ *Western Daily Press*, 8 June 1897,.

¹¹⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 16 Oct. 1852.

¹²⁰ *Wells Journal*, 2 July 1853; *Bristol Mercury*, 27 May & 10 June 1854.

¹²¹ *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 22 May & 30 May 1867.

¹²² *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 28 Apr. 1869.

¹²³ *Bristol Times & Mirror*, 14 Apr. & 23 Aug. 1870; *Western Daily Press*, 7 Sep. 1870.

¹²⁴ *Bristol Mercury*, 15 Apr. 1871;

¹²⁵ OS Maps, 1:25000, Glos. LXIX.6–7 (1882, 1903, 1921 edns.).

organised by the Beaufort Hunt which met at different places within the wide area over which the hunt ranged.¹²⁶

The town achieved some notable success in a range of sporting activities in the late 19th century thanks in no small part to the achievements of members of the Grace family, who lived in the town. George Frederick Grace, younger brother of W. G. Grace and with him one of the famous 'Three Graces', played for Chipping Sodbury in 1869.¹²⁷ Their older brother Alfred was a doctor in Chipping Sodbury and a regular competitor in all sporting activities, captaining the cricket team and also playing football, rugby and running for the town, and was renowned as a fine horseman.¹²⁸ In many of these athletic exploits he was joined by his sons Alfred and Gerald.¹²⁹

A cricket club was formed in Chipping Sodbury in 1863,¹³⁰ although Sodbury men had previously formed a team with Yate, playing at a field in Yate.¹³¹ A rough cricket ground had been established at the southern end of the Stub Riding by the 1890s.¹³² In 2018 the club played in the Gloucestershire County League.

A cross-country running club, the United Chipping and Old Sodbury Harriers, was established in 1882.¹³³ Men of Chipping Sodbury also took part in regional athletics meets.¹³⁴

A football club was founded in 1885.¹³⁵ They were called Chipping Sodbury Rovers in 1896.¹³⁶ The club were elected to the Gloucestershire Football Association (based in Bristol) in 1898,¹³⁷ and competed in the North Bristol & District League.¹³⁸ The team joined the Wotton-under-Edge & District League in its inaugural year,¹³⁹ although in the 1907–8 season a the club were unable to play any matches, and were replaced in that season's fixtures by a team of amateurs from the town.¹⁴⁰ Having won the second division of both the Wotton League and the Dursley & District League in 1912–3, the club entered the Bristol & District League in the 1913–4 season, later called the Bristol & Suburban League. Despite promotion to the Western League in 1950, the club folded in 1954. Reformed in 1959, the club joined the

¹²⁶ *Wiltshire Independent*, 7 Apr. 1870.

¹²⁷ *Wisden on Grace: An Anthology*, ed. Jonathan Rice (2015), 21.

¹²⁸ *Wisden on Grace*, 185.

¹²⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 10 Mar. 1885.

¹³⁰ *Bristol Daily Post*, 21 July & 5 Aug. 1863.

¹³¹ *Bath Chron.* 8 Sep. 1859; *Bristol Mercury*, 17 Sep. 1859 & 7 Apr. 1860.

¹³² TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 24.

¹³³ *Bristol Mercury*, 31 Jan. 1882; *Western Daily Press*, 24 Aug. 1882.

¹³⁴ *Western Daily Press*, 13 Aug. 1877 & 25 July 1887; *Bristol Mercury*, 28 June 1886 & 1 June 1887.

¹³⁵ *Bristol Mercury*, 10 & 23 Mar. 1885.

¹³⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 5 Oct. 1896.

¹³⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 9 Aug. 1898.

¹³⁸ *Bristol Mercury*, 3 Oct. 1898.

¹³⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 6 July 1905.

¹⁴⁰ *Bristol Mercury*, 15 July 1907.

Dursley & Wotton League, gaining promotion to the Bristol Combination in 1991, the Glos. County League in 2008, and returning to the Western League in 2015.¹⁴¹ In 2018 the club competed in the Western League Premier Division.¹⁴²

A rugby team was formed in 1895, which again featured the ubiquitous Alfred Grace, but may not have played any subsequent fixtures.¹⁴³ A rugby club was formed in 1949. Having won the Gloucestershire League in the 2017–8, the club competed in the Western Counties North League in the following season.¹⁴⁴ A tennis club was formed in 1954, playing at the facilities provided on the Ridings by Amalgamated Roadstone Corporation, where they still played in 2018.¹⁴⁵

A golf club was instituted, playing on a 9-hole course at on the Stub Riding in 1905.¹⁴⁶ The course was closed at the outbreak of the First World War, and another 9-hole course was opened in 1933. This course was destroyed when the Ridings were requisitioned and ploughed during the Second World War.¹⁴⁷ A new 9-hole course was laid out on the common in 1954, and in 1971 an 18-hole course was established on the Mead Rising.

Some 34 a. of the Stub Riding were set aside for use as playing fields in the 20th century, and they subsequently became the homes of the principal sports clubs of the town. They are managed by the Chipping Sodbury Town Trust. There was a privately-owned swimming pool in Chipping Sodbury in 1938.

A cinema was established behind a house on the south side of Broad Street c.1919. The wooden building housing the cinema was blown down in 1928, and was replaced with another wooden hall.¹⁴⁸ In 1946 district and parish councillor H. J. Dando purchased the Chipping Sodbury cinema in order to prevent the showing of films on Sundays.¹⁴⁹ The Glen Cinema was opened near at the southern end of Hounds Lane in 1950,¹⁵⁰ but it was demolished as part of the development of this area in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁵¹ The development of the new shopping centre in Yate,

¹⁴¹ 'Our History', *Chipping Sodbury Town Football Club*, <<http://www.cstfc.co.uk/our-history.html>> [accessed 25 Nov. 2018].

¹⁴² 'Chipping Sodbury Town Football Club', *Toolstation Western League*, <<http://www.toolstationleague.com/club.php?selection=Chipping%20Sodbury%20Town>> [accessed 25 Nov. 2018].

¹⁴³ *Bristol Mercury*, 15 Oct. 1885.

¹⁴⁴ *Chipping Sodbury RFC*, <<http://www.pitchero.com/clubs/chippingsodbury>> [accessed 25 Nov. 2018].

¹⁴⁵ 'Club History', *Sodbury Tennis Club*, <<http://www.sodburytennisclub.org.uk/about/club-history/>> [accessed 25 Nov. 2018].

¹⁴⁶ *VCH Glos. II*, 305; 'Club history', *Chipping Sodbury Golf Club*, <<http://www.chippingsodburygolfclub.co.uk/history.php>> [access 25 Nov. 2018].

¹⁴⁷ See Economic History.

¹⁴⁸ *Western Daily Press*, 11 Dec. 1928.

¹⁴⁹ *Citizen*, 9 Oct. 1946.

¹⁵⁰ GA, P300a PC 1/10, 147.

¹⁵¹ See Settlement.

which included a cinema, reduced demand for entertainment facilities within Chipping Sodbury.¹⁵²

Education

Grammar School

There was a schoolmaster at Chipping Sodbury by 1594.¹⁵³ By an order of 1629 the bailiffs were to pay £20 a year from the Town Lands revenues towards the employment of a schoolmaster, who was to teach the children of the town for free.¹⁵⁴ A further £10 a year was added by a bequest of Robert Davis of Little Sodbury, who stipulated that the children of the school were to be over the age of 10 and to be taught by the master for five years or more.¹⁵⁵ The bequest was found to be £20 in arrears in 1694,¹⁵⁶ but it was evidently still being paid in 1700, when Davis' heir met with several townsmen to nominate two poor boys to be taught at the school under the terms of the will.¹⁵⁷ Boys continued to be appointed under the terms of the will until 1728, but no mention of the extra £10 a year was made on the appointment of a new master in 1737.¹⁵⁸ The augmentation was considered lost by 1764, however, when an extra £5 a year was awarded to the school master from the revenues of the Town Lands charity.¹⁵⁹ This was apparently for the employment of an assistant master,¹⁶⁰ but was discontinued in 1775.¹⁶¹ In 1782 a writing master was appointed with a salary of 12 guineas,¹⁶² who remained in post until 1793.¹⁶³ In the same year the retiring schoolmaster was granted a pension of 10 guineas a year for the rest of his life, besides the payment of £20 a year to his successor.¹⁶⁴

Charles Tarry, appointed schoolmaster in 1690,¹⁶⁵ was prosecuted in 1694 as a notorious drunkard. Stories were told of how Tarry had to be helped back to his home to protect him from the hooting of the children he was supposed to teach, who had also been known to pin mocking papers to his breeches.¹⁶⁶ In his defence Tarry alleged that he had fallen foul of factional politics within the town, accusing his

¹⁵² See Wallis, *Yate*, 87.

¹⁵³ GA, GDR/73; CCED, ID 236810.

¹⁵⁴ GA, D2071/L8.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, PROB 11/363/273; GA, D2071/L11.

¹⁵⁶ GA, D2071/L11

¹⁵⁷ GA, D2071/B6.

¹⁵⁸ GA, D2071/B6.

¹⁵⁹ GA, D2071/B5, 5.

¹⁶⁰ GA, D2071/A5.

¹⁶¹ GA, D2071/B5, 28.

¹⁶² GA, D2071/B5, 35.

¹⁶³ GA, D2071/A5.

¹⁶⁴ GA, D2071/B5, 34.

¹⁶⁵ GA, Hockaday Abs. cccxlii.

¹⁶⁶ GA, GDR/B4/1/2239.

prosecutors of being anabaptists and convicted felons. Tarry had apparently been turned out of the school two years previously, but continued trying to teach his pupils in rented private rooms. Meanwhile the town had appointed Solomon Moses in Tarry's place, whom Tarry also accused of anabaptism. Despite his protests, Tarry was ejected from the place in 1695. In his place was appointed John Watts, who was to receive the £30 due to the schoolmaster in return for freely teaching the children of the town grammar, writing, accounting, and to read the Bible. He was also required to make all the rates and the engross all the accounts of the town's officers during his term.¹⁶⁷ John Shellard, who had been presented to the diocesan authorities for teaching in the school without a licence for one week in 1694,¹⁶⁸ was appointed schoolmaster on the same terms as Watts in 1697, and he would remain in post for the next 40 years.¹⁶⁹

Orders passed by the bailiff and burgesses in 1782 stipulated that the schoolmaster was to be elected by the bailiff and burgesses for a period of three years at a time.¹⁷⁰ A committee was to be formed each year comprising the bailiff and four of the seven senior bailiff's burgesses, and only children with a ticket from the committee were to be admitted. To be eligible for admission, the children had to have been born within the town to parents with a right of settlement there, and each boy was required to be able to read the Bible before gaining admission to the school. Once admitted, the children were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic for free. The children were expected to attend a place of public worship and to be taught the Anglican catechism every week.¹⁷¹

Since long before 1634 the school room was located within a tenement in the Garret, standing in the middle of the high street near to the entrance of Hounds Lane, where it can be seen depicted on a map of 1768.¹⁷² By 1789 the building was in a ruinous state, and its poor condition and a desire to improve the road through the town resulted in its removal to a new site on the south side of the high street, previously occupied by the Lamb inn.¹⁷³ A large house was built for the master on the high street with a school room behind it which could accommodate up to 50 boys.¹⁷⁴

Thomas Smith was appointed master in 1818 and perpetual curate of the parish in 1822.¹⁷⁵ Previous masters had been required upon appointment to teach reading, writing and arithmetic as well as classical languages, and had been subject

¹⁶⁷ GA, D2071/B6.

¹⁶⁸ GA, GDR/B4/1/2240.

¹⁶⁹ GA, D2071/B6.

¹⁷⁰ GA, D2071/B5, 30–2.

¹⁷¹ GA, D2071/B5, 36–9.

¹⁷² GA, D2071/E39, f. 42; D2071/L11; D1610/P18. See Settlement.

¹⁷³ GA, D2071/B6, 2 July, 19 July, 27 Aug & 10 Dec. 1789.

¹⁷⁴ *17th Rep. Com. Char.*, 385.

¹⁷⁵ GA, Hockaday Abs. cccxliii.

to the authority of the town's corporation, including the power to dismiss them. Smith had agreed to these terms, but then claimed that his subsequent licensing by the bishop represented an appointment in the office for life without any restrictions or qualifications. He expelled several pupils at his discretion, and advertised vacancies to prospective parents. The issue appears to have been the wording of the decree of 1629, that the schoolmaster's salary be paid to him in return for teaching the townsmen's children their grammar freely. Smith interpreted this to mean that he was only bound to teach classical languages, contrary to the long-standing practice at the school.¹⁷⁶

The controversy remained unresolved until the visit of the commissioners to enquire into charities in October 1826, when Smith was said to have made several fruitless efforts to have the school reported a free grammar school. However, the commissioners, noting the previous requirement to teach the three Rs, doubted whether it could be called a grammar school 'in the strict sense'.¹⁷⁷ At the same time, Smith complained that the 'inferior condition' of the town's children had prevented him from taking in paying boarders. A month later the corporation offered to double Smith's salary, from £20 to £40, if he would agree to teach reading, writing and arithmetic, and submit to the authority of the corporation.¹⁷⁸ When Smith refused to cooperate the corporation dismissed him. Despite this, Smith petitioned Chancery requesting that they declare the school a grammar school for the purpose of teaching Latin and Greek.¹⁷⁹

As a consequence, a new scheme was drawn up in 1831, and confirmed by an order in Chancery in 1832.¹⁸⁰ It required the master to be a graduate of an English university and a clergyman, to teach 20 boys of the town for free between the ages of 9 and 15. The school was to be a traditional grammar school, and the master was only bound to teach Latin and Greek to 20 boys of the town. However, he was also to teach a 'sound English education, Commercial or otherwise, suited to the wants of the present time' upon payment of 15s. a quarter per pupil.¹⁸¹ Noting that the £20 settled upon the master in 1694 represented one-quarter of the revenues of the Town Lands at that time, the court ordered that the master's salary should be increased to £93 a year, one-quarter of the revenues in 1832.¹⁸² A subsequent suit, resolved in 1837, established that if the revenues of the charity lands fell then the master's salary should also fall in proportion.¹⁸³ Following the adoption of the scheme, no children attended the school for an education in the Classics, and the bailiff and burgesses

¹⁷⁶ GA, D2071/L14.

¹⁷⁷ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 385.

¹⁷⁸ GA, D2071/L14.

¹⁷⁹ GA, D2071/E39, f. 65.

¹⁸⁰ GA, D2071/L14.

¹⁸¹ GA, D2071/L14.

¹⁸² GA, D2071/E39, ff. 72–9.

¹⁸³ GA, D2071/E39, ff. 79–84.

paid an extra £20 a year to Smith in order that 20 children might receive the English and commercial education that the townsmen desired from the school. The costs of the Chancery suit, which had to be paid for by the raising of the mortgage, reduced the income left for Smith to £57 a year.¹⁸⁴ This situation continued for the next 26 years until Smith's death in 1857, at which time the school fell into abeyance.¹⁸⁵

Chipping Sodbury Endowed School

In 1861 the trustees of the grammar school appealed to the charity commissioners to establish a new scheme for the management of the school.¹⁸⁶ In 1867 a new scheme was adopted for the renamed the Chipping Sodbury Endowed School, and the trustees advertised for a new master early in 1869.¹⁸⁷ Under the new scheme, the master was to be a graduate of one of the English universities, to have a salary of £100, to reside in the town, and not to accept any other office or benefice.¹⁸⁸ If funds permitted, the trustees were also to appoint assistant masters. The school became mixed for the first time, open to boys and girls of the neighbourhood between the ages of 8 and 16, who were to pay between 15s. and 30s. a quarter in fees, half of which was to be paid to the master to augment his salary, the other half to be used for paying salaries of other teachers or for the expenses of the school. The curriculum was to comprise reading, writing, spelling, English grammar and composition, history and geography, Latin, French and German, with an option to study Greek as well, elementary mathematics, arithmetic, algebra, land mensuration and surveying. The school was to teach the principles of the Church of England, unless parents registered in writing their conscientious objection to this.

A report to Parliament early in the 1870s suggested that a third-grade school would be of most use to the town.¹⁸⁹ The first master recruited 40 boys to the school, but left having failed to get his salary increased.¹⁹⁰ Under his successor the numbers attending the school fell to just seven boys.¹⁹¹ Between 1883 and 1895 attendance at the school varied between 12 and 22 boys a year, a small proportion of whom were boarders.¹⁹² In 1890 the gross income of the school was £144.¹⁹³ A new scheme under the Endowed Schools Act was sought by the trustees, but ultimately aborted over

¹⁸⁴ TNA, ED 35/873.

¹⁸⁵ *Return of Amount of Subscriptions, Donations and Collections in Places of Worship Received by Each School Aided by Grants from Privy Council, 1860 and 1861* (Parliamentary Papers, 1862, (186), XLIII), 33.

¹⁸⁶ See Charities.

¹⁸⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 28 Aug. 1869.

¹⁸⁸ Charity Commission, *The Scheme of the Chipping Sodbury Endowed School* (Gloucester, 1869); GA, D2071/E44.

¹⁸⁹ *Schemes Presented from Counties to Endowed Schools Commissioners*, (Parliamentary Papers, 1874 (203), LI), 8.

¹⁹⁰ TNA, ED 35/873.

¹⁹¹ TNA, ED 35/873.

¹⁹² TNA, ED 35/873.

their objections to some of the provisions made by the scheme for the raising of fees.¹⁹⁴ A new scheme was adopted for the Town Lands charity in 1899, appointing a new body of 11 trustees and governors of the school, comprising two representatives of the county council, three of the parish council, one of the rural district council, one of the council of the Bristol University College, and four co-opted trustees who were to be resident or carrying on business within the town.¹⁹⁵ At the end of the century the attendance at the Grammar School, never considerable, began a gradual decline, from 30 in 1898, to 18 in 1901, to 8 in 1905.¹⁹⁶

Following the death of the headmaster in 1905,¹⁹⁷ the school was once again closed.¹⁹⁸ At this time there were said to be only six boys attending the school, which still consisted of a single small and dilapidated schoolroom, and the education provided was felt to be of little better standard than was offered by the National School.¹⁹⁹ Doubts were expressed about the viability of appointing a new headmaster and reopening the school, and discussions were held about how else to apply the school's endowment to meet the needs of the town.²⁰⁰ The county council, as the local education authority,²⁰¹ favoured replacing the grammar school with a new higher elementary school for boys and girls, with any remaining money from the endowment to be dedicated to the award of scholarships for the children of the town to secondary schools in Bristol.²⁰² The closure of the school was strongly opposed by the parish council, but doubts were expressed about the support within the town for the raising of any local rate to support the costs of an expanded school,²⁰³ while the Board of Education could not countenance the continuation of the grammar school under its existing scheme.²⁰⁴ Subsequently the county council rejected an application by the trustees for a grant towards maintaining a new school in the town,²⁰⁵ and the trustees were advised to set aside the question for two or three years, during which time they could allow the profits of the endowment to accrue.²⁰⁶

A new application to re-establish the school as a mixed higher elementary school was made in 1908, to provide day and evening classes to children aged 12 and

¹⁹³ *Return of Foundations in England Recorded as Subject to the Endowed School Acts* (Parliamentary Papers, 1892 (99), LX), 21.

¹⁹⁴ TNA, ED 35/873.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, ED 35/873.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, ED 35/872.

¹⁹⁷ *Western Daily Press*, 22 Dec. 1905.

¹⁹⁸ TNA, ED 35/872.

¹⁹⁹ TNA, ED 35/872.

²⁰⁰ TNA, ED 35/873.

²⁰¹ TNA, ED 35/872. See Elementary Education.

²⁰² TNA, ED 35/873.

²⁰³ TNA, ED 35/873.

²⁰⁴ TNA, ED 35/872.

²⁰⁵ TNA, ED 35/873.

²⁰⁶ TNA, ED 35/872.

over.²⁰⁷ New school buildings would be erected on the existing site to accommodate these pupils, and one-quarter of the annual income of the endowment would be set aside for the award of scholarships to secondary schools in Bristol for children of Chipping Sodbury.²⁰⁸ An enquiry held in the town in 1909 once again cast doubt upon the long-term viability of a higher elementary school in the town.²⁰⁹ Consequently the trustees of the grammar school applied to the Board of Education in 1911 to re-establish it under a new scheme.²¹⁰ It was argued that demand for secondary education in the district was sufficient to merit a mixed secondary school that could accommodate 80 children, although the trustees initially intended to open with half this number.²¹¹

A new scheme for the school was approved in October 1912,²¹² and the school reopened in the following January, initially with 24 pupils (six of whom had been awarded free places).²¹³ By April 1913 there were 31 pupils on the register, 15 of whom were from neighbouring parishes.²¹⁴ A headmaster was appointed with a salary of £300, as well as the use of the school house for his residence, and two female assistant teachers were awarded, with salaries of £120 and £90 respectively.²¹⁵ A significant expansion of the facilities was proposed, to comprise four new classrooms, a hall, a laboratory, a cooking room, handicraft room, and facilities for the teachers.²¹⁶ One of the school's impediments under its former scheme had been the limited resources available to it beyond its endowment, with a small number of pupils paying low fees, and the local population rejecting any suggestion that there should be a local rate raised. Under the new scheme a fee of £8 per pupil would be charged, although free places would also be made available. The endowment produced £145 a year, and a number of local inhabitants had guaranteed supplementary funding worth £165 for the first three years of the school.²¹⁷ A misunderstanding arose between the school governors and the county council concerning this money later in 1913.²¹⁸ The guarantors had pledged the funds only upon the understanding that they would only be called upon to make up any deficit in other sources of funding, but the county council would not consider making a grant to the school unless the guarantee fund had first been received.

²⁰⁷ TNA, ED 35/873.

²⁰⁸ TNA, ED 35/873.

²⁰⁹ See below, Elementary Education.

²¹⁰ TNA, ED 35/872–3.

²¹¹ TNA, ED 35/872.

²¹² TNA, ED 35/873; GA, K696/2/60.

²¹³ TNA, ED 35/872.

²¹⁴ TNA, ED 35/872.

²¹⁵ TNA, ED 35/872.

²¹⁶ TNA, ED 35/872.

²¹⁷ TNA, ED 35/872.

²¹⁸ GA, K696/2/60.

In June 1914 there were 35 boys and 24 girls on the school's register, aged between nine and 16, some 52% of whom were drawn from Chipping Sodbury and the rest from neighbouring parishes.²¹⁹ Eleven of the pupils held free places, another held a scholarship awarded by the governors, and three held county council exhibitions for pupil teachers.²²⁰ Following the expansion, the school now comprised a large hall, six classrooms divided between two floors, a housecraft room, and a separate woodwork room stood on the other side of the playground. The curriculum consisted of English language and literature, maths, French, Latin, history, geography, art, housecraft, woodwork, and science, although the teaching of the latter had been hampered by the lack of a laboratory.²²¹ On the recommendation of the inspector, Latin was removed from the curriculum to enable extra tuition in English and French.²²²

Under the terms of the 1918 Education Act of 1918 the county council took over responsibility for funding the school in 1919,²²³ when the number of governors appointed by the council was increased from two to four.²²⁴ By the summer of 1920 there were 130 pupils registered at the school, and this increased to 149 in the following year after the closure of a local private school necessitated a temporary reduction of the minimum age of entry from 8 to 7.²²⁵ In order to supply extra accommodation for the increased number of pupils, the school rented the New Hall in the High Street,²²⁶ and purchased a former army hut from the RAF depot at Yate, which also enabled one of the existing classrooms to be equipped as a laboratory.²²⁷ The freehold of Painter's Mead, the field behind the school which had been used as a playing field since it opened, was purchased in 1927 to provide space for the future expansion of the school.²²⁸ However, in 1930 the county council proposed to relocate the school to a larger site near Yate railway station as part of its reorganisation of secondary education in the county.²²⁹ There was strong opposition to the move within the town, but the Board of Education was nevertheless on the point of sanctioning the purchase of land in 1931 when a change of government policy cancelled the move.²³⁰ There were 153 children at the school in 1931, of whom 3 were

²¹⁹ TNA, ED 35/872.

²²⁰ TNA, ED 35/872.

²²¹ TNA, ED 35/872.

²²² TNA, ED 35/872.

²²³ 8 & 9 Geo. V, c.39.

²²⁴ TNA, ED 35/872.

²²⁵ TNA, ED 35/872.

²²⁶ GA, D6717/2/1; D6717/4/2.

²²⁷ TNA, ED 35/872.

²²⁸ TNA, ED 35/4309; GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/1.

²²⁹ *Glouc. J.* 5 Apr. 1930.

²³⁰ TNA, ED 35/4309; *Glouc. J.* 29 Sep. 1& 3 Oct. 1931.

boarders and 8 sixth formers²³¹ The majority of children at the school left the school before completing the full course and without sitting the examinations for the school certificate: 64 per cent of boys and 69 per cent of girls in 1928–9, and 56 per cent of boys and 42 per cent of girls in 1929–30.²³²

In 1933 the county council again considered the provision of a new school. Local support for retaining the school in the town, and changes in the distribution of the population of the district, meant that the council then favoured expanding the existing school within the town.²³³ Another plot of land to the south of Painter's Mead was purchased, increasing the existing site of the school to c.5 a.²³⁴ The numbers on the school's registers were growing rapidly as an increasing number of people moved from Bristol into south Gloucestershire. The roll had risen to 188 by 1934, and it was anticipated that the new school needed to accommodate 300 children.²³⁵ In light of this, the county architect argued that the existing site was far too small for a larger school, and it was decided instead to utilise 12½ a. of a site already owned by the county council at Gaunts Field.²³⁶ The new school was opened in 1938, providing accommodation for 400 pupils, with nine classrooms, two laboratories, a lecture room, dedicated rooms for art, handicrafts and domestic sciences, a large hall, a gym, and a library.²³⁷

New articles of government were adopted for the school in 1948, appointing four Foundation governors, five governors representing the county council, one the rural district council, and two Sodbury parish council.²³⁸ Under the terms of the local government order uniting the two parishes of Chipping Sodbury and Old Sodbury, the governors representing Sodbury parish council were to be drawn from Chipping Sodbury ward.²³⁹ The school's numbers continued to grow rapidly as it served a wide area of south Gloucestershire, and by 1949 there were 540 pupils at the school, of whom only 21 were from the town itself.²⁴⁰ Most lived within 10 miles of the town, but more than a quarter (145) lived more than 10 miles away, including 17 who lived over 18 miles away.²⁴¹ A fleet of buses was required to transport the pupils to and from school.²⁴² Although the majority of pupils at the school were thought to be more than capable of achieving a School Certificate, the ready availability of well-

²³¹ GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/1.

²³² GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/1.

²³³ TNA, ED 35/4309; GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/2.

²³⁴ TNA, ED 35/4309; GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/2.

²³⁵ TNA, ED 35/4309.

²³⁶ TNA, ED 35/4309.

²³⁷ TNA, ED 35/4310.

²³⁸ TNA, ED 109/8795; GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/2.

²³⁹ TNA, ED 31/610; GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/2.

²⁴⁰ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴¹ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴² TNA, ED 109/8795.

paid jobs in the area meant that many children were leaving school before turning 16, and the Sixth Form only contained 38 pupils.²⁴³ The majority of children took up clerical roles upon leaving the school, with a smaller number leaving to take work with one of the many engineering firms in the area.²⁴⁴ Between 1946 and 1949, 12 pupils left the school for university, seven for teacher training colleges, and four for another further education institution.²⁴⁵

Despite the new premises within a decade the school was facing a problem with capacity.²⁴⁶ Use of the well-stocked library was hampered by the need to employ it as a teaching room for much of the week.²⁴⁷ Meeting these challenges had been hampered by a long-term illness of the headmaster, who died in 1947,²⁴⁸ and a high turnover of staff, with 62 members of staff being appointed in the ten years between 1939 and 1949.²⁴⁹ In the latter year, there were 25 members of staff employed at the school, of whom six were women.²⁵⁰ The curriculum in 1949 comprised English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious instruction, French, Latin, Greek (in the Sixth Form), art, housecraft and needlework, handicrafts, music, and physical education.²⁵¹ There was also a school choir, and children were taken to Bristol to learn to swim.²⁵²

By 1959 the numbers at the school had stabilised somewhat, and there were 571 pupils attending the school.²⁵³ These children continued to be drawn from a very wide area across south Gloucestershire, including nine who travelled from Pilning, 22 miles away.²⁵⁴ The majority of children came from the residential areas bordering Bristol, with 146 travelling every day from Downend and 130 from Filton, while 24 were from Chipping Sodbury itself, 57 from Yate, and five from Old Sodbury and Little Sodbury together.²⁵⁵ The school population was drawn from a total of 18 Gloucestershire parishes, and four children travelled from outside the county.²⁵⁶ The school remained crowded, although expansion of the facilities was underway.²⁵⁷ The school's catchment area was expected to change with the opening of Filton High School in that year, although it was anticipated that the increasing population of

²⁴³ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴⁴ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴⁵ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴⁶ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴⁷ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁴⁸ *Western Daily Press*, 26 June 1947.

²⁴⁹ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁵⁰ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁵¹ TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁵² TNA, ED 109/8795.

²⁵³ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁵⁴ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁵⁵ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁵⁶ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁵⁷ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

Winterbourne and Downend would counterbalance the loss of children to the new school.²⁵⁸ The pupils were divided into three forms according to their 11+ results when they first entered the school, and studied a common curriculum for the first three years.²⁵⁹ At the end of the third year the pupils were divided into three streams: the 'M' stream, intended to lead to arts subjects in the Sixth form; the 'S' stream, intended to lead to maths and the sciences in the Sixth Form; and the 'T' stream, intended to leave with O-levels.²⁶⁰ The curriculum remained similar to that of ten years earlier, although economics had been added and Greek dropped in the Sixth Form; the teaching of German in the Sixth Form had also recently been abandoned.²⁶¹ The Sixth Form numbered 73 in 1959. Between 1956 and 1959 ten per cent of the school's leavers had gone to university, while apprenticeships in the aircraft industry and employment in local engineering firms were also popular options.²⁶² The school's foundation was used to make grants to support the continued education and training of school leavers.²⁶³ The academic life of the school was supplemented by a number of clubs and societies, and there were regular cultural and educational visits, which in 1957–8 included trips to London, Paris, and the Isle of Wight.²⁶⁴

The school was reorganised as a comprehensive school in 1970, and was renamed Chipping Sodbury School. A proposal was made to rename the school Chipping Sodbury Gaunts School, so that the initials of the school might remain the same, but this was not acceded to.²⁶⁵ There were 843 pupils attending the school in 1994, of whom 163 were over the age of 16.²⁶⁶ In 2010 there were 935 pupils registered at the school. In 2018 there were 740 children on the school roll.²⁶⁷ The school continued to benefit from the proceeds of the endowment, which in 2019 was used to purchase equipment and books, subsidise educational visits, and support pupils going into higher education or training after leaving school.²⁶⁸

²⁵⁸ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁵⁹ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁶⁰ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁶¹ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁶² TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁶³ TNA, ED 109/9311/14.

²⁶⁴ GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/2.

²⁶⁵ GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/1/3.

²⁶⁶ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140614003322/http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/archive/schools_94/h901/x9014502.shtml> [accessed 22 Feb. 2019].

²⁶⁷ Ofsted report, 2018.

²⁶⁸ 'Chipping Sodbury Endowed School Foundation', Chipping Sodbury School <<http://www.chippingsodbury.school.com/Endowed-School-Foundation>> [accessed 1 Feb. 2019].

Elementary education

Before 1870

A parish Sunday school was established in 1787,²⁶⁹ and a boarding school for young ladies was set up by Mrs Cooper, previously of Corsham (Wilts.), in 1789.²⁷⁰ A Sunday school associated with the Baptist chapel was initiated in 1807.²⁷¹ In 1818, besides the grammar school, the parish contained two or three day schools, supporting 121 children, and there were two boarding schools for girls.²⁷² There was also the Sunday school managed by the Baptist chapel but open to all sects, which taught 120 children. The Church of England Sunday school had been abandoned by this date because it was said that the poor preferred to send their children to the Baptists' Sunday school instead. In 1825 there were 119 pupils registered at the Sunday school, which rose to 279 in 1836; in 1839 there were 260 pupils registered at the school, but about 180 attended each Sunday.²⁷³ There were four private day schools and two private boarding schools in 1842,²⁷⁴ one of which was probably the ladies' boarding school maintained at Melbourne House in the 1850s.²⁷⁵ In 1852 the town was said to contain a Church of England girls' school maintained in a small and inconvenient room in the town, several private dame schools,²⁷⁶ and the Baptists' Sunday school, which in 1852 was said to have instructed over 2,000 children since its opening 45 years earlier.²⁷⁷ In 1865 there were 165 pupils at the Baptists' Sunday school.²⁷⁸

A National school was established in the town in 1852 on a site, donated by the lord of the manor, at the west end of Hatters Lane.²⁷⁹ There was a single schoolroom with separate playgrounds for boys and girls, and a master's house, separated from the schoolhouse by the master's yard.²⁸⁰ The National Society contributed a grant of £40,²⁸¹ and the government another £125, leaving the inhabitants to find the remaining £315 costs.²⁸² In 1860 the income of the National School was £84, comprising £38 in donations and subscriptions, and £46 in fees from the pupils. A new headmaster, William Bacon, was appointed in 1867, who found

²⁶⁹ *Bath Chron.* 14 June 1787.

²⁷⁰ *Bath Chron.* 8 Jan. 1789, 7 July 1791.

²⁷¹ GA, D6717/4/18; D6716/7/2/1.

²⁷² *Educ. of Poor Digest*, 311.

²⁷³ GA, D6717/7/3.

²⁷⁴ *Pigot's Dir.* (1842), 127.

²⁷⁵ *Bristol Mercury*, 23 Dec. 1854; 14 Mar. 1857.

²⁷⁶ TNA, 103/107/13, 245–6.

²⁷⁷ GA, D6717/2/1.

²⁷⁸ GA, D6717/7/3.

²⁷⁹ TNA, 103/107/13, 248; GA, P300 SC 1.

²⁸⁰ GA, D2186/114.

²⁸¹ CERC, NS/7/1/3011.

²⁸² TNA, 103/107/13, 248–50.

his new pupils 'very backward'.²⁸³ There were 118 pupils registered at the school in that year, and the average attendance at the school in the following year was 88.²⁸⁴ A night school was opened at the school in October 1867 with an attendance of 17.²⁸⁵ Attendance had risen to an average of 22 by the following year, but the initiative appears to have been short-lived.²⁸⁶

As with schools in rural parishes, school life responded to the rhythms of the countryside. Children were absent from school for a number of reasons, including gardening in the summer, potato picking, attending the market, hay-making, and meetings of the Beaufort Hunt.²⁸⁷ In May 1868 the school was closed for the festivities at Badminton when the Marquis of Worcester came of age.²⁸⁸ As a National school, it was affiliated with the Church of England, and the incumbent of the parish provided religious instruction to the children. Despite this, in 1869 there was a demand for education for the large number of Nonconformists' children in the parish, who only had a Sunday school, and in 1869 the son of 'one of the most virulent dissenters' was admitted to the school.²⁸⁹ In the following year it was noted by the HMI that instruction in the catechism had been discontinued, and should be restored.²⁹⁰ Consequently some parents requested to admit their children but withhold from the teaching of the catechism.²⁹¹

1870–1900

A pupil-teacher was appointed in 1870 to assist the headmaster of the National school,²⁹² which in 1872 could accommodate 122 children.²⁹³ An infant teacher was appointed in 1872,²⁹⁴ and a new classroom was added to the north of the school later that year to provide an extra 60 spaces for infants,²⁹⁵ for which grants of £60, £45 and £5 were received respectively from the government, the diocese and the National Society.²⁹⁶ The Infants' mistress resigned later in 1872, having failed to gain her certificate, and was replaced by Mrs Mary Anne Alice Bacon, the headmaster's

²⁸³ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁸⁴ *Return of Parishes in which Alterations have been made in Accommodation of Schools aided by Parliamentary Grants* (Parliamentary Papers, 1868–9 (124), XLVII), 5.

²⁸⁵ *Return of Parishes in which Alterations have been made in Accommodation of Schools aided by Parliamentary Grants* (Parliamentary Papers, 1868–9 (124), XLVII), 5.

²⁸⁶ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁸⁷ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁸⁸ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁸⁹ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁹⁰ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁹¹ GA, S300/1/1.

²⁹² GA, S300/1/1.

²⁹³ TNA, ED 21/5765.

²⁹⁴ GA, S300/1/2.

²⁹⁵ TNA, ED 21/5765; GA, D2186/114.

²⁹⁶ TNA, ED 103/107/13, 255–71; CERC, NS/7/1/3011.

wife.²⁹⁷ Despite this expansion in 1873 the Education Department suggested that another classroom should be built to accommodate children from Old Sodbury, if that parish became a contributory educational district of Chipping Sodbury. The Department estimated that the new district would need 40 new places, including 24 for Old Sodbury.²⁹⁸ However, the managers of the school objected that the attendance at the National school had never exceeded 163, including children from Old Sodbury, and that they had been dissuaded from building a larger Infants' school by the Education Department.²⁹⁹ Ultimately, the combination of Chipping Sodbury with Old Sodbury was rejected, although provision was made for 12 children of Old Sodbury who lived closer to Chipping Sodbury to attend the school there.³⁰⁰

Following a poor inspection of the Infants' school in 1873, it was threatened with a deduction in the grant. William Bacon was replaced as headmaster school by Edward Freeman in 1875, with Freeman's wife Sarah becoming the mistress of the Infants' school at the same time.³⁰¹ The new headmaster commented upon the low standards and ill-discipline that he found at the school, and two paid monitors were appointed in the following year to assist him.³⁰² The school's finances were described as deplorable in 1877, when the staff's salaries were paid late.³⁰³ The situation was addressed in 1879, when it was agreed to raise a voluntary rate for the school.³⁰⁴ At the same time the pupil-teacher was replaced by a fully qualified assistant master.³⁰⁵ The headmaster applied for the appointment of two more monitors to assist with the lower forms later in that year.³⁰⁶ The National school was described as 'oppressively full' in 1880, with an average attendance of 104 from the 117 on the registers.³⁰⁷ There were 53 children registered at the Infants' school in 1882.³⁰⁸ Outbreaks of measles and fever in 1883 caused the closure of the school on 74 occasions.³⁰⁹ The Baptists' Sunday school had 127 scholars in 1884, when the building of the New Hall in the High Street was commenced to provide it with new classrooms.³¹⁰ It opened in 1886, and there were 110 pupils at the school in 1889.³¹¹

²⁹⁷ GA, S300/1/2; TNA, RG 10/2577, 25.

²⁹⁸ TNA, ED 21/5765.

²⁹⁹ TNA, ED 21/5765.

³⁰⁰ See Old Sodbury, Education.

³⁰¹ GA, S300/1/1-2; TNA, RG 11/2509, 16.

³⁰² GA, S300/1/1.

³⁰³ GA, S300/1/1.

³⁰⁴ GA, S300/1/1.

³⁰⁵ GA, S300/1/1.

³⁰⁶ GA, S300/1/1.

³⁰⁷ GA, S300/1/1.

³⁰⁸ GA, S300/1/2.

³⁰⁹ GA, S300/1/1.

³¹⁰ GA, D6717/2/1; D6717/7/4-5.

³¹¹ GA, D6717/2/1.

The numbers attending the National school fell again over the course of the 1880s, and by 1891 there were 97 on the registers.³¹² Following the adoption of the Government Fee Grant by the managers of the Infants' school in 1891, making it free to attend, 81 pupils were registered at the Infants' school, although this fell again to 68 in 1892, and 58 in 1898.³¹³ It was recommended by HMI in 1894 that the two monitors in the Infants' school should be replaced by an adult teacher, and an assistant mistress was appointed in their place.³¹⁴ There were on average 25 children from the workhouse who were receiving industrial education in 1895, supervised by a female industrial trainer who was paid an annual salary of £15.³¹⁵ The arrival of engineers and navies with their families during the building of the railway c.1898–1903 swelled the numbers at the National school again, to an average attendance of 151 in 1897.³¹⁶ The presence of the railway men's children was said to have caused a number of local parents to refrain from sending their children to the school.³¹⁷ In 1899 there were 180 children registered at the school, although an outbreak of scarlet fever in January of that year caused more than half to be absent,³¹⁸ and closed the National school and the Baptists' Sunday school for three weeks.³¹⁹ The National school was closed again in 1902 for an outbreak of whooping cough.³²⁰

The early 20th century

In the first decade of the 20th century, average attendance at the parish school varied between a low of 88 in 1900 and a high of 120 in 1909, when there were 110 and 133 pupils on the register respectively.³²¹ There were 60 pupils registered in the Infants' school in 1900, when an average of 52 attended; both of these figures fell respectively to 52 and 47 in 1909.³²² The parish school was taken over by the county council in 1903, from which time it was known as the Chipping Sodbury Church of England school.³²³ The Infants' department was instructed in 1905 no longer to admit children under the age of five into the school, having previously admitted children under the age of four.³²⁴ The closure of the Grammar School in 1906 provided an opportunity to reassess the educational facilities within the town. After a long period of decline, the parish school was felt to be fast improving under a new headmaster, and would

³¹² GA, S300/1/1.

³¹³ GA, S300/1/2.

³¹⁴ GA, S300/1/2.

³¹⁵ *Western Daily Press*, 1 June 1895.

³¹⁶ GA, S300/1/1.

³¹⁷ TNA, ED 21/5765.

³¹⁸ GA, S300/1/1.

³¹⁹ GA, DA33/100/3, 305.

³²⁰ GA, DA33/100/5, 323.

³²¹ TNA, ED 161/5848.

³²² TNA, ED 161/5848.

³²³ TNA, ED 161/5848; GA, S300/1/2.

³²⁴ GA, S300/1/2.

soon require enlarged premises, for which the small and dilapidated schoolroom of the Grammar School were not suitable.³²⁵ Alterations were made to the premises c.1907 with the erection of a new classroom and a new playground, providing space for 56 infants and 138 older children.³²⁶ Besides the need for increased accommodation, the closure of the Grammar School left the town and the district without any provision of higher education, although many children already travelled to Bristol for a secondary education.³²⁷ Rather than appointing a new headmaster to the grammar school, some instead favoured the establishment of a higher elementary school in the town, to which the endowment of the grammar school could be dedicated.³²⁸ However, the decision was deferred when it became apparent that there was little support for an increase in the local rates to support any new foundation.³²⁹

The question of secondary education in Chipping Sodbury was reopened in 1908, when the trustees of the grammar school applied to the Board once more for permission to dedicate the endowment to the foundation of a new higher elementary school in Chipping Sodbury.³³⁰ The Board of Education was keen for the question to be considered within the broader context of the provision of secondary education in south Gloucestershire. A well-attended enquiry was held in 1909 to consider the need for a new school in the town.³³¹ The new school would cater to a population of at least 7,000 in the surrounding district, a figure that would be doubled if the school also attracted children from parishes closer to Bristol, although this would make Chipping Sodbury a less suitable location.³³² While support for the establishment of a higher elementary school in Chipping Sodbury was strong, the Board of Education were keen for the inhabitants to consider establishing a secondary school instead. Crucially a secondary school could receive the funds of the former endowed school, which continued to accumulate in the hands of the trustees and which in 1909 amounted almost to £2,000, but which could not be made available to an elementary school.³³³ However, objections to the raising of a local rate to support the school proved an obstacle once more, while the county council felt that Chipping Sodbury was not a suitable location for a new secondary school that it was hoped would also serve parishes nearer to Bristol.³³⁴

³²⁵ TNA, ED 35/872.

³²⁶ TNA, ED 21/5765; ED 35/872; ED 161/5848.

³²⁷ TNA, ED 35/872.

³²⁸ TNA, ED 35/872. See Grammar School.

³²⁹ TNA, ED 35/872–3. See Grammar School.

³³⁰ TNA, ED 35/872–3.

³³¹ TNA, ED 21/5765.

³³² TNA, ED 21/5765.

³³³ TNA, ED 21/5765.

³³⁴ TNA, ED 35/873.

At the start of the 1920s there were a total of 179 children aged 3 and over registered at the school, and average attendance in 1920 was 156.³³⁵ In 1923 the curriculum consisted of the three Rs, history, geography, and physical education.³³⁶ A building adjoining the school was let by the local authority in 1925 for the teaching of handicrafts and domestic science to children at the school, and also from schools in Old Sodbury and Yate.³³⁷ Concerns were raised in 1926 about the size of the classes in the school and the weakness of the teachers in the lower school.³³⁸ By that date drawing, gardening and woodwork had been added to the curriculum.³³⁹ A new classroom for infants was proposed in 1928, but it was not proceeded with because of plans for the grammar school.³⁴⁰ Concerns were raised in 1929 about poor progress in the lower school and the overambitious nature of the curriculum for the older children, causing many pupils to struggle academically; however, the teaching had greatly improved by 1933.³⁴¹ Progress was still good in 1937, but it was suggested that too much emphasis was placed on reading challenging texts and not enough on practical activities, such as art.³⁴² Book-binding was added to the curriculum of technical subjects in 1937.³⁴³ The conditions at the school were by now very cramped,³⁴⁴ with 180 pupils on the register and an average attendance of 160.³⁴⁵ In particular, the middle classes of the school were taught in the same classroom, separated only by a curtain.³⁴⁶ In 1938 the infants' class numbered 56, taught by a monitor rather than a certified teacher.³⁴⁷

Since the Second World War

Under the 1944 Education Act³⁴⁸ the parish school became a controlled school, with a body of managers consisting of the incumbent of the parish and an appointee of the diocesan education committee, and two representatives each of the parish council and the local education authority.³⁴⁹ The Act also raised the school leaving age to 15, putting a further strain upon accommodation at the parish school. In order to ease this overcrowding, in 1946 the senior classes moved into the premises in the high

³³⁵ TNA, ED 161/5848.

³³⁶ TNA, ED 21/28732.

³³⁷ TNA, ED 70/828.

³³⁸ TNA, ED 21/28732.

³³⁹ TNA, ED 21/28732.

³⁴⁰ TNA, ED 21/28732.

³⁴¹ TNA, ED 21/28732.

³⁴² TNA, ED 21/51735.

³⁴³ TNA, ED 161/5848.

³⁴⁴ TNA, ED 21/51735.

³⁴⁵ TNA, ED 161/5848.

³⁴⁶ TNA, ED 21/51735.

³⁴⁷ TNA, ED 21/51735.

³⁴⁸ 7 & 8 Geo. VI, c.31.

³⁴⁹ TNA, ED 161/5848.

street vacated by the endowed school in 1938, leaving the infants and junior classes at the site on Hatters Lane.³⁵⁰ Despite being split between two sites, the school remained united under a single headmaster. Accommodation in the school was further increased with the erection of two Ministry of Works huts c.1952, each providing two new classrooms, one of which was erected at the old grammar school site and the other at Hatters Lane.³⁵¹ The adjacent New Hall was also rented in 1952 to provide further accommodation for the senior school.³⁵² In 1952 it was decided to divide the school into separate primary and secondary modern schools.³⁵³

In April 1953 the new primary school had 246 pupils, but this steadily fell to 208 in February 1960.³⁵⁴ The new classrooms installed in 1952 were utilised as a separate block for the infants. The four junior classes were accommodated in the old Victorian building where space was limited. There was no hall for assembly, dining or physical education, and indoor exercises had to be performed in a narrow corridor. There were six full-time teachers in 1960.³⁵⁵ With the closure of the secondary school in 1966, the junior classes of the primary school moved into the vacant site, while the infants moved into adjacent premises erected on the playing fields, facing Hounds Lane. The former site in Hatters Lane was closed in 1974, and reverted to the heirs of the Hartley family.³⁵⁶ The two sections became separate schools, called Painters Mead Infants School and St John's C. E. Junior School, but in 1990 they were once more amalgamated into a single primary school for children aged from three to 11, called St John's Mead Primary School. There were 312 pupils attending the school in 2001.³⁵⁷

A new instrument of government was adopted for the secondary school in January 1953,³⁵⁸ and the new school opened in the following April.³⁵⁹ The school was to serve a district comprising Acton Turville, Badminton, Chipping Sodbury, Coalpit Heath, Dodington, Horton, Iron Acton, Little Sodbury, Old Sodbury, Rangeworthy, Tormarton, Westerleigh, and Yate.³⁶⁰ Initially, it had been intended to group the new school with the grammar school, sharing governors. But the difference in the two schools' districts and character made this impractical.³⁶¹ Consequently the governing body comprised five representative governors appointed by the county council, at

³⁵⁰ TNA, ED 109/9311/5.

³⁵¹ TNA, ED 161/5848; GA, GCC/EDU/2/1/8/300/2/1.

³⁵² TNA, ED 161/5848.

³⁵³ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁵⁴ TNA, 161/5848.

³⁵⁵ TNA, 161/5848.

³⁵⁶ CERC, NS/7/1/3011.

³⁵⁷ Ofsted report, 2001.

³⁵⁸ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/3.

³⁵⁹ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁶⁰ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁶¹ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

least one of whom was to be a woman, two by Sodbury parish council, and one each by Sodbury rural district council, Westerleigh parish council, and Yate parish council, and five co-opted governors, at least one of whom was to be a woman.³⁶²

A new headmaster, F. W. Pickles, was appointed in March 1953,³⁶³ and opened in the following month with 324 pupils aged between 11 and 15.³⁶⁴ This figure increased to 385 in September 1953, and was anticipated to increase to 445 in September 1954.³⁶⁵ More accommodation was provided at the school by the erection of huts, including a new laboratory, and handicraft and housecraft rooms.³⁶⁶ A small upstairs room in the Old Grammar School building had been equipped as a school library; the building also housed a branch of the county library.³⁶⁷ In 1957 the school had 20 full-time members of teaching staff, and the school secretary also assisted part-time with the teaching of the commercial students.³⁶⁸ The curriculum consisted of English, mathematics, science, including rural science and hygiene, history, geography, technical drawing, music, arts and crafts, physical education, woodwork and metalwork for boys, housecraft and needlework for girls, some of whom also learnt secretarial skills.³⁶⁹ Arrangements were made for regular trips to local farms,³⁷⁰ and there were annual trips to Cowley Manor for field work, and visits to places such as London and Canterbury.³⁷¹ The children did not sit external exams before leaving the school, although a leaving certificate was said to have proved helpful in their taking up employment after school. Approximately half of the boys who left the school took up jobs in agriculture, horticulture or engineering, and half of the girls in shops, factories or offices. A few pupils attended technical college in Stroud or Cheltenham or attended the Hartpury Farm Institute, while for those who remained in the area there were evening classes held in the school which taught a range of vocational skills.³⁷²

Although the facilities at the school were inadequate and dilapidated, no plans for its future could be made until a decision was taken about the location of the overspill area north of Bristol. The opening of a new secondary school in Winterbourne reduced the numbers being admitted to the school,³⁷³ and the development of Yate new town dramatically shifted the focus of the population in

³⁶² GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/3.

³⁶³ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁶⁴ TNA, 109/9311/5.

³⁶⁵ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁶⁶ TNA, 109/9311/5.

³⁶⁷ TNA, 109/9311/5.

³⁶⁸ TNA, 109/9311/5.

³⁶⁹ TNA, 109/9311/5.

³⁷⁰ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁷¹ TNA, 109/9311/5; GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁷² TNA, 109/9311/5.

³⁷³ TNA, ED 109/9311/5.

the area. The school moved into new premises in Yate in 1966, when it was renamed King Edmund's county secondary school.³⁷⁴

Social Welfare

Charities for the poor

Town Lands until 1897

Following the dissolution of the guild and chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the reign of Edward VI,³⁷⁵ the guild house and the two adjoining tenements were granted to Miles and Hugh Partridge in 1548,³⁷⁶ who immediately granted them to Richard Pates.³⁷⁷ Pates subsequently granted the three tenements to feoffees in 1557, who were to pay the profits each year to two burgesses nominated by the bailiff and majority of the bailiffs, subsequently called the Town Masters, who were to distribute the money as alms to poor people of honest fame who had lived within the town for at least three years.³⁷⁸ By an order of the Council in the Marches of 1549, the Town Masters were to render an account of their revenues to the bailiff and burgesses at Epiphany each year.³⁷⁹

A separate estate known as the Town Lands, comprising seven tenements in Chipping Sodbury and 24 a. of pasture in Old Sodbury, was held in trust for repairing the roads and maintaining the poor within the town.³⁸⁰ A feoffment of the estate was made c.1433,³⁸¹ although it is likely that the charity existed before this date, and further feoffments were made in 1515, c.1572, and 1595.³⁸² These lands were augmented by the purchase in 1611 of four tenements and 34 a. of land in Wickwar for £133, which was again enfeoffed for the maintenance of the poor, repairing of the roads, and such other uses as the bailiffs and bailiff burgesses should determine to be necessary.³⁸³ In the reign of James I the revenues of the Town Lands amounted to £8 15s. 2d. a year before the purchase of the Wickwar estate, and £13 2s. 8d. afterwards.³⁸⁴ Total expenditure by the Town Masters amounted to £8 13s. 5d. in 1609–10.³⁸⁵

In the reign of Charles I commissioners appointed under the statute of charitable uses found evidence of significant mismanagement of the charity lands.

³⁷⁴ GA, GCC/EDU/2/18/300/2/2.

³⁷⁵ See Religious History.

³⁷⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1548–49, 102–12.

³⁷⁷ BA, 08830/2.

³⁷⁸ BA, 08830/2. See Town Trust.

³⁷⁹ GA, D2071/L1.

³⁸⁰ GA, D2071/E10; D2071/L11.

³⁸¹ GA, D2071/L6; D2071/L8.

³⁸² GA, D2071/L6; D2071/T2; D2071/T4; BA, 08830/1a–b.

³⁸³ GA, D2071/E12; D2071/E39; D2071/L8.

³⁸⁴ GA, D8887/3, f. 60.

³⁸⁵ GA, D2071/A2.

An inquest was held first in the Town Hall and then at Gloucester Castle in 1627 in which 25 former bailiffs or their executors were required to give an account of their use of the charity rents.³⁸⁶ The inability of many to provide full accounts resulted in a second, more thorough inquest at Tetbury in 1628, where it was found that a total of £117 could not be properly accounted for by 14 of the 25 bailiffs since the beginning of the reign of James I.³⁸⁷ This had been made possible because no proper books or accounts had been kept for the previous 30 years. Furthermore, the commissioners objected that the practice of letting the lands on long leases for large fines had greatly depressed the annual revenues of the charity. Although a total of £313 had been received in fines by the feoffees since 1603, the annual rents were only worth £15 in 1628, £80 less than they might be worth if they were let at their real values.

The commissioners ordered that in future all of the revenues of the charity lands were to be employed towards the uses for which they were given.³⁸⁸ To ensure this was the case, the burgesses were ordered to keep a ledger of all revenues and expenditure, which was to be produced at the court leet for perusal by the jury, and was then to be certified by two JPs. The former bailiffs and their executors were ordered to repay the outstanding £117, from which £45 was to be used to defray the costs of the inquest, £10 was to be distributed to the poor in the town, and the remainder was to be used to bind and clothe apprentices. In future bailiffs were prohibited from claiming any of the revenues of the Town Lands towards the costs of their year in office, and in particular the commissioners ordered that the St Stephen's Day breakfasts should be suppressed. To improve the revenues of the charity no leases were to be made in reversion or before the final year, none were to be for terms longer than 21 years, and none were to be for rents less than three-quarters of the full yearly improved value. All fines received were to be used to apprentice poor children. The commissioners limited annual expenditure from the revenues on mending the town's roads to £4, with the remaining revenues to be spent on relieving the poor. Finally, the commissioners directed that as the revenues of the charity improved in the future, first the money to be expended on the poor each year should be increased from £10 to £20, then £20 should be set aside to bind four children a year as apprentices, and then £5 a year should be paid towards the maintenance of a school master. Any remaining moneys was to be spent at the discretion of the bailiff and burgesses.

In 1687 the feoffees purchased two messuages on the high street, adjoining properties already belonging to the borough, and pasture land at Buckets Hill for £125.³⁸⁹ The revenues of the charity in the year 1690 came to almost £60, and total

³⁸⁶ GA, D887/3, ff. 31–33.

³⁸⁷ GA, D2071/L8.

³⁸⁸ GA, D2071/L8; D8887/5, f. 58.

³⁸⁹ GA, D2071/E18; D2071/E39; D2071/L11.

spending amounted to over £55.³⁹⁰ From this, almost £35 was spent on relieving the poor, including over £13 spent on weekly payments worth between 1s. and 2s. to six people, perhaps the inmates of the almshouses. The remainder was spent on paying the salary of the school master, mending the highways, and the various charges associates with the properties of the charity.

In 1694 another inquest found further evidence of maladministration of the charity.³⁹¹ The lands held by the feoffees had not been re-eneffed according to their original uses, and the lands purchased in 1687 had only been enfeoffed to the benefit of the town. The money used for that purchase had included £10 bequeathed to the feoffees specifically for binding poor children as apprentices. Once again it was found that the town masters had ceased to record their accounts in the ledger, and several former Town Masters were unable to properly account for their revenues, to a total of almost £219. It was decreed that this sum was to be repaid, and after the costs of the inquiry were paid, money was to be employed repairing the church, the school house, and the houses belonging to the charity, and the remainder was to be divided between binding up to five apprentices a year and relieving the poor.

The revenues of the Town Lands amounted to almost £72 in 1711–2, of which £29 was spent on poor relief, £20 was paid to support the schoolmaster, £16 was spent to bind four apprentices, and £3 was spent repairing the highways.³⁹² By the decree of 1694 the bailiffs were to reserve £20 a year for the binding of five poor children apprentices, but the lack of appropriate children in most years meant that by 1712 a large stock of money had accrued.³⁹³ Rather than leave this in the town chest, where it might be a temptation to misappropriation or theft, it was decided to use the money to purchase 2½ a. of pasture land at Culverwell.³⁹⁴ Money raised by fines on new leases of the estate was employed to purchase several more pieces of pasture in the parish between 1714 and 1725.³⁹⁵ With the estate thus enlarged and the rents of the older properties improved as leases came to an end, by the 1760s the revenues from the rents were worth c.£90 a year, and other revenues, including the sale of timber, brought the total up to £113 in 1761.³⁹⁶ Out of this, £20 was paid to the schoolmaster, £20 was distributed to the poor, c.£22 was spent apprenticing poor children, and c.£26 was spent maintaining the estate of the charity, leaving a surplus of c.£25.³⁹⁷

In 1799 annual expenditure from the town lands on supporting poor people within the town amounted to £41, and a further £11 was spent on the apprenticing

³⁹⁰ TNA, C 8/436/6.

³⁹¹ GA, D2071/L11; *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 372–83.

³⁹² GA, D2071/A4.

³⁹³ GA, D2071/E39, f.45.

³⁹⁴ GA, D2071/E39, 43–8.

³⁹⁵ GA, D2071/E39, 48–54.

³⁹⁶ GA, D2071/A5; D2071/E4.

³⁹⁷ GA, D2071/A5.

poor children.³⁹⁸ In 1809 weekly payments of 2s. or 2s. 6d. were made to 15 individuals.³⁹⁹ In the years 1813–15 the average amount spent on charitable purposes in the parish, excluding £20 a year spent on the grammar school, came to almost £241.⁴⁰⁰ The majority of this was derived from the revenues of the Town Lands. In 1813 the rents of the Town Lands properties in Chipping Sodbury and Wickwar were worth over £268, of which £205 was expended making weekly payments of between 1s. and 5s. to 33 individuals or couples.⁴⁰¹ However, by 1815 the number receiving weekly payments had fallen to 26, and only eight were in receipt of money for longer than four weeks, reducing the total expenditure on such payments to c. £47.⁴⁰² In the following year, six people received weekly payments from the Town Lands charity, totalling c.£14, although another c.£33 was given from the charity revenues to the overseers of the poor.⁴⁰³ The rack and chief rents belonging to the charity were worth c.£213 in 1825, while the average annual value of the fines in the previous 20 years came to £25.⁴⁰⁴ A large surplus from the previous year enabled spending to exceed £268. The bailiff and burgesses also undertook to spend £20 a year on the apprenticing of children, or at least £100 every five years, as opportunities arose.⁴⁰⁵

An inquiry of the charity commissioners in 1826 found that houses continued to be let for three lives, despite earlier decrees against the practice.⁴⁰⁶ It was objected that the charity continued to lose out by the inability to improve the rent of these properties, and so the bailiff and burgesses undertook to allow these leases to expire and in future to let them by tender or public auction at rack rents for terms not exceeding 21 years. A new scheme was devised and approved by Chancery in 1831, whereby the revenues of the charity were divided into four equal parts, dedicated respectively to paying the school master's salary, apprenticing poor children, relieving the poor, and the public benefit of the town, including maintaining the highways. By 1839 the revenues of the charity had increased to £220 a year.⁴⁰⁷

After the grammar school fell into abeyance in 1857,⁴⁰⁸ the trustees requested in 1861 that the Charity Commissioners devise a new scheme for the management of the Town Lands. The new scheme, sealed in 1867, added the incumbent of the parish church to the number of trustees. After the costs and expenses of the charity were

³⁹⁸ GA, D2071/A7.

³⁹⁹ GA, D2071/E8.

⁴⁰⁰ *Poor Law Abstract, 1818*, 150–1.

⁴⁰¹ GA, D2071/A7.

⁴⁰² GA, D2071/A6, 19–20.

⁴⁰³ GA, D2071/A6, 33–4.

⁴⁰⁴ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 383–4.

⁴⁰⁵ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 384.

⁴⁰⁶ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 384.

⁴⁰⁷ GA, D2071/E8.

⁴⁰⁸ See Education, Grammar School..

paid, the remaining profits of the charity were to be divided into three, with two-thirds to be dedicated to the maintenance of the school, and the remaining one-third to be applied to the benefit of the industrious poor of Chipping Sodbury not already in receipt of parochial relief.⁴⁰⁹ The trustees could take up to £40 a year from the funds set aside for the school for the apprenticing of children from the parish, or they could award the money as a prize to up to two boys who were particularly deserving of reward, at their discretion. In 1865 the income of the charity was c.£370, comprising c.£111 in rents of houses and shops in Chipping Sodbury and Wickwar, c.£256 in rent of c.64 a. of agricultural land, and c.£3 in reserved rents.⁴¹⁰ In the twenty years before the new scheme's adoption, there had only been a total of 38 applications for apprenticeship money from the scheme, and the accrued income reserved for that purpose amounted to £660 in 1867.⁴¹¹ Since Smith's death in 1857, the trustees had also allowed the money reserved for the master's salary to accumulate, and this came to almost £1,000 in 1867.⁴¹²

In the late 19th century significant resentment was expressed concerning the management of the Ridings by the bailiff burgesses. Some confusion surrounded the particular status of the Ridings. Although they were not held by the town as a charitable property, numerous individuals, including the bailiff burgesses, expressed opinions that they should be managed for the benefit of the town's poor.⁴¹³ Furthermore, the corporation of the borough was deemed to have been terminated by the Municipal Corporations Act, 1883, yet the bailiff burgesses continued to administer the property of the town, including the town hall, as trustees. Although the attention of the Charity Commissioners was drawn to the management of the Ridings in the 1870s and again in the 1880s, no scheme had been drawn up by the 1890s.⁴¹⁴

Resentment towards the old corporation influenced the elections for the town's first parish council, and several councillors were elected who wished to reform the management of the town's municipal and charitable estate. Continued antagonism between the parish council and the former trustees of the charities preceded an inquiry held in the town by an assistant commissioner in August 1896.⁴¹⁵ The new councillors objected that the former corporation managed the Ridings to the benefit of themselves, and so should be disqualified from continuing to dispense the charities under the terms of the Local Government Act, 1894.⁴¹⁶ It was objected that the bailiff burgesses, acting as trustees, were not chosen by public

⁴⁰⁹ Char. Com. *The Scheme of the Chipping Sodbury Endowed School* (Gloucester, 1869); GA, D2071/E44.

⁴¹⁰ *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. XV* (Parliamentary Papers, 1867–8 (68), LXVIII), 59.

⁴¹¹ *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. I* (Parliamentary Papers, 1867–8 (54), LIV), 218.

⁴¹² *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. XV* (Parliamentary Papers, 1867–8 (68), LXVIII), 58.

⁴¹³ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 8.

⁴¹⁴ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 5–6.

⁴¹⁵ GA, P300a PC 1/1, 22–4, 28–35; *Bristol Mercury*, 22 Apr. & 6 Nov. 1895,, 21 Feb. 1896, 28 Apr. 1897, 13 Aug. 1896. TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, *passim*.

election and they did not render public accounts. Accusations were also made that the bailiff burgesses were partial in the distribution of acres in the Mead Riding, giving priority to themselves and their associates. Furthermore, the councillors had been surprised to be offered the use of the town hall by the trustees, some of whom had also been elected as councillors, at a rent of 7s. 6d. per meeting, when the town hall had always been made available for all other public meetings for free.⁴¹⁷

Following the inquiry, it was determined that it was necessary to establish three new and distinct schemes to administer the estates that had been managed by the old corporation. The Town Lands estate was vested in a new group of trustees who were initially to comprise six of the surviving former burgesses and the vicar of the parish, co-opted to serve for life, subsequently to be replaced by four co-opted trustees serving terms of seven years.⁴¹⁸ To these were added seven representative trustees, made up of two county councillors, three parish councillors, and one rural district councillor, for terms of four years, and an appointee of Bristol University College, serving for five years. The provisions of the 1867 scheme were continued, by which the profits of the charity were divided two-thirds to the endowment of the grammar school and one-third to the relieve of the industrious poor.

Town Trust

The Town Trust was established to administer the Stub and Mead Ridings, and also the common rights held by the inhabitants of the borough.⁴¹⁹ A body of trustees comprising co-opted and representative members was instituted.⁴²⁰ Initially this was to comprise the seven surviving former burgesses, appointed to the charity for life. As vacancies occurred, these initial co-opted trustees were to be replaced by six individuals residing or carrying on business in the town, who were to serve terms of five years. The remainder of the trustees consisted of seven parish councillors and one county councillor, serving for four years at a time, and individual appointees from each of the Bath and West Agricultural Society, one from the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, and the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, all appointed for terms of five years. The profits of the trust were to be applied to draining and improving the Ridings, creating additional enclosures within the Stub Riding, maintaining recreation grounds in the Stub Riding, maintaining the fire engine, and maintaining a Library and Reading Room for the

⁴¹⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, 16 Jan. 1894; TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 6.

⁴¹⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 16 Jan. 1894.

⁴¹⁸ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Property of dissolved Corporation and trusts of Grammar School and Town Lands and Church Lands, 1899.

⁴¹⁹ See Economic History; Old Sodbury, Economic History.

⁴²⁰ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Property of dissolved Corporation and trusts of Grammar School and Town Lands and Church Lands, 1899.

town. Under the terms of the scheme establishing the Grammar School endowment, the Town Trust also purchased the Town Hall and two adjacent buildings.

The Town Trust was varied by new schemes in 1910,⁴²¹ 1922, and 1959.⁴²² The latter was necessitated by the destruction of the small enclosures on the Ridings during their wartime requisition.⁴²³ The new scheme empowered a new body of nine representative and four co-opted trustees to let the two Ridings at commercial rates for grazing, and to maintain and make available the recreation ground and Town Hall for the benefit of the town. A new scheme was adopted in 1977, varied in 1996.⁴²⁴ In 2017 its income was £88,612.

Church Lands

A new scheme was drawn up for the Church Lands, the trust of which was to be the co-opted members of the Town Trust and the vicar of the parish.⁴²⁵ The profits of the charity were to be paid to the vicar and churchwardens of the parish. A new scheme was adopted in 1977.⁴²⁶ In the years 2013–7 its average income was c.£2,700.

Other charities

Mary Stiles and George Russell left £10 and £10 6s. respectively to the use of the poor.⁴²⁷ Toby Davis bequeathed £2 a year by his will of 1654 to be paid towards the cost of placing one boy a year as an apprentice.⁴²⁸ This money was found to be £66 in arrears forty years later.⁴²⁹ By 1826 the bequest had not been paid for a long time, and it was thought impossible to identify the lands from which it had been granted. Martha White gave £140 in 1731 to be used to the benefit of the poor in Chipping Sodbury and Yate. No trace could be found in 1826 of any records of payments under the charity, and it was presumed that the whole sum was distributed at the time to the poor of the two parishes at the discretion of her trustees.⁴³⁰

Samuel Hardwicke bequeathed £40 in 1762, the interest of which was to be spent on bread to be distributed to the poor twice a year, at Michaelmas and Christmas.⁴³¹ Richard Blake left £50 in 1771 for a similar purpose, with bread to be distributed at Christmas.⁴³² George Hardwicke gave £40 in 1792, and William Harvey

⁴²¹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1.

⁴²² TNA, CHAR 7/112/1; Chipping Sodbury Town Trust Scheme Confirmation Act, 1960, 8 & 9 Eliz. II, c.v.

⁴²³ See above, Economic History.

⁴²⁴ Char. Com. Website, No. 274443.

⁴²⁵ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Property of dissolved Corporation and trusts of Grammar School and Town Lands and Church Lands, 1899.

⁴²⁶ Char. Com. Website, No. 238275.

⁴²⁷ GA, D2071/E41.

⁴²⁸ TNA, PROB 11/237/627.

⁴²⁹ GA, D2071/L11.

⁴³⁰ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 385.

⁴³¹ TNA, PROB 11/907/278.

⁴³² TNA, PROB 11/963/393.

the same amount in 1807, for the distribution of bread on the Sunday after 28 October and the first Sunday in February. Also in 1807, Thomas Brooks left £50 for the distribution of bread on the Sunday after Christmas.⁴³³ Together these five charities produced a total of £9 14s. In 1826.⁴³⁴

Sarah Hewett left £800 to the parish in 1821 for the distribution of bread in the parish twice a year, on 24 June and Christmas Day.⁴³⁵ It produced £24 a year.⁴³⁶ By his will dated 1792, William Winstone left £20 to the parish, to be paid after the death of his wife, the interest of which was to be divided equally between six Church-going householders within the parish who needed support and were not already in receipt of alms.⁴³⁷ His widow died in 1816, and in the following ten years 20s. a year was distributed as directed by his executor.⁴³⁸

A sum of £30 was left by the former parish clerk Samuel Isaac in 1823, the profits of which were to be distributed in bread each year on Good Friday.⁴³⁹ His nephew, Jeremiah Isaac, left stock producing a further £4 a year, which was to provide one guinea a year for the minister to preach a sermon on Ash Wednesday every year, the remaining money was to be distributed in bread to the poor of the parish every year on Good Friday.⁴⁴⁰

In 1830 the surgeon Joseph Hiatt left £300 to the parish, two-thirds of the annual interest of which was to be dedicating to treating the sick of the parish,⁴⁴¹ and the remaining one-third was to be distributed to the poor of the parish in money and food at the discretion of the minister and churchwardens.⁴⁴² In 1867 this produced an annual income of £9.⁴⁴³ In 1836 John Harvey Ollney left, amongst legacies to numerous places within Gloucestershire, £300 to Chipping Sodbury, the interest of which was to be used to distribute coals and blankets every Christmas to 'poor deserving persons' as determined by the vicar and churchwardens.⁴⁴⁴ William Holloway left a sum which amounted to £21 13s. 3d. in stock by his will in 1871, for the benefit of poor members of the Baptist church of Chipping Sodbury.⁴⁴⁵ In the 1890s this produced 11s. 8d. a year to be distributed among the recipients of the charity.⁴⁴⁶

⁴³³ GA, P300 CH 1.

⁴³⁴ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 386–7.

⁴³⁵ TNA, PROB 11/1648/159; GA, P300 CH 1; *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 387.

⁴³⁶ *Return of Charities Distributed to the Poor* (Parliamentary Papers, 1843 [436], XVIII), 81.

⁴³⁷ GA, GDR/Wills/1793/61.

⁴³⁸ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 387–8.

⁴³⁹ TNA, PROB 11/1677/274; GA, P300 CH 1.

⁴⁴⁰ TNA, PROB 11/1850/424; GA, P300 CH 1.

⁴⁴¹ See Medical Services.

⁴⁴² TNA, PROB 11/1776/13.

⁴⁴³ *General Digest of Endowed Charities* (Parliamentary Papers, 1867–8 (433), County of Glos. 54–5.

⁴⁴⁴ TNA, PROB 11/1859/274; GA, P300 CH 1.

⁴⁴⁵ *20th Rep. Com. Char.* 11.

⁴⁴⁶ *Supplementary Digest of Endowed Charities* (Parliamentary Papers, 107 (1893–4), LXVII), 48–9.

The creation of the parish council in 1894 was the cause of controversy concerning the parochial charities. The churchwardens had continued to dispense the parochial dole charities to the poor of the town, despite having been warned that their appointment as trustees had been terminated by the election of the parish council. A proposal was made by the parish council that the churchwardens should be replaced as trustees by two parish councillors, one of whom should be a Nonconformist.⁴⁴⁷ The combined revenues of the dole charities in 1894–5 were c.£52, from which c.£29 was spent on bread and c.£13 on blankets for the poor, and £3 was paid as a subscription to the Bath Mineral Water Hospital, leaving a surplus of c. £7.⁴⁴⁸ At the annual parish meeting in March 1895, it was felt that the churchwardens had distributed the charities fairly amongst the poor of the town, but an objection was raised that two-thirds of the money paid for bread had been paid to Churchmen.⁴⁴⁹

During the early 20th century, the dole charities continued to produce small sums which were distributed within the town. In the year 1926–7 the dole charities produced £16 13s. 4d., which was expended on subscriptions for hospitals in Bath and Bristol, the purchase of bread and blankets, and preaching sermons on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.⁴⁵⁰ Twelve individuals were given doles of 3s. 4d. each on New Year's Day and again on Good Friday, when another six people were given a further 2s. each. Four individuals were also given blankets in 1926–7.⁴⁵¹ On the eve of the Second World War the income from the small charities had risen to £17 13s. 4d., which was distributed as payments of 2s. each to six poor people on New Year's Day and 2s. 2d. each to 18 individuals on Good Friday, as well as a total of £1 5s. worth of blankets, the hospital subscriptions and the two annual sermons.⁴⁵² The charities continued to produce an annual revenue of £17 13s. 4d. in 1958, which supported the two annual sermons and the distribution of a total of 30 small doles worth £21 at New Year and Good Friday.⁴⁵³ In 1966, it was realised by the vicar that the dole charities had not been distributed according to the terms of their original benefactors for a considerable time, and distribution of the doles was suspended pending their reorganisation by the charity commission.⁴⁵⁴ The various charities were combined in 1969 to form the Chipping Sodbury United Charities.⁴⁵⁵ The charity never had a large income, usually amounting to between £50 and £60 a year, and sometimes had to be supplemented with grants by the Town Lands charity in

⁴⁴⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 18 Mar. 1895.

⁴⁴⁸ GA, P300a PC 1/1, 5.

⁴⁴⁹ *Bristol Mercury*, 30 Mar. 1895.

⁴⁵⁰ GA, P300 CH 3/1, 6.

⁴⁵¹ GA, P300 CH 3/1, 3–4.

⁴⁵² GA, P300 CH 3/1, 18.

⁴⁵³ GA, P300 CH 3/1, 44.

⁴⁵⁴ GA, P300 CH 3/1, 54–5.

⁴⁵⁵ GA, D8624/1.

order to meet its aims.⁴⁵⁶ It was decided to wind up the charity in 1995,⁴⁵⁷ but through an oversight of the last trustees the assets of the charity were not transferred to their nominated recipient, the Town Lands charity, until 1999.⁴⁵⁸

Almshouses

By the late 16th century, certain lodgings were provided for six poor widows and spinsters behind the guild house free of rent. When parts of the guild house including the 'inner rooms' accommodating these women were let in 1582 it was decided that they should be moved to another house in Rouncival Street.⁴⁵⁹ This was presumably the tenement, part of Hugh Sexey's grant of the former possessions of the Guild of St Mary, which in 1609 was still used as an almshouse.⁴⁶⁰ The lease of the former guild hall was due to expire in the following year, at which point the poor inmates of the almshouse may have returned to the former accommodation behind the hall, and the almshouse has certainly been returned to the site of the hall by 1653, when repairs were ordered.⁴⁶¹ The lack of adequate chimneys or ventilation rendered them uncomfortable fire hazards, and they were ordered to be demolished in 1745, after the erection of a parish workhouse on a more suitable site.⁴⁶² Despite this, poor people were still being accommodated in the Church House in 1751, when it was revealed that the premises also lacked any form of toilet facilities, causing significant nuisance in the adjoining Church House Lane.⁴⁶³

Poor relief

In 1654 the town took a lease of the market weights and tolls from the lord of the manor, and ordered that half of the revenues should be put to the use of the poor, in particular by apprenticing poor children and converting part of the church house into an almshouse.⁴⁶⁴ Expenditure on the poor in 1690–1 included weekly payments worth between 8*d.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*, gifts of coal and clothes, medical care, payments for shrouds, coffins and digging graves, and for beer and cheese at funerals.⁴⁶⁵

By 1826 the system, whereby a farmer received the revenues reserved to the poor of the church lands and the amounts raised by the poor rate and distributed the

⁴⁵⁶ GA, D8624/3/1.

⁴⁵⁷ Char. Com. Website, No. 208859.

⁴⁵⁸ GA, D8624/3/1.

⁴⁵⁹ TNA, CHAR 7/112/1, Report of the Assistant Charity Commissioner, 1897, 17–8.

⁴⁶⁰ GA, D2071/E10; D2071/A2.

⁴⁶¹ GA, D2071/M1.

⁴⁶² GA, D2071/B6, 20 June 1745.

⁴⁶³ GA, D2071/B6, 16 Apr. 1751.

⁴⁶⁴ GA, D2071/M1.

⁴⁶⁵ TNA, C 8/436/6.

two together under the direction of the vestry, had been long discontinued from a sense of its impropriety.⁴⁶⁶

The parish spent £190 on relieving the poor in 1776, and an average of *c.*£214 a year in the years 1783–5. Extraordinary payments were made to the poor in 1789, totalling £2 5s., on account of the severe weather that year, when another £2 13s. was also spent on beef and peas for the poor.⁴⁶⁷ Total expenditure on the poor had risen to £417 a year by Easter 1803, of which *c.*£309 was spent, including providing out-relief to 58 people, of whom 22 received relief only occasionally, and *c.*£69 was spent on 12 inmates in the workhouse.⁴⁶⁸ Some £482 was spent on maintaining the poor in 1812–3, when 44 persons received out-relief permanently and another 21 occasionally, and there were four inmates of the parish workhouse.⁴⁶⁹ Expenditure had fallen to £405 two years later, although the numbers maintained by out-relief had risen to 48 permanent and 23 occasional recipients of out-relief, and there were five people maintained in the workhouse.⁴⁷⁰ Payments to 41 poor people came to a total of £95 in 1825, when the charity commissioners complained that insufficient care was taken to ascertain the real state of the poor in order to make effectual relief.⁴⁷¹ It was agreed that in future the bailiff, burgesses, town masters and overseers would meet four times a year to draw up a list of deserving candidates, paying attention not only to their needs but also their character.

The apparent stability of expenditure on maintaining the poor in the final decade of the Old Poor Law, when *c.*£472 was spent in 1824–5 and *c.*£476 was spent in 1833–5, masked a significant level of fluctuation in the intervening years, between a low of *c.*£381 in 1825–6 and a high of *c.*£628 in 1831–2.⁴⁷² It was said in 1827 that the majority of the town's residents were too poor to pay the poor rate, and were forced to seek relief from the parish because of the lack of work for labourers within the parish.⁴⁷³ The heavy burden of the poor rates which fell on the remaining households was said to have caused several houses to have been left vacant. In the year ending 25 Mar. 1835, the final before the creation of the Poor Law Union, the parish of Chipping Sodbury spent £526 on relieving the poor.⁴⁷⁴ In the following year this figure fell to £400.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁶⁶ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 384.

⁴⁶⁷ GA, D2071/A5.

⁴⁶⁸ *Poor Law Abstract, 1804*, 176–7.

⁴⁶⁹ *Poor Law Abstract, 1818*, 150–1.

⁴⁷⁰ *Poor Law Abstract, 1818*, 150–1.

⁴⁷¹ *17th Rep. Com. Char.* 384.

⁴⁷² *Poor Law Returns (1830–1)*, 68; *Poor Law Returns (1835)*, 67.

⁴⁷³ GA, D1610/E139.

⁴⁷⁴ *Poor Law Com. 2nd Rep. App. E*, 122. See also below, Local Government.

⁴⁷⁵ *Poor Law Com. 2nd Rep. App. E*, 123.

The lord of the manor, W. H. H. Hartley, made an annual dole of bread and beef to his tenants in Chipping Sodbury in the 1820s, electing two of the guardians.⁴⁷⁶ In the early 20th century the vicar of the parish maintained a sick, poor and needy fund from the annual proceeds of the offertories, special communions, and churchings.⁴⁷⁷ This produced a revenue of c.£60 in 1907–8, distributed as monthly pensions, donations to local hospitals, ecclesiastical funds, and *ad hoc* payments to the sick and needy. The receipts of the fund had fallen to c.£28 ten years later.

Medical services

One Thomas Gale was an early medical practitioner in Chipping Sodbury, despite apparently being illiterate. Gale was presented to the diocesan consistory court in 1612 ‘for practisinge phisick & surgery without licence’, for ‘barbing’ on the Sabbath, and for negligent church attendance.⁴⁷⁸ Elizabeth Hether was licensed as a midwife in Chipping Sodbury in 1712.⁴⁷⁹

The Ludlow family of apothecaries and surgeons were established in Chipping Sodbury in the late 17th century, with the arrival of Christopher Ludlow in the town in 1681.⁴⁸⁰ His grandson Daniel (b. 1720) later practised as an apothecary-surgeon in the town, and the young Edward Jenner began his medical training under him.⁴⁸¹ Jenner completed his apprenticeship under another surgeon based in Chipping Sodbury, George Hardwicke, who is presumably the same man described as a doctor in physic by the 1780s.⁴⁸² Daniel Ludlow’s three sons, Ebenezer (b. c.1750), Christopher (1755–84), and Daniel (1757–1802), all became apothecary-surgeons in the town,⁴⁸³ and Daniel junior was a founding member alongside Jenner of the Fleece Medical Society at Rodborough.⁴⁸⁴ In the late 18th and early 19th centuries John Waite (d. 1792), Robert Mason and Joseph Hiatt were also practising as apothecaries and surgeons in Chipping Sodbury.⁴⁸⁵

A pest house was erected in the Stub Riding in 1757 for the isolation and treatment of smallpox patients.⁴⁸⁶ In 1782 the town expended £45 to inoculate the poor of the town against smallpox, presumably through the technique of variolation.⁴⁸⁷ Individuals were also inoculated at the cost of the town in the

⁴⁷⁶ *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 Jan. 1826.

⁴⁷⁷ GA, P300 CH 2/1.

⁴⁷⁸ *Trans. BGAS*, 108 (1990), 7.

⁴⁷⁹ GA, GDR/C8/2.

⁴⁸⁰ Robert J. Haines, ‘The Ludlows of Chipping Sodbury’, *Glos. History*, VI (1992), 16–17.

⁴⁸¹ *ODNB*, Jenner, Edward (1749–1823).

⁴⁸² GA, D2071/E28; D2957/340/41;

⁴⁸³ Haines, ‘Ludlows’, 16–17.

⁴⁸⁴ H.J. Eastes, ‘The Fleece Medical Society’, *Bristol Medico-Chirurgical J.* 98:1 (1893), 18–22.

⁴⁸⁵ *Bath Chron.* 17 Mar. 1791, 8 Mar., 14 June & 26 July 1792, 3; GA, D2071/E31.

⁴⁸⁶ GA, D2071/B6, 5 July 1757; D2071/A10.

⁴⁸⁷ GA, D2071/A5.

following decade.⁴⁸⁸ A further 12 guineas was expended in 1808 inoculating the poor children of the town.⁴⁸⁹ Other payments were also paid to the poor on account of illness or injury, such as broken limbs.⁴⁹⁰

The surgeon Joseph Hiatt left £300 in his will, proved in 1830, to provide medical care to the poor of Chipping Sodbury and the neighbouring parishes.⁴⁹¹ Each year one-third of the interest of the stock was to be paid to the governors of the Bath General Hospital and another third to the governors of the Bristol Infirmary, in return for which they were to treat sick individuals nominated by the minister and churchwardens of the town. A medical club was established in Chipping Sodbury by one Mrs Atkinson in 1836.⁴⁹²

The rural district council established an isolation hospital in 1895, at the site of the old windmill on Old Sodbury.⁴⁹³ In the same year, a nurse was maintained in Chipping Sodbury by the Nurses' Home in Wotton-under-Edge.⁴⁹⁴ A cottage hospital established after World War One and called Chipping Sodbury District War Memorial Hospital was in fact located within the parish of Yate.

⁴⁸⁸ GA, D2071/A5.

⁴⁸⁹ GA, D2071/A5.

⁴⁹⁰ GA, D2071/A5.

⁴⁹¹ TNA, PROB 11/1776/13.

⁴⁹² GA, G/SO 8a/1, 132.

⁴⁹³ GA, DA33/100/3, 60–5.

⁴⁹⁴ *Stroud News & Glos. Advertiser*, 10 May 1895.