

Other Charities

Apart from the Deddington Charity Estates, during the 1850s there are press reports of charitable subscription schemes for the distribution of coal, bread, and clothing to alleviate the distress of the poor. There is also reference to a lying-in charity.¹

The coal charity, funded by subscriptions and donations, including church collections,² appears to have been founded before 1835, and a stone barn was built on Goose Green in 1849 as a coal house.

A general meeting of subscribers to the coal charity was usually held in July each year at the Town Hall, when it would be resolved to seek tenders for 4 boat loads of coal (via Aynho Wharf (known as 'Botany Bay') on the Oxford Canal).

The minutes and accounts of the Deddington Coal Charity in July 1850 record that eight of the principal inhabitants, including Mrs. Risley and Mrs. Field, each lent £10 to facilitate the purchase of the coals.³

Consistent with the pattern of other years, in December 1858 it was reported that the committee had acquired 120 tons of coal, which was distributed to 183 Deddington families and 40 at Clifton at the reduced price of 6d. per cwt. Local farmers lent horses and wagons to transport the coal.

There was a lengthy report in January 1854 of a public meeting chaired by Rev. Brogden at the Town Hall, attended by over 25 ratepayers, with the object of devising a means for the poor of the parish "so abounding in pauperism" to purchase bread at a reduced price whilst the current price was prohibitive, and likely to be of long continuance. The Rev. Risley observed that: "Out of a population of 2000, there were not less than 1500 paupers".

The meeting resolved to establish a Poor Relief Fund, and a committee was appointed to solicit subscribers.⁴ £50 13s. was pledged at the meeting, and the total raised through very numerous donations was £102 3s.

There are references to meetings of the Poor Relief Fund subscribers in 1855 and 1856, but not thereafter.⁵ It was reported that it was not necessary to provide relief during the mild winter of 1855/56. As at July 1856 there was a balance in hand of £29 15s. 10d.

¹ 'Memorial' to the Bishop of Oxford by 128 parishioners dated 29 February 1859, opposing the rumoured return of Rev. James Brogden.

² E.G. Harvest Thanksgiving Day services on 14 September 1859.

³ *North Oxfordshire Monthly Times*, No. 14, 6 August 1850, page 6.

⁴ The Poor Relief Fund is not to be confused with the bread charity established by the 1633 will of Richard Cartwright, who died in 1637, whereby an annual sum of £6 1s. 4d. was to be used to purchase bread for the poor of Deddington. According to a report by the Charity Commissioners in 1826, this money was paid to a baker who supplied 14 two-penny loaves every Sunday, which were given away by the minister at the parish church after Divine Service.

<https://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/thepoorindeddington/charitycommissionersreport-1839>

⁵ Nor is there reference to the Fund, or a bread charity, in the list of local charities mentioned in the 'Memorial' to the Bishop of Oxford in 1859.

As bread was the dietary staple, its price directly reflecting the price of corn, its cost was a highly sensitive issue, especially for labouring families living at less than subsistence level. When it seemed that local bakers were being dilatory in passing on reductions in the price of corn, reports record the discrepancy being "cried round Deddington" by the town crier.

A letter to the Editor of the *Oxford Journal* in July 1856, in the context of the contention over the Crimean War "peace rejoicings", refers to the "very efficient and well-conducted clothing club" in Deddington during the previous thirty years. This is not wholly consistent with a report in the *North Oxfordshire Monthly Times* for June 1850, which recounts the establishment of a Deddington Clothing Society. The list of generous contributions by the initial 20 subscribers includes 11 ladies.

Reports in 1850-1852 refer to a National Schools Children's Clothing Club founded by the new Master, Mr. Ward, in December 1850.

There are also several references to distributions of blankets and flannel to the poor at Christmas by some of the principal inhabitants. At Christmas 1851 there was mention of the Rev. W.C. Risley's general custom of distributing money, lamb, beef and tea amongst the poor.

