

Eighteenth-century stationers and the distribution of Poor Law settlement certificates in East Kent

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We are fairly well informed about the business activities of English printers and booksellers in the eighteenth century.¹ If their names occur in the imprints of the books they produced and sold, they can be searched for on the database of the English Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC) and will probably be listed in the British Book Trade Index (BBTI).² This is much less likely to be true for their book-trade colleagues, the stationers, unless they also functioned as publishing booksellers. Many stationers are listed in the Bibliographical Society's dictionaries of the book trades³ and the London Book Trades (LBT) database often has additional biographical information not found in other sources,⁴ but there is far less coordinated information about the range of their activities. The present investigation looks at the role of stationers in the eighteenth century in supplying printed blank forms for the needs of churchwardens and overseers of the poor in the administration of the Poor Laws in England.

This trade was first of all served by stationers working in the City of London and, from later in the century, also by printers in provincial towns. This activity does not seem to be covered in volume five of the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* which does not list the Poor Laws in its index, though the law stationers are mentioned as a category developing at the end of the eighteenth century.⁵ Maurice Rickards's *Encyclopedia of Ephemera* has a two-page entry for 'Forms' but mainly discusses nineteenth and twentieth-century examples; there is another extensive entry for 'Poor-law papers' which gives details of the settlement system but again concentrates on the later period and does not mention the role of the stationers in

¹ The author expresses his warm thanks to the Cathedral Archivist at Canterbury, Mrs Cressida Williams, and to her staff who have been unfailingly helpful in facilitating access to the documents examined in the Cathedral Archives.

² Web sites of ESTC and BBTI at <http://estc.bl.uk/> and <http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> (May 2021).

³ Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667*, London 1907.
H.R. Plomer, with E.R. McC. Dix, G.J. Gray and R.B. McKerrow, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1668 to 1725*, ed. Arundell Asdaile, Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the Oxford University Press 1922.

H.R. Plomer, G. H. Bushnell and E.R. McC. Dix, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775*, Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the Oxford University Press 1932.

Plomer (H. R.) and others, *Dictionaries of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1557-1775*, 4 vols. in 1 (reprint in compact form of the original volumes published 1907-1932), London 1992.

⁴ London Book Trades Database (hereafter cited as LBT): <http://lbt.bodleian.ox.ac.uk> (May 2021).

⁵ Michael Turner, 'Personnel within the London book trade', *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 5, 1695–1830, Cambridge 2009, p. 326.

distributing the forms.⁶ The record for their activity in the earlier period is patchy but the supply of blank forms by London stationers near the Inns of Court was already a feature of the final years of the seventeenth century.

The Poor Relief Act of 1662 specified that the parish where you lived would have to support you out of the rates if you became unable to support yourself. Parish officers could remove from their parish to the original parish of settlement any person who rented for under £10 a year and who was 'likely to be chargeable to the parish' which he 'had come to inhabit'.⁷

A further Act of 1697 introduced a system of Settlement Certificates. If you wanted to leave your parish and were not a £10 renter, your local church wardens could issue a Settlement Certificate recognising you as a 'settled inhabitant'. The certificate was authenticated by two Justices of the Peace and then handed over to your new parish to notify it that if you fell on hard times there, your original parish of settlement accepted a liability to support you.⁸ These settlement certificates are the most frequently surviving poor-law documents in parish archives, as it was important for the parish officers to retain them in case a new inhabitant fell on hard times at some future date, perhaps several decades later. Other related printed blank forms include authorisations for the removal of persons lacking settlement certification, records of appeals against such decisions, passes for transporting persons back to their parish of settlement, as well as bastardy forms recording infants who would need the support of the parish rates and many apprenticeship indentures for children from the parish workhouse or from families fallen on hard times.

Settlement certificates for the late seventeenth century are mostly hand-written but the London stationers quickly realised that there was a market for printed blank forms for sale to parish authorities across the country. The present investigation has looked at eight parish archives in East Kent deposited at the Cathedral Archives in Canterbury.⁹ Some have several hundred settlement certificates from before 1800, testifying to the frequency of migration, mainly within the region, though there are a few cases from much further afield.

A typical settlement form is printed on a half-sheet of paper, usually pot or chancery half-sheets (approximately 30 x 20 cm), with some on larger crown paper (approximately 38 x 23 cm). They mostly have a royal coat of arms printed at the head. In the first section, the church wardens and overseers of the poor of a parish name themselves and the inhabitants who they wish to declare are legally settled there. Their declaration is signed, sealed and witnessed. The second section is addressed to the churchwardens and overseers of the parish the named persons intend to move to. It is validated by two justices of the peace who declare that they

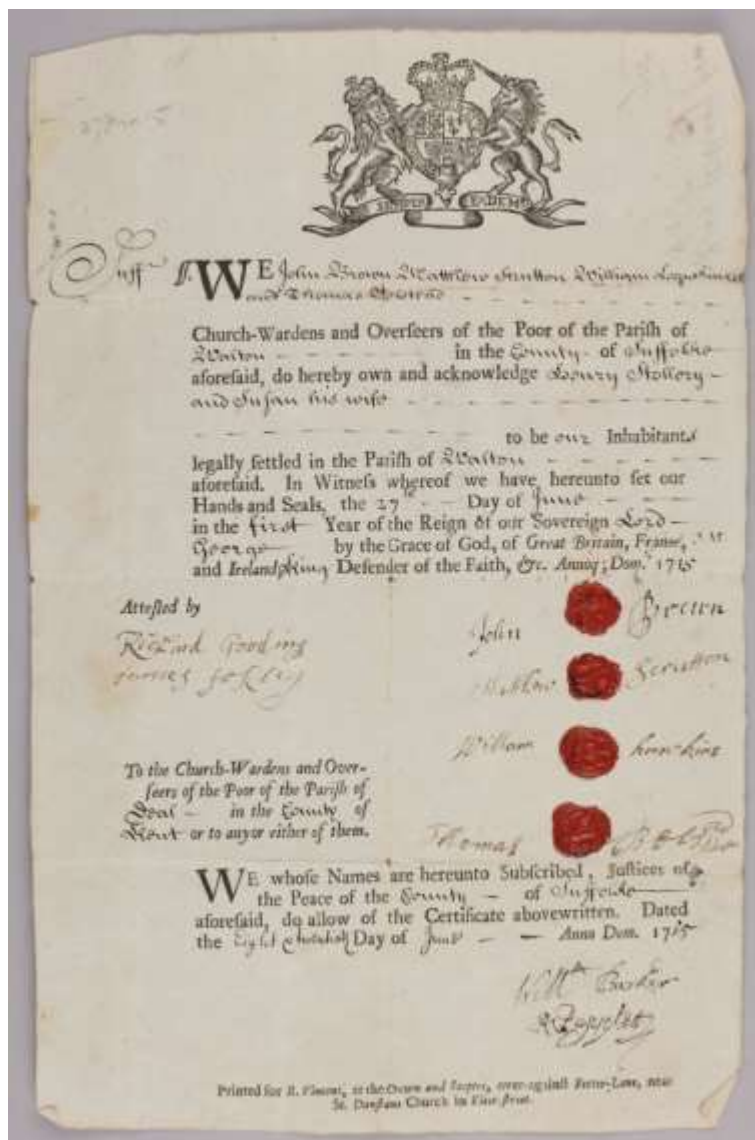
⁶ Maurice Rickards, *The Encyclopedia of ephemera*, edited and completed by Michael Twyman, London, 2000, pp. 150–152, 243–244.

⁷ Norma Landau, 'Who was subjected to the Laws of Settlement? Procedure under the Settlement Laws in Eighteenth-Century England', *Agricultural History Review*, 43, 1995, pp. 139–159: p. 140.

⁸ Landau, p. 141.

⁹ A ninth parish deposit was examined for St Mary, Chilham (Canterbury Cathedral Archives (hereafter cited as CCA) U3/191/13). It had a number of other printed poor-law forms but no surviving settlement certificates.

are satisfied that the above declaration is valid and then add their signatures and seals.



Settlement certificate from Walton, Suffolk, to the parish of St Leonard, Deal, Kent, 1715 (Canterbury Cathedral Archives U3/95/13/A/109).

Image reproduced courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

The text of the forms evolved during the course of the eighteenth century, with the certification of settlement becoming simpler and the authorisation by the justices of the peace becoming longer. A typical early settlement form,¹⁰ with the blank spaces shown as text in square brackets, might read:

To wit. We [AB, CD] Church-wardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of [P] in the [county or city] of [Q] aforesaid, do hereby own and acknowledge [EF, GH] to be [our] Inhabitant[s] legally settled in the Parish of [P] aforesaid. In Witness whereof, we have hereunto set our Hands and Seals, the [nth] Day of [month] in the [nth] Year of the Reign of our Sovereign [Lord], [George] by

¹⁰ Based on, St Nicholas, Ash (CCA U3/274/13A/28), 1723, J. Coles, Stationer.

the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, [King] Defender of the Faith, &c. Annoq; Dom. 17[]

Attested by [several lines of blank space for the signatures and seals of AB, CD, EF and GH and witnesses]

To the Church-wardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of [Y] in the [county] of [Z] or to any or either of them.

We whose Names are hereunto subscribed, Justices of the Peace of the [county] of [Q] aforesaid, do allow of the Certificate above-written. Dated the [nth] Day of [month] Anno Dom. 17[]

The stationer issuing a batch of certificates usually had his address printed at the foot of the form, for example 'Printed for John Coles Stationer, at the Sun and Miter next the Inner-Temple-gate Fleet-street'.¹¹ These imprints provide evidence for the activity of families and partnerships of London stationers extending through the eighteenth century and give some clues as to the extent of their business. The surviving printed blanks are either undated or dated only by the century or the decade ('17 ' or '175 ') to be completed by the user: the date cited for each in this study is the earliest date of use entered by the parish officers on a surviving form.

The imprint acts as an advertisement for obtaining further copies. London parishes may well have purchased blank forms directly from the issuing stationers in the Fleet Street area but in the provinces it is more likely that local stationers would order forms from London to sell on to local parishes.

A large number of surviving forms lack an imprint, possibly because it was cut off; occasionally it is possible to match such a form with a complete copy naming the London stationer for whom it was printed; there are a few examples where an imprint has been cut away incompletely, leaving a trace of the tops of the letters to show that it had an imprint when issued.¹² It may be that the imprint would be cut off by a provincial stationer to discourage parish officers in the provinces from re-ordering directly from a stationer in London.

A total of 1,225 printed forms have been examined. There are also many handwritten forms, especially for the early period. These have been excluded from this study. The 1,225 surviving printed forms represent 175 different blank forms, each of these different forms being found an average of seven times in the archives examined. Some are only found once, especially forms submitted from far distant places. The form used most frequently occurs 36 times and is found in six of the parish archives examined. Another form, issued locally in 1773 by T. Smith and Son, Canterbury, is found in all eight East Kent parish deposits, 25 copies in all. These figures, from just eight sets of parish documents, give some indication of the enormous quantity of blank settlement forms which must have been printed and distributed over the entire country during the eighteenth century.

¹¹ St Lawrence, Deal (CCA U3/95/13), c. 1723.

¹² For example, a form received by St Mary, Chartham, in 1738 from the nearby parish of Chilham has the foot cut off, leaving just enough of the text of the imprint to see that it was issued by John Coles, probably in 1736 (CCA U3/154/13A/49).

Figure 1 shows the numbers of forms seen for each parish (excluding handwritten forms), together with the number of different printed forms (editions) identified for each parish.

Location in East Kent	Parish	Number of documents examined	Number of different forms	Date range	Canterbury Cathedral Archives call number
Ash	St Nicholas	137	54	1705–1791	U3/274/13A
Canterbury	Cathedral parish	5	5	1731–1777	U3/100/13A
Canterbury	St Dunstan	109	46	1708–1791	U3/141/13A
Chartham	St Mary	156	64	1707–1793	U3/154/13A
Deal	St Leonard	221	86	1701–1794	U3/95/13A
Faversham	St Mary of Charity	322	94	1698–1800	U3/146/13A
Hernhill	St Michael	46	32	1699–1794	U3/235/13A
Sandwich	St Clement	229	68	1718–1794	U3/172/13A

Table 1: Settlement certificates in eight East Kent parish deposits at Canterbury Cathedral Archives

How are the 175 different ‘editions’ of these settlement certificate forms to be distinguished? Forms with a stationer’s name and address are an obvious first method of classification. However, some of these are numerous: the firm of John Coles has 42 identifiable different editions of the form in a career spanning forty years. Most forms have a royal coat of arms at the head: I have recorded over 60 different ones, with variations for successive monarchs from William III (C. Coningsby, 1700), Queen Anne (with the motto ‘Semper eadem’), through the three Georges (sometimes with a superscript ‘G R’, ‘G II R’ or ‘G III R’). The arms are inadequate to distinguish forms issued in successive years by the same stationer from the same address, who may have owned the block used to print them or may have used the same printer who owned the block. The coats of arms are not separately printed from engraved plates; they are either wood blocks or type metal, either engraved or dabbed, and were printed along with the letterpress text of the forms.

More successful as distinguishing characteristics are the texts themselves. A series of keywords and typographical characteristics have been very useful. Does the form open with the formula ‘ff’, ‘ff’, ‘To wit’ or ‘(To wit)’? Does the opening sentence of the form have the spelling ‘Church Wardens’ or ‘Church-Wardens’ or ‘Church-wardens’ or ‘Churchwardens’? Are the words ‘In Witness’ set in roman type, italics, blackletter or large and small caps? How many lines are there in the final declaration by the Justices of the Peace? This can vary from 4 lines in earlier forms to 13 or 14 lines in later, more wordy versions. Even these and similar characteristics do not work for forms issued word-for-word and line-by-line by the same stationer with the same address and the same coat of arms. The final recourse is to the positioning of the blank spaces on the form for insertion of names, places and dates, etc. A record of the words on either side of a blank space in relation to the text in the lines above or

below typically suffices to distinguish one apparently identical form from another: two or three more such checks in one document are sufficient to confirm this.

Although this enquiry concentrates mainly on printed settlement certificates, the stationers specialising in this trade also stocked other forms for a wide variety of administrative purposes. John Lenthall advertised his range of blank forms in his imprint in 1716:¹³

Sold by J. Lenthall, Stationer, at the Talbot against St. Dunstan's-Church in Fleet-street, London, Where are sold all sorts of Blanks.

All the major law stationers treated below seem to have offered a range of blank forms for poor law and other administrative uses.

There follows a chronological list of the businesses involved in the sale of blank poor-law forms so far as it can be ascertained from the East Kent records so far examined. The surviving evidence consists mainly of settlement certificates, with occasional examples of various types of removal orders and other related poor-law printed forms.

The earliest dated printed settlement certificate which has come to light so far carries the date '169 ' at the end of each of the two sections of the document.¹⁴ Unfortunately, it has no imprint at the foot, either because it never had one, or possibly because the imprint was cut off as the batch of forms passed into the hand of a local stationer for onward sale to local parish authorities.

Robert Vincent

The earliest datable form with an imprint which has come to light was issued by Robert Vincent in about 1698. Plomer and BBTI record his trade dates as 1691–1713; he started as an apprentice in 1680, gained his freedom in 1688 (LBT). He took his son, also called Robert, as an apprentice in 1708; they were later in partnership from 1716 to 1730 (BBTI). Robert junior traded on his own after this date. He was an Assistant at the Stationers Company in 1741 (LBT).

A search of ESTC shows that the Vincents issued a wide range of books and stationery: law reports, legal manuals, prayer books, plays, tax collectors' forms, sermons, writing copybooks, taxation, interest rates, lotteries.

The tables below list the surviving forms for each firm of stationers, giving dates of use, statistics of survival, and a note of cases where the parish of settlement is distant from East Kent. Settlement forms issued by the Vincents in the East Kent sample are:

¹³ CCA U3/95/13A/120.

¹⁴ CCA U3/235/13A/1 with no imprint, deposited by the parish of St Michael, Hernhill, recording an immigrant from Borden to Hernhill; dated by hand 1699. The entries in this form have a number of false starts and corrections, suggesting that the churchwardens were not familiar with this method of complying with the requirements of the Act.

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued from a parish beyond Kent
1698	3	1	R. Vincent	
1702	1	1	R. Vincent	
1703	2	1	R. Vincent	
1705	1	1	R. Vincent	Hornchurch, Essex to Ash
1708–1712	6	3	R. Vincent	St Helen, City of London, to Deal
1708	2	2	R. Vincent?	
1710–1721	5	4	R. Vincent	
1712, 1713	5	3	R. Vincent	
1714	3	2	R. Vincent	
1714, 1717	3	1	R. Vincent	
1715	2	1	R. Vincent	
1715, 1725	4	2	R. Vincent	Walton, Suffolk to Deal
1716–1726	6	3	R. Vincent	
1716–1730	9	3	R. Vincent	
1719, 1721	3	1	R. Vincent	
1719	1	1	R. Vincent	St Katherine Creechurch, London, to Deal
1719–1724	17	4	R. and R. Vincent	East Greenwich to Hernhill
1717–1729	21	7	R. and R. Vincent	
1724	3	1	R. and R. Vincent	
1726–1728	3	2	R. Vincent and Son	Ewell, Surrey to Deal
1728–1730	3	3	R. Vincent and Son	Brightelmstone (Brighton) to Deal
1731	1	1	R. Vincent and Son	Coventry to Faversham
1733	5	4	R. Vincent and Son	Orsett, Essex, to Faversham
1733	1	1	R. Vincent and Son	

Table 2. Settlement certificates issued by the firm of Robert Vincent, 1698–1733

The addresses recorded for the firm are:

- 1699 Printed for Robert Vincent in Clifford's-Inn-Lane in Fleetstreet.
- 1702 Printed for R. Vincent, in Clifford's-Inn-Lane, Fleetstreet.
- 1710 Printed for R. Vincent, at the Crown and Scepter over-against S. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet.
- 1712 Printed for R. Vincent, at the Crown and Scepter over-against Fetter-lane, near S. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet.

- 1717 Printed for R. Vincent, and R. Vincent, Junr. at the Crown and Sceptre, over-against Fetter-lane, near St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street.
- 1726 Printed for R. Vincent and Son, at the Crown and Sceptre, over-against. Fetter-lane, near St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street.
- 1731 Printed for R. Vincent and Son, at the Crown and Scepter in Ludgate-Street, near St. Paul's Church.

In addition to settlement certificates, there are also printed removal order forms issued by the Vincents in 1710, 1717, 1723 and 1726.

Christopher Coningsby

The next earliest example found in the sample was issued by the London stationer Christopher Coningsby whose name appears in a form used in 1700 with the imprint:

Printed for Chr. Coningsby, at the Golden Turks-Head in Fleetstreet.¹⁵

In this case, we are dealing with a fairly well-known stationer. BBTI lists his apprenticeship in 1679 and his trading dates as a stationer and bookseller as 1687 to 1720. Plomer records that 'He sold legal forms of all kinds, warrants for land tax, licences for alehouses, and general literature'.¹⁶ ESTC has entries for him from 1691 to 1719/1720 as a publisher of writing copy books, shorthand, tax collection forms, ready reckoners, anagrams, commerce, cookery, medicine, politics and general literature, as well as blank forms. The Sir Ambrose Heal collection of trade cards in the British Museum has a copy of Coningsby's card:

At the Golden Turks Head ... Are Sold All sorts of Blank Bonds, Writs, Warrants, Licences and other useful Blanks. Steell [sic] Pens, Ink Bottles or any other Stationary [sic] Wares. Deeds or other Writings fairly Engrossed or Copyed [sic]. Also the Best Ink for Records made & Sold by Chr Coningsby.¹⁷

He was succeeded by 1728 by his wife **Anne Coningsby** for whom there is a single surviving settlement form bearing the printed date '172'.¹⁸ She is not recorded in the usual sources as active in the trade. The London Book Trades database (LBT) records her maiden name as Harrison.¹⁹

In the East Kent sample of forms, I have found eight settlement certificates issued by the Coningsbys; one has the imprint cut off but matches Coningsby's other forms:

¹⁵ CCA U3/146/13A/18; from the parish of Davington to St Mary, Faversham, dated by hand 1700.

¹⁶ Plomer, *1668–1725*, p. 79.

¹⁷ A copy of his trade card is in the Heal Collection (Heal, 111.42): <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG222738>.

¹⁸ CCA U3/95/13A/154, deposited by the parish of St Leonard, Deal, recording an immigrant from West Langdon in 1730.

¹⁹ LBT/03820

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued in a parish beyond Kent
1700, 1703, 1727	4	3	Chr. Coningsby	
1705	2	2	Chr. Coningsby	
1707	5	1	Chr. Coningsby	
1711	5	3	Chr. Coningsby	St Bride, London, to Deal
1711	1	1	Chr. Coningsby	
1712	1	1	[Chr. Coningsby?]	
1717, 1727, 1730	3	3	Chr. Coningsby	
1728, 1730, 1731, 1732	7	6	Anne Coningsby	

Table 3. Settlement certificates issued by the firm of Christopher Coningsby, 1700–1728

There are also removal orders printed for **Elizabeth Coningsby** at the Ink Bottle dated 1724 and 1726. There is no record for her in BBTI or LBT but she was presumably a family member operating at the same address.

The addresses recorded on Coningsby's forms are:

- 1701 at the Golden Turks-Head in Fleet street
- 1711 at the Ink-Bottle in Flower-de-luce-Court near Fetter-lane-end, Fleetstreet.
- 1711, 1717 at the Ink Bottle against Cliffords-Inn Back Gate in Fetter-lane, Fleetstreet.
- 1729 at the Ink Bottle in Fetter-lane, Fleet-street.

In 1691 Coningsby took **Philip Barrett** (or Barret) as an apprentice (see below).

William Warter

Only a single settlement certificate blank form for William Warter was found (in two copies from two parishes, dated 1703 and 1705); he was the oldest of the group of stationers dealing in this trade. BBTI records that he was apprenticed in 1668 and worked as a stationer from 1684 to 1709. It records him as a publisher of maps and as a playing-card maker. ESTC has just two entries for him: R176811 is a map showing the booths and attractions of the frost fair on the Thames in 1683/1684; R232338 is *Directions to young clerks in the court of Kings Bench* (1680) written by his father, the late John Warter. His address was at the Mitre Tavern:

- 1703 Printed for W. Warter, Stationer, under the Miter-Tavern in Fleet-street, London.²⁰

Warter was in partnership with his former apprentice **John Lenthall** from 1708 until his retirement in 1709.

²⁰ CCA U3/95/13A/68, deposited by the parish of St Leonard, Deal, recording an immigrant from Bridge in 1705.

John Lenthall

BBTI lists Lenthall as an apprentice of **William Warter** in 1699, freeman of the Stationers Company from 1706 and in partnership with Warter in 1708/1709. Plomer records that he ‘sold packs of cards, maps, and general stationery’, working ‘at the Talbot against St. Dunstan’s Church in Fleet-street, London, Where are sold all Sorts of Blanks’.²¹ ESTC has six items printed for Lenthal: engraved arithmetic tables; card games and cards; instructions on carving; and forms for registering Quakers, but it lists no poor-law forms. Lenthall’s settlement certificates are distinguished by the use of two wood-cut initials. As noted above, his imprints state that he ‘sold all sorts of blanks’. His address was ‘at the Talbot against St. Dunstan’s Church in Fleet-street, London’.

Four settlement certificates sold by Lenthall are found in the East Kent sample:

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued in a parish beyond Kent
1716, 1717	2	1	J. Lenthall	
1717, 1718	2	2	J. Lenthall	
1718	2	1	J. Lenthall	
1724, 1726	4	3	J. Lenthall	

Table 4. Settlement certificates issued by the firm of John Lenthall, 1716–1724

A printed removal order form is also found, dated 1713 (St Leonard, Deal, for St Mary, Dover). To judge from the small number of copies recorded, Lenthall’s business was not as substantial as that of the Vincents and was smaller than that of the Coningsbys.

Philip Barrett

The LBT database records that Barrett was an apprentice of **Christopher Coningsby** (1691, freed in 1698) and that **John Coles** (below) was among Barrett’s apprentices.²² BBTI gives his dates of activity as a bookseller and stationer as 1702–1745 but this last date must refer to his son, also Philip Barrett, who had also been his apprentice (bound 1722); the elder Barrett died in late 1725 or early 1726. ESTC lists a few small pamphlets co-published by Philip Barrett, and several single-sheet items including *Useful directions to gentlemen how to fix, order and keep their clocks and watches* (1711; ESTC T230787) and *The rates of servants and labourers wages by the year, assessed at the General-Quarter-Session of the Peace for the Sussex quarter sessions in 1725* (ESTC T198948). ESTC T177317 is a sermon published in 1728 which must be the work of the younger Philip Barrett.

²¹ Plomer, *1668–1725*, p. 187.

²² LBT/12010.

Barrett's imprint was

1714 Printed for Phil. Barrett, at the Mitre over against Chancery-Lane-End in Fleet-street

or simply

1720, 1724 Printed for P. Barrett, Stationer, in Fleet-Street.

By the late 1730s Philip Barrett junior had moved. His new imprint was

1739? Printed for P. Barrett, Stationer, in Bishop's-Court, near Lincoln's-Inn, London.

Surviving copies of printed settlement certificates sold by Barrett father and son are:²³

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued in a parish beyond East Kent
1716 [1714]	1	1	Phil. Barrett	
1718–1722	9	4	P. Barrett	Three forms from Chatham to Faversham
1722–1724	5	3	P. Barret	
1723, 1724	3	2	P. Barrett	
1727, 1728 [1724?]	4	2	P. Barrett	
1726, 1728 [1724?]	2	2	P. Barret	
1732–1734	3	2	Philip Barrett	
1745 [1739?]	1	1	P. Barrett	Worplesdon, Surrey, to Chartham
1742	1	1	Philip Barrett	

Table 5. Settlement certificates issued by the firm of Philip Barrett, 1714–1742

John Coles and successors

The other major London stationer offering blank settlement certificate forms was John Coles, whose firm and its successors operated from the 1720s into the following century. Coles had served his apprenticeship with **Philip Barrett** (1710, freed in November 1717). Coles seems to have been a significant player in the Stationers Company: he was chosen as an Assistant in 1754 and was a regular attender at meetings of the Court. In 1760 he became Under Warden and Upper Warden the following year. He was Master of the Company in 1762/1763 and attended the Court

²³ The first form has the hand-written date 1716 but has a coat of arms with the initials 'A R' and was presumable printed and sold before the Queen's death in 1714 (CCA U3/95/13A/121), issued by the authorities of the parish of St Alphege, Canterbury, to the parish of St Leonard, Deal.

Two sets of forms have hand-written dates later than the death of Barrett senior in 1725/1726. The son entered his apprenticeship in 1722 and was probably not old enough to take over the business at this point.

for a further six years.²⁴ He died in 1775. His presence in the higher reaches of the Company over a fifteen-year period suggest that his business was substantial and well-thought of.

Coles's forms are distinctive for the numbering system used from about 1740. The settlement certificates were number 18. The number was at first printed in small type at the far right of the imprint at the foot of the sheet, suggesting that it might have been intended just for internal warehouse use. It later moved prominently to the top left of the sheet as '(No. 18.)' or '[No. 18.]' which might indicate that it was useful for Coles's customers when re-ordering stocks of the forms. From the 1770s the settlement certificate number was changed to '[No. 45.]'. Other surviving forms from Coles's stock were numbered '60' (tithes due), '13' (removal orders; also later '38' and '39'), '16' (county-to-county removal orders).

The earliest imprint found for Coles is

1723 Printed for John Coles Stationer, at the Sun and Miter next the Inner-Temple-gate Fleet-street.

From about 1730 he had reduced this to simply 'Sold by J. Coles, Stationer, in Fleet-street.' suggesting that the business was sufficiently well-known not to need a detailed address. By the mid-1760s he was at the same address in partnership with his son as **J. Coles and Son**:

Sold by J. Coles and Son, Stationers, in Fleet Street.

changing from 1769 to add the street number:

Sold by J. Coles and Son, Stationers, [No. 21.] in Fleet-Street

The London Book Trades Database does not record a name for Coles's son who is not listed among his apprentices by LBT and was presumably not a member of the Stationers' Company.

One of Coles's apprentices was **Thomas Evans** (bound 1748, freed 1755).²⁵ After Coles's death in 1775, Evans traded as **Coles and Evans**, presumably in partnership with Coles junior, operating at the same address:

Sold by Coles and Evans, Stationers, No. 21. Fleet-Street.

Evans died in 1789 and the firm continued in a new partnership, apparently still led by Coles junior, as **Coles, Dunn and Knight**, recorded by BBTI as trading from 1791 to 1813.²⁶ The East Kent survey found a settlement certificate for the partnership dated 1800, numbered 'No. 45.' and removal orders dated 1793, 1795, 1799, 1807.

John Coles's surviving East Kent settlement certificates up to his death in 1775 are listed below, with two forms which have his name but later dates, possibly produced by his son.

²⁴ LBT/16093.

²⁵ LBT/17315.

²⁶ Five forms in the deposited archive of St Nicholas, Ash (CCA U3/274).

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued in a parish beyond East Kent
1723, 1724, 1729	8	4	John Coles	Great Bedwyn, Wiltshire, to Deal
1725–1729	17	3	J. Coles	Caversham, Oxfordshire, to Sandwich
1726	1	1	John Coles	
1726–1729	10	2	J. Coles	
1730	1	1	J. Coles	
1730–1736	11	4	J. Coles	Lansallos, Cornwall, to Sandwich
1731, 1732	2	2	J. Coles	
1732	2	1	J. Coles	All Hallows, Barking, London, to Deal
1732	1	1	J. Coles	
1734, 1735, 1736, 1744			J. Coles	
1734	7	3	J. Coles	St Margaret, Westminster, to Deal
1735–1737	11	3	J. Coles	
1736–1738	4	2	J. Coles	All Hallows, Lombard Street, London, to Canterbury
1736	2	1	J. Coles	
1736	1	1	J. Coles	
1737–1741	15	5	J. Coles	
1738–1746	17	5	J. Coles	
1739–1742	16	5	J. Coles	
1740	1	1	[J. Coles?]	
1741, 1745	2	1	J. Coles	
1741–1744	4	2	J. Coles	
1742–1749	9	4	J. Coles	Chatham to Sandwich
1744, 1745, 1752	6	2	J. Coles	
1744	4	2	J. Coles	
1745–1753	17	3	J. Coles	
1748–1755	9	4	J. Coles	Battle, Sussex, to Faversham
1751–1756, 1770, 1771	9	3	J. Coles	
1753–1756	11	5	J. Coles	
1754–1759, 1766	22	4	J. Coles	Richmond, Surrey, to Faversham
1757–1765	5	2	J. Coles	Rochester to Faversham
1758–1761, 1785	6	4	J. Coles	Bloomsbury, London, to Deal
1759, 1760	6	4	J. Coles	
1760–1766	25	5	J. Coles	
1760–1765	5	2	J. Coles	
1761	1	1	J. Coles	
1763–1767	9	5	J. Coles	East Hornden, Essex, to Chartham
1764	1	1	J. Coles	
1765–1767	2	2	J. Coles	Croydon to Deal
1774	1	1	[J. Coles]	Little Bowden, Northampton to Faversham
1779–1780			J. Coles [junior?]	
1781	1	1	J. Coles [junior?]	

Table 6. Settlement certificates issued by John Coles, 1723–1781

Coles also issued at least seven removal orders (1740, 1743, 1745, 1750, 1753, 1755, 1759) and can be assumed to have sold a wide range of similar administrative documents. This pattern also emerges for Coles's successor firms which also issued removal orders, bastardy examinations, etc.

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued in a parish beyond East Kent
1766-1770	4	2	J. Coles and Son	
1768, 1771	4	2	J. Coles and Son	Gravesend to Deal
1768-1772	14	4	J. Coles and Son	
1770-1780	12	5	J. Coles and Son	
1770-1784	10	4	J. Coles and Son	
1771-1777	23	3	J. Coles and Son	
1772-1782, 1793	14	5	J. Coles and Son	Beddington, Surrey, to Faversham
1775-1782	10	2	J. Coles and Son	
1776-1777	5	2	J. Coles and Son	
1777-1778	3	2	J. Coles and Son	
1793	1	1	Coles and Evans	
1794	1	1	Coles and Evans	
1800	1	1	Coles, Dunn and Knight	Rye, Sussex, to Faversham

Table 7. Settlement certificates issued by Coles's successors, 1766-1800

Three further members of the London book trade appear in the East Kent sample of poor-law blank forms, though no settlement certificates came to light.

John Fowler (died 1747) is almost unrecorded as a stationer. His name is not to be found in the Bibliographical Society's *Dictionaries*. The London Book Trades Database records his apprenticeship (bound 1702, freed in 1709: LBT/22724) and notes that his father was a bookseller in Northampton. The ESTC database records several books published by his father but has nothing for the son. LBT gives his address in 1716 and 1718 as Clifford's Inn, Fleet Street, Temple Bar. This is the address found in the imprint of a form for appeals against removal orders in 1723.²⁷ It is possible that he was a minor player in the market for poor-law blank forms in the period 1710 to 1740.

William Edwards is also missing from the *Dictionaries* but is found in BBTI and in LBT (LBT/18366) which records his freedom at the end of his apprenticeship in 1756 and states that his address was in Middle Temple in 1757, 1760, 1767 and 1770. He died in 1775. CCA U3-95/13D/30 is a removal form ('No. 16. County to County') for the removal of a 'Rogue and Vagabond' from St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex (London) to the parish of St Leonard, Deal, dated 1768, 'Sold by W. Edwards, Stationer, next the Temple-Cloisters.' He too probably played a minor role in the law stationery business.

²⁷ Parish of St Nicholas, Sturry (CCA U3/48/14C/2).

Thomas Cadell was of course a well-known London bookseller and publisher, in partnership for many years with William Strahan and then his son Andrew Strahan (Plomer; BBTI; LBT). A removal order (numbered ‘N^o. 51.’) has the imprint:

Printed by W. Strahan and M. Woodfall, Law-Printers to his Majesty; for T. Cadell, and sold only by the said T. Cadell, Bookseller in the Strand.

There are five copies of this form with the date 1796 from the parishes of Ash, Chartham and Deal.²⁸ Cadell also supplied a printed form for appeal against a refusal of the overseers to provide support (‘No. 63.’). It has the same imprint and probably is of the same date, though the printed date ‘one thousand seven hundred and [blank]’ has been crossed through and changed to 1808.²⁹

All the settlement certificates discussed so far were issued by stationers working in the City of London in the Fleet Street area near the Inns of Court. Churchwardens and overseers of the poor in East Kent will hardly have obtained their supply of the necessary forms directly from London. It is much more likely that they purchased them from local stationers who obtained them through their normal trade connections in London. Inevitably, as the book trade expanded nationally during the eighteenth century, provincial printers will have seen an opportunity to address this market.³⁰ Several provincial suppliers of poor law documents have come to light from the East Kent archives.

It is not surprising that **Canterbury** features in this trade. **James Abree** established a press in the city in 1717.³¹ No printed settlement certificates bearing his name have come to light so far but several removal orders from the 1720s have the imprint ‘Printed in Canterbury’. Abree was the only printer working in Canterbury until the late 1760s, so these can safely be attributed to him. Another removal order of 1729 has no imprint but uses the same coat of arms as the Abree forms. A later removal form dated 1768 with a printed heading ‘To the Governor or Master of the House of Correction in the City of Canterbury, and County of the same City’, was presumably printed in Canterbury by James Abree towards the end of his career.³²

²⁸ Copies in the deposited archives of St Nicholas, Ash (CCA U3/274/13D/46 and 54), St Mary, Chartham (CCA U3/154/13C/39), and St Leonard, Deal (CCA U3/95/13C/27 and 28).

²⁹ St Mary, Chilham (CCA U3/191/13/3).

³⁰ Michael Twyman writes ‘By the end of the century, categories of ephemera that had previously been available in the capital, and perhaps a few other large towns, were in common use by provincial tradesmen.’ (M. Twyman, ‘Printed ephemera’, in *CHBIB*, vol. 5, p. 69.

³¹ Richard Goulden, *A Biographical Dictionary of those engaged in the Book Trade in Kent, 1750–1900*, Croydon 2014, p. 26.

³² St Clement, Sandwich (CCA U3/172/13D/1).

Thomas Smith was established in Canterbury in the mid-1740s as a bookseller. From 1768 he was also a printer and newspaper publisher, in partnership with his son from 1769 to 1781.³³ Four versions of the Smiths' settlement certificates can be distinguished, all with a local distribution pattern.

Dates of use	Surviving copies	Parishes	Imprint	Form issued in a parish beyond East Kent
1769–1771	7	7	T. Smith and Son	
1771–1772	12	6	T. Smith and Son	
1771–1774	13	4	[T. Smith and Son?]	
1773--1783	25	7	T. Smith and Son	

Table 8. Settlement certificates issued by T. Smith and Son, 1769–1773

The firm of **Simmons and Kirkby** played a major role in the book trade in Canterbury from 1769 to the end of the century as printers, booksellers and newspaper proprietors.³⁴ They do not seem to have been very active in issuing law stationery requirements. A single copy of a bastardy order is dated 1790.³⁵ A removal order with the imprint 'Canterbury, printed by Simmons and Kirkby, 1800.' is found in 4 copies in three parish deposits.

A settlement certificate issued by the parish of Frittenden to the parish of Faversham dated 1792 has the imprint 'Cranbrook: Printed by S. Waters.' **Samuel Waters** was the first printer in **Cranbrook**. BBTI gives his dates of activity as 1789–1820. ESTC records four books produced by him in 1789–1791. He was also the schoolmaster and parish clerk in Cranbrook.³⁶

A similar picture can be painted for **Maidstone** where **John Blake** was a significant figure in the book trade from 1776 to his death in 1814.³⁷ He was a printer, bookseller, binder, newspaper proprietor as well as a stationer. ESTC records 269 items with his imprint, many of them local pieces, especially auction catalogues. The list includes some blank militia forms but does not record a settlement certificate, of which two copies are found in the East Kent parish deposits with the imprint 'Maidstone; Printed and Sold by J. Blake.' They were issued by two local parishes, Leeds (Kent) dated 1789 and Hollingbourne, 1792.

Another witness to an important provincial printer-publisher is a printed removal order for a rogue and vagabond dated 1757 with the imprint 'Sold by W. Dicey, in Northampton.' By this date **William Dicey** was a well-established figure in the trade in popular literature, based in **Northampton** with an important London operation managed by his son. The second line of the imprint continues 'Passes from County to County by Constable, &c.' advertising the availability of blank forms for poor law administrators. The removal form was used by the parish of Dingley,

³³ Goulden, p. 560.

³⁴ Goulden, pp. 373-374 and 548.

³⁵ St Nicholas, Sturry (CCA U3/48/14F/10).

³⁶ Goulden, p. 638.

³⁷ Goulden, pp. 78–79.

Northamptonshire, for the removal of Mary Price and her child from Dingley to Deal in Kent.³⁸

The final provincial town to feature in the survey is **Southwark**, at that time still considered as part of Surrey rather than London. A removal form for a rogue and vagabond issued by the parish of St Saviour, Southwark, to the parish of Chilham in Kent has the imprint 'Printed and sold by J. Andrews, at No. 177, the Corner of Falcon Court in the Borough where all sorts of Stationary Wares, and Printing Work done in the neatest Manner.' **J. Andrews** is a new book-trade name, not recorded in the Dictionaries, BBTI, LBT or ESTC. Another barely recorded stationer is **John Barbor** who is recorded by BBTI as working in Southwark in 1754/1755. His death in 1757 is noted by LBT.³⁹ ESTC has records for a John Barber working in the City of London from 1675 to 1741 who is almost certainly a different person. The imprint on a settlement certificate dated 'the Year of our Lord 174[blank]' reads 'Sold by John Barbor, Stationer, at the Golden Lyon, in the Borough of Southwark. with all sorts of Stationary Wares.'⁴⁰ Barbor must have worked in Southwark for at least eight years but has left almost no trace.

Finally, three settlement certificates with no imprint, each of which is unlike any of the London examples seen, may have been produced by other provincial printers. One, issued by the parish of Owston, West Riding of Yorkshire, in 1707 to the parish of St Mary, Faversham, has a different text and somewhat archaic spellings and was possibly printed in York or, less likely, in Leeds; another, issued by the parish of Hickling in Nottinghamshire in 1770, also to Faversham, was possibly printed in Nottingham.⁴¹ A form submitted by the parish of St Peter in the borough of Ipswich in Suffolk for a family intending to move to the parish of St Clement in Sandwich in 1745 looks like the typical London form but has a different arrangement of the standard paragraphs; it has no coat of arms and may have been printed locally by the Ipswich printer William Craighton.⁴² Each of these three forms is found in a single copy in the East Kent records examined.

How widely distributed were the forms which are found in our eight Kentish parish deposits? Most of the settlement certificates submitted to our East Kent parish officers were for a move from a nearby parish of settlement. One of the forms listed above for John Coles (with dates ranging from 1760 to 1766) was found in twenty-five copies in five of the parish deposits examined, all submitted from nearby East Kent parishes; several of the certificates held by the parish of St Clement, Sandwich, were from the parishes of St Peter and St Mary in the same town and will only have travelled a few hundred yards. Only a very small number of forms came from towns beyond East Kent, though some of these were from hundreds of miles away.

³⁸ CCA U3/95/13D/26.

³⁹ LBT/29275.

⁴⁰ CCA U3/95/13A/313, issued by the parish of St Saviour, Southwark, to the parish of St Leonard, Deal.

⁴¹ CCA U3/146/13A/46 and CCA U3/146/13A/358.

⁴² CCA U3/172/13A/121.

Blank forms printed in Canterbury or Cranbrook or Maidstone are hardly likely to have been purchased by churchwardens and overseers outside Kent (though the forms may have been issued locally and then sent on to parishes far and near, as required). Forms produced in London, however, might benefit from the capital's national book-trade distribution network and be bought to order by regional stationers for onward sale to parish officers in their area. What can the East Kent data tell us about this system?

The forms issued by London stationers appear to have had a nation-wide distribution. A number of those examined have one or two 'foreign' parishes of settlement in addition to East Kent locations. For example, a form sold by Robert Vincent in 1715 is found in four copies in our sample, three of them in the deposit from St Mary, Faversham, all for settlement from nearby parishes; the fourth copy, deposited by St Leonard, Deal, is to acknowledge the settlement in Walton, Suffolk, of 'Henry Stollery and Susan his wife' who plan to move to Deal.⁴³ One of the forms issued by John Coles in 1725 is found in 17 copies in three of the parish deposits; all the originating parishes are local except for one which was issued from Caversham in Oxfordshire in 1729 for someone intending to move to Sandwich in Kent.⁴⁴ One far-travelled example is among 35 surviving copies in 5 parish deposits, all originating in local parishes between 1733 and 1742 except for one copy from Sunderland, County Durham, in 1739.⁴⁵ This is one of the many forms with no imprint but it is clear that it must have been issued by a London stationer and sold round the country, since copies are to be found which were purchased by parish officers both in Kent and in County Durham. Other examples with one form of non-Kent origin in a batch of East Kent locations are from Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire,⁴⁶ Lansallos, Cornwall,⁴⁷ Widdrington, Northumberland,⁴⁸ Ipswich, Suffolk,⁴⁹ and several from London parishes. Although there are only two examples from as far away as County Durham and Northumberland, this confirms that the distribution was national, not restricted to the south of England or to the ecclesiastical province of Canterbury.

Having established that there must have been a nationwide pattern of widespread distribution of settlement certificate forms involving London-based stationers and a more local market served by provincial printer-stationers, is it possible to quantify the size of this trade during the eighteenth century? Figure 9 shows estimates which can be calculated from the East Kent settlement certificates examined for the 102 years up to the year 1800.⁵⁰

⁴³ CCA U3/95/13A/109.

⁴⁴ CCA U3/172/13A/42.

⁴⁵ CCA U3/172/13A/98.

⁴⁶ St Mary, Chartham (CCA U3/154/13A/5).

⁴⁷ St Clement, Sandwich (CCA U3/172/13A/48).

⁴⁸ St Leonard, Deal (CCA U3/95/13A/205).

⁴⁹ St Clement, Sandwich (CCA U3/172/13A/121).

⁵⁰ The figure for the number of parishes in England is taken from a tally of the number of parishes in each county in the provinces of Canterbury and York derived from an interactive map on the web site <https://www.familysearch.org/mapp/> (September 2021).

A	Number of East Kent parish deposits examined	8	
B	Number of printed settlement certificate editions identified	171	
C	Total number of settlement forms examined	1,268	
D	Average number of certificates in parish deposits up to 1800	159	C/A
E	Average number of settlement transactions per parish each year	1.6	D/100
F	Average number of settlement form editions produced each year	1.7	B/100
G	Approximate number of parishes in England	12,000	
H	Estimate of number of settlement forms required each year	19,000	E*G

Table 9. Estimates of annual production and use of settlement certificates

Assuming that the eight East Kent parishes examined are typical of the whole country for the whole of the eighteenth century, these figures suggest that parish authorities might deal with one or two settlement cases each year on average. The stationers and their printers must have been providing at least two new editions of settlement certificates each year and probably more. It is quite likely that a systematic examination of groups of settlement certificates in other regions would reveal further numbers of distinct editions which would increase the probable number of new editions each year.

There is no evidence as to the number of copies in each batch produced but it is likely to have amounted to several thousand copies. The estimate above for the total annual production (19,000 copies) would suggest either large edition sizes or many editions yet to be discovered. And of course there were all the other varieties of forms required for the poor-law administrators. The numbering system used by Coles and others suggests that many types of forms and administrative documents were kept in stock, indicating a successful and long-standing business model for the small group of stationers involved in the London trade.

The present investigation has highlighted the activity of several major firms involved in supplying law stationery for the administration of the poor laws and has identified several smaller London players and some of the provincial printers who sought to benefit from the need for documentation for the workings of the poor laws.