Social discontent and Agrarian disturbances in Essex, 1795 - 1850

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CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND GRAPHS

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.M.	British Museum
Ec.Hist.	Economic History
Ec.Hist. Rev.	Economic History Review
E.R.	Essex Review
E.R.O.	Essex Record Office
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
R.C.	Royal Commission
S.C.	Select Committee
V.C.H.	Victoria County History

ABSTRACT

According to Martin Luther King, riots are "the language of the unheard". This dissertation describes the condition of the Essex agricultural labourers and how they reacted against, and sought to improve, their lot.

There were six stages in the development of the workers' protest. i) The old-style food riot, ii) wage demands, which reached their climax in the 1830 riots, iii) machine-breaking between 1815 and 1830, iv) early agricultural unionism, v) rural chartism, and vi) the increasing use of incendiarism to express discontent.

The causes of unemployment after 1815 are examined in Chapter III and in the following section the labourers' standard of living is discussed. The Game Laws, the altered methods of employment, and the decline in 'living in' added to the tension within the villages. Various methods of alleviating distress were tried but the bulk of the unemployed were forced to apply for parish relief. Chapter VI includes discussion on the controversial question of the effects of the allowance system after 1795.

The central part of the dissertation is concerned with a description of the 1830 riots. Despite the large number of Essex labourers transported after the disturbances, serious trouble was restricted to a small area. Chapter IX examines

the hostility of the labourers towards the Anglican clergy and the influence of Methodism in the riotous areas of 1830.

The initial severities of the New Poor Law ended the comparative tranquillity of the period 1831-5. Chapter VIII describes the conditions within the workhouse and the reaction of the labourers to the measures of 1834. Despite the easing of the Poor Law regulations, there was little sign, from the incendiarism after 1840, that agrarian discontent was on the wane at the end of the period.

Chapter I THE AGRICULTURE OF ESSEX

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Essex was a predominantly agricultural county. The rapidly dying woollen industry in the Braintree-Halstead area was replaced by silk manufacture, but the majority of Essex workers earned their living on the land. Small industries included straw-plaiting, salt manufacture, corn-milling, brick-making, and the production of gunpowder.

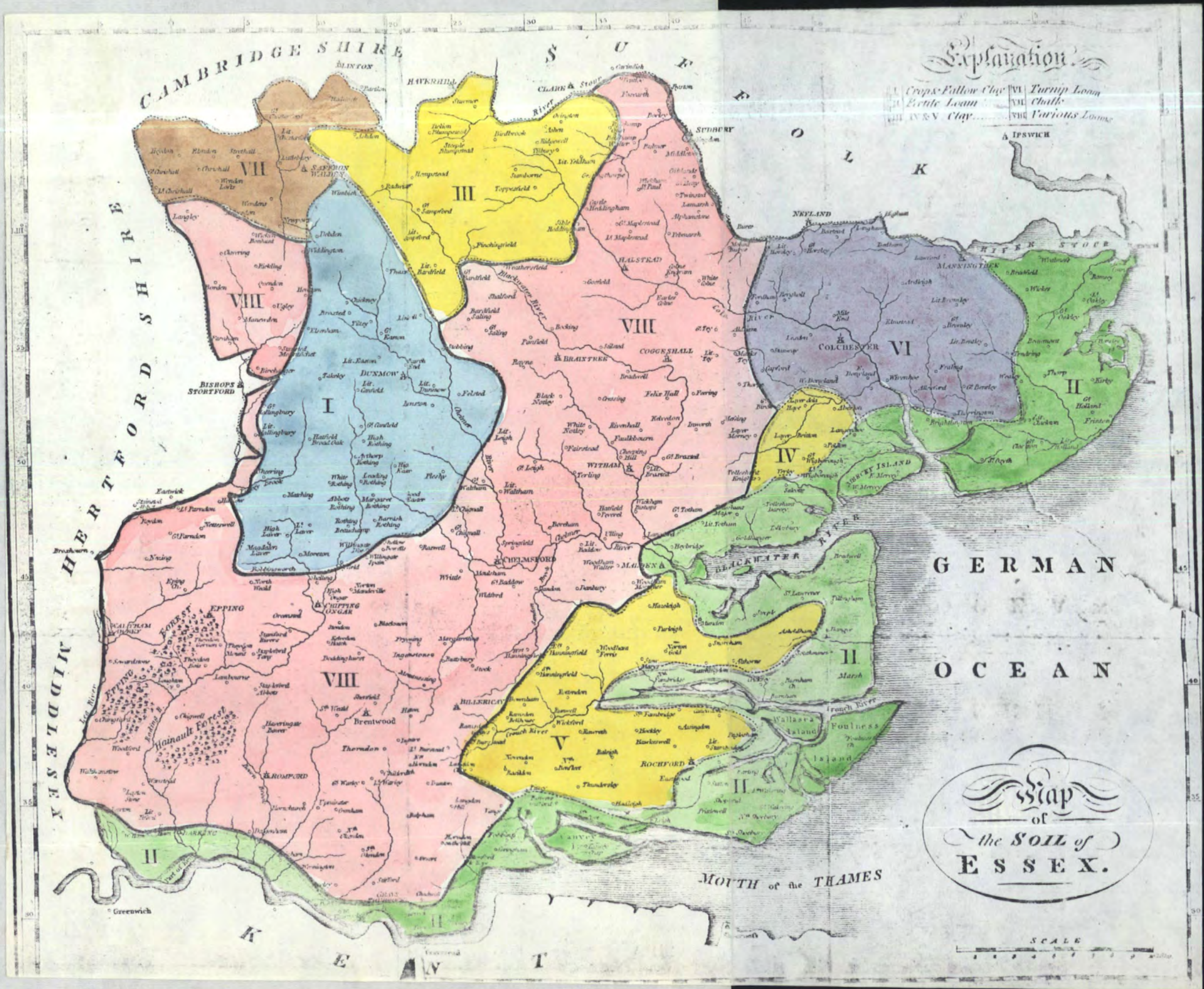
The chief crops grown in Essex were wheat, barley, oats, peas, beans, rapeseed, mustard rye grass, tares and trefoil. About 370 acres were devoted to the growing of hops, chiefly in the Halstead-Castle Hedingham-Wethersfield area. The cultivation of caraway, coriander and teazel was peculiar to the county. The average product from each acre of cereal was as follows (1848):-[1]

Wheat	24½ bushels
Barley	33¾ bushels
Oats	36½ bushels
Beans	27 bushels
Peas	20½ bushels

The finest wheat crops were sown in September; March was the best time for sowing oats and barley. Turnips were grown on the lighter soils and near London. Potatoes were grown for the metropolis. Essex was not famous for its livestock, but calves were sent from Suffolk, sheep from Sussex and Wiltshire, and oxen

Fig. 1

Map showing soils of Essex.



from as far away as Scotland to be fattened on marshland areas.

Efficient drainage was essential for good yields in Area I (see Young's Map - Fig. 1) [2] where strong wet loams were found on a whitish clay marl bottom. The chief crops in this district, the Dunmow Hundred and the Rodings, were wheat and barley. The most fertile area of the county was the maritime district of rich loams (Area II). This included the fertile grazing land south of Maldon and the nearby islands. Areas III, IV and V were composed of mixed soils; in some places very wet and stiff but interspersed with dry superior soils. In the Layer-de-la-Haye area, there was light turnip land. Another region suitable for turnip cultivation was the dry country around Colchester (VI) with loamy sands on gravel. In the extreme north-west of the county (VII), the area was a continuation of the Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire chalk. Because the soil was shallow, deep ploughing was not possible. The two main crops were wheat and barley, the farmers following the old adage "Good elm, good barley; good oak, good wheat" [3]. The final area (VIII) was a large area stretching from Suffolk to Middlesex with a great variety of sands and loams.

Essex was well situated for the efficient development of agriculture. It had a mild climate, no areas of highland and yet, except for the coastal regions, no land so flat that water collected. Transport facilities improved between 1750 and 1850 with better roads and the early development of railways. With the many rivers

in the county, there was ready water carriage. Along the Thames were chalk pits which supplied many areas in the south of the county. The most important advantage that Essex possessed was its proximity to London. The metropolis provided a natural market for agricultural produce and a source of employment for labourers in the south-west of the county. [4]

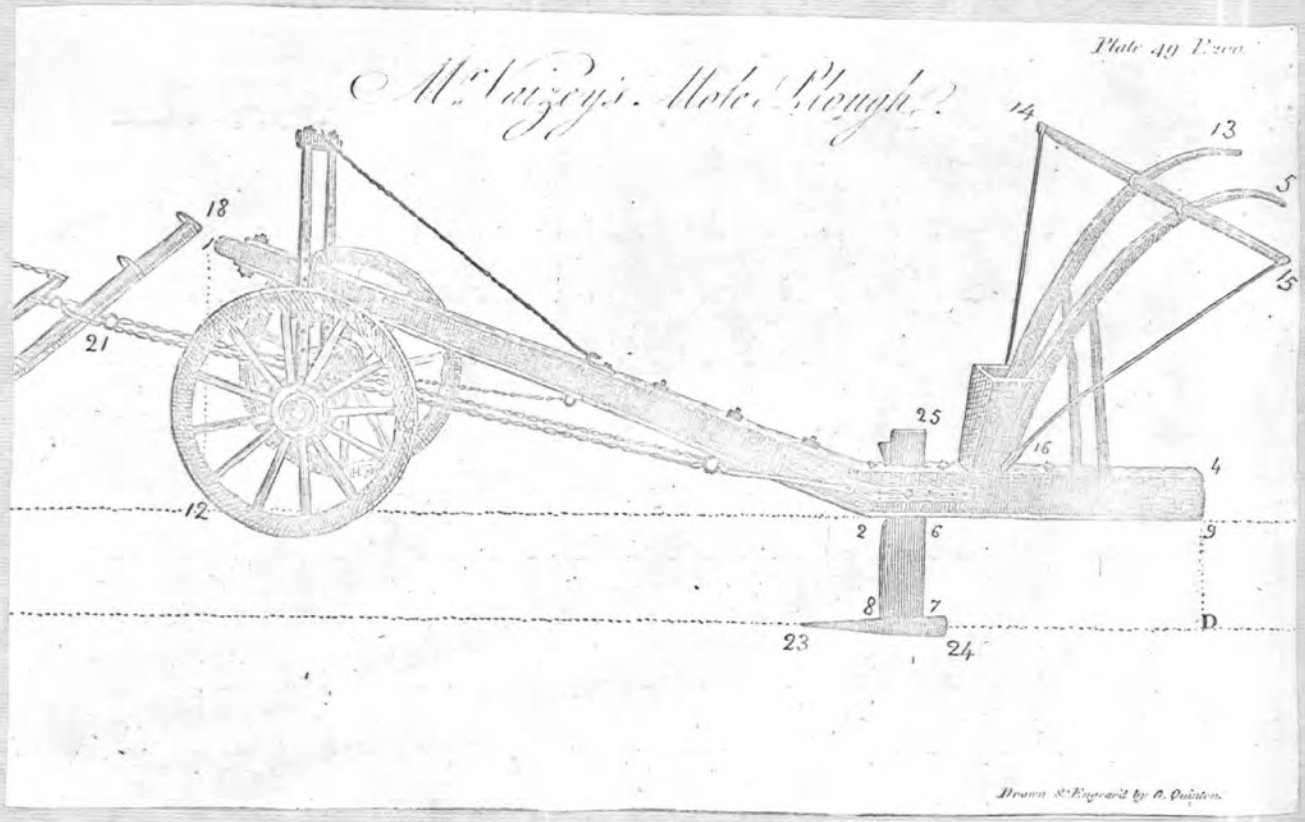
At one time Essex had been famous for its large farms but by the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were found only along the coast. In other parts of the county, a farm of 400-500 acres was regarded as being a large property; the average for the county being about 150-200 acres.[5] With the increased prosperity of the farmers during the Napoleonic Wars, rents were raised, sometimes dramatically. Around Pitsea in 1784 rents were 10/- per acre; by 1805, they averaged between 20/- and 30/-. In the same year, rents between Colchester and Witham were in the region of 22/6d per acre (13/- in 1770).[6] Tithes had also increased; the average composition per acre went up by 1/3½d between 1794 and 1805.[7] In a few parishes, the tithe composition was related to rent, the average composition being approximately 4/- per acre. In the Chesterfords and Littlebury, land had been given to the tithe-holder after the enclosure acts. Tithes were taken in kind at Great Clacton, Eastwood, Prittlewell, Great Wakering and Romford (great tithe only). The most notorious example was at Hornchurch causing Arthur Young to comment that "New College, Oxford, and Mr. Bearblock, are famous topics in

this country". [8]

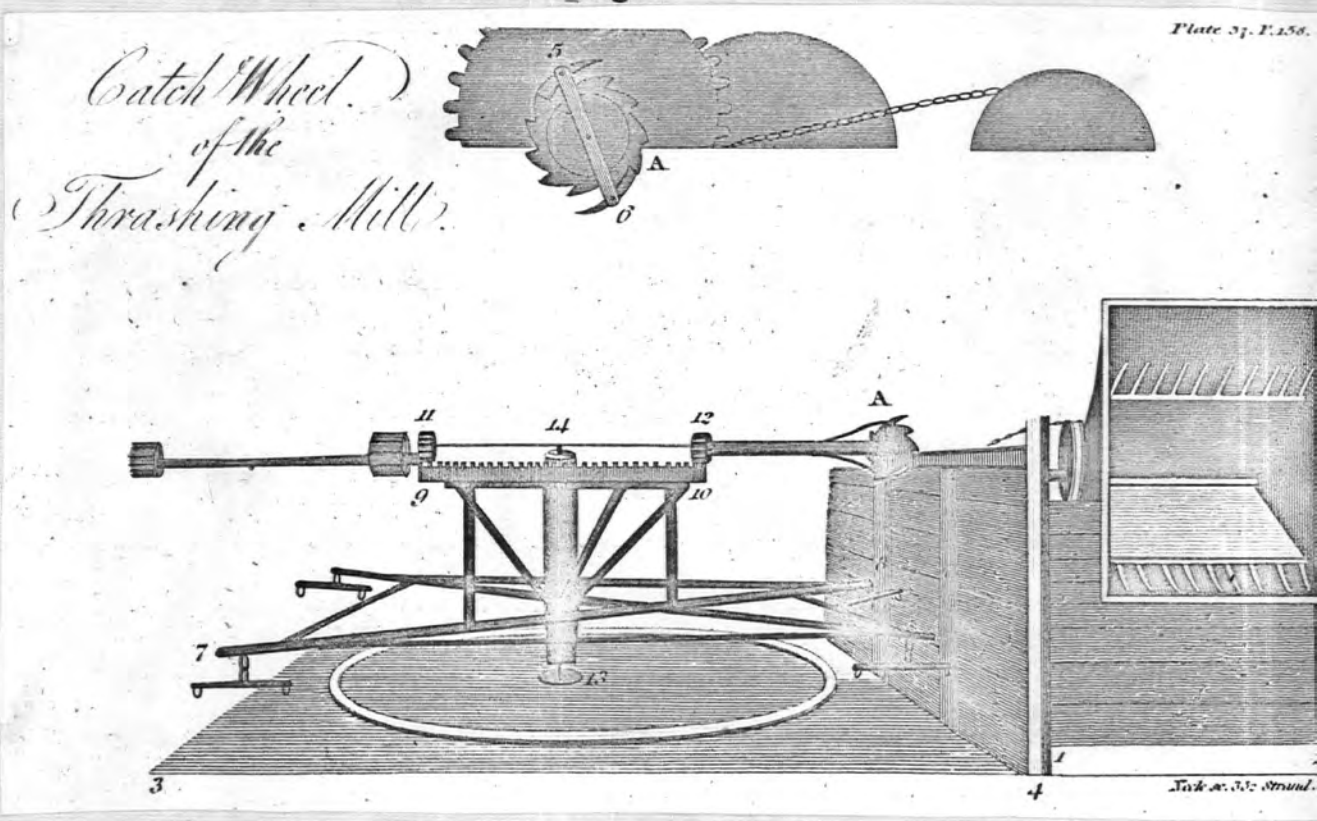
Tithes were mentioned as being one of the "obstacles to husbandry". The lack of leases was another. At one time they were normally for 21 years but Young reported that "leases are going rapidly out of fashion in this county". [9] Forty years later Caird complained that Essex landlords failed to provide capital for the improvement of their estates and refused to give their tenants the security of tenure that would encourage them to undertake the work. The result was that the soils of Essex failed to produce their maximum amount. There were two main explanations; that the landlords were so encumbered with mortgage debt and other liabilities, and that they feared the loss of their influence over tenants if security of tenure was guaranteed. [10]

Essex farmers were among the first to use the latest equipment such as the threshing machine. [11] Mr. Vaizey of Halstead used one driven by four horses. "One man feeds, two supply, a boy drives and two men clear away the straw". Mr. Spurgeon's machine was worked by two horses "and not hard labour. Last year's wheat, which was very badly threshed at 7/- a quarter, was done by the machine perfectly well". Difficulties arose with some of the early machines. A threshing mill belonging to Mr. Wakefield of Burnham and erected at a cost of £200 fell to pieces. [12] By 1830, however, most of the defects had been

Fig. 2.



A Mole Plough



A Threshing Machine

remedied and threshing machines were widely used in Essex. Farmers either bought their own or hired them from contractors. Efficient drainage was essential in some areas of the county, and the mole plough, which originated in Essex, [13] was adopted by a number of farmers who found it more economical than ordinary labour. Mr. Tabrum reported that the machine could do 8-9 acres per day; labourers could do 20 rods each. The saving per acre was 2/-, besides the saving of straw and bushes. [14] Because the threshing machines and mole ploughs were regarded as being one cause of unemployment, both were the objects of attack in 1816 and 1830.

At the start of the nineteenth century, Essex farmers were regarded as among the most efficient in the country. Essex had its share of innovators such as J.J. Mechi who wrote "A Series of Letters on Agricultural Improvements". In 1850, Caird was unable to share the views of Arthur Young as to the efficiency of Essex farmers. He criticized the farmers for failing to use their proximity to London to greater advantage. Caird advised them to pay more attention to supplying milk for the capital; thereby reducing their dependence on corn crops. He concluded that with all the advantages that the county enjoyed, Essex might be expected to be eminently well-cultivated, the landlords wealthy, the farmers prosperous and the labourers fully employed. "This is far from being the case.....". [15]

Chapter II FOOD RIOTS AND POST WAR DISTURBANCES (1815-1819)

(a) Food Riots 1700-1800.

The problems facing the agricultural labourer during most of the eighteenth century were different from those which affected him in the following century, and his reaction consequently differed. Until 1814 employment was usually plentiful and distress was caused not by redundancy, but by sudden increases in the price of essential goods. During the eighteenth century food riots were not uncommon in Essex, especially as after 1765 bad harvests were the rule rather than the exception. Apart from pure plundering, food riots were of two main types: the rioters either seized waggons loaded with food and compelled the authorities to sell the produce at a low price, or they visited farmers and shopkeepers with the same object. [1]

Professor Rudé mentioned a riot by Essex housewives during the period 1709-1710 [2] and in 1740 rioting broke out in Colchester and Manningtree. The most disturbed years were 1772, 1795 and 1800. In 1772 millers and farmers in Chelmsford were compelled to sell their goods at a low price, and meat was only 3d per pound. The Rev. J. Tindall, a local magistrate, confessed that he was at a loss to know what to do. He managed at least to lock up the militia firearms to prevent the mob seizing them. [3] At Colchester waggons loaded with wheat and flour were captured by rioters. [4] A large number of calves bound for the London market were stopped

and taken to the mayor, who ordered them to be killed and sold at 3d a lb.[5] Similar incidents involving corn and meat were reported at Witham. A number of villages were also involved: disturbances broke out at Belchamp Walter, Great Yeldham, Great Waltham, Felsted, White Notley, Writtle, Springfield, Pentlow, Foxearth, Rochford, Birdbrook and Wickham St. Paul. At Pentlow and Foxearth attempts were made to pull down mills.[6] At Barnston a shopkeeper was forced to sell butter at 6d and cheese at 3d per lb, well below market prices.[7]

Rioting broke out in 1795 in the Colchester, Braintree and Halstead districts after the price of wheat rocketed to over 90/- a quarter. Poor harvests had caused a marked reduction in the wheat crops, although the yield of oats increased in the Dunmow area.

Crop in average year (Dunmow area)		1794	1795
Wheat	20 bushels per acre	16 bushels	12 bushels
Oats	28 bushels per acre	24 bushels	32 bushels
Barley	24 bushels per acre	20 bushels	24 bushels

In the Chelmsford division the wheat crop was down by 20%, and in the Dengie Hundred by 25%.[8] There were rumours that the price of grain was being kept artificially high by farmers buying wheat at markets where prices were comparatively low, and selling it elsewhere for a handsome profit. A quantity of corn bought at Epping for £23.15s. 0d. could be sold at Romford for £25. 5s. 0d.[9] The shortage of provisions led to a crowd in Halstead bursting open the doors of a

mill and seizing bags of flour.[10] In nearby Gosfield the village cryer was sent round to tell the public to assemble to reduce the price of corn and pull down mills. A crowd of 500 collected and laid hold on two waggons loaded with wheat but was dispersed by the yeomanry.[11]

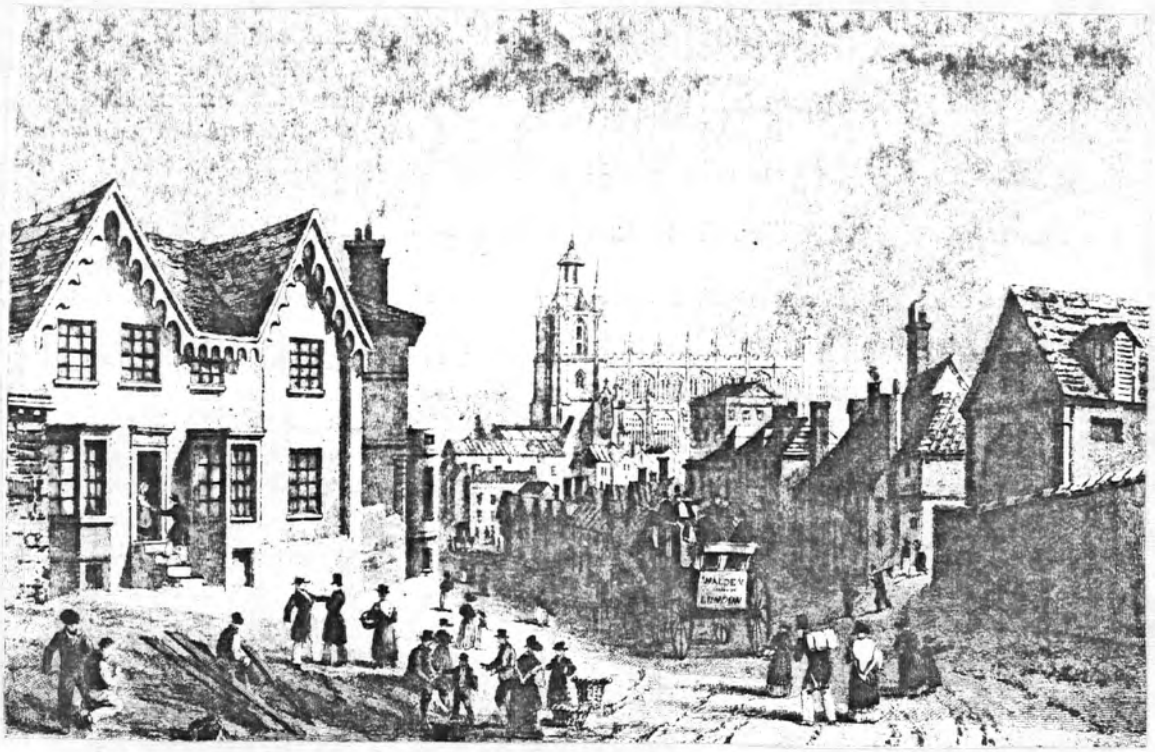
Saffron Walden was the scene of the worst disturbances in 1795. An attempt had been made to supply the parish with cheap wheat and flour, but great difficulty was experienced in finding sufficient quantities. The mayor bought fifty quarters of wheat from a Mr. Horner, and had ordered another fifty. As this transaction had been completed with his young nephew, Horner refused to supply the second order, on the grounds that the mayor had taken advantage of his nephew's age and inexperience in bargaining. On Monday 27th July, 1795, a riot broke out in the town and order was not fully restored until two troops of Surrey Fencibles arrived from Colchester. The leader of the mob was Samuel Porter, a cooper, who on the first day had contributed 10/- for drink for the crowd and forced passers-by to do the same. With their new leader, the crowd gathered in the Greyhound Inn where a quantity of corn was taken from the loft. After Porter had set up his headquarters in the White Horse Inn, parties were sent out to gather corn, cheese, meat and other food at reduced rates. A carrier was pressed into service to fetch the fifty quarters of wheat from Mr. Horner. Fortunately for him, the ringleaders were so busy planning the raids that he was able to escape. When some of the shopkeepers resisted the demands of the rioters, fights broke out. John Leverett, shop-

keeper and dealer in cheese, received such injuries that "his life was despaired of". At the Lent Assizes 1796, five of the rioters were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from three to six months. At the Summer Assizes 1795, Porter was sentenced to "pay a fine of £50 and be imprisoned in the common gaol until he pay the said fine and also to enter into recognizances with two sureties, himself in the sum of £500 and each surety £250 for his good behaviour for the space of seven years, to be computed from the end of the said one year and then discharged". A year later, in a letter written in Chelmsford prison to Thomas Hall, a Town Clerk, Porter expressed the hope that he would "interseed for me to Lord Howhard and the town at larg" to draw up a petition for his release before the end of his term. [12]

The composition of the crowd in the Saffron Walden riots is difficult to determine. Although Porter was a cooper, and another ringleader [13] a bricklayer, it is likely that many of the rioters were agricultural labourers from the surrounding district. The cause of the riot was purely economic. An observer reported that "I cannot find out that these poor deluded people have ever assembled in this neighbourhood from any other motive than that of getting corn from farmers who would not bring it to market". [14]

A similar riot broke out in Harwich in 1800 during which the mob forced the "market people" to sell their butter at 1/- a pint, eggs at a halfpenny each and other produce in proportion. Peace was restored when an agreement was signed by the mayor and principal

Food Riots 1795 and 1800



Saffron Walden

A Typical Essex Mill (Braintree-Bocking)

inhabitants to give no more than 1/3d per pint for butter, a halfpenny for an egg and 2d a quarter for potatoes. [15] 1800 was a year of considerable social distress as the price of wheat reached 113/10d per quarter. Crimes involving the stealing of flour and wheat greatly increased. An advertisement appeared in a local newspaper offering a reward of £30 to be paid by the parishoners of Thundersley for the detection and conviction of those responsible for breaking into the barn of Mr. Marsh and stealing three bushels of wheat. Thieves also broke into the premises of three other parishioners. [16]

(b) High Prices and Incendiarism.

In many counties, incendiarism was important only after 1830. In East Anglia, however, fire-raising was a form of social protest throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Fires were so frequent in the Braintree-Halstead area in 1800 that patrols had to be instituted. During one night three blazes were reported in the Braintree area. [17] The incendiaries often proved to be most determined. Watchmen at Mr. Granger's farm at Great Braxted discovered two men in the stack yard and heard one say "Why don't you blow?". The patrol pursued and fired at the men but they escaped. A bundle of tinder and matches were found nearby. When the incendiaries made another attempt at midnight, they were "frustrated in their designs". [18] A fire at Halstead began in a barn containing peas, oats, barley and tares and spread to three stacks of hay worth over £600. The blaze could be seen in Colchester, over ten miles away. [19]

Threatening letters were sent to the parson at Great Bardfield and ministers of five adjoining parishes. They demanded a reduction in the cost of provisions, failing which corn and buildings would be destroyed. The ministers were told to read out the warnings in church or face the consequences. All the clergy except one (a dissenter) ignored the request. As a precaution against disturbances, volunteers assembled and one troop "went through the broad sword exercise with great exactness...." [20]

Millers were the object of much hatred during the period of high prices. In 1795 a mill was pillaged during disturbances in Halstead. [21] In 1800, Lord Braybrooke was sent two letters which had been circulated in the Saffron Walden area. The writer threatened to commit murders and to "burn up all mills". He demanded that the millers should "sink" their flour to 2/6d a peck. He added that as a married man with six children "tha low me 4 and 6 a weak". [22] In the same year, two haystacks in a field adjoining Mr. Tiffen's Mill at Bocking were fired. Fortunately the wind was blowing away from the mill, and the building escaped destruction. [23] During the same period of high prices, William Royce was reported to have said "Damn Mr. Abraham Johnson..... for a Rogue". He threatened to pull down Johnson's mill and throw him in the river. A Volunteer, John Honeybold, who was wishing to resign was told to keep his Brown Bess or else hand it over to him (Royce) and with it he would lower the price of corn. [24]

N. 1. This will all com true.

June 10th 1800

This is to give notis that you millers and Shop keepers all
kill the over Seers
had best to take keare of youer selves and mend that you
and kild and if you dont sink with youer Flower we will make
Tom Nottage is a dam Rogue
you sink for we have rob your Mill several Times and we
kill him for one there is more we will kill
will rob it again if you doant look down we —
Sink your Flour to 2 and 6 a peck
Set fier to it and burn it down — — — — ——

Burn up all the Mills

and do all the Mischife as we can and weare every you
la weele up we set fier to it and burn up every thing here
is 10 of us in this Gan and we had best do as this for we are
all most starvd i my Selfe have got a Wife and 6 Children
and tha Give me 4 and 6 a week Ther Shall be the most fiers
in this Town between now and 5 of November Ther ever was
none in this world and most mischeif in it shall never miss
a weake with out a fier we will set fier to Heat god dam.
Millen and all the Gospel that is Preach in for that doth more
and the Church doth fale and that is the Sin of ingland for ever —

Bine up all ever thing an set fier to the Gierneay

superscribed.

Mr Sargir

Colling a.t

Carrons

N. 2.

Now Gantleman this is to let you know in all Parts that we have suffered hungary for sumthing and we have born it Joccasly but we will keep stoting us more and more but with grate reserlusen we will not bear it no longer for we live in a Land plenty and if you do not chuse for to Loven Kings so every woone may live and in a shoard Time for all working Hands are woon time to each other the hole Kingdom through and the first Nobleman in engelin for we have seaveal Noblemen will in Georges as for the dasnd Farmers and Factors an like wise sellers an Shopkepers for they are worse then the head Gantleman and we mean to set out with a grate reserlusen to destroy all them kind of men for we will kill burn and dissthroy every thing we come at thesely the great Landholders and the most seanvear men them and there farmeirs and now Gantlemen you have brought all this on yourselves. We mean to behave well to every minester that will read this in the Church, for he is a ded man by night or by day we by all means dessthroy the King and Parlement.

Superscribed

To Mister
Deanes Church
Minster.

Copies of Two Threatening Letters
(1800)

(c) Wage Demands 1790-1800

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was a significant change in tactics among some of the labourers, who sought to mitigate the effects of high prices by demanding increased wages. In 1793, Isaac Sear (or Seer) was arrested in Thaxted after going to "various places" with twenty others for "the purpose of raising wages". [25] Another case concerned the labourers of Steeple in the Dengie Hundred, who in 1800 refused to work until their wages were raised or the cost of provisions lowered, and attempted to persuade others to join them. The strikers appointed John Little to be their leader and agreed that when their supporters numbered two hundred, they were going to take the horses from the ploughs and the strike was to begin. Their cause received support from the marshmen, of whom a hundred assembled in Southminster at the time the plan was to have gone into operation. Prompt action on the part of the authorities led to the arrest of the leaders who appeared at the Summer Assizes (1800). [26] John Little, Thomas Crisp and Joseph Perry were sentenced to be imprisoned for a year, and until they entered into recognizances for their good behaviour for seven years. The Rev. Bate Dudley was later thanked for his exertions in suppressing the "spirit of insurrection" in the parish. [27]

(d) Post War Disturbances 1815-1819.

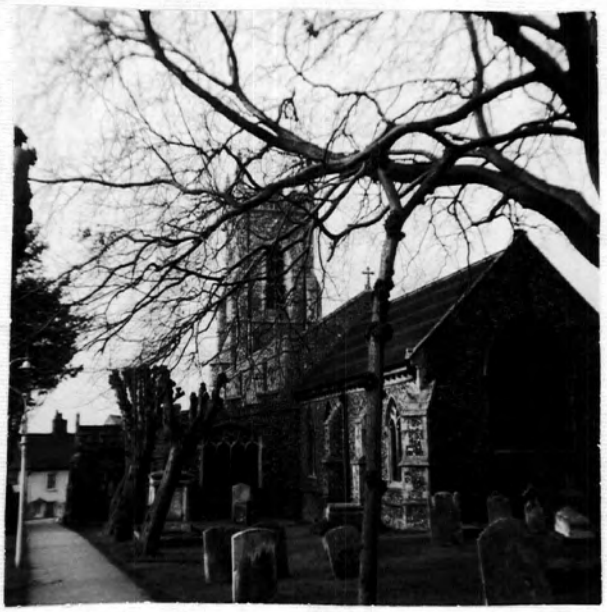
The last important outbreak of rioting resulting from sudden increases in prices, occurred in 1816 in a number of East Anglian

towns, including Bury St. Edmunds, Brandon, Norwich, Downham Market, Littleport and Ely. The riots became so serious that the military were called in to restore order.[28] Although the immediate cause of the disturbances was a sudden rise in the price of flour, there were more complex reasons for the tension in 1816 and successive years. In addition to the food riots in the towns, there were a number of incidents involving the destruction of agricultural machinery.

The old-style food riot played no part in the disturbances in Essex in 1816. The only town where rioting was in any way comparable with that in other East Anglian towns was Halstead. It was after seeing conditions in this town that Pitt remarked that he had no conception that any part of England could present a spectacle of such misery.[29] On 28th May (1816) a mob tried to rescue four prisoners who were being lodged in the Halstead House of Correction for smashing agricultural machinery at Sible Hedingham. The crowd chased one of the escorting constables into a nearby house, smashed the windows and attacked other houses. The next day labourers from nearby villages came streaming into Halstead and more window-smashing took place. The Riot Act was read and the Halstead Yeomanry cavalry attempted to disperse the crowd. The rioters retreated into the churchyard, reassembled and forced the horsemen to retreat before a hail of stones. Ladders and ropes were placed across the road to prevent troop reinforcements reaching the town. By 30th May, after the arrival of a party of Dragoons from Colchester and the enrolling of sixty special constables, the situation was under

Fig. 5.

Disturbed Parishes 1816



Halstead Church and Churchyard

Finchingfield

(Scene of a Wage Riot in 1830)

control. For a week, the constables and troops patrolled the streets.[30] In the opinion of Major-General Byng, responsible for the suppression of the East Anglian riots, the trouble in Hâlstead "does not appear to be at all serious".[31] The troops left on 7th June.

An important feature of both the 1816 and 1830 riots was the destruction of agricultural machinery, especially threshing machines. Essex farmers had been among the first to adopt new methods, though whether the introduction of the threshing machine increased their profits to any great extent is doubtful. The inefficiency of early models, the existence of a cheap labour market and the growing burden of the poor rates discouraged their full-scale use, and may have been the reason why some farmers did little to protect their machines in 1830. Nevertheless, the use of machinery saved the farmers precious time and the existence of 'contractors' hiring out their machines enabled them to cope with a good harvest without sinking money in expensive plant.[32] A Colchester correspondent claimed that a threshing machine worked by four or five horses could thresh the same amount of wheat in one day as twenty men working with a flail.[33]

In areas where threshing provided the main source of winter work, the machines were regarded by the unemployed as the cause of their redundancy, or as a threat to their livelihood.[34] A machine-breaker of Lawford, Thomas Francis, claimed in 1816 that he had "no work to do" and his colleague Edward Turtle said he "could not get any work".[35] Machine-breaking was also a method by which

labourers could put pressure on their employers to increase wages.[36] This may have been the case in the Tendring Hundred riots of 1830 when the destruction of machinery was closely linked with wage demands. Mole ploughs, which were used for draining heavier soils and consequently reduced the labour force, were also targets for attacks in 1816 and 1830.

An entry in the Chelmsford Petty Sessions for 24th November 1815, records an early incident of machine-breaking. The case (Sparrow against Brigley) "for wantonly breaking and damaging a threshing machine" was dismissed "on account of Bush (?) the master of the Defendant not chosing to complain - so that the Proprietors were left to a civil action".[37]

On 23rd May 1816 a crowd of 200 visited Mr. John Smith of Finchingfield and smashed his threshing machine before continuing to Boyton Hall where Mr. Robert Smith's mole plough was broken. The following day a crowd of the same number visited Great Bardfield to break machinery. A farmer, Mr. Philip Spicer, and twenty neighbours managed to carry out a "Waterloo movement" to get between the mob and the barn and dared the rioters to advance. After the intervention of the local dissenting minister, the rioters retreated, muttering threats. Special constables were sworn in and night patrols introduced, but as a correspondent reported: "we dread the night, lest they should proceed to further mischief".[38] Other parishes in which there were incidents involving the destruction of machinery were Sible Hedingham, Lawford

and Layer Breton. At Lawford on 18th July 1816 thirteen or fourteen men and boys smashed a threshing machine belonging to Mr. John Lugar and the Rev. Marshall Lugar of Ardleigh, which was being used on the premises of the Rev. William Wood of Lawford.[39] During a similar incident at Layer Breton in October (1816), one of the rioters threatened to "run through" Mr. William Sach with a pitchfork.[40]

Axes, saws and hammers were not the only instruments used to destroy the hated machines. At Mile End, Colchester, a threshing machine belonging to Mr. Posford was set on fire on 6th April (1816).[41] At Hutton part of a machine was removed and burnt in an adjoining field.[42] Farmers using machinery were the principal victims of incendiaries after 1815. Essex farm buildings, usually made of wood and old thatch, were easy targets for fire-raisers. Yards were often littered with straw, and with hayricks nearby, fires often spread out of control.[43] A blaze at Henham on 4th May 1816 destroyed a granary, a stable, cowhouses, four barns and cart sheds.[44] Incendiarism was a quick and effective method of protest. A labourer seeking revenge "knows every path, hedge, bush, post and dog on his master's farm".[45] Within fifteen minutes of firing a stack, he was either snoring in bed or rousing his employer with cries of "fire! help!" The reaction to the use of a threshing machine was often swift; at Little Blunts, Buttsbury, a fire was started only a few hours after a

machine had arrived.[46] At West Mersea a blaze, which gutted a barn and destroyed a stack of wheat and some oats, could be seen at Purleigh about ten miles away.[47] Another farmer using a machine received prior warning of action against his property. "Take care, Joseph Green, or your premises will be burnt down before next Lady-Day".[48] Other incidents involved farmers at Ramsey, Great Wigborough, Langham and Southminster.[49] The destruction of threshing machines was only a symptom of the discontent of the labourers which came to the boil in 1816-1819, 1829-31 and 1834-44. The deeper issues that were involved were summarised in an appendix to the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, in which local correspondents gave their opinions as to the causes of the riots and fires of 1830.[50] The replies for Essex were as follows:-

Unemployment	(15)
Low or inadequate wages	(8)
Threshing machines	(4)
Personal malice	(3)
"Distress" "Poverty"	(3)
Inefficiency of Poor Law administration or inadequate poor relief	(3)
"Depravity", "Idleness"	(2)
Inadequate accommodation	(1)
Game Laws	(1)
Enclosures	(1)

Chapter III UNEMPLOYMENT

(a) Introduction.

"If I don't soon get some work I'll be..... if I don't do something; I fired Lambert and I'll do something else". These words of Robert Woodward, transported for life in 1843, reveal the desperation felt by many labourers between 1815 and 1850. Woodward was convicted of setting fire to property belonging to Mr. Lambert, a farmer of West Bergholt, who had refused him work a short time before. [1] Unemployment was the prime cause of distress in the period under review. It is important at the outset to make a distinction between the area within a twenty mile radius of London and the rest of Essex. Labourers near the capital could always obtain other employment during periods of hardship. The diversity of crops grown near London reduced the dependence on wheat yields and prices, consequently the effects of agricultural depression were reduced. Wages were considerably higher in the vicinity of the capital. For these reasons, very few agrarian disturbances took place within the twenty mile radius of London. In 1816, the only incident of any importance occurred at Hutton where a threshing machine was destroyed. [2] During the 1830 troubles, only one incident, a fire at Leyton, [3] was reported near London. The main areas of distress were in the predominantly wheat-growing regions, north of a line from Chelmsford to Bishops Stortford.

(b) The Agricultural Depression.

The fall in the price of wheat from an average of 126/6d in 1812 to below 75/- in 1814 came as a severe blow to the farmers. During the wars, the expense of cultivating 100 acres of arable land had doubled [4] and many farmers were unable to meet their commitments once the price of wheat fell. Everywhere there were "unpaid rent and taxes, undischarged tradesman's bills and capital melting away". Landlords were forced to lower their rents or give their tenants notice to quit. [5]

Parish	Notice to Quit	Abatement of Rent
Ardleigh	Several	33%
Mistley	Three	20 - 25%
Mark Hall	Several	10 - 25%
Gosfield	None	20%
Halstead	Many	-

Because of the financial position of the farmers, labourers were faced with accepting lower wages or redundancy. When James Buxton, an Essex farmer, reduced his wages by 6d a day, one of his men told him that he did not know what to do as a result; "..... however, there is a revolution at Norwich and I hope we shall have ablaze here". A fortnight after seven of his workers had been dismissed, one returned and told Buxton that after seeking employment elsewhere, they had been unable to do more than two days' work. "We could get work but the farmers had no money".

Questioned about the price of grain needed to give the farmer a living profit with rents at 30/- an acre, Buxton replied that a full crop every year at 90/- a quarter was necessary, a full crop being three quarters of wheat and five quarters of barley. Even then he would only have 12/- a year profit on every acre. [6]

The effect of the agricultural depression can be seen in the statement of Bury Farm in High Roothing (or Roding), a holding of 500 acres. The average profit from the farm for the four years ending October 1814 was £431. 5s.10d. In the six years after 1814, the average annual loss was £153. 2s. 9¾d besides the interest on capital (£4,500) which had fallen by one-third in value. [7] In 1836 John Kemp estimated that his average profit for the previous three years was only 2½%. "I have had to live and do everything for the two and a half per cent". [8]

In 1830 the farmers blamed taxes and tithes for their inability to pay higher wages. Among the taxes mentioned in 1816 as being burdensome were the malt, salt, property, leather and carthorse taxes. [9] As a result of great pressure from the farmers, the malt tax and property tax were abolished; the other charges continued to be a nuisance. During the period of high prices, tithes had been increased and often remained the same after 1815, although newspapers sometimes reported "a liberal abatement of tithe" by incumbents or lay impropriators. [10] In 1836, John Kemp paid 6/6d an acre on his arable land and 2/-

on pasture, the average annual amount being £130.[11] Another burden in agricultural regions was the parish poor rate which operated as a vicious circle; the fall in the price of wheat led to unemployment and high poor rates which added to the financial distress of the farmers. From Halstead came reports that the average rate for the year 1806-1816 was 18/- in the pound or 13/10d per acre. According to John Vaizey any increase would mean much land being uncultivated.[12] The position was made worse when seventy or eighty banks came to grief in 1825-6. Among these were several Essex banks, three of which failed in a week. The remaining banks were naturally cautious in lending money to farmers when agriculture was in such a precarious state.[13]

A volume published by the Board of Agriculture in 1816 gave a picture of British farming following the collapse of wheat prices. The most interesting section concerned the condition of agricultural labourers in different parts of the country. Reports from the most distressed areas in Essex gave a grim impression of poverty and unemployment.[14]

Ardleigh	"Worse than ever known".
Copford	"Many unemployed".
Mistley	"Far worse than ever, for want of employment".
Mark Hall	"Truly miserable for want of employment".
Gosfield	"Many able men picking stones".
Halstead	"Four-fifths want employment".

Despite the very real distress in the county after 1815, Essex probably suffered less than many other areas. "Everywhere farmers became insolvent because they could not meet liabilities incurred at a higher level of prices out of returns received when a low level reigned". Yet "although these conditions applied to Essex as much as to other counties, the distress there does not seem to have been so great". [15] This may have been the result of the resourcefulness of the Essex farmer that Arthur Young admired. The fact that Essex was an old enclosed county and the farmers were spared the "parliamentary exertions" of enclosure bills may be another explanation. The varied types of crops grown in the south of the county and the proximity of London helped to soften the impact of the agricultural depression. Another reason was probably the wisdom of many landlords in not pressing for their full rents and making generous abatements to their tenants.

(c) Decline of Local Industry.

The most distressed areas in Essex in 1816 were those where local industries were declining. In the north of the county woollen manufacture had sustained a final coup de grâce during the French wars. In Colchester 150 or 160 men and the same number of women were employed in 1794 in the manufacture of baize for Spain; before the outbreak of war, nearly five times that number had been employed. The extent of the decline can be

see in the table below.[16]

Immediately before the war		January 1794
Weekly manufacture of baize	400	160
Exported or used at home	400	40 [17]
Hands employed in Colchester or adjacent country	20,000	8,000

In 1795 the position in Colchester was so desperate that a petition was sent to the King asking for the termination of the war "on such terms as shall be consistent..... with the welfare and honour of your Majesty's Dominions".[18] The position was no better in Dunmow, Halstead, Bocking and Coggeshall. At Dunmow, the average earnings of the best spinners in 1790 were scarcely 4d a day; forty years before they were usually 8d.[19] In Halstead 434 families were receiving relief from the parish in 1817.[20] Because of the high poor rates, which averaged 13/10d an acre after 1806, land value had been greatly reduced. Although the situation was complicated by the return of troops after the war, the main reason for distress in Halstead was the decay of the woollen industry. In 1800, the manufacturers had paid £13,000 in wages; by 1817 it was only "a very small sum".[21]

The silk industry which replaced the decaying woollen manufacture in the north of Essex failed to produce the stability in employment that the area needed. The fluctuations in the

silk trade were fully documented in the diary of John Castle, a silk-weaver, who was forced to seek alternative employment on a number of occasions when the factory at which he was working had to close. [22] In 1830 Mr. Beckwith of Coggeshall was forced to reduce the wages of his silk weavers by between twenty-five and thirty per cent. Shortly afterwards he received a "Swing" letter threatening to burn down his factory if he did not "advance his labour in two days". Two houses were burned down to emphasise the threats and Beckwith had great difficulty in obtaining insurance cover for his factory. The average wage of a weaver was 8/- a week, less than the usual pay of an agricultural labourer. The weavers considered themselves worse off than men on the land who could earn additional wages at harvest-time, were able to glean some "perks" from their work and had no expenses. [23]

(d) Unemployment and the weather.

Although farmers had a nucleus of workers hired on a semi-permanent basis, many workers were paid by the day or by the piece. The state of the weather therefore dictated whether the labourers enjoyed full employment or had to depend on parish relief. The disturbances in 1816 and 1830 broke out during prolonged periods of inclement weather. 1816 was a "disastrous year" with a very wet spring and summer. [24] Although in Essex much of the wheat crop had been harvested by September, hail

and frost had seriously affected potatoes, beans, peas and barley. In parts of the county, ice was four inches thick. [25] According to John Kemp the distress of 1828-31 resulted from prolonged wet seasons. [26] The rainfall figures for the months of July, August and September 1828-31 reveal that in only one month (July 1830) was the rainfall less than average. [27]

					Average	Average
Station: Epping	1828	1829	1830	1831	1830-39	1840-49
July	5.57	4.96	1.48	3.04	2.155	2.349
August	3.66	6.83	3.35	2.73	2.490	2.337
September	3.32	4.23	3.75	5.20	2.775	2.610

Cold winters added to the distress of the poor. During the winter of 1828-9 house-to-house collections for the purchase of coal or flannels for the poor were undertaken in many parishes. The latter part of January (1829) was particularly bitter; between 17th and 25th January the temperature only twice reached 32°F. On 25th the temperature at 8 a.m., at noon and 11 p.m. was 20°F, 23°F and 28°F respectively. During this winter there was a wave of incendiarism, the crime rate in the Chelmsford area rose sharply and offences against the Game Laws increased. Various 'depredations' were committed in Witham, a parish which suffered from incendiarism

in the following year.[28] Other seasonal factors affected the well-being and employment of labourers. The slow ripening of corn in 1836 led to no extra labourers being required in the Thaxted area. The resulting unemployment among casual workers led to a wave of lawlessness in the district.[29] The dry summer of 1843 and the resulting poor wheat crop led to a reduction of the labour force required for threshing during the winter and may have been one reason for the incendiarism in East Anglia in 1843-44.[30]

(e) The Increase in population.

The chief cause of the unemployment after 1815 was the exceptional increase in population in the years following 1781.[31]

Date	Population in Essex
1701	168,527
1751	180,465
1781	207,739 or 222,946
1801	233,664
1831	321,044

The lack of reliable statistics before 1801 has led some historians to underestimate the size and effects of the increase. Another debate among scholars has centred around the reasons for the population "explosion".

In Essex the population apparently increased by about 50%

between 1781 and 1831. According to Deane and Cole, the increase would have been greater if the numbers migrating from Essex had not exceeded those entering the county by 24,033. This reversed the trend of the period 1701-1750 when the death rate considerably exceeded the birth rate and the increase was the result of migration. [32]

Estimated increase in population	11,938
Estimated natural increase	- 31,848
Net gain by migration	43,781

From 1751, the rate of natural increase went up, gradually at first and then sharply after 1801; the rate of migration into Essex did precisely the opposite. [33]

	Rate of Natural Increase%	Rate of Migration%
1701-1750	-3.7	5.0
1751-1780	0.9	3.8
1781-1800	6.4	-0.5
1801-1830	13.5	-2.9

It is likely that Deane and Cole ante-dated the ending of migration into Essex, for during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, more persons entered Essex than left it. [34]

The increase in population in Essex, which was proportionally slightly less than that in the whole country, was spread very unevenly throughout the county. The most marked increases were in

areas near London. In 1670, 4.6% of the Essex population lived in the Becontree Hundred; by 1801 this percentage had risen to 9.2. Other parishes that experienced large increases in population included sea ports and market towns and the surrounding villages. Towns and villages along main roads showed above average growth because of their good communications with local markets and London. The progressive farming in the Tendring Hundred led to an increase in population much above the Essex average. In the north of Essex, the decline of the textile industry caused the stagnation or even a decrease in population in towns like Colchester, Braintree, Bocking, Hālstead and Coggeshall. In most rural areas, the population increased steadily except in the backward parts of Dunmow, Harlow, Ongar and Uttlesford Hundreds. [35]

After 1800 migration into Essex gradually decreased and population growth was the result of other factors. For many years the ideas of G.T. Griffith, that the increase in population was the result of a decrease in the death-rate following improved medical conditions, were accepted with little questioning. Doubts about the thesis were first expressed by Professor K.H. Connell who showed that medical improvements were not the cause of the great population increase in Ireland between 1781 and 1841. [36] Another critic of Griffith's ideas, J.T. Krause, concluded that the death rate may have risen after 1810 and the apparent low level

of mortality after that date was evidence of the breakdown in parish registration. [37]

In Essex, the natural increase in population after 1800 probably resulted from a decrease in the death rate. [38]

Date	Death Rate per '000
1701-1750	35.5
1751-1800	31.4 or 32.6
1801-1830	23.0

The sharp drop in the death rate occurred after 1816. [39]

Date	Ratio of Burials to Population.
1796-1800	1 : 44
1806-1810	1 : 45
1816-1820	1 : 58
1826-1830	1 : 52

One contributory cause of the population explosion in Essex was the improvement of medical facilities, especially the increase in pesthouses, the spread of free medical treatment and the use of vaccination and inoculation against small pox. A Hedingham doctor who had started inoculations in 1763, had treated "thousands" by 1767. At Chipping Ongar ten patients a week were inoculated by a local doctor. Centres were set up at Great Waltham, Pattiswick, Kirby, Danbury, Barnston, Little Baddow,

Ramsey, Ardleigh and Mile End, Colchester. The most famous of the Essex inoculators, Daniel Sutton, treated 13,792 people at his hospital at Ingatestone between 1763 and 1766 and his assistants inoculated 6,000 more. [40] Sutton visited Maldon and inoculated 487 inhabitants, none of whom later died of smallpox. Other parishes where treatment was carried out included Great Chishall (1778) and Rayne (1806) where half the population was inoculated. [41] At first the rich alone benefited but later some parishes offered free inoculation to all who wished to undergo it. [42]

Essex was among the first counties to benefit from vaccination. In 1800, the Chelmsford Chronicle reported that "The introduction of the Vaccine or Cow Pox is now become general. We believe it has been introduced into this neighbourhood". [43] In the same year, Dr. Jenner and his brother inoculated the 85th Regiment at Colchester with cow pox, with no harmful results. The soldiers' wives and children were also treated. [44] Vaccination being cheaper than inoculation, was offered more freely to villagers and townsfolk. In 1803, 1809 and 1814, 300, 200 and 100 persons were vaccinated at Castle Hedingham. Wivenhoe, Rayne, Great Tey, Kirby and Coggeshall made similar arrangements. [45] In other parishes inoculation or vaccination was given when the danger of smallpox approached. James Holmes (?) was paid 5/- for "Inoculating two children of Clarks" at Steeple Bumpstead in 1830 when smallpox hit nearby Linton. [46] By 1820 vaccination was becoming a regular feature of medical care in Essex parishes, although

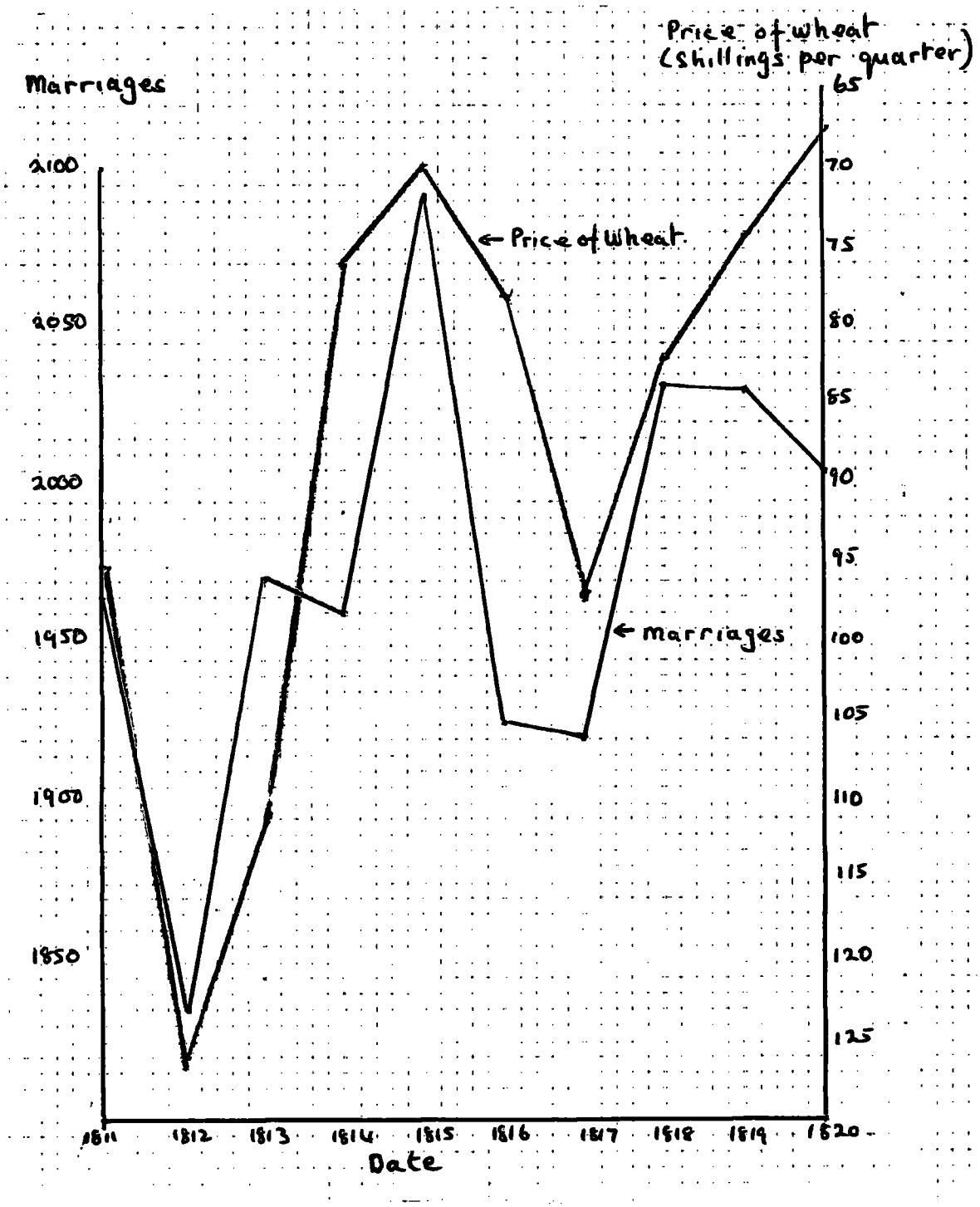
it did not always replace the old method of inoculation. In Wickford in 1811, 1821 and 1827, both methods were used but inoculation was more common.[47]

Other factors may have assisted the fall in the death rate. Increased production and better distribution of food, the widespread use of the allowance system of poor relief, and the introduction of substitute foods such as potatoes helped to increase the expectancy of life.

The increase of the birth rate was less spectacular than the fall in the death rate.[48]

County	Date	Birth Rate (per thousand)
	1701-1750	31.9
Essex	1751-1800	34.4 or 35.7
	1801-1830	36.5

The increase in the birth rate was probably the result of couples marrying at an earlier age. A survey of 450 couples married by licence shows that between 1700-39 and 1760-99 the average age of men marrying for the first time fell from 28.4 to 25.6 and of women from 24.7 to 22.6. Although the poor did not often marry by licence, the trend was possibly the same among the labouring classes. Agricultural improvement after 1740, which created more jobs and enabled men to reach maximum earnings at an early age, was one reason for this. Another was the increase mobility of the workers which allowed them to meet



Graph to show

Relation between Marriages in

Essex (1811 - 1820) and the Price of Wheat.

their future wives outside the parish.[49] The trend during the Napoleonic war is uncertain. The decline in "living-in" and the increasing use of potatoes as a substitute for bread to feed a family may have encouraged earlier marriage, yet according to one source the marriage rate fell after 1800.[50]

Essex Marriage Rate	1796-1800	1806-1810	1816-1820	1826-1830
1 in	126,	130,	146,	154.

Whatever the cause of the population increase, there was a considerable surplus of labour, especially during the winter. This was particularly true of some of the most disturbed parishes between 1800 and 1850. At Sible Hedingham there was an "excess of labourers";[51] in Finchingfield, a large number of the men occasionally fell entirely on the parish.[52] Between 50 and 70 workers were unemployed in Writtle during the winter.[53] From a total of 202 agricultural workers in Clavering, 60 were redundant during the summer and winter.[54] Even at harvest-time, there were 40 hands more than necessary.[55] A similar situation existed in Ridgewell,[56] where a wage riot broke out in 1830. In Great Clacton, the problem was chiefly winter unemployment. On 25th January 1830, twenty-five men and boys were "out of employ"; a fortnight later, eighteen were given relief for work on the roads.[57] In the following month (March), only five able bodied labourers were given relief.[58]

Chapter IV THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE LABOURERS

(a) Wages.

The arguments among historians about the standards of living during the Industrial Revolution have centred primarily on the conditions of the urban workers and have so far proved inconclusive.[1] A more difficult task has to be attempted when trying to assess the position of the agricultural labourers. It is impossible to work out exact figures when piece work was common and when labourers received 'extras' in the form of free cottages or at rents below the letting value of their home. Harvest earnings, extra allowances and the wages of those having special care of animals have to be taken into account. Wages varied from district to district. At the end of the eighteenth century labourers on the islands along the Essex coast received 10/6d a week throughout the year, in areas near London 10/-, and in the Chelmsford-Maldon district 9/3d. The lowest wages were found in the west central and northern parts of the county where the men were paid 9/- in the summer and 7/- or 7/6d a week in winter.[2]

An attempt was made by A.L. Bowley to compile a chart showing agricultural wage variations in different counties. The figures for Essex were as follows;[3]

Date	Wages
1767-70	7s. 9d.
1794	8s. 0d.
1795	9s. 0d.
1824	9s. 4d.
1832	10s. 0d.
1833	10s. 6d.
	or 12s. 0d.
1836	9s. 0d.
	or 10s. 0d.
1837	10s. 4d.
1838	9s. 3d.
1851	8s. 0d.

The real wages of the labourers are of course more difficult to plot especially after 1815. Up to this date, expenditure on food appears to have consumed an increasing proportion of the family income after 1730. A labourer with a wife and daughter employed spinning (or in casual work) and a boy in farm work would have spent 34% of the family income on food in 1730-40. Seventy-five years later, the proportion would have been 59%. [4] There is little doubt that the real wages of the labourers decreased during the wars with France when wages doubled but prices trebled.

The rocketing of prices during the wars might have caused widespread starvation. Yet is is confirmation of the increased

supply and flexibility of agricultural produce that a growing population was fed. Even the food riots of 1795 and 1800 were partly the result of racketeering and imperfect internal communications. [5] Employment was steady and the Speenhamland system of poor relief helped to ameliorate distress. The substitution of wheat bread by oats or of bread by potatoes probably restored the balance upset by the high price of wheat. [6] In 1795 the supply of oats in the Dunmow area rose by 17% although the wheat crop was 40% below average. [7] Arthur Young believed that the increase in prices between 1794 and 1805 had been cancelled out by the consumption of larger quantities of potatoes. [8]

The main problem after 1815 was the chronic unemployment in the rural areas. According to Mr. Tabrum, the position of the labourers was "much worse" and they relied heavily on potatoes. [9] The period between 1821 and 1827 was a somewhat easier time for the workers but this was followed by the wet summers and severe winters of 1828-30. Mr. Christopher Comyns Parker, writing to his daughter about the disturbances of 1830 attributed the distress of the poor to a number of factors but "most particularly by the change from high to low wages without a corresponding change in the prices of the various articles of food and necessaries required by the working classes". [10] Conditions improved after 1830 but by 1836 the standard of living had deteriorated slightly. Charles Page of Southminster believed that the wages had been reduced in greater proportion than the necessities of life

except flour.[11] R. Babb agreed that the labourers' conditions in 1836 were not as good as in 1833.[12] According to John Kemp, (another Southminster farmer) the real wages of the men were about the same as three years before and they ate about the same quantity of potatoes, bread and bacon.[13] The so-called "Hungry Forties" were probably no worse than preceding decades. R. Baker said in 1846 that the workers in the Writtle area were better off than he had ever known them.[14]

In the areas near London labourers enjoyed relative prosperity compared with their colleagues in the north of the county. At the other end of the scale was the day labourer who gave details of his wages and weekly budget in a letter to the Chelmsford Chronicle in 1825.[15] Although he was a strong man and in constant employment, the income for the family was 9/3d a week. The labourer received 7/- a week, his wife 6d for straw-plaiting and the parish gave them an allowance of 1/9d. The cottage in which they lived with their three children had a rental of £3 a year, and to pay this amount, the worker had to use the extra earnings received during the harvest (£1.12s.0d). The balance was made up by saving 7d a week. The weekly budget was;

$2\frac{1}{2}$ pecks of flour	8s. $1\frac{1}{2}$d
Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$d
Rent	7d
	8s. 9d.

From the weekly income of 9/3d, only 6d was left for buying clothes, cheese, potatoes, candles and fuel.

Caird made a comparison of the prices in 1850 with those of 1770.[16] The cost of bread was about the same but the price of meat had gone up from 4d to 5d per lb. Cottage rents had doubled. During the period, average wages rose from 7/9d to 8/-. Such a comparison omits the change in the diet of the labouring classes, which enabled a large section of the population to subsist more cheaply than before.

(b) Food.

One of the demands of the rioters in at least two Essex parishes in 1830 was for more food. The answers to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws[17] revealed great variations in the amount and type of food that labourers were able to buy with their wages. At Great Baddow the men were able to eat the best bread, some cheese, vegetables (especially potatoes), occasionally meat, tea and a small beer. Workers at Clavering could not subsist on their wages and at Thorpe-le-Soken, they could only afford bread and coarse tea. By the middle of the century, the average diet of the Essex labourer was;[18]

Breakfast.	Bread, sometimes butter and cheese.
Dinner.	Bread and cheese. On Sundays sometimes pork or bacon.
Tea and Supper.	Vegetable pudding.

Although conditions had improved in many areas by 1850, some witnesses reported that the greatest suffering occurred after that date. In Witham, during the Crimean War, a labourer had to exist for months on bread and onions. His family received some cheese and butter but because they could not afford tea, the labourer's wife imitated its appearance by soaking a burnt crust of bread in boiling water.[19] Proper comparisons between the labourer's diet in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot easily be made because of the paucity of evidence before 1800. The consumption of meat probably decreased although two-thirds of the parishes from which replies were received in 1834 reported that their labourers ate some meat, bacon or pork.[20] Meat was still considered a luxury in 1863, when it was calculated that Essex labourers could only afford $6\frac{1}{2}$ ounces a week compared with an average of 16 ounces for the whole country.[21] The consumption of cheese and bread was also less than the average. Essex was one of the ten counties where the nitrogenous content of the food of the poor was below the minimum for the maintenance of health.[22] It was recalled by a not unbiased reporter that some families during the Hungry Forties had little besides bread. At night their supper consisted of a few hot potatoes, some salt and bread. A pound of pork provided the weekly "treat for the family". Many of the poor had to buy "toppings" because they could not afford flour.[23] Another witness claimed in 1846 that labourers in his area (Writtle) were better clothed,

better fed and in greater comfort than he had every known. They all had meat (mainly bacon) and when flour was at a certain price, they ate the best wheaten bread instead of potatoes.[24]

The amount of ale that the labourers received probably decreased until 1830, when the rioters demanded higher wages "with beer". "There is not so much ale given them as formerly" was the opinion of a farmer in 1821.[25] There were parts of Essex where the labourers drank water because of the expense of providing them with beer. The malt tax was blamed for this and a reduction in the duty of malt would have been beneficial because "the lower orders would then have the comfort of home-brewed beer, which they are now deprived of".[26] Griggs mentioned that malt and hops were often among the perquisites of the agricultural labourers at the end of the eighteenth century.[27] With the malt tax and the scarcity of fuel, this custom presumably died out. Although labourers after 1830 were normally given beer or an allowance in lieu of beer, tea began to replace ale in the diet of the home. In Essex in 1863, the average amount of tea used per adult in labourer's families was 0.64 oz. per week. With the price of tea at 5/- per lb after 1840, many families could only afford an ounce a week to be shared among all their members.[28] After working hours, the labourer sought his drink elsewhere, usually in the beer shops opened after 1830.

Dr. Salaman estimated that it was not until 1860 that the

labourers' wages were sufficient to buy the wheat that they were accustomed to in 1760. According to Salaman's thesis, the increased consumption of potatoes was a major factor in Britain escaping revolution after 1789.[29] Nevertheless, the campaign to persuade the labourers to use potatoes instead of fine flour in the making of bread met with limited success. In a national survey during the French wars, only seven out of 104 replies to a questionnaire indicated that the poor used potatoes in their bread (the seven parishes included Dunmow).[30] As the price of flour began to rise, an increased number of labourers began to eat potatoes in place of bread. Young reported that "since the scarcities, hardly any object has occupied so much attention or any article of cultivation so increased".[31] By 1796, there were more than 1600 acres under potatoes in Barking, Ilford, Leyton, Wanstead, and East and West Ham. In 1811 there were 420 acres in West Ham alone.[32] Even after the price of flour had dropped, labourers had to use potatoes to supplement their diet. In 1821, Mr. Litchfield Tabrum told a select Committee that "potatoes they resort to very much at this time".[33] Rural distress was increased in 1816 when the failure of the potato crop coincided with a rise in the price of wheat.

Workhouses used potatoes in large quantities in making soup for the inmates. The recipe for a soup made in the Epping workhouse was as follows;[34]

4 lb	pickled pork
6 stone	shins and legs
6 lb	skibling (meat waste)
28 lb	potatoes
20 lb	scotch oatmeal
2 lb	salt
1 lb	whole pepper
¼ lb	ground pepper
1 doz	carrots
56 gallons of water	
a handful of meal	

A similar recipe was used in the Chelmsford area during the period of high prices in 1800. 112 gallons of soup were made and given to 800 poor persons. [35]

The quantity of food consumed and the lack of variety in the labourers' diet would be completely unacceptable today, yet it normally provided just sufficient nourishment. In two families out of six interviewed in 1863, the health of the adults and children was said to be "good", one family was in "moderate health" and another "not very good". In the fifth family, one member was "not good". [36]

(c) Accommodation.

According to one observer, cottage accommodation was the worst feature of the Essex labourers' position. [37] Even in

1892, the condition of cottages in the Maldon and Chelmsford area was responsible for many occupants being prematurely crippled by chronic bronchitis and rheumatism. [38] Fifty years before, a report had given interesting details about cottages in the Epping Union. Some were neither wind nor water tight. In one dwelling, damp was running down the walls, daylight could be seen through the roof and there was no provision for a fireplace. All the family slept in one bedroom. [39] The cottages in the most disturbed areas of Essex were almost as bad as those in Ireland. From Castle Hedingham to Clavering, there was an almost continous succession of bad dwellings; the worst were in the neighbourhood of Sible Hedingham, Wethersfield, Bardfield, Wicken and Clavering. [40] In Sible Hedingham, the most riotous parish between 1800 and 1850, only 20 out of 350 cottages were classified as being "good" in 1867, and some were "deplorable". [41] In the Tendring Hundred, the scene of the worst riots in 1830, the position was little better. At Manningtree there were a considerable number of one-room houses, and even larger cottages held as many families as there were rooms. [42] In the Clacton area, the cottages were normally small and overcrowded and imperfectly lit by tallow candles. Water taken from the well was often polluted because of the lack of sanitation. [43] In 1832, typhus spread through the villages of Elmdon, Arkesden and Clavering. In some dwellings two-thirds of the inhabitants died and at Duddenhoe a whole

family was wiped out.[44]

Mr. R. Baker, a farmer with land in Writtle, Widford and Hatfield Peverel, reported that many of the cottages in his area were made of brick or of lath and plaster.[45] Some of the older cottages in Essex were of clay daubing in bad repair and imperfectly thatched. Gardens were normally attached to them but they were rarely of a size sufficient to produce much food for the family.[46] Overcrowding was another problem. In Bradwell there were a hundred dwellings for more than 500 inhabitants, and at Dunmow 325 cottages housed 365 families or 1663 persons.[47] High rents were the chief cause of overcrowding. The resulting lack of privacy sometimes led to "great indecency".[48] The dearth of cottage accommodation continued well into the twentieth century. In 1915, a medical officer of health claimed that "....if I represented every house that might be considered unfit for habitation and got closing orders, we should soon be without sufficient houses for the people to live in."[49]

Chapter V TENSION IN THE VILLAGE

Even if there was no dramatic change in the standard of living of the labourers between 1790 and 1850, the period saw an increase in tension in the village that helps to explain the rural disturbances of 1830.

(a) Poaching.

Because of their frugal fare, the labourers sought to supplement their diet by poaching rabbits, pheasants, partridges and other game. As a result, the countryside was wracked for more than fifty years by a bitter war provoked by the wish of a small minority to retain an exclusive right to game. During the reign of George III, no fewer than thirty-two new Game Laws were passed. The hatred of the labourers towards the laws was shared by the small farmers. Under an Act of 1671 the killing of game was, in general terms, restricted to owners of land worth £100 or more a year, lessees of land worth £150 a year, the eldest sons of esquires or of persons of higher degree and the owner of franchise. There were a number of anomalies; for example, although a landlord might grant the right to shoot game to his gamekeeper, he could not do so to his younger sons. As a result, younger sons sometimes engaged themselves as keepers.

The small farmer either had to tolerate the ravages of such pests as rabbits or ask a qualified neighbour to shoot them. In practice, the qualified neighbours often treated the small mans game as his own. [1] The inability of the small farmers to destroy game that ate crops could lead to serious consequences. Mr. Thomas Bennett Sturgeon of South Ockendon Hall in Essex rented his farm but the right to shoot the game was reserved to the landlord. In 1841 only 41 quarters of wheat were obtained from thirty acres of land instead of an estimated 120 quarters. With the price of wheat at 66/- a quarter, the monetary loss caused by the depredations of rabbits was approximately £260. [2] It is small wonder that there were many cases involving men using guns "not being qualified". At the Chelmsford Petty Sessions in March 1815 Jonathan Key was convicted of this charge and fined £5. [3] Others were convicted of using dogs or an "engine called a snare".

In order to reduce the amount of poaching Parliament passed an Act in 1817 under which anyone poaching at night with no more than a net was to be transported for seven years. The threat of severe punishment completely failed to deter poachers and the number of convictions continued to rise. This may have been partly the result of stricter preservation of game but as F.M.L. Thompson has shown, offences under the Game Laws were most frequent in years of greatest distress. [4]

(Essex). Summary Convictions under Game Laws 1814-1820 [5]

1814	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820
17	33	50	26	23	32	37

During the years before the 1830 riots the numbers of convictions increased from 31 in 1826 to 61 in 1830, the "peak year" being 1828 when 77 persons were convicted. [6] The correlation between distress and poaching is confirmed by studying the number of prisoners appearing at the Assizes and Quarter Sessions between 1840 and 1845, charged with arson or poaching.

Essex	(a) Arson	(b) Being out armed etc to take game by night, taking game by night and assaulting gamekeepers. [7]
1840	2	-
1841	-	-
1842	3	5
1843	2	2
1844	21	11 (4 separate cases)
1845	9	2

A more direct link between poaching and poverty is suggested by an anonymous letter to Mr. Isaac King of Wickham St. Paul, threatening to burn down his stacks of corn and his barns.

"Mr. King I have to tell you that if you let Binks or Col. Meyrick or any of his Gamekeepers come on your land after this week we will Set fire to every Stack of Corn and every Barn you have got

or Allow them to informe against anyone and we mean to do it if you do not give your Men 10 shillings A week for we will have no more of it if you do we will Burn everything you have got the very next tim". [6]

The sentence of seven years transportation, instead of acting as a deterrent, increased the violence of the poaching war. Poachers who had formerly worked singly or in pairs, banded together into gangs. At the Lent Assizes 1829 a number of poachers were indicted for shooting at Richard Warren, assistant gamekeeper of John Wilkes of Wendon Lofts. Although found not guilty of the charge, they were convicted of being out armed at night in open land for the purpose of destroying game. Nine were sentenced to be transported for fourteen years, eight for seven years and one was given a prison sentence of twelve months. Warren and some companions, hearing some shooting, found about thirty poachers. As they were out numbered, the gamekeeper went to obtain some assistance. The poachers came at them "There is the d.....d old devil - shoot him - smash him", and a fight broke out. [9] Because of the terrible sentence of transportation, poaching gangs were prepared to go to any lengths to resist arrest. At Hérongate near Brentwood a skirmish took place between gamekeepers and a gang. "The poachers, besides their guns, were armed with bludgeons and evinced a determination to kill the gamekeepers rather than be captured". Three men, however, received sentences of ten years transportation. [10] Another gang at Elsenham that had long been the terror of the neighbourhood as robbers,

poachers and sheep-stealers, were reported to have had their faces painted black before their midnight adventures. They were also given a "tolerable portion of gin" before setting off. [11] It was not only poachers that came off worse from the affrays. J. Goodey, a gamekeeper of Coggeshall, served a six-month sentence for manslaughter. [12]

Poaching was undertaken not only to supplement a frugal diet but for other reasons. To some it was a source of adventure, to others a means of profit. Although the sale and purchase of game was not legalised until 1831, there was quite a trade in game and eggs in some counties before this date. In Essex, however, there was only one summary conviction for buying game and two for taking away pheasants' eggs. [13] One case involved a carrier, James Smith of Elmdon, who served a total of eleven months imprisonment for buying eight pheasants from four persons who were later apprehended in How Wood, Littlebury. [14] Mr. T.B. Sturgeon of South Ockendon reported in 1846 that two men in his parish lived entirely by poaching. Men even came from Suffolk, Norfolk and Wiltshire because the game was not as strictly preserved as in other areas. The poachers found a ready market for the game and eggs in the country towns. [15]

The Game Laws must be counted as one cause of the "revolt" of 1830. They helped to widen the divisions between landlords on one side and the small farmers and labourers on the other. The widespread and not wholly unjustified belief that poachers

were more harshly punished than other offenders[16] caused resentment among the labourers, most of whom refused to believe that poaching was a crime. In one Essex village after a burglary and a murder, the parish constable called in outside helpers who found and apprehended the murderer. Before the trial and execution of the suspect, the constable said to him, "Good God, Tom, is this you? If I had known it, you would have been the last man I should have taken". Apparently the murderer and the constable had been poaching companions.[17]

(b) Public Houses and Beershops.

The gulf between the labourers and the authorities was further enlarged by the increase in drunkenness after 1815. The fears of the magistrates and the clergy can be summarised by reference to a letter from a parson, describing the behaviour of labourers in a public house.

"As their heads became heated with liquor, their tongues poured out in the form of songs and speeches, torrents of sedition, blasphemy and obscenity.. ..... In these midnight haunts are trained the petty thief....the poacher who takes away your life when you prosecute him for taking your game, the burglar who breaks open your house and the incendiary who fires your ricks and barns".[18]

The views of the labourers reveal the great gulf that existed in the village. "How should they, who see it from the outside - they who never go near the public house; they who have no experience either of poverty or of hard work - how should they

who speak from prejudice, be entitled to dictate to him who has knowledge". [19]

There was certainly no dearth of ale-houses in Essex. The 8,000 inhabitants of Colchester in 1795 were served by 75 public houses. [20] With the opening of beer shops in 1830, the number of licences granted for the sale of beer greatly increased. [21]

Licences for beer to be consumed	(a) on premises	(b) off premises	Total
1831	no distinction made		332
1841	289	190	479
1851	468	158	626

The beershops were regarded with the deepest suspicion by the authorities. The rendezvous of the rioters in the Tendring Hundred was said to be the local beershops, [22] which were the resort of "smugglers, thieves, poachers and prostitutes". [23] The churchwardens of Little Bromley lamented that "There is a Beer Shop, and a greater evil it is not in the power of man to visit this parish with". [24] Many young men "were drawn in to take part in actions under the excitement of drink and the influence of bad associates which they might otherwise have never thought of". [25] Joseph Gladwell, one of the most violent of the Great Clacton rioters, admitted that before the disturbances he had had "a little beer". [26] One of the leaders of the Coggeshall poor law riot, William Love after a visit to the Red Lion, enquired as to the whereabouts of certain unpopular townsfolk. "Bring them here, I'll cut their d.....d bl.....y heads off...". [27] Drink may have given labourers

sufficient courage to commit acts of incendiarism. Samuel Richardson admitted setting fire to a barn belonging to Robert Lambert of Panfield Hall. Lambert had dismissed Richardson three weeks before the fire for intemperance. As the barn was on Richardson's route from the beershop in Bocking to his house, the temptation to wreak revenge must have been too great. [28]

(c) Enclosures.

In their classic work, "The Village Labourer", the Hammonds placed the blame for rural discontent on the enclosure of open fields and common land during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The small farmer disappeared and the labourer lost his right to keep a pig, a cow and some geese on the common. There is some published evidence to support this view; one report indicated that enclosures had caused "a spirit of insubordination and outrage". [29] According to a contemporary writer, enclosures had changed the labourers from being "industrious" and "cheerful" to being "very destitute and dependent and branded with the degrading epithet of pauper". [30]

Although there were protests against enclosure during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 1830 riots broke out in areas where there had been few enclosures for two hundred years. Essex was an old enclosed county and according to Arthur Young, "there was no field here for the great parliamentary exertions which have been made in so many other counties.....". [31] Professor Gonner calculated that only 3.1% of land in Essex was

enclosed by Act of Parliament between 1761 and 1870. [32]

Date	1760-1800	1801-1810	1811-1820	1820-1870	Total
% common field enclosed	None	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.9
Total i.e. common field and commons.	Only a small amount	0.8	1.1	1.2	3.1

A study by L.A. Clarkson has shown that in 91 Essex parishes examined, there was an overall increase in the number of the smallest holdings after 1780, thereby disproving the idea that there was a decline in the number of small farmers during the period. [33] Whether the poor suffered from enclosure in Essex is debatable. At Great Parndon where 150 acres of common were enclosed in 1795, "no allotment was made for it" because the common "yielded no fuel of any kind". [34] Enclosure does not appear to have been among the causes of the Tendring Hundred riots of 1830. The only area where there was any correlation between enclosures and rural disturbances was the north-west of the county. According to Ashurst Majendie, "since the abolition of small farms, it has been observed that there is nothing between 10/- a week and a large occupation "in the Saffron Walden district. [35] An interesting case concerned Henry Jordan who was fined £5 for breaking and destroying a fence in Arkesden "which had been put up and placed under and for the purpose of an Act 54 Geo III". [36] By another act (5 Geo IV), land in neighbouring Wendon Lofts and Elmdon was enclosed, the date of the award being 15th December 1829. In the following year

labourers in Arkesden, Elmdon and neighbouring parishes demonstrated for higher wages. A Times reporter gave the enclosure of common land as one of the reasons for the fire-raising that swept East Anglia in 1843-1844. [37] This did not apply to the fires in the Tendring Hundred and around Braintree but may have one factor that led to the incendiarism that caused so much alarm north of Bishops Stortford. Two parishes which suffered had recently been enclosed or were in the process of being enclosed. [38]

(d) The Decline in "Living-In".

The Times Correspondent enquiring into the causes of the incendiary fires of 1843-4 gave as one reason "the effect of the altered custom of employing agricultural labourers by the day instead of by the year". [39] Although in Essex piece work was common, the effect was the same, namely a reduction in the number of labourers engaged on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The result was a loosening of ties between the farmer and his workers, whose employment was less secure.

Agricultural labourers worked long hours for poor pay. During the summer, the hours of labour were from six until six; in the winter, work began at seven and continued until five, or started as soon as it became light and ended when the darkness fell. Piece workers could earn more than day-labourers, but often became prematurely old because of the long hours at work, sometimes from four in the morning until eight at night. [40]

The ties between masters and men were further slackened by the decline in "living-in". The widespread practice of boarding single labourers in the farmhouse declined during and after the Napoleonic Wars. During the hostilities the high price of corn increased the wealth of the farmer and improved his status. Farmers, or more particularly their wives, felt it distasteful to share their homes with their men. According to Mr. John Kemp, the practice of providing cottage accommodation for labourers gave "greater comfort" to the farmer. [41] The decline in "living-in" continued after 1815, sometimes because of economic necessity. At Great Henny it was cheaper to pay the men "weekly wages". The correspondent emphasised that because of the economic situation, it was vital for the cheapest method to be employed. [42]

Most commentators lamented the decline of paternalism. "Living-in" had made the labourer "more tractable and respectable". [43] The chief agricultural correspondents of the Chelmsford Gazette, applauding a move by local farmers to re-board all their employees, recalled the days when "each labourer as well as servant was regarded as one of the farmer's own family, for whose good conduct and appearance the master was in some degree accountable". [44] Dr. A.J. Peacock in his study of the 1816 riots noted that a number of labourers who "lived-in" with farmers of Ely and Littleport were active in defending their masters during the disturbances. Only one indentifiable labourer was on the side

of the agitators.[45] Yet despite the obvious benefits from "living-in", the disadvantages were numerous. Constant contact with an employer must have created tension even when the master was kind and generous. Labourers were continually "on call" and the regulation of their leisure activities may have been irksome to young workers.[46]

Chapter VI "BENEVOLENCE, CHARITY AND BOUNDLESS HUMANITY".

According to Mr. Justice Park at the Reading Special Commission in 1830-1, "there is not a calamity or distress incident to humanity, either of body or of mind, that is not humbly endeavoured to be mitigated or relieved, by the powerful and the affluent, either of high or middling rank, in this our happy land, which for its benevolence, charity and boundless humanity, has been the admiration of the world". [1] What attempts were made between 1790 and 1850 to "mitigate or relieve" the distress of the poor?

(a) Allotments.

Mr. George William Gent, a "landed proprietor" of Moyns Park in Steeple Bumpstead and Birdbrook, spoke of the "beneficial effect" that the provision of allotments had on the poor. Instead of wasting their time on a Sunday evening, the labourers could be seen comparing the improvements made on their allotments with those of their neighbours. During the week, their wives and children were sometimes working on the plot. When Gent told a man caught stealing wood from him that he would lose his allotment, the labourer begged forgiveness saying that the allotment was a great comfort and supplied his family with potatoes for the whole winter. [2]

Although there were disturbances in the north-west of the county, Saffron Walden escaped the riots and fires of 1830. Not only did the labourers refrain from joining the mobs but they also helped the magistrates to put down the riots in adjoining parishes. According to a report of 1834, the tranquillity of the town was the result of the provision of allotments. When one of the principal promoters of allotments was warned "This house to be burnt," five hundred labourers came forward to watch his premises. [3]

Allotments were sometimes provided by the parish or by local landowners. At Springfield the Rector gave the glebe land and the labourers had twenty rods each at a nominal rent. The usual amount of land for each person was between eight and twenty rods at between 3d and 6d a rod. At Bulmer, for example, the labourers received twenty rods at 3d a rod. At Loughton plots of one-eighth acre were provided for "potato gardens", the rents being distributed in prizes for the best cultivators. [4] The most extensive allotments were found in Saffron Walden and neighbouring parishes. By 1834 there were 138 allotments in Saffron Walden, varying in size between twenty and forty rods. The profit to the labourer after the rent and seed had been paid for, was about £3 per year [5] (or 12% of a labourers annual income). The initiative for this scheme came from Lord Braybrooke in 1829; as a result there were 255 allotments in Saffron Walden, Littlebury and Wendon by 1833 and about a thousand individuals

benefited. The Essex Mercury reporter noted that there had been a considerable fall in the crime rate in the area, that rents were paid promptly and nearly 300 persons contributed to a clothing bank which was under the patronage of Lord and Lady Braybrooke.[6] In 1834, however, only about a third of the 43 parishes that replied to a question about allotments for the poor reported that provision had been made.[7] Some farmers were actively hostile to allotments as the holders deprived them of manure from the roads. Others feared that the allotments would give the labourers too much independence.[8]

(b) Benefit Clubs and Friendly Societies.

In his evidence to the Select Committee on the Poor Laws (1817), John Vaizey of Halstead expressed his approval of benefit clubs and anything that would increase the independence of the poor.[9] In 1801 there were 205 friendly societies in Essex; by 1815 the societies had a total membership of 20,531 and in 1831 approximately 7½% of the population of Essex belonged to a Society.[10] The associations varied greatly in status and composition. In 1795 there were sixteen friendly societies in Colchester with a membership of between twenty and forty persons each.[11] Members paid 1/- into the box each week and expected to receive a weekly allowance of between 8/- and 10/- if sick, and 6/- when old. The Essex Mercury gave details of the composition of the Dunmow Friendly Society; 39 females, 343 agricultural labourers and 174 servants and artisans.[12]

Not all observers welcomed the benefit clubs as unreservedly as John Vaizey. One of the chief causes of criticism was the practice of the clubs of holding their meetings in public houses.[13] Many of the societies attempted to disarm the criticism of excessive drinking by inserting clauses prohibiting drunkenness. Yet as long as the public house was the focal point for the clubs, there was bound to be opposition from the clergy. The Rev. John Thomas, Vicar of Great Burstead, preaching to the members of three clubs in Billericay, warned them against the danger of "intoxication" as the "very nature of these meetings was likely to lead to such a result".[14] The Rev. Howlett of Dunmow, speaking of the benefit clubs, was of the opinion that "notwithstanding their superficial flattering appearance, they may have been highly pernicious; they may have contributed to the increase of idleness and intemperance; prevented the diminution of ale houses, given occasion to illegal combinations (and) seditious proceedings;.....".[15] Howlett quoted an example of a club in Dunmow which had eighty members in 1801. The club which had been in existence for thirty years, had paid out £706. 1s. 8d in relief to sick members and most of the residue of £137.11s. 8d had been invested. Although most of the members were under the age of thirty, three-quarters of the membership had at one time or other received parish relief. Since the club had started fifty-seven people had been expelled because of their inability to pay their subscriptions. Although most of the clubs were "respectable", some provided a possible

haven for the disaffected to plan disturbances. The rioters of Littleport near Ely began their violence in 1816 after a meeting of their club in the Globe public house.[16] Thomas Linnett, one of the rioters at Clacton in 1830 admitted that, after club hours at the Queens Head, he and a few others began to raise a mob.[17]

(c) Savings Banks.

The establishment of Savings Banks was "for the purpose of affording to the industrious classes particularly to Little Tradesmen, Mechanics, men and women servants and labourers, a secure and productive investment for such sums as they can conveniently spare".[18] The promoters of the scheme had high hopes as to the effects of saving. A young man who became a depositor would gradually acquire habits of "foresight, prudence and frugality". He would also become more loyal, no longer saying "....it is a matter of complete indifference whether George or King Bonaparte is my sovereign".[19] After George Rose's Savings Bank Act of 1817 (57 Geo III c 130), a number of banks were established in Essex. Between 12th September 1817 and 3rd January 1818, deposits in the Chelmsford Hundred Savings Bank reached £5,216. 0s. 6d.[20]

According to H. Oliver Horne "so far as the savings banks in the smaller country areas are concerned, there is little evidence to show whether any support was obtained from the hard-pressed agricultural labourer.....".[21] At Dunmow in 1818

The Queen's Head, Great Clacton.

labourers deposited £207.10s. 0d out of a total of £2,642.15. 0d.[22] There were 58 and 73 labourers among 377 and 283 depositors in the Chelmsford and Colchester banks respectively.[23] At Witham 41 labourers deposited a total of £527. 8s. 0d in the first ten weeks of opening.[24] In 1834 it was reported that the "Rochford Savings Bank is a good deal resorted to by the labourers but secretly" so the members were not known.[25] By 1833 there were 408 trustee savings banks in England and Wales, 425,000 depositors and total funds of £14,334,000. The relatively high average amount saved, nearly £34, suggests that the main patrons were small tradesmen and others not entirely dependent on wages.[26] This is confirmed by the answers to questions about the labourer's conditions, circulated by the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. The answer of Martin Nockolds was typical. Asked whether a labourer's family in Stansted Mountfichet could save anything from their wages, he replied, "certainly impossible to lay by anything".[27]

(d) Migration and Emigration.

Although the rural population was by no means as static as was originally believed, one of the main causes of unemployment was the comparative immobility of the agricultural workers. Despite incentives to begin a new life in the growing industrial towns or in the colonies, the labourer was normally prepared to remain in his village in the hope that conditions

would improve.

The attempts to promote migration gained momentum after 1830, especially in parishes disturbed by riots in that year. Two rioters of Steeple Bumpstead, having served their sentences, moved with their families to industrial areas. [28]

Name	Number	Total of relief in 12 months before migration	Cost of outfit and journey
George Bacon and family	6	£5. 18s. 8d	£8. 8s. 11d
William Randell (? Randle) and family	2	£1. 4s. 6d	10s. 0d

Ridgewell, a parish with high poor rates and the scene of a wage riot in 1830, sent twenty persons to Canada in April 1832. One of the seven able-bodied men in the party wrote a letter giving a glowing picture of prospects in his new home. "I can see five chances of getting a living here, while there is none in England". [29] Twenty persons from Great Clacton, the most disturbed parish in 1830, emigrated in 1832 at a cost of £128. 8s. 4½d. [30] At Harlow six single men of "idle character" left for Quebec. The cost per head was £12, and 30/- was given to each man on arrival. [31] Edward Ridgewell, a fifty-one year old pensioner of Castle Hedingham, travelled with his wife and eight children to Leeds in 1836 at the expense of the parish. Before their move the weekly family income was 13/3d. From his work at Messrs. Hindes and Denham, spinners, Ridgewell received £2. 1s. 0d a week. [32] A hundred persons were sent from Stebbing

to industrial towns after twenty "heads of families" agreed to voluntary migration. [33]

After the introduction of the New Poor Law, a new scheme was put forward to help emigration. By 1850 at least 160 Essex inhabitants had been helped to start a new life overseas. Essex lagged far behind Sussex, which in the first year of the scheme provided nearly half the emigrants. [34] The Guardians of the Braintree Union were prepared to help Catherine Breed, a pauper, and her child to emigrate to Australia. [35] Whether Catherine was sent to the colony is uncertain as she appeared before the magistrates five months later accused of assaulting the matron of the workhouse. [36]

Attempts to promote migration to the North and Midlands, met with little success. According to the 1851 census, there were only 1,432 inhabitants in Lancashire and Cheshire who had been born in Essex. The figure for the natives of Essex in the North Midlands was 1,266. In a list giving the numbers of persons from each county removed from nineteen towns in Lancashire, Essex was not mentioned. [37] The response of the labourers to offers of help was often negative. Mr. R. Baker complained that "There is very great indispostion to seek work elsewhere..... It is hardly possible whatever the advantage you show them to compel them to do it; they would rather stop at home upon their 8/- or 10/- a week than go abroad with a certainty of earning 15/-. The very nature of the work that they carry out and their habits of life all

operate against it". [38] A correspondent reported that he had recently made an offer of 9/- a week, constant wages, plenty of piece work, coals at 3d a week per cwt., and a cottage at 1/- a week. "The offer has for several weeks gone begging and has not yet been accepted". [39] At Great Henny there was no response to an offer by the parish officers to finance any labourers who wished to emigrate or apprentice boys to a trade at home. [40]

Apart from the cost of moving and the disruption involved, the labourer probably feared a hostile reception in his new home. A threatening letter sent to James Miles promised him a "light" unless he discharged men who lived outside the parish. [41] William Smith, a Suffolk man, employed by Mr. Richardson of Little Bromley, was assaulted and warned not to help another farmer procure "Suffolkers" for work. [42] In 1841 three fires in Burnham were said to be the result of the employment of "Yankees" instead of men of the parish. [43]

Although official schemes for migration had little success and although the average distance travelled by labourers seeking work was ten miles, the "pull" of London increased greatly during the century, especially after the development of the railway system. By 1851 2.44% of the population of London had been born in Essex.

Percentage of Population of London born in neighbouring counties.[44]

Surrey (Extra-metropolitan)	1.63
Kent (Extra-metropolitan)	2.87
Sussex	1.19
Middlesex (Extra-metropolitan)	1.33
Essex	2.44
Hertfordshire	1.03
Suffolk	1.37

Although the widespread depopulation of the rural areas did not begin until 1870, there was some easing of the population problem in a number of Essex parishes after 1830. In five of the riotous parishes the population had actually decreased by 1841.[45]

Parish	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841
Sheering	342	349	439	547	544
Kirby-le-Soken	664	743	853	972	924
Ramsey	595	515	676	708	649
Elmdon	534	547	601	697	680
Henham (part)	703	563	644	703	693

(e) Poor Relief.

Despite the use of various expedients[46] during periods of high prices or inclement weather, one measure that might have improved conditions on a long-term basis was hardly discussed in Essex before 1830. Not until 1824 was there a recommendation

(from the Chelmsford parochial authorities) that wages should be increased.[47] During periods of prosperity farmers were reluctant to increase wages which would be difficult to reduce when the price of wheat dropped. After 1815 the employers could claim, with some justification, that they were unable to afford the increases. The farmers view was that it was quite "contrary to reason" that an employer should pay a man sufficient to support a whole family which in some cases would be 20/- a week. If farmers were forced to pay a "living wage" to every worker, they would have to employ only single men and dismiss married men with large families.

In times of distress the main support came from parish relief. Relief to the able-bodied was by no means uncommon before 1795; in Woodford in 1778, two men were granted three and four loaves respectively and a shilling a week until they could get work.[48] The high price of wheat after 1790 caused parishes to assist an increasing number of labourers.

In 1795 in Clavering an allowance was paid according to the number of children in the family.[49] The payment was only temporary and the number of families that benefited decreased as conditions improved.

	13th July (1795)	20th October	9th December [50]
Every person with 1 child	6d per week	-	-
Every person with 2 children	1/- per week	6d per week	-
Every person with 3 children	2/- per week	1/6 per week	1/- per week
Every person with 4 children	3/3 per week	3/- per week	2/6 per week
Every person with 5 children	4/6 per week	4/6 per week	4/- per week
Every person with 6 children	5/- per week	5/- per week	4/6 per week

In Ramsey the child allowance was based on a sliding scale, varying according to the price of flour. [51]

Family	Flour 3/- - 3/6 per peck	3/6 - 4/- per peck
Man, wife and child under 10	-	-
Man, wife and 2 children under 12	1/-	2/-
Man, wife and 3 children under 12	2/9	4/-
Man, wife and 4 children under 12	4/6	6/-
Man, wife and 5 children under 12	6/3	8/-
Man, wife and 6 children under 12	8/-	10/-

Among other parishes that helped large families for limited periods were Colne Engaine, Black Notley and Wormingford (summer 1795), Great Tey, Black Notley and Stansted (summer 1801).

Poor Law expenditure had risen steadily from 1750 and after 1794 it increased rapidly. [52]

Essex	1735	£30,000 (estimated)	1813	£312,000
	1776	£74,000	1814	£276,000
	1783-5	£95,000 (annual average)	1815	£226,000
	1803	£184,000		

Arthur Young estimated that by 1803 seventeen per cent of the population in Essex was being relieved from the poor rates.[53] According to an Essex historian, the parish account books show that, although many parishes helped large families for a short while during periods of high prices, the increased expenditure resulted from the higher cost of maintaining the old, the widows, the orphans and the disabled. After 1795 expenditure increased as much in towns where Speenhamland payments were rare as in the villages where they were more frequently used. Up to 1815, "Speenhamland allowances were one of the minor causes of increased expenditure".[54]

The agricultural depression after 1815 led to a more widespread application of the "Speenhamland" measures. Scales of allowances were published in Beaumont-cum-Moze (1816) for the Tendring Hundred, Chelmsford (1821), the Hundreds of Uttlesford, Clavering and Freshwell, Little Dunmow (1829) Halstead (1830) and Hempstead in 1834.[55] The magistrates of Chelmsford decided in 1821 that each family was to have the means of procuring half a peck of flour per week and 10d per head "if the family consists of only two members, 8d if three, 6d per head if four and 5d if more than four."[56] It was the

use of such scales that led some ratepayers to suspect the "corrupting influence of lavish relief". Their suspicions were given further weight when the agricultural disturbances broke out in areas where Speenhamland was strongest rooted. It is possible, of course, to find numerous examples of "generosity" on the part of the parish. Although James Dickerson (or Dickinson) was said to be "very lazy", the overseer of Ramsey gave him 13/6d in relief on 24th May, 1817. [57] In the Thaxted area mothers and children were reported to be refusing to nurse each other unless they were paid. Their feeling was "why should I tend my sick and aged parents when the parish is supposed to do it?". In general, however, the overseers carried out their obligations with efficiency and humanity.

The main charge against the allowance system was that it enabled farmers to reduce wages and threw the labourers on the parish, thereby encouraging pauperism to spread. Yet this view ignored the social conditions in areas using the allowance system and assumed the ability of farmers to pay higher wages. Many were in dire financial trouble and an increased wage bill would have worsened the unemployment situation. As Mr. Buxton reported in 1814, there was plenty of work for the labourers but the farmers were unable to pay them. [59] It is important to remember that the fall in wages after 1815 was small in proportion to the cut in wheat prices. The districts in Essex that used the Speenhamland measures most extensively were those that had the

greatest unemployment problems. There is much to be said for the view that the allowances enabled a larger number of villagers to be given work instead of being thrown completely on the parish.[60] There were two methods of relief; the wage subsidy and the "child allowance". Of the two, the latter was the most common. Wage subsidies were sometimes given between 1815 and 1825 but by 1830, the practice had nearly died out.

Another charge made against the allowance system was that it encouraged large families. In fact inter-censal population increases and the rate of natural increase in Essex were less than the national average.[61]

Inter-Censal Population Increases (rural districts)

	1811 - 21	1821 - 31
Essex	14.55	8.32
Average increase in rural districts of England and Wales.	14.72	10.52
Average increase, all areas of England and Wales.	18.06	15.81

[62]

	Natural Increase (per thousand) 1801 - 30
Essex	13.5
England and Wales	14.3

The extent to which wage and child allowances were used in Essex after the wars can be seen in a parliamentary paper of 1825.[63] Local observers were asked whether agricultural labourers

received the whole or any part of their wages from the Poor Rates (Question I), whether married labourers with children received assistance from the parish (Question II) and if so, when the allowance was given (Question III).

District	Question I	Question II	Question III
Brentwood	Occasionally	Yes, in some parishes	-
Chelmsford Division	Yes	Yes	Sometimes with one child
Colchester Borough	Yes, part	Yes	When with two children
Dengie Hundred	No	Yes	Not less than three children
Dunmow Hundred	In some cases	Yes	When in want
Liberty of Havering-atte-Bower	No	Not only to married men but to bachelors also	-
Hinckford Division	Yes, when wages are low or insufficient	Yes	Not less than 3 children
Rochford Hundred	No	Yes	No rule
Walden Division	In one or two parishes only	Yes. In cases of need, relief is according to wants and number of family	-
Witham Division	It has been so but has nearly ceased	Yes	Seldom less than 3 children

By 1832 only four of the fifty parishes reporting in the 1834 report of the Royal Commission subsidised the wages paid to the labourers.[64] Most of the parishes were still giving child allowances, although only parents with three, four or more children usually qualified. Despite the more stringent distribution of relief, the amount spent on the poor increased between 1825 and 1830.

(Essex) Poor Law Expenditure (1825-1830)

1825	£251,143
1826	£255,012
1827	£261,278
1828	£247,386
1829	£262,215
1830	£282,132

A survey of nine of the disturbed parishes in 1830-1, reveals a fairly consistent pattern of poor law expenditure. In eight of the parishes the amount decreased in either 1827 or 1828 but then rose during the crisis years of 1829 and 1830. There appears to have been no cut in relief in 1830; in six out of the nine parishes the expenditure was higher than in 1829. The severe winter of 1829-30 necessitated the relief of many able-bodied labourers. In Great Clacton 25% of the overseers' payments in February 1830 went to men for "work on roads", to those "out of employ" or to labourers for "loss of time".[65]

There is no pattern for expenditure after 1830 except for the cut in relief in 1834 which probably stemmed from the fall in the price of wheat and the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.[66] In some parishes the reduction in relief was severe.

Parish	1833	1834
Writtle	£2,978	£2,350
Clavering	£1,564	£1,309
Great Glacton	£1,154	£581
Ramsey	£818	£644

The refusal of allowances sometimes caused trouble. At Ilford in 1832 six "desperate paupers" from Barking demanded money from Mr. Coxhead, an assistant overseer. As they refused to leave, Coxhead had to seek aid from Bow Street Runners and the local constable. Meanwhile a crowd of 400-500 had assembled and started to stone the officers as they conveyed the men away. The Riot Act was read and the crowd eventually dispersed.[67] In 1834 a riot occurred in Sible Hedingham when the allowance was reduced after a fall in the price of flour.[68] The disturbances, on 28th April, lasted for six hours and involved 150 persons. The mob refused to let a pauper leave the workhouse after his allowance had been reduced. The crowd was joined by two of the inmates and resisted attempts of constables and a magistrate to break the ring of men encircling the workhouse.

One of the constables, Thomas Garrod, was told "you shall not come here - we want our full pay and we won't go away without it...." Six foot of the workhouse wall was torn down and slates on the roof were damaged by stone throwing. The situation in Sible Hedingham was aggravated by the use of non-parochial labour at the time when 150 men were unemployed. In another disturbed parish, Writtle, the overseer was sent a note enclosing tinder and matches. The letter threatened to murder him and burn his premises.[69] In the same year (1834) an attempt was made to fire property belonging to Mr. Thomas Lee, one of the overseers of Dagenham.[70]

The condemnation of the allowance system by the Royal Commission coloured later accounts of the Poor Law between 1795 and 1834. Yet ratepayers regarded it as an onerous but unavoidable responsibility. Officials in general administered it with considerable honesty and diligence and the poor valued it as the guarantee of their subsistence. If the receipt of relief put them in an inferior position and strengthened the power of the ratepayers, the relationship was only a continuation of their subservience to their employers.[71]

Chapter VII THE LAST LABOURERS' REVOLT 1830

(a) The Prelude to the Riots.

During the 1820's fires and occasional riots still disturbed the countryside and areas which suffered in 1816 or 1830 were affected. Sible Hedingham and Castle Hedingham were the scenes of incendiary fires.

"On Saturday night, 3rd inst. (March 1822) the premises of L. Majendie Esq., of Castle Hedingham were consumed by fire and we are informed that it was wilfully occasioned". [1]

At Great Clacton, the most disturbed parish in 1830, a double barn, several stacks of corn and other buildings were destroyed on 4th February 1822. At the Summer Assizes Daniel Bloomfield was acquitted of arson. The estimated damage to the property, belonging to Mr. James Page, was £1,200. [2] The Tendring Hundred, of which Great Clacton was part, was especially prone to outbreaks of fire-raising in the 1820's. In the petition of the minister, churchwardens and inhabitants of the parish of Tendring on behalf of a girl convicted of arson in 1825, the petitioners claimed that she "was instigated to the commission of the said crime by certain wicked and evil disposed persons...whom however the laws cannot at present reach". [3] In 1825 a rate was assessed on the Hundred to recompense an inhabitant of Little Bentley, after his property had been fired by an unknown person. [4]

At Weeley (also in the Tendring Hundred) a mob collected in 1822 to stop farmers using threshing machines. The owners of the machines, which were hired out to the farmers, were visited and told that "there would be no machines in the parish." John Ribbans, a local farmer, was reassured that he would not be injured but was told that he would not be able to use his machine. Ribbans replied that he did not much care; as he had arranged to use it that afternoon, he would do so but not after that. After the Rev. Fisher, the minister of Weeley, had intervened the rioters agreed to his request. [5] To one of the ringleaders, Charles Jolley, who claimed that he had never been out of work in his life except by his own fault, the machines obviously represented a threat to his livelihood. Next time, he protested, lives would be lost. "We ought to have a little more porter before we start. We should then have a little more courage". [6]

In the summer of 1823 there was a spirit of "insubordination and turbulence" prevailing among the labourers in Wormingford and neighbouring parishes. Local farmers received threats that their premises would be burned down and labourers went round trying to persuade their colleagues not to work until their wages were increased. In the words of one labourer, Nathaniel Sexton, "if they do not raise our wages, we must force them". On 10th June one of the farmers of Wormingford, Robert Everard, was working with his men hoeing beans, when between thirty and forty labourers came into the field, led by one playing "a bugle

horn". They forced his men to join them in visits to other farmers. Although they excited "considerable terror and alarm" in the neighbourhood, there is no evidence to show that their demands were met. [7]

In 1829 another isolated case of machine-breaking occurred. Mr. Marsh of Steeple Bumpstead was a contractor who hired out agricultural machinery to farmers. While a machine was being used at Toppesfield on 16th January, labourers gathered and took it to Stambourne where they smashed it. Six ringleaders were arrested and appeared at the Petty Sessions at Castle Hedingham. Because the farmer failed to attend, the men were released. [8]

The year 1829 ushered in a period of extreme tension unknown since 1641, [9] during which the labourers expressed their discontent by fire-raising, machine-breaking, rioting and opposition to unpopular officials.

(b) Incendiarism 1829-1831.

Incendiarism was only a peripheral part of the rural rebellion of 1830. Although "Swing" letters were sent to farmers in the Tendring Hundred just before the machine-breaking of December 1830, the only direct connection between the machine-breakers and the fire-raisers was in Ramsey on 7th December. Another fire, on the premises of Mr. Feedham of Great Holland on 11th September 1830, [10] was probably an isolated incident because nearly three months was to elapse before the same parish was disturbed by

machine-wrecking. There were few fires between November 1830 and January 1831 (the period of the rioting in Essex) and they were normally well away from the main areas of the disturbances. Nevertheless the disturbed state of the country can be seen in the increased insurance premiums paid by farmers. In December 1830 the premiums on the Rectory and the New Barn at Purleigh were increased from £3. 0s. 0d to £3. 6s. 0d and 18/- to £1. 4s. 0d respectively. [12]

Fire-raising played a more important part in 1829 than in the following year. The winter of 1828-9 was very severe and house to house collections for the poor were organised. The crime rate increased sharply and offences against the Game Laws were frequent. At one time there were twenty-five poachers in custody at Saffron Walden. [13] Losses from fires in 1829 were so great that one insurance company suspended all insurance on farm buildings and stock. In the following year this suspension was relaxed as long as threshing machines were not used. [14] In January 1829 threatening letters were sent to farmers in the Thaxted area and fires were started at Saling, Finchingfield and Great Yeldham. [15] In February and March there was "great horror" in Witham because of an outbreak of incendiarism. The most serious was at Mr. Green's farm, a mile from the centre of town, on 20th March. Two barns and sheds, worth a total of £1,500, were destroyed and the flames could be seen from the hills near Sudbury. The previous night a stack belonging to

Mr. Whale of Witham had been fired. Watchmen were employed by local farmers and special constables were enrolled but these measures did not prevent the destruction of a stack and two sheds in the following month. [16]

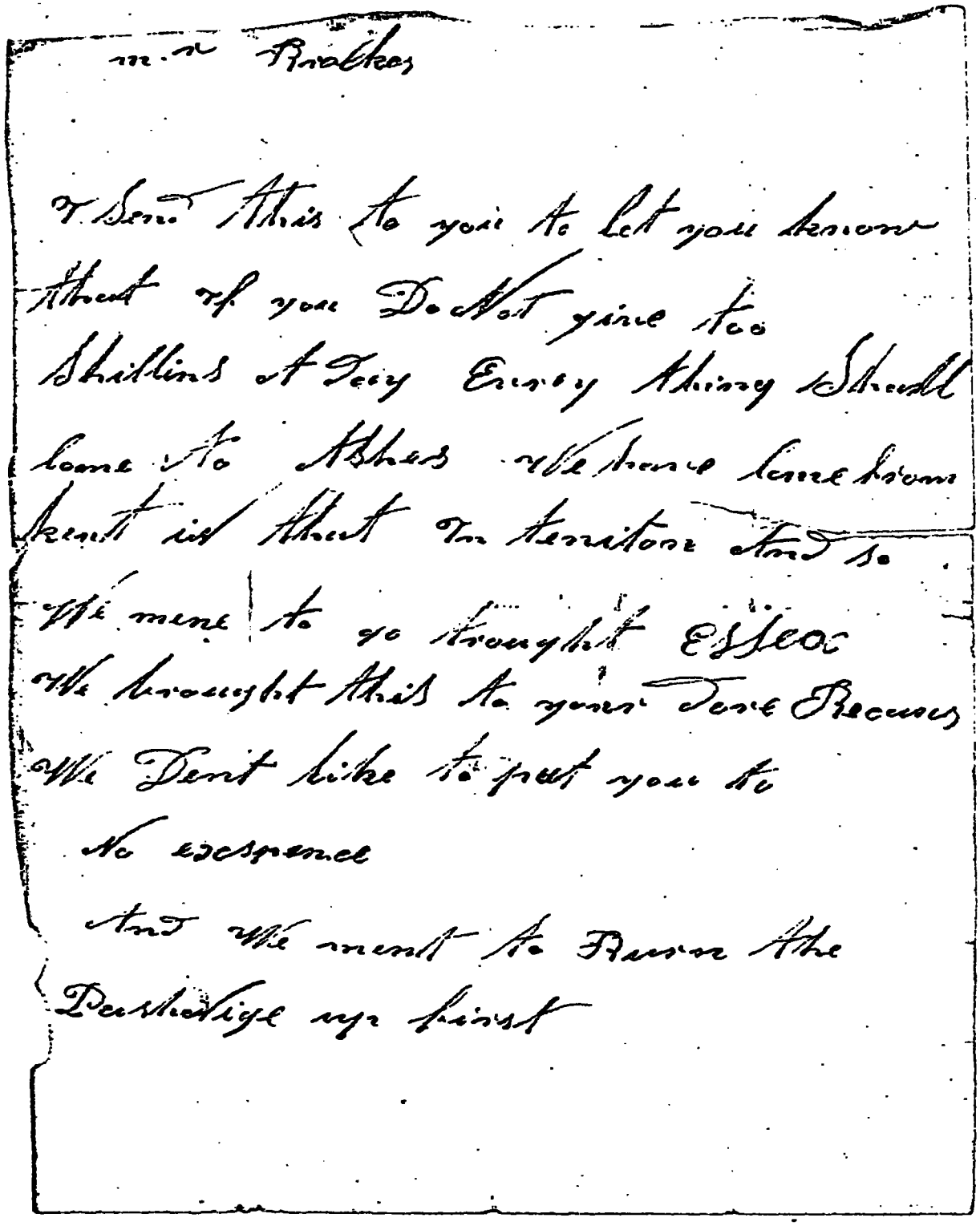
The use of machinery for threshing again led to cases of incendiarism. At East Mersea on 18th February, a fire caused damage estimated at £500 on a farm where a machine was in use. [17] A similar incident occurred eighteen months later at Bradwell where Mr. Spurgin had been threshing his crop by machinery. [18]

In 1830 the only area in the south of Essex to be affected by disturbances was to the north and west of Southend-on-sea. Two fires were reported at Rayleigh and Basildon (on 5th November and 2nd January 1831) and threatening letters were sent to residents of Hawkwell and Orsett. The latter note threatened to burn down the stacks and house of Thomas Ashford and contained the verse:

What the Poor
Lacketh; The
Flame catcheth. [19]

Another threatening letter, written by John Shepherd to Mr. Brockies of Hawkwell, gave a warning that unless he paid 2/- a day "everything shall come to ashes". [20] The fires and threatening letters in the Southend area, unlike the riots in the north of the county, were obviously inspired by the disturbances south of the Thames. James Ewen, convicted of the Rayleigh fire,

Fig. 8.



m.r Brookes

I Sent This to you to let you Know
Whot if you Do not give Ten
Shillins a Day Every Thing Shall
Come to Ashes we have Come from
Scott in Whot Is Territore and so
We mene to go Brought Ellen
We brought This to your Dore Becaus
We Dont like to put you to
No expence
And We ment to Have the
Deathridge up first

A "Swing" Letter

was reported to have promised more incendiary fires as "they served them so in Kent....". [21] Shepherd pretended that "we have come from Kent (with) that intention and so we mean to go through Essex". [22]

The motives behind the outbreaks of incendiarism varied. In Writtle the three fires in six weeks were probably the result of the chronic unemployment in the parish, which made a hundred able-bodied men dependent upon the overseer. [23] In other parishes the attacks on property resulted from private grudges, rather than general distress. Unpopular farmers were the main targets. John Sach, victim of the Rayleigh fire, would "starve a dog". Another unpopular farmer, Mr. Blewitt (or Brewitt) was next on the list for a "light" but Mr. Mee who paid his men 2/- a day with three pints of small beer would be left alone. [24] The authorities were anxious to prove that the fires were not the work of starving labourers but mobile incendiaries who moved from farm to farm deliberately creating havoc. [25] After a fire at Great Chesterford, "two men in a gig" were chased for some distance before escaping. These men, one of whom was described as a "large, stout man, with red whiskers", were believed to be "two of the principals of the Incendiary System". [26] Another story that was circulated concerned "suspicious strangers" who travelled round asking questions and making notes about the labourers conditions and the use of agricultural machinery. These men were reported in Havering, [27] Rochford, [28] Ilford and Barking.

Shortly after one of the "visits", Mr. Thompson of Ilford had a message written on his gates; "Thompson, take care of your stacks". [29] Men dressed as "sailors" were seen in the Hornchurch and Upminster area. [30] The tales about "men in gigs" and "suspicious strangers" may have been circulated by the labourers themselves. According to Gibbon Wakefield ".....it is common for peasants to wink slyly at each other, whilst they assure the magistrates that farmer Smith is a good friend of the poor and that the deeds must have been done by some wicked stranger". [31]

The reaction of the labourers to the fires varied greatly. At Basildon workers gave prompt and active assistance. [32] Although three hundred labourers helped to extinguish a blaze at Brightlingsea in December 1831; in the same month men at Brentwood witnessed the destruction of a stack, barn and shed belonging to Mr. Roper, "without expressing their regret and, it is said, with a degree of exultation". [33]

Unpopular farmers were not the only targets for attacks and abuse during this period. On 22nd November 1830, a riot broke out in Coggeshall and a mob of 200 smashed the windows of two overseers. One member of the crowd did little to hide his feelings. "We'll burst the door open and pull the bl.....y old b.....r out and rend him limb from limb". Special constables were sworn in but the trouble soon subsided. [34] In January 1829, fires were started at the farms of Samuel and John Beddall. The brothers were both acting overseers of their respective parishes. [35] A letter sent to the Rev. C.S. Bourchier contained a threat to

shoot Edward Wilson, deputy overseer of the parish of Hallingbury, and set fire to the property of others. Thomas Cass, the writer of the letter, claimed that while families were starving for want of bread, Wilson was drunk five days out of seven from drinking "more gin than aney man doth Beer". [36] Magistrates were not immune to threats or insults. In Writtle, a parish of acute distress at this time, justices were frequently followed and insulted with "ludicrous gestures". [37]

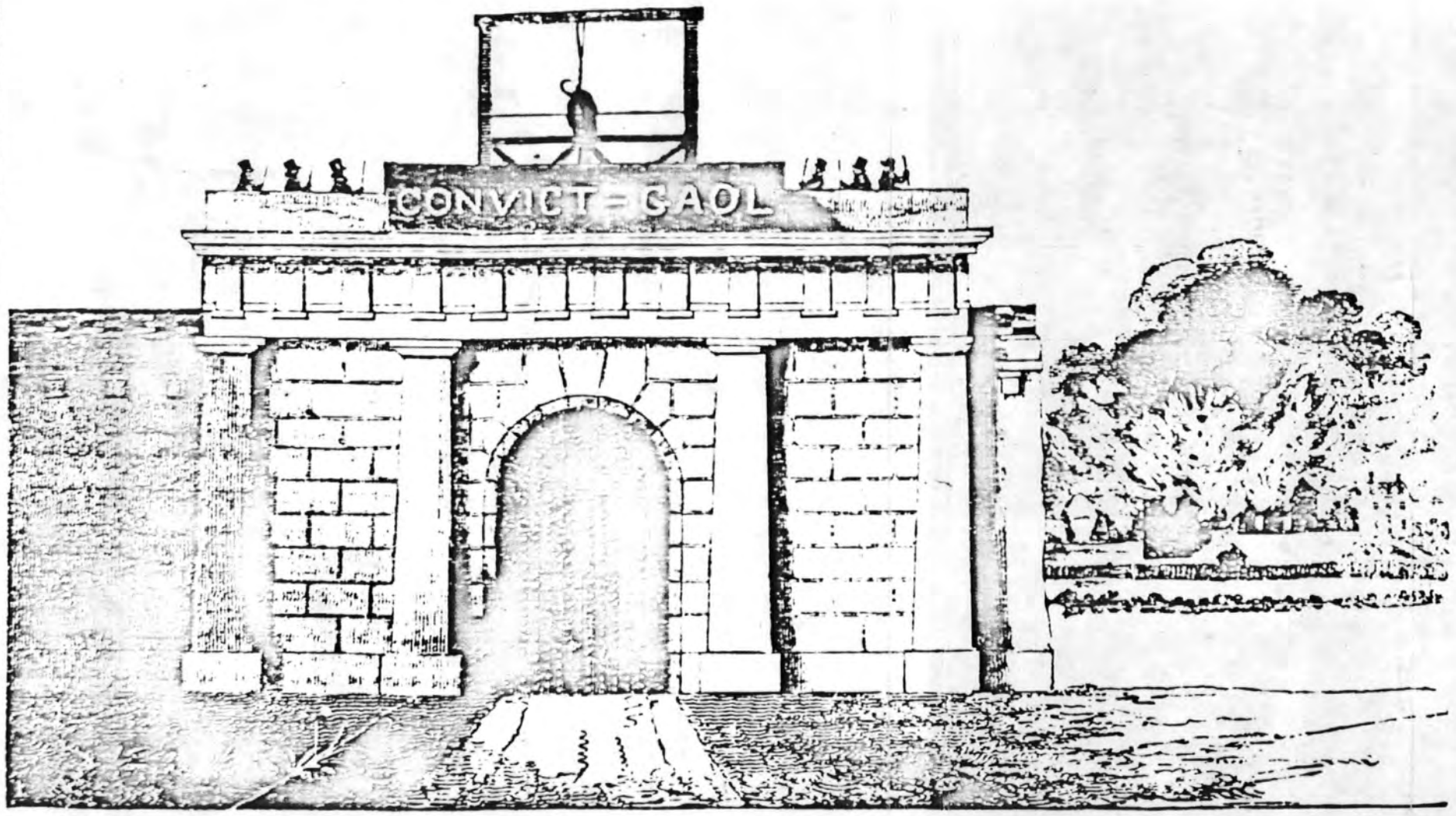
The magistrates and judges reacted with great severity towards those convicted of arson. In 1829, a parish apprentice, named Cook was convicted of setting fire to buildings belonging to his master, Mr. Green of Witham, Cook, "a cunning and deceitful person", was later executed. In the following year, James Ewen suffered the same fate outside Springfield Jail on 24th December 1830 after his conviction for firing the stacks, barns and premises of John Sach of Rayleigh on 5th November 1830. [38] Ewen was found guilty on very scanty evidence and went to the scaffold protesting his innocence. Many magistrates were said to have had grave doubts about the justice of his conviction. [39] In the following year, William Jennings, capitally convicted of arson in Writtle, was hanged on 9th August 1831. [40]

(c) Wage Riots and Machine-Breaking.

In the late summer of 1830 rioting and machine-breaking broke out in Kent and spread to the neighbouring county of Sussex.

Engraving showing Execution of James Cook

THE AWFUL FATE OF AN INCENDIARY.



THIS Engraving represents the Entrance of the County of Essex Convict Gaol—the Place of Execution on the Morning of the 27th of March, 1829, when James Cook, a boy only 16 years of age, suffered for the atrocious crime of setting on fire the premises of Mr. William Green, of Witham, farmer, with whom he lived as Cow Boy.

The Buildings and Stacks, which are represented as burning, furnish a true picture of the lamentable destruction of property occasioned by this wicked boy.

It is a melancholy fact, that there are offenders of the same cast still abroad, who by their conduct, show, that the disgraceful end of Cook has not operated as a sufficient example, to deter them from the commission of the like heinous crime; such, however, may be assured, that justice will ultimately overtake and punish them.

38

From there the disturbances moved west and north affecting Hampshire, Wiltshire, Gloucester, Worcestershire, Dorset, Devon, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire. Another centre was Berkshire and rioting spread into Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire. In November disturbances broke out in the third "focal point", Norfolk, and moved south into Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire. This third wave of rioting affected counties as far north as Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. [41] Social conditions in England were probably better in 1830 than the two preceding years but a feeling of apprehension pervaded the whole of south-eastern England. Bad harvests and winters coupled with attempts by some parishes to reduce the expenditure on poor relief had increased the tension in the countryside. The downfall of Charles X in France and the English political crisis of 1830 may have added fuel to a near revolutionary situation. What caused the final spark varied from district to district. Chambers and Mingay give the causes of the 1830 riots as being "the low levels of wages and the constant struggle to exist, the game laws, the degradation of the poor law, the decay of living-in and the growth of rural slums, the immobility of surplus labour and the lack of alternative occupations, together with the loss of winter employment to the threshing machine....". [42] There were four areas in Essex that were affected by the disturbances in 1830; an area to the north and west of Southend (involving mainly fires and threatening notes);

the district to the north and west of Chelmsford (varied types of disturbances); the north-west corner of the county (wage riots) and the Tendring Hundred (machine-breaking and wage riots). The only incident within twenty miles of London was at Leyton where a fire occurred on the premises of Mr. Dobey on 14th December after a number of "Swing" letters had been circulated in the area. [43] It is possible that the blaze was the result of unemployment caused by the influx of Irish labourers in the parish after 1828. [44] A letter addressed to the "hard working (but ill-used) labourers" of Stapleford Tawney and neighbouring parishes exhorted them to emulate their colleagues in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire and demand 14/- a week for winter work and 15/- in the summer. Although the "poor man's friend" encouraged the circulation of the letter among the labourers, there were no strikes or wage riots in the area. [45]

The disturbances in the central part of Essex began before the more serious riots in the north and were probably inspired by the troubles in Kent. At the end of November, five householders in the Chelmsford area, fearing that "incendiaries and tumultuous rioters" were about to approach the neighbourhood, asked for appropriate action to be taken. [46] A number of inflammatory newspapers were circulated [47] and on 10th December the magistrates urged the apprehension of John Battle for "seditious and inflammatory language and endeavouring to stir up certain labourers (in Writtle) to riot and disorder". [48] A "disposition to riot and insubordination" was also reported in Roxwell and

the Willingales.[49] At Sheering fifty labourers visited Mr. Pavitt's farm and asked if he used a machine. Having been reassured that this was not the case the labourers behaved peaceably and Pavitt gave them beer. Another farmer, Mr. Beale, was not so generous and in face of threats, he gave way to the rioters' demands.[50] The riot continued for about three hours "to the great terror, annoyance and disturbance of the peaceable and well-disposed subjects of our said Lord the King".[51] A clerical magistrate, the Rev. Glyn, told the men to disperse[52] but they refused until they had received the assurance about machines.

At Dunmow a mole plough was broken by workers from nearby High Easter on 10th December. The men had gathered the previous day and had been advised to go to Hopkins Farm and break the drill there. There is no evidence that a drill was damaged but the mob visited James Hockley (?) who was using a mole plough loaned by a contractor, John Ward. Hockley was told by a labourer "we are come to cut this plough, I know it will not work here any more". The plough was later found with one side and a beam sawn through and some of the nuts removed.[53] According to one local newspaper two men were committed for trial for destroying a threshing machine also belonging to Ward but no other sources suggest that threshing tackle was involved.[54]

In the north-west corner of the county the protests took the form of wage riots. The first outbreaks occurred near the

Suffolk border in the villages of Stambourne, Ridgewell, Birdbrook and Steeple Bumpstead and continued for over a week. This area had been in the news two years previously when a threshing machine was broken and continued to be a centre of militant activity until the first World War.[55] On 1st December a mob in Ridgewell went round demanding "pork, bread and beer". On 2nd the rioters assembled to demand a daily wage of 2/- and called a one-day strike. The trouble spread to Birdbrook on 7th and the men were given a small increase in pay.[56] Riots also broke out in Steeple Bumpstead on 6th and 10th December. Three labourers were later convicted at the Quarter Sessions and imprisoned for six months.[57] The focal point of the rioting then moved to the west of Saffron Walden. Wage riots occurred in Henham and Arkesden (10th) and Clavering (11th). An isolated incident was reported in Finchingfield on 14th.[58] In another village, Elmdon, first reports suggested that a hundred labourers went to the church, where the parishioners were discussing the state of the workers, locked the doors and put a guard on them.[59] The men then visited Mr. Wilkes, a local farmer, to demand that he should give his men 2/- a day. After Wilkes had contacted Lord Braybrooke, the ringleaders were quickly rounded up. The Elmdon rioters were treated leniently by the magistrates; all were discharged on their finding two sureties for their good behaviour for twelve months.[60]

The wage riots followed the same pattern in most of the villages. A small group of ringleaders went round the farms, persuading or forcing men to join them. Having collected a crowd of a hundred or more labourers, the leaders called on farmers, demanding higher wages usually 2/- or 2/3 a day with beer. At Henham the rioters asked for "more victuals". Except in the Tendring Hundred, the farmers suffered no physical violence although various methods of intimidation were attempted by the rioters. In Sheering, for example, Mr. Beale considered it expedient to pay his labourers 2/- a day after a mob had forced their way into his yard carrying flags and demanding more wages. [61] The rioters were usually more violent towards their colleagues who refused to join them. At Finchingfield George Freeman was dragged across two fields and struck. [62] At Henham George and Thomas Clayden were assaulted and threatened. Although one of the Henham rioters was heard to mutter that he would set fire to "them" before the week was out, [63] the only fire in the area was at Great Chesterford, eight miles away.

The most serious disturbances in 1830 took place in the Tendring Hundred and especially in the coastal region around Great Clacton. The hundred had experienced great prosperity during the eighteenth century; good soils and easy access to sea transport had encouraged progressive farmers to settle in the district. The agricultural 'boom' led to an influx of labourers from other areas and a large increase in

Fig. 11.

Disturbed Parishes 1830-1

Clavering
(Wage Riot)

Arkesden
(Wage Riot)

Writtle
(Fires)

Tendring
(Wage Riot)

population between 1700 and 1800. During this period, eleven out of seventeen parishes in thehundred experienced a population growth much above the Essex average. Two of the most riotous parishes in 1830 were included among the eleven.[64]

	Great Clacton	Little Clacton
Families 1723	63	33
Families 1801	169	94

With this abnormally fast population growth, overcrowding became a problem in the hundred and the cottages were said to be among the worst in the county.

When the agricultural depression after 1815 led to a slackening in demand for labour, the Tendring Hundred was seriously affected. There was little alternative employment in the district, and neighbouring hundreds had unemployment problems of their own. Migration to London was difficult because of the distance. The situation was aggravated by the introduction of threshing machines by farmers in the area.

By 1827 634 labourers were unemployed and completely dependent on parish relief. *

The distress of the labourers was often expressed in the years between 1815 and 1830. In 1816 a crowd gathered at Lawford and destroyed a threshing machine [66] and in 1822 a less successful attempt was made at Weeley. [67] Fires were not uncommon after 1820, especially in the east of the hundred. [68]

When disturbances began in Norfolk in November 1830 and spread south, it was almost inevitable that the Tendring Hundred would be affected. At the beginning of December, there were reports of rioting in Ipswich area. On 6th December, 300-400 labourers assembled and commenced "riotous proceedings" at Mile End near Colchester. This parish had been one of the first to be affected by disturbances in 1816 when a threshing machine was destroyed by fire. In 1830 labourers visited local farmers and persuaded at least five of them to sign a paper stating

"I wish to have two shillings per day up to Lady (Day) and beer, that is all we wish for; we will have it by fair means or foul"

---

* Chelmsford Chronicle 23rd February 1827. The totals for individual parishes were as follows;

Ardleigh	83	Little Bromley	10	Walton	10
Little Oakley	2	Ramsey	22	Little Clacton	35
Manningtree	15	Great Holland	21	Kirby	20
Thorrington	14	Little Holland	7	Thorpe	11
Wix	38	Great Oakley	23	Wrabness	13
Beaumont	9	Frating	11	Tendring	26
Bradfield	33	Great Bentley	37	Alresford	8
Mistley	19	Great Bromley	13	Weeley	18
Little Bentley	23	Elmstead	33	Great Clacton	22
St. Osyth	22	Brightlingsea	20	Frinton	0
				Lawford	16

The mob eventually dispersed after Sir Henry Smith, a local landowner, met them with magistrates and special constables and promised to consider the matter with his friends. [69]

The rioting moved to the east. On the same day as the Mile End disturbances, labourers at Tendring demanded higher wages and protested about the exorbitant tithes that the minister received. [70] On 7th a file of soldiers was called out by Sir George Hoste after an incendiary fire at the farm of Mr. Palmer of Ramsey. [71] No sooner had the fire been extinguished by the fire brigade and the soldiers withdrawn, then a threshing machine of Mr. Campion was smashed. [72] Although a number of "Swing" letters were received by local farmers, this incident was the only direct connection between incendiarism and machine-breaking. Wage riots and the destruction of machines occurred in Great and Little Clacton, Great Holland, Walton-le-Soken and Kirby. By Thursday, 9th December, no less than eight machines had been broken in Great Clacton alone. [73] At Dovercourt eighty labourers visited Mr. John Pattrick (a miller, farmer and churchwarden) who agreed to hold a meeting to discuss wages. At this meeting it was agreed to pay the men 2/- a day with, or 2/3d without beer. [74] Another wage riot took place on 10th December, after a small group of labourers in Peldon had visited their colleagues during the night and early morning to compel them to join their number. Their object was to seek a daily wage of 2/3d and beer from their employers. One labourer was told, "if you don't get up, we will take you bed and all". [75]

Lodge Farm, Little Clacton.

(Scene of machine-breaking)

The events in the Clacton area were described by T.G. Habin, an officer of Excise at Thorpe-le-Soken. Rioting broke out in Great Holland on 6th, Great Clacton on 7th and in Kirby, Little Clacton and Walton-le-Soken on the following day. After the disturbances on 8th, there was a general muster of the rioters to proceed to Thorpe to smash machines and rescue three of the ringleaders of the Great Holland riot who had been apprehended by the constable of Thorpe. With no Justices at hand and their constable out of the parish, the inhabitants of Thorpe were virtually helpless to stop the rioters. The local farmers refused to assist as they feared reprisals. Habin rode to Manningtree to ask the Justices for help. They sent him to Sir George Hoste, the commandant of the Harwich garrison. Hoste regretted that he could not send troops to Thorpe because the distance was too great but he gave Habin a letter of introduction to Captain Kitche R.N. Kitche suggested that he should seek aid from Preventive stations in the Thorpe area.[76] In Walton the rioters broke the machines of Mr. Baker and Mr. Wilson before calling the farmers together to demand more wages. The farmers agreed to give 2/- a day to those in work and 7/- a week to unemployed single men.

One interesting feature of the 1830 riots was the indifference shown by a number of farmers towards the destruction of their machines.[77] A reporter of The Morning Chronicle commented that the farmers "stood aloof and if not abetting, have not exerted

themselves to put down the riots and stop the mischief". [78] The Home Secretary himself had to rebuke some magistrates for agreeing to uniform rates of wages and the discontinuance of threshing machines. [79] According to another report, farmers mentioned threshing machines as being one cause of their inability to pay higher wages. [80] Although it is possible that farmers wished to deny any connivance with the labourers, the evidence suggests that some employers resisted the mob with considerable spirit and only gave way in face of threats. Joseph Salmon of Great Clacton attempted to stop the rioters with a gun but it was pulled from his hand and broken. Salmon was "struck and ill-used". [81] When the farmers of Kirby met to discuss the riots, John Phipps and a mob of two hundred attended the meeting. Phipps entered, carrying a piece of paper in one hand and a sledge-hammer in the other. Faced with the threat of violence, the farmers agreed to pay higher wages and 2/- a day to each person for breaking machines. [82] Some prisoners at the January Quarter Sessions 1831 claimed that Mr. Samuel Baker had sanctioned the destruction of his machine, a claim Baker hotly denied. He was prepared to put away his machine but was told "damn you, your word of mouth won't do". When he attempted to resist the rioters, he was threatened with a pick-axe as the machinery was broken. [83] Violence sometimes erupted when the demands of the rioters were not met or when unpopular officials were involved. John Fisher, a farmer and former overseer of the poor for Great Clacton, was told by Joseph Gladwell, "You damn'd old rogue, you shall give the men

2/3d per day and if you don't like that you shall give them 2/6d". Gladwell then gave him a push. Blows were aimed at the legs of a Mr. Smith (nicknamed "Bully") and a fight started when Preventive men came to restore order. [84]

(d) Measures taken by the Authorities.

To meet the threat of disturbances, there were meetings of magistrates to swear in special constables. On 8th December at a meeting presided over by the Lord Lieutenant, the Justices expressed their determination to maintain the laws and the public peace but recommended measures to ensure the employment of the poor. The resolutions were printed and distributed. [85] Lord Maynard, the Lord Lieutenant, wrote to the Home Secretary asking that troops should be stationed at Chelmsford, Braintree, Colchester and Warley. [86] Lord Melbourne replied that it was not in the government's power to do so but he understood that there was already a military force at Warley. [87] In answer to a letter from Capel Cure Esq., Lord Melbourne said that a troop of the 2nd Dragoons was to go to Warley Barracks to help the civil power if necessary. [88]

Troops were not used in Essex and the bulk of the work of restoring order was borne by the special constables. By 14th December there were five hundred "specials" in the Chelmsford area [89] including a hundred on horseback. [90] After 15th December many "respectable" persons were "called upon,

Mr Samuel Jones. Churchwarden of Great Hallingbury. Dr

To Joshua Chessins.

1830			
Dec.r 4	To 20. 2ft 2" Ash Constables Staves painted, and		
	with the Royal Crown and initials Heather Mongst	Yd	2. 0. 0
	To 14. 2ft 4 D° ——— D° ——— D° ———	1/2	1. 10. 4
		£	3. 10. 4

A Bill for Special Constables' Staves.

nominated and appointed" as special constables in Braintree and an oath administered to them.

"You shall well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the Office of Special Constables for the parish of..... and the neighbourhood thereof until you shall be discharged by due course of law according to the best of your skill and knowledge.

So help you God" [91]

In the Chelmsford area one mounted special constable in each parish was chosen to act as a messenger between the constables and Mr. Archer, Clerk to the Magistrates. Another was to be elected as leader in each parish and parishioners were asked to provide waggons to convey the constables to troubled areas. [92] The "specials" were urged to act with "sound discretion and perfect integrity". They were advised to use a set form of words when challenging a suspect.

"In the King's name, I a Special Constable command you to stop and give an account of yourself". [93]

The constables were armed with truncheons. Three hundred, decorated with a crown and the constable's number and with a leather thong, were made for the Epping Division. [94]

In the Tendring Hundred the magistrates at Manningtree were occupied until late on 6th December swearing in "specials". [95] During the emergency about 800 were appointed, [96] including 113 in St. Osyth, 43 in Kirby and 37 in Great Clacton. In Thorpe where the farmers had shown reluctance to assist, 40

men volunteered for duty. On 7th the justices had a circular printed and distributed, in which they recommended the procedure to be followed during the riots. The special constables were to ask three or four ringleaders to state their case to the magistrates and the mob was to be ordered to disperse. Failing this and if violence broke out, every effort was to be made to secure the leaders.[97] A strange incident was reported by the Kent and Essex Mercury. Labourers were said to be marching into Manningtree armed with bludgeons. The authorities were alerted but it appeared that the men, some of whom had been among the machine-breaking mobs, were coming to be enrolled as special constables.[98]

The reaction of individual parishes to the riots in the county varied greatly. A note of panic can be detected in a letter from R.W. Hall Dare of Ilford, in which he asked the Home Secretary to direct the issue of sabres from the Ordnance stores to mounted special constables.[99] Lord Melbourne refused the request as there was no possibility of disturbances in the Ilford area.[100] In the Chelmsford district there was a very poor initial response to the appeal for volunteers to act as special constables.[101] A reluctance to assist the authorities was apparent among farmers in other parishes. Capel Cure, a magistrate at Ongar, complained that although many labourers had been sworn in, the farmers had refused to join the special constabulary.[102] This reluctance may have been the result of the farmers fearing reprisals from rioters and incendiaries as in Thorpe.[103] In the Hornchurch

Handbill circulated by Magistrates of Tendring Hundred

(1830)

Petty Sessions, MANNINGTREE,

DECEMBER 7, 1830.

The Magistrates of the HUNDRED OF TENDRING having received Information of ILLEGAL ASSEMBLIES of the LABOURERS, have deemed it expedient to swear in SPECIAL CONSTABLES in every Parish; and the Magistrates recommend that the Special Constables so sworn, will select one Person in each Parish through whom Orders may be communicated. Should any Outrage occur, information is to be forwarded by a Horseman to the Chief Constable of the Division, and a Notification to be given to a Constable of each Parish through which the Horseman will pass, and such Constable to assemble all those of his Parish.

In the preservation of the public Peace, it is expected many of the Residents in the Hundred will unite, who may not form part of the Constabulary Force; especially to them, the Magistrates earnestly inculcate the necessity of Order and a uniform system of Action in unison with the Chief Constables, to whom the Magistrates' instructions will be regularly communicated.

It is hoped that the Remonstrances of the well-disposed may have had due effect on the misguided Populace, but should any in future assemble and commit Outrage, the Constables will use all possible exertions to procure the aid of contiguous Parishes.

The Mounted Force, of which the Magistrates doubt not a large Body will be formed, will not advance, except in cases of immediate necessity, beyond that on foot, and on coming up to the Multitude they will require them to select three or four Individuals to state their grievances to the Magistrates, and then to disperse; but should they unfortunately refuse to comply, and commit any Acts of Violence, the Ringleaders must be secured, in order that they may be dealt with according to Law.

The Chief Constables will assure the misled People that the Magistrates are always ready to redress every Grievance in their power, and that acts of Outrage and Tumult necessarily tend to augment the Distress of which they complain, and of which all Classes in a greater or less degree now participate.

The Magistrates most earnestly recommend to the whole of the Constabulary Force, the strictest observance of good Order and Sobriety.

THOMAS NUNN, H. R. SOMERS SMITH,
R. W. COX, THOMAS NUNN, Jun.

BURKITT, PRINTER, BOOKSELLER, BINDER, & STATIONER, MARKET-PLACE, MANNINGTREE.

district the magistrates dared not enrol local farmers as "specials" because of the ill feeling generated by the exorbitant tithes demanded by the Rev. Bearblock. [104] An interesting incident occurred at the Rochford Petty Sessions called for swearing in of special constables. The chairman was told that if he would pay his men higher wages and put away his threshing machine, the other farmers would do the same. After Bennington had replied that he would rather lose his life than submit to the labourers, most of the farmers left and only one constable was sworn in. [105] At Ingatestone there was a meeting in a beer-shop at which almost the whole parish refused service in the special constabulary. [106]

In the Tendring Hundred Preventive men were very active in crushing the riots and escorting rioters for trial. Before the disturbances began the Home Secretary had given permission for the "Coast Blockade" to be used by the magistrates. [107] The men roused the labourers to fury and rioters in Walton threatened to tear them "limb from limb". [108] In the same parish six Preventive men stationed at Mr. Wilson's farm were advised to retreat as 150 rioters approached. They were also used at Great Clacton, where blows were struck. [109]

On 9th December special constables met on Tendring Heath to complete the rounding-up of the ringleaders. [110] Suspects, who had been apprehended at the start of the rioting, were tried at the Winter Assizes before Mr. Justice Taunton. The remaining

rioters and machine-breakers appeared before the magistrates at the Lent Quarter Sessions (1831). Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent the escape of the ringleaders.[111] Each contingent of prisoners was closely guarded; for example seven machine-breakers were escorted by Thomas Bundock, constable of Kirby, and nine assistants. Because the authorities feared that rescue attempts would be made, six extra special constables travelled with the party as far as Colchester.[112] One of the rioters escaped capture for nearly a month. Benjamin Hackshell hid in a neighbour's chimney for several days before making his way to London where he was apprehended on New Year's Day by a Bow Street Runner. Having served his sentence, he returned to his village where, it is said, he wrote and published a ballad recounting the adventures of the machine- breakers, beginning:-

"It was on the eighth of last December
Which many of us well remember;
When Little Clacton mob did rise,
Which put the people in surprise.
For higher wages was their scheme.
Likewise to break the Lodge machine."

The final verse ended on a note of caution.

"Others may rise and they may scheme
I'll mob no more, nor break machines.
But as the boy's copy say,
Avoid all lying company." [113]

Copy of a Gaol Certificate

Essex.—RECEIVED into the Convict Gaol, at Springfield, this 9th Day of December 1830 the Bodies of William Curtis William Cole and John Pudney— from Mr. Edward Norris — Constable of Manningtree — by Warrant, under the Hands and Seals of R. W. Cox & Drummond Esqrs & J. Smith Esq for Felony—

W. Creighton

Curtis, Cole and Pudney were all sentenced to seven years' transportation

At the Assizes Mr. Justice Taunton sentenced sixteen machine-breakers to be transported. The majority of the rioters and the remaining machine-breakers appeared at the January Quarter Sessions 1831. Eight were sentenced to be transported and forty-three lesser punishments were imposed. After the sentences had been passed the prisoners thanked the chairman and Samuel Draper expressed the wish that he might sit there until he came back! [114]

Before the convicts were sent to Van Diemens Land, representation was made on their behalf for mitigation of sentences but with no success. [115] Attempts to reduce the terms of imprisonment for the other rioters fared little better, although James Wedlock, Nathan Unwin and John Sanders of Arkesden secured one month's remission through the good offices of Lord Braybrooke. [116] Those convicted and sentenced to transportation at the Assizes were conveyed from Chelmsford prison on 15th December 1830 to the "York" and "Leviathan" hulks at Portsmouth. Although twenty-four were given the awful sentence of transportation, only twenty-three appear to have been sent to Tasmania. [118] The fate of John Phipps of Walton is unknown.

(e) Van Diemens Land.

The machine-breakers convicted at the Assizes were sent to Van Diemens Land in the Eliza II, which left Portsmouth on 6th February 1831 and arrived in Hobart on 28th (or 29th) May. [119] The Eliza was a vessel of 538 tons, built in India in 1806. The

Master was Jonathan S. Groves and the Surgeon William Anderson.[120] The remaining machine-breakers were conveyed to Hobart in the Proteus, a barque of 254 tons, built in Java in 1815. Transported with the Essex convicts were 105 other male prisoners with an escort of two officers and twenty soldiers. The Proteus, commanded by Sylvester J. Brown, left Portsmouth on 14th April 1831 and docked in Hobart on 3rd (or 4th) August.[121]

Little is known of the fate of the machine-breakers.[122] Charles Dunnett died at the age of 45 on 4th July 1831, only five weeks after arriving at Hobart. Another Essex convict, John Webb, was killed in an accident in 1832.[123] An anonymous machine-breaker, sentenced at the Essex Quarter Sessions, applied for a ticket of leave as early as November 1832. He was recommended by his employer, John Hart Esq., but his request was refused as he had served such a short period of his sentence. His conduct on the hulk was said to be "good" and he had no other offences on record.[124] Some of the Essex prisoners managed to save while serving their sentences; cash payments were made by the Savings Bank during 1835 to the following convicts;[125]

	£.	s.	d.
William Cole		5.	0.
Thomas Ship	1.	4.	6.
John Grant		19.	0.
Robert Keeble	8.	0.	0.

It appears as though none of the convicts' families travelled to Australia[126] nor did any of the machine-breakers marry while

serving their sentence. A freed convict, William Bloomfield, applied in 1840 to marry 327 Martha Saffran, who had been transported in the "Platina"; William Bloomfield, the Essex rioter, was already married with four children before he left England.[127] Most of the machine-breakers were released on 3rd February 1836, the exceptions being George Davey, Thomas Grant, James Grant, John Ingram, William Jefferies and Samuel Draper. Davey and the Grants were serving sentences of fourteen years transportation; Jefferies and Draper were not released because of offences committed while in Tasmania.[128]

It is impossible to follow the careers of the convicts after their release without spending many days examining the Tasmanian archives. Only a few scraps of information can be extracted. William Bloomfield and John Hart became shoemakers in Hobart and Launceston respectively. Samuel Hayhoe was "fully committed" for trial for breaking, entering and stealing a cloth waistcoat worth 4/- and other goods. The verdict is not given.[129] Hayhoe died on 25th November 1881. George Davey received a free pardon on 24th April 1837 but five years later, he was sentenced to be transported for seven years after a trial at Launceston. Although recommended for a conditional pardon on 4th August 1846, he had to wait until 5th October 1847 before the recommendation was approved.[130] The 1851 census returns contain a reference to Stephen Eade, an agricultural labourer aged 62, living at 117 St. Osyth Road, Great Clacton as a lodger in the house of Joseph Winterflood.[131]

This was probably Stephen Eade, the machine-breaker who was 41 when convicted and was a native of Great Clacton. The Census Returns and the convict records both classify Eade as a "widower". [132] There is no evidence to show that other convicts returned to their parishes.

(f) Composition of the Mobs and the character of the Rioters.

In his great work on nineteenth century Britain, Halévy concluded that the suspects rounded up after the 1830 riots were often "smiths, joiners, artisans of every trade whom political passion not poverty had turned into agitators". [133] This was not the case in Essex. No hint of political motives behind the "revolt" is to be found in the records and only a few of the ringleaders were not agricultural labourers. [134] Joseph Gladwell and George Watling were thatchers and William Jeffries a blacksmith. John Ingram, who had been in trouble with the law before 1830, was a ploughman. There is, however, an element of truth in part of Halévy's statement; most of the ringleaders were not drawn from the poorest ranks of the village. According to J. Martin Leake, the rioters were in good employment for men of their condition. [135] All those brought before the magistrates were said to be in full employment and receiving wages of 11/- or 12/- a week or more with beer. [136] An examination of the overseer's accounts of Great Clacton confirms that the ringleaders were not dependent on poor relief before the riots.

The thirteen leaders of the Arkesden mob were found to have £4. 9s. 0d and six silver watches between them when arrested.[137] Nevertheless, several of those transported to Van Diemens Land left behind wives and families who became "burdensome" on parish rates.[138] The wife of William Bloomfield of Great Clacton received a total of £20. 5s. 4d in relief between 23rd April 1833 and 21st March 1834.[139] Although the ringleaders were men of some independence, little is known of the circumstances of the rioters who never came before the courts. Many were probably in the same situation as Mark Pealing of Little Clacton who had no lodging or work and was pulled out of a stable by the crowd and made to go with them.[140]

Reports from Van Diemens Land contrasted the conduct and character of the machine-breakers with the brutality of the ordinary convicts. There is much evidence to suggest that the men involved in the riots were mainly of good character. Farmers in Mile End (Colchester) described the ringleaders of the wage riot in their parish as being "sober, steady, hard-working men until this affair".[141] The Ramsey machine-breakers were described in similar terms when they appeared at the Winter Assizes.[142] John Causten and Thomas Newman, convicted of machine-breaking escaped exile to Australia because of their previous good behaviour. They were sentenced to twelve months imprisonment.[143] In April 1831 a memorial from three Justices in the Tendring Hundred asked that Abraham Neale, one of the

Machine Breaking" Evil Effect "Machine Maled Not Opened" Machine Breaking "...

...L. Comp.[y]/ ...ident from his Hut without ... ...ws. Rep.[d] Indict.[t] / E. Curr. / Dec.[r] 11. 18... / 25 Lashes / E. Curr. / May 9 1833 J.P.L. Comp.[t] ... ...les / All Hone / Jan.[y] 28 1835 J.P.L. Co / Found ... ...own? / J.L.H. / July 11: 1835 V.D.L. 601 / Neglect of ... ...work 25 Lashes / J. H. Hutchinson /

3rd Feb.[y] 1836.

King Evil Effect Machine "Mu... ...e Maled Not Open" Effect ...

...duction of his Master and employer Jam.[s] ... ...Hill of Perth / Jan.[y] 29 1834 / Tried / Guilty Lurking ... ...Neglect of duty and feigning Sickness, Tried in ... ...Repeated Idleness and determined misbehaviour, returned by ... ...the Assistance of the principal Gaoler Vide Lieut.[t] Gov.[r]

14th March 1836.

Convict Conduct Records.

Ramsey rioters, should be released after four of his six month's sentence as he "hath properly conducted himself during such his imprisonment". [144] One reason why previously model labourers took part in machine-breaking was explained in a local newspaper. [145]

"Strange as it may appear, many of these deluded men actually think that they are not committing an unlawful act."

This probably applied to Charles Dunnett of Great Holland. A married man with six (or seven) children, he had spent "sixteen years in one service in England" and had a certificate of good conduct. He died (? of grief) several weeks after arrival in Tasmania. [146] John Webb had worked for the same master for ten years and produced a letter to that effect. [147] Six other Essex convicts had certificates or letters "in their favour". [148] The majority of the machine-breakers either had a "clean" record of conduct in Tasmania or committed a few minor infringements of the harsh rules.

Name	Offences [149]
James Cross	None
Charles Dunnett	None
John Webb	None
Robert Davey	None
Henry Baker	None
William Acres	3
Thomas Grant	3

Name	Offence
Stephen Eade	None
James Grant	1
William Curtis	None
William Bloomfield	3
Samuel Hayhoe	1
George Davey	4
John Grant	None
Robert Keeble	1
Thomas Ship	1
Robert Cullender [150]	2
William Cole	1

For a number of the labourers, the trial for machine-breaking was not their first taste of British justice. Thomas Grant had been imprisoned for being insolent to a magistrate. [151] William Bloomfield had appeared before the Bench for stealing rabbits but was discharged. [152] William Curtis had been sentenced to one month's imprisonment "for leaving my master". [153] John Ingram had served three and a quarter years of a seven-year sentence for stealing a watch. Ingram continued his bad behaviour in Tasmania. His punishments while a convict were as follows; [154]

A total of 200 lashes,

A total of eight months hard labour (usually in a chain gang)

Ten days on bread and water,

Twenty-one days solitary confinement,

Two reprimands.

Samuel Draper was another nuisance to the prison authorities. He received a total of 160 lashes and sentences of up to six months' hard labour. [155] Considering his conduct, he was fortunate to be released in October 1836.

William Jeffries, John Hart and John Pudney were other Essex convicts with bad records in Tasmania. On 4th January 1836 Pudney escaped the sentence of thirty lashes because he was "unfit to receive punishement". [156] Because of the offences committed by Draper, Pudney, Jeffries, Ingram and Hart, the average crime rate among the Essex rioters was higher than that of the 1830 machine-breakers as a whole, yet considerably below that of all the male convicts transported to Tasmania. [157]

Average number of offences committed in Tasmania

(I) Essex machine-breakers	(II) All machine-breakers	(III) All male convicts
2.6	1.7	6.0

As we have see, Samuel Hayhoe and George Davey served prison sentences for crimes committed after their free pardon. [158]

There is a possibility that some of the rioters in the Tendring Hundred may have been smugglers. The villages where the disturbances took place were on or near the coast and within

fifteen miles of Harwich. In 1827 there were reports of "murderous conflicts" taking place between Preventive men and smugglers along the coasts of Essex and Kent. [159] In the same year fifty-one tubs of contraband spirits were found near Walton. [160] At Clacton it was said that farm workers and indeed most inhabitants were engaged in smuggling. [161] The beer shops, which the authorities considered had been the headquarters of the rioters, were the resort of "smugglers, thieves, poachers and prostitutes". [162] The speed and efficiency with which the threshing machines were destroyed suggest skilful co-ordination which may have been produced by smuggling exploits. This argument is strengthened by the almost pathological hatred shown by the labourers towards the Preventive men, whom the rioters threatened to tear "limb from limb" if they were used to quell the disturbances. [163]

(g) The Results of the Riots.

The labourers appearing at the Lent Quarter Sessions (1831) were accused not only of riot and inciting others to riot for higher wages but also for "unlawfully exacting and extorting the same". [164] The rioters had obviously achieved their immediate aim. Yet despite the increased wages after 1830 by 1836 the labourers' earnings had decreased to a greater extent than the reduction in the price of provisions. The riots may also have had indirect effects in helping the cause of reform in the Game Laws and the tithe question. [165]

According to E.P. Thompson, the 1830 revolt sapped the confidence of the gentry and helped to arouse the agitation for the reform of Parliament in 1831-2. [166]

The rioters also achieved temporary success in reducing the number of threshing machines in use. In 1836 C.C. Parker of Woodham Mortimer reported that some farmers used machinery but not as many as before. [167] Farmers who continued to use threshing tackle were often targets for incendiaries. At Little Burstead a stack was fired in 1836 and three trusses of straw were placed under a machine and ignited. [168] By 1843 farmers were beginning to use machines once again, which was one reason for the wave of incendiarism during the winter of 1843-4. Two years later Mr. R. Baker of Writtle admitted that, "since the disturbances", he had put away his chaff-cutter and threshing machine during winter. [169]

Farmers who had suffered from the actions of the machine-breakers often managed to recoup some of their losses. There were two ways by which they could be recompensed; either by receiving costs for successfully prosecuting the machine-breakers or by claiming a share of the rewards given for the apprehension of rioters. In the Tendring Hundred some farmers were luckier than others but almost half the total value of the threshing machines was recovered by the payment of expenses.

Farmer	Expenses paid[170]	Value of machines[171]
	£. s. d.	£
Samuel Wilson	34.16. 6.	45
Samuel Baker	18. 8. 0.	50
John Welham	17.15. 0.	40
John Smith	12. 7. 0.	35
William Nicholson	2. 0. 6.	40
Nathaniel Page Cavill (or Cavell)	8.15. 6.	40
George Moss	30.15. 8.	40
Robert Large	26.15. 0.	50
Joseph Salmon	10.12. 4.	40
	£172. 3. 6.	£380

The same farmers received rewards for the apprehension of the machine-breakers. The rewards were originally intended to be £500 each but so many claims were made that the sum had to be subdivided. In the Tendring Hundred sixty-nine persons were given rewards totalling £1,950, the amounts ranging from £5 to £85.[172]

The 1830 disturbances did not mark the end of wage riots in the county. In 1834 labourers in Stansted Mountfichet gathered together to increase their wages, which had been reduced by 1/- to 8/- and beer for labourers and 10/- and beer for ploughmen. The meeting got out of hand, resulting in an assault on a

labourer, John Savill. In October of that year George Willis and George Sapseed were convicted of conspiring to raise wages paid to agricultural workers and were sentenced to a year's imprisonment.[173] Yet few labourers were prepared to risk the savage punishments inflicted upon the rioters of 1830. Discontent was therefore driven underground but on the occasions that it came to the surface, it was often expressed in more vicious forms than before 1830. Animal-maiming became more prevalent, although the incidents were more often the result of personal grudges and sudden anger than part of the social revolt. In Writtle, in 1831, there was an unpleasant case of pig-maiming at a time when the parish was considerably disturbed.[174] A group of boys, who had been seen with a scythe blade, tried to stop John Quin from working on the farm of Samuel Lucking. A short time later a pig belonging to Lucking and a Mrs. Elizabeth Barlow was found with deep cuts, one of which was eleven inches long. Suspicion naturally fell on the boys who were committed for trial. They were found not guilty at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions 1831. Another case involved Robert Wass of Colne Engaine accused in 1837 of "maliciously and feloniously killing a sheep".[175]

Incidents of sheep-stealing continued at a high level during the 1830's but showed a marked decline after 1843. There is a close correlation between poaching and incendiarism; a different relation exists between arson and sheep-stealing. Between 1834 and 1840, when cases of incendiarism were relatively

infrequent, sheep-stealing was rife. In the following decade the position was reversed.[176]

Date	Commitments for arson	Sheep-stealing
1834	2	14
1835	6	15
1836	-	22
1837	6	26
1838	3	16
1839	1	17
1840	2	21
1841	-	21
1842	3	18
1843	2	18
1844	21	8
1845	9	4
1846	5	5
1847	7	7
1848	9	7
1849	17	5
1850	8	8

Occasional fires and threatening letters continued to disturb the countryside in the decade after the riots. In order to deter potential incendiaries, farmers sent their labourers

along to watch the execution of fire-raisers. Most of the 1,200 spectators at the hanging of James Passfield were agricultural workers.[177] Unpopular farmers were the recipients of threatening notes. William Tyler a labourer earning only 5/6d a week expressed his discontent in a message to his employer, Isaac Belcher of Sandon. The note contained some personal abuse and a picture of a man in a coffin surrounded by mourners.

"Starvegut Belcher if you don't go better great will be the consequence and what do you think you must alter or must be set fire this comes from London nose is as long sharp as a flint you ought to pay your men".[178]

Conditions between 1831 and 1835 almost certainly improved for the majority of the agricultural workers.[179] In 1834, however, Parliament passed a measure which was to re-kindle the fires of rural agitation.

Chapter VIII THE NEW POOR LAW

Following a report of a Royal Commission, the practice of giving outdoor relief to able-bodied labourers was ended by the Poor Law Amendment Act. Although reports indicated that the habits of the poor had "decidedly improved" and that they were "more industrious", [1] the position of the unemployed worker got worse after 1834. Crime increased by 21% [2] in 1837 largely because "they have become much more daring; instead of living partly on the parish and partly on poaching and plunder, they live entirely upon depredation". [3]

In the Tendring Hundred the workers formed a combination, "exhibiting in many of its features an illegal character", in order to safeguard their employment. [4]

The ending of relief to able-bodied paupers was not effected overnight. In a circular, dated 8th November 1834, the Poor Law Commissioners recommended that able-bodied labourers who could not get work should be employed by the parish. Their wages were to be less than those of ordinary labourers. If parish employment was not practical, the poor were to be given relief but half of it was to be in kind. In parishes which had workhouses suitable for accommodating and giving work to the poor, able-bodied paupers were to be sent there. [5] The granting of relief in kind led to protests at Stebbing [6] and in Ardleigh a bread waggon, carrying supplies for the Tendring Union, was intercepted and escorted out

of the parish. [7]

The ending of outdoor relief led to more protests. The Relieving Officer of the Thaxted district was abused by twenty or thirty men who claimed that they had lost three days work and unless they were paid, blood would be spilt. The unfortunate official was also "ill-used" by George Bowlett at Little Bardfield who threatened to knock him and the constable down. [8] At Great Holland three labourers were refused relief and told to enter Thorpe workhouse. They replied that they would not go there for all the Boards of Guardians in England. One of the paupers, Solomon Draper, went to Mr. Stubbin, the Relieving Officer, demanding "money or victuals". When his demands were refused, he called in six men who took the relief. After Stubbin had warned them of the consequences, the men replied "we'll be d.....d if we care, we shan't be worse off if we do". [9]

The new Poor Law, said to be the "salvation" of Essex, undoubtedly cut the poor rates dramatically. Poor Law expenditure per head of population fell from 17/6d in 1834 to 9/9d in 1838. In the Tendring Union the money expended on poor relief had been reduced by 55% by 1838, in the Epping Union by 49% and in the Halstead Union by 48%. [10] The refusal to give outdoor relief to able-bodied labourers and their families was usually adhered to but occasionally the regulations had to be relaxed. In the Halstead Union during the winter of 1840-1 when the workhouse was nearly full, some of the families of able-bodied paupers were

given relief outside the house. This had to be continued because of a scarlatina outbreak. The Guardians reported that as soon as the families received the money, the paupers left the workhouse! [11] The local Guardians were normally more humane than the Commissioners in London. James Willis, an able-bodied pauper of Earls Colne, applied for relief and was given a ticket to the workhouse for himself and his family. His wife refused to go and the family faced starvation. The Guardians gave them outdoor relief for one week but received a mild rebuke for their action from the Commissioners who re-affirmed that the family had to enter the workhouse. [12] The Commissioners also rejected an attempt by the Guardians of the Dunmow Union to give occasional relief in kind to large families. [13]

The New Poor Law achieved considerable initial success in compelling workers to find work. In Sible Hedingham where the average number of paupers during the winter was 140, the number of unemployed in one week in July 1835 was 89. A year later, after the formation of the union, no-one was out of employment. The good harvest of 1836 may have had some effect on the unemployment figures but in the Dunmow Union, which had been established before the Halstead Union, there were hardly enough men in the workhouse in the summer of 1835 to work a handmill. [14] It is possible, however, to follow the example of Dr. Hasbach and exaggerate the effects of the 1834 Act. [15] In Braintree after five years of the union, an observer con-

cluded that "..... it was confidently expected that its operations would tend, in general, to raise the labouring-poor from a state of pauperism to comparative independence; as to which I am not so confident it has, as yet succeeded, at least to the extent contemplated; perhaps the number of permanent paupers has been reduced, but the numbers in general have materially increased since the commencement of the union". [16] Although the average annual expenditure for the period 1836-40 was only £1,807. 2s. 5½d compared with an approximate average of £2,107 for the period 1832-5, the number of persons receiving outdoor relief increased between 1836 and 1840.

Average number receiving outdoor relief (Braintree Union)

1836	1008 (½)
1837	1840
1838	2023 (½)
1839	2407
1840	2797 (½)

(N.B. It was not until the third quarter of 1836 that the number of children were included with adults receiving relief). [17]

The increase was the result of several factors: the increased number of applications for midwives, funeral expenses and sickness benefits; the lack of firmness on the part of the guardians and relieving officers in refusing relief; loans which

were made but seldom recovered: but above all, the attitude of the poor who still regarded money raised by the poor rates as "fair game". [18]

Despite the support given to the New Poor Law by some local newspapers, petitions for the repeal of the Act outnumbered those applauding the sterner measures. Petitions against the Act were sent to Parliament from many parts of the county in 1837-8, including the Chelmsford Union, the Lexden and Winstree Union, Halstead, Rawreth, Braintree, Bocking, Coggeshall, Colchester, Maldon and Thundersley. [19] Opposition was not restricted to the poor; in Colchester there was said to be a dislike of the New Poor Law among the middle and upper classes. [20] The Rev. Jee of Thaxted reported that his parish was in "an almost lawless state" because of unemployment, low wages and the severity of the poor law. [21] The Rev. Maberly of Bourn near Caxton, Cambridgeshire, distributed handbills calling on the poor to attend a meeting on Saffron Walden common at noon on 16th July 1836 to petition against the poor law. Although it was not expected that the meeting would lead to a breach of the peace, the Mayor of Saffron Walden took measures to prevent any disorders. The Mayor was informed that "Mr. Maberly's conduct has been brought under Lord John Russell's notice". [22]

The Essex Standard printed a number of reports concerning the excellent condition of the Colchester workhouse where there was an "evident desire to promote the comfort and happiness of

its various classes of inmates". [23] "Comfort" and "happiness" were seldom the lot of the inmates of workhouses where the officials were tyrannical or incompetent. The master of the workhouse at Sible Hedingham was "addicted to drunkeness and totally incompetent to fulfil the duties of the office he holds". [24] The chief aim of the poor law officials was to make the conditions in the workhouses more unpleasant than those of the lowest paid labourers. Inmates were set to work performing the most monotonous or back-breaking tasks. In the Halstead workhouse the able-bodied paupers were divided into two sections; one group was employed "at the mill" and the others picked oakum. [25] The separation of husbands and wives was another cause of misery. A Braintree tailor claimed that he would rather die in the streets than be torn from his wife and children. [26] In the Colchester workhouse William Sallowes assaulted Joseph Dennis, one of the serjeants at mace, after his wife and family had been parted from him. [27]

The diet in the workhouses acted as another deterrent to "idleness". Mr. John Taylor complained to the Halstead Guardians that great illness prevailed in the union workhouse because of an insufficient diet and suggested that vegetables should be allowed. [28] Another complaint came from Mr. Grice, the medical officer of the Dunmow Union. He maintained that the quantity of food given to an able-bodied man was quite insufficient and that the weight of bread allowed was much less

than that of a labourer outside the workhouse. Grice concluded that the labourer's health would be affected if he remained in the workhouse for any length of time.[29] As a result, the amount of gruel and bread given to the paupers was increased. The Poor Law Commissioners were anxious to maintain the policy of "semi-starvation" and advised the Guardians of the Tendring Union to employ only those doctors who would give the sick poor no mutton.[30] The diet for the male able-bodied paupers in the Tendring Union was as follows;[31]

Breakfast	6 oz bread 1½ pints of gruel	each day
Lunch	5 oz cooked meat ½ lb potatoes	Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday
	1½ pints of soup	Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
	14 oz of suet or rice pudding	Friday
Supper	6 oz bread 1½ pints of broth	Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday
	6 oz bread 2 oz cheese	Monday, Wednesday Friday and Saturday

[Approximate calorific value of meals on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday = 1600 calories (Bread 640, gruel or broth 480, potatoes 170, meat 370) Calorific value of meals on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday = 1350 (Bread 640, soup or gruel 480, cheese 230). The

quantity of drink given is not known but the calorific value of the meals fell well below the minimum required for a man to maintain his weight.

Weight	Calories required to maintain weight at 25 years of age
8 stone	2,500
9 stone	2,700
10 stone	2,850
10½ stone	3,000
11 stone	3,200

Despite improvements in the quantity and quality of food, the diet in Union workhouses was considerably more spartan than that in a well administered workhouse before 1834. Dinner for the able-bodied pauper in the Chelmsford workhouse in 1817 [32] consisted of;

Sunday	Beef with suet pudding and vegetables
Monday	Bread and cheese
Tuesday	Cold meat and vegetables
Wednesday	Beef and vegetables
Thursday	Pork with vegetables
Friday	Ox cheeks and vegetables
Saturday	Soup from bones left over from the week.

The combination of unpleasant work, poor diet and separation from one's family led to the Union workhouses becoming hated places. The Northern Star reported a case of a "poor old man", Benjamin

Hammond, who hanged himself rather than enter the "Bastille". [33] Rioting was common, especially in 1843, and in the Dunmow workhouse, the screaming of the women was reported to be "quite alarming". [34] In December 1835 a fire, which may have been started deliberately, broke out in buildings belonging to the Saffron Walden workhouse. The "lower orders" refused to help, shouting "let it burn, it cannot be at a better place," "no Poor Laws", and "put it out yourselves". [35]

Attacks on the person or property of union officers were common. Mr. Franklin, a Guardian of Thaxted, was retiring to his bed when his windows were shattered but the culprits escaped. [36] The most serious incidents took place in the Halstead Union. On 19th January, 1836 a hundred paupers gathered outside the Bell Inn, Castle Hedingham, where the Guardians were meeting. The business was prolonged and the crowd became restless. As the entrance to the inn was blocked, some force had to be used to clear it. Taking advantage of the confusion, the paupers began throwing stones at the windows of the inn, aiming at the Guardians inside. The windows of the houses of G. Nottidge of Castle Hedingham and W. Fisher of Sible Hedingham were also broken. After the rioters had dispersed, £25 was offered for the apprehension of the ring-leaders. [37] According to one report, the Metropolitan Police were called to restore order. [38] Soon after the riot, the paupers had their revenge by firing a rick belonging to Ashurst

The Hedinghams

Sible Hedingham

Castle Hedingham

(Both parishes were disturbed areas, 1800-1850)

Bell Inn, Castle Hedingham

(Scene of Poor Law Riot, 1836)

Majendie, Chairman of the Board.[39] In the same Union a number of paupers in the workhouse refused to work and were sent to prison.[40] The destruction of Majendie's stack began a wave of incendiarism in the Halstead area in 1836 and 1837. On 27th October 1837 farmers attended a meeting in Halstead to discuss measures to catch the perpetrators of the fires. In the Tendring Union a sinister note addressed to "Mr. Wicked" was found in Ardleigh.[41]

"Children from thare mothers
Men from thare wivs
Starve poor families
had better take thar lives
they hve had thare desire
i fear it Will End with
a Union of fier".

By 1847 the original harshness of the New Poor Law had been mitigated. According to one source, "they (the Boards of Guardians) began to set at defiance the ukases of the Central Board..... and Outdoor relief which..... the widespread distress made more than ever necessary, became again universal".[42] This is an exaggeration but it helps to explain why relief "in aid of the wages of the poor of High Easter" was given in consequence of the high price of provisions in 1847.[43] At the beginning of the twentieth century the Victoria County History expressed its disapproval that in parts of North Essex "a great deal of outdoor relief is still given, with the usual result of discouraging thrift".[44]

Chapter IX OPPOSITION TO THE ANGLICAN CLERGY AND THE INFLUENCE OF METHODISM.

One of the most interesting features of the 1830 riots was the hatred shown by the labourers towards the Anglican clergy. This hatred existed throughout much of the period 1800-1850 and was shown in many agricultural counties. At Lawshall in Suffolk a letter in 1816 announced that three farm-houses were to be set on fire and the parson "burnt in his bed". [1] During the riots in Kent, in 1830, a labourer threatened, "we will destroy the cornstacks and threshing machines this year, next year we will have a turn with the parsons, and the third we will make war on the statesmen". [2]

There can be little doubt of the poor spiritual state of the church at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many clergy had obviously missed their true vocation; a most notable example being Sir Henry Bate Dudley at one time curate-in-charge of Bradwell. A famous duellist, he became known as the "fighting Parson". He was a friend of the Prince Regent and Garrick and a patron of Gainsborough. He was editor of the Morning Post for a time, started a number of newspapers and served a twelve month sentence for libelling the Duke of Richmond. He was also a well-known huntsman, and is reported to have clambered on to the roof of a church to kill a fox. [3]

Pluralism and non-residence were common features of the church at the time. According to the Quarterly Review, it was possible to tell by the behaviour of the labourers, the appearance and clothing of their children, and the state of their cottages and gardens whether the incumbent was resident or non-resident in the parish and whether he took an interest in his flock. [4] Pluralism and non-residence were rife in Essex. The Kent and Essex Mercury concluded that "nowhere is reform more necessary than in many parishes in this diocese. If required, we ourselves could point out twenty adjoining parishes in a certain district of Essex, where two-thirds of the incumbents are absent, leaving the church services to be scantily performed by, we fear, very inadequately remunerated curates. In some parts it is not uncommon for one clergyman to have the cure of two or even three parishes". [5]

Although there were ministers who actively attempted to improve the conditions of their poorer parishioners, the typical attitude of the clergy was revealed in the reminiscences of a Norfolk poacher. His father was allowed 2/6d from the parish and his mother was forced to work in the fields. "Did the Parson help them - no he told them to be contented with there lot, and make the most of what they had got". [6] (Original spelling and punctuation). A prayer at the time of the 1830 riots implored God to "have pity..... on the simple and ignorant, who have been led astray, and recall

them to a sense of their duty;....."[7] When the clergy attempted to intervene to improve the lot of the labourers, their exhortations were full of pious advice, totally irrelevant to the needs of the poor. A pamphlet entitled "Friendly Hints to my Poor Parishioners" was circulated in the disturbed area of Kirby, Walton and Thorpe-le-Soken. After giving details on making soup, the ingredients of which were beyond the pocket of most of the poor, the minister concluded;

"Pay your debts, be honest, kind and gentle towards all men and thus love your neighbour. Love God with all your heart - serve God who knows your heart and never fail to say your prayers".

Not surprisingly, the Kent and Essex Mercury called him a "pious quack"![8]

Although pluralist and non-resident ministers were attacked by reformers, the hatred of the labourers was reserved, not for those who neglected their duty, but for the clergy who were over-zealous in local affairs and in enforcing their rights. Bate Dudley was loathed by the labourers less for his eccentricities than for his vigorous action in crushing disturbances. Already well known for his fanatical opposition to poaching, in 1800 he was thanked for "suppressing a spirit of insurrection which manifested itself in the parish of Steeple in the month of June last".[9] After becoming a prebendary of Ely, he was very active

during the riots in that city in 1816. The clergy appeared in every way to ally themselves with the ruling classes and opponents of the poor. In 1831 there were 51 clerical magistrates in Essex (out of a total of 170). [10] Many contemporary writers realised the dangers when the ministerial duties of a clergyman were coupled with those of the magistracy. The clergy ran the risk of being "much disliked by the middling and lower classes of people" and parishes were left "to the influence and intrusion of sectaries while their proper pastors are engaged in what is vulgarly called justice business". [11] The clergy were often the most zealous of the justices. One prominent magistrate, the Rev. G. Leapingwell of Good Easter, received two letters in 1816 threatening to murder him and burn down his premises. [12]

During the period 1829-31 the clergy were subject to threats and violence. Two corn stacks belonging to the Rev. Lewis Way of Great Yeldham were fired in January 1829. Two Bow Street Runners were hired and handbills, offering £200 for information regarding the perpetrator of the crime, were printed. [13] An inflammatory letter was sent to the Rev. Watkinson of Earls Colne on 12th December 1830, [14] and in March 1831 an attempt was made to set fire to the house of our "worthy and exemplary vicar" at (?) Harwich. [15] The chief cause of the hatred shown toward the clergy at that time was the tithe question, which "was in the very centre of the social agitations that ended in the rising of 1830....". [16] The Rev. W.M. Hurlock, Lecturer of Dedham, on the day before his tithe composition received a letter

with two matches enclosed; "Set thy house in order for thou shalt die and not live. Prepare your wicked Soul for death - you and your whole Crew are biggest Paupers in the Parish. There is not a Farmer in the Parish but what hates you..... your House shall come to the ground". [17] In the Tendring Hundred the farmers blamed tithes, among other financial burdens, for their inability to pay higher wages. [18] Their answer to the labourers was "we cannot pay more as the rents and tithes are so high - you must go to the clergy and landowners and get them to reduce their rents and tithes and we will then pay you higher wages". [19] As a result, the labourers attempted to put pressure on the tithe-holders. A mob collected in Tendring, where the incumbent was said to pocket upwards of £900 annually, and "vociferated" loudly against tithes. [20] At Little Clacton after the farmers claimed that they could not afford to pay their men 2/3d a day, the rioters said "that in order to enable them to pay that sum, they would go to the tithe feast, and force the gentleman who received the tithe to give the farmers back half their money. The farmers told them they would give them 2s. a day". [21]

The tithe question was more serious in parishes where the clergy insisted upon payment in kind. When the yeomanry assembled on Tendring Heath to put down the riots in December 1830, a farmer shouted "Is there a parson amongst us who collects his tithe in kind? If there is, he is not a fit subject to join us". To the

accompaniment of cheers, one young clerical magistrate turned his horse round and rode off. [22] At Little Oakley in 1834 there was great enmity between a churchwarden and the minister "who takes his tithes in kind of me after first violating an agreement made with me and afterwards refusing to accept any reasonable composition or fair mode of reference....". [23]

The most notorious instance of tithes being taken in kind was in the liberty or hundred of Havering-atte-Bower, where the lay tithes were held by New College, Oxford. The right to collect the tithes in the Hornchurch division was leased to the Rev. Bearblock and sons and Mr. Morgan for £3,500 and the small tithes in the Romford division to the Rev. Rawbone for £2,400. Formerly the farmers had paid a modus in lieu of rendering hay in kind and another in lieu of giving lambs. The lessees had reverted to taking the tithes in kind. Although the modus dated back to 1641 or before, the tithe payers case was dismissed because there was no proof that the modus existed in 1180. As a result, the petitioners had to pay £3,000 in costs. The effect of tithe in kind was disastrous for some farmers. Formerly the modus on lambs was 1d for each animal, that is 10d for the tithe lamb. By taking the lamb itself (value £1. 8s. 0d.), the tithe-man secured a profit of £1. 7s. 2d. Milk was collected every tenth day, so that on that day calves had to go without or drink stale milk. A tithe on all eggs and potatoes was also taken. The tithe-man, instead of being content

with every tenth row of potatoes, demanded that the potatoes should be measured at the end of each day's work. This prevented the farmer from washing and sorting them in time for the early market the following day. The financial loss to the farmers was very great. The amount of modus paid on 97 acres of old pasture land for fourteen years was £22.12s. 8d. As a result of the charges by the Rev. Bearblock, the amount paid on the land for the same period was £741. 4s.10d. On the 97 acres of land, the farmer was forced to pay over £50 each year. Not surprisingly, discontent over tithes grew so great that at the time of the 1830 riots an official said "Sir, the conduct of the parson is such that I dare not swear in those proper persons who would otherwise be sworn in as special constables". [24]

The Tithe Commutation Act (1836) did not always end the antagonism between farmers and the clergy. The measure, "a parsons' Act", was attacked by G. Ruffel who cited the case of his father, an Essex farmer. Before 1836 the tithe was 2/6d an acre on arable land and nothing on the marshes. After the Act, the tithe was assessed at 7/- per acre on the arable and 3/6d per acre on the marshes ("a fine plum for the parsons"). [25] The Commutation Act did, however, place the assessment of tithes on a more rational basis and helped to end the wrangling between incumbents and farmers. The decline of the "tithe question" and the growing awareness among the clergy that the Gospel of Christ involved social concern, [26] led to a gradual change in the attitude

of the Church to the labourers' movements. During the agricultural workers' strike in north Essex in 1914, support for the men was given by the Rev. E.G. Maxted, Vicar of Tilty and a well-known socialist. The Rev. Hugh Fleming of Ashdon, one of the parishes involved, attempted to effect a reconciliation between the farmers and their men.[27] The newly appointed Bishop of Chelmsford arranged a meeting between the two sides but the farmers refused to attend, insisting that only individual agreements between masters and employers were agreeable.[28] Although the attempts at reconciliation failed, the attitude of the clergy was a considerable advance on that of Sir Henry Bate Dudley in 1800.

One feature of the Tendring Hundred between 1801 and 1851 was the remarkable growth in chapel-building. Neither the Wesleyans nor the Primitive Methodists gained much ground in Essex except in the north-eastern corner of the county. Although there may have been no direct connection between methodism and the riots in the Tendring Hundred, both were forms of protest and presupposed some independence among the labourers. Methodism offered them the practical experience of administration in the running of the chapel. Nothing is known about the leaders of the Tendring Agricultural Labourers' Union in 1836 but it may not have been a coincidence that the formation of the first organised agricultural workers' union in Essex was in an area where methodism had spread so rapidly.

The extent of Methodist influence in the hundred was seen in the 1851 census.[29]

Church	Poor Law or Registration Districts with Population			
	Lexden	Billericay	Chelmsford	Tendring
	(21,666)	(13,787)	(32,272)	(27,710)
Anglican	34	18	34	31
Wesleyan	8	3	3	20
Primitive Methodist	3	-	-	5
Wesleyan Reformers	-	-	-	-

In 1794 the Harwich circuit (later to be called the Manningtree circuit) was formed and in the same year preachers were reported in Great Clacton. A small society was formed but it lapsed until it was restarted in 1822. A chapel was opened in 1824. The congregations were large and some of the seats were occupied "by the most respectable inhabitants of the place". In 1836 there were 43 members but in 1843 the number had fallen to 30, all of whom were described as "believers". At Little Clacton in 1829 services were held fortnightly on Sundays at 10 o'clock and the membership totalled ten out of a population of 494. Until the chapel was built in 1851, meetings were held in a thatched cottage, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. James Cole. In 1838 it was recorded that services were regularly held "in a dwelling-place occupied by Cole". It seems likely that these meetings were being held several years before 1838 and caused some anxiety to the

Church authorities, for two months after the riots in Clacton, the following resolution was adopted "Whereas certain parish clerks have been guilty of schism in attending Conventicles and encouraging, either directly or indirectly, others to do the same, We, the Ministers, Churchwardens and Parishoners determine to elect no person to that office who shall not promise previously to such election to resign the said office as soon as he should have violated one or both of the following conditions and promises.

"I.....promise faithfully that if I shall by my presence or otherwise encourage the Conventicle and thus become guilty of schism to the prejudice of the Church of England, I will immediately resign the office of parish clerk to which I am now about to be elected".

Little Clacton — John L. Kirby (Vicar)

February 1831 — Abraham Fisher, Thomas Hicks — Churchwardens

The most amusing part of this document is the end, because Abraham Fisher later became a staunch Methodist! [30]

One view put forward by modern historians is that after 1830, the poor turned either to terrorism or religion in response to defeat. [31] In Essex, however, religious revivalism was greater between 1821 and 1830 than the period 1831-1840.

Date	New meeting-houses (Wesleyans, Primitives and other Arminian Methodists) [32]	
	Temporary	Permanent
1801-1810	2	-
1811-1820	2	2
1821-1830	37	11
1831-1840	18	2
1841-1850	4	6

Apart from the congregations established in Great and Little Clacton , meetings were also held in Kirby (after 1826) and Ramsey (after 1822). [33] In both of these parishes machine-breaking occurred in 1830. It is possible that some of the rioters may have been methodists but no detailed records survive to provide evidence, although some of the names of prominent methodists have been recorded. These include James Cole, whose brother William was transported for machine-breaking, Thomas Linnett, and a Sunday School superintendant, Stephen Eade. Eade and Linnett may have been the rioters of the same name who received sentences of seven years transportation and one year's imprisonment respectively for breaking threshing machines.

Chapter X AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' UNIONS AND RURAL CHARTISM

(a) The Tendring Agricultural Labourers' Union.

The years between 1830 and 1872 form a twilight period when the labourers, thwarted in their attempts at direct action but not in a position to form a national union, reverted to incendiarism as the chief form of social protest. There is, however, evidence of at least one local agricultural workers' union during the 1830's. The Tendring Agricultural Labourers' Union was formed in 1836 with its headquarters in Thorpe-le-Soken, a parish which had been on the fringe of the riots in 1830. [1] The Union had an entrance fee of two shillings and sixpence and a monthly subscription of a shilling. Members were forbidden to work for less than two shillings a day or twelve shillings a week with beer. If beer was not given, the farmer had to pay an extra threepence a day or eighteen pence a week. The wages were to rise and fall according to the price of flour. One shilling a day was to be paid out of union funds to labourers who were sacked for refusing to accept lower wages than those agreed by the union. No member was to work a threshing machine or seek employment on a farm where a machine was used. Members were not to work for any master who employed non-union labour unless the men had been employed before April (1836) in which case members were to use their discretion. [2]

The union quickly received unwelcome publicity when five labourers, said to be members, appeared at the Summer Assizes charged with conspiring together to raise wages and assaulting William Smith at Little Bromley. They were found not guilty of the first offence but convicted on very scanty evidence of the second. Smith had left Grundisburgh (Suffolk) to come to work for Mr. Richardson of Little Bromley. He agreed to procure two Suffolk men for Mr. Nunn, another farmer. The prisoners were each given three weeks in gaol. In evidence, it was revealed that union membership was 1,200. [3]

The union soon ran into opposition from farmers and local newspapers, especially the Essex Standard and the Colchester and Chelmsford Gazette. One farmer said that he would rather let his crops rot on the ground than give way to the labourers' demands. [4] Another source of opposition was the Established Church. The Rev. Robert Eden, curate of Peldon, castigated the union as "a wrong and unchristian alliance", [5] and the Rev. G. Tufnell wrote a pamphlet exposing the weakness of the combination. [6] He claimed that the farmers, faced with intimidation by the men, would immediately discharge all union members. He calculated that if all members claimed their right to a shilling a day while out of work, the union funds totalling £175 would be drained in three and a half days. Within a week the workers would be forced to seek re-employment with their masters but at lower rates because some of the harvest would already have been

gathered.

It is not clear what happened to the union. Attempts were made to establish a similar combination in the Winstree Hundred but by the end of July, the union in the Tendring Hundred was breaking up. Members were seeking work with their old employers, convinced that union funds were insufficient to support them if they were dismissed. [7]

(b) Rural Chartism in Essex.

The failure of the G.N.C.T.U., the harshness of the New Poor Law and continued social distress caused the working-class to seek amelioration in a new form of protest: chartism. In the index to Hovell's work [8] on the movement, Essex is mentioned only once. Although Essex Chartism was less spectacular than chartism in the North and Midlands, it was typical of the movement in rural areas. The leaders were usually shopkeepers and (later) silk weavers and the methods they used were non-violent. While their colleagues in the north were arming themselves with pikes and muskets, the Essex Chartists were listening to lectures on astronomy.

An interesting though exaggerated story about Essex Chartism concerned five of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. After their return to England, three were settled at Greensted and two at High Laver.[9] Shortly afterwards, the Essex Standard announced that in the Ongar area, labourers were openly insulting their masters. The

paper had little doubt as to the origin of this "insubordination" and blamed the pardoned Dorchester labourers.[10] The report on the conduct of the agricultural workers was strongly contested by the Rector of High Laver, who described the men as "honest, industrious, peaceable and well-disposed".[11] According to the Morning Post, a chartist association had been established in Greenstead and by "persuasion and terror" the labourers had been forced to join and pay a weekly subscription. The beershops were said to be more frequented and noisier. Chartist newspapers were circulated in the district. Meetings were originally held in the farmhouse at Greenstead, usually during the time of Divine Service but because the house was too small, the Chartists assembled in adjoining fields. At these meetings delegates from Waltham Abbey, Epping, Harlow and Hatfield Broad Oak were present as well as orators from London. At one of these meetings "the project of a general rising was discussed and entertained". Because of the unsettled state of the district, farmers employed labourers during the harvest on different terms so that in case of desertion, the men were liable to summary punishment.[12]

Determined efforts were made by the chartists to enlist the support of the agricultural labourers, especially in the south of the county. These efforts were moderately successful at Rawreth, Rayleigh and Great Baddow.[13] In July 1836 there was a meeting at Rawreth to form a working men's Association, the first of its kind among farm labourers and the first to petition against the

"infernal poor law in Essex". [14] One of the speakers, Thomas Bedlow, attacked the corrupt House of Commons, the aristocracy, the poor law and the clergy (especially the bishops). In the Chelmsford theatre 2,000 attended a chartist meeting. "Greasy smock frocks were lounging in aristocratic boxes and hob nailed shoes rested on stools intended for satin slippers, while women and children filled up crevices and corners. Labourers from the surrounding districts were among those who failed to obtain admittance". [15] A year later there was a meeting on Galleywood Common on 18th June 1839 at which 200-300 operatives and agricultural labourers attended. [16]

The first stage of Essex chartism ended in 1839, after a plan for a harvest strike in south-west Essex had failed and the Newport rising had frightened the moderate leaders. Although chartism obtained a footing in Witham, Brightlingsea, Maldon, Sible Hedingham, Wivenhoe and Manningtree in 1842, references to its influence among the agricultural labourers are very rare after that date. [17] Although the conditions which bred chartism, especially low wages and hatred of the New Poor Law, were present in Essex, the bulk of the agricultural workers were untouched by the movement.

(c) <u>The Revival of Incendiarism.</u>

The failure of chartism to attract much support from the agricultural labourers confirmed the opinion that rural workers had "a much keener appetite for bread than for the franchise". [18]

Discontent continued to be expressed by fire-raising, especially during the winter of 1843-44 when a wave of incendiarism swept through East Anglia and continued without abatement until the early summer. The increase in cases of arson can be traced in the criminal offenders tables. [19]

Cases of Arson heard in Higher Courts (Essex).		Acquittals
1840	2	1
1841	-	-
1842	3	2
1843	2	1
1844	21	9
1845	9	5

In 1844 all but one of those convicted of arson were sentenced to transportation for varying terms.

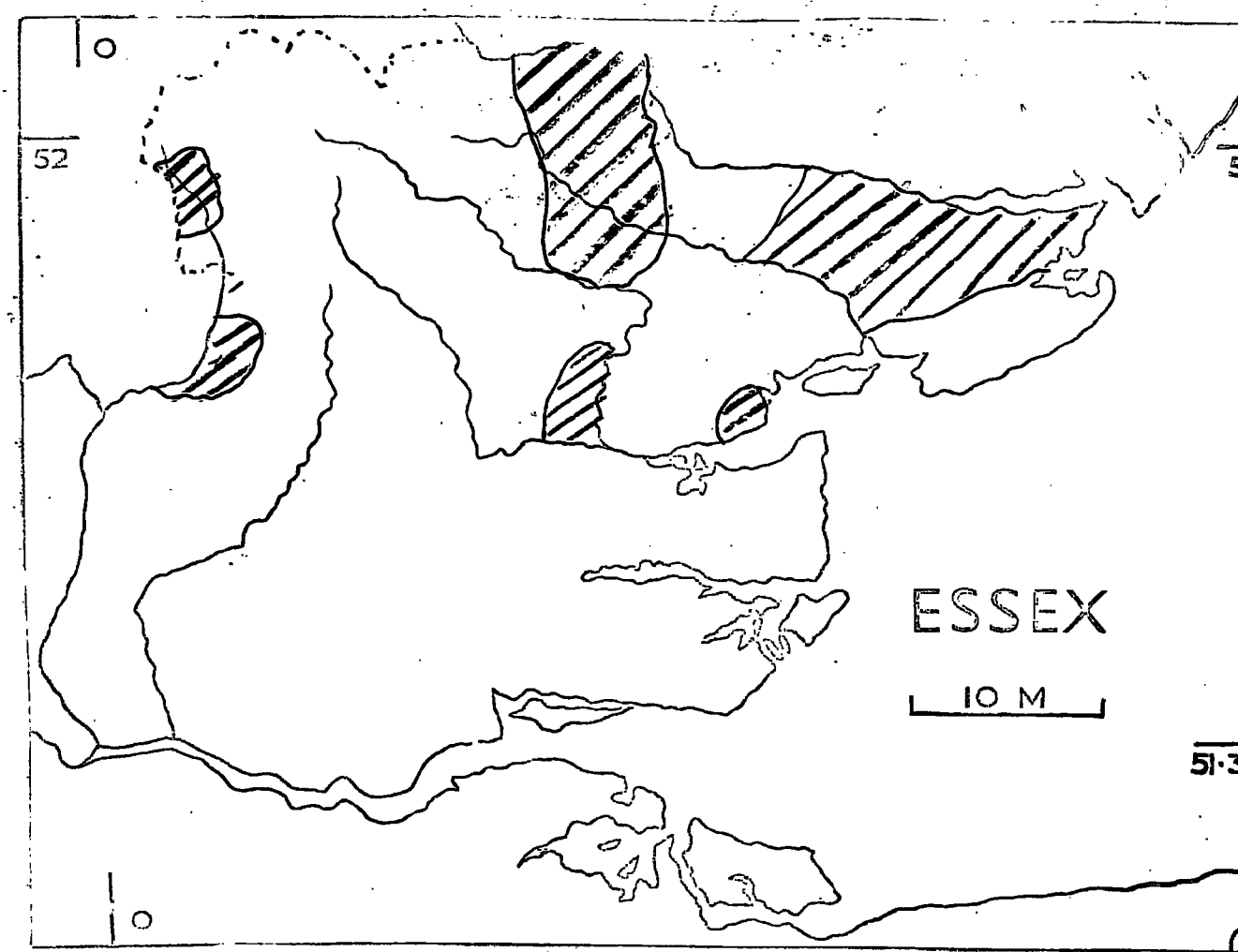
Many of the areas which had been affected by disturbances in 1816-1819 and 1829-31 suffered once again from the work of "diabolical incendiaries". There was "great alarm" among the farmers to the north of Bishops Stortford as a number of threatening letters were received, followed by malicious fires. [20] Further east there were nine cases of arson in ten weeks in the Braintree area. [21] Another district affected was the north-east of Essex, between Colchester and the Suffolk border. From August 1842 to April 1843 there were seven fires in West Bergholt and two in the adjoining parish of Little Horkesley. [22] In 1844

it was nearby Ardleigh where the disturbances were most serious; during one night no less than three fires were seen burning within two miles of each other. According to the Suffolk Chronicle, some local labourers tried to obstruct the firemen but the farmers and others later praised the men for their assistance.[23]

In Manningtree and Tendring, meetings were held to offer rewards for evidence leading to the apprehension of the incendiaries.

Fantastic rumours were circulated that the fires were the work of the Anti-Corn Law League or were started by foreign agents! Although the Essex Standard ridiculed the notion that the disturbances signified distress, the Times reporter noted that the fires had occurred in the Halstead, Thaxted and Braintree areas, where wages were the lowest in the county.[24] Cases of poaching, usually a good indicator of social conditions, greatly increased. No fewer than eleven persons appeared at the Assizes and Quarter Sessions of 1844 charged with being out at night armed with the intention of taking game; in 1843 and 1845 there were only two.[25]

Another explanation of the discontent was the exceptionally dry summer of 1843; in the following winter there was a great deal of surplus labour because of the small amount of wheat to be threshed. In some areas the barn labour was reduced by half.[26] Young boys were probably the first to be laid off and this may explain the youthfulness of some of the defendants appearing at the Assizes. William Saxby and Henry Smith, both aged eight,



Chief areas affected by incendiarism

(1843-4)

John Hardy, eleven and Nathaniel Barton, twelve, were all sentenced to terms of transportation in the summer of 1844.[27] Hardy was said to have fired his master's stacks at Steeple Bumpstead after he had been beaten by him. Another boy, aged nine, set a barn alight at Ramsey out of "mere wantoness".[28]

The reappearance of threshing machines aggravated an already tense situation. The three farmers at Ardleigh were using machines when fires occurred on their premises[29] and threshing tackle was among the equipment destroyed by a blaze at Wethersfield.[30] Richard Newman of Hornchurch received a note threatening to burn down his house because he had used a machine.[31] A similar note sent by William Taylor of Aldham to his employer, James Miles, revealed another grievance. Having threatened Mr. Miles that "we will burn you down clean to the ground....." if he used his "mesheen" again, Taylor urged his employer to discharge employees from other parishes and engage men from his own village, some of whom were out of work. No harm would come to Miles if he employed his "own" and threshed his corn with flails. If he failed to take heed to the warning, he was promised a "light". The note ended, "There is no plees (police?) that we care fore because we are so strong a company..."[32]

With the increase in unemployment, Poor Law officials were the natural objects of hatred. A number of guardians were among those

whose stacks or premises were destroyed by fire. A blaze was started at Stisted where there was considerable discontent because of low wages and limited employment. Nineteen paupers, including fourteen able-bodied labourers, were sent to the Braintree Union workhouse. After marching into Braintree in procession, they paraded in the streets for several hours displaying their orders for admission before entering the workhouse. [33] Once again the clergy were not exempt from attacks on their property. In May 1844 a fire broke out on the premises of the Rev. A. Fletcher of Braintree. [34] On 10th March nineteen cottages and a barn were destroyed by a blaze on the property of the Rev. B. Scale; the incumbent of Braintree and a prominent magistrate. Within an hour three-quarters of an acre of ground was alight and damage worth £1,500 was done. [35] There was also a fire at Glebe Farm, Great Easton, the property of the trustees of the Rector, the Rev. Paul Saumarez. [36]

There were several reports of obstructive behaviour by the labourers during the fires. Two of Mr. Lambert's employees at West Bergholt impeded a messenger sent to call the fire engine in Colchester. As a result of the delay, the damage to the farm was much greater than was expected; a barn, two stables and a large cow-house were destroyed. [37] A disorderly mob hindered firemen extinguishing a blaze at Parsonage Farm, Manuden on 10th December 1843. [38] In the same month a hose was cut when a fire was being tackled at High Roothing (or Roding). [39]

Although 1843-4 was an exceptional period for fire-raising, there was little abatement in the incidents of incendiarism after that date. [40]

Date	Commitments for Arson.
1844	21
1845	9
1846	5
1847	7
1848	9
1849	17
1850	8

Rude and Hobsbawm suggest that social incendiarism lasted until the 1860's [41] but it appears that in Essex it lingered until the second decade of the twentieth century. Mr. Justice Bray commented at the Essex Lent Assizes 1914 that there were the "usual cases of arson" to be heard and that incendiarism remained a common offence. [42] After 1860 fires were normally blamed on tramps and pedlars but in 1914 there occurred a classic example of incendiarism during a dispute between farmers and their men. Labourers in Helions Bumpstead, Steeple Bumpstead, Ashdon and Ridgewell went on strike for higher wages and the recognition of their union. After the dispute had dragged on for nearly five months, the patience of the men was at an end. Five new stacks, completed with the help of outside labour, were fired in Birdbrook and Steeple Bumpstead. [43]

CONCLUSION

Although the focal point of this dissertation is the "revolt" of 1830 it is essential to place the events of that year in their true perspective. Rioting was not confined to the first half of the nineteenth century; in 1772, riots affected at least sixteen parishes, only three fewer than 1830. Yet the reasons for the tension changed during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Unemployment and low wages and not the high price of bread were the main grievances in 1830. A parallel can be seen in French history; in 1789 and 1794 the urban mobs called for a maximum on prices; by 1848 the demand was for work. [1] The decline in local industries, the agricultural depression and the increase in population led to a pool of surplus labour. The catalysts that caused disturbances were often the use of threshing machines and long periods of inclement weather that resulted in unemployment, high prices or both.

No theory about the causes of the population increase will fit every part of the British Isles. In Essex the increase was mainly the result of a fall in the death rate, probably brought about by medical improvements (especially vaccination and inoculation) and the availability of substitute food when the price of wheat was high. The age at which couples married

gradually decreased during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and this was probably the reason for the gradual increase in the birth rate.

Unemployment was seldom a difficulty near London except in the Leyton area, where there was an "Irish problem" after 1828. Even in the most riotous parish in 1830, Great Clacton, the chief hardship was the lack of winter work. It was in the villages near the Suffolk and Hertfordshire borders that there was surplus labour throughout the year; Ridgewell and Clavering for example, contained men who had to be supported for at least ten months of the year.

According to the Hammonds, "the labourers were more wretched in 1830 than they had been in 1795...." [2] Unfortunately the labourers of the eighteenth century did not come under the scrutiny of a Royal Commission as their colleagues did in 1832-4. Conditions varied in different parts of the county; in 1832, the wages of labourers in the south of Essex were sometimes twice as much as those in the north. It is impossible to measure the benefits that percolated down to the labourers from the industrial expansion in other parts of England yet it seems unlikely that the standard of living changed markedly between 1790 and 1850. During the eighteenth century, the proportion of the labourer's wage devoted to the purchase of food increased and this trend continued until 1813. After this date, conditions may have improved for the fully employed labourer whose wages fell only slightly compared with the dramatic fall in

wheat prices. The amount of meat consumed may have fallen by 1830, although pork, bacon and "meat" were included in the diets of two-thirds of the parishes reporting in 1834.[3] Set against these signs of a possible deterioration in standards are the improved distribution of produce and the widespread use of the potato as a substitute for, or in addition to, bread. Cottages continued to be poor in many parishes and overcrowding added to the difficulties. Nevertheless, an encouraging sign was the increase in the number of brick cottages during the period under review. The labourer also benefited from the increasing care shown by the parish for the health of the villagers, especially in the provision of vaccination and inoculation. Only one definite conclusion can be reached regarding the labourers' position; that the riotous areas between 1800 and 1850 were those where wages were the lowest, the diet the poorest, and the housing the worst in the county.

The labouring classes, whether "better off" or not, were subject to pressures that they could not control and their well-being fluctuated from year to year. Their insecurity was increased by the altered method of employment and the decline in "living in" which widened the divisions within rural society. Added to the purely agrarian discontent was the political turmoil of the 1820's and 1830's. The effect of this on the labourers cannot be assessed but it may have been greater than has been imagined.

The "degredation" resulting from the use of the "Speenhamland" system of poor relief has probably been exaggerated. During the

periods of high prices, outdoor relief was given to the able-bodied but only occasionally and was discontinued when conditions improved. The increase in poor law expenditure was only partly the result of allowances. The supplementing of wages was by no means universal and was largely restricted to the period 1815-1825. The more usual method of relief, the family allowance, was at least an attempt to give help where it was most needed and enabled farmers to give employment to more labourers. It is difficult to see what other measures would have been successful at a time when England was experiencing such unprecendented unemployment. Although the allowances may have helped the decrease in the death rate, the critics' fear that the birth rate would rise rapidly was unfounded.

In December 1830 the rioting which affected most counties in South-East England hit Essex. Little is known of the background of many of the rioters but only three can be identified as being rural craftsmen and not agricultural labourers. As regards character, the machine-breakers formed a cross-section of village life. Three had previous criminal records but for most machine-breaking was their only offence. Many appear to have been in full employment, three at least having been with one master for ten years or more. Apart from five machine-breakers who had appalling convict records in Tasmania, the majority behaved well during their sentence. Only one returned to his native parish

(and apparently played an important part in the Methodist Church of the area).

There is no difficulty in finding characteristics common to the riotous areas in 1830. All were at least thirty miles or more from London. All were wheat producing regions and had a high rate of unemployment. The riotous districts were, with one exception, near the boundaries of Essex and were much influenced by disturbances in neighbouring counties. A more complicated problem concerns why individual parishes were disturbed or remained tranquil. Why, for example, did Langley escape the rioting that affected neighbouring Arkesden? Unfortunately there are no unemployment figures or wage rates for individual parishes [4] in 1830, nor do the ratios of labourers to farmers employing workers show any distinct trend. There is no evidence that the ratios were generally higher in riotous parishes than in others. [5]

Parish	Ratio of employing farmers to labourers	Ratio for Hundred
Sheering	1 to 10.4	1 to 7.2
Clavering	1 to 10.0	1 to 9.3
Mile End	1 to 11.6	1 to 7.4
Ridgewell	1 to 13.4	1 to 9.4
Finchingfield	1 to 10.0	
Birdbrook	1 to 8.3	
Steeple Bumpstead	1 to 7.4	
Arkesden	1 to 6.6	1 to 9.4
Elmdon	1 to 8.7	
Henham	1 to 10.8	
Peldon	1 to 7.7	1 to 8.0

Six of the eleven riotous parishes had ratios higher than the average for their Hundred. In the Tendring Hundred only three out of the seven riotous parishes appeared to have exceeded the average.

Parish	Ratio	Ratio for Hundred
Great Clacton	1 to 8.6	
Little Clacton	1 to 5.3	
Great Holland	1 to 6.7	
Kirby	1 to 16.5	
Ramsey	1 to 5.3	1 to 7.6
Tendring	1 to 4.8	
Walton-le-Soken	1 to 10.2	

In some parishes there would appear to have been a hard core of "militants" among the labourers, that resulted in the villages being more riot-prone than others. Essex labourers had not experienced the savage punishments meted out to their colleagues in other counties after the 1816 disturbances; the incidents in Essex were less serious than elsewhere in East Anglia, many of the rioters and incendiaries were never apprehended and the few machine-breakers that were caught were treated comparatively leniently. Consequently a number of Essex parishes that featured in the 1816 troubles were "riotous" in 1830.[6]

Henham.	Fire 1816; wage riot 1830.
Finchingfield	Destruction of machinery 1816; fire 1829; wage riot 1830.
Ramsey	Fire 1816; fire and destruction of a threshing machine 1830 (also fire in 1844).
Mile End, Colchester	Destruction of a threshing machine 1816; wage riot 1830.

It is surprising, therefore, that the most troubled parish in Essex in the period 1800-1850, Sible Hedingham, escaped serious disturbances in 1830. In 1816 a threshing machine was broken and six years later there was a case of incendiarism. The only incident in 1830 concerned a man committed to the House of Correction for threatening that "Hedingham" would soon be reduced to ashes.[7] Two poor law riots occurred in 1834 and 1836; in the latter year, incendiaries struck at the property of the Chairman of the Board of Guardians. Eight years later tension again increased after a case of arson. Sible Hedingham was also affected by chartism after 1842. The militancy of the workers was expressed again during the "revolt of the field" in 1873-4.

Sible Hedingham and Finchingfield were both large villages but the riotous villages in 1830 varied greatly in size. It has been suggested that the number of shoemakers, often a radical element in the community, was sometimes greater in riotous parishes than in non-riotous villages.[8] There is no evidence of this in Essex. There was only one shoemaker in Sible Hedingham in 1833,

but four in neighbouring Castle Hedingham, a more tranquil parish, Great Oakley with five shoemakers remained quiet while nearby Walton-le-Soken (with three) experienced machine-breaking. [9]

Individual parishes, therefore, had their own reasons for rioting. In Great Clacton, Great Holland, Kirby-le-Soken, Little Clacton and Walton-le-Soken the main targets for the rioters' attention were the threshing machines. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine that the machines had suddenly been introduced in 1830 as threshing tackle had been used in the Tendring Hundred since the first decade of the century. It is possible that the destruction of machinery was part of a plan to put pressure on farmers to increase wages but demands for more pay appear to have been subsidiary to the main campaign of machine-breaking. Unemployment was probably less in December 1830 than in February and March of the same year but after a series of harsh winters, there was a fear that yet another period of distress was about to begin. Although the riots were not spontaneous, the Clacton area was particularly receptive to the news of disturbances in Suffolk and Norfolk. The labourers retained a comparative independence, an independence that showed itself in the strength of Methodism and, in a different manner, in successful smuggling exploits. In the north-western corner of the county there may have been some connection between enclosures and the riots. In the same area the provision of allotments was given as a reason for parishes remaining tranquil.

Despite the centres of militancy, most of the disturbances in Essex between 1800 and 1850 were extensions of troubles in other counties. Although the first threshing machine to be broken in East Anglia during the 1816 riots was at Mile End, Colchester, machine-breaking had occurred in Suffolk during the previous year. The incident involving a machine at Weeley in 1822 was only a minor part of a more serious conflagration in Suffolk and Norfolk. In 1830 the Essex labourers were among the last to rise and the disturbances were inspired by similar incidents in East Anglia. The outbreak of fire-raising in 1843-4 was part of the wave of incendiarism that affected the counties to the north of Essex. The disturbances lacked the spontaneity seen in Kent and Norfolk and were generally less serious, the mitigating factor being the proximity of London.

The indifference of the farmers to the destruction of their machines was a strange feature of the 1830 revolt. A similar attitude was adopted in 1816 and 1822. According to witnesses, one of the Lawford machine-breakers of 1816 said "Goodbye, we have had some beer for doing it (i.e. breaking the machine)". [11] The owner of the machine, Mr. Lugar, and the Rev. William Wood, who was using it on his premises, later expressed their anger that action had been taken against four of those involved and asked that they should be acquitted. [12] John Ribbans, a farmer at Weeley, told a group of rioters in 1822 that he "did not much care" if he gave up using a machine. [13] In 1830 even the Lord

Lieutenant of Essex expressed the wish that threshing machines should be dispensed with. [14]

The labourers in the Clacton area "determined on remedying one part of the evil by the destruction of the threshing machines. This to a considerable extent was effected". [15] The 1830 riots undoubtedly inhibited the use of threshing machines for a number of years but this should not be overestimated. By 1843-4 machines were being used to an extent that worried the labourers. Although the men were not so imprudent as to take direct action against them, the number of fires on premises where machinery was used and the threatening notes that cited threshing tackle as a grievance revealed growing discontent.

Another source of tension expressed more often after 1830 was the use of "Yankees" instead of labourers in the parish. A number of fires, threatening letters, a poor law riot and an assault on a "Suffolker" resulted from their employment.

According to one modern authority, the poor "opposed whole-heartedly" the measures of 1834. [16] There were, of course, disturbances involving the old Poor Law, but they normally resulted from the unpopularity of individual officials or a cut in relief. After 1834 the protests were aimed more at the "system". The exact extent of opposition to the New Poor Law is difficult to assess except where there is a definite connection between the disturbances and the new measures. [17] The property of some of the Guardians was involved in malicious fires but the motives

for the attacks are uncertain. In many areas Guardians were usually farmers [18] and sometimes were magistrates. On 10th October 1837 a fire caused £2,600 worth of damage at the farm of George de Horne Vaizey a Guardian. Vaizey expressed his opinion that the Poor Law had nothing to do with the fires in the Halstead area. [19] Abraham Rayner, a silk weaver, tried for the fire at Vaizey's farm was reported to have said "that d....d b.....r tried to transport me and my uncle Jack for taking a piece of sear wood". [20] So few of the culprits of the Halstead Union fires in 1836-7 were caught that to blame the Poor Law would be unjustified.

The New Poor Law was responsible for the formation of the Tendring Agricultural Labourers Union in 1836. This combination was a testimony of the continued independence and resilience of the Tendring workers despite the savage punishments of 1830. [21] With such limited funds at its disposal, this plucky venture was bound to fail. Rural chartism fared little better; its main influence among the agricultural labourers was in the southern part of the county and the workers in the more distressed northern areas were largely untouched by its ideas.

Incendiarism was an established method of social protest by 1800 and remained endemic during the first half of the nineteenth century. [22] The exact relationship between fire-raising and social distress cannot be accurately defined as some cases of arson were the result of personal grievances. There were, however, many incendiary fires in 1816-19 and 1843-4 that were the consequence

of farmers using threshing machines. In 1830-1 incendiarism was more common in the south of the county away from the riotous areas.[23] The number of fires increased after 1840 and arson continued to be a common offence until 1914.

Although threatening letters usually contained a warning about "a light" if certain demands were not met, there were only a few cases where there was a direct link between a letter and a fire.[24] Newspapers occasionally printed accounts of blazes in areas where threatening notes had been circulated but the authors of the letters often used bluff to force the farmers to make concessions.[25]

The hostility of the clergy to the labourers' movements was a depressing feature of the period. Consequently ministers were the frequent recipients of "lights" and threatening letters. There were three reasons for the labourers' hatred; some clergy owned land and shared in the general unpopularity of the farmers after 1815. Others, like Bate Dudley and George Leapingwell were magistrates and won reputations for harshness rather than compassion. The third reason, the tithe question, united the small farmers and the labourers in their opposition to the clergy.[26] The greatest discontent was caused in parishes where the tithe was taken in kind. Although protests against tithes were fewer than in Norfolk, anger was expressed in the Tendring Hundred, Dedham and Havering. After 1830 the clergy continued to rail against workers' movements.[27] Not until the end of the century did their attitude change from opposition to conciliation.

This dissertation has, of necessity, been partly a chronicle of disturbances since 1700. There was no lack of distress in Essex but to imagine that a ceaseless civil war was waged in the countryside would be incorrect. Except in years of acute discontent,[28] the only indication of rural unrest was the occasional newspaper report of an incendiary fire. Although the number of Essex machine-breakers transported after the 1830 "revolt" exceeded those from counties often associated with the riots[29] serious disturbances were confined to a small area. It is, therefore, possible to agree with Mr. N. Rowley that "Essex was a comparatively law abiding county during periods of social tension over the past two centuries".[30]

Appendix A.

Persons Executed for Arson 1767-1848

(E.R.O. D/DTU235,235A)

Date	Name	Prosecutor	Where Committed
22nd August 1775	Thomas Clampin	Mr. Downes	Lamarsh [1]
27th March 1829	James Cook	William Green	Witham
24th December 1830	James Ewen	John Sach	Rayleigh
9th August 1831	William Jennings	Robert Cranmer [2]	Writtle
27th May 1835	James Pasfield	Thomas Davey	Toppesfield
7th August 1835(?)	George Canfield	-	-

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[1] Executed for setting fire to a barn on the evening of 1st January 1774 (Chelmsford Chronicle 31st March 1775)

[2] "Craneis" or "Cranies".

Appendix B.

Food that could be bought with Labourer's Wages

(R.C. on Poor Laws 1834, Appendix B. Qu.14)

Parish	1 Family could live on wages	2 Family could not live	3 Bread	4 Flour	5 Cheese	6 Vegetables	7 Potatoes	8 Meat	9 Pork	10 Bacon	11 Butter	12 Sugar	13 Beer	14 Tea	15 Milk
Gt. Baddow			X		X	X				X					
Little Bardfield		X													
Barking	X														
Bocking			X				X								
Braintree			X		X	X	X	X			X		X	X	
Bulmer				X			X		X						
Clavering		X													
Gt. Coggeshall	X														
Epping			X		X			X							
Fryerning			X		X					X			X	X	
West Ham								X							
Harlow			X		X		X			X					X
Castle Hedingham			X												
Sible Hedingham			X		X										
Ingatestone			X		X			X	X						
Kelvedon		X													
Lawford			X				X		X						
Loughton			X		X		X	X		X	X	X		X	

Appendix B (Contd.)

Parish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Gt. Maplestead			X												
Prittlewell							X		X						
Rochford			X		X		X	X			X		X	X	X
Romford			X				X						X		
Stansted Mountfichet			X				X								
Springfield			X		X			X							
Stebbing			X				X								
Thaxted			X		X		X		X	X					X
Thorpe-le-Soken			X											X	
Gt. Tey		X													
Gt. Waltham			X		X			X	X		X	X		X	
Witham			X			X		X					X		
Totals: 30	2	1	21	1	12	3	12	9	6	5	4	2	5	6	3

Parishes

Family can live on wages

They could not live without an allowance

Bread

Flour

Cheese

Vegetables

Potatoes

Meat

Pork

Bacon

Butter

Sugar

Beer

Tea

Milk

Appendix C.

Occupation of Those Convicted

Under the Game Laws.

(January 1819 - Easter 1820)

E.R.O. Q/CR9/3

31	Labourers
5	Farmers
4	Gentlemen
1	Yeoman
1	Miller
1	Baker
1	Carrier
1	Butcher
1	Higler

Appendix D.

Summary Convictions under Game Laws 1814-20

(Essex) (E.R.O. Q/CR9/3).

Offence	1814	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820
Keeping and using snares guns, dogs etc. to destroy game.	14	30	41	18	15	24	20
Unlawfully killing game and having in possession.	1	2	2	1	1	1	6
Buying game.							1
Taking away pheasants' eggs.				2			
Unlawfully killing and carrying away deer in and from Waltham Forest and having deer in possession.	2	1	7	5	7	7	10

Appendix E.

Occupation of Special Constables in the Ongar Division 1830-1

(E.R.O. P/NM1)

Labourers	41	
Pensioners	22	
Serving Men	12	
Farmers	11	
Clergy	9	(including one Doctor of Divinity)
Shoemakers	4	
Bricklayers	3	
Gamekeepers	2	
Butchers	2	
Esquires	2	
Schoolmasters	2	
Viscount Chetwynd		
One "Gentleman"		
" Blacksmith		
" Tailor		
" Hairdresser		
" Ironmonger		
" Watchmaker		
" Surgeon		
" Assistant Surgeon		
" Solicitor		
" Pawnbroker		
" Apprentice		
" Wheelwright		
" Gardener		
" Grocer		
" Carpenter		
" Unidentified		

Appendix F.

Persons Tried at Essex Winter Assizes 1830 and Lent Quarter Sessions 1831

for "Swing" Offences

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Arson	James Ewen	Rayleigh	Death
Machine-breaking	Robert Cullender	Ramsey	7 years transportation
" "	John Hart	"	7 years transportation
" "	Thomas Ship	"	7 years transportation
" "	Samuel Sexton	"	12 months hard labour
" "	George Porter	"	12 months hard labour
" "	Abraham Neal	"	6 months hard labour
" "	William Mills	"	3 months hard labour
" "	Richard Rowland	"	3 months hard labour
" "	John Nevard	"	3 months hard labour
" "	James Grant	Walton-le-Soken	14 years transportation
" "	Thomas Grant	" "	14 years transportation
" "	George Dav(e)y	" "	14 years transportation
" "	John Grant	" "	7 years transportation
" "	Samuel Hayhoe	" "	7 years transportation
" "	John Ingram	" "	7 years transportation

(contd)

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Machine-breaking	William Jeffries	Walton-le-Soken	7 years transportation
" "	William Curtis	Little Clacton	7 years transportation
" "	William Cole	" "	7 years transportation
" "	John Pudney (or Putney)	" "	7 years transportation
" "	Charles Dunnett	Great Holland	7 years transportation
" "	Henry Baker	" "	7 years transportation
" "	John Webb	" "	7 years transportation
Rioting for higher wages	William Hardwick(e)	Mile End, Colchester	12 months hard labour
" "	Samuel Lilly	" "	3 months hard labour
" "	Edward Edwards	" "	6 months hard labour
" "	Thomas Holland	" "	9 months hard labour
" "	William Bugg	" "	6 months hard labour
" "	Edward Peachall	" "	6 months hard labour
" "	Samuel Nevard	" "	6 months hard labour
" "	Daniel Brown	" "	3 months hard labour

(contd)

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Rioting for higher wages	Thomas Farrar	Mile End, Colchester	3 months hard labour
" "	James Wright	" "	12 months hard labour
" "	Shadrach Graves	Sheering	6 months hard labour
" "	George Burls	"	6 months hard labour
" "	Daniel Thomas	"	6 months hard labour
" "	David Thomas	"	6 months hard labour
" "	John Witham	"	6 months hard labour
" "	Joseph Norris	"	6 months hard labour
" "	Richard Thomas	"	3 months hard labour
Quarter Sessions			
Sending a threatening letter	John Shepherd	Hawkwell	6 months hard labour
Breaking a mole plough	John Smith	Dunmow	Not Guilty
" " "	Daniel Ralfe	"	Not Guilty
" " "	Charles Paine	"	Not Guilty
" " "	John Porter	"	Not Guilty

(contd)

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Breaking a mole plough	William Fuller (all of High Easter)	Dunmow	Not Guilty
Rioting for higher wages	Samuel Shead	Finchingfield	15 months hard labour
" "	James Shead	"	12 months hard labour
" "	William Salmon	"	6 months hard labour
" "	William Martin	"	6 months hard labour
" "	William Shelford	"	6 months hard labour
" "	James Newman	"	6 months hard labour
" "	William Dawson	"	6 months hard labour
" "	George Bacon	Steeple Bumpstead	6 months hard labour
" "	William Randle	" "	6 months hard labour
" "	Samuel Levitt	" "	6 months hard labour
" "	Job Jeffery	Clavering	3 months hard labour
" "	Joseph Jeffery	"	3 months hard labour
" "	Robert Newland	"	6 months hard labour

(contd)

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Rioting for higher wages	George Matthews	Clavering	6 months hard labour
" "	William Durrant	Tendring	5 months hard labour and 1 month solitary confinement
Rioting for higher wages	James Wedlock	Arkesden	3 months hard labour
" "	Nathan Unwin	"	3 months hard labour
" "	Joseph Jeffery	"	3 months hard labour
" "	John Sanders	"	4 months hard labour
" "	Thomas Jeffery	"	3 months hard labour
" "	Joseph Parish	"	3 months hard labour
" "	James Hayden	"	6 months hard labour
" "	William Hammond	"	3 months hard labour
" "	George Jeffery	"	6 months hard labour
" "	Charles Hayden	"	3 months hard labour
" "	Thomas Thompson	Henham	4 months hard labour
" "	George Mead	"	3 months hard labour

(contd)

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Rioting for higher wages	John Fuller	Henham	3 months hard labour
" "	George Turner	"	2 months hard labour
" "	James Barker	"	3 months hard labour
" "	John Frost	"	3 months hard labour
" "	William Lappage	Peldon	12 months hard labour
" "	William Warner	"	15 months hard labour
" "	William Smith	"	6 months hard labour
" "	Joseph Gladwell	Great Clacton	18 months hard labour
" "	George Watling	" "	18 months hard labour
" "	Samuel Ablett	" "	18 months hard labour
" "	Stephen Eade	" "	1/- fine
" "	John Causten	" "	1/- fine
" "	James Cross	" "	1/- fine
" "	Thomas Newman	" "	1/- fine
" "	John Tillett	" "	Not Guilty
" "	Thomas Linnett	" "	3 months solitary confinement

(contd)

Charge	Name	Parish in which incident occurred	Sentence
Rioting for higher wages	William Bloomfield	Great Clacton	1/- fine
" "	John Phipps	Kirby-le-Soken	Not Guilty
Machine-breaking	Stephen Eade	Great Clacton	7 years transportation
" "	William Bloomfield	" "	7 years transportation
" "	James Cross	" "	7 years transportation
" "	John Causten	" "	9 months hard labour, 3 months solitary confinement
" "	John Mills	" "	3 months hard labour
" "	Thomas Newman	" "	9 months hard labour, 3 months solitary confinement
" "	Abraham Newman	" "	1 month hard labour, 2 months solitary confinement
" "	John Tillett (or Tillitt)	" "	Not Guilty
" "	Robert Keeble	Walton-le-Soken	7 years transportation
" "	Samuel Draper	" "	7 years transportation
" "	Robert Davey	" "	7 years transportation
" "	William Acres	" "	7 years transportation
" "	John Phipps	" "	7 years transportation
" "	Thomas Linnett	Little Clacton	12 months hard labour
" "	Daniel Bareham	" "	12 months hard labour
" "	Benjamin Hackshell	" "	12 months hard labour

Appendix G.

Labourers Transported after Riots in Essex 1830

(H.O. 11/8 pp 1,2,8.)

Name	Ship	Convict Settlement	Date
James Grant+	Eliza	Van Diemens Land	2nd February 1831
Thomas Grant+	"	" " "	" " "
George Davey+	"	" " "	" " "
John Hart	"	" " "	" " "
William Jeffries	"	" " "	" " "
Samuel Hayhoe	"	" " "	" " "
John Webb	"	" " "	" " "
Henry Baker	"	" " "	" " "
Robert Cullender	"	" " "	" " "
William Curtis	"	" " "	" " "
William Cole	"	" " "	" " "
John Pudney	"	" " "	" " "
John Grant	"	" " "	" " "
John Ingram	"	" " "	" " "
Charles Dunnett	"	" " "	" " "
Thomas Ship	"	" " "	" " "
Samuel Draper	Proteus	Van Diemens Land	12th April 1831
Robert Davey	"	" " "	"
William Acres	"	" " "	"
William Bloomfield	"	" " "	"
Stephen Eade	"	" " "	"
James Cross	"	" " "	"
Robert Keeble	"	" " "	"

Total 23 John Phipps of Walton was sentenced to seven years transportation but no record exists of the sentence being carried out.

\+ The Grants and Davey were transported for fourteen years; the remainder were for seven years.

Appendix H.

Numbers of persons committed for trial for Arson sending threatening letters, or killing or maiming cattle. (1834 - 1850)

Date	Arson	Sending threatening Letters	Killing or maiming cattle
1834	2	2	1
1835	6	2	-
1836	-	1	1
1837	6	-	1
1838	3	-	3
1839	1	-	5
1840	2	-	2
1841	-	1	3
1842	3	-	1
1843	2	-	2
1844	21	4	2
1845	9	1	1
1846	5	-	4
1847	7	-	1
1848	9	-	-
1849	17	-	1
1850	8	1	-

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1805	4s. 9d	
Average increase	1s. 3½d	A. Young op.cit., Vol.I p.36.

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44. Chelmsford Gazette, 4th October, 1822, quoted in A.F.J. Brown, English History From Essex Sources 1750-1900 (Chelmsford, 1952), p.42 - 3.

45. A.J. Peacock, op.cit., (London, 1965), p.25.

46. James Cook, executed for arson in 1829, set fire to the premises of his master, with whom he lived as a cow-boy.

Chapter VI

1. J.L. and B. Hammond, The Village Labourer, (Guild Books, 1948), Vol. II, p.106.

2. S.C. on the Labouring Poor,(Allotments of Land) (1843). Evidence of G.W. Gent, Qn 687 - 710.

3. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App. A.Pt.I p.227.

4. Ibid., App B. Qn 20 (Essex).

5. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App. A.Pt.I p.227.

6. Essex Mercury, 10th September, 1833.

7. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App.B. Qn 20.

8. G.W. Gent, op.cit., Qn 694 - 697.

9. S.C on the Poor Laws (1817). Evidence of John Vaizey, p.126.

10. P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England 1815 - 1875 (Manchester, 1961), p.23.

11. F.M. Eden, The State of the Poor, (London, 1928 edition), p.188.

12. Essex Mercury, 28th May, 1839.

13. See Quarter Sessions Order Books.

14. Sermon preached on Whit Monday (E.R.O.)

15. A. Young, General View of the Agriculture of Essex, (London, 1813), Vol.II p.397.

16. A.J. Peacock, Bread or Blood, (London, 1965), p.54.

17. E.R.O. Q/SBd. 6/1/7.

18. First Annual Report of the Savings Banks for the Town of Saffron Walden and Hundreds of Uttlesford, Clavering and Freshwell. (E.R.O.)

19. Letter in Chelmsford Chronicle, 2nd January, 1818.

20. Chelmsford Chronicle, 16th January, 1818.

21. H. Oliver Horne, A History of Savings Banks, (Oxford, 1947) p.96.

22. Chelmsford Chronicle, 10th April, 1818.

23. Ibid., 16th January and 10th April, 1818.

24. Ibid., 9th January, 1818.

25. R.C. on Poor Laws, (1836), Qn 15 p.183 (XXXI).

26. J.H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, (Cambridge, 1964 edition), Vol. I p.299-300.

27. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App. B. Qn.15, p.185 (XXXI)

28. E.R.O. D/P 21/18/31. After their move, neither family had been forced to apply for relief.

29. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App. A. Pt. I, p.231.

30. E.R.O. D/P 179/12/16.

31. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App. A. Pt. I, p.224 (XXVIII).

32. Colchester and Chelmsford Gazette, 2nd July, 1836.

33. Ibid., 3rd October, 1835.

34. G.E. Fussell, From Tolpuddle to T.U.C., (Slough, 1948). p.44.

35. E.R.O. G/Brm 2 p.134 (2nd April, 1838)

36. Ibid., p.231 (3rd September, 1838).

37. 1851 Census, Pt. 2 Vol. 2 Division VIII p.659.

38. Sixth Report of the Select Committee on Settlement (1847.) Evidence of R. Baker, Esq., Qn. 7065-6.

39. Essex Herald, 26th January, 1836.

40. R.C. on the Poor Laws, App B. Qn 46 p.179 (XXXIV).

41. Essex Standard, 6th December, 1844.

42. Ibid., 15th July, 1836.

43. Essex Herald, 20th July, 1847.

44. 1851 Census, (1852-3 LXXXVIII (i) Table 23 p. CIXXVI). According to A.F.J. Brown, "Rural population was mobile but it did not usually range far. The exception was the steady stream of villagers to London". Essex at Work 1700 - 1815, (Chelmsford, 1969), p.107.

45. V.C.H. of Essex, Vol.II p. 344 - 354.

46. For example, house collections, cheap food and soup.

47. E.G. Thomas, "The Parish Overseer, 1597 - 1834", (M.A. London, 1956).

48. E.J. Erith and H.E.P. Grieve, Essex Parish Records 1240-1894, (Chelmsford, 1950), p.25.

49. E.R.O. D/P 333/8/2. To qualify, the boys had to be under 12, the girls under 14.

50. "With making allowance of sixpence a week for such people as have a house and the same for such boys as go to work to be taken out". The scale of 9th December was for one

month. It was renewed on 3rd February, 1796, also for a month.

51. E.R.O. D/P 7/12/1, 17th December, 1795.

52. A.F.J. Brown, Essex at Work 1700-1815, (Chelmsford, 1969) p.151.

53. A. Young, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Essex (London, 1813), Vol. II p.414.

54. Brown, op.cit., p. 152 - 3.

55. Thomas, op.cit., p.133.

56. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834) (E.R.O.) p.22.

57. E.R.O. D/P 7/12/3.

58. For this attitude, see R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), Appendix A, pp 228,230.

59. S.C. on Petitions Relating to the Corn Laws, (1814). Evidence of James Buxton, p.13 - 19.

60. Essential reading are the articles by M. Blaug, "The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New", Journal of Economic History XXIII (1963) and "The Poor Law Report re-examined". Journal of Economic History XXIV (1964).

61. J.D. Marshall, The Old Poor Law, (London, 1968) p.40.

62. P. Deane and W.A. Cole, British Economic Growth 1688 - 1959, (Paperback edition, Cambridge, 1961) p.115.

63. H.C. 299 (1825) XIX p.376 - 7.

64. Great Henny ("in some cases"), Rochford ("very occasionally"), Stisted ("occasionally"), Walthamstow ("seldom").

65. E.R.O. D/P 179/12/8.

66. The only parish out of the nine selected which did not reduce its expenditure in 1834 was Finchingfield.

67. Kent and Essex Mercury, 3rd April, 1832.

68. Ibid., 3rd June, 1834.

69. Ibid., 28th January, 1834.

70. Ibid., 3rd June, 1834.

71. A.F.J. Brown, Essex at Work 1700 - 1815, (Chelmsford, 1969). p.153.

Chapter VII

1. Place Collection (B.M.), Vol. 21 p.37.

2. Chelmsford Chronicle, 8th February and 26th July, 1822.

3. E.R.O. D/D HW03.

4. E.R.O. D/P /179/10/1. Similar cases involved the Hinckford Hundred. The Parish of Steeple Bumpstead had to raise £9. 0s. 3d and £8.16s. 7d in 1824 and 1825 respectively as part of compensation for victims of fires at Pentlow and Pebmarsh (E.R.O. D/P 21/18/17).

5. Chelmsford Chronicle, 4th and 25th October, 1822.

6. E.R.O. Q/SBb 469/74.

7. E.R.O. Q/SBb 472/1965.

8. Chelmsford Chronicle, 30th January, 1829.

9. G.M. Young, Victorian England, Portrait of an Age, (London, 1961), p.27.

10. Chelmsford Chronicle, 17th September, 1830.

11. For example Leyton and Basildon. A fire in Great Chesterford on 7th December may have been connected with the wage riots in the north-west of the county. Another blaze at Brightlingsea was probably accidentally started (P.R.O. H.O. 52/7, 8th December, 1830).

12. J. Oxley Parker, The Oxley Parker Papers, (Colchester, 1964) p.82.

13. Kent and Essex Mercury, 13th January, 1829.

14. B. Drew, The Fire Office - being the History of the Essex and Suffolk Equitable Insurance Society Ltd., (London, 1952), p. 33 - 4.

15. P.R.O. H.O. 40/23 Fo.17. Letter from the Rev. T. Jee (7th January, 1829).
Ibid., Fo. 31. Letter from the Rev. Lewis Way, (17th January, 1829).

16. See Kent and Essex Mercury for February and March, 1829.

17. Ibid., 24th February, 1829.

18. Chelmsford Chronicle, 20th August, 1830.

19. Could be "cracketh" (E.R.O. Q/SR 1028).

20. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/19 (amended spelling).

21. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

22. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/19.

23. Kent and Essex Mercury, 8th February, 1831.

24. Ibid., 14th December, 1830.

25. According to Thomas Carr of Prittlewell "the crimes were in all cases committed by evil-disposed rather than distressed peasants". (R.C. on Poor Laws 1834, App B. Pt. 5 Qn.53 p.183).

26. H.O. 52/7. Letter from H.G. Ward (8th December, 1830).

27. H.O. 52/7. Letter from G. Rankin (27th November, 1830).

28. Ibid., Letter from magistrate (30th November, 1830).

29. Place Collection (B.M.) Vol. 21, p.112.

30. H.O. 52/7, Letter from John Bearblock, (11th December, 1830).

31. E. Gibbon Wakefield, Swing Unmasked or the cause of Rural Incendiarism, (London, 1831), p.38.

32. Kent and Essex Mercury, 4th January, 1831.

33. Place Collection, (B.M.) Vol.21, p.231-2.

34. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/79-85.

35. Kent and Essex Mercury, 13th January, 1829.

36. Essex Standard, 18th February, 1831.

37. Kent and Essex Mercury, 8th February, 1831.

38. Ibid., 28th December, 1830.
A plea for mercy was rejected (P.R.O. H.O. 13/57 p.40-1, 22nd December, 1830).

39. Farmer Sach was later paid £13. 6s. 0d for the expenses of the prosecution (E.R.O. Q/SO32 p.222).

40. E.R.O. D/DTu 235,235A.

41. G. Rudé, "English Rural and Urban Disturbances", Past and Present No.37, (July, 1967), p.89 ff.

42. J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution, (London, 1966), p.144.

43. H.O. 52/7. Letter from Mr. Pritchard (15th December, 1830).

44. "The Leyton Poor Rate", Essex Review, Vol. LX p.82.

45. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7. Letter enclosed by Lord Maynard (16th December, 1830).

46. E.R.O. P/CM13, 26th November, 1830.

47. P.R.O. H.O. 41/8 p.498-9.

48. E.R.O. P/CM 13, 10th December, 1830. The disturbed state of Writtle resulted in three fires in six weeks and a drunken brawl in the Bull public house, for which six labourers appeared at the Petty Sessions. (E.R.O. P/CM 13, 22nd March, 1831).

49. Kent and Essex Mercury, 28th December, 1830.

50. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7. Letters dated 6th and 7th December, 1830 from Mr. Abdy and Mr. Joseph Arkwright.

51. Assize Records 35/270 Pt.I. (P.R.O.)

52. Colchester Gazette, 18th December, 1830.

53. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/14 - 15.

54. Chelmsford Chronicle, 17th December, 1830.

55. R. Groves, Sharpen the Sickle, (London, 1949), p.147 - 9

56. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7. (Letters dated 3rd and 7th December, 1830).

57. See Appendix F.

58. For details see E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/70 - 76.

59. This was later denied.

60. Cambridge Chronicle, 10th December, 1830.

61. Beale had earlier refused to give the crowd beer (P.R.O. H.O. 52/7).

62. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/72,76.

63. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/61-6. The Henham rioters were more sullen than their colleagues. Many refused to sign their depositions.

64. A.F.J. Brown, Essex at Work, (Chelmsford, 1969), p.103.

65. Chelmsford Chronicle, 23rd February, 1827.

66. E.R.O. Q/SBb 444/85.

67. E.R.O. Q/SBb 469/74.

68. For example, Great Clacton (1822) and Little Bentley (1825).

69. Colchester Gazette, 18th December, 1830.
The Times, 11th December, 1830.

70. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

71. Colchester Gazette, 11th December, 1830.

72. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7. Letter from E. Freshfield (8th December, 1830).

73. Colchester Gazette, 11th December, 1830.

74. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

75. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/36 - 38.

76. P.R.O. T/1/4193 No.11240.

77. Morning Chronicle, 13th December, 1830.

78. Place Collection (B.M.), Vol. 21, p.120.

79. E.R.O. Q/APp 1.

80. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App B1, Pt. 5, Qn.53. p.190.

81. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/57. According to one account, the only casualty in Great Clacton was the parish constable, thrown off his horse while attempting to maintain order. K. Walker, The History of Clacton, (Clacton, 1966), p.19.

82. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/21.

83. Ibid.,

84. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/49-56.

85. E.R.O. Q/AP pl.

86. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7 (Letter of 9th December, 1830).

87. P.R.O. H.O. 41/8 (Letter of 10th December, 1830).

88. Ibid., (Letter of 22nd December, 1830.)

89. E.R.O. P/CM13, 14th December, 1830.

90. During the disturbances 745 special constables were sworn in for the Chelmsford area. This total included 60 in Great Baddow, 103 in Chelmsford, 48 in Springfield and 83 in Writtle.
M. Scollan "I a Special Constable". Essex Journal, Vol.3 (1968), p.52.

91. E.R.O. P/HZ1.

92. E.R.O. P/CM 13, 14th December, 1830.

93. E.R.O. Q/APpl.

94. Ibid.,

95. Colchester Gazette, 11th December, 1830.

96. E.R.O. Q/APpl.

97. Ibid.,

98. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

99. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7, (Letter dated 14th December, 1830).

100. P.R.O. H.O. 41/9, (Letter dated 16th December, 1830).

101. E.R.O. P/CM 13, 10th December, 1830.

102. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7, (Letter dated 21st December, 1830).

103. P.R.O. T/1/4193.

104. Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, Vol. II, p 29-41.

105. Kent and Essex Mercury, 28th December, 1830.

106. S.C. on the Sale of Beer (1833), Evidence of John Disney. QN. 345.

107. E.R.O. Q/APpl.

108. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

109. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/49-56.

110. Place Collection (B.M.), Vol 21, p.120.

111. Colchester Gazette, 11th December, 1830. Mr. Hardy, the Chief Constable who was chiefly responsible for crushing the disturbances became a hated man in the Tendring Hundred. A year after the riots, an incendiary set fire to his property. Nine stacks of corn, a double barn and other buildings were destroyed. (Essex Herald, 3rd December, 1831).

112. E.R.O. Q/APpl. Thomas Bundock became a constable as early as 1807 (E.R.O. D/P 169/12/1.)

113. Quoted in K. Walker, The Story of Little Clacton, An Essex Village, (Little Clacton, 1958) p.24.

114. Kent and Essex Mercury, 11th January, 1831. Draper was probably the most reckless of all the rioters. In Tasmania, he fell foul of the authorities and was imprisoned. He was among the few rioters who could sign their name.

115. For example see P.R.O. H.O. 13/57 p.132. Letter to J.M. Leake (25th January, 1831).

116. P.R.O. H.O. 13/57. p.225. Letter to Lord Braybrooke (1st March, 1831).

117. Bury and Norwich Post, 22nd December, 1830. According to the Criminal Entry Book, fourteen machine-breakers were removed on 13th December to the "York". (H.O. 13/57 p.19).

118. P.R.O. H.O. 11/8 pp 1,2,8.

119. C. Bateson, The Convict Ships 1787-1868, (Glasgow, 1959), p.310. Professor G. Rudé gives the date as 28th May.

120. Bateson, op.cit.,

121. The Tasmanian and Southern Literary and Political Journal, 6th August, 1831. Bateson gives the date of arrival as 3rd August.

122. For the list see Appendix G.

123. Information supplied by Professor G. Rudé.

124. S.C. on Transportation (1837), Appendix p.29.

125. Ibid., Appendix p.223.

126. Tasmanian State Archives, Con.54.

127. Con. 52, 15th February, 1840.

128. The Tasmanian and Austral Asiatic Review, 5th February, 1836. P.R.O. H.O. 10/31 p.229-230. Draper ended up in a chain gang.

129. E.J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, Captain Swing (London, 1969), p.277.

130. Con. 31/20 p.82.

131. P.R.O. H.O. /107/1779/203 (1) p.225. Joseph Winterflood was among the rioters appearing at the Quarter Sessions but was discharged (E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/49-56).

132. Con 31/11 p.26.

133. E. Halévy, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, Vol. III, (Paperback edition, London, 1961), p.8.

134. All the rioters and machine-breakers appearing at the Lent Quarter Sessions were classed as "labourers" (E.R.O. Q/SPb20)

135. R.C. on Poor Laws, App B. Pt. 5, Qn. 53, p.190 (XXXIV).

136. E.R.O. Q/APp1.

137. Cambridge Chronicle, 24th December, 1830.

138. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834) App.B, Qn 53, p.190. (XXXIV).

139. E.R.O. D/P 179/12/9. p.73. Other wives included Mrs. Ablett, Mrs. Newman and Mrs. Watling whose husbands were imprisoned. (E.R.O. D/P 179/12/8.).

140. E.R.O. Q/SBd 6/1/13. Pealing was the recipient of much parish relief. (See E.R.O. D/P 80/12/2.).

141. The Times, 11th December, 1830.

142. Chelmsford Chronicle, 17th December, 1830.

143. Kent and Essex Mercury, 11th January, 1831.

144. E.R.O. P/TP 17. This was rejected. (P.R.O. H.O. 13/57 p.353.).

145. Colchester Gazette, 11th December, 1830.

146. Con 31/10 p.49.

147. Con 31/46 p.94.

148. Baker, Thomas Grant, Eade, James Grant, Hayhoe. Baker had been fourteen years in one service (Con 31/4 p.108.)

149. Common offences were "neglect of duty", "insolence", "absent without leave", and "drunkenness".

150. Cullender was sentenced to six months hard labour for having mutton in his possession and "not being able to give a satisfactory account of the same". He was later pardoned after giving information about sheep stealers. (Con 31/7 p.85).

151. Con 31/16 p.50.

152. Con 31/4 p.131.

153. Con 31/7 p.85.

154. Con 31/24 p.6.

155. Con 31/10 p.53.

156. Con 31/35 p.54.

157. E.J. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, op.cit., p.248.

158. Both had had certificates in their favour.

159. Kent and Essex Mercury, 20th February, 1827.

160. Ibid., 8th May, 1827.

161. K. Walker, The History of Clacton, (Clacton, 1966), p.18.

162. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7, 27th December, 1830.

163. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

164. E.R.O. Q/SR 1028.

165. M. Dutt, "The Agricultural Labourers' Revolt 1830 in Kent, Surrey and Sussex". (Ph.D. London, 1967) p.327 ff.

166. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, (London, 1963), p.228.

167. S.C. on Agricultural Distress (1836), Evidence of C.C. Parker, Esq., Qn.12432.

168. Essex Standard, 26th February, 1836.

169. S.C. on Burden Affecting Real Property(1846). Evidence of R. Baker, Qn. 267.

170. E.R.O. Q/SO 32 p.221-222.

171. E.R.O. Q/SR 1028.

172. P.R.O. T/1/4193 No. 17511. Farmers were not the only beneficiaries. A sum of £180 was shared among seven inhabitants of Southend, Rayleigh and Rochford, following the conviction of James Ewen for arson. (T/1/4193 No. 4764).

173. E.R.O. Q/SBd 9/6, E.R.O. Q/SR 1054.

174. E.R.O. Q/SBD 6/4/58-9.

175. E.R.O. Q/SPb 22 p.84.

176. Tables for Criminal Commitments for 1834-50.

177. Chelmsford Chronicle, 3rd April, 1835.

178. Essex Herald, 17th March, 1835.

179. This was not necessarily the case for some of the rioters after their release. William Shelford and Samuel Shead were among the unemployed in Finchingfield 1833-4. (E.R.O. D/P 14/12/4.)

Chapter VIII

1. Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (1836) p.243. (E.R.O.)
2. G.R.W. Baxter, The Book of the Bastilles, (London, 1841), p.545.
3. Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (1836) p.243 (E.R.O.).
4. Ibid., P.255 - 6. See also E.R.O. G/BrM2 p.296.
5. E.R.O. D/P 21/19/4.
6. Essex Herald, 9th June, 1835.
7. Essex Standard, 26th February, 1836. E.R.O. Q/SBD 11/2.
8. E.R.O. G/DM1 p.42 - 43.
9. E.R.O. Q/SBd 11/3/46-51.
10. Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (1838), p.66.
11. Seventh Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (1841), p.2-3
12. E.R.O. G/HM4 pp 204,212 (1843).
13. Resolution in E.R.O. G/DM2, 23rd January, 1838.
14. Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (1836), p. 254 (E.R.O.).
15. W. Hasbach, History of the English Agricultural Labourer, (London, 1908).
16. E.R.O. G/Br Z1 p.21.
17. Ibid., p.25.
18. Ibid., p.22-4.
19. Index to the Commons Journal, 31st January - 17th July, 1837, Vol. XCII.

20. Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (1836), p.241.

21. P.R.O. H.O. 52/29, 20th August, 1836.

22. P.R.O. 41/12 p.366 (Letter dated 9th July, 1836 to the Mayor of Saffron Walden).

23. Essex Standard, 31st January, 1840.

24. E.R.O. G/HM1 p.364. The master of the Braintree workhouse resigned shortly after he had struck a female pauper and made her nose bleed. (E.R.O. G/BrM4 p.273).

25. E.R.O. G/HM3 p.228.

26. Essex Mercury, 20th November, 1838.

27. Colchester Gazette, 30th April, 1836.

28. E.R.O. G/HM2 p.62.

29. E.R.O. G/DM2, 6th February, 1838.

30. G.R.W. Baxter, Book of the Bastilles, (London, 1841), p.213.

31. E.R.O. G/TM1 pl.

32. E.R.O. D/P 94/8/12.

33. Baxter, op.cit., p.115.

34. E.R.O. G/DM6, 5th December, 1843.

35. Essex Standard, 1st January, 1836.

36. E.R.O. G/DM1 p.43.

37. Essex Herald, 26th January, 1836.
Essex Standard, 29th January, 1836.
According to E.R.O. G/HM1 p.76, the windows of a Mr. Bird were broken.

38. Second Report of the Poor Law Commissioners p.253 (E.R.O.).

39. E.R.O. G/HM1 p.82.

40. Second Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, p.254. (E.R.O.).

41. Essex Standard, 28th April, 1837.

42. T. Doubleday, Political Life of Sir Robert Peel, (London,1856), Vol.II p.354.

43. E.R.O. D/P 46/12/7.

44. V.C.H. of Essex Vol.II p.325.

Chapter IX

1. P.R.O. H.O. 42/150, 12th May, 1816.

2. J.L. and B. Hammond, The Village Labourer, (London, Guild Books edition, 1948), Vol.II p.47.

3. J. Fyvie, Notable Dames and Notable Gentlemen in the Georgian Era, (London, 1910)
W. Addison, The English Country Parson, (London, 1947), p.218.

4. Quarterly Review, XXIX p.550.

5. Kent and Essex Mercury, 20th January, 1829.

6. Ed. L. Rider Haggard, I Walked by Night, (London, 1935), p.4.

7. J.L. and B. Hammond, op.cit., Vol II p.72.

8. Kent and Essex Mercury, 1st February, 1831.

9. E.R.O. Q/SBb 381/20,21.

10. H.C. 39 (1831-2) XXXV p.243.

11. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol 99 (Jan. - June 1829) p.102.

12. E.R.O. P/CM 3, 21st and 25th June, 1816.

13. P.R.O. H.O. 40/23 Fo.31. Letter from the Rev. Lewis Way, (17th January, 1829).

14. E.R.O. Q/APpl.

15. Kent and Essex Mercury, 23rd March, 1831.

16. J.L. and B. Hammond, op.cit., Vol.II p.23.

17. P.R.O. H.O. 52/7. Letter from the Rev. W.M. Hurlock, (14th December, 1830).

18. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834), App.B1, Pt. 5, Qn 53, Thorpe-le-Soken.

19. Place Collections (B.M.), Vol. 21, p.120.

20. Kent and Essex Mercury, 14th December, 1830.

21. K. Walker, The Story of Little Clacton - an Essex Village, (Little Clacton, 1958), p.23.

22. Kent and Essex Mercury, 8th February, 1831.

23. Ms. 9583 A/a 2 (Guildhall Library).

24. Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series, Vol.II, p. 29-41 (21st December, 1830).

25. E. Fisher Unwin, The Hungry Forties, (London, 1906), p.51.

26. A. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution, 1789 to the Present Day, (London, 1961).

27. Essex Chronicle, 3rd and 24th July, 1914.

28. Essex Standard, 25th July, 1914.

29. H.C. (1852-53) LXXXIX p.37-38.

30. G.C. Gould, Lest We Forget, (No place of publication given, 1925), p8 - 13.

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32. H.C. 156 (1852-3) LXXVIII p.37.

33. H.O. 129/203 - 2 - 5 - 9 and H.O. 129/203 - 4 - 1 - 8.

Chapter X.

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2. G. Tufnell, Address to Agricultural Labourers (1836), quoted in A.F.J. Brown, English History From Essex Sources, 1750-1900, (Chelmsford, 1952). p.48-9.
3. Essex Standard, 15th July, 1836.
4. Colchester and Chelmsford Gazette, 16th July, 1836.
5. Essex Standard, 22nd July, 1836.
6. Tufnell, op.cit.,
7. Colchester and Chelmsford Gazette, 23rd July, 1836.
8. M. Hovell, The Chartist Movement, (Manchester, 1925).
9. The Martyrs of Tolpuddle, (London, 1934), p.90.
10. Essex Standard, 22nd November, 1839.
11. Ibid., 29th November, 1839.
12. Ibid., 20th December, 1839, quoting Morning Post of 17th December, 1839.
13. "The Chartist Movement in Essex" by A.F.J. Brown, in Chartism in East Anglia, (Cambridge, no date) p.5.
14. Place Collection (B.M.), Vol. 56 p.113.
15. Brown, op.cit., p.5.
    Essex Standard, 14th December, 1838.
16. Essex Mercury, 25th June, 1839.
17. Brown, op.cit., p. 7-8.
18. J. Glyde, Suffolk in the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1856) p.185.

19. Criminal Offenders Tables for 1840-5, On page 12 for each year.

20. Essex Standard, 15th December, 1843.

21. Ibid., 28th June, 1844.

22. Ibid., 7th April, 1843.

23. Ibid., 9th February, 1844.
Suffolk Chronicle, 3rd February, 1844.

24. See Essex Standard, 14th June, 1844.

25. Criminal Offenders Tables (1843-5), p.12.

26. S.C. on Burdens affecting Real Property (1846). Qn 445, Evidence of Mr. R. Baker.

27. Essex Standard, 28th June, 1844

28. Annual Register (1844), Chronicle p.75-6.

29. Essex Standard, 7th March, 1845.

30. Ibid., 28th June, 1844.

31. Essex Herald, 19th December, 1843.

32. Ibid., 6th December, 1844.

33. Ibid., 28th June, 1844.

34. Ibid., 24th May, 1844.

35. Essex Countryside, December, 1961 p.70.

36. Essex Standard, 29th December, 1843; the Rector was "a Lunatic" (Guildhall Library, Ms 9560).

37. Essex Standard, 7th April, 1843.

38. Ibid., 15th December, 1843.

39. Ibid., 29th December, 1843.

40. Criminal Offenders Tables 1844-50, p.12 for each year.

41. E.J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, Captain Swing, (London, 1969), p. 299 n.

42. Essex Chronicle, 13th February, 1914.

43. Ibid., 7th August, 1914.

Essex Standard, 8th August, 1914.

Conclusion.

1. A. Cobban, A History of Modern France,(Penguin edn., 1965), Vol.II p.137-8.

2. J.L. and B.Hammond, The Village Labourer (Guild Book edn., 1948), Vol.II p.7.

3. See Appendix B.

4. The wage rates for some of the riotous areas were the lowest in the county. In 1825 the lowest daily wage in the Saffron Walden Division was only 6d, in Dunmow Hundred 7d and the Hinckford Division 1/-. H.C. 299 (1825) XIX p.376-377.

5. From 1831 Census.

6. Ely, Littleport and Downham Market, centres of activity in 1816 were reported to be "tranquil" in 1830. A.J. Peacock, Bread or Blood, (London, 1965), p133

7. Kent and Essex Mercury, 11th January, 1831.

8. Hobsbawm and Rudé, op.cit., p.181.

9. Pigot's Directory (London, 1833) pp 116,158.

10. There were Wesleyan Congregations in four out of the five parishes in which machines were destroyed in 1830.

11. E.R.O. Q/SBb 444/85.

12. E.R.O. Q/SBb 446/66.

13. E.R.O. Q/SBb 469/74.

14. Chelmsford Chronicle, 17th December, 1830.

15. R.C. on Poor Laws (1834) App.B Qn 53 p.190.

16. A.F.J. Brown, Essex at Work 1700-1815, (Chelmsford, 1969), p.153.

17. For example, the Poor Law riot in Castle Hedingham.

18. In 1840 over three quarters of the Guardians in the Tendring Union were farmers (E.R.O. G/TM3 p.485).

19. Essex Standard, 27th October, 1837.

20. Ibid., 25th January, 1838.

21. There is no evidence to show whether labourers in the Clacton area joined the union.

22. Critical periods were 1800, 1816-19, 1829-31, 1836-38 (Halstead), 1843-44.

23. See map.

24. For example the fire on the premises of Joseph Green in 1817.

25. For example, north of Bishops Stortford in 1843-4.

26. For example, John Shepherd of Hawkwell.

27. The threatening letter sent to the Rev. Hurlock of Dedham in 1830 was probably the work of a farmer.

28. For example the Tendring Agricultural Labourers' Union.

29. Especially 1795,1800,1816,1829-30,1836-7,1843-4.

30.

Berks	44	Hampshire	100	Suffolk	7
Bucks	29	Hunts	5	Sussex	17
Dorset	13	Kent	22	Wilts	151
Essex	23	Norfolk	11		
Gloucester	24	Oxford	11	Total	457

J.L. and B. Hammond, The Village Labourer, (Guild Books, 1948), Vol.II p.111 n.

31. Report of the Historical Association (1971) p.21.

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B. Guildhall Library. Ms. 9539/2

Ms. 9560

Ms. 9583 A/a/1,2.

C. Essex Record Office (E.R.O.)

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Q.S. Rolls (Q/SR) 1021,1022,1028,1029,1030,1033,1039,1054, 1060,1064,1081,1089,1099,1128,1131.

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269/1,37.

270/15

351/21

360

361/71,72,74.

381/20,21

398,14

444/85,105

451

457

469/74

472/19,65

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(2) Petty Sessions.

P/CM 3,4,13	Chelmsford
P/COR 14	Colchester
P/FM1	Freshwell
P/HZ1	Hinckford
P/LWR 19,23,24,27	Lexden and Winstree
P/TP 1 - 5) P/TPa 22 - 3)	Tendring

(3) Poor Law Guardians (by Unions)

G/BrZ 1 - 2) G/BrM 1 - 4)	Braintree
G/DM 1 - 6	Dunmow
G/EM 1 - 2	Epping
G/HM 1 - 4	Halstead
G/TM 1 - 3	Tendring

(4) Parish Records. A variety of records were consulted especially those of Chelmsford, Great Clacton, Little Clacton, Finchingfield, Castle Hedingham, Sible Hedingham, Ramsey, Steeple Bumpstead, Writtle.

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1817 Report of the Select Committee on the Poor Laws, H.C. 462 (1817) VI.

1818 First and Second Reports of the Select Committee on the Poor Laws, H.C. 107,237 (1818) V.

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1823 Report of the Select Committee on the Game Laws, H.C. 260 (1823) IV.

1824 Report of the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages, H.C. 392 (1824) VI.

1831 Report of the Select Committee on Secondary Punishments, 276 (1831) VII.

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Fig.10.

Map showing Disturbed Parishes (1830-1)

P96

Great & Little Chishall and Heydon were transferred to Cambridgeshire in 1895.

1829

1816

1816

1816

1816

1816

1815

1816

Stour

River Stour

River Blackwater

River Crouch

RIVER THAMES

N O R T H S E A

ESSEX
HUNDREDS & PARISHES

SCALE
0 1 2 4 6 8 10 MILES

Longitude 0°40' East of Greenwich

EDINBURGH GEOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE

JOHN BARTHOLOMEW & SON, LTD.

Wage Riots

Threatening Notes

Fires, Nov. 1830 - March 1831

Machine-Breaking

1816 Previous Outbreaks of Machine-Breaking (dates)

9 b2