

Widows' and Orphans' Funds

Introduction

A number of employers and charities operated funds for the benefit of widows and orphans.

There are also records relating to widows and orphans funds in the following entries in other sections of this guide (sections given in brackets):

- Brooks's Club (Occupational Pensions section)
- City of London Police Pensions (Occupational Pensions section)
- Corporation of London (Occupational Pensions section)
- Court of Requests, City of London (Occupational Pensions section)
- James Capel and Company: Gordon L. Jacobs and Company (Occupational Pensions section)
- Southgate (The Bourne) Methodist Church (Occupational Pensions section)

CLAIMANT WIDOWS' FUNDS (CLC/132)

The Claimant Widows' Funds supported the widows and orphans of clergy.

Account books of fines and benefactions and annual subscriptions to the funds for the support of widows and orphans of the clergy within the bills of mortality and in the county of Middlesex	1765 - 1766	CLC/132/MS10515
Ledger	1765 - 1811	CLC/132/MS33589

COAL METERS COMMITTEE: COAL METERS' BENEFIT SOCIETY AND WIDOWS' AID FUND (CLC/B/052)

The Coal Meters' Benefit Society and Widows' Aid Fund was established in 1863 and provided a weekly allowance to members who were incapable of performing their duties due to sickness, accident or other infirmity, and a sum of money on the death of members or their wives.

The committee required every Coal Meter to be a member of the society. There was a 1s entry fee and a weekly contribution of 1s 6d thereafter. Members received 24s per week for their first 26 weeks off work, 18s for the next 26 weeks and 12s 6d after that. The death allowance was 10s per week for the first year and 5s thereafter. A Widows' Aid fund was set up in April 1882. Members also seem to have receive a payment upon retirement when they ceased membership of the Society.¹

Papers, chiefly minutes, resolutions touching amendments to the constitution, statements of account and correspondence relating to the Coal Meters' Benefit Society and Widows' Aid Fund. Papers include: - Quarterly (Jan - Oct 1910, Jun 1912 - Dec 1920) and annual (1910 - 1920) statements of account; - election of officers (1914, 1917, 1918); - resolutions relating to various subjects including state national insurance (1912), annual Christmas grants, changes to the Society's benefits or rules, and proposals to dissolve the Society (1907 and 1916);	1886- 1920	CLC/B/052/MS10176
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¹ Information from the 1897 rules booklet (reference CLC/B/052/MS10176).

COAL METERS COMMITTEE: COAL METERS' BENEFIT SOCIETY AND WIDOWS' AID FUND (continued)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - papers relating to investments; - papers concerning the appointment of trustees; - a copy of the rules of the Society (1897); - papers regarding arrangements made on the death or retirement of members; and - several statements of the contributions made by members since the Society's establishment and the benefits provided by the Society. 		
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See also: Friendly Societies, Provident Funds.

CORPORATION OF LONDON (COL)

Miss Wilkes' Legacy for Freeman's Widows: a legacy from Mary (Polly) Wilkes (daughter of John Wilkes), who died in 1802, left the residuary of her estate to the senior Aldermen and Chamberlain of London to be applied towards the relief of the widows and children of decayed Freeman.²

Institution of Municipal and Country Engineers Widows and Orphans Benevolent Fund: In 1898 the Institution formed a Widows and Orphans Fund for the benefit of relatives of deceased members of the Institution. The Fund existed to provide temporary assistance to relatives in genuine need. Usually aid was given immediately following the death of the member, when finances of families were likely to be most adversely affected. All financial resources were raised through voluntary subscriptions. Though membership numbers were high during the 1920s and 30s, subscriptions only came from a small number of these members, with only around 52% of members subscribing to the Fund during this time. This meant that the donation of permanent pensions was not possible and temporary aid was the most effective form of assistance possible.

Poor Widows of Freeman Fund ledger	1870 - 1899	COL/CHD/TF/03/008
Miss Wilkes' Legacy acquittance book	1862 - 1882 1925 - 1939	COL/CHD/TF/03/021 COL/CHD/TF/03/009
Miss Wilkes' Legacy for Freeman's Widows accounts and acquittances	1823 - 1882	COL/CHD/TF/03/020
<p>Records of the Institution of Municipal and Country Engineers' Widows and Orphans Benevolent Fund. Includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes of annual general meetings of subscribers and orphans' fund committee meetings; - Annual reports; - Ledgers, receipts and payments books, and bank pass books; and - Trustees' correspondence (much of the correspondence included is between Ernest Edward Finch (City Engineer from 1915 to 1938, and also the Fund's Honorary Secretary and Treasurer from 1925 to 1939) and the fund-holding bank and between Finch and the Fund's trustees). 	1899-1938	COL/TSD/EG/08 (series)

See also: Occupational schemes, Poor Law.

² See John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 478 for the terms of Mary Wilkes' will.

CORPORATION OF TRINITY HOUSE (CLC/526)

Active elder brethren widows' annuity fund minutes of the trustees (and some copy court minutes)	1849 - 1861	CLC/526/MS30232
Active elder brethren widows' annuity fund accounts	1848 - 1861	CLC/526/MS30233
Active elder brethren widows' annuity fund correspondence and memoranda about the establishment, operation and winding up of the fund, 1848-61, with balance sheets, 1853-61	1848 - 1861	CLC/526/MS30234
Active elder brethren widows' annuity fund rules	1848	CLC/526/MS30235
Clerks' widows and orphans fund rules and draft deeds of establishment	1843 - 1844	CLC/526/MS30237
Clerks' widows and orphans fund dissolution correspondence and agreements about its takeover by the Corporation	1890 - 1908	CLC/526/MS30238
Clerks' widows and orphans fund volume including profit and loss accounts, 1907-31, and list of pensioners, 1909-42	1909 - 1942	CLC/526/MS30239

See also: Almshouses, Charity Pensions, Occupational schemes.

EALING VESTRY (ACC/2208)

Henry Chappell's charity benefited poor widows. It merged with two other organisations to form the United Charities in 1912, later merging with additional charities to become the Brentford and Chiswick Merged Charities.

Accounts of Trustees of Mr Henry Chappell's Charity (Old Brentford)	Jan 1862 - Dec 1888	ACC/2208/E/234
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See also: Almshouses, Poor Law.

LEGAL AND GENERAL ASSURANCE SOCIETY LIMITED (CLC/B/144)

Staff widows' and orphans' fund committee minute book	1934 - 1935, 1949 - 1958	CLC/B/144/MS36316
Staff widows' and orphans' fund miscellaneous papers, including accounts, correspondence, reports etc.	1928 - 1950	CLC/B/144/MS36317

See also: Miscellaneous (Pension Companies), Occupational schemes.

LONDON FIRE BRIGADE WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND (ACC/1730)

The London Fire Brigade Widows and Orphans Fund, also known as the Captain's Club, came into existence in 1882. The Club was administered by a Committee. In the first year the members (about 520) paid 6d per week. On retirement the benefit was £2 a year for each year served, plus a further death benefit if membership was continued. If a fireman was killed on duty the widow received £50 plus a pension of £2 per month. Large donations from the public were needed to maintain these grants, and the trustees undertook fundraising measures.

In 1901 the subscription was increased to one shilling per week and benefits were amended, with the widow's pension ceasing and assistance with funeral costs began to be offered. In 1911 an annuity of ten shillings a week was established for orphans of firemen. By the end of the First World War the Club was responsible for £45,400 and membership was in the region of 1600. In 1959 the

Club became a Friendly Society to save tax. By 1961 there were approximately 2000 active and 1500 retired members. The orphans numbered 63.

In 1965 the Club was united with the West Ham Widows and Orphans Fund. Also in 1970-1971, following the decimalization of currency and in an attempt to counter the rise in inflation which was devaluing the benefit payment of £200, a 'new scheme' was introduced. Units of 15p were paid weekly giving benefits subject to a person's age on joining. In the 1980s the active membership stood at 2805 with 1083 retired members. 32 orphans received a benefit allowance of £1 per week plus a Christmas bonus of £15. Payment of death benefit could be obtained from holding a maximum of ten units. The existence of the Club was brought to the attention of all new recruits and they were entitled to join at any time up to the age of 45 years.

Records of the London Fire Brigade Widows and Orphans Fund, including minutes; annual reports; rules; subscription books; cash books; and distress fund accounts	1906-1980	ACC/1730 (fonds)
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See also: Occupational schemes.

PARISH OF SAINT SEPULCHRE, HOLBORN: CITY OF LONDON (P69/SEP)

Account book of pensions paid to widows of men of the City Militia, East and West Regiments.	1799 - 1808	P69/SEP/B/062/MS03212
Account book of pensions paid to widows of men of the County Militia.	1799 - 1814	P69/SEP/B/063/MS03213

See also: Charity Pensions, Poor Law.

SOCIETY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WIDOWS OF THE CLERGY (CLC/103)

The Society provided benefits for widows of Clergy upon petition.

Petitions to the Society	1783 - 1784	CLC/103/MS33590
Letters patent of the Society for the Benefit of the Widows of Clergymen transferring £2000 to the Corporation for the Relief of Poor Widows and Children of Clergymen (also known as the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy).	1790	CLC/103/MS33591

WHIFFEN AND SONS LIMITED (MANUFACTURING CHEMISTS) (B/WHF)

Widows of employees' pension cash book	1926-1933	B/WHF/055
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See also: Occupational schemes.

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF APOTHECARIES (CLC/L/AA)

Widows fund account book	1815 - 1895	CLC/L/AA/G/001/MS08260
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