

AN EXPLANATION OF THE POOR LAW RECORDS

These records are transcribed from a Kent Family History Society CD.

In 1597 the Poor Law Act said that parishes should provide relief for their own poor. Levying of poor rates was set up and an overseer was created. From 1662 you had to have a place of settlement and parishes could send paupers back (remove) to their parish of settlement. Frequent disputes were settled in the Quarter Sessions courts.

Settlement could be by place of birth of settled parents, buying or renting a property worth £10 or more, paying taxes on a lesser property for a long period, serving as a parish officer, apprenticeship of 7 years, hired by settled inhabitant for a whole year or marriage to a settled man. Sick persons were not allowed to be moved. Bastards were settled in the parish of birth but overseers kept an eagle eye for pregnant females and took steps to move them on before the birth.

Children could be apprenticed originally from the age of 7 but in the early 19th century it rose to 10. The child was bound until the age of 24 but that changed to 21 in 1778. They were often sent miles away from home. At the end of their term they gained settlement in their Master's parish. This system ended in 1844 and Ragged Schools gave children better opportunities.

Sometimes the Parish would pay for a marriage licence or for the passage to another country. This effectively removed more paupers from their books.

Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars could be ejected, have stones thrown at them or put into the village lock-up. Relief could be given in the parish workhouse or as 'out relief' in their own homes. Marden's parish workhouse was in Albion Road where The Allens now stand. It also became the Parish Cottages when the workhouse moved to Coxheath.

We have many records from the workhouse waiting for a transcriber!! Anyone out there with a little spare time? You don't have to be local to do this.

The Act changed in 1834 with the New Poor Law Act where parishes were grouped together in Unions with a Board of Guardians to oversee them. Our Union workhouse was in Coxheath.

Records were usually kept in the Parish Chest and most are now with the appropriate County Archives.

To view the Poor Law records point to TABLES and click on POOR.

The database will appear as a series of records. An asterisk in each of the green column headings denote whether that field is searchable, and clicking on each one arranges contents ascending or descending - signified by an upward or downward pointing triangle respectively.

The Search Bar will accept any names, dates or terms and has options for entering multiple terms. The page selection buttons will move through pages of batched records - one page up or down, or to the beginning and end of the whole database or selection. There are also options to export data to Word or Excel files.

To view an individual record, click the magnifying glass button on the extreme right hand side of each one. 🔍

The column names of a record's table are:

- Column 1 – **REF(*)** - our reference number for that table.
- Column 2 – **Forename (*)** - the name given on baptism or birth.
- Column 3 – **SURNAME (*)** - the last name of the person on the record, which are listed alphabetically. Please note there may be a double entry when two people are mentioned.
- Column 4 – **LOCATION(*)** – this gives the present parish of the person.

- Column 5 - REGISTER (*) – the Kent Archives reference number.
- Column 6 - ENTRY(*) –also a reference number.
- Column 7 - TYPE (*) – the reason for the entry, R = removal, S = settlement, BO = bastardy order, BE = bastardy examination. There were also bastardy warrants and summons, maintenance orders and bastardy bonds.
- Column 8 - YR(*) – the year of the entry.

- Column 9 - 🔍 - clicking on this will show you the individual record. Here you will also find the reason for a record being made, which parish they are from and which one they are being moved to. It gives the outcome of any examinations. Here you will find the date.
- Column 10 - 🖋️ - for editors only.
- Column 11 - 📄 - for editors only.

- 📄 Clicking on this symbol at the top of the page enables you to print the information as an Excel file.
- 📄 Clicking on this symbol at the top of the page enables you to print the information as a Word file.
- 📄 Clicking on this symbol at the top of the page enables you to print the information as an Excel CSV file (comma separated values).