

10,250 in 1841 to 23,089 in 1851 must represent a real increase, and a detailed study of Chester shows that there was a substantial rise in numbers in that city during that decade.⁸ The reasons for the increase included the development of the railway construction industry, with many thousands of navvies seeking temporary accommodation, the increase in immigration from Ireland particularly as a result of the Famine from 1846, and the effects of the new Poor Law of 1834 that, according to Henry Mayhew, encouraged vagrancy by establishing casual wards in workhouses. The number of lodging houses steadily decreased in the late nineteenth century, although many of substantial size are recorded in the censuses of 1891 and 1901, and some, as in Banbury, continued well into the twentieth century.

Common lodging houses should also be seen in the context of a hierarchy of accommodation that was available for travellers. Few of those who used the principal coaching inns, the *Red Lion* or *White Lion* in Banbury, or the *George* in Oxford would ever have stayed at lodging houses. Below such prestigious establishments was a range of inns, at the lower end of which were establishments whose inmates might well on other occasions use lodging houses. At an inn in Sheep Street, Northampton, in 1851 there was a resident staff of four and eight guests including a cloth manufacturer born in Manchester and an auctioneer, but also two Irish dealers in fancy goods, and an Irish couple who were hawkers of earthenware, occupations that might equally well have been found in a lodging house. At a level slightly above lodging houses were households whose heads, engaged in particular industries, were accustomed to take in, often for short periods, members of their own trades who had migrated to the town, something that can readily be observed amongst shoemakers in Northampton, or hosiery workers in Leicester. Mayhew's observations show that itinerants graded lodging houses and drew distinctions between those that were open to all and those where some kind of test of respectability was imposed.⁹ Below lodging houses in the hierarchy were the mendicant houses, such as that operated near the bridge by the Banbury Mendicity Society between 1834 and 1838.¹⁰ The equivalent in Oxford, the 'Receiving House of the

⁸ M. Glazier, 'Common Lodging Houses in Chester 1841-71', R. Swift, ed., *Victorian Chester* (1996), Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, pp.58-59, 64.

⁹ Mayhew, *London Labour*; Vol..I, pp. 258-61.

¹⁰ Trinder, *Victorian Banbury*, p.67.