

The Workhouse

In 1738 the trustees of Middleton's charity bought the old Bull Inn from Jane Stanbridge which was then rented and made use of by the Churchwardens and overseers as a workhouse for the Poor. The idle poor were set to work and the unemployed was discouraged from moving about to seek work. The parish of their settlement had a duty to maintain them. At the Lewes Sessions in 1715 the settlement of Thomas Mitchell, pauper, was fixed at Cuckfield. The old poor laws treated the paupers almost as criminals to encourage independence. Extracts from the Sussex Weekly Advertiser show:

Jan 19, 1789. John Morris for running away and leaving his family chargeable to the Parish of Cuckfield was adjudged a rogue and vagabond: recommitted for one week and ordered to be privately whipped.

April 16, 1790. Abraham C was sentenced to 7 years transportation for stealing 1 bushel of wheat in the chaff, from the barn of John Coppard of Cuckfield. He was 22 years old, of previously good character, had a wife and one child and another daily expected.

A new Poor Law was enacted in 1834 and Guardians were created to administer it. Under this law all who were in need were obliged to reside in parish workhouses. Local poverty and unemployment, made worse by changes in farming practices, meant there was overcrowding in the workhouses. The churchwardens and overseers gave up the old parish workhouse on 29 September 1845. Later uses for the old workhouse were as a county court and as headquarters of the Volunteers.

Cuckfield was a union town responsible by law for providing a workhouse in the area. This was known as the Cuckfield Union and included an infirmary. Places within the union were Albourne, Ardingly, Balcombe, Bolney, Clayton, Cuckfield Urban and Cuckfield Rural, Haywards Heath, Horsted Keynes, Hurstpierpoint, Keymer, Lindfield, Newtimber, Pyecombe, Slaugham and Twineham. They had a combined population of 23,326 in 1891.

The new Union Workhouse was opened in September 1845 in Ardingly Road on the northern outskirts of Cuckfield. It cost £7,500. It comprised the main building, which was designed to accommodate 450, an infirmary and a chapel. The able bodied poor of the workhouse were expected to help earn their keep by working at a nearby cornmill or by breaking up stones for the roads from a quarry at nearby Whitemans Green. Staffing originally consisted of the master, nurse and salaried chaplain. All vagrants admitted overnight were required, willing or unwilling, to have the obligatory bath in the bath houses behind the porter's lodge before being given a meal and bed for the night. The next morning they were required to undertake some task in or around the house to pay for their bed and breakfast. Many were then leaving to look for another workhouse for the next night. Resident paupers over the age of seventy were excused manual work and were allowed out of the workhouse between 8 til 11 in the morning and 2 til 4 in the afternoon. It was quite common in the 1880s for there to be two or three hundred in the "casual"

wards and 40 to 50 requiring admission overnight. In 1891 there were 186 inmates and officers at the Workhouse.

It became the Cuckfield Poor Law Institution at the end of the first world war and then in 1930 became the West Hylands Institution as it was built on the western part of the Highlands Estate. The main work of the Institution was the care of acute and chronic sick, the elderly ambulant infirm, mentally subnormal and "casuals".

At the outbreak of the Second World War the Cuckfield Union Infirmary became an Emergency Medical Service Hospital and in 1942 the Canadians established a Military Hospital there.

During the 1990s the Old Union Workhouse was converted to apartments and the old nissan huts demolished to make way for housing.

The following are recorded as being at the Union Workhouse at the time of the 1881 Census.

Occ
Married
Age
Sex
Birthplace

Thomas Thorston RICHES
Master of Workhouse
M

34
M
Sheffield, York, England

Edith Jane RICHES
Matron of Workhouse
M
33
F
Burnage, Cheshire, England

Frank Maplestone RICHES
None

4
M
Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Thomas Thorston RICHES
None

1
M
Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Phillis Mary RICHES
None

5m
F
Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Frank Maplestone RICHES
Assistant Workhouse Master
U

23
M
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, England

Kate JUSTEN
Workhouse School Mistress
U
28
F
Merton, Surrey, England

Thomas HOPPER
Workhouse Porter
U
28
M
Lewes, Sussex, England

Paul MEASON
Workhouse Tailor & Industrial Trainer

M
359
M
Brighton, Sussex, England

Caroline TAYLOR
Infants Nurse
M
55
F
Chelsea, Middlesex, England

Joseph KING
Gardener
M
36
F
Bolney, Sussex, England

Ann KING
Superintendent of Vagrants
M
36
F
Slaugham, Sussex, England

Annie DANCEY
Scholar
U
14
F
Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Charlotte BRICKNELL

Infant Nurse

U

29

F

Turnpike, Surrey, England

Mary Ann COPE

Infirmiry Nurse

U

45

F

New Radford, Nottingham, England

Agnes BOONE

Infirmiry Serv

M

42

F

Horsham, Sussex, England

The following are recorded as inmates at the Union Workhouse at the time of the 1881 Census.

Occ
Married
Age
Sex
Birthplace

Jane JONES

Laundress (Pauper)

W

74

F

(B S), Gibralter

Louisa TULLET

None(Pauper)

U

18

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Thomas STRINGER

Ag Lab(Pauper)

W

79

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Ellen BARNETT

Field Work (Pauper)

M

39

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Amon CONSTABLE

Scholar

U

16

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Herbert CONSTABLE

scholar

U

14

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Robert CONSTABLE

scholar

U

11

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Mary HIGHLAND

Cook Domestic Servant

W

74

F

Framfield, Sussex, England

Charles MARCHANT

scholar

U

10

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Jesse MARCHANT

scholar

U

7

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Louisa NEWNHAM

scholar

U

5

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Henry AUSTEN

Carpenter

U

34

M

Yapton, Sussex, England

Frederick BAILEY

scholar

U

10

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Caroline HAYNES

none

U

20

F

Haywards Heath, Sussex, England

Annie THOMAS

scholar

U

15

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

William ANSCOMBE

scavenger

W

68

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Henry GODSMARK
scholar

U

13

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Frank GODSMARK
scholar

U

10

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Mark JOYES
Ag Lab

U

56

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Rebecca FULLER

Laundress

W

81

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Joseph MANSBRIDGE
scholar

U

11

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Stephen MANSBRIDGE
scholar

U

9

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

Jesse MANSBRIDGE
scholar

U

7

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

Philip MANSBRIDGE
scholar

U

5

M

London, Middledsex, England

Eliza TURNER

laundress

W

37

F

Brighton, Sussex, England

Frederick TURNER
Scholar

U

4

M

Brighton, Sussex, England

James FREEMAN
Blacksmith

U

41

M

Horsham, Sussex, England

Susan SHORT
laundress

W

73

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Thomas MITCHELL
scholar

U

12

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Fanny MITCHELL
scholar

U

10

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Francis BOWDLER
navvy

U

68

M

Leicester, Leicester, England

William STREETER
Ag Lab

W

77

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Stephen GATFORD
Ag Lab

U

46

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Richard BURTENSHAW

Ag Lab

W

67

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Mary MANSBRIDGE
Gen Serv Dom Serv

M

30

F

Eybridge, Lincoln, England

Thomas PICKNELL
none

U

17

M

Brighton, Sussex, England

George ELSEY
Ag Lab

U

75

M

Lindfield, Sussex, England

William BEARD
Ag Lab

W

62

M

Linfield, Sussex, England

Peter MARCHANT
Ag Lab

W

74

M

Linfield, Sussex, England

George BOTTING
Ag Lab

W

63

M

Linfield, Sussex, England

John PENFOLD

Ag Lab

U

54

M

Linfield, Sussex, England

Charles Pierce
Ag Lab

W

70

M

Cowfield, Sussex, England

George HAYNES
Ag Lab

W

76

M

Lindfield, Sussex, England

William EASTMOND
Marble Mason

U

36

M

Jersey, Channel Islands

Owen TESTER
scholar

U

13

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

John PIERCE
Ag Lab

W

78

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Joseph STEDMAN
Ag Lab

W

41

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Abraham BAKER
Ag Lab

W

81

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Thomas WOOLGAR
Ag Lab

W

84

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Abraham WOOLGAR
Ag Lab

U

77

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Edmond WOOLGAR
Ag Lab

U

31

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

John WALLER
Ag Lab

W

85

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

William MAY
scholar

U

9

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Edward THOMPSON
Navy

U

52

M

Munby Cum Shappel, Lincoln, England

Alexander SHERLOCK
Ag Lab

U

75

M

Horsted Keynes, Sussex, England

Thomas BROWN

Navy

U

60

M

Mount Sorrel, Leicester, England

Clara NEWNHAM
Gen Serv Dom

U

17

F

Ardingly, Sussex, England

William CRONK
Ag Lab

U

46

M

Ardingly, Sussex, England

Richard TESTER
Ag Lab

U

76

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Florence BOTTING
scholar

U

13

F

Balcombe, Sussex, England

William GAMMON
Shoemaker

W

81

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Frances GAMMON
none

U

49

F

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Amelia STEDMAN
Gen Serv Dom

U

27

F

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Alfred STEDMAN
scholar

U

6

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Caroline STEDMAN
scholar

U

3

F

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Grace STEDMAN
none

U

1

F

Balcombe, Sussex, England

John WOOD

Ag Lab

U

62

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Eliza BREDEN
Laundress

W

47

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

William BREDEN
scholar

U

15

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Charles BREDEN
scholar

U

13

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Thomas BREDEN
scholar

U

11

M

Red Hill, Surrey, England

Emeny BREDEN
scholar

U

8

M

Red Hill, Sussex, England

Robert BREDEN
scholar

U

5

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

James BREDEN
none

U

1

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

William HILL
Carpenter

W

77

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

William WENHAM

Ag Lab

W

75

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

William SRATCHELL
Ag Lab

W

67

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Matthew MITCHELL
Ag Lab

W

69

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

William HEASMAN
Ag Lab

W

91

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Sarah BAILEY
Laundress

W

75

F

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Thomas JAPP
Ag Lab

W

75

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Peter TUNEL
Ag Lab

W

77

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Jane COLLINS

Hawker

M

37

F

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Sarah COLLINS
scholar

U

6

F

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Alice COLLINS
scholar

U

8

F

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Henry COLLINS
scholar

U

13

M

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Mary LEWRY
Cook Dom Serv

W

84

F

Slaugham, Sussex, England

Henry HUNTLEY
Shoemaker

W

70

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Ann STEER
none

W

55

F

Slaugham, Sussex, England

John BOTTING
none

U

55

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Ann BOTTING
none

U

54

F

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

William JOHNSON
scholar

U

14

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

John BURTENSHAW
scholar

U

14

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Charles BURTENSHAW
scholar

U

12

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

James BURTENSHAW
scholar

U

9

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Caroline KING

none

U

43

F

Barnsley, York, England

Richard RICHARDSON

Ag Lab

M

70

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Rebecca RICHARDSON

none

M

70

F

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Sarah HENLEY

laundress

U

28

F

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Alice HENLEY

none

U

1

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Henry BATCHELOR

Ostler

U

33

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Prudence SHERLOCK

Gen Serv Dom

U

37

F

Clayton, Sussex, England

Thomas HILLS

Ag Lab

M

71

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

William MARCHANT
Stone Mason

U

48

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

James GOODCHILD
scholar

U

16

M

Horsham, Sussex, England

John LEWRY
Ag Lab

M

39

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Alice LEWRY

none

M

29

F

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

John LEWRY

scholar

U

10

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

James LEWRY

scholar

U

8

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

Stephen LEWRY

scholar

U

6

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

William LEWRY
none

U

2

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

Rose LEWRY
Laundress

U

19

F

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Ann HOBDEN
none

U

51

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Sarah LINDFIELD

Gen Serv Dom

U

19

F

Keymer, Sussex, England

Mary LINDFIELD
scholar

U

15

F

Keymer, Sussex, England

George BEECHING
scholar

U

10

M

Keymer, Sussex, England

Sidney WARD
scholar

U

10

M

Keymer, Sussex, England

Mary WOOD
laundress

W

75

F

Keymer, Sussex, England

Ann GIBSON
schoOlmistress

w

84

F

Keymer, Sussex, England

Louisa BROOKER
scholar

U

16

F

Keymer, Sussex, England

George ORAM
Ag lab

W

78

M

Keymer, Sussex, England

William ANSDELL
Musician

W

85

M

London, Middlesex, England

Amy TREMAINE
Gen Serv Dom

W

72

W

Allerden, Kent, England

Eliza PARSONS
Gen Serv Dom

W

40

F

London Middlesex, England

John PARSONS
scholar

U

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Robert PARSONS
none

U

2

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Peter ORAM
Ag lab

W

72

M

Keymer, Sussex, England

Florence BEALE
Scholar

U

12

W

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

John MILLER
Ag lab

U

68

M

Keymer, Sussex, England

James HOLE
Blacksmith

U

75

M

Keymer, Sussex, England

Ruth SMITHERS
Scholar

U

13

F

Clayton, Sussex, England

James SMITHERS
Scholar

U

12

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Elizabeth KNAPP
Laundress

M

32

F

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

James KNAPP
Scholar

U

10

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Harry KNAPP
Scholar

M

7

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

Rose KNAPP
Scholar

U

5

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Frederick KNAPP
None

M

1

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

William BURT
Ag Lab

W

76

M

Clayton, Sussex, England

James ORAM

Ag Lab

W

61

M

Clayton, Sussex, England

Mary WICKHAM

None

U

42

F

Clayton, Sussex, England

David WHITE

Ag Lab

U

71

M

Clayton, Sussex, England

Henry BRICKNELL

Ag Lab

W

70

M

Petersfield, Hampshire, England

Emily BRICKNELL
Scholar

U

12

F

Petersfield, Hampshire, England

Charles NORTH
Brickmaker

U

43

M

Clayton, Sussex, England

George KING
Ag Lab

U

47

M

Hurstpeirpoint, Sussex, England

Esther MOORE
None

U

49

F

Cowfold, England

Florence KNIGHT
None

U

17

F

London, Middlesex, England

Louisa TURNER
None

W

25

F

Exmouth, Devon, England

George TURNER
Scholar

U

8

M

Bristol, Gloucester, England

Charles TURNER
Scholar

U

4

M

West Hallam, Derby, England

William TURNER

Scholar

U

3

M

Kettering, Northampton, England

David DAVEY

Ag Lab

M

53

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Joseph GILLAM

Carpenter

U

58

M

Cowfold, Sussex, England

Sarah BATCHELOR

None

U

39

F

Bolney, Sussex, England

George BATCHELOR

None

U

2

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Alfred SCUTT

Ag Lab

M

21

M

Bolney, Sussex, England

George WOOD

Ag Lab

M

55

M

Twineham, Sussex, England

Elizabeth WOOD

Scholar

M

33

F

Twineham, Sussex, England

John WOOD

None

U

12

F

Twineham, Sussex, England

Elizabeth WOOD

Scholar

U

10

F

Twineham, Sussex, England

William WOOD

Scholar

U

5

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Henry WOOD

Scholar

U

3

F

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Amelia WOOD

Scholar

U

8

F

Twineham, Sussex, England

Stephen VIRGO

Ag Lab

U

69

M

Twineham, Sussex, England

Ellen TULLEY

None

U

27

F

Bolney, Sussex, England

Frederick LEWRY

None

U

1m

M

cuckfield, Sussex, England

Harry ANSCOMBE

Ag Lab

U

28

M

Cowfold, Sussex, England

Thomas MITCHELL

Ag Lab

U

74

M

Balcombe, Sussex, England

Richard NEWMAN

Ag Lab

U

62

M

Cowfold, Sussex, England

Peter STARLEY

Shoemaker

U

56

M

Bolney, Sussex, England

Henry PACKHAM
Ag Lab

W

76

M

Cuckfield, Sussex, England

Henry HENTY
Ag Lab

W

79

M

Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, England

George BOWRING
Ag Lab

U

47

M

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

John SOLLEY
Ag Lab

M

51

M

Ramsgate, Kent, England

James ROBERT
Bricklayers Labourer

U

48

M

Glasgow, Scotland

Albert THORPE
Bricklayers Labourer

U

39

M

Greenwich, Kent, England

John KEEFE
Carpenter

U

56

M

Lambeth, Surrey, England

George SYKES

.

U

30

M

London, Middlesex, England

John WILSON
Bricklayers Laborer

U

32

M

Lambeth, Surrey, England

Timothy MC CARTHY
Bricklayers Laborer

U

49

M

Ireland

George ATKINS
Bricklayers Laborer

U

46

M

Walworth, Surrey, England

John SMITH
Tanner

M

41

M

Gt Coggeshall, Essex, England

Mary SMITH
Laundress

M

40

F

Dublin, Ireland

William SMITH
Bricklayers Laborer

U

48

M

London, Middlesex, England

Thomas WRIGHT
Bricklayer

U

40

M

Dublin, Ireland

Thomas ANDERSON
Ag Lab

M

44

M

London, Middlesex, England

Mary ANDERSON

Laundress

M

40

F

London, Middlesex, England

John CARTER
Ag Lab

M

43

M

Dover, Kent, England

Elizabeth CARTER
Laundress

M

41

F

Brighton, Sussex, England

Stephen HAWKINS
Painter

U

60

M

South Molton, Devon, England

Edward JOHNSON
Painter

U

44

M

Calcutta, East Indies

George BULL

Dock Laborer

U

45

M

Dartford, Kent, England

John GILL
Dock Laborer

U

24

M

London, Middlesex, England

Louisa REECE
Laundress

M

40

F

London, Middlesex, England

Alexander REECE
Scholar

U

7

M

London, Middlesex, England

John MC CARTHY
Dock Laborer

U

59

M

Cork, Ireland

For more information about workhouses click [here](#) or [here](#).