

his friends. On the way back on the coach from London, the weather being cold, he drank a great deal of brandy and became intoxicated. When he arrived in Woodbridge he went to a public house, 'which was infested with bad girls of the common sort and being drunk and my time not being out till the next night I was easily led away with one of them though I had never given up myself to them before'.

The Ipswich Journal and Suffolk Chronicle record some interesting details about the women and children of soldiers in the Royal Bucks Militia, when it left Woodbridge for Nottingham after two months in the Barracks. Nottingham was a centre for Luddism, which took the form of frame breaking. Mayett stayed behind to accompany the baggage train, and must have witnessed what followed. In February 1812 the Guardians of the Poor in Woodbridge provided £30 for the women and children who went with the baggage. However, by the time they reached Stowmarket there were 'scenes of very great distress' among the 200 or more women and 117 children. The former were given one shilling, and children sixpence each chargeable to the rates. The newspapers indignantly charged the authorities with not providing the 'wretched and helpless followers of our home defence' with support so that they did not pass through towns as paupers.

Some fifteen cases of bastardy were brought before the Woodbridge Quarter Sessions because the father, a soldier, would not pay for the maintenance of his child. The court required sureties from the offender and until they were forthcoming he was held at the House of Correction. The court must have been aware that soldiers moved on, so that long time maintenance was unlikely to be achieved. Sometimes it demanded money for the woman's laying-in as in the case of Thomas Shore, aged 36, of the Royal Veteran Battalion. He was required to pay £4 7s 0d, Lydia Pain's laying-in costing two shillings a week. The last two cases before the Barracks closed were in May and June 1814. In each case the soldiers were committed for three months. One paid after two months, the amount of £3 15s 0d covering midwife's expenses and six weeks maintenance. The other never paid the £3 3s 6d demanded and served his full term.

In three cases soldiers obtained discharge from the House of Correction by marrying. The witnesses were the Constable, William Baxter, an Overseer or Colward Frost, the Governor of Woodbridge Poor House. They made sure the 'shotgun marriage' went ahead. There was just one case of rape. Sarah Ashwell of Martlesham charged John Morgan with assault and attempted rape on Sunday evening, 28 June 1808. He was held at Woodbridge until early October and then committed to Ipswich Gaol for 12 months solitary confinement.

The anticipated crime wave due to the military being in the town did not materialise. The number of prisoners held each week (including civilians who were the majority) was usually between five and twelve, but often as few as two or even one. This is no more than were held in the old Bridewell between 1801 and 1803. The new House of Correction was nowhere near full until the Game Act of 1831 resulted in many poachers being committed. For example during week ending 7 March 1832 there were 27 prisoners in the House.

Deserters, who made up the largest military category, were usually discharged within a few days and escorted back to their own regiments or a different one on orders from the War Office. However in 1813 two men from the 54th Regiment of Foot, John Brett and Robert Kettles, were committed for two years for stealing two engraved silver watches from George Gurdon, a Woodbridge watchmaker. Brett spent his time spinning wool, but fell ill and was discharged to the Hospital at the Barracks. Kettles served his time, and when he was discharged back to his regiment, which was then lying at Ipswich, he took away earnings of £10 3s 3d for spinning wool. Until the beginning of 1808 there was no evidence in the registers of earnings being paid to inmates upon discharge. Presumably the money paid by