

urban elegance, in Stamford, Ludlow and Bath, and in such small communities as Watlington and Woodstock. They were, with good reason, a cause of alarm to those responsible for the health, welfare and good order of urban communities, but they should not be seen simply as social problems. They had important functions in providing for the needs of skilled workers seeking employment or experience, in the informal pattern of retailing that supplied many of the needs of country people, in the provision of popular entertainment, and in the re-cycling of waste materials. They provided many links between provincial towns and the wider world, with London, with the state of trade along the routes tramped by skilled men looking for work, with most parts of Ireland, and with Germany. If we are to understand how towns worked in the nineteenth century we need to look at the operations of lodging houses.