

SHAME AND MODERNITY IN BRITAIN

1890 TO THE PRESENT



ANNE-MARIE KILDAY
AND DAVID NASH



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To Michael John Meadows (1934–2015)
A man who loved history

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Introduction: The Endurance of Shame and its Transformation in Modern Britain

INTRODUCTION

This book is the continuation of a thesis that we began to sketch in a previous volume entitled *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600–1900* published in 2010.¹ Our construction of this former book was largely fuelled by unease with many conventional theoretical approaches to the nexus of feelings that coalesce around both shame and guilt. In effect we wanted to add our critique, through the use of micro-histories, to engage with the assumption that guilt is a product of modernity that largely replaces shame, or at least alters it sufficiently to hide its presence. Through the investigation of a number of case studies of individuals trapped in shame steeped situations that straddled the nineteenth century, we uncovered a startling degree of continuity and the often active retention of assumptions some other historians might have overlooked or ignored. Shame was alive and well. Moreover, it was actively potent and was functioning within societies on the cusp of full modernity. It had either successfully survived changes in social configurations or had managed to be subtly (and sometimes less than subtly) incorporated within such changes.

But what precisely was this ‘shame’ that we had studied, and moreover why did we find it valuable to pursue the history of this concept into the twentieth century and modernity? Certainly academic definitions, as we discovered, needed to be opened out from a heavily theoretical bias and emphasis and, likewise, to be held up to the mirror of real-life situations.

Whilst this enabled us to see shame at work in the nineteenth century, the twentieth century also offered further opportunities to investigate this further and, indeed, to extend our thesis that broke the connection between shame's often simplistic identification with rural societies and varied conceptions of the 'primitive'. Yet into the twentieth century, shame was still manifestly about policing and controlling one's own conduct. It was, and remained into the modern era, a social emotion which damages a person's own internal strength and sense of integrity as they prepare themselves for interactions with the public sphere. Yet that sphere itself intrigued us in this context because it was widening and growing increasingly sophisticated under the both the pressures and the opportunities offered by modernity.

Given that we finished the previous book with conclusions that demonstrated shame's prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century, we subsequently decided that following this trajectory through the twentieth century was a project that was imperative. If it was still present in this historical context what forms did it take and how was it performed? How did those who wanted to shame people deliver this opprobrium so that it had the desired effect? Viewing this interaction from the point of view of the victim of shame caused us to ask how it was received and mitigated by those subjected to its raw and energetic power. Moreover, given the various instances of shame investigated in our first book, was it still the case that shame could be episodic and fleeting or consistent and impactful upon individuals? Likewise, we finished the previous volume with the first tentative consideration of how shame could be wrought upon an institution. Given what we know about the institutionalisation and bureaucratisation of twentieth-century life, could we expect this phenomenon to have widened and deepened as a result of some of the pressures of modernity?

This book commences with the premise, established in our previous volume, that the nineteenth century witnessed the passing of some forms of communal shaming and its ingestion by individuals. Likewise, during this self-same period, new methods of shaming arose whilst some of the older ones acquired a new vibrancy that ensured the survival of shame into the twentieth century. Whilst a meditation upon the themes provoked by our research questions may carry and demonstrate elements of continuity from our first book, we were also exceptionally mindful of the contextual differences that venturing into the era of modernity posed for the researcher seeking to follow the intensive study of shame. How far, for example, is there still a conception of moral orthodoxy that individuals

seem to define, perform and maintain as far as possible? How did any such conceptions come to fit within individual contexts and experiences?

The nineteenth-century manifestations of shame that we encountered emerged from social circumstances which had made them visible. These instances that broke the surface appear to have generated significant public sources with which to investigate them. This enabled our engagement with the history of individuals negotiating their shame within, or having their shame explicitly held up to, the public gaze. We have persisted with this rationale since we consider such incidents to ask searching questions about societies configuring and reconfiguring shame and public responses to this. The different contexts are important, and we are fully aware that our examples range from the early years of the twentieth century through to the early years of the twenty-first. Certainly such contexts changed, and these are reflected in the different chapters through a full and detailed discussion of the historical background to each chapter's subject. However, there is also a clear attempt to elaborate upon a variety of themes that, arguably, transcend the chronological context of their respective chapters. Themes investigated here associating shame with cowardice, with popularity and betrayal, with theft and reputation and with sexuality and its multiple consequences, all speak to more common experiences that produce a myriad of examples that could have been chosen. We are also convinced that the systematic investigation of public instances of shame remain relatively unexplored—paradoxically at a time when the capacity for private shame has been opened out and, at least partly, scrutinised by other historians.

LOCATING DEFINITIONS OF SHAME IN THE MODERN ERA

Shame is about pain and dishonour brought on by the reflection upon one's own malevolent or indiscreet conduct. But it is also a phenomenon that disciplines individuals through the didactic process of observing, from a distance, its action impacting upon the lives and self-images of others. Even in the modern era, this line of thinking too often persuades that shame is integral to communal societies and is difficult to psychologically place in atomised urban societies. Alongside shame lies the concept of guilt, which is often considered to be shame's modern replacement, and regular comparisons with the former highlight shame's apparently primitive nature. Guilt is apparently internalised and introspective, and possesses tools that make an individual act to restore their own status or position within the social world. Shame, in comparison, is something that

paralyses the individual, often preventing them from responding to the power of this social emotion.

But shame is also enduring, and it became an important question for us to consider the relationship between this phenomenon and social change. If shame policed behaviour and norms, how did shame operate amongst such norms as they evolved over the twentieth century? Within this nexus of ideas we came upon a phenomenon which we labelled as presumptive shame: that is, the display of attitudes which indulge in a widespread belief that an act is, or more importantly remains, shameful, despite important elements of liberalisation inspired by both legislation and public opinion which present strong counterarguments against such views. This presents a series of ambiguous opinions which suggest that portions of society believe it has moved on, or ought to have moved on, from a particular interpretation of circumstance, yet some opinions and practices continue to deny this progress in reality. Certainly in some chapters of this book this theme appears to exert a strong influence.

Much of the material discussed in this book constitutes an argument that modern public spheres throughout the twentieth century have constructed and maintained arenas in which conduct can be discussed, scrutinised and censured. In these, shame is regularly recast and reshaped although its purposes remain substantially the same. Yet twentieth-century individuals (as we will discover in forthcoming chapters) become capable of fighting against shame and occasionally deploy what we have termed anti-shame. That is the concerted effort of individuals, caught in shameful situations or indulging in shameful behaviour, seeking to somehow fight back. They may do this through counter-shaming, through unexpected and innovative forms of defence or through persistence with their opprobrious activities. As we will discover, many attempts have been made during the twentieth century and beyond to actively use anti-shame. However, not all of these are successful or sometimes even wholly articulate, and it becomes the historian's task to identify and elaborate upon these instances. Quite whether anti-shame is sparked and motivated by high levels of shame, by heightened levels of individualism or by heightened levels of fear can be difficult to discern. Nonetheless it does unequivocally appear to be a product of modernity and, paradoxically, something which itself has served to give shame extra power and relevance. As we shall see, this anti-shame frequently appears to be in a relationship with presumptive shame whereby the former grows in power and stature as the other diminishes over the course of the twentieth century.

One further concept has also aided shame's continuance into modernity: that of culpability or what we may seek to term blameworthiness. Culpability involves the discovery and exposure of blame for a mistake, misdemeanour or major piece of negligence. The discovery and exposure of culpability and the shame that goes with the apportioning of blame was something that seemed to gather pace within the twentieth century as a consequence of the development of modernity and its mechanisms. Culpability, within a developed public sphere, showcased people's behaviour and instances of questionable conduct to other people, who constituted a much broader audience than in the previous century. This growth in the public sphere effectively allowed more episodes of blaming and resultant shaming to occur. From the early years of the twentieth century, we can think of major news events (such as the sinking of the *Titanic* or the outbreak of the First World War) which were catastrophic disasters for modernity's vision of itself. As a result, the public sphere and its mechanisms engaged in blame and shame as an almost natural response. Beyond such major events, twentieth-century life and public knowledge of it created new smaller-scale sites for blame and its attendant shame. New laws and moral panics (the latter of which were a feature of the first forty years of the century) incited the desire to apportion blame and shame.² This further assists in confirming our original definition of shame as 'a response reached for by individuals and groups. This grasping of shame occurred when the individual sought to theorise, organise and articulate their response to their own behaviour.'³ Moreover the growing importance of institutions and their reach throughout the century meant that the conduct of such institutions became scrutinised alongside burgeoning codes of professional conduct and publicly received expectations about such codes and the standards they represented.

The idea that guilt replaced shame also appeared to be further questionable as perhaps a species of wishful thinking on the part of modernity in its quest to be civilized. Certainly, not all thinking about shame was so readily prepared to go along with the modernisation narrative. Indeed, bringing our study of shame into the twentieth century resulted in our finding some sites where the writ of humane progress ran out of steam. The apparent transformation of punishment regimes from the start of the nineteenth century onwards was a material case in point. Much of the theoretical slant behind evaluations of punishment reform focussed upon variations of Elias' 'civilizing process', which made punishments modern by removing their shameful or degrading elements.⁴ Guilt supposedly began to supplant

shame, providing a further means by which relations between individuals were softened and, arguably, modernised by a change in social practices and configurations. Thus, within this formulation, shame became often sublimated into guilt practised and performed by the individual within their own mind and psyche. However, we had already found that this simple suggestion scarcely told the whole story and that shame was readily and regularly applied to individuals and institutions within the public sphere. Indeed, we could already point to instances at the end of the nineteenth century where shame was intrinsic to some narratives that were radical and provided species of informed comment or active entertainment.⁵ The agents and material mechanisms of the 'civilizing process' contained within them the capacity to rejuvenate, recast and enhance shame and its possibilities.

Moreover, some theoretical positions in modern criminology that wanted to rework concepts of shame were in distinct opposition to the idea that a 'civilizing process' should remove shame from the modern world. Indeed, John Braithwaite, one of the foremost advocates of shaming in the context of restorative justice, took one of Norbert Elias' descriptors of modernity and his 'civilized' society as a theoretical building block.⁶ Braithwaite argued that societies with high levels of communality, and degrees of interdependency, were the most successful at bringing their crime levels down. Such societies were highly interdependent, and this attribute was crucial to what Braithwaite proffered as his solution to criminality and the failure of modern, post-enlightenment views of criminality.

Braithwaite argued for a skilled and targeted use of shame as chastisement within a viable system of punishment. Shame was effective when it was followed by visible systems of rehabilitation and reacceptance, and this subsequent opportunity for the removal of shame was essential for this approach to work.⁷ Braithwaite saw this happening within developed and thoroughly interdependent societies and cultures, ones that Elias potentially regarded as civilized. Consequently in the most developed and modern of societies, one influential and contemporary criminologist envisaged that the controlled application of shame would work against transgressors where the supposedly modern application of guilt by the individual had failed in the arena of criminal justice. Thus it is possible to suggest that the idea that shame had been written out or discarded by theories which aligned themselves with modernisation ideas, was illusory or short-sighted. It remained a piece of social behaviour that even modern societies were prepared to reach for and conceivably refashion, even where rational and supposedly humane systems of criminal justice argued otherwise.

However, the counterpart private world of the shamed has an understandable allure in relation to the modern era, possibly because it illuminates the very nature of privacy alongside our assumption that the twentieth century represents both its maturity and its zenith. Whilst it overlaps slightly in some areas with public shaming, the former already has its own history, which has recently been ably investigated by Deborah Cohen.⁸ In her excellent work *Family Secrets: The Things We Tried to Hide*, published in 2014, Cohen outlines and describes attitudes, institutions and laws which aided and abetted those intent on using a range of strategies of concealment. Children born out of wedlock or with forms of mental deficiency were hidden away in response to the psychological and moral climate of the early twentieth century. But the approach to shame over this period produced some interesting contradictions and surprises, both for contemporaries who confronted these and for historians who subsequently investigated them. Cohen noted that cultures of secrecy tended to go in circles on the back of panics about detection. The discovery of incest, for instance, shocked only those who were not accustomed to viewing it as an inevitable consequence of crowded tenement life. Conversely, domestic violence has become more hidden by the arrival of more spacious and comfortable housing.⁹

The courtroom was another arena highlighted by Cohen which allowed the public airing of compromising evidence and detail, particularly in the context of attempts to deter pleas for divorce. At first the innocent produced evidence and testimony to shame the guilty. However, as time went on, the guilty were required to attest to their own shame whilst loopholes in procedure, and subsequent compromises in practice, led individuals to connive in the concoction of compromising detail in pursuit of an easy legal separation. Such outcomes were some distance from the benign mechanism to right wrongs and, within reason, remedied social ills envisaged by the architects of the divorce courts.¹⁰ Likewise when the vogue for counselling arose from the late 1940s onwards it was an unnerving discovery for those involved, that the public at large had a sometimes inexhaustible capacity for pouring out their secrets to a sympathetic listener.¹¹ Moreover, Cohen's study ends with a meditation upon the ambivalent nature of privacy evident in the contemporary world. Whilst so-called 'confessional culture' exposes more secrets than ever before, there is also a strange reticence that chooses to keep other information secret alongside resentment of statutory or unwarranted intrusion into a constructed ideal of libertarian privacy.¹²

It also seems almost axiomatic that the extension of privacy, something that is a feature of twentieth-century life, also created opportunities for shame itself to become private. Some scholars, like Stuart Shapiro, have suggested that over a considerable time period, the distinction between public and private has largely altered in relation to the conception of 'the home'. This gradually became a place where activities were demarcated and thus divided into sites in which behaviour was located. The growth of suburbia and the onset of a 'car culture' enabled the size of the average dwelling to grow and thus gave enhanced opportunities for privacy.¹³ With this privacy came the opportunity to contemplate and investigate the individual's own mistakes, misdemeanours and shame, and it was possible to locate this away from the public sphere and gaze.

Scholars such as Trina Magi have also unpacked modern conceptions of privacy, seeing them as fundamentally important in the generation of the modern self. It would seem logical to suggest that shame followed individuals into this world of the private, and enabled them to better cope with its assaults upon the self, rather than coping with it outside in the public gaze. As Magi unpacks her 'Fourteen Reasons [Why] Privacy Matters', we can observe both the construction of psychological equipment that made private consideration of shame possible and the development of potential strategies whereby it was dealt with. For Magi, privacy is a refuge where exposure to surveillance and damaging perceptions can be avoided, something which also explains the benefits of restricting financial and personal information solely to the individual concerned.¹⁴ She also identifies individual autonomy and privacy's furnishing of a space where individuals can retreat and explore their partially formed perceptions of how to interact or, as she puts it, their 'rough draft ideas'.¹⁵ This also coalesces with the ideas of Erving Goffman, since private escape and places for contemplation were intrinsic to his conception of life as a series of social performances.¹⁶ Privacy likewise preserves the chance of a fresh start after a mistake or episode, prompting feelings of shame. This is facilitated by the construction of an often ideologically motivated opposition to information technology's ability to store and preserve sensitive and potentially damaging information.¹⁷ Thus for Magi, privacy is self-evidently a social good, and we could certainly go further and say that this enabled the construction and performance of private shame.

We should also be aware that the state itself sometimes enabled the further construction of privacy and that this, in turn, enabled some individuals to transcend what would otherwise have been a cause of public shame.

Nadja Durbach, for example, noted how the introduction of the abbreviated birth certificate in 1947 removed information about an individual's parentage. At a stroke, this eradicated some of the material (such as illegitimacy or other family secrets) that promoted the shame that many individuals from the world sketched by Deborah Cohen would have otherwise carried with them in their daily interactions and course through life.¹⁸ It was also instrumental in creating a new relationship between the individual, the flow of information about them and the state itself.¹⁹ Steering all this range of compromising information and perceptions away from the public gaze may have gratified many that their shame had become their own private, personal concern. However, this did not enable every individual to manage their shame successfully, as we shall see. Yet the state is not always successful in breaching the world of private shame and, indeed, suspicion of the state could actually reinforce it. For instance attempts to turn disclosure of an individual's sexual history to prospective sexual partners into a 'safe sex' strategy in the modern USA was conspicuously unsuccessful. Interestingly, those most reticent and obstructive about adopting this strategy were also those with the strongest libertarian concerns about the state's information-gathering and storage policies.²⁰

CHANGING CONTEXTS FOR SHAME IN MODERNITY

Another key issue arising in our research is that aspects of modern life have actually changed and enhanced the modes and occasions where public shame can occur, rather than having removed them from civilized behaviour because they are anachronistic or unmodern. As a result, they remake shame and provide new opportunities for it. Certainly it was valuable for us to hold up incidents of shame to historical commonplaces linked with modernity in Britain. What, for example, was the relationship between shame, and incidents of shame, with the growing conception of a permissive society? Was this new social configuration an attempt to deal with the problems that shame had bequeathed to society in the past by inviting discussion? Or was it the occasion for trying to make previously shameful behaviour and morals become shameless and beyond censure: an attempt to kick against the perceived power of presumptive shame? Did the permissive society expose more shameful material to the public gaze, thus causing panic and alarm rather than liberation and tolerance?

It appeared to us that public shame in the context of the twentieth century was arguably more transitory than in previous periods, despite the fact that it reached its audience more quickly. It became less serious because it was less communal in nature and did not live as long as in other chronological and spatial contexts. Privacy, thus, had the potential to atomise audiences and attention just as much as it gave individuals the opportunity to enjoy isolation with their own thoughts. It also appears that the effects of shame were sometimes mitigated by modernity's ability to equip individuals with the tools associated with anti-shame.

Female emancipation also provides an intriguing backdrop to, and theme of, many of our investigations and many of the cases cited in this volume. The dramatic shift in women's roles and expectations that occurred from 1900 onwards had a particular impact upon shame stories. Women were more independent, more capable of taking action within the public sphere, but also more capable of acting as independent moral scrutineers of behaviour. Society had created opportunities for their voices to be heard and for their problems to be aired. This society also saw the rise of the problem page and opportunities for women to realise the apparent ubiquity of some problems, and likewise the ubiquity of many solutions to them. Yet increased social mobility could also take women entirely away from circles of moral surveillance into quite independent spaces where shame could be hidden, transcended or even celebrated.

Researching the twentieth century also enabled us to see new sites and contexts where shame had been positively reinvigorated, not simply by social changes, but also by events or special circumstances created by the modern world. The quest for compulsory patriotic duty by all fit adult males, for instance, was a product of the special circumstances that accompanied Britain's slide into total war after 1914. The shame wielded by the country's mobilised and motivated women was considered both potent and effective in the quest for selfless military service, conformity and sacrifice. The war's obsession with patriotism and patriotic fervour also provided opportunities for the unscrupulous to use such apparently noble sentiments for their own discreet ends.

Technologies of representation, reading and discussion had also been transformed by the end of the nineteenth century, and so the capacity to consume impressions and opinions had become a more or less accepted part of society. Technological advances also provided opportunities to hide or conceal shame or to enable otherwise shameful activities. Obviously crucial to the whole function of shame within modernity is the power of

the printed word. As we are aware, newspapers, magazines and periodicals multiplied dramatically during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and this expansion continued apace well into the twentieth century. This development served as both the painting materials and the finished canvas for graphic portrayals of shame and its consequences.

Newspapers and magazines carried information, advice, reportage, opinion, scandal and entertainment—each bringing their own agendas and judgements upon people, events and institutions. Thus newspapers and magazines provide fundamentally important information about understandings of shame and how these were communicated to wider culture and society. However, if we are to judge the shameful actions of individuals as misdemeanours, then, for the bulk of the modern period, newspapers, magazines and other media have been accusers, witnesses, judge and jury. As such, their particular role in this and their interaction with specific historical contexts perhaps deserves its own study. Occasionally we can still see glimpses of the media constructing norms that, wittingly or not, contain underlying potential for shame. Indeed, in the area of sexual behaviour, the printed media established and promulgated norms to produce new forms of shame. The impact of the media established and policed norms, but not simply in a heavy-handed didactic manner as might have been expected. Certainly the twentieth century saw a break with Victorian attitudes that were provoked by the agendas of the media themselves. Deborah Cohen, for instance, notes how the *Daily Mirror* transformed its fortunes by targeting a working-class readership in the 1930s by embracing a more obviously ‘confessional style’.²¹

Where once the indulgence of sexual appetite and its exposure may have attracted and enabled the performance of shame and rituals associated with this, things have arguably turned full circle. The agony columns of newspapers and magazines constitute an anonymous forum where intimate emotional and sexual difficulties are aired, discussed and, it is hoped, remedied in the context of private shame. However, this forum’s advice, both wittingly and unwittingly, establishes new and different ‘norms’. Thus expectations of the nature, scope and variety of sexual behaviour become established in the mind of the reader or audience, marginalising individuals who are unable to aspire or perform such ‘norms’.²² The inability to measure up to standards of beauty and physical allure, or to attain a recognisably ‘normal’ number of sexual partners before a certain age, is now capable of disconcerting the individual. Even those in fulfilling relationships are likewise ensnared by the ‘norm’ created in relation to

expected levels of sexual activity within monogamous relationships. Where once the performance of passion and sexual relations was hidden as potentially shameful, by the latter twentieth century, the very failure to perform such sexual activity, according to norms about nature and frequency, had become a new source of new shame.

Certainly the same historical period also witnessed regular questioning of the motives, morals and methods of many of the published and broadcast media. Within many of the examples outlined below it is possible to trace this pointed questioning. Such dialogues revolved around the role of the press and media and often culminated in narratives of the public interest. Such twentieth-century debates have been evidently reignited in the twenty-first century by events such as the Leveson inquiry. Press freedom came to be regarded as a touchstone of healthy social democratic systems, yet it also had the innate power to judge and stir up less rational ideas and emotions. Managing the full balancing act outlined above is clearly an ongoing challenge, and many of the issues and questions over the last century have neither gone away, nor have they been wholly resolved. However, it is certain that historical investigation of past episodes where shame has been discussed illuminates some of the processes of this debate and some of the earlier answers to its questions. What we perhaps make of this in our own time will be governed by these past answers, but it will also help us to acknowledge the full and ambivalent nature of press freedom and its implications.

Whilst the public interest was the narrative the media offered to justify its investigation of shame, there were other narratives at work. Newspapers, television and journalists may have regularly declared that they were searching for the facts in pursuit of some sort of truth, but their accounts of some incidents argued otherwise. Very often shame-filled incidents, particularly those outlined in the succeeding chapters, were narrativised as morality tales. Thus the predicaments of individuals were often the result of some tragic flaw, some oversight or recklessness. Whilst it would clearly be difficult to suggest that the use of these morality tales was part of some overarching project of social management, it does remain the case that shaming has persisted as a consequence of transgression and poor behaviour, right through the transfer to modernity and beyond. Besides, who knows how many people may have imbibed the lessons of watching the downfall of their reckless forebears and contemporaries? In this respect, this study perhaps reaches one of the most difficult boundaries of historical study and likewise poses one of the most difficult questions for

historians. How does the historian go about studying the history of quiet acceptance and undisturbed conformity?

One other concept that has become self-evident to us in researching this area is the invention and enduring nature of something that we term the archaeology of reputation. This might be considered to be the investigation of the past actions and conduct of others (generally by an interested party). These others might be individuals, institutions or whole societies that find aspects of their past conduct dragged into the spotlight and questioned. This phenomenon may be motivated by personal connection to the individual, or by an awakened and heightened historical interest in the facts of an individual's life, or by individuals who were part of the industry of telling and retelling lives. As such, it has a close relationship with the concept of private shame. The term 'archaeology' is deliberately intended to reflect the often immense work required to uncover ideas of truth and to demonstrate how the actions of the individuals themselves, or of institutions, or of society as a whole has made it expedient or necessary to construct an alternative version of the truth. The archaeology of reputation can produce both beneficial and malevolent effects upon the long-term reputation of an individual, and, as we demonstrate, society is well used to living with both of these outcomes.

The archaeology of reputation also involves engagement with the ideas of individuals who are fascinated by the story of your own life or that of others. This is especially important in a world where information and opinion are more readily stored, circulated and retrieved than ever before. Thus numerous stories and versions of what actually happened are capable of competing for space and adherence. This is no more graphically demonstrated than through the power of the Internet conspiracy theory. Probably the most famous of these is the belief that the 1969 lunar landing was faked by NASA. This has reached such significance that possibly more Americans now believe it to be fiction than to be fact. Likewise, modern culture is similarly awash with conspiracy stories concerning the untimely deaths of individuals. Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, Elvis Presley, John Belushi, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison all have been the subject of such speculation (informed or otherwise).²³ In the twenty-first century, with the 'always on' Internet, such opinions and apparent 'facts' are a relatively constant presence, and this means that stories about reputation are often more prevalent than the truth. Perceptions that there is a truth to be discerned or publicised frequently motivates instances of the archaeology of reputation, making it a media activity commonplace in the

contemporary world. Moreover, the democratised power of modern publishing via the Internet serves to create places where such an archaeology of reputation may be stated and restated.

TRACING THE ENDURANCE OF SHAME IN MODERN BRITAIN

As we have seen, shame appears in many guises and in a variety of contexts in the history of modern Britain and indeed seems to be flourishing amidst new opportunities for its acquisition and use. However, its survival and its potency within contemporary Britain itself have a history, and it is to this which we now turn. Each of the succeeding seven chapters elaborates a story which focusses upon central experiences of shame. Some of these radiate out from single, often famous instances to illuminate and highlight the experience of others. Each elaborates a theme, and these themes, when taken together, provide an all-embracing study of shame's survival and prosperity into modernity and beyond.

Chapter 2 looks at early, occasionally abortive, attempts to apply shame to individuals suspected of refusing to engage in military conflict during the Great War—an occasion where new stresses associated with modern warfare dramatically altered expectations and behaviour. In particular, it focusses in on the shaming initiatives aimed at conscientious objectors and the extent to which these tactics were effective. The chapter also analyses the impact such practices had on public opinion during a time of intensely conflicting popular emotion, when an explicit sense of patriotism was infused with an implicit fear about the safety of loved ones. This was inevitably contrasted with an increasing awareness and acknowledgement of the democratic rights of citizens.

Chapter 3 traces the life and times of the one-time popular demagogue, politician and hero of the turf and boxing ring Horatio Bottomley, who was initially seen as a populist patriot par excellence and an effective defender of the common man and his rights. However, Bottomley eventually came to be vilified as a cheat, a cad and a fraudster, ultimately betraying the logic of the populist persona he had done so much to cultivate and lionise. The chapter explores the ultimate 'shamelessness' of Bottomley, illuminates his activities and examines why he was able to trick people for so long. It also examines the extent to which the reach and significance of shame are dependent upon the context in which it occurs and the preoccupations of society and the mass media at any given time.

The fourth chapter uses the 1930s case of Harold Davidson, the Rector of Stiffkey, to examine the consumption of shame and its often systematic repackaging for new times, contexts and media. In doing so it introduces the analytical concept of the archaeology of reputation, which here involves the pursuit of the 'truth' about individuals and incidents with the intent of realising and telling a credible narrative. This becomes increasingly problematic in an age where multi-media obsessions with celebrity provide wide-ranging information on individuals and their proclivities.

The next chapter in the volume covers the subject of abortion in England and Scotland during the twentieth century. It thus departs from the previous chapter and to an extent the subsequent chapters of this book. It does not turn around specific events so much as around a phenomenon to present a different aspect of shame in modern British society. The practice of abortion has been hidden by individuals, by societies and to an extent by history. Yet couples used this method of family planning and limitation discreetly and then more publicly as the course of the twentieth century progressed. Modernity, and indeed the very essence of being modern, was partly about leaving behind anachronistic and unprogressive attitudes. Progress seemed to be the heir of liberalising morals and gave the individual autonomy to make personal choices about their sexuality and its regulation. The evidence presented in this chapter relates to a considerable time span and shows that women felt surprisingly little in the way of shame after undergoing a termination. Yet, strangely, this was not really what society thought should happen, and intermittent levels of stigma about the choice to abort unwanted children persisted. Society frequently indulged in the application of presumptive shame. This phenomenon can be properly traced only through a long chronological analysis, and this in part explains the length of this particular chapter. Whilst strident opposition to abortion re-emphasised the contentious nature of the issue, this clamour has sometimes overwritten and obscured the persistence of presumptive shame emanating from particular elements of society. Whilst 'pro-lifers' and 'pro-choicers' conducted a tug of war with the unfortunate mother, society itself in *sotto voce* still expressed its disapproval based on its presumption that women felt shame after having an abortion. The language of support, counselling and forms of help were all aimed at the archetypal distraught woman riddled with doubt and regret, an archetype rather challenged by the evidence offered in this chapter. Moreover, the two 'pro' approaches each met their nemesis in normal

women seeking terminations for personal reasons and not seeking to make ideological stands about their decision and, on the other side, by liberal individuals who stood up to organisations and dogmas which attempted to blight the legitimate and legal rights of women seeking terminations. Thus the history of abortion deserves its prominent place in this book and the wider history of shame because it is the history of an activity which became normalised within modern human relationships despite challenges to destabilise it and apply opprobrium to it. Such material constitutes a history that until now has been coloured by legal, religious and political considerations. Unlike the experience of homosexuals, covered in a later chapter, who asserted a new identity by ‘coming out’ of the closet, women who had experienced abortion merely wanted to return to a normal life. Accordingly, they sought to climb back ‘into the closet’ and resume the quiet normality they had once known.

Sex scandals have always been associated with the application of public and private opprobrium but in the modern era, new forms of mass media ensure that they take on a new significance in the history of shame, since the advances of e-technology can turn a localised affair into an incident of national importance. The sixth chapter in this volume looks at the sex scandal associated with the late MP Lord Antony Lambton in the 1970s. This not only resulted in his own very public downfall and disgrace, alongside various official inquiries into the threat of a potential security risk caused by his actions, but it also brought about debates over the extent to which intrusion into the private lives of public figures was justified by its relevance to how they perform their professional duties. Questions about this issue scarcely vanished during the twentieth century and indeed loom large in current debates over the rights of a ‘free’ press versus the rights of individuals.

The seventh chapter investigates the case of the one-time television personality Lady Isobel Barnett, who tragically committed suicide after a conviction for shoplifting. Her status, fame and subsequent downfall and the shame she received *en route* enable us to explore various aspects of the nature, application and impact of shame in the modern era. Indeed the piece also functions as a study of the last gasp of presumptive shame as it demonstrates its potency amongst individuals from a certain generation, background and culture of service. This episode, in particular, can be contrasted with accounts of subsequent celebrity shoplifters who have relied upon the very passing of presumptive shame and replacement narratives about pathology and pity. The chapter also facilitates an examination of

how class and status can affect those individuals involved in the shaming process, as both accused and accuser. In addition, the piece sheds light on the motivations and context for the crime of shoplifting in the post-war era and its relationship to the extended networks of shame. This analysis demonstrates how shoplifting and the associated shame shown by perpetrators led to it being designated a genteel crime. As a result, considerable influence ensured that such crimes and criminals received sympathetic and apparently humane treatment. This approach to the crime also created very interesting debates about the behavioural norms and deviances to be expected of different classes, and what precisely was the role of the criminal justice system in managing these for the benefit of society.

Before offering some concluding remarks, the eighth chapter in the work traces the relationship between shame and the history of homosexuality in Britain, particularly in relation to the experiences of gay men and women in the armed forces. Within this particular context, a more liberal or tolerant attitude to homosexuality, which has been evident across modern British society more widely, has been largely absent from the military arena until much more recently. This has resulted in individuals hiding their sexuality out of fear, or has led to shaming practices being carried out against individuals suspected of being gay. The chapter fits these experiences into theoretical understandings of shame and anti-shame. This highlights another aspect of British life where opprobrium remains a tool for social control when we might have assumed its dissipation. Yet the approaches of mobilising anti-shame associated with Gay Pride and Stonewall were not universally accepted within the gay community. Indeed homosexuals' striving for citizenship faced something of a backlash from proponents of Queer Theory, who despised conformism and the activities of homosexuals prepared to acquire full citizenship on the heterosexual world's terms. Instead, Queer Theory proposed that the unacceptable in the gay and lesbian world was to be exalted and celebrated, and a crucial element charged with doing this was shame and its various functions that shaped and moulded dissident anti-mainstream identity. This is thus an appropriate context within which to consider the transformation of shame within modernity. Where once within humane modernity, homosexuality was linked with uncivilized and offensive behaviour, it now exists as an almost discarded component part of a culture that has seen it shaped into something positive and worthy.

The conclusion to this book then offers a consideration of the path that shame has trod throughout the modern era and notes how it is still being

remade and reshaped to perform new functions. This is especially true when it is considered that the writ of law and modern methods of control and regulation have failed and have been manifestly found wanting. Shame within modernity has a past, a present and a surprisingly bright future; it is now time for us to find out precisely how and why this is the case.

NOTES

1. D.S. Nash and A-M. Kilday (2010) *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
2. For an interesting discussion of post-First World War female sexuality as a site of moral panic see L. Bland (2013) *Modern Women on Trial: Sexual Transgression in the Age of the Flapper* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
3. Nash and Kilday (2010) *Cultures of Shame*, pp. 18–19. It is possible to see how this also potentially extends the explanatory power of the work of Erving Goffman and his description of the evident disappearance of inner life: see *ibid.*, pp. 16–18.
4. See N. Elias (2000) *The Civilizing Process*, translated by E. Jephcott (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell).
5. Nash and Kilday (2010) *Cultures of Shame*, Chap. 8.
6. J. Braithwaite (1989) *Crime, Shame and Reintegration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
7. *Ibid.*, *passim*.
8. D. Cohen (2014) *Family Secrets: The Things We Tried to Hide* (London: Penguin), *passim*.
9. *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 181–90.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 198–204.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 250–1.
13. S. Shapiro (1998) ‘Places and Spaces: The Historical Interaction of Technology, Home, and Privacy’, *The Information Society: An International Journal*, 14, 4, pp. 275–84.
14. T. Magi (2011) ‘Fourteen Reasons Privacy Matters: A Multidisciplinary Review of Scholarly Literature’, *Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*, 81, 2, pp. 187–209, at p. 190 and p. 197.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 191 and p. 194.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
18. N. Durbach (2014) 'Private Lives, Public Records: Illegitimacy and the Birth Certificate in Twentieth Century Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 25, 2, pp. 305–26.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 326.
20. W.L. Nichols (2012) 'Deception Versus Privacy Management in Discussions of Sexual History', *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 20, pp. 101–15.
21. Cohen (2014) *Family Secrets*, pp. 190–4.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 191–5 and p. 198.
23. *Time Magazine*, 20 November 2008.

White Feathers and Black Looks: Cowardice, Conscientious Objection and Shame in the Great War

INTRODUCTION

The Great War and the strained atmosphere it created led to many young men in Britain suddenly encountering the powerful nexus of feelings associated with cowardice and shame. One such individual recorded the following experience:

On my way to work one morning a group of women surrounded me. They started shouting and yelling at me, calling me all sorts of names for not being a soldier! Do you know what they did? They struck a white feather in my coat, meaning I was a coward. Oh I did feel dreadful, so ashamed. I went to the recruiting office. The sergeant there couldn't stop laughing at me, saying things like 'Looking for your father, sonny?', and 'Come back next year when the war's over!' Well, I must have looked so crestfallen that he said 'Let's check your measurements again.' You see, I was five foot six inches and only about eight and a half stone. This time he made me out to be six feet tall and twelve stone, at least, that is what he wrote down. All lies of course – but I was in.¹

The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that since the late eighteenth century, the white feather has been regarded as a symbol of cowardice.² Seemingly, this association derived from cock-fighting, where cockerels with white feathers in their tails were deemed to be a far inferior cross-breed and therefore poor fighters. Pure-bred game cocks, on the other hand, do not show white feathers. From around 1785, then, an association

between cowardliness and white feathers was established. At the start of the twentieth century, the white feather was very much associated with so-called ‘shirkers’ and cowards: men who refused to fight for king and country. This association was very evident in contemporary popular culture, with literary offerings by A.E.W. Mason (1865–1948), P.G. Wodehouse (1881–1975) and Arnold Bennett (1867–1931) in the early 1900s bringing the concept to a wide audience.³

This chapter charts the use and abuse of the white feather as a tool to enforce shame on individuals who were slow to respond to the call to arms at the beginning of the First World War. The chapter outlines the origins of the ‘White Feather Movement’ in Britain. Officially entitled ‘The Order of the White Feather’, this organisation, founded at the very start of the conflict and prior to conscription, attempted to shame men into military enlistment. Sometimes the White Feather Movement succeeded in its objectives, as can be seen in the example at the opening of the chapter. After the movement’s intervention, various individuals ‘rushed to the colours’ during the war years, albeit at a relatively sedentary pace! However, it is also clear that in certain instances—such as attempts to conscript conscientious objectors—the movement repeatedly, publicly and somewhat spectacularly failed. This provoked attempts to force men to enlist through the use of shaming tactics which escalated in extent and degree over time. These initiatives, their effectiveness and their impact on public opinion are examined by a detailed investigation of the treatment of a conscientious objector named Howard Cruttenden Marten. The publicity associated with the opprobrium inflicted on men like Marten, coupled with grave errors of judgement by members of the White Feather Movement, produced a growing tide of criticism of their efforts from the middle of the Great War onwards. The chapter concludes by exploring the reasons for the demise of the White Feather Movement and the popular revulsion that clustered around it. Many of the examples of opprobrium in the modern era illustrated in this book indicate that shame has a habit of coming back to haunt those who initially apply it. This seems to have been particularly true of the White Feather Movement in the opening decades of the twentieth century.

THE ORIGINS OF THE WHITE FEATHER MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

When war broke out in 1914, eschewing conscription, the British decided to initiate a voluntarist recruitment campaign supported by propaganda of various forms.⁴ Although the initial call to arms had raised 750,000 new

recruits, the flow of volunteers quickly diminished and, in rural areas in particular, recruitment figures were deemed problematic, with Lord Kitchener (1850–1916), Secretary of State for War at that time, bemoaning the lack of enlisted men.⁵ Consequently, the first year of the war saw a vigorous campaign to persuade the nation to embrace a collective definition of patriotism which was fundamentally based on the need to fight for one's country when invited to do so.⁶ This initiative had limited success, however, and it became evident that enlistment was not necessarily determined by concepts of patriotism alone, but also by economic, demographic and personal circumstances.⁷ This lethargy gave much encouragement to organisations such as the National Service League, which had been campaigning in peacetime, and as early as 1901, for universal military conscription.⁸

In the context of inadequate military enlistment and the fact that the National Service League's campaign for national conscription had repeatedly failed to attract sufficient parliamentary and political support, Admiral Charles Penrose Fitzgerald wanted to confront those individuals who were not prepared to perform their patriotic duty: men whom he described as 'selfish shirkers'.⁹ Consequently, on 30 August 1914, he hit upon an idea to facilitate the recruitment process. He deputised thirty women in Folkestone to hand out white feathers to any men not in uniform. According to the admiral, the purpose of making this gesture was to 'shame every young slacker found loafing about' and to remind those who were 'deaf or indifferent to their country's need' that 'British soldiers are fighting and dying across the Channel'. He warned the men of Folkestone that there was 'a danger awaiting them far more terrible than they could meet in battle', for if they were found 'idling and loafing tomorrow', they would be humiliated in public by a fearsome lady brandishing a white feather.¹⁰

The 'Order of the White Feather' or the 'White Feather Brigade', described by Nicoletta Gullace as 'a paramilitary band of women',¹¹ garnered considerable support after its initial formation. The suffragettes Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were very vocal in their approval of the organisation and its objectives and now saw it as a 'priority' 'to make sure that *every* Briton pulled his or her weight in the war effort'.¹² The active involvement of women in this particular recruitment campaign drew the enthusiasm of suffrage supporters for reasons that will be explored in the next section of this chapter. Admiral Penrose Fitzgerald also received personal support from other notable women, including two female novelists: Mrs Humphrey Ward, whose most famous work *Robert Elsmere* was probably the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century, and Baroness Emma Orczy, the author of the much-loved *Scarlet Pimpernel*

series.¹³ Additional support came from individuals operating in fairly influential circles such as Lord Esher and Arthur Conan Doyle.¹⁴ All in all, the admiral's call to women for their support was widely reported in the press, and soon numerous women across England responded by combing towns, cities and villages, confronting men they found in civilian clothes and placing white feathers in their hat-bands and lapels.¹⁵ This campaign effected the rapid construction of presumptive shame facilitated by the media-constructed image of the 'slacker', and it came to be explicitly contrasted with promotion of the new ethic of voluntarist service.

ATTACKING MASCULINITY WITH A FEATHER

The historiography regarding the White Feather Movement emphasises women's role as facilitators against the backdrop of suffrage agitation's lack of success. Although, the campaign for the franchise had largely been suspended in 1914, it is evident that women were still keen to achieve that goal, and scholars have considered the extent to which their participation in the 'Order of the White Feather' was ultimately a help or a hindrance to that end.¹⁶

The receipt of a white feather questioned not only the patriotism of the recipient, but also his masculinity. It effectively told a man that he was not a *real* man.¹⁷ As Peter Hart explains, the white feather campaign 'was meant to make these men question their gender identity and hopefully drive them to enlist in the military so that they could correct this perceived imbalance'.¹⁸ Indeed, nothing was worse for a man in the early decades of the twentieth century than being accused of a lack of manhood.¹⁹ As the *Girl's Own Paper* reported in 1914–15, 'Women will forgive almost anything in a man except cowardice and treason.'²⁰

The early years of the war witnessed something described as 'khaki fever', where the most virulent displays of masculinity came to be portrayed by fighting men or men in uniform.²¹ This romanticisation of the military was almost tangible, as every wall and every street corner hosted propaganda posters depicting bravery in the form of a uniformed man.²² Coupled to this were the spectacular recruitment rallies of Horatio Bottomley (whom we meet in the next chapter of this volume) and the representations of the soldier as hero from popular artists, writers and singers of the time. All of this turned military service into what Nicoletta Gullace has described as the 'national aphrodisiac'.²³ More significantly, however, the depiction of the recruit as a romantic ideal also highlighted its distinction from the

‘contemptible slacker’. Consequently, women viewed those who would not enlist with disgust and contempt, especially if their fathers, brothers, sweethearts and husbands had already ‘rushed to the colours’.²⁴ One woman left the following message for her ‘sweetheart’ in the personal column of *The Times* on 8 July 1915:

Jack F.G. If you are not in khaki by the 20th I shall cut you dead.

Ethel M.²⁵

The ‘Order of the White Feather’ was an eloquent example of emotional blackmail *en masse* which made clever use of a potent mix of shame and femininity. The movement gave women the opportunity to contribute to the war effort and to display their patriotism alongside their worth, and white feather giving enabled them to demonstrate this.²⁶ They were also supporting their loved ones at the Front by providing further recruits to fight with them in the trenches.²⁷ Fundamentally, the movement also enabled women to visibly compare their own active patriotism with the attitude of fully franchised men unworthy of this honour. Moreover, they could now argue that as *women* were now being asked to remind *men* of their patriotic duty, they too should be given full citizenship. To that end, suffrage campaigners such as Christabel Pankhurst saw the White Feather Movement as an indirect opportunity to earn public support for women’s rights that had hitherto been so difficult to achieve.²⁸

It seems evident that through the distribution of white feathers and poster campaigns with similar objectives (see Fig. 2.1), women were not only functioning as the guardians of patriotism, morality and good conscience, but could also portray themselves (or let themselves be portrayed) ‘as the objects soldiers fought to defend, the rewards only heroes dared to desire, and as the spectre of what a man might become were he to “show the white feather” and fail in his duty’.²⁹ Many of the women involved in the White Feather Movement undoubtedly relished the opportunity afforded them, and they were accordingly strident in their ‘recruitment’ efforts, often being described as ‘fanatical’ in their persuasion of men to enlist, as we will now discover.³⁰ Indeed we know, for instance, from the correspondence of numerous First World War veterans and from sound recordings of interviews with them held in the Imperial War Museum archive that many men did indeed respond to the shame of the white feather, or the threat of it, by reluctantly enlisting. As one journalist writing for *The Times* newspaper during the war put it: ‘The bellicosity of

Fig. 2.1 First World War army recruitment poster, 1915 (Imperial War Museum, Art. IWM PST 4903)



these females is almost as terrible to the young man who has no stomach for fighting as an enemy with banners and guns. At the sight of them he is glad of the chance of being able to hide anyhow his diminished head.³¹

TACTICS, METHODOLOGY AND IMPACT

Some scholars have suggested that it is difficult to assess the true impact of the White Feather Movement on recruitment in wartime Britain, as evidence of the actual activities of the organisation's membership is hard to glean.³² Moreover, in the aftermath of the First World War, the novelist Virginia Woolf even went as far as to suggest that the movement was really more a product of male hysteria than of actual female practice. She argued that it was an exaggerated moral panic, as only an 'infinitesimal' number of women were really involved in giving out feathers.³³ Yet the Imperial War Museum's sound archive holds more than 200 recordings of men who admitted to being in receipt of a white feather during the Great War.³⁴ Their testimonies support Will Ellsworth-Jones' argument that 'the

white feather was ... a powerful, sometimes tragic and occasionally laughable recruiting weapon'.³⁵

On the whole, white feathers were distributed by women—mostly younger single women and mothers whose sons had already enlisted—but on occasion they were disseminated by men too.³⁶ The act was principally carried out in urban areas, although rural areas were not immune, and it is evident that the whole of Britain was affected, not just England. Indeed one contemporary commentator described how 'the idea spread like a virulent disease' right across the country, 'creating one of the most persistent memories of the home front during the war'.³⁷ Parks, cinemas, trains, trams and buses were the favoured places to catch a man in civilian dress by surprise, and the women acting as the agents of shame in these episodes gave a fair amount of attention to selecting the specific feathers to be used. For instance, one witness recounted how the girls 'used to get the little white feathers from round a chicken's bum and give 'em that which was adding insult to injury'. Recipients felt bad enough 'about getting a decent-size feather, but when they got that stuff near the chicken's arse they didn't like that'.³⁸

There were various ways in which a white feather could be given. At the start of the war, this was usually done in person, as depicted on the cover of the Christmas 1914 edition of the popular comic *Union Jack* reproduced in Fig. 2.2. Women would approach a man in civilian dress, attach a white feather to his lapel or hat band, question why he was not in uniform and then either taunt or vociferously remind him of his patriotic duty. One Nottinghamshire hotel proprietor engaged in the White Feather Movement, Rosa Lewis, even trained her Aberdeenshire terrier 'Kippy' to be an attack dog when he saw any man in civilian clothes. When the dog was attacking his victim, Rosa was able to deliver a white feather to the ravaged man's person!³⁹

As time went on, however, the tactics associated with the distribution of feathers broadened and intensified. As a result, white feathers were increasingly sent anonymously in the post, alongside letters or postcards (such as that seen in Fig. 2.3), or simply on their own.⁴⁰ Men who received white feathers were certainly made to feel very uncomfortable. The typically exposed nature of the act of delivering and receiving a white feather was unquestionably a modern version of more 'traditional' shaming practices such as 'charivari' or 'rough music' familiar to communities in the pre-industrial era. 'Feathering' was an opprobrious tactic designed to instigate very public emotional blackmail. Men who received white feathers

Fig. 2.2 ‘The White Feather’, *Union Jack*, 26 December 1914



A member of the "Dandy Ninth" for four years in the piping times of peace, and posing as a British subject then; When Britain called you to the colours, you were an American subject, and escaped military service by a fluke. If you are a man, join up at once. If you don't join up, then remain what you are, A damned coward & slacker & unfit to breathe the same air as decent men, let alone to live amongst them.
Yours contemptuously,
Scotsman.

Fig. 2.3 ‘The Mysterious Scotsman’ postcard, sent in Edinburgh to an Edinburgh address on 12 October 1916 (from *Picture Postcards from the Great War*: <http://www.worldwar1postcards.com>, accessed 1 January 2016).

variably described the experience as ‘painful’, ‘an acute embarrassment’, ‘a thing impossible to live down’, ‘mortifying’ and ‘a deep and darkening stain’ that could only ever be removed by the act of enlistment.⁴¹

George Taylor, for instance, was presented with a white feather in Euston Square, London in early 1915. His first child was under the age of two and his wife was pregnant, so he had chosen to wait before enlisting. However,

on receipt of a white feather he enlisted in the East Surrey regiment immediately. He recounted, ‘Notwithstanding my home ties I must confess that I felt terribly guilty and made up my mind to join up right away.’⁴² A Mrs Upjohn remembered the day her father, Robert Smith, received a white feather whilst out working near Westminster. Like Taylor, Robert Smith had delayed joining up as he had two small children and because his wife, who had only just recovered from a very serious illness, had found herself to be pregnant again. Upon receiving the white feather, Smith walked home, and according to his daughter, ‘That night he came home and cried and cried and cried. He cried his heart out. He was inconsolable. My father was no coward. He enlisted the next day.’⁴³

The public receipt of a white feather from a woman or girl could be especially devastating for younger men as peer pressure had a powerful impact upon the social confidence of adolescents, even in the early decades of the twentieth century. Evidence from the Imperial War Museum archive and elsewhere suggests that numerous young men—often too young to be eligible to fight—were so humiliated that they enlisted, ‘persuading’ the recruitment officer that they were nineteen years old.⁴⁴ One illustration of this in the Imperial War Museum sound archive features the British radio producer and broadcaster Olive Shapley (1910–99) recounting the impact that a white feather had on her brother Frank.⁴⁵ Olive explains:

I had a brother five years older than myself and one I think about eleven years older. He was a big chap, Frank. And he was out one day with his Scout troop and a woman gave him a white feather – very common then – and said, ‘What’s a big chap like you doing, you know, playing? You get out and fight.’ And he went and joined up; joined the Navy before he came home that night.

Evidence from archival records show Frank Gilbert Shapley to have turned seventeen on 16 August 1915 when he came to enlist.⁴⁶ His naval enrolment form and service record, however, suggest that he lied about his age to the recruitment officer in his desperation to join up.⁴⁷ Some nine months after his recruitment, Frank’s ship, HMS *Indefatigable*, was involved in the Battle of Jutland as part of Admiral Sir David Beatty’s battle cruiser fleet. HMS *Indefatigable* was hit several times in the opening salvos of the battle cruiser action in May 1916. Shells from the German battle cruiser *Von der Tann* caused an explosion which ripped a hole in her hull, and a second explosion hurled large pieces of the ship some 200 feet into

the air. Soon after being rent in this fashion, HMS *Indefatigable* ‘turned over and in a moment, all trace of her was gone’.⁴⁸ Frank Shapley was one of the 1019 crew members who died on board HMS *Indefatigable*, and his service file records him as having been ‘Killed in Action’ on 31 May 1916.⁴⁹ Shapley was awarded the Mercantile Marine Medal and the British War Medal, and his service to his country is permanently commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial.⁵⁰

The experiences of the Shapley family were undoubtedly horrendous and tragic, doubly so of course, because Frank was clearly under age and should not even have been engaged in the conflict. Nevertheless, as far as the White Feather Movement was concerned, its recruitment efforts had again been successful as another individual had been persuaded to enlist. Yet there were other men who resolutely refused to engage in the war effort—and in direct combat in particular—no matter how many white feathers they received or what opprobrium and abuse came their way. Typically, these individuals were conscientious objectors. One leading pacifist and conscientious objector, Fenner Brockway (1888–1988), recounted that he had received so many white feathers from women that he had enough to design a ‘splendid fan’ to keep himself cool in the more humid summer months, but still, he refused to enlist!⁵¹

THE SHAMING OF THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

Despite the best efforts of the White Feather Movement and other recruitment campaigns in the early years of the Great War, enlistment levels were still inadequate by the end of the first year of the conflict. At this time, Lord Kitchener requested that a further three million men be put at his disposal to bolster military efforts.⁵² Kitchener’s request came in part because news from the Front related alarming casualty figures. By the end of 1915, some 528,272 British troops had been killed in the conflict. This news reflected both the brutality of the war and a serious deficit of numbers, but it also seemed to impact upon the rate of volunteering. At the start of the conflict 30,000 British men enlisted on a daily basis. By 1915, only 70,000 volunteers came forward every month.⁵³ Yet data collected by the National Registration Act in the summer of 1915 revealed that approximately 2,700,000 eligible men had not yet enlisted.⁵⁴ The Liberal Prime Minister at the time, Herbert H. Asquith (1852–1928), remained reluctant to introduce conscription because he believed it would be universally unpopular.⁵⁵ He wanted to exhaust all possible means of

encouraging voluntarism before forcing military service on British men.⁵⁶ In addition, popular opinion in the early years of the conflict believed the war would be a short-lived affair, so the need for conscription was remote in the minds of the general public.⁵⁷ A further push for voluntary enlistment was instigated by Lord Derby in October 1915 when he established a National Register of men aged nineteen to forty-one who were willing to enlist should they be directly called upon to do so. The scheme failed, however, as on the whole it attracted support from married men, whereas single men were the preferred target audience for recruitment at that time.⁵⁸

The necessity of conscription was difficult to stomach for many, especially for liberal-minded authority figures, as 'it involved the abandonment not only of familiar military tactics but also of cherished beliefs in the extent of individual freedom and the limitations of government control'.⁵⁹ Accommodating this viewpoint and other organised opposition to conscription, such as the Non-Conscription Fellowship established by Fenner Brockway in the autumn of 1914, the draft of the Military Service Bill included the offer of an exemption from combative duties on the grounds of conscience, provided that the objector be engaged instead in work considered to be of 'national importance' to the war effort.⁶⁰ Eligibility would be determined by application and hearings before local tribunals. The Military Service Act was passed on 27 January 1916 and conscripted unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one.⁶¹ Married men were conscripted by an amendment to the initial legislation on 2 May 1916, and a further change introduced in April 1918, albeit very late in the conflict, lowered the age of service liability to seventeen and the maximum age to fifty-five.⁶²

The debates surrounding conscription, which had begun as early as 1909, raged on even after mandatory service had been written into law.⁶³ The exemption of conscientious objectors, in particular, caused virulent reactions from peers and politicians alike. In their minds at least, the inclusion of the 'conscientious clause' had rendered the Military Service Act the 'slacker's charter'.⁶⁴ As Lord Willoughby De Broke articulated in a parliamentary debate:

a man who conscientiously objects to fighting himself for himself or for his own wife and family but is willing that others should be persuaded to fight for his possessions and lay down their lives for him displays a selfishness, an hypocrisy, and an arrogance very difficult to forgive.⁶⁵

There were three potential types of exemption which could be granted by tribunals: partial exemption from combative service only; conditional exemption, provided that the individual undertook work of ‘national importance’; and absolute exemption, where the tribunal excused the applicant’s engagement in the war effort at any level.⁶⁶ It was exceedingly difficult to be granted any of these exemptions on the grounds of conscience, however, as few tribunals accepted objection to the war as a valid reason for non-enlistment.⁶⁷

Essentially, tribunals tested the resolve of those who applied for exemption from military service on the grounds of conscience, especially absolutist objectors who refused to participate in any way. David Lloyd George (1863–1945), Secretary of State for War and soon to be Prime Minister of the coalition government from December 1916, personally sanctioned the rigorous attitude of tribunals by saying that he ‘would only consider the best means of making the path of that class [the absolutists] a very hard one’.⁶⁸ Tribunals tended to be composed of local worthies, and so were normally presided over by a mayor or a local councillor. Few women were engaged by the tribunals, as they were seemingly deemed ‘too fierce’ in dealing with applicants, but there was typically a working-class representative (usually a trade union member) as well as a military man in attendance.⁶⁹ Tribunals often dealt with claimants in a fairly cursory manner, since they considered all the various kinds of applications for exemption: illness, dire poverty and engagement in ‘work of national importance’ as well as conscience. Between January and July 1916 alone, some 750,000 men applied for exemption from military service of one form or another. Most hearings only lasted five minutes or so, and it was not unusual for a tribunal to hear as many as thirty exemption cases in one morning.⁷⁰

It is estimated that some 16,000 British conscientious objectors claimed exemption from military service when compulsory conscription came into force in 1916. Of these individuals, 5944 obstinately refused to accept the terms of exemption given to them or to accede to the fact that they had not been granted an exemption. A further 1200 individuals refused to even apply for an exemption in the first place.⁷¹ Conscientious objectors had varying backgrounds, and many were religious men who believed that military action was incompatible with the teachings of Christianity or the sacredness of human life.⁷² Others had more political agendas in mind. A section of the manifesto of the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF) produced in 1915, for instance, reads:

We yield to no one in our admiration of the sacrifice, the courage and the unflinching devotion of those of our fellow-countrymen who have felt it their duty to take up arms. Nevertheless, we cannot undertake the same form of service ... we deny the right of any Government to make the slaughter of our fellows a bounden duty.⁷³

Several socialist objectors saw workers, regardless of nationality, as their brothers or comrades rather than the enemy.⁷⁴ Others simply opposed the concept of warfare. As one conscientious objector, Bert Brocklesby from Conisborough in south Yorkshire, explained when interviewed in 1988: 'It seemed *monstrous* to me that men should sell their souls to wicked commanders who might order them to commit the foulest crimes ... to start hating millions of people I had never seen.'⁷⁵

Various attempts were made to shame conscientious objectors into enlisting. Many objectors received multiple white feathers in the course of their resistance to conscription, and when those failed, white feathers were sent instead to their parents, family and friends. When that strategy also proved futile, other tactics were employed, particularly after newspapers reported the various ploys that so-called 'shirkers' had been adopting in order to avoid conscription. These included feigning illness, deliberate self-harm, adopting false personas, bribing officials and dressing as women.⁷⁶

Shaming attempts appeared in the context of the tribunals convened to hear exemption claims where conscientious objectors received regular verbal abuse from panel members. One conscientious objector was told, for instance, that he 'was fit only to be on the point of a German bayonet'.⁷⁷ Other objectors were asked savage and wholly inappropriate questions to test the extent of their pacifist beliefs, such as whether they would physically react to defend their mother if she was being raped by a German soldier.⁷⁸ This kind of ill-treatment was common and officially sanctioned as an appropriate investigative mechanism by which to determine whether claims for exemption were genuine or otherwise. There was also a specific poster campaign directed at conscientious objectors (see the example in Fig. 2.4) which—in the same vein as the White Feather Movement—attempted to emasculate the men concerned and suggest that their actions demonstrated an 'inappropriate masculinity'.⁷⁹

An accompanying press campaign to deride conscientious objectors was another mechanism of shaming, especially at the mid-point of the conflict and after March 1916 when the government introduced a Non-Combative



Fig. 2.4 ‘The Conscientious Objector at the Front’ was a postcard and subsequently a poster, undated but likely to have been produced in October 1916 (accessed from *Picture Postcards from the Great War*: <http://www.worldwar1postcards.com>, accessed 1 January 2016)

Corps to serve the needs of conscientious objectors. This initiative meant that the army could train men who were resistant to combative duty to undertake manual labour for the war effort. However, many conscientious objectors refused to take up this type of exemption as it contributed to a war which they fundamentally opposed, and soon the press renamed the unit the ‘Non-Courage Corps’.⁸⁰

Although some newspapers were fairly supportive of free speech, other publications shamed and condemned conscientious objectors. The press used the language of the tribunals to describe these men as ‘cowards’, ‘cads’, ‘shirkers’, ‘degenerates’, ‘a contemptible little army’, ‘the most awful pack that ever walked on this earth’, ‘a shivering mass of unwholesome fat’ and ‘men who were acting in league with the Devil in place of Christ in their refusal to defend our women and children from the ravages of the Germans’.⁸¹ The *Sunday Herald* even observed that conscientious objectors were ‘not worth the powder and shot’ but that in view of the extreme circumstances of the time ‘perhaps a few rounds might be spared’.⁸²

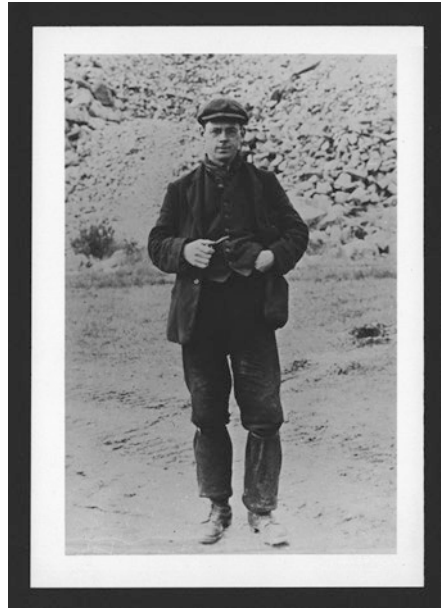
Conscientious objection also became a political football, since most parliamentarians and authority figures were quick to voice their criticisms. Many argued that conscientious objection was a ‘shameful cloak to cowardice’ which was unacceptable when other men were making the ‘ultimate sacrifice’.⁸³ One leading figure in the War Office regarded conscientious objectors as working in league with the Germans to hamper the British military effort, ultimately describing them as ‘the enemy within our gates’.⁸⁴ Popular public opinion denounced the objectors, regarding their attempts to exercise their rights as citizens in a country that they were not prepared to defend as shameful and ‘intolerable’.⁸⁵ One observer reflected that conscientious objectors appeared oblivious to the fact that their country was in mortal danger. He described them as ‘such self-centred and opinionated beings ... [who] have, however sincere, something repellent and almost inhuman about them’.⁸⁶ Admiral Penrose Fitzgerald, founder of the White Feather Movement, questioned why conscientious objectors were permitted to flout the law of the land and other individuals were not. He hypothesised: ‘I might as well trump up a conscience against paying my taxes.’⁸⁷

This opprobrium levelled at conscientious objectors in 1916 implied that they were somehow deviant, ‘criminal’ outcasts who were traitors to their king, their country and their fellow men. As the historian Lois Bibbings has described, conscientious objectors were portrayed as ‘unmen’ or ‘an aberrant form of manhood’, and as a group ‘they represented identities that sounded a discord with the dominant ideas of the period’.⁸⁸ The final method employed to force enlistment amongst conscientious objectors, when all others failed, was compulsory militarisation, which was starkly evidenced by the experiences of one English conscientious objector called Howard Cruttenden Marten (1884–1981).

HOWARD CRUTTENDEN MARTEN

Howard Cruttenden Marten (see Fig. 2.5) was born on 29 July 1884 in the parish of St George, Hanover Square, in London and, with perhaps one exception (the latter part of his time in France), his experiences as a conscientious objector exemplifies what these men went through during the Great War and the aftermath of the conflict.⁸⁹ Marten was in his early thirties and working in London as a bank clerk when the First World War began and, as a committed Quaker and pacifist, he believed that conflict

Fig. 2.5 Photograph of Howard Cruttenden Marten, 1917 (Leeds University Library, GB 0206, Liddle Collection: Howard Marten Papers, CO 061)



was wrong and indeed sinful.⁹⁰ Once conscription was in place, Marten applied to the local tribunal at Hendon in Middlesex on 1 March 1916 for ‘absolute’ exemption from all activity related to the war effort. In his application he set out his reasoning as follows:

While humbly conscious before God of my constant neglect of His precepts, I sincerely and earnestly declare that I cannot undertake any form of military service, in which decision I, personally, feel supported:

1/ By the life and teaching of Jesus Christ which, as the highest achievement of living, is characterized by love and forbearance as opposed to fear and violence.

2/ By the direct testimony of my own conscience which I am bound to obey.

3/ By the knowledge that the ultimate triumph of Christian Ideals can only be accomplished by the loyalty of each individual to the guiding power of that Inner Light which must direct his course.⁹¹

His application was refused, ‘there being insufficient proof of conscientious objection’, and instead he was recommended for non-combatant service.⁹²

At this point in time, Howard Marten was given a white feather—which he used to clean his pipe. He refused to accept the exemption offered to him by a tribunal and appealed against the decision later that month, but again, his application was denied.⁹³ Marten then appealed to the central tribunal for the County of Middlesex on 22 March 1916 claiming that the original decision offering him non-combative service ‘has not fully recognized the grounds on which it was based i.e. My inmost conviction that all war is wrong and that therefore any form of military service is incompatible with my beliefs’.⁹⁴ Marten requested ‘absolute exemption’ once more and that he ‘be free to take up any work beneficial to humanity towards which I may be led, thus leaving my conscience free from human control and at liberty to render obedience to the Guiding Spirit of our Heavenly Father’.⁹⁵ Recollecting this in an interview nearly seventy years after the event, Marten stated that his obstinacy was not just because he did not want to fight, but also because he objected to having his life directed by an ‘outside authority’.⁹⁶

In support of his application and reflecting his long-standing commitment to pacifism, Howard Marten appended a copy of a paper entitled ‘National Defence’ that he had given to the Polytechnic Mutual Improvement Society on 27 November 1900. In this paper, Marten declares that it is ‘deplorable’ that nations ‘should resort to the most inhuman, fiendish and barbaric of all methods, namely “war” for settling their disputes ... There is no doubt that war is utterly wrong and yet the more education continues, the more war is studied as an art or science.’⁹⁷ His appeal was refused and dismissed. As he continued to reject enlistment, he was now breaking the law under the provisions of the Military Service Act of 1916, and he was subsequently arrested for his steadfast refusal to fight.⁹⁸ Marten was undeterred and later recounted: ‘I remember telling somebody that if I was the only person in this world, I would take this attitude. That’s how I felt about it. It was a very personal thing.’⁹⁹

Marten was imprisoned in various English institutions before being sent to a military compound in France in April 1916.¹⁰⁰ He was warned that once he was across the Channel, acts of disobedience would be met with the death penalty and that the ‘Parliamentary friends’ of the conscientious objectors would not prevent this.¹⁰¹ Despite this threat, and even after being verbally shamed and physically abused, Marten still refused to obey orders, and as he was now subject to military rules, he was charged under sections 9 (1) and/or 9 (2) of the Army Act for the repeated defiance of authority.¹⁰² Thus Marten received a version of the opprobrious,

'harsh and degrading' Field Punishment No. 1 (see Fig. 2.6), where he was effectively crucified for two hours every day, three nights out of four,

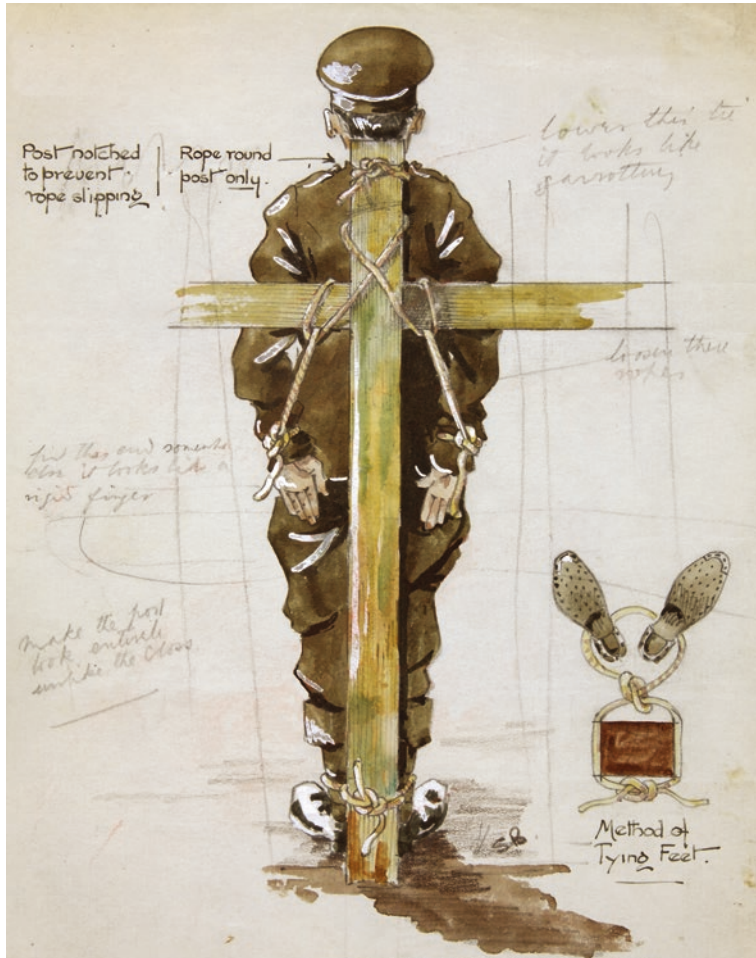


Fig. 2.6 Sketch produced as part of correspondence providing detailed description of Field Punishment No. 1, 1916 (National Archives, War Office Papers, David Lloyd George, letter to French Minister, 21 November 1916, WO 32/5460)

affixed by his wrists to a horizontal rope five feet off the ground and fed on a ‘punishment diet’ of four biscuits and some water each day.¹⁰³

Still, Marten refused to comply. As he explained:

It was unprecedented. The military authorities didn’t know quite how to react to it. It was something quite outside their experience. And it became clear we weren’t people that could be bullied. I think the idea was to break us. They thought by threatening us one way or another way they would break the resistance, and that would settle the matter, and of course it didn’t. You don’t break resistance by threatening people ... They thought we were always out to save our skin; not for a principle. And when they thought we were fighting a principle, they couldn’t understand it.¹⁰⁴

Marten and sixteen other prisoners were then ordered to drill. When they refused, all seventeen men were placed in irons and imprisoned in an underground cage measuring eleven feet nine inches by eleven feet three inches.¹⁰⁵ Marten was soon put in his own cell as the prison authorities regarded him to be a ringleader.¹⁰⁶ Marten and three other men (Harry Scullard, Jack Foister and Jonathan Ring) were then asked to drill once more. They again refused to do so and were subsequently court-martialled on 2 June 1916, being told that ‘disobeying orders on active service was a sin’, and they were then sentenced to death for their ongoing defiance and misconduct. The camp commanders asked the five men to make out wills. They declined. For Marten, ‘It was all water off a duck’s back ... I could not recognise any military authority. We never saluted anybody; we never stood to attention.’¹⁰⁷

The ‘shameful’ treatment endured by Howard Marten and the other conscientious objectors sent to France was widely reported in Britain (by organisations such as the Non-Conscription Fellowship), and it was clear that political and public opinion judged that the authorities had gone too far.¹⁰⁸ What had not been made public, however, was that in May 1916, the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, had issued a directive to the military authorities saying that capital sentences were not to be carried out on conscientious objectors without the consent of the Cabinet.¹⁰⁹ Marten, too, was unaware of this when he learned his fate on 15 June 1916 at Henriville Camp in north-eastern France. An officer read out the long list of Marten’s offences listed at the court martial hearing before solemnly announcing: ‘The sentence of the court is to suffer death by being shot.’ There was then a pause for dramatic effect. Marten recounted

saying to himself at that moment 'Well that's that then.' To his amazement, the officer then continued his speech, explaining that the sentence of execution had been commuted by order of the Commander-in Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, to ten years' penal servitude. Marten explained that he felt disembodied when hearing the decision against him, as if it was happening to someone else:

I must admit that I had a feeling of sinking in the stomach as I waited for my sentence, but you had been threatened with the death sentence for days in and out so that you almost lost a sense of personality. I have often since felt that on the parade ground I was a different personality. I was part of something much bigger than myself. There was something mystical about it. It was very strange.¹¹⁰

Similar emotions were recounted by all of the thirty objectors who were capitally convicted, and clearly the military authorities had no intention of executing the conscientious objectors brought before them. However, the men's continued insubordination and perceived lack of patriotism could not go unpunished since enlisted men elsewhere in France were being shot for desertion and failing to obey direct orders. As a result, the army instigated these sham military proceedings in the hope of scaring conscientious objectors into participation in the war effort. However, this initiative failed and, just as before, the conscientious objectors remained defiant.

Howard Marten's case illuminated the fact that degrading shaming punishments were not solely restricted to the fifty men sent to France. For instance, the case of three conscientious objectors called up as recruits to the Cheshire Regiment, Charles Dukes, George Benson and George Beardsworth, made headline news in 1916, after reports surfaced that they had each been verbally abused and physically assaulted by army officers attempting to 'tame and shame them' into enlisting.¹¹¹ Collectively, instances such as these and the plight of the so-called 'Frenchmen' such as Howard Marten resulted in the treatment of conscientious objectors being debated in Parliament in an attempt to prevent further abuses and improve their treatment in captivity. Lois Bibbings explains that 'their presence in the armed forces was both an embarrassment and a waste of military time'.¹¹² Consequently, it was determined by Army Order X that conscientious objectors should be court-martialled under military law, but transferred for punishment under civilian authority for a maximum

sentence of two years' imprisonment (typically 112 days of detention were served).¹¹³ The Pelham Committee was established to find alternative work of national importance for imprisoned conscientious objectors, and the Home Office scheme was subsequently offered to those objectors who were willing to work but refusing contribute to the war effort in any way.¹¹⁴

Howard Marten was one of nearly 4000 conscientious objectors who accepted the offer of convict hard labour in prison or works camps set up in places like Dyce (Aberdeenshire), Llanddeusant (Carmarthenshire), Wakefield (west Yorkshire) and Dartmoor (Devon).¹¹⁵ His decision dismayed other conscientious objectors and leading members of the NCF, however, as it was regarded as 'selling out'. Marten recalls that the leader of the NCF at the time, Catherine Marshall, 'thought it would have been very much better if we had been shot' in France, as at least the NCF would then have had 'proper' martyrs for its cause.¹¹⁶ Despite Marshall's frivolous and inappropriate comment, it is clear from Marten's testimony and that of others that the Home Office scheme was not a 'soft option' for these prisoners. They suffered tremendous hardships during their confinement and several of their number died as a result of such treatment.¹¹⁷

Approximately 985 conscientious objectors rejected the Home Office scheme and remained hardened absolutists. For these men, the government provided only the dismal treadmill of arrest, court martial, solitary confinement or hard labour, release, re-arrest, court martial and so on, much like the impasse caused by the so-called 'Cat and Mouse Act' relating to the treatment of the suffragettes in 1913.¹¹⁸ Absolutists continued to receive abuse, shaming punishments and inhumane treatment even in the aftermath of Army Order X. For example, in 1917 newspapers reported that the conscientious objector John Gray was punched in the mouth, stripped naked, frogmarched and 'ducked' eight or nine times in a pond at Alnwick Camp (Northumberland), and his fellow pacifist James Brightmore was held in a pit twelve feet below ground for eleven days and nights at Cleethorpes Camp (Lincolnshire).¹¹⁹ Official and non-official supporters of conscientious objectors also received unrelenting opprobrious treatment. Leading members of the NCF, for example, were harassed, arrested and imprisoned by authorities on a routine basis, through arguably 'imaginative' interpretations of the function and purpose of the Defence of the Realm Act (1914).¹²⁰ Some NCF meetings seeking support for conscientious objectors were met with violent opposition from the general public, and evidence suggests that the government went to

elaborate lengths to showcase its distaste for those individuals who condoned the presence of conscientious objectors in their midst.¹²¹

Even after the conflict had ended, conscientious objectors were still shamed and shunned by their contemporaries. Objectors were refused the franchise for five years as part of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, and they found it very difficult to find employment once released as everyone seemed to know their background and history; some received continued verbal and physical abuse on a regular basis.¹²² For several years after the war Howard Marten and his wife and their two children were stoned every Sunday when they went to church, and the authorities did nothing to help them. Marten similarly found it difficult to adjust back into civilian life and spent the remainder of his days trying to live a quiet, unassuming existence.¹²³ He rarely talked about his wartime experiences, save for a substantive interview he gave in 1974. He died in the spring of 1981 at the grand old age of ninety-seven.¹²⁴

MISTAKES, CONCERNS AND CRITIQUES

The well-publicised plight of conscientious objectors initiated a subtle softening of attitudes.¹²⁵ At the same time, a more evident distaste at how men were being ‘encouraged’ to engage in military action began to flourish across Britain. Newspapers repeatedly reported instances of woeful errors of judgement made by the women who distributed white feathers. Feathers were given to men who were too old or too young to fight, to men who were doing work of ‘national importance’ and to men who had tried repeatedly to enlist but had been declared medically unfit. More farcically, white feathers were also being given to men who had returned home from the Front after having been wounded, as well as to soldiers on respite leave.¹²⁶

Reuben W. Farrow, for instance, had been sent back home to Derby in 1916 after he had one of his hands blown off at the Front. He was riding a tramcar in civilian dress and had his overcoat on his lap covering his arms. A woman walked up to him and asked him ‘very harshly’ why he was evading his duty to his country and thrust a white feather into the lapel of his jacket. Mr Farrow said nothing but calmly stood up and shoved the stump of his hand in the woman’s face. When reminiscing about this incident later, Farrow said he felt ‘pained’ by the encounter as he had been questioned on what he was willing to give for his country, a question that, he felt, he had already given a strong answer to.¹²⁷

The Scotsman George Mackenzie Samson, on the other hand, was a seaman in the Royal Navy Reserve. On 25 April 1915 Samson and four other men were on the HMS *River Clyde*, which was attempting to land 2000 troops on to V Beach at Gallipoli, when lighters forming the bridge between the steamer and the shore began to drift apart. Under fierce machine-gun fire, Samson busied himself among the wounded and assisted those repairing the bridge. He was hit over and over again, but ensured that the wounded were taken to safety and the bridge repaired. Samson was awarded the Victoria Cross by King George V at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace in October 1915. After receiving his award, Samson went into Hyde Park to sit on a bench to have a smoke. He had an overcoat on over his uniform as it was raining heavily. While sitting on the bench, a woman came up to him, spat at him and called him a ‘dirty coward’. She then handed him a white feather. Samson said nothing to the woman as he just could not believe what had happened. He kept the white feather in the same box as his Victoria Cross as he was pretty sure that no-one else would have received both emblems in the one day!¹²⁸

There were also a growing number of reported instances of inappropriate feather-giving which resulted in violence being threatened or inflicted upon the distributor concerned. Private Ernest Atkins, for instance, recounted being home on leave in 1917 and having changed into his ‘civvies’ in order to go and visit his parents. He boarded a tram crowded with girls going to do munitions work and, as he recounted:

I hear giggling behind me and one says, ‘Go on, give it to him.’ A girl sitting behind me touches my shoulder and hands me a white feather. I get up and, taking out my pay book, smack it across her face and say, ‘Certainly I’ll take your feather back to the boys at Passchendaele. I’m in civvies because people think my uniform may be lousy, but if I had it on, I wouldn’t be half as lousy as you.’¹²⁹

Episodes such as these resulted in support for the White Feather Movement ebbing away, to be replaced with mounting criticism of the practice and of the individuals involved in feather distribution. One journalist from the newspaper *The Times* described how he found the tactics of white feather givers to be incomprehensible. He explained:

Those who assume that all men are alike; mere machines that can march so many miles an hour and fire so many rounds of ammunition – only some are

‘shirkers’ evading their duty as citizens. No allowance appears to be made for the infinite variety of constitution, temperament, emotion, disposition, and of idiosyncrasies among men. Fundamentally speaking, Nature makes heroes and cowards of us from the first, in our mother’s womb, without in the least consulting us.¹³⁰

Others argued that the women of the white feather campaign were no better than the enemy in their callous disregard for the pain they inflicted on ‘sensitive’ individuals and suggested that the military uniform was not the only suitable symbol of patriotism.¹³¹ The writer and cultural commentator Sir Compton Mackenzie (1883–1972) accused white feather givers of being flippant in their motives for employing such a powerful tool of opprobrium. He argued in his memoirs that ‘too many idiotic young women were handing white feather to boy-friends they were tired of’.¹³²

Hostility towards white feather giving led to the practice being debated in Parliament. Concerns were voiced, as early as March 1915, over the safety of non-military personnel and their apparent need for protection from over-zealous members of the White Feather Movement. For instance, Cathcart Wason (1848–1921), MP for Orkney and Shetland, asked the Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna (1863–1943), at that time:

if he was aware that persons employed directly or indirectly in the service of the State are subjected to insolence and provocation at the hands of some advertising young women presenting them with white feathers; and if he will give order to the police to arrest such persons for acting in a manner likely to create a breach of the peace?

McKenna replied:

I agree with my honourable Friend in thinking the practice very objectionable and not likely to assist recruiting, but I am informed by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police that no complaint in the matter has reached the police, and I do not think the risk of the practice leading to breach of the peace is so great as to justify the action which my honourable Friend suggests.

Wason went on to ask the Home Secretary: ‘...whether, if he is unable to assist in the manner indicated, he would make it easier for badges to be issued to persons employed?’

McKenna concluded: ‘That question should be addressed to the naval and military authorities.’¹³³

Although clearly the Home Secretary made no decision on the matter at the time, Cathcart Wason's suggestion of distributing badges to individuals undertaking work of 'national importance' to prevent them from receiving white feathers was widely adopted, and armlets were issued to individuals undertaking certain types of employment.¹³⁴ Over time, therefore, and by the latter years of the Great War in particular, the crescendo of criticisms relating to the practice of white feather giving had become deafening.

Women's association with the movement was seen as being particularly problematic. The White Feather Movement initially showcased feminine strength, dedication and patriotism but seemed to have outstayed its welcome—even by the end of 1915—and instead came to be regarded as something that seemingly displayed all the worst traits of women.¹³⁵ White feather distributors came to be described variously as 'hysterical hoydens', 'a repulsive disgrace' and 'monstrous distortions of femininity'.¹³⁶ One contemporary commentator told the women of Britain that the distributing of white feathers, '...far from witnessing to your patriotism, witnesses only to the fact that you are unpardonably ignorant, vulgar and impertinent'.¹³⁷

Shame and white feathers were of course propaganda tools that sought to play off people's fears and desires, but it seems that this manipulation went too far and ultimately, as a campaign, it came across as being unnecessarily negative. The White Feather Movement ignored the good within men but instead drew upon their flaws, such as self-consciousness and fear of failure. As historians such as Peter J. Hart have argued, propaganda during the Great War sought to recruit men through strengthening their spirits, not by crushing their confidence. Could men be effective soldiers if they were sent to war with a sense of shame? Surely it was preferable that they had a feeling of patriotic spirit—of *wanting* to serve their country? The general populace came to realise that the White Feather Movement's campaign to garner patriotic recruits to fight in the Great War had largely failed. Most of the men who enlisted would have done so in any case, with or without a white feather in their cap, and the remainder either could not or would not fight, no matter how many feathers were bestowed upon them.¹³⁸

CONCLUSION: SHAME COMES FULL CIRCLE

In response to waning recruitment levels at the beginning of the First World War, the giving of white feathers to 'persuade' men to do their patriotic duty and 'rush to the colours' was a potent tactic. Supported

by influential politicians and social commentators alike, the White Feather Movement played on the indissoluble bond between masculinity and militarism to encourage women, in particular, to adorn unenlisted men with white feathers. Initially the work of feather givers was encouraged. It let women show their patriotism and their capabilities, whilst it undoubtedly persuaded some individuals to enlist sooner than they might otherwise have done. Some men, however, were undeterred by the opprobrium of receiving a white feather. Conscientious objectors, in particular, steadfastly refused to engage in the war effort. As a consequence shaming tactics were employed by the government, the military, the press and the general public to change the seemingly intractable mind-set of those conscientious objectors who refused to obey military orders once compulsory conscription was established in Scotland, England and Wales in 1916. Some relented, but several hundred ‘absolutists’ faced down the opprobrium they received and remained resolute in their conviction that warfare and interpersonal conflict were abhorrent.

The ill-treatment of conscientious objectors and their supporters became well publicised and was strongly criticised in some quarters. Over time, the viewpoint of pacifists and conscientious objectors became more tolerated, especially in the context of a war that was rapidly being associated with an abominable loss of life.¹³⁹ The panic over recruitment which had seen men effectively forced into enlistment started to diminish and burn itself out from the latter months of 1916 onwards. One catalyst for this change was knowledge of woeful errors of judgement by women in distributing white feathers to wounded men and soldiers on respite leave. Some episodes even became violent, and women’s role in reinforcing patriotism soured to the extent that their actions came to be regarded as an unattractive, blatant manipulation of their femininity. The White Feather Movement as a whole, along with recruitment campaigns which used shame as a key method of persuasion, became derided and roundly criticised for fostering the wrong kind of attitude in the men sent to the Front.

In 1914, it was shameful to receive a white feather. By 1917, it was shameful to give a white feather. Perhaps the clearest representations of this transformation of attitude towards feather giving comes in a poem called ‘The Jingo-Woman’, written by the school-teacher Helen Hamilton in 1918. An extract from the poem reads as follows:

Jingo-woman
(How I dislike you!)

Dealer in white feathers,
 Insulter, self-appointed,
 Of all the men you meet,
 Not dressed in uniform,
 When to your mind,
 (A sorry mind),
 They should be,
 The test?
 The judgement of your eye,
 That wild, infuriate eye,
 Whose glance, so you declare,
 Reveals unerringly,
 Who's good for military service.
 Oh! Exasperating woman,
 I'd like to wring your neck,
 I really would! ...
 ... Do hold your tongue!
 You shame us women.
 Can't you see it isn't decent,
 To flout and goad men into doing,
 What is not asked of you?¹⁴⁰

Despite its negative connotations by the end of the Great War, white feather giving was resurrected during the Second World War. Once again, unenlisted men were taunted and targeted by women distributing white feathers. Sometimes the opprobrium involved had tragic consequences. For instance in the summer of 1943, two men committed suicide after receiving white feathers. Bernard Sills from London shot himself with a rifle, and Cyril Wray from Oxford gassed himself. The inquests into their deaths noted that both individuals were in fact too young to be recruited to the military, although both had tried.¹⁴¹ Shaming customs of this type evidently had a long reach and significance for certain individuals, even when the majority of the population had disassociated itself from such practices. In any event, what this chapter has shown is that the application of shame and the feelings that result often come full circle. The White Feather Movement is a good example of the reverberatory nature of shame in the modern context: the individuals who distributed feathers, who were once celebrated and revered, eventually came to be loathed and derided by the populace at large.¹⁴²

NOTES

1. Imperial War Museum (Sound Archive), London (hereafter IWMSA), interview with James Lovegrove (1984), catalogue no. 8231, reel 1.
2. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989, second edition), vol. 20 (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 275. See also N. Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War', *Journal of British Studies*, 36, p. 189.
3. See respectively A.E.W. Mason (1902) *The Four Feathers* (London: Macmillan) [Bodleian Library, Oxford, 2561 e. 1270]; P.G. Wodehouse (1907) *The White Feather* (London: Adam and Black) [Bodleian Library, 2532 e. 262]; and A. Bennett (1914) 'The White Feather: A Sketch of English Recruiting' reproduced in *Colliers' Weekly*, 10 October 1914. For further discussion see W. Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight: The Untold Story of World War One's Conscientious Objectors* (London: Aurum Press), p. 46; Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 188–9; and George Simmer's research blog entitled (2007) 'White Feathers: Stories of Courage, Recruitment and Gender at the Start of the Great War', found at <http://greatwarfiction.wordpress.com>, *passim*, accessed 1 January 2016.
4. See for instance P.E. Dewey (1984) 'Military Recruitment and the British Labour Force during the First World War', *Historical Journal*, 27, 1, pp. 199–233, and R. Douglas (1970) 'Voluntary Enlistment in the First World War and the Work of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee', *Journal of Modern History*, 42, 4, pp. 564–85.
5. For fears over dwindling recruitment figures see R.J.Q. Adams and P.P. Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain, 1900–1918* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press), p. 62 and pp. 66–9; B.J. White (2009) 'Volunteerism and Early Recruitment Efforts in Devonshire, August 1914–December 1915', *Historical Journal*, 52, 3, p. 642; J.M. Osborne (1988) 'Defining their Own Patriotism: British Volunteer Training Corps in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 23, 1, p. 65; and Dewey (1984) 'Military Recruitment', *passim*.
6. Osborne (1988) 'Defining their Own Patriotism', p. 60.
7. White (2009) 'Volunteerism', p. 642.

8. See Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, pp. 12–47, and A. Summers (1976) ‘Militarism in Britain before the Great War’, *History Workshop*, 2, pp. 113–14.
9. Admiral C.C.P. Fitzgerald (1916) *From Sail to Steam: Naval Recollections, 1878–1905* (London: Edward Arnold) [Bodleian Library, 23141 e. 185], p. 287.
10. *Daily Mail*, 31 August 1914. For further discussion of the formation of the movement see Gullace (1997) ‘White Feathers’, pp. 178–9, and N.F. Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’: *Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), pp. 73–4.
11. Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’, p. 73.
12. D. Mitchell (1977) *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst* (London: Macdonald and Jane’s Publishers), p. 249, and see also pp. 247–9 for more detail. For further discussion of Emmeline’s and Christabel’s support for the ‘White Feather Movement’ see also A.K. Smith (2005) *Suffrage Discourse in Britain during the First World War* (Aldershot: Ashgate); D. Mitchell (1965, 1966 edition) *Women on the Warpath: The Story of the Women of the First World War* (London: Jonathan Cape), pp. 54–5; C. Haste (1977) *Keep the Home Fires Burning: Propaganda in the First World War* (London: Allen Lane), p. 57; A. Wiltsher (1985) *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* (London and Boston: Pandora), pp. 36–40; and R. MacDonald (1998) “‘White Feather Feminism’: The Recalcitrant Progeny of Radical Suffragist and Conservative Pro-War Britain’ found at <http://itech.fgcu.edu/&/issues/voll/issue1/feather.htm>, pp. 2–3, accessed 1 January 2016.
13. For more on Mrs Humphrey Ward’s support of the movement see M.A. Ward (1916) *England’s Effort: Six Letters to an American Friend* (London: John Murray) [Bodleian Library, 22281 e. 405], pp. 3–4 and p. 98, and M.A. Ward (1917) *Towards the Goal: Letters on Great Britain’s Effort in the War* (London: John Murray) [Bodleian Library, 22281 e. 539], p. ix. For more on Baroness Emma Orczy’s support of the movement see Baroness E. Orczy (1947) *Links in the Chain of Life* (London: Hutchison and Co.) [Bodleian Library, 2569 d. 294], *passim*; Gullace (1997) ‘White Feathers’, pp. 192–3; J. Sutherland (1990) *Mrs Humphrey Ward: Eminent Victorian, Pre-eminent Edwardian* (Oxford: Clarendon

- Press), *passim*; and Haste (1977) *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, p. 57.
14. See Gullace (2002) 'The Blood of Our Sons', p. 83, and Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', p. 186.
 15. See for instance *Chatham News*, 5 September 1914. For further discussion see Gullace (2002) 'The Blood of Our Sons', pp. 73–4; Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 178–9; and White (2009) 'Volunteerism', pp. 662–3. For evidence of the White Feather Movement spreading as far as Canada during the First World War, see E.A. Kuhlman (1997) *Petticoats and White Feathers: Gender Conformity, Race, the Progressive Peace Movement and the Debate Over War, 1895–1919* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press), p. 1.
 16. See for instance L. Bibbings (2003) 'Images of Manliness: The Portrayal of Soldiers and Conscientious Objectors in the Great War', *Social and Legal Studies*, 12, 3, pp. 335–58; L. Bibbings (2003) 'Conscientious Objectors in the Great War: The Consequences of Rejecting Military Masculinities' in P.R. Higate (ed.) *Military Masculinities: Identity and State* (London and Westport, CT: Praeger), pp. 125–41; Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 178–206; and P.J. Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign: A Struggle with Masculinity during World War I', *Student Pulse*, 2, 2: <http://www.studentpulse.com?id=151>, accessed 1 January 2016.
 17. White (2009) 'Volunteerism', p. 665; Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign'; and Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', p. 184 and p. 190.
 18. Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign'.
 19. For further discussion see Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 191–2, and Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign'.
 20. *Girl's Own Paper*, 1914–15, p. 36.
 21. For further discussion see A. Woollacott (1994) "'Khaki Fever" and its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29, 2, pp. 325–47; J. Bourke (1995) *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books) and G. Dawson (1994) *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge). See also Bibbings (2003) 'Images of Manliness', p. 339; Bibbings (2003) 'Conscientious Objectors', p. 126; Gullace (2002) 'The Blood of Our Sons', p. 93; and Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign'.

22. For further discussion see R. Ormiston (2013) *First World War Posters* (London: Flame Tree Publishers), especially pp. 13–21; Haste (1977) *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, pp. 56–7, and A. Marwick (2006) *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), p. 92.
23. Gullace (1997) ‘White Feathers’, p. 193.
24. See for instance *ibid.*, p. 182 and p. 191, and Mitchell (1977) *Queen Christabel*, p. 254.
25. *The Times*, 8 July 1915.
26. For further discussion see Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’, p. 74; Mitchell (1977) *Queen Christabel*, p. 249; MacDonald (1998) “‘White Feather Feminism’”; White (2009) ‘Volunteerism’, p. 664; Hart (2010) ‘The White Feather Campaign’; Wiltsher (1985) *Most Dangerous Women*, p. 40; and P. Ward (2001) “‘Women of Britain Say Go’: Women’s Patriotism in the First World War’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 12, 1, pp. 23–45.
27. For further discussion see Hart (2010) ‘The White Feather Campaign’.
28. For further discussion see MacDonald (1998) “‘White Feather Feminism’”, *passim*; A. Marwick (1977) *Women at War 1914–1918* (London: Fontana Press), p. 36; N.F. Gullace ‘Female Patriotism in the Great War’, *Women, War and Society*: www.gale.cengage.com/pdf/whitepapers/gdc/FemalePatriotism.pdf, p. 1, accessed 1 January 2016; Mitchell (1965, 1966 edition) *Women on the Warpath*, p. 55 and pp. 58–9; Simmer (2007) ‘White Feathers’; S.K. Kent (1987) *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); and S.S. Holton (2003) *Feminism and Democracy: Women’s Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
29. Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’, p. 82.
30. For discussion of the advantages of the ideology behind the ‘White Feather Movement’ see for instance Hart (2010) ‘The White Feather Campaign’. For discussion of the movement as ‘fanatical’ see Haste (1977) *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, p. 56, and P. Simkins (1988, 2007 edition) *Kitchener’s Army: The Raising of the New Armies 1914–1916* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military), p. 124.
31. M. MacDonagh (1935) *In London during the Great War: The Diary of a Journalist* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode) [Bodleian Library, 22281 e.1976], p. 79.
32. See for instance Simmer (2007) ‘White Feathers’.

33. V. Woolf (2007) 'Three Guineas' in *The Selected Works of Virginia Woolf* (Ware: Wordsworth Library Collection), p. 918 and n. 111 on that page in particular.
34. For further discussion see Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', p. 181 and nn. 12 and 14 on that page in particular.
35. Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 46.
36. For further discussion see White (2009) 'Volunteerism', p. 664; Gullace (2002) *The Blood of Our Sons*, p. 77; and Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 52.
37. Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', p. 179 and n. 5 on that page in particular.
38. Recollections of Ted Harrison from Hoxton recounted in Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 50.
39. See E.S. Turner (1980, 2012 edition) *Dear Old Blighty* (London: Faber and Faber), p. 69.
40. For further discussion of the methodologies associated with the White Feather Movement and how these changed over time see Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', p. 191; Simmer (2007) 'White Feathers'; and White (2009) 'Volunteerism', p. 664.
41. For further discussion refer to the descriptions given by men who received white feathers during the First World War provided when interviewed in 1964 by the BBC for its Great War series. More specifically, refer to the recordings of T.O. Cunningham, J.W. Besker, S.W. Buckingham, C.G. Byrne and F. Almond in IWMSA, respectively BBC/GW, volume CRA–CUT, fol. 245; BBC/GW, volume BEL–BEX, fol. 269; BBC/GW, volume BUC–BUR, fol. 54; BBC/GW, volume BUS–BYR, fol. 184; and BBC/GW, volume ALL–ANT, fols 339–40.
42. Imperial War Museum, Great War Collection (BBC), G.F. Taylor, letter of 18 May 1964.
43. *Ibid.*, Mrs J. Upjohn, letter of 17 May 1964.
44. See Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 47.
45. 'News from the Home Front' Imperial War Museum Collections, First World War Centenary, podcast 21: From <http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/podcasts/voices-of-the-first-world-war/podcast-21-news-from-the-front>, accessed 1 January 2016.
46. London Metropolitan Archives, Records of Births and Baptisms, Parish of St Antholin, Nunhead, 1813–1906, GB0074 P73/ANT; and The National Archives, London, Census Return of 1901 (England), Registration Sub-District: Deptford (South), RG

- 13/532, and Census Return of 1911 (England), Census Schedules, Registration Sub-District: Peckham (South), RG 14/2589.
47. National Archives, Naval Enrolment Form of Frank Gilbert Shapley (Service Number Z/1626 RNVR), 15 July 1915, ADM 337/36/250; and Naval Service File of Frank Gilbert Shapley (Service Number Z/1626 RNVR), ADM 339/1/34239.
 48. Sir J.S. Corbett (1923) *History of the Great War Naval Operations*, vol. 3 (London: Longmans, Green and Co.) [Bodleian Library, 22281 e.1409/3, 1], chapter XVII.
 49. National Archives, Naval Service File of Frank Gilbert Shapley, ADM 339/1/34239. For further detail on the Battle of Jutland see *London Gazette (Third Supplement)*, 6 July 1916; Corbett (1923) *History of the Great War Naval Operations*, vol. 3, Chaps. 16–21; G.M. Bennett (1999) *The Battle of Jutland* (Ware: Wordsworth); N. Steel and P. Hart (2003) *Jutland 1916: Death in Grey Wastes* (London: Cassell); G. Bonney (2002) *The Battle of Jutland* (Stroud: Royal Naval Museum); and H.W. Fawcett and G.W.W. Hooper (2001) *The Fighting at Jutland: The Personal Experiences of Sixty Officers and Men of the British Fleet* (Rochester: Chatham). It is worth noting that in all, the British lost 14 ships and 6094 men in the Battle of Jutland.
 50. See Commonwealth war graves, 1914–21 and 1939–47, Commonwealth War Graves Commission: www.cwgc.org, accessed 1 January 2016; and National Archives, Records of the Board of Trade and of Successor and Related Bodies, medal card of Frank Shapley, BT 351/1/127048.
 51. See Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 46.
 52. For further discussion see A. Kramer (2013) *Conchies: Conscientious Objectors of the First World War* (London and Sydney: Franklin Watts), p. 13, and Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, p. 114.
 53. Kramer (2013) *Conchies*, p. 13.
 54. Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, p. 98.
 55. *Ibid.*, p. 20 and p. 47, as well as J. Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics: The British Government and the Conscientious Objector to Military Service 1916–1919* (London: Oxford University Press), p. 1.
 56. See Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, pp. 112–13.

57. See Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, p. 2.
58. For further discussion see Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, pp. 120–35, and Marwick (2006) *The Deluge*, pp. 117–18.
59. Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, p. 2.
60. For further discussion see *ibid.*, Chaps. 2 and 3.
61. Parliamentary Papers, Military Service Act, 5 and 6 Geo. V, c. 104 (1916).
62. For further discussion of subsequent amendments see Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, pp. 140–251, and L. Smith (2009) *Voices Against War: A Century of Protest* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing), pp. 21–2. Exemptions were given to clergymen, to individuals engaged in work of so-called ‘national importance’ such as teachers or scientists and to those already working indirectly for the war effort such as miners, munitions workers and farmers.
63. For further discussion see Adams and Poirier (1987) *The Conscription Controversy*, pp. 83–4.
64. See an extensive report on the parliamentary debates surrounding this issue in *Manchester Guardian*, 20 January 1916; Marwick (2006) *The Deluge*, pp. 120–1; and T.C. Kennedy (1973) ‘Public Opinion and the Conscientious Objector, 1915–1919’, *Journal of British Studies*, 12, 2, p. 108.
65. Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 25 January 1916, vol. 20, cols 995–6.
66. For further discussion see L. Bibbings (1995) ‘State Reaction to Conscientious Objection’ in I. Loveland (ed.) *Frontiers of Criminality* (London: Sweet and Maxwell), p. 60, and N. MacMahon (1921) *The Conscientious Objector Problem from a War Office Aspect* (London: War Office) [Bodleian Library, M00. L00058], p. 4.
67. See Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, p. 48.
68. Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 26 July 1916, vol. 84, cols 1759–60. My addition in parenthesis.
69. For further discussion see Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 64; Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, Chaps. 4, 5 and 6; and Smith (2009) *Voices Against War*, pp. 28–9.
70. Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 64 and p. 68.

71. See Kramer (2013) *Conchies*, p. 32 and p. 36, and Bibbings (1995) 'State Reaction', p. 128. This figure equates to around 0.33 per cent of the 4,970,902 men who volunteered or were conscripted into the military.
72. For further discussion see J. Bell (1935) *We Did Not Fight: 1914–1918 Experiences of War Resisters* (London: Cobden-Sanderson) [Bodleian Library, LG 24884 e. 166], p. viii and p. x; F. Goodall (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War: Conscientious Objection during the World Wars* (Stroud: The History Press), p. 2, and J.W. Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience: A History 1916–1919* (New York: Augustus M. Keller Publishers), pp. 30–2 and p. 36.
73. *The Pioneer*, 11 September 1915.
74. For further discussion see Kramer (2013) *Conchies*, pp. 25–6, and Smith (2009) *Voices Against War*, p. 22.
75. IWMSA, interview with Bert Brocklesby (1988), catalogue no. 10122, reel 1. See also correspondence from conscientious objectors reproduced in *Manchester Guardian*, 24 January 1916 and 15 May 1916.
76. See L.S. Bibbings (2009) *Telling Tales About Men: Conceptions of Conscientious Objectors to Military Service during the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 179–81.
77. The proceedings of this hearing were reported in the Non-Conscription Fellowship's weekly newspaper *The Tribunal*, 15 March 1916.
78. For further discussion of the various abuses witnessed at tribunals see Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, pp. 74–7, and Turner (1980, 2012 edition) *Dear Old Blighty*, p. 175 and p. 177, and especially Bibbings (1995) 'State Reaction', pp. 62–5.
79. For further discussion see Bibbings (2003) 'Conscientious Objectors', pp. 125–6.
80. For further discussion see Kramer (2013) *Conchies*, p. 51.
81. See respectively Goodall (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War*, p. 15; Kramer (2013) *Conchies*, p. 30, p. 35 and pp. 42–3; Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 30; *Evening Standard*, 23 March 1916; *Glasgow Herald*, 10 April 1916; *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 September 1916 and *Manchester Guardian*, 24 July 1918.
82. *Sunday Herald*, 9 April 1916.

83. See for instance Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 25 January 1916, vol. 20, cols 970–1022, and D. Lloyd George (1933) *War Memoirs*, volume 2 (London: I. Nicholson and Watson) [Bodleian Library, K. 10.205], p. 712. For further evidence see C. Moorehead (1987) *Troublesome People: Enemies of War, 1916–1918* (London, Hamish Hamilton), p. 17.
84. MacMahon (1921) *The Conscientious Objector Problem*, preface.
85. See for instance *Daily Mail*, 10 April 1916. The founding members of the White Feather Movement, Mrs Humphry Ward and Admiral Penrose Fitzgerald were particularly scathing of pacifists and conscientious objectors, describing them respectively as ‘noxious weeds’ and ‘selfish shirkers’. See respectively Ward (1917) *Towards the Goal*, pp. vii–viii, and Fitzgerald (1916) *From Sail to Steam*, p. 287 and also pp. 295–6.
86. Commentary provided in a letter to the editor and published in the *Weekly Dispatch*, 9 April 1916. See also MacDonagh (1935) *In London during the Great War*, p. 100.
87. Fitzgerald (1916) *From Sail to Steam*, p. 297.
88. Bibbings (2003) ‘Images of Manliness’, p. 337 and pp. 342–7. For further discussion of these ideas see Bibbings (2003) ‘Conscientious Objectors’, pp. 129–33; Haste (1977) *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, p. 148; and especially Bibbings (2009) *Telling Tales About Men*, Chaps. 1–4.
89. Birth Index, England and Wales, 1837–1915: www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 13 March 2016; and Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 116.
90. National Archives, Census Return of 1911 (England), Census Schedules, Registration Sub-District: St Mary Parish (St Marylebone), RG 14/556; and M. Sedgwick (2003, 2013 edition) *Cowards: The True Story of the Men Who Refused to Fight* (New York and London: Raider Publishing International), p. 11.
91. National Archives, Central Military Service Tribunal and Middlesex Appeal Tribunal: Minutes and Papers, case number M123 (1916), MH 47/8/82.
92. *Ibid.* For further discussion of Marten’s appearance before the tribunal see Sedgwick (2003, 2013 edition) *Cowards*, p. 15, and Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 83.
93. National Archives, Central Military Service Tribunal and Middlesex Appeal Tribunal, MH 47/8/82.
94. *Ibid.*

95. *Ibid.*
96. IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 2.
97. National Archives, Central Military Service Tribunal and Middlesex Appeal Tribunal, MH 47/8/82.
98. For further description of Marten's initial arrest, fine and detention see Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, pp. 117–18. Interestingly in Marten's official file in the National Archives, there is a letter addressed to Marten from the Central Tribunal, implying that he had written to it enquiring about how someone might go about applying for exemption from military service on the grounds of ill-health. The date of the reply suggests that his enquiry had been lodged *after* his other appeals for exemption had failed. There is no evidence of any further applications for exemption by Marten, nor is there any evidence to support any suggestion of him being in ill-health. Whether this enquiry was genuine, a further stalling tactic or a half-hearted ruse is unknown: see National Archives, Central Military Service Tribunal and Middlesex Appeal Tribunal, MH 47/8/82, letter in file dated 8 April 1916.
99. IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 2.
100. For further discussion of Marten's experiences of incarceration in England prior to being sent to France see *ibid.*, reel 1; Leeds University Library, Liddle Collection, GB 0206: Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, pp. 117–18; Sedgwick (2003, 2013 edition) *Cowards*, p. 20 and pp. 26–7; and P. Liddle (2010) *Captured Memories 1900–1918: Across the Threshold of War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military), pp. 281–2. For further discussion of the treatment of conscientious objectors in detention barracks see Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, pp. 148–50.
101. See IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reels 1 and 3; and Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 137.
102. Parliamentary Papers, Army Act, 44 and 45 Vict., c. 58 (1881). For further discussion see MacMahon (1921) *The Conscientious Objector Problem*, pp. 5–7, and for Marten's experiences in this respect see Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, pp. 120–3 and pp. 141–5.

103. For Marten's experiences of this opprobrious punishment see IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 3; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; G. Bould (1991) (ed.) *Conscience Be My Guide: An Anthology of Prison Writings* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books), p. 64; Smith (2009) *Voices Against War*, p. 35; and Liddle (2010) *Captured Memories*, p. 282. For further discussion of the use of this type of punishment within this and the wider military context see C. Emsley (2012) 'Crucifying Tommy: Punishment in the First World War', *History Today*, 62, 11, pp. 27–33; Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, pp. 148–9; and C. Emsley (2013) *Soldier, Sailor, Beggarman, Thief: Crime and the British Armed Services since 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 64–5.
104. IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reels 1 and 3; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; and Sedgwick (2003, 2013 edition) *Cowards*, p. 39.
105. For further discussion see IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 4, and Sedgwick (2003, 2013 edition) *Cowards*, pp. 45–7.
106. *Ibid.*
107. For further discussion see IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 4; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; and Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, pp. 160–8.
108. See for example Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 26 June 1916, vol. 83, cols 521–8; and Goodall (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War*, p. 27.
109. For further evidence of this see Bibbings (1995) 'State Reaction', p. 68, and Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, pp. 153–4.
110. IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 4; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061. See also Liddle (2010) *Captured Memories*, p. 284 and Sedgwick (2003, 2013 edition) *Cowards*, p. 51.
111. See *Manchester Guardian*, 4 October 1916, 13 October 1916 and 14 October 1916. For these instances and other examples see also Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 138, and Goodall (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War*, pp. 17–20.

112. Bibbings (1995) 'State Reaction', p. 68. See also *The Times*, 6 July 1916; and Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 29 June 1916, vol. 83, cols 1013–18, and 17 July 1916, vol. 84, cols 642–5.
113. See Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 25 May 1916, vol. 82, cols 2279–81; and MacMahon (1921) *The Conscientious Objector Problem*, pp. 32–3.
114. For further discussion see Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, p. 159 and Chap. 8; MacMahon (1921) *The Conscientious Objector Problem*, pp. 9–10; and Marwick (2006) *The Deluge*, pp. 121–2.
115. See IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 5; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; and Liddle (2010) *Captured Memories*, pp. 285–6. For further discussion of the Home Office scheme see Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, Chap. 9; Kennedy (1973) 'Public Opinion', pp. 113–14; Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, pp. 209–12 and pp. 220–3; and Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, Chap. 7.
116. See IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 5, and Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 227.
117. For further discussion see IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 5. There is disagreement in the historiography on the number of conscientious objectors who died as a result of their incarceration. Figures range from two to seventy-three: see MacMahon (1921) *The Conscientious Objector Problem*, p. 118; Goodall (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War*, pp. 46–7 and pp. 54–8; Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 351; Goodall (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War*, p. 60; and Smith (2009) *Voices Against War*, p. 41 and p. 43.
118. Various petitions were sent to the government for the discontinuation of the 'persecution' of conscientious objectors: see those reproduced in *Manchester Guardian*, 4 October 1916 and 11 October 1916. For further discussion of the treatment of absolutists see Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, Chap. 10; Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, Chaps. 7 and 9; and Bibbings (1995) 'State Reaction', pp. 68–9.
119. *Manchester Guardian*, 19 July 1917, 27 July 1917, 3 August 1917 and 10 August 1917. See also Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*,

- pp. 143–4, and Graham (1969) *Conscription and Conscience*, p. 136.
120. Parliamentary Papers, The Defence of the Realm Act, 4 and 5 Geo. V, c. 29 (1914), was instigated to facilitate prosecutions of any individuals deemed to be communicating with the enemy or obtaining information for that purpose. For further discussion of the ill-treatment of the NCF leadership see *Aberdeen Journal*, 12 September 1916; T.C. Kennedy (1981) *The Hound of Conscience: The Non-Conscription Fellowship* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press), *passim*; and Bell (1935) *We Did Not Fight*, pp. 148–9.
121. A good example of this would be the trial of anarchist Alice Wheeldon at the Old Bailey in March 1917. Alice, a noted supporter of conscientious objectors, was charged with attempting to murder the Prime Minister David Lloyd George and the government minister Arthur Henderson (1863–1935) with poisoned darts. Historians claim that the case against Wheeldon was crudely constructed through the use of *agents provocateurs* in order to shame her for her overt sympathy towards conscientious objectors. It was on very dubious evidence that Wheeldon, her daughter and her son-in-law were found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder. For her part, Mrs Wheeldon was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. For further discussion see Turner (1980, 2012 edition) *Dear Old Blighty*, pp. 244–5; B. Millman (2005) 'HMG and the War against Dissent, 1914–1918', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40, 3, pp. 413–40; and especially *The Times*, 10 March 1917, 12 March 1917, 3 April 1917, 31 December 1917, 1 January 1918 and 27 January 1919, as well as J. Jackson (2007) 'Losing the Plot: Lloyd George, F.E. Smith and the Trial of Alice Wheeldon', *History Today*, 57, 5, pp. 40–7.
122. Parliamentary Papers, Representation of the People Act, 7 and 8 Geo. V, c. 64 (1918). For further discussion and examples of the treatment of conscientious objectors after the conclusion of the conflict see IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 6; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; Rae (1970) *Conscience and Politics*, Chap. 11; Kennedy (1973) 'Public Opinion', pp. 116–18; Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, p. 204, p. 225 and pp. 231–2; Bibbings (1995) 'State Reaction', pp. 70–1; Goodall

- (1997, 2010 edition) *We Will Not Go to War*, p. 80; Smith (2009) *Voices Against War*, pp. 45–6 and p. 58.
123. For further discussion see IWMSA, interview with Howard Cruttenden Marten (1974), catalogue no. 383, reel 6; Leeds University Library, Howard Marten Papers, CO 061; Liddle (2010) *Captured Memories*, p. 287; and Ellsworth-Jones (2008) *We Will Not Fight*, pp. 242–52.
 124. Death Index, England and Wales, 1916–2007: www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 13 March 2016.
 125. For further discussion see Kennedy (1973) ‘Public Opinion’, p. 116 and p. 119; Bibbings (2003) ‘Images of Manliness’, pp. 353–4; and Bibbings (2009) *Telling Tales About Men*, Chap. 6).
 126. For further discussion and examples see *Manchester Guardian*, 4 November 1915; Gullace (1997) ‘White Feathers’, pp. 187–8 and pp. 200–1; Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’, p. 78 and pp. 93–4; and Simkins (1988, 2007 edition) *Kitchener’s Army*, p. 124.
 127. See Imperial War Museum, Private Papers of R.W. Farrow (catalogued 1975), documents 7527: 75/111/1/289–90 and Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’, p. 94.
 128. See *Manchester Guardian*, 16 September 1915, and also M. Arthur (2005) *Symbol of Courage: The Men Behind the Medal* (London: Pan Books), p. 220; MacDonagh (1935) *In London during the Great War*, p. 80; and J. Glansfield (2006) *Bravest of the Brave: The Story of the Victoria Cross* (London: Sutton Publishing), pp. 110–12.
 129. See G. Regan (1992, 2002 edition) *Military Anecdotes* (London: André Deutsch), p. 63. See also an early example of a violent reaction on receipt of a white feather reported in *The Times*, 19 January 1914, as well as Gullace (2002) ‘*The Blood of Our Sons*’, p. 79 and Smith (2009) *Voices Against War*, p. 47.
 130. MacDonagh (1935) *In London during the Great War*, p. 80.
 131. See Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 15 September 1915, vol. 74, cols 91–3, and White (2009) ‘Volunteerism’, p. 663.
 132. C. Mackenzie (1965) *My Life and Times: Octave Four, 1907–1915* (London: Chatto and Windus) [Bodleian Library, LG 2569 e. 1355], p. 224.
 133. Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 1 March 1915, vol. 70, cols 547–8.

134. See *The Times*, 2 November 1915, and Turner (1980, 2012 edition) *Dear Old Blighty*, p. 69.
135. For further discussion see Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 185–6 and White (2009) 'Volunteerism', p. 663 and p. 665.
136. See for instance C. Kernahan (1915) *The Experiences of a Recruiting Officer: True Pictures of Splendid Patriotism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton) [Bodleian Library, 23167 d. 69], p. 27, p. 70 and p. 72; White (2009) 'Volunteerism', pp. 662–5; Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign'; Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 185–8; and Gullace (2002) *The Blood of Our Sons*, pp. 82–97.
137. Kernahan (1915) *The Experiences of a Recruiting Officer*, p. 70.
138. Hart (2010) 'The White Feather Campaign', *passim*.
139. For further discussion see Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', p. 203.
140. H. Hamilton (1918, reproduced in 1981 volume) 'Jingo-Woman' in C.W. Reilly and J. Kazantzis (eds) *Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (London: Virago), pp. 47–9.
141. See the report on Sils' death in the *Cairns Post*, 27 July 1943, citing the *London Sunday Chronicle* for the content on which the article is based, and also the report on Wray's death in the *Evening Telegraph*, 9 June 1943.
142. For further discussion see the notes on those women interviewed by the BBC in the 1960s who 'shamefully' admitted to having given out white feathers during the Great War in Gullace (1997) 'White Feathers', pp. 181–2, n. 14.

‘This Tribune of the People, this Uncrowned King of Britain’: Horatio Bottomley – Shame, the Public Sphere and the Betrayal of Populism

INTRODUCTION

In the past there has been a temptation to assert that the eclipse of shame from the landscape of human emotions was achieved by the end of the nineteenth century. This supposedly occurred as the stigma was gradually removed from forms of behaviour that later societies would normalise or tolerate. However, it should also be realised that, as this and subsequent chapters in this volume show, the modern world’s mass media and mass consciousness meant that opinions and ideas could be created, manipulated and consumed with greater rapidity and arguably with greater impact than ever before. By the end of the nineteenth century, the radical, the showman and the astute politician could gain a place in popular culture and affection with an otherwise disarming ease and swiftness.

As many historians have noted, ‘populism’ was a key to success for radicals and others with agendas which involved being accepted by society at large. These readily, and easily, went beyond conventional class and political labels to allow for other narratives to organise responses to society and events.¹ Likewise, when such a pinnacle of fame and celebrity proved attainable it became a commonplace, widely acknowledged assumption that a closer scrutiny of behaviour would inevitably follow such prominence. Transgression could be investigated and punished quite ruthlessly, especially when a considerable number of individuals at large found themselves materially damaged by such action. Yet this chapter also looks closely at the construction of the modern idea of the ambivalent rogue: an

individual occasionally vilified, occasionally fêted and sometimes forgiven. One further element within this equation is an investigation of the issue of gullibility, webs of trust and the role of potential shame in allowing, or even persuading, people to deceive themselves.

The potential for all of these incidences of shame within modernity is graphically illustrated through the life and career of Horatio Bottomley, which lurched from the pinnacle of popular delight to cashiered pariah status, drowned very deeply in a sea of shame. At the height of his populist adoration, Bottomley was very frequently identified with a constructed notion of the national character, exemplified in plain-speaking common sense and steadfast defiance of the enemy. His graphic, larger-than-life imitation of John Bull made him the Tommy's closest ally in the darkest days of the First World War. However, by the time of his fall his shame was that he had swindled ex-servicemen and had wantonly besmirched the memory of those who had fought so bravely through such a modernist nightmare. Bottomley had defiled a modern taboo of national reverence, gratitude and remembrance, a taboo that had been created in only a few short years. This taboo had appeared alongside a consciousness that the 'War to End All Wars' had scarcely been futile. Bottomley's frauds and swindles brought shame on his character, and this shame emanated not from an age-old emotion or public infelicity or infidelity. Instead, its sheer intensity sprang from reactions to a thoroughly twentieth-century response to extreme circumstances, steered and shaped by both the mass media and mass consumption patterns and their consequences.

EARLY CAREER—THE POPULIST SWINDLER IN THE MAKING?

Although it is difficult to envisage that Horatio Bottomley planned his 'career' as a rogue from the start, the historian surveying his life could easily be forgiven for believing this to be the truth. Nonetheless, an analytical mind might take the view that Bottomley's career belonged to a specific moment where conceptions of the popular were in a state of transition, and an individual who was clever enough to ride the crest of this appreciated an astute key to success. Certainly Bottomley's populist inheritance was extremely impressive. He combined elements of late nineteenth-century popular radicalism with populist writing and speaking, an actively cultivated common-touch journalism and a sporting persona that made him a favourite and doyen of both horse-racing and boxing circles.² Likewise it is also feasible that he could have made a reasonable career concentrating upon

any one of these activities. However, it also seems likely that his quest for material gain nurtured the urge to spread both opportunity and risk for a man whose whirlwind achievements suggest he was in a considerable hurry.

His credentials for being a successful radical politician were mightily impressive. He was a nephew of George Jacob Holyoake, the veteran creator of Secularism and intermittent leader of one wing of the secularist movement until well into the third quarter of the nineteenth century.³ Holyoake had been a pragmatist and had always been willing to sacrifice principled stands for expediency, if it would ultimately prove more effective, and Bottomley learned this principle from him and arguably forged a career from it. Bottomley's family was well connected within radical circles, and he also cultivated, and indeed seemed to create, an enigmatic association with Annie Besant.⁴ It is tempting to speculate that Bottomley may have learned from her how possible, and indeed easy, it could be to change emphasis during the course of a career. These two radicals were both mentioned extensively by Bottomley himself when interviewed during the First World War. It was significant that he was strangely more cagey in this interview about Charles Bradlaugh, the other major secularist leader who clearly also exerted a telling influence over Bottomley.⁵ Bradlaugh was an obvious polar opposite of Holyoake. Whilst Holyoake plodded, Bradlaugh dazzled as a speaker and had an almost electric physical presence in many public arenas.⁶ Throughout the 1880s he was regarded as something of a totalitarian leader as his crusades against religious oaths, blasphemy laws and the rights of secularists and atheists to bequeath money for the cause or to serve in Parliament caught the public and radical imagination. His one-man crusade, with followers towed behind in his wake, caused some misgivings and indeed out-and-out dissension within the movement.⁷

Conventional intellectual history sees Bradlaugh as a demagogue, and certainly all contemporaries, even quite hostile ones, acknowledged his skill as an orator and remarked openly about the charisma he invoked from audiences throughout the land.⁸ Bradlaugh also possessed considerable charm, which enabled this republican radical to make friends with a member of a French royal house and to obtain compliance from policemen and functionaries in many fortuitous instances.⁹ Bottomley identified with Bradlaugh through his unproven but often declared assertion that he was the latter's illegitimate son—sometimes suggesting utterly erroneously that Annie Besant was his mother.¹⁰ The first part of this slightly implausible story was, however, given greater credence by the utterly startling physical resemblance that Bottomley bore to Bradlaugh. Certainly the association had its advantages, which partly explains the fact that

Bottomley did not want to associate his character with simple magnetism and charisma at every juncture; such an identification would have been crude and potentially damaging. This was substantially because Bottomley wanted to persuade people of his inherent honesty—an impression reinforced through the obviously popular and benevolent nature of the causes he espoused and similarly by the fact that many members of the public accepted this at face value. In this, they often had to forgive past misdemeanours, often lapsing into compliance when confronted with the force of Bottomley's personality. This was materially aided by the fact that one of the virtues most readily identified with Bottomley and his populism was the phenomenon of plain speaking.

Some significant parts of his career really seemed to be uncannily drawn from Bradlaugh's own life. Bottomley became acquainted with the law by becoming a law court short-hand writer. He also gained notoriety when he acted in court and, at all times, was anxious to curry a reputation for defending the rights of the weak and the common man against those of the strong and powerful.¹¹ After Bradlaugh's death, Bottomley gained a place in popular memory for giving a well-remembered speech in toasting the 'Memory of Charles Bradlaugh'.¹² Certainly in his youth, Bottomley showed every sign of following the family ideological inheritance into the secular movement. He regularly attended lectures at the Hall of Science in London, but ultimately retreated from this when he discovered that the message he beheld within was barren and substantially without hope.¹³ He also encountered a range of other writers that arguably constituted a scratch autodidact education, but again found that each of these had largely failed to provide emotional and intellectual satisfaction. This curriculum was to be superseded by a quest and yearning for a species of common sense, which further served to endear him to a wider public that wished to avoid middlebrow pretensions. Bottomley certainly played up to this with, again, a populist reassertion of the virtues of plainness and a dislike of fussier ways of thinking and action.

Bottomley eventually came to speak out in favour of the idea of a supreme being. Although he characteristically retained a populist distrust of churches, creeds and denominations, he was shrewd enough, outwardly at least, to display a modicum of simple Christianity. Writing in the *Sunday Pictorial*, for instance, he expressed a belief that there was no such thing as death and that the soul survives the experience of annihilation. This sentiment persuaded him to paint the ideological world of the nineteenth century as one where 'All thought – religious, scientific, theological and political – was infinitely narrower and more rigid than it is possible for us to imagine today.'¹⁴ Likewise, when Bottomley entered Parliament (as a

Liberal) he further pursued the support of the hard-working individual thwarted by privilege, red tape and injustice, once more reflecting the character of Bradlaugh’s own tenure in Parliament.¹⁵

However, Bottomley’s personal interest regularly moved from politics into the world of finance and, from the outset, he began using his populist appeal to shape the thoughts of others to his own will. The 1890s and the Edwardian years, right up to the First World War, saw Bottomley’s name linked with a considerable array of dubious, underhand and, for the most part, illegal business dealings. The full extent of these is mind-boggling, and they have taken up many pages in the numerous biographies of Bottomley which began appearing as early as the First World War period.¹⁶ However, and for our purposes, we should note that many of them involved a familiar series of sub-themes. Several of the schemes made use of relatively innovative and unfamiliar business ideas and markets. Likewise, they were generally driven by Bottomley’s own twin needs to both refinance his previous shady ventures and fund his lavish lifestyle, which, to the unwary, itself furnished further outward confidence in his personality and business credentials. Many of these qualities were evident in his manipulation of the public’s interest in Australian gold mining before the turn of the century. Bottomley launched a company in the early 1890s to ride on the success of the Australian gold mining boom.¹⁷ He effectively raised millions of pounds on the back of launching successive companies with nominal capital of £25 million. This induced people to invest in this new opportunity and actually provide some of this otherwise fictional cash. Some of this money went to shareholders and some to directors, but some to (in Julian Symons’ words) ‘tame accountants, solicitors, stockbrokers and hangers-on who made up the “stable” more spent on racehorses, women and champagne’. Some was also used to launch still more new companies without any real capital. This ‘snowball, or chain letter, method of finance could not continue for long’ but amazingly was not openly questioned for several years.¹⁸ In themselves, these episodes appear to have been a part of the expansion of webs of trust that an increasingly sophisticated modern financial world demanded—a situation that Bottomley was to exploit and ultimately pay the price for.¹⁹

When creditors, or the disgruntled, sought recompense for their losses, Bottomley bought them off with shares in one of his forthcoming ventures. Generally the value of these was relentlessly talked up, which itself served to assuage the anger and sense of loss endured by those seeking redress. This was achieved quite readily because so many individuals wanted to recoup their losses and negotiate away their own previous culpability and gullibility. Many of Bottomley’s dealings relied upon this confidence and

a public mood of trust, which meant that his rather ‘vague’ sense of how much money was involved in his Australian mining ventures actually served to stoke public confidence in the magnitude of what was, in reality, an illusory gold strike.²⁰ Writing in 1955, Symons had nothing but contempt for those who fell for Bottomley’s well-practised and seductive patter:

The gullibility of almost all the people with whom Bottomley came into contact gives his progress through life something of the hard brightness of Jonsonian comedy. It is impossible to feel anything for these people, they are so foolish, so greedy, so happy to be deceived. Bottomley himself developed a contempt for his gulls, and could hardly be bothered to invent plausible deceptions.²¹

Even the hostile *Penny Illustrated Paper* recognised Bottomley’s gifts of persuasion, noting, ‘in one minute he was speaking to silent listeners, in two the angry looks had given way to amused interest, and in five the gathering had become white-hot with excitement, and was cheering his every word to the echo’.²²

Unsurprisingly, the bottom fell out of Australian gold mining, and confidence even in Bottomley’s over-ambitious business offerings receded.²³ Thereafter a certain aspect of his business plans changed. Although he could never resist the opportunity to persuade individuals to part with substantial sums of money, his business ventures, scams and frauds increasingly targeted those with much smaller stakes. Bottomley realised that defrauding the masses of small sums was safer than defrauding individuals over big sums. This was because the masses would more readily relinquish the money, and those who did not could be paid off without publicity or fuss, keeping the fraud going. Alongside these, Bottomley’s exploits on the turf and his dalliances with a succession of mistresses in far-flung hotels and flats strewn across London further endeared him to the populace. Symons argues persuasively that Bottomley was the embodiment of a fantastical achievement from humble origins which was ‘an earthly Paradise without responsibilities or dishonoured cheques, but it is one that has a powerful and enduring fascination’.²⁴

BOTTOMLEY, JOHN BULL AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

From 1906 onwards, Bottomley acquired a new vehicle for promoting both his ideological causes and his mass schemes for petty fraud. He had reinvented and promoted the John Bull ‘concept’ through a number of

ventures, such as the John Bull League, which argued incessantly for the populist touchstones of 'common sense' and 'trust' and their reintroduction to many spheres of modern life. The message from this was promoted by a *John Bull* newspaper, which took the idea and the call to all corners of the land. The organisation and the newspaper were both personal vehicles for Bottomley but also new opportunities to initiate more 'subscription' swindles. These began with a share issue, which had the added inducement of a seat in the 'John Bull stand' to witness the coronation of George V—another populist touch. This 'prize' was dubious, however, because the stand was poorly located with minimal visibility of the events and actually collapsed during the proceedings, and demands for compensation went unheeded.²⁵

As the circulation of *John Bull* grew, Bottomley would blackmail companies into advertising with him under the threat of bad publicity for their services, products or dealings. This was a method of guaranteeing a certain level of income with which to float other schemes and sustain public interest in the publication.²⁶ Beyond this, *John Bull* itself began to contain small-scale competitions, each of which required a 6d postal order to enter, centring initially on 'Hitting the Bull's eye', followed by football and cricket competitions. Although these brought in considerable sums, the competitions were dogged by complaints and noises off. The newspaper *Truth* investigated Bottomley and noted that winners' identities were fabricated and could not be traced. Eventually Bottomley began to become involved in sweepstakes on horse races conducted in Switzerland; again the winners of these were somewhat improbable. His biggest venture was the Derby Sweepstake of 1914, backed by a cheque for £50,000 deposited in the London City and Midland Bank, which was withdrawn a few days later. Bottomley placed the favourites with friends, and long odds were hedged with bets at bookies. The outsider Durban II won, and the winner of the prize was a 'blind woman of Toulouse' who turned out to be the sister of a confidant, who pocketed £250 whilst the rest went back into Bottomley's account.²⁷

Eventually problems with the financing of the John Bull Investment Trust caught up with its proprietor and forced Bottomley (as a bankrupt) to resign his seat in Parliament. Things were set to become quite sedate for Bottomley until the outbreak of the First World War, which rapidly assumed the magnitude of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him to forward both his enterprises and their populist milieu. Bottomley seems

to have been genuinely seized by the moment: rounding on his secretary, he declared, in characteristically bombastic style:

Houston, this war is my opportunity. Whatever I have been in the past, and whatever my faults, I am going to draw a line at August 4th 1914, and start afresh. I shall play the game, cut out my old associates, and wipe out everything pre-1914.²⁸

In *John Bull*, Bottomley had the ideal vehicle with which to promote popular causes associated with the war, and even to set his own agenda about some of these. Many of his themes endured from earlier days, with consistently voiced criticism of the conduct of the war being hampered by party government or alternatively the ineptitude of the coalition, or simpler mismanagement and corruption.²⁹ This harked back to older forms of radicalism, and once again echoes of Charles Bradlaugh were evident in these concerns.³⁰ The newspaper also advertised a plethora of Bottomley's subscription schemes (including bullet lotteries and football pool competitions) which, as before, targeted the small stakes proffered by thousands of people. An interesting innovation was Bottomley's offering of free wartime insurance to his readers provided that they each completed a form (separately for each family member) and sent it back to the offices of *John Bull*.³¹ This clearly ensured that circulation figures were buoyant, and even encouraged the unnecessary purchase of extra copies of the newspaper to ensure that all family members were covered. Gradually, as air raids occurred, Bottomley was able to report in the newspaper that readers were receiving pay-outs from the scheme.

The newspaper also made stirring contributions to ensure the effective conduct of the war. Once again Bottomley was fortunate that his previous slogans denigrating party politics and muddled government came back into fashion and reflected popular concerns about the inability of the Liberal government to wage an effective war. Throughout the course of 1916, Bottomley's newspaper carried stories uncovering scandals associated with mismanaged food supplies, failures in the provision of munitions, the shortcomings of Asquith, 'Doddering Generals', war profiteers, the scandal of Dutch neutrality, proper invalidity pensions wrapped up with the demand for a 'Minister for the Wounded' and the evil of 'slack-ers', a theme discussed at length in the previous chapter.³²

However, *John Bull* was also a self-conscious reflection of the nation at war and the ebbs and flows of its morale in the face of adversity. *John Bull*'s letter bag was a way of keeping a finger on the pulse of the nation whilst also having the opportunity to have this reflect Bottomley's own campaigns, interests or predilections. Of course, some of these letters were conceivably fakes, but they had further value when they mutated into a regular feature of the newspaper which began life as 'Tommy's Troubles'. This claimed to reflect the authentic voice of the British Tommy (and subsequently the Jack Tar) bemoaning his poor treatment at the hands of government and military incompetence and, sometimes, outright callousness. By the end of the war, Bottomley's newspaper had complained about everything from poor barrack conditions, to the vagaries of poorly managed railway timetables which inconvenienced wounded soldiers, a plethora of pay irregularities and the erratic granting of leave to some whilst others were neglected altogether. Brutal treatment and inconsiderate handling of wounded and discharged men would also regularly appear in these columns, as did the scandal of families being billed for the cost of the blanket in which their loved one had been buried.³³ One theme which began to grow in stature in many of these reports was a concern for the plight of the invalid, which by the end of 1916 had turned into an outright pledge, with Bottomley producing an open letter to his readers appealing on behalf of permanently disabled soldiers and sailors.³⁴

Bottomley's contribution to the war effort was also anthologised, and reading a collection of his aphorisms further distils and serves also to sharpen an appreciation of his populist skills, which transferred effortlessly to this genre. H.B. Elliott's *The Great Thoughts of Horatio Bottomley*, compiled in 1918, provides abundant illustrations of Bottomley's appreciation of how to weld together the components of skilled populist speaking and writing. However, this was populism devoted to the war effort and cultivating the ennoblement of sacrifice as a major trope of popular feeling. Resembling Mao's *Little Red Book*, it possibly had the same sort of function in providing moments of morale-boosting inspiration. It contained occasional Shakespearean quotations and phrases, gathered in equal measure from Kipling, the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, which crept readily into many of these pronouncements, arguably making them easy on the ear or eye of the average consumer. This in turn fed a species of middlebrow cultural attainment and aspiration, whilst also feeding, still further, the idea and illusion that Bottomley was a thinker

of some depth. Like every aphorism, Bottomley's pronouncements were democratic, inclusive and inspirational and—at least for a few moments—apparently profound. His call for a total war effort from the population managed to address practically everybody:

Conscientious Objectors, Pacifists, and all the rest of them must be roped in; the round men must be pulled out of the square holes, and all overlapping and confusion must cease. We must conscript the man-power, the woman-power – and the *youth-power* of the nation. As I have said elsewhere, lusty lads and lasses have something better to do to-day than to learn how many wives Henry VIII had, and how he managed to get rid of them. There is no better 'education,' in the true sense of the word, than that provided by the lessons of this war. Everything else will keep.³⁵

However, this work is also notable for containing pronouncements and phrases that would later come back to haunt Bottomley. His populism led him to idolise and increasingly idealise the common soldier who had both fought and ennobled himself in the armed struggle of the First World War:

It is by the sword that we shall win, and those who are the real victors have the greatest right of all to a say in the peace which is to follow war – in the great awakening and reorganisation that will come from the welter of conflict, from the soil of re-birth, watered with the blood of our bravest and best ... We are on the edge; we are looking down upon the Promised Land – all the blood and sacrifice are awaiting their reward. Let us see to it that those who have fought, and will speedily return flushed with victory, are strong in the power to control the destinies of the Great Empire for which they have suffered so much – which they have saved.³⁶

In this, Bottomley's populist touch led to his involvement in this overwhelming sentiment, which would become a rallying cry of 'a land fit for heroes'. The government also saw the value of Bottomley as an individual whose populist appeal could recruit men for the Front as well as quelling trade union strife amongst disgruntled workers.³⁷ In this role he exhibited an innate theatricality, and audiences waited for him to bring out what became renowned as his 'Prince of Peace Speech' alongside spirited recitations of a warlike tub-thumper, 'Why is the Red Blood Flowing'? As editor of *John Bull*, plain-speaking advocate for the British Tommy, eloquent hater of the 'Germhun' enemy, galvaniser of the home front and more, it was intensely ironic that Horatio Bottomley should play quite such

a prominent role in creating a noble cause that he would subsequently betray so rakishly.

In his rampaging thirst to finance the consequences of his own lavish lifestyle, alongside preventing financial ruin (as a result of previous dubious schemes and ventures from catching up with him), Bottomley embraced the fundraising potential of stretching his populism to the absolute limit. He was aware that the final victory of the allies would potentially rob him of power and influence, and arguably of an important income stream—a fact brought home to him by the sudden and surprisingly lacklustre failure of his newspaper competition, which had offered readers the chance to predict the dates of the ceasefire and peace treaty. Thus he was determined to extract a last payday from the First World War, and once again he relied upon the tide of populist feeling to canvass on his behalf and to argue the merits of the scheme he planned to put before the public. Where once he had appealed to speculative greed, he now appeared to be appealing to an unselfish patriotism. In a sense, the various ‘John Bull’ wartime insurance schemes (insurance against war damage by the enemy and life insurance for those posted to the Front) had been dry runs for this next step.

The victorious British government launched a Victory Bond Scheme, which offered its bonds for sale at a price of £5. Bottomley quickly realised that this price structure excluded a significant number of people and promptly launched his own John Bull Victory Bond Club to capture smaller sums of money. This offered, direct to the public, one-fifth (£1) shares in his Victory Bond Club, which was tasked with purchasing the government’s £5 War Bonds, with all interest generated by the subscriptions to be added, apparently, to the prize fund. This gave his customers an opportunity to have a one-fifth share in one of the major cash prizes offered by the government scheme. As the cartoon illustrating its launch implied, it was intended to capture the small capital of the working man. However, this being the end of the war, Bottomley had also tapped into the mood of optimism that came with the peace, and a significant number of ex-servicemen queued to buy his bonds.³⁸ Bottomley had already resigned himself to returning the subscriptions of the insignificant number of unhappy and disgruntled, safe in the knowledge that this would scarcely compromise the overall credibility and appeal of the Victory Bond Club. As it turned out, he was unable to even assuage this low level of indignation and found that he was under a now ruthless type of surveillance that his dealings had not previously attracted.

This scheme rapidly ran into chaos as Bottomley's aides lost track of ticket allocation and Victory Bond certificates, especially since they were also indiscriminately used to pacify the angry and dissatisfied holders of Bottomley's horse-racing and other sweepstake schemes. The certificates themselves were also prepared in haste, and it was unhappily discovered that they were easily forged. Unwittingly, Bottomley had aided the task of swindlers lower down the pecking order than himself.³⁹ In his quest to keep the Victory Bond Club going, he fronted a meeting at London's Cannon Street Hotel in which he brazenly declared that the Club owned £500,000 worth of government Victory Bonds, and that any audit was safely in the hands of the club's staff.⁴⁰ However, even the government itself was taken aback when its own Victory Bonds failed to be the sound investment it claimed, or hoped. Bottomley would later refuse to refund payment because his Club's prospectus declared that it depended upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer's assurance that these investments would not depreciate in value—a situation which had failed to materialise.⁴¹ Predictably this scheme's shaky foundations had a commensurate impact upon Bottomley's parasitic Victory Bond Club, which itself had to be rolled into another venture when Bottomley was forced to merge it with a subsequent venture called the Thrift Prize Bond Club. This was to be administered in France to avoid the difficulties of English lottery legislation and invited further subscriptions so that individuals could purchase £15 French Credit National Bonds using their Victory Bond Club certificates as part payment. However, French bonds were purchased only after a French banker, who had lent Bottomley an office, complained that these premises were effectively a dead letter box from which Bottomley's aides collected the small remittances of the hundreds who continued to subscribe, in the hope of hanging on to some semblance of their money.

When these bonds were purchased, the price had fallen to only £9, with Bottomley offering owners the chance to buy a second bond for another £12 in 'recompense'. Again the surplus money that this pricing policy generated was employed to buy off some of the disenchanted owners.⁴² Bottomley's endless legal and illegal lottery and investment ventures, which rolled into each other in the manner of a momentous train crash, had so far survived allowing him to race horses and to drink champagne another day. Up to this point, those who got the better of him by challenging him in court or privately, were isolated individuals who were quietly paid off, or whose victory barely created noise or ripples. In this respect,

Bottomley’s dishonesty was regularly trumped by his populist power. He was, to all intents and purposes, John Bull personified: pugnacious, enterprising, loyal to apparent values, if scarcely to people or their money.

However, this last Victory Bond Club came unstuck when Bottomley quarrelled with a small-time printer and acquaintance from the turf, Reuben Bigland. When Bottomley backed out of a partnership to produce a characteristically fanciful and overblown miracle petrol substitute, Bigland threatened to expose the catastrophic looming disaster that were the Victory Bond Clubs. Unlike some of Bottomley’s previous critics, Bigland was doggedly persistent and was eventually able to invoke the emotions clustered around war sacrifice and remembrance in shaming Bottomley. Bigland had discovered that Bottomley, whilst writing an article on the interment of the Unknown Soldier, declared himself to have ‘heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me to write’. Shocked and appalled by this fabricated lapse in taste and equally apparently nauseous hypocrisy, Bigland sent Bottomley a telegram declaring that he was going to ‘unmask England’s greatest living humbug, the man that takes the name of the Lord to cover up his terrible sins’.⁴³ Although Bigland faltered in some of his actions against Bottomley, he eventually rallied to become resolute, resourceful and innovative in his campaign against the man he saw as Britain’s greatest swindler. Bigland ensured that his pamphlet *The Downfall of Horatio Bottomley* was widely sold throughout the North and parts of the Midlands, even evading the reach of the law by ensuring that all vendors of the publication were masked. Bigland eventually succeeded in staging his own arrest for being in possession of a forged Victory Bond. This meant a court case which Bottomley could ill afford since the Victory Bond Clubs would not stand up to any scrutiny at all. Although this case failed, Bottomley’s unwise subsequent libel case against Bigland was a reckless and foolhardy venture which resulted in profound failure and the exposure of Bottomley’s financial crime. His failure to speak in his own defence eventually excited the interest of the Director of Public Prosecutions and resulted in a charge of fraudulently converting £5000 of Victory Bond Club funds to his own use, although allegations about much greater sums would emerge, so that the final amount reached six figures. Eventually the case grew bigger and more incriminating as it moved from the Bow Street Police Court to the Old Bailey. In the end, it emerged that Bottomley had been on the receiving end of 16,464 claims seeking ‘stake’ money back from the Victory Bond Club and associated schemes.⁴⁴

The trial saw many individual witnesses called and a number of small investors (a civil servant, a widow, a boiler maker and a domestic servant) who all declared that they believed Bottomley's bond club schemes had defrauded them of money. Many had asked for their investments back for wholly legitimate reasons such as unemployment or illness.⁴⁵ Moreover, the small sizes of these investments appeared especially poignant and emotive to those in court and those reading the popular press; an issue compounded by the fact that these witnesses had pursued Bottomley for redress and had failed.⁴⁶ The prosecuting counsel also considered it worth venturing what many must have been thinking when, referring to the well-paid nature of Bottomley's lecturing and recruiting engagements during the war, he asked, 'So the war did pay you pretty well, after all?' Although Bottomley, as was his custom, brazened this question out, in the context of a fraud trial the question did its damage nonetheless.⁴⁷ All this accumulated to an embarrassing degree and finally resulted in a conviction for fraud with a subsequent sentence of seven years' penal servitude. Bottomley was expelled from Parliament and portrayed this as a boyhood dream cruelly torn away from him by his own sense of shame, declaring that 'to my dying day it will be an ever-abiding grief that I have in any way been the cause of sully[ing] its [Parliament's] fair name'.⁴⁸

Whilst in prison Bottomley gamely tried to put on a brave face, and equally tried to generate additional income by turning his privations into doggerel verse delivered in attractive-looking volumes.⁴⁹ When his sentence was over, Bottomley was released with an almost obsessive quietness by the authorities, who deliberately wanted to deny him any publicity on this particular occasion.⁵⁰ Bottomley, whose *John Bull* empire had passed out of his hands, tried to resume the reins of his career by floating yet another newspaper entitled *John Blunt*. This appears to have deliberately tried to inherit as much as possible of the populist mantle that had surrounded *John Bull* and the various schemes and products associated with this brand. However, Bottomley's sureness of touch was fast deserting him and his purchase of two ailing newspapers quickly led to increased debts and their rapid closure. Enthusiasm, and more importantly custom for his *John Blunt* paper was, to say the least, disappointing, and the recklessness of these measures illustrated that Bottomley's continued optimism was evidence that his judgement had now been fatally compromised.

In this respect, the populism that Bottomley had inherited from the nineteenth century and which he had further nurtured himself, gave him an alibi for almost all of his behaviour. Bottomley was literally shameless

because his populist appeal and the functioning of the public sphere persuaded people at large to believe deeply in his veil of plain-speaking integrity. Time and again, numerous accounts of Bottomley’s life recount how apparently sane individuals, including some who had lost considerable sums of money in Bottomley’s wayward schemes, would leave his presence having been further fleeced by a shameless and unscrupulous man.⁵¹ However, an important aspect of shame that these episodes (prior to the Victory Bond scandal) emphasise, is the undeveloped nature of the public sphere in the very early twentieth century that allowed these episodes to happen. The traditional models of shame occurring at a micro-level in a small community are well established in our minds, just as they would have been in the minds of those listening to Bottomley. Although attempts had been made to take shame into public space, it is noteworthy that these had, at best, only passing influence.⁵² From this, and Bottomley’s ability to repeat the offence often with the same people, it is possible to suggest that there was a naive trust in those who dealt with the press or were involved in public oratory, politics and high finance. Only when we consider this, can we imagine how Bottomley was serially trusted far more readily than he was serially shamed. Perhaps it was this conviction that saw Bottomley tread the boards in the Windmill Theatre upon his release from prison in September 1932. This was not a man confessing his guilt, but an individual trying to further invoke the populism by which he had lived by and, in a few short months, was about to die by.⁵³ In amidst the crowd which thought him an irrelevance, there were still those prepared to listen to his stories of the past and to clap politely whilst half-remembering the role he had played in marshalling wartime populism in a wholly beneficial direction. One night, however, Bottomley collapsed on stage and was hospitalised. He never really recovered, dying six months later.⁵⁴

BOTTOMLEY—ENDGAME AND ANALYSIS

Throughout, Bottomley had been a larger-than-life figure and had lived in one manner or another around the whole concept of shame. Elements in his story show a determination to transcend shame, or we might say constructed pseudo-shame. His time in an orphanage, his alleged unorthodox parentage and his sensitivity at being inadequately educated were apparent social handicaps which he took great delight in transcending with little effort. Such transformation could also appear, if marketed correctly, as linked to modernity and the new opportunities that Edwardian life had

offered in an attempt to distance itself from more obviously staid and unnecessarily sober Victorian values. However, there is no doubt that Bottomley understood shame and how to invoke it in others. Many of his financial schemes involved extending the commitment of those who had invested in a previous Bottomley failure. Here again, Bottomley clearly understood the confluence of emotions that would attend individuals when they realised they been the victims of a considerable financial swindle. A remedy which potentially addressed the twin shames of duplicity and financial loss would quite readily be grabbed and embraced by those to whom it was offered. Moreover, if this offer could be further leavened with the incentive to trust still further (sometimes without reason or even hope), then the problem of financial loss might, for many, seem to resolve itself.

Bottomley also further understood the role of shame in modern commerce and that individuals could hold, and indeed even spread unwittingly, adverse opinions about nationally renowned businesses they had never personally encountered or utilised. Such individuals, simply by reading *John Bull* and taking its opinions at face value, were contributing and sustaining this modern shame process, which used the public sphere to link protagonists that would never meet—yet would potentially have a singularly important impact upon each other. Bottomley was aware that patiently created reputations, sometimes constructed over many years, could be swiftly unravelled by targeted and sustained adverse publicity. Such knowledge and tactics were actively practised by *John Bull* against a significant number of business organisations, some of whom were household names and would scarcely have stayed as such if they had refused to yield and guarantee Bottomley (and his newspaper) a steady stream of advertising income.

However, it was significant that it was the Victory Bond Clubs which proved Bottomley's lasting undoing. This particular scheme had latent and, perhaps unrecognised, power because Bottomley was besmirching and profaning a sacred idea that British society itself had rapidly constructed over the preceding five years: the heroic sacrifice and struggle of the common soldier in a civilised and noble cause. Ironically Bottomley had played a central and instrumental role in constructing this very same sacred idea, often setting the terms of the debate himself in the minds of his readership. With every wry cartoon which vilified slackers and conscientious objectors; with every recruitment meeting at which he recited 'Why is the Red Blood Flowing?'; with every jingo cartoon in *John Bull* which castigated cowardly neutral nations and chastised the government for the apparently inept conduct of the war; with every championing of the Tommy and the Tar (from the mild inconveniences they suffered right

through to the ultimate sacrifices they made), Bottomley became central to creating a near-sacred set of beliefs and hopes. Moreover, he further nurtured expectation that he, and he alone, had the power to right these wrongs whilst ensuring that 'common-sense' popular patriotic approaches to practically everything would prevail. If it were also possible, Bottomley and his newspaper also hoped that the population at large would trust each and every one of his campaigns as propagated for the greater good, before anyone considered how far they might have enriched Bottomley himself or served to advance his own causes. Perhaps even more ironic was the fact that Bottomley's own motivation of rapacious financial gain remained the same throughout, whilst the process of constructing this sacred set of beliefs and the business of profaning them continued apace—a further manifestation of the shameless.⁵⁵

Yet there was something in this duplicity which motivated both the journalists writing for *Truth* and Reuben Bigland (the latter of whom recognised its emotive power) to use this against Bottomley. Bigland also realised the scandalous nature of the fraud he had been involved in. During Bottomley's disastrous libel case against him, Bigland recounted how a Bottomley debt was to be paid to him by 'allowing' him to win a third prize in the 'War Stock Combination'. Bigland declared in court that 'The third prize was £1,000. I agreed to my shame and it was said I had better get a nominee.'⁵⁶ He was later offered a £1000 prize for additional services rendered and claimed that when considering the Bottomley compromise 'I heard a voice from Heaven', which pushed him into making up his mind to 'clear his conscience'. Upon making this decision, Bigland 'went to Wellington to deliver myself up to justice and hand back the £1,000 War Bonds' with the further declaration that his 'only object was to get the people in the Victory Bond Club and the War Stock Combination their just rights'.⁵⁷ Whilst Bigland was singularly implausible as a wholly repentant and benevolent sinner, he certainly was aware that he had fastened upon the precise allegations that could do Bottomley the most damage. He had even gone as far as to write 'to the Prime Minister and a number of other people wishing to put forward the whole story with regard to these charges I make'.⁵⁸ Indeed the power of Bigland's apparent conversion experience persuaded Bottomley that entering the witness box on this occasion would constitute supreme folly. His change of heart was obvious for all to see and was pointedly remarked upon by the judge in this instance.⁵⁹

As the 1920s began, the newspaper *Truth* kept an especially close eye on Bottomley's dealings and the collapse of the bond scheme, eventually

providing advice and suggesting astute solicitors for the hundreds who were encouraged to notify the publication of their grievances. *Truth* was preoccupied with business stories but also, in some respects, also rivalled Bottomley's *John Bull*. The early editions of 1919 were filled with stories about the mechanisms of returning soldiers to civilian life. One article prophetically warned against 'various share-pushing firms and bucket-shop keepers who have designs on their gratuities'.⁶⁰ Whilst there were no sweepstakes, football pool competitions or share schemes, it nonetheless remained true that selling varieties of snake oil was part of the zeitgeist. In each edition, for instance, *Truth* carried an advertisement for 'Pelmanism', a correspondence course which promoted mental agility and positive thinking.⁶¹ *Truth* had also carried an unequivocal endorsement of War Bonds with an advertisement describing them as the 'Dividends that never fail'.⁶² Likewise *Truth* identified the British Victory Loan scheme as a superior investment because it carried 'the certainty of redemption at par' and stated that the French scheme carried the forlorn hope that 'only an infinitesimal [sic] proportion of the total issue will ever gain a prize'.⁶³ Here in embryo was the newspaper's objection to Bottomley's Victory Bond Club, whose premium-bond-style offer multiplied the odds against a return on investment many times over, long before any suggestion of impropriety emerged. In the early years of the 1920s, *Truth* contained a catalogue of embarrassing stories shaming Bottomley's financial misbehaviour, ensuring that vital details elicited specific responses from its readers. Eventually these stretched over a year, with hardly a week passing without embarrassing coverage—a fact which exasperated Bottomley to the point of issuing a number of writs for libel.

Initially *Truth* outlined suspicion, but it was readily able to supply more concrete stories of out-and-out fraud that had, for Bottomley at least, increasing and worrying mileage.⁶⁴ A 'widow, with a limited income' who had been asked to exchange her Victory Bond Club certificates for those in the Thrift Prize Bond Club was now being pestered for an additional £5 to buy false investments supposedly of vastly inflated value. The newspaper waspishly asked rhetorically, 'What is said about devourers of widows' houses?'⁶⁵ Another individual, described as an 'ex-soldier' seeking the return of his £80 investment, indicated that he was 'a working man, married with three children and another one expected and at times have been very hard pushed for cash to keep things going' and had been 'treated a little cruelly'. This report also juxtaposed these base shabby dealings with Bottomley's lofty pretension to lecture Parliament and his wider public

with ‘the complex mysteries that grip the human soul’.⁶⁶ Another individual needed to realise his capital in order to pay hospital bills, and a further correspondent needed to help his recently demobilised son, whilst another was a disabled naval veteran.⁶⁷ As the torrent grew, *Truth* noted that Bottomley had betrayed the populism he had stirred up: ‘some of the letters are pathetic, coming from poor people, who in consequence of unemployment are in sore need of the money which they confided to Mr Bottomley as the self-proclaimed friend and guide of the “bottom dogs” and the “common folks”’.⁶⁸ One especially indignant unemployed man seeking his money back was more strident and evoked Bottomley’s populist wartime promises to those serving, noting how they were now shamefully hollow in this new context: ‘no notice was taken of my letters, and matters go from bad to worse, and this is *John Bull*’s pledge – “no case of hardship or injustice, no instance of beggarly treatment or mean cheesepar- ing shall go unchallenged or ‘unremedied”’ – Horatio Bottomley, August 19, 1916.⁶⁹ *Truth* was utterly triumphant when Bottomley was convicted, declaring that his actions were ‘premeditated, cold blooded frauds, carried out under a hypocritical pretence of patriotism mainly at the expense of humble investors – those “little men” and “bottom dogs” of whom this unspeakable rogue professed to be the friend and champion’.⁷⁰ The paper also shamed him for what it saw as a cynical use of populist patriotism for his own ends:

he consecrated his whole being to the service of his country and to the men who fought and fell, etc., etc. In his own intimate circle he dropped this hypocritical fiction ... ‘That’s the stuff to give ’em’ he would say ... But the public guilelessly swallowed the stuff, and fondly believed that this incomparable rogue and hypocrite was at last a reformed character. That impression did much to swell the responses to his bond club prospectuses ... they decided to subscribe because his speeches and his articles seemed to prove that he had turned over a new leaf during the war.⁷¹

Not long after the trial had gone against Bottomley, a *Times* correspondent actively questioned how far contemporary society, with its incomplete nature and undeveloped public sphere, had been responsible for its own folly:

The style, in such cases, is the mood, if not the man; and the style of Bottomley expressed moods which were not his own, but collective. He may have thought them sincere; but unconsciously he worked himself into

them because they were popular. It would have been impossible for him, in that style, to say anything that was not popular; it is the manner of a stump orator dependent on his audience for this matter, and feeling his way to their applause ... Bottomley won his popularity and power because he was a kind of medium who knew unconsciously what his audience wished to be told and who told it to them with an air of profound, if vague conviction ... I wish not to sneer at their simplicity, but to point out that aesthetic education is not a luxury but a necessity, since without it we cannot distinguish between truth and humbug ... But we can grasp the fact that style and matter are inseparable and that aesthetic education is as important as moral or intellectual, if only to prevent the poor from being deceived and plundered by self-deceiving demagogues.⁷²

This last sentiment is an appropriate place to conclude our examination of the narrative surrounding Horatio Bottomley and his extensive frauds perpetrated upon the British people, both individually and collectively. It is worth offering an extended consideration to how the totality of his story demonstrates a considerable array of ways in which shame functioned in areas of the public sphere during the first third of the twentieth century.

Bottomley's own manufactured and constructed life story straddled the Victorian period and the new world of the twentieth century. His identification with the populist radicalism of Bradlaugh, however fleeting, meant that he firmly had a toe in this past world. Using the populist appeal of this connection, he also uncovered the ambivalent nature of shame surrounding his lack of formal education. Where a previous age would have subsumed this into an autodidact self-reliant cultural attainment, new avenues of ambition and definitions of attainment left Bottomley's psyche with a slight legacy of shame. Where Bradlaugh rose to command intelligent and articulate political classes, Bottomley, despite his occasionally half-hearted pretensions otherwise, only sought the wherewithal to consume champagne and operate occasionally successful racehorses. In the new world of the twentieth century, fame was more fickle and was garnered in many more ways than in the more austere world of the 1880s. To achieve this, Bottomley had a magic touch ensuring that any intellectual or moral position he took was founded upon common sense, an instinctive distrust of the highbrow and an enduring appeal to ordinary people. The pursuit of such fame and fortune was itself a world which created the capacity for episodes of shamelessness, which Bottomley's narrative displays in abundance. Likewise, a consequence of this was that Bottomley could be seen to be locked into disreputable and fraudulent patterns of behaviour.

Yet one of Bottomley's tactics was to roll each impending fraud into the next, a strategy which avoided detection and the shame that would prevent the refinancing and rapid growth of the subsequent venture. Similarly, his masterstroke of recognising that good name and reliability had been essential in selling goods to a mass consumer society enabled him to use the public sphere to threaten such organisations with spurious and constructed shame. In this he understood that shame, in many potential forms, lurked close to the new webs of trust that were a developing phenomenon of the age. Betrayal of these was a betrayal of the mass populist world and how it had forged relationships to survive the deluge of the First World War and to honour and remember these relationships once peace had come.

All these facets point to the lingering importance of populism in its positive aspects as adulation and its negative ones as shame. They also demonstrate how Bottomley was able to use this tide to persuade individuals to go (sometimes repeatedly) against the instincts of their own better judgement. In this respect, Bottomley certainly understood the potential shame that would attend an individual realising they had been duped and conned, and must serve as the most likely explanation as to why so many people appeared to be serially gullible. Yet shame also occasionally impinged upon the character of Bottomley himself. His fear that he had besmirched Parliament seems genuine enough; likewise his desire to spare his favourite mistress from exposure in court does point to a belief that such public knowledge could do his spirit and psyche lasting damage.

Interestingly, elements of Bottomley's experience also actually reversed the traditional early nineteenth century's understanding of shame as a phenomenon intimately linked with the individual's own community. Bottomley's fraud had been perpetrated on the wide and far-flung public, who were only a series of names to Bottomley and his army of aides. Yet precisely these aides, and other people who worked with Bottomley on an intimate level, regularly tolerated him and seamlessly became party to his underhand and shame-inducing behaviour. Perhaps most tellingly of all, villagers near Bottomley's Sussex residence at Upper Dicker welcomed him home as a hero when he was discharged from prison: the locality was covered in bunting, and children waved flags after his arrival.⁷³ Such a benign response crowned a reversal of the conventional nexus of nineteenth-century community shame. One that would serve to comfort many publicly disgraced politicians and celebrities until the end of the twentieth century and even beyond.

Theories surrounding the idea of charisma indicate that popular understandings of it regard it as something possessed by individuals, where in fact it is a quality bestowed upon such individuals by their audience. This is especially true in the case Bottomley's career, his power and his fate. As a *Times* correspondent recognised, Bottomley knew a range of tactics, motifs, words and influences that would draw his audience in and give him such charisma. His response to the war was the high-water mark of this influence, but this all ended in an ignominious prison sentence because he ultimately betrayed the tide of populism that he had played the most important part in creating. Thus thousands of individual investors traded their own shame at being duped by shaming Bottomley in court and subsequently shaming him in prison. Certainly the pivotal person in his downfall, Reuben Bigland, understood this, even admitting his own shame in being complicit in Bottomley's defrauding of people's hopes for a better world after the 'War to End All Wars'.

These vastly different contexts of remorse and shame demonstrate how some of the modes of shaming from the nineteenth century could now operate upon the grand scale in modern national life, as reputations good or bad could be carried great distances and consumed by many. Moreover, episodes like the Bottomley case were also moments in a long and protracted twentieth-century debate about the nature of trust in public life which used populism, adulation and shame as its three tools of operation, as later chapters in this volume testify.

NOTES

1. The leading statement of this approach is P. Joyce (1991) *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). See also R. McWilliam (2007) *The Tichborne Claimant: A Victorian Sensation* (London: Hambledon Continuum), pp. 240–3 for a discussion of the infectious nature of populist ideas in British politics in the latter half of the nineteenth century. McWilliam notes in particular the resonances of the idea of 'fair play', which arguably plays an important role in the power and appeal of Horatio Bottomley's political persona in the following pages.
2. *The Times* is littered with references to Bottomley's racing exploits. For a synoptic account see J. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley: A Biography* (London: Cresset Press), pp. 37–46.

3. See Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 11.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
5. See R. Blathwayt (1916) *Horatio Bottomley: The Man as he is Today* (London: Odhams), p. 6 and p. 74.
6. See E. Royle (1980) *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), *passim*.
7. See *ibid.* and D.S. Nash (2002) “‘The Credulity of the Public Seems Infinite’: Charles Bradlaugh, Public Biography and the Battle for Narrative Supremacy in fin de siècle England”, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 7, 2, pp. 239–62.
8. See Nash (2002) “‘The Credulity of the Public’”, *passim*.
9. See Royle (1980) *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, pp. 90–1.
10. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, pp. 15–16.
11. See D.S. Nash (2000) ‘Charles Bradlaugh, India and the Many Chameleon Destinations of Republicanism’ in D.S. Nash and A. Taylor (eds) *Republicanism in Victorian Society* (Stroud: Sutton), pp. 106–24.
12. Blathwayt (1916) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 19.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 113–15.
16. See C.H. Norman (1915) *Horatio Bottomley Exposed* (London: Blackfriars Press); Blathwayt (1916) *Horatio Bottomley*, *passim*; and Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, *passim*. It is worth noting that Symons had an extended interest in ideas and personalities associated with populism since he wrote (1965) *The Belting Inheritance* (London: Collins), a fictional recreation of the Tichborne case and agitation.
17. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 50.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–8.
19. Interestingly a number of journalists also saw it as their public duty to pursue Bottomley in what was an embryonic conception of the public interest. See for example *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 21 October 1911, p. 520. In an article entitled ‘Bottomley at Bay’ the writer described the publication as ‘one journal in England which declines to be muzzled’. See also *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 7 October 1911, p. 456, and 28 October 1911, p. 551.
20. Rohan McWilliam also noted in his account of the Tichborne case and its popular appeal that the claimant functioned (in the manner

of Bottomley's own schemes) 'as a figure of wish-fulfilment for thousands of people' and likewise a focus for frustration. The actual character of the claimant was also dubious (like Bottomley's) and he was likewise addicted to risk. He also was a considerable disappointment to those who sought to have their wishes fulfilled and again sustained trust through the continual use of images and symbols rather than concrete ideology. See McWilliam (2007) *The Tichborne Claimant*, p. 277.

21. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 57.
22. *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 9 July 1910, p. 41.
23. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 58.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 101–2.
26. See *ibid.*, pp. 85–6 for Bottomley's attempt to blackmail Lyons Corner Shops over their allegedly poor working conditions. The falsity of these attacks embarrassed Odhams, the printers of *John Bull*.
27. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, pp. 137–8, pp. 142–3 and p. 147.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
29. M. Taylor (1992) 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England c. 1712–1929', *Past and Present*, 134, 1, pp. 121–2.
30. Nash (2000) 'Charles Bradlaugh', pp. 106–24.
31. See for example *John Bull*, 1 January 1916.
32. *Ibid.* as well as *John Bull*, 15 January 1916, 29 January 1916, 3 February 1916 and 19 August 1916.
33. *Ibid.*, 22 January 1916, 4 March 1916, 15 July 1916, 19 August 1916 and 30 September 1916.
34. *Ibid.*, 23 December 1916.
35. H.B. Elliott (1918) *The Great Thoughts of Horatio Bottomley* (London: Hardingham), p. 27.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 63 and p. 64.
37. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, pp. 174–5 and p. 186.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–10. See also A. Hyman (1972) *The Rise and Fall of Horatio Bottomley* (London: Cassell), p. 196. See also *Manchester Guardian*, 27 May 1933 for the suggestion that individuals believed that purchasing such bonds was arguably a patriotic duty.
39. Hyman (1972) *The Rise and Fall*, p. 197.
40. *Truth*, 20 April 1921, p. 687.

41. *Ibid.*, 23 March 1921, p. 506.
42. Hyman (1972) *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 227–8. This scheme was likewise declared illegal and was also dissolved. See *Truth*, 27 July 1921, p. 157.
43. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 235.
44. *Manchester Guardian*, 8 April 1922.
45. *Ibid.*, 20 May 1922.
46. *The Times*, 26 April 1922, and *Manchester Guardian*, 26 April 1922 and 26 July 1922.
47. *The Times*, 26 May 1922.
48. *The Times*, 2 August 1922.
49. See Horatio Bottomley (1927) *Convict ‘13’: A Ballad of Maidstone Gaol* (London: William Southern); Horatio Bottomley (1928) *Humours of Prison Life* (London: William Southern); and Horatio Bottomley (1928) *Songs of the Cell* (London: William Southern).
50. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 262.
51. See *Truth*, 23 February 1921, p. 325 for its incredulity at how easily individuals were persuaded to invest more deeply in Bottomley’s French Credit National Bonds ‘at a price over 50 per cent in excess of the current market value’.
52. See D.S. Nash (2010) “‘Writing Cuckold on the Foreheads of Dozen Husbands’: Mid-Victorian Monarchy and the Construction of Bourgeois Shame’ in D.S. Nash and A-M. Kilday (eds) *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 153–72. This notes the concerted attempt by English Republicans to actively shame the monarchy. This may have had some bearing on the monarchy’s reshaping of itself to better fit the public sphere. However, it should be noted that Republicanism itself, as a political and even as a moral programme, was less than successful.
53. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 271, and Hyman (1972) *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 288–9.
54. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 272.
55. See *Truth*, 16 March 1921, p. 461 for the widely held suggestion that government may even have turned a blind eye to the illegal nature of Bottomley’s lottery-style scheme as a piece of misplaced patriotic licence.
56. Quoted in Hyman (1972) *The Rise and Fall*, p. 243.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 246–7.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 247–50. See also *The Times*, 20 February 1922.
60. *Truth*, 22 January 1919, p. 104.
61. See for example *ibid.*, p. 123.
62. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1919, p. 615. See also *ibid.*, 23 April 1919, p. 655 for the slogan ‘How are you going to Invest that Money?’; 7 May 1919, p. 751 for ‘The Future of Your Investments’ and 21 May 1919, p. 865 for ‘More than £600,000 is invested in War Bonds every 24 hours.’
63. *Ibid.*, 31 December 1919, p. 1195.
64. See *ibid.*, 12 January 1921, p. 25 for initial scepticism. See *ibid.*, 26 January 1921 for a dialogue with Bottomley challenging the legality of his schemes in both England and France and his culpability for thus attempting to float and operate them. See also *ibid.*, 9 February 1921, pp. 235–6, and 2 March 1921, p. 369, noting that claimants armed with a solicitor were having notably greater success in retrieving their money; 30 March 1921, p. 558 for information about subscribers unaware that their certificates had been merged into a new scheme; 27 April 1921, p. 735 for *Truth* proclaiming that its publicity was starting to elicit repayment for bond holders from Bottomley; 3 August 1921, pp. 196–7, 10 August 1921, p. 241, 17 August 1921, p. 287 for details of Bottomley’s writs of libel against *Truth*; and 31 August 1921, p. 366 for a report that 100 summonses had been issued in the Westminster County Courts.
65. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1921, p. 413.
66. *Ibid.*, 29 June 1921, p. 1134.
67. *Ibid.*, 21 September 1921, p. 479; 28 September 1921, p. 526, and 16 November 1921, p. 858.
68. *Ibid.*, 23 November 1921, p. 902.
69. *Ibid.*, 27 July 1921, p. 157. From the issue dated 1 February 1922, *Truth* began publishing verbatim letters from those seeking redress from Bottomley in a column sometimes entitled ‘Mr Bottomley and his Victims’, and it is certainly possible that these began to have an effect on public opinion. See also *ibid.*, 8 February 1922, p. 221, and 22 February 1922, p. 315.
70. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1922, p. 941.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 944–5.
72. *The Times*, 11 July 1922.
73. Symons (1955) *Horatio Bottomley*, p. 262, and *Manchester Guardian*, 30 July 1927.

The Rector of Stiffkey: ‘The lower he sinks, the greater their crime’: Clerical Scandal, Prurience and the Archaeology of Reputation

INTRODUCTION

In its heyday, the ‘case’ of the Rector of Stiffkey was a sensation avidly consumed by all who encountered it. Importantly, this chapter is not specifically about the case itself. Indeed this has been retold several times over in all possible media. Instead it is more precisely about aspects of this retelling and the manner of how the story is and has been an artefact of shame for wider consumption and the creation of shame-filled archetypes. An important element within the story of the Reverend Harold Davidson and his ‘fall’, which sheds light on the position and place of shame within modernity, has been the many and varied uses to which it has been put. These lie alongside the multifarious ways in which they outline and illuminate the concept of the archaeology of reputation. This might be described as the public viewing and reviewing of the ‘moral life’ of the individual, judged against the standards set by an age in which it is viewed. Such archaeology can re-occur with subsequent revisitings of the essential narrative in search of both perennial and new meanings, and/or new resolutions, of what is by now an older, well-worn and interestingly archetypal story. Likewise, each age measures its own levels of prurience and establishes its own fine line dividing amusing folly from culpable and disturbing predatoriness.

In examining cases (and narratives) like this, there is a justifiable urge (as voyeur, historian or both) to distinguish fact from fiction. More precisely, the researcher is anxious to tell the difference between fact and

narrative woven from such fact. This perhaps creates an artificial sense of the researcher believing that there is a chance of uncovering an actual ‘truth’. Certainly an aim of this chapter is following and analysing this urge amongst not simply historians but also novelists, playwrights, filmmakers and television investigative journalists in their quest to uncover some sense of ‘reality’ or ‘truth’ (either particular or universal) about modern shame and its processes that still to this day clings to the Reverend Harold Davidson.¹ However, stripping down the various narratives surrounding the Rector of Stiffkey in search of indisputable facts is not exactly an easy task. As one commentator has suggested, some of the most outlandish stories about him are true, whilst some of the more ordinary and mundane appear to be the work of journalistic licence or fiction.²

When one looks now at the photographs of Harold Davidson after more than seventy years, the images of him have to be filtered through many decades of jokes, archetypes and innuendo about the fabled and actual behaviour of Anglican clerics—what we might describe as the ‘tarts and vicars’ syndrome.³ Perhaps most striking of all to those encountering this story in the more recent past is Davidson’s uncanny resemblance to the comic cleric Lord Henry from the D’Ascoyne family, artfully portrayed by Alec Guinness in the film *Kind Hearts and Coronets* and himself a variation on many anti-clerical sub-themes. This filtering through the baggage of popular culture assumes that the motives of all are transparent, and thus the judgement of many individuals resorts to using archetypes. The spread and knowledge of these archetypes through twentieth-century popular culture further reinforces assumptions about forms of good and bad behaviour. These are further retold in a considerable number of literary genres, ranging from the newspaper letters pages to the gossip columns and even to the editorial and court reporting of the age. In short, twentieth-century popular culture, fed by growing reading publics who actively consumed its products, could quite readily, by the inter-war period, indulge opinion which made it judge, jury and executioner of unfortunate individuals from a considerable distance both culturally and physically.

Still worse, in our own time, stories of various errant clerics have to be filtered through the perceptions of clerical scandals of much more recent years: stories which have a profoundly more malevolent tone and register to them. These are strikingly different, as their prurience takes them a world away from the retro light-heartedness and sexual innuendo of McGill-style postcard humour: a trope regularly evoked persistently in the literature surrounding Davidson and his decade of prominence and infamy, the 1930s. This also alerts us to the fact that stories that surround

shame are regularly told with either malevolence or a suggestive playfulness according to their context.

AN UNFORTUNATE CAREER IN THE MAKING

Despite the artistic licence that the story of the Rector of Stiffkey positively invites, some facts are, and remain, indisputable. Harold Davidson was Rector of Stiffkey, an isolated Norfolk parish, for most of the first third of the twentieth century and the early 1930s.⁴ This was his latest post in a somewhat chequered career that had seen him perform indifferently in both his university studies and his military service. During his war service, he was arrested in a Cairo brothel and claimed to be searching for a prostitute who had infected his men: a talent for being in the wrong place at the wrong time was seemingly emerging.⁵ This reputation was embellished by a much less than ecstatically successful war record which referred to his performance of his duties as 'perfunctory'.⁶

He was not especially gifted as a clergyman, nor especially as an actor—a putative second career which he seems to have intermittently envisaged for himself. For much of the time he made social and professional errors that gained him a poor, if not actually squalid, reputation with his clerical superiors and the local gentry, who still held significant sway over the appointment processes of rural livings and their subsequent administration. Yet it seems equally indisputable that Davidson was well-meaning, and the longevity of support he garnered from the local community remains an important indicator of this which should not be forgotten in consideration of what follows.

By almost any measure, Davidson's discharge of his priestly duties was sporadic and at times bordered on the incompetent. What, however, really rocketed him to public prominence was the other life that he led in the metropolis. Part social missionary and part flâneur, Davidson spent noticeably inordinate amounts of time in London, where he was engaged in saving young women from the perils of the city and its unsavoury inhabitants. These activities went unnoticed whilst they were apparently 'successful', did not generate unwelcome attention and did not involve Davidson himself in compromising incidents and circumstances. Then at some point, his exceptionally lonely wife Molly's last child was conceived with one of the family lodgers, and her infidelity may very likely have pushed Davidson closer to the edge.⁷ Certainly it meant that much more of his attention became fixed upon the moral and immoral landscape of London and its more desperate female inhabitants.

It is possible that Davidson would have escaped censure had not one of the women he helped determined that she would profit from testifying about alleged incidents of lascivious and poor behaviour whilst in the company of Davidson. These apparently culminated in increasingly pressurised requests to have sexual intercourse with him, to which she had no choice but to assent. One alleged incident here had the capacity to unleash the torrent that followed. Once the allegation was in the public sphere, attention was drawn to a whole string of incidents in which Davidson's behaviour led him to be labelled what the twenty-first century would term a 'sex pest'. In his pamphlet 'The Reason Why', Davidson claimed he had helped up to 3000 girls between 1919 and 1934. He loudly advocated this work, believing that others in the clergy should follow his lead and be prepared to face the attendant public risk in order to 'live dangerously for God'.⁸ Davidson had initially helped young boys, but after his war service, he turned his attention to young women. As early as 1906 he had become a chaplain to the Actors' Church Union and had already attracted complaints for barging unbidden into the changing rooms of young actresses.⁹ From here, it was scarcely difficult to note that Davidson's attempts to save fallen women always seemed to relate to individuals who appeared to be both young and physically attractive. Likewise he imposed himself upon women who were moving through gainful employment in the public spaces of inter-war London; indeed their very transience was often seized upon as a likely attraction for Davidson. Thus the rector was reported as having approached telephonists at their place of work as well as women travelling on the underground.¹⁰ He also frequented that quintessentially inter-war institution the Lyons Corner House, where a succession of waitresses or 'Nippies' received his generally unwelcome attentions.¹¹ When linked together, these accounts provide a picture of Davidson as an indulgent lascivious idler who neglected his duties and, through days of apparent fruitless inactivity in London, neglected the emotional and material welfare of his wife and children.

Yet there is evidence that kicks against the readily and easily constructed archetypes associated with shame in this narrative. Davidson had a relatively plausible defence that he was engaged upon missionary work, and he regularly proffered evidence to prove the legitimacy of this and its effectiveness. In some respects, this is a very important issue: the problem of female waifs and strays in the capital was very real and, on the face of it, clergymen were the people best equipped to address its day-to-day manifestations. But clearly suspicion and innuendo were, by now,

an established part of responses to this phenomenon. In this, the public sphere played a crucial role in bringing Davidson's activities—whatever their real motives—to a form of trial. At some point it became clear that the diocese of Norwich and its authorities decided to act against Davidson. In subsequent months and years, Davidson would spend much time, ink and paper convincing anyone who would listen that this was a malevolent conspiracy against him which employed a multitude of dark, inscrutable and devious methods.¹² Agents from the Arrows Detective Agency thereafter pursued Davidson across London and discovered 'not that he spent his days leaping in and out of beds, but that large parts of his life consisted of more or less unabated pointlessness and dissipation'.¹³

Whatever the truth or otherwise of this particular assertion, a case was brought against Davidson largely on the testimony of a single individual: Barbara Harris. She gave damning evidence of her coercive relationship with Davidson that contained incidents of duress and pressure exerted to force her into a sexual relationship with the rector, to which she eventually succumbed. The prosecution painted a picture of Davidson abusing his rank and vocation in pursuit of Harris and produced numerous witnesses who served to confirm the substance of this and other related incidents. Davidson's own defence was to prove ineffective and was further undermined by his eccentric behaviour in the dock, which alienated the presiding judge. All of this seemed to come to a head when the prosecution produced a sensational photograph of Davidson apparently leering over a young actress (Estelle Douglas, the daughter of a family friend), whose naked buttocks were exposed to the gaze of the camera, the courtroom and eventually all those who consumed the case in the popular newspapers. Although the pictures had been slyly set up by photographers seeking to gain from the publicity surrounding Davidson, the message that the photograph carried trumped any thoughts about Davidson's defence and its likely success. Davidson was apparently floored by the photograph, and his position in the picture showed he was unaware of Estelle Douglas' exposed condition. His performance in court never recovered from this and the charges against him were upheld.¹⁴

At this stage it is unclear what the ecclesiastical authorities thought should be done with Davidson. At some point he accepted that he would be deprived of his living at Stiffkey, but there was subsequently an additional controversy about whether he would be barred from holy orders. Davidson seems to have considered the first to be perhaps bearable, but the second involved removing his material means of support alongside any remaining

entitlement to a sense of mission that he may genuinely have possessed. A further dimension was added to the shame element in this episode through the decision to conduct Davidson's removal from office in the very public arena of Norwich Cathedral. Davidson would later protest at length that the Bishop of Norwich, Bertram Pollock, had made a solemn promise to conduct his deprivation in the privacy of the diocesan library.¹⁵ Within this wider episode, this particular facet highlights how apparently archaic forms of shame, such as public deprivation of office, could still resonate significantly in the England of Hollywood films and Lyons Corner Houses.

Throughout, Davidson protested his innocence to whatever audience would listen. Certainly the popular press of the period found his to be an especially good story. This is not simply because of the innate subject matter, which was also natural territory, but because, as A.J.P. Taylor argued in *English History, 1914–45*, consistory courts were not subject to a ban on the publication of proceedings as had been introduced in the divorce courts in 1926. Consequently, the Davidson episode, and others like it, provided the Sunday newspapers with their best material.¹⁶ Jonathan Tucker thought that 'It is no exaggeration to compare the level of media interest in this case to that witnessed during the Profumo Scandal of the 1960s.'¹⁷ However, in the intricacies of detail it generated, there were also other interesting elements at work. Davidson's own remarkable theatricality was seized upon not only by the press, but by other interests too. Davidson himself was readily complicit in this because of his poverty and his enduring belief that he was a wronged man. Such actions were also necessary since Davidson had also been duped by Arthur John Gordon, a man described as a chancer and plausible swindler, who persuaded him to part with money and corralled him into using his position as a clergyman to solicit investment from others.¹⁸ Similarly, Davidson's many years struggling to maintain lodgings in the metropolis and his apparently endless philanthropic donations (great and small) to those down on their luck, coupled with unwise speculative investments piled upon the demands of his family, had left him worse than penniless.¹⁹

Davidson's novel theatrical career as a defrocked clergyman commenced with his revival of his own drawing-room raconteur act, which, by the early 1930s, was certainly showing its age. However, it was his continued and lengthy protestations of innocence that also caught the public imagination. In this respect, Davidson was the more modern representative of the much older tradition of the wronged man cast as a variety celebrity. At the end of the previous century, the Tichborne claimant had entertained

audiences at the music hall, and his appearances simultaneously evoked a populist narrative and displayed an obvious contemporary curiosity for the public gaze.²⁰ Davidson drew on the previous poor treatment of clergymen to make himself a martyr, echoing the case of John Wakeford, who had been accused of adultery and died protesting his innocence in a lunatic asylum. Likewise, the occasional sermon or comment from Davidson likened his own suffering to that of Christ or Dreyfus, and he similarly wrote populist articles railing against the anachronistic and devious practices of the establishment for both the *Empire News* and the *Daily Herald*.²¹ In the previous decade (and as described in the preceding chapter of this book) Horatio Bottomley had also trod the boards in an effort to exonerate himself of charges of duplicity and fraud. Intriguingly, Bottomley's own theatrical agent swiftly lighted upon Davidson as an obviously populist successor with considerable and widespread appeal. He was also later to be instrumental in one retelling of Davidson's own extraordinary story.

Davidson's public persona as the disgraced clergyman began to acquire a life of its own as rumours circulated that he was planning a lecture tour to America and had even potentially been offered a role in the cinema.²² However, the reality was to be rather less glamorous as Davidson was, surprisingly easily, talked into becoming a seaside showman's curiosity. He was persuaded to fast for fourteen days in a barrel at Blackpool's Golden Mile and, amazingly, became a considerable draw, attracting crowds of thousands each paying 2d for the privilege. In this new creation of spectacle, he was seen sharing the bill with a range of circus freak acts including a 'gorilla girl', a 'bearded lady' and 'the world's fattest man'.²³ Blackpool Corporation found the whole spectacle unedifying and tried to prosecute the show for obstruction. The resolution of this involved satisfying the condition that the barrel exposition be discontinued. A film was made locally about this event, and Davidson's self-styled theatricality left him convinced that he alone was attracting large crowds to Blackpool.

Indeed, these stunts did not cease and became still more bizarre, involving a tableau of Davidson roasting on a spit, only to be superseded by a later version in which he was imprisoned in a glass coffin accompanied by a stuffed whale in an attempt to recreate the Jonah story.²⁴ After one such incident, he was prosecuted for attempted suicide following a hunger strike, but in this instance he won the case.²⁵ The summer season of 1936 found Davidson booked to appear as a seafront entertainment at Skegness. In this tableau, Davidson had gone from Jonah and the whale to a version of Daniel in the lion's den. Although he was nervous about appearing in

public with circus lions, the stunt was going well until, on 28 July 1936, a distracted and exhausted Davidson stepped on the tail of the female lion, only to be dragged into a corner and mauled by her mate. Although he survived for a while, he died in hospital two days later.²⁶

STIFFKEY—THE AFTERLIFE OF AN INCREDIBLE STORY

Davidson's remarkable story has lived a quite prolific afterlife, spawning historical accounts and appearing as a footnote in major histories of the period and also in some extrovert studies of scandal that see it pitched between Victorian values and modern sensibilities. Perhaps the first of these was embodied in the work of Ronald Blythe, whose *Age of Illusion* latched on to the whimsical and picaresque quality of the Davidson story to include it alongside others that were indicative of 'a vivid and compelling portrait of Britain over twenty turbulent years'.²⁷ Certainly, Blythe lost no time in applying the creative urge to the Davidson story, which he summed up in the first paragraph as 'a comic process in which retribution slips on its own banana skin'.²⁸ Blythe, however, quickly indulged artistic licence to make a point about the inevitability of shame catching up with individuals and leading to spectacular downfalls. By suggesting that Davidson had decided to make 'girls his special ministry', Blythe ignored his work with vulnerable boys and men in favour of the more story-worthy and salacious option.²⁹ Blythe's imagination soared with lengthy and supposedly knowledgeable expositions of Davidson's state of mind. He pruriently nudged his readership to envisage the clergyman lecher taking the train from London in introspective, yet shameful bliss: 'As Romford and Ilford flashed by, he might fancy he already heard it, the siren song of the Nippies, the ineffable harmonies created by starched linen crackling over young breasts and black-stockinged calves in chubby conference just below the hem of the parlour maid's frock'.³⁰

However, in truth, this was another portrayal of straightforward human folly and weakness without the nuances, or indeed salient facts, that would turn up elsewhere in accounts of Davidson and his story. Blythe, arguably unwittingly, summed up the ability to swiftly dispense with facts and central issues when he suggested that the trial itself inhabited 'the thin line between jurisprudence and entertainment'.³¹ Entertainment won out in Davidson's transmutation into a circus act, which Blythe assures us would have happened to the early Christian hermit Simeon the Stylite if he had lived in inter-war Britain. As he continued:

And so the case built itself into a fantastic edifice of prelates, waitresses, strong men, hunting churchwardens, amorous Indian youths, publicans,

landladies, dentists, titled female do-gooders with a passion for facts, the *Folies Bergère*, bathing suits, photographs, train journeys, Mr Gordon and every possible variation on the popular theme of 'virtue exposed.'³²

By the time Davidson had become a seaside attraction in a barrel, Blythe claimed that he had thrown his lot in with Diogenes, who had believed 'that one should be free from shame, free from emotion and free from all useless conventions'.³³ However, Blythe was equally aware of the solemn attempts to clear Davidson's name and was shrewd enough to pronounce on their effectiveness, suggesting they 'declined with gimmicky tricks until it [the campaign] became an outré sideshow in which goggle eyed holidaymakers would cram themselves to see a real live Sunday newspaper sensation'.³⁴ Whilst Blythe claimed to be writing a precursor of cultural history, it remains fascinating how the Stiffkey scandal was one of his more lyrical and artistically creative chapters in the book; the chapter on Amy Johnson is, for example, more obviously factual and markedly less interesting and inventive. Thus, in probably its first historical retelling, the label of shame and scandal alongside archetypal caricatures fell easily to hand, amidst the urge to report on the endless revelations of human motivation. Nonetheless, Blythe was also keen to locate Davidson in his context as shaped by place and time. Such detail fitted his theme of the inter-war period, but also held up the possibility of temptation and a deliberate portrayal of human fallibility that was potentially timeless.

The Davidson story has, however, also fascinated the creative professions, spawning plays, musicals, films, stage productions and a novel. Some of these, such as Michael Palin's *The Missionary*, indulge considerable artistic licence with both the character and the story. However, it is remarkable how many apparently fictional accounts stay close to the essential narrative of the Davidson episode. What seems to motivate each of these portrayals of Davidson, is a search for the truth about him and to uncover the essence of shame at a precise historical moment. Sometimes this is pitched as a tipping point between the old Victorian world and the new world of twentieth-century modernity. Davidson clearly had a foot in each era, and more than one account sees this as a major factor contributing to his woes. One question that essentially echoes around all of these various narratives is who should feel the most shame – Davidson or the forces and institutions that conspired to ensure his downfall and destruction. In the constant attempts to revisit the story since Davidson's death, there is also a sense of repackaged voyeurism in which reading publics are invited to

scrutinise each new revelation as it builds upon the past ones. It is also the case that Davidson's story was unequivocally picaresque, meaning that a considerable array of sub-themes and incidents could be signposted and retold. Often the choice to include all or only some of these served to restate versions of Davidson's reputation. Likewise they could equally create new perspectives on the overall story, depending upon the intended audience and its precise tastes.

Each is also a piece of the archaeology of reputation, whereby through revisiting the case, authors believe they can purge the shame suffered by an individual. Similarly, Davidson's own family has latterly followed suit and persisted with a campaign claiming his innocence and the request for a partial or full acknowledgement of wrongdoing on the part of the diocese of Norwich.³⁵ However, each of these treatments of Davidson's story, which are quite often decades apart, teaches us a different facet of how society views stories of shame in its historic and personal past. They also illuminate how shame can be viewed and carried by individuals and this process explained to wider audiences. What follows below alludes to the theatrical and cinematic 'repackaging' of Davidson, but it is also important to be acutely aware that the written histories are an important place to start in the quest to analyse the dimensions of shame inherent in this particular story.

Tom Cullen's 1975 consideration of Davidson's career, *The Prostitutes' Padre: The Story of the Notorious Rector of Stiffkey*, takes a clear slant on the story that problematises Davidson's apparent guilt.³⁶ Interestingly, this particular commodification of Davidson's shame removes his rationality to argue that his behaviour can be attributed only to psychological and psychiatric disorder. Although witnesses are produced to support such a story, the truth or otherwise of the assertion provides some interesting insights into the outer limits of acceptable behaviour. The desire and perhaps need to pathologise such behaviour was a new dimension of shame in a post-Freudian world. Where community sanctions once functioned, the late twentieth century sought explanation and new facets of culpability to explain away shame.

The book begins with an epigram from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Like Stevenson's character, Davidson apparently had an alter ego that was the opposite of the affable and endearing rector. He however also had a third, more extreme ego, which amplified still further the psychological and pathological explanation. Additional exploration of this post-Freudian world sees Davidson

pursued by domineering women, whilst he was fated by the fact that his own taste lay with the innocent: 'The Rector of Stiffkey had eyes for girls of quite tender years, nymphets who were still malleable and whose character he hoped to help form.'³⁷ Cullen backs up these musings with an extended investigation of the literature on multiple personality which goes some distance in 'exonerating' Davidson from conscious intentional wrongdoing. Although this account has a worthy seriousness about it, there are also elements of knockabout farce.

Thus far Cullen's account gives us a collection of information which indulges and reinforces a stereotype. In a sense this is the first building block of the archaeology of reputation. Davidson impressed the working girls of Soho by being more interested in buying them meals than in preaching to them. He also defended the girls against their pimps, as is stated in this account: 'The story of how the pocket-size parson had outfaced Dixie Din, who made a kerbside living bending iron bars and wriggling out of chains, made the rounds, earning for Davidson more respect than any amount of Bible-thumping would have done.' Moreover, this account asks us to look with ambivalent, but still sympathetic, eyes as Davidson asserts that Christ's 'attitude towards the woman taken in adultery and still more his close personal friendship with the notorious harlot of Magdala ... have always been my inspiration'.³⁸

In this account Davidson is also seen through the eyes of his eventual press agent J. Rowland Sales, who had, coincidentally, been the press agent for Horatio Bottomley.³⁹ Sales sees Davidson unequivocally as a split personality, suggesting once again that Davidson really did have multiple personality disorder, with three distinct characters in evidence. The benign rector character is styled as 'Uncle Harold' but there is a dark mischievous 'Little Jimmy' at war with the rector's upstanding and responsible persona too. Then Sales goes on to reveal a third persona, the 'Bunco Kid', an American-style swindler whose actions would have been utterly incongruous with the physical appearance of the rector. Sales also notes that transformations from one personality to another and to yet another could be rapid and unfortunate.⁴⁰ The account by Sales also argues that the Church's failure throughout the affair consisted of not recognising or acting on the fact that Davidson was a disturbed personality: 'The analyst's couch rather than the witness-box, was the proper place for the Rector to rid himself of his obsessions.'⁴¹

There is further pathologising in Cullen's twin suggestions that 'multiple personality appears to be a turn-of-the-century disorder', and that

clergymen were especially prone to the ailment. Unfortunately, this placed Davidson in the wrong place at the wrong time and served to elicit further sympathy.⁴² The appearance of these personalities is also strongly linked to traumatic narrative moments in the Davidson story. The apparent flourishing of the 'Uncle Harold' character was supposedly occasioned by his early exploits in saving a young waif from drowning. Likewise Cullen indulges the suggestion that the appearance of the 'Bunco Kid' was Davidson's inner psychological reaction to being cuckolded.⁴³

But one other element of the consumption of Davidson's shame emerges from this, and it also inspired the public to think in a somewhat different direction. Davidson's poor behaviour is linked with the new confined public spaces of modernity, such as the London underground, photo booths and telephone boxes, that encouraged the possibilities of unexpected intimacy. Although these were comparatively new spaces, this was also something of a safe, even comforting narrative which spoke of familiar places and domains at a time when the remote and far-flung was tinged with degrees of menace. Cullen's account readily invokes this with an assertion that 'The Rector and his antics took people's minds off breadlines, hunger marches, and the dole, or so editors reasoned. He likewise chased from the front pages those other bogies, the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler.'⁴⁴ The story is also given its share of compulsive glamour with the appearance of the star witness, Barbara Harris, whose aspirations linked the narrative with the dreams of the masses. Barbara Harris and her eye-catching 'practiced wiggle', created to bewitch talent scouts in her quest to be discovered for the movies, also contains elements of encounters with the narratives of modernity. Cullen imagines this as a vignette in which 'she walked around in a dream of imminent discovery'.⁴⁵ Davidson was not wearing a dog-collar when they first met, and Harris could have entertained every assumption that his far-fetched tales were indeed half promises of a genuine career in show-business.⁴⁶ Cullen weaves this as a central element of the story with Barbara wanting '... something thrilling to happen to her... It was the *cri de coeur* of thousands of girls Barbara's age who read the movie fan magazines to divert their minds from the drabness of their uneventful lives.'⁴⁷

This story itself ended (and is narratively cut off by Cullen) as so many dreams had done for so many young girls in Barbara's position, when the reality was stripped away. In the end, Davidson could only offer her employment as a domestic servant.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, this woman remained crucial to his fate. Without the testimony of Barbara Harris, Davidson's

habits could only really be described as bohemian and emanating from his love of the stage and the people who frequented this milieu.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Cullen again links this with the multiple split personality theory, and he painstakingly recreates the places where these three personas met and interacted. His account of the courtroom drama depicts the struggle between 'Uncle Harold' and 'Little Jimmy' when they confront the psychic catastrophe that makes one personality shift into another.⁵⁰

The appearance in court of the photograph of Estelle Douglas' naked buttocks, and Davidson's reaction to it, is described by Cullen as 'Uncle Harold confronted by the mischief Little Jimmy had done'.⁵¹ The naked photograph was also emblematic of another important theme in this case and the coverage of it. Precise details of the posing of the photograph and its discussion in court further invoked Davidson's split personality as he struggled to justify his appearance in the picture, and this is once again portrayed by both Cullen and Sales. Nevertheless, Cullen also mentions numerous press offers for Davidson to pose again for photographs with Estelle Douglas, the young woman concerned. This, in itself, gives an interesting insight into the contemporaneous consumption of Davidson's own shame both by himself and by a wider readership, or voyeurship.⁵² This voyeurship also took on a ribald existence, with Davidson becoming the subject of limericks and lurid songs often associating the phrase 'Stiffkey' comically 'with certain priapic propensities'.⁵³ Cullen's account concludes with the much later consumption of the case as cause célèbre, which had been under way for some time before his book was published. Cullen suggests that by the 1970s, Stiffkey had become a place of pilgrimage. He further quotes material in the *Lynn Advertiser* in about 1973 which speaks of a search for justice and reports that the 'cult of Stiffkey is growing rapidly'.⁵⁴

Considered as a coherent whole, the Cullen account dwells on the amusing, the comic and the picaresque elements that clung to this case and which clearly followed Davidson around as an occupational hazard. Nonetheless, the sustained exploration of the multiple personality idea was a clear effort to exonerate Davidson from ultimate culpability for his often bizarre and occasionally questionable actions. For Cullen, Davidson needed help rather than punishment and censure, although in putting this explanation of Davidson's culpability and shame forward, Cullen ensured it was consumed through another exploration of what was, inescapably, a good story whose attraction and power had scarcely diminished over forty years.

Jonathan Tucker's later book *The Troublesome Priest: Harold Davidson, Rector of Stiffkey* (2007) is more measured than Cullen's publication but

nonetheless acknowledges the latter's value in providing insight into the thoughts of those who were alive when the scandal occurred.⁵⁵ However, Tucker was also clear that Cullen, in the minds of the Stiffkey villagers at least, had besmirched the honour of a man who had done no wrong. Tucker also saw this as connected with Davidson's reputation for defending the rights and status of local agricultural workers. Similarly, his poor reputation amongst the local gentry was also further explained by this particular phenomenon. Together, these views of Davidson further polarised his reputation and persuaded the interested observer that a deeper truth could be discerned through a further archaeology of reputation.⁵⁶

Tucker's account concentrates greatly upon a combination of chance and serendipity, couched alongside what he sees as Davidson's serial capacity for 'self-destruction'. Davidson, for example, would arguably not have been set on his course of saving young women, had he not happened to be on hand in November 1894 to rescue the run-away sixteen-year-old waif who had thrown herself in the Thames. The element of chance in this episode is further invoked through the fact that Davidson pronounced himself thereafter likely to keep 'my eyes open for opportunities to help that type of girl, namely, the country girl stranded on the alluring streets of London, of which there is an enormous number every year'.⁵⁷ It is also suggested in the Tucker account that Davidson took as his exemplar the work of Gladstone, and we should remember important facets of this. Gladstone's behaviour and motives have been similarly questioned and reconstructed as an archetype by modern sensibilities, but this again perhaps forgets the breadth and depth of the fallen-woman problem that had infested London since 1860.⁵⁸

Within the Tucker account, Davidson's early life displays elements of conscientious hard work aided by considerable feats of memory, wrapped up in an endearing kindness and sharply theatrical eccentricity. Tucker's book likewise regularly repeats the phrase 'self-destructiveness', as though Davidson should be recognising that he is the architect of his own shame and that other courses of action are clearly open to him. It seems inherent in the Tucker account, particularly, that Davidson was a victim of the times in which he lived. This was a man described by all commentators (from those who knew him right through to twenty-first-century apologists for his fictional self) as a Victorian. Davidson had served in the First World War but was, in many ways, untouched by it. Thus some of the changes wrought by it caught him desperately unawares and likewise in a species of trap. When he frequented the various Lyons Corner Houses of

central London, he was captivated by the sight of the latest Nippy to have caught his eye. The Nippies' very existence as a marketing creation of the Lyons company proffered them as an ideal of work and feminised service which made them 'available' for public consumption in a variety of ways. Advertisements extolled their various virtues and duties in an organised and choreographed ethic of service that would have deeply appealed to Davidson's theatrical instincts.

Sometimes this account also contains a noisy collision of modern and late Victorian themes which further indicates that shame could exist along the fault line between the dramatically different sensibilities of two ages of mores and behaviour. For instance, Tucker describes how Davidson denied having ever used condoms or possessed them and likewise denied having taken tea with Barbara and her Indian boyfriend whilst they were in their pyjamas. There was similarly a flat denial of having had sexual intercourse with Barbara, alongside an insistence that he had had intercourse with his wife only for the purposes of procreation and had never indulged in this activity without praying first.⁵⁹

The caricatured Victorianism of some themes dwelt upon by Tucker is also worthy of comment. The extravagant life that Davidson led whilst his family were more or less penniless led to the exposition in court of a letter that he had written to the Duchess of Devonshire begging for a £500 loan to be secured against a life insurance policy. Davidson begged for this in order to provide for his family, but it was used by the prosecution to indict him for a lack of morals.⁶⁰ Likewise the Estelle Douglas photograph narrative echoed what appearances told the public: 'It looks for all the world like the classic stereotype of the prurient ageing parson seducing the young virginal innocent.'⁶¹ Davidson had a point when he suggested that no sane man would let himself be photographed in such a compromising position. Nonetheless, reports of the nude photographs raised the public interest to even greater heights.⁶² The defence, according to Tucker, also concurred in this evaluation, summing Davidson up as a man 'utterly indifferent to the way other people judge his behaviour'.⁶³ However, shame was also invoked in the defence's picture of Barbara Harris as a dissolute woman who 'lay in bed during the day, went to cafes in the evening, and slept with men all night'.⁶⁴ This picture was blackened still further when Davidson and his defence asserted that she had been further supported in this life by the inducements of the prosecution.⁶⁵ Just after the trial, Davidson's wife, who had steadfastly supported him, began to waver in a newspaper interview, suggesting that her husband lacked judgement: 'Who pays the

pipe? I do and my children ... Is Mr Davidson a saint whom the powers of good protect! Or does the Devil look after his own?' His daughter in the same newspaper interview readily noted how often Davidson would cry with anguish that he was misunderstood.⁶⁶

Tucker's account also focusses upon the precise circumstances of Davidson's deprivation in Norwich Cathedral, dwelling upon this element of shame as a consequence of Davidson's poor judgement. Tucker suggests that the Bishop of Norwich, Bertram Pollock, was very reluctant to take action against Davidson because he had skeletons of his own in the cupboard. At a meeting with Pollock, Davidson offered to resign in return for the bishop's dropping all charges while an investigation took place with the promise of being reinstated if exonerated. He quickly discovered that the bishop investigated this option to discover it did not have mileage.⁶⁷

Tucker also noted that the *Church Times*, in trying to evaluate the damage done by the case, saw that in the end its prosecution had been 'ill advised'. The London setting of the trial, its conduct and the panoply of charges all turned the case into a modern media event. The bishop's prosecution was declared 'unChristian' and an assault upon someone who had worked for the lowly and destitute in society. The *Church Times* also criticised the exceptionally poor tone set by the court, which should have been a model of higher morality than the secular courts.⁶⁸ For Tucker, Davidson's theatrical career, in all its apparent ridiculousness, became part of the wider moral crusade against an institution that had treated him with great injustice:

Davidson did not merely confine himself to barrels. In one variant he was locked in a refrigerated chamber, vowing that he would freeze himself to death to shame the dark forces that had brought him to his current state. In another stunt he appeared to be roasting in an enclosed pit while a mechanical imp prodded his buttocks with a gilded pitchfork. He constructed placards which sought to blame and shame the church for the actions it had taken against him ... The lower he sinks, the greater their crime.⁶⁹

Tucker concludes with a chapter assessing whether Davidson was guilty and notes that the son of his leading opponent considered him to be innocent: 'He was a *looker* not a *doer*.'⁷⁰

Tucker's verdict on this story ends with the following:

It is my view that the Church of England owes it to Davidson's family to re-examine this case and, if the evidence of immorality is as flimsy

as I have suggested, to make a public statement to the effect that despite his undoubted shortcomings as a clergyman, Harold Davidson was *not* an immoral man. His years of good works and his faithful service to the Church were ignored and the public flogging to which he was subjected between 1932 and 1937 was both unnecessary and unjustified. Perhaps then the 'Prostitute's Padre' will finally rest in peace.⁷¹

Shortly after Davidson's death, someone arrived at the Stiffkey Rectory allegedly to compile a biography of Davidson. This individual disappeared with a very large number of his papers, which were then never seen again. This was viewed by the family as an act perpetrated by the Bishop of Norwich to erase evidence of the rector and his version of the truth of what had happened to him. Tucker quotes Karilyn Collier, Davidson's granddaughter, as saying that it 'removed all traces of the Rector and any hopes of uncovering the truth behind the scandal'.⁷² The episode and its retelling further added to the value of the archaeology of reputation in the twentieth century and of, in this case, a 'wronged man'. Whilst a few papers were returned, the supposition is that there was also an attempt to protect Bertram Pollock's own apparent indiscretions. A letter from Davidson to Pollock hinted that he knew about the allegations against Pollock and that he was surprised that such an individual would allow a suit against him when their own reputation was potentially under such a cloud. This adds another dimension to the archaeology of reputation: digging can produce information on almost anyone, and reputations continue to be protected by all who have things to lose.⁷³

There are also more widely known versions of the Davidson story that cross the line into creative writing, but still have judgements to make about the nature of shame and reputation.⁷⁴ Michael Palin's film *The Missionary* was loosely based upon the Rector of Stiffkey story, but somehow owed its lineage to earlier currents in Palin's thought and humour. Many of the characters and situations in Palin's earlier solo work *Ripping Yarns* displayed a fascination with the archaic in both subject and narrative terms. There was a considerable interest in, and indeed obsession with, empire and the situations it left protagonists in, and this was emphatically a new dimension added to the Davidson story. Victorian and Edwardian England, as Palin frequently portrayed it, asked a great deal of its young men. As a result, these crises of masculinity were a source of both humour and pathos. In *The Missionary*, Palin's significantly younger, more handsome clergyman is exposed to the serial temptations of attractive and needy fallen women.

However, the film also makes a significant gesture towards investigating what placed the Palin/Davidson character in the perilous position in the first place. In an early sequence the Palin/Davidson character visits the offices of the Bishop of London (played by Denholm Elliot), who is discovered to be in the basement of the building, teaching young boys how to box. He then outlines to the Palin/Davidson character that he has to actively play 'catch up' for the Anglican Church, which has fallen behind in its missionary work and is perceived as 'losing out' to its rivals. The Palin/Davidson character's previously unblemished career is damaged by these activities, and indeed the opening sequence focusses squarely upon the shame he has brought upon the institutions he represented, as his name is erased from the honours board at his school.

John Walsh's fictional retelling of the Davidson story goes some considerable distance in seeking to be a recreation of the events of the scandal. Walsh uses the epistolary novel format to recreate the journals of Davidson that are imagined to have been amongst the papers stolen from Stiffkey Rectory after Davidson's death. Walsh re-echoes that the Davidson saga is utterly irrepressible as an endlessly fascinating story. The novel is creatively ambivalent about Davidson's motives but largely concludes that he ultimately did more good than harm. Nonetheless, it still remains another 'repackaging' of the shame that surrounded Davidson and the events that unfolded around him.⁷⁵

Walsh's account of Davidson's activities valuably gives life to the men and women otherwise hidden in the official accounts of what happened. Thus Barbara Harris becomes a believable, if capricious and fickle, individual. Nonetheless, at certain points it is still possible to fall into the trap of believing this to be an accurate historical account. It is not: it is and remains a work of fiction. But as fiction, it does contain some very interesting and telling meditations on the themes which the Davidson case so regularly illuminates. Firstly, there is consideration of the idea of celebrity. Davidson manages to be a celebrity to many different people in many different ways. The use of newspaper reporters conveys the nature of Davidson's crusade and perhaps lends it some degree of dignity. But the reporters are also noted as realising very quickly that Davidson is a good story, prompted by the titillating and archetypal level of ambivalence about his motives. As has been suggested, the novel is non-committal about Davidson, but its contextual backdrop instantly relates to twenty-first-century understandings of how close this celebrity status and shame can go together, a consideration picked up in Chaps. 6 and 7 of this vol-

ume. The first paperback edition of the novel contains a useful postscript entitled 'A 16 Pocket Skirt Chaser', which is an interview with the author. In this, Walsh outlines his motivation in tackling the story:

I couldn't help admiring Davidson. Whatever Davidson was doing – and we really don't know the details to this day – the powers that be they were trying to bang him up and succeeded, which seemed unjust to me. I shared his energy. I admired the way he stood up to the Bishop. And I admired the way he bounced back after the scandal. We have to remember, he did this 60 years at least, before Neil Hamilton, Jeffrey Archer and Jonathan Aitken, and those people. Because in the old days if you were disgraced or struck off, court-martial or cashiered you were expected to do the decent thing. You took a service revolver and a bottle of whiskey and you shot yourself. What you didn't do was turn around and become a celebrity, on the grounds that the public should be able to judge for themselves. I was intrigued by all of that and intrigued by his toughness.⁷⁶

Very interestingly, Walsh also declares that in recreating Davidson's story he concluded that Davidson was innocent of the baser motives ascribed to his actions. Elements within this fictional account particularly highlight the important issues in the wider history of shame in the twentieth century. Firstly, the exposure to shame promotes a reaction from the ashamed individual. As we can see, Davidson, and whatever motivation was within him, contrived to fight what had happened to him, and this, in itself, demonstrates the increased visibility of ideas of propriety and how these are played out in the public sphere. Secondly, Walsh's own personal investigation of Davidson indicates, on the grand scale, something that all members of the twentieth-century omnipresent media world are encouraged to indulge in. Investigations of guilt, motivation and human frailty were undertaken by all of those who, in the 1930s, would have read newspapers and periodicals. Whereas in the contemporary world, they would also be avidly perused by those individuals who readily consume new media of many kinds. By the time Walsh had finished, Davidson's reputation had been taken out of the archives and picked over once again. It had been dusted down, romanticised, made public and made tragic, and in the end had persuaded another commentator to pass judgement on his guilt or innocence. Along the way we had once again been entertained by a star turn, but we had also been led to think deeply about how we consume shame and its reflexive relationship with the idea of human frailty.

Davidson at one point rails against the destructive power of archetypes, declaring ‘I cannot help it if the suspicious minded see the performance, rather than the kindly Samaritan behind it.’⁷⁷ Walsh also exonerates him by indicating the enhanced levels of temptation which 1930s British life appeared to put before both the quasi-Victorian Davidson and those he sought to save. Vulnerable young women are at the mercy of ‘...the leery gang of off-duty lawyers’ clerks and fly-by-night office boys ... whilst “cocktails” ... have come to represent all the headlong sinfulness of the modern age’.⁷⁸

STIFFKEY, MORAL CENSURE AND RESTORING REPUTATION

So much of the whole Davidson case turns upon another presumption stemming from archetypes: namely that within the new morality of the twentieth century, permissive sexual licence meant that *all* motives led somewhere suspect. The accumulation of evidence depicting Davidson in circumstances unbecoming, was thus given a new gloss by modernity. He was an individual drawn to London and had an almost compulsive habit of becoming involved in organisations intended to provide welfare that would sap and call upon his time to an unanticipated degree. We might also argue that if Davidson was guilty of, at least, a fascination with women, then this too indulged a series of archetypes. Although he professed a vocation to save waifs and strays, he was ultimately interested in the quasi-independent women of the period in the shape of Nippies, telephonists, showgirls and prostitutes. Yet beyond his failings, a surprising number of people were prepared to speak up for Davidson and to indulge in the favourable archaeology of his reputation. We have met two writers and a novelist who have done so with the benefit of both detachment and considerable hindsight. However, there were also other surprising individuals who were prepared to do the same. Davidson himself recorded how a waif he had saved from plunging into sin in the vicinity of Shaftesbury Avenue was now married and in better circumstances. She had written to him during the court case thanking him and hoping he could escape the ‘monstrous charges brought against him’.⁷⁹ Perhaps an even stranger instance still lies in the archives at Lambeth Palace. In December 1932, the swindler John Gordon, who had otherwise led Davidson a merry dance, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cosmo Lang, trying to mitigate his view of Davidson. In this letter, Gordon claims that he alone was responsible for arranging the barrel stunt with Davidson’s promoter in Blackpool. Davidson was appalled, but went along with things ‘with his usual readiness to help anyone in a difficulty’.⁸⁰

This evidence also contributes to an important aspect of the history of shame in the twentieth century. If careers, lifestyles and life histories could become so obviously public knowledge, as Harold Davidson's had, then letters such as these were small materials with which to restore and rebuild the archaeology of reputation. This shows also its potential power as real, as psychological or even as imaginary moral support. However, a paradox was that these materials and their use also added further complications to an already hyper-complex narrative. Nevertheless, it remains interesting how various forms of media, from the newspaper to the supportive letter and through to the imaginations of seaside showmen, all saw Davidson himself as a series of archetypes. Thus he appears in these sources as a vocation-driven innocent, as a lecher (especially unforgettably depicted in the Estelle Douglas photograph) and as a wronged man, alongside his biblical metaphorical selves in 'Jonah and the whale' and 'Daniel in the lion's den'.

The Davidson case also opened another dimension to aspects of the experience of shame in the twentieth century. Many correspondents, and indeed Davidson himself, indicted the institution which decided to discipline him, sometimes themselves bringing the psychological power of other institutions to bear.⁸¹ Not surprisingly, this has been a popular theme for those who have sought to restore Davidson's reputation. Indeed, his own family has made considerable use of it. Its quest for a pardon rehearses the document confiscation episode and holds the Anglican Church up to its professed standards of mercy and forgiveness. As such, this was a blueprint for British populations to treat institutions as though they were, or had, personalities of their own. As the century progressed, the development of standards and officially recognised codes of conduct mushroomed, so that by the end of the twentieth century, the popular press and individuals could routinely talk about the apparent shame of institutions in relation to their practices, malpractices and conduct.

Davidson's narrative of himself and his actions never wavered and always began with the story of the girl rescued from the Thames, which is ubiquitous throughout his writings. Davidson, given his status as a wronged man with time on his hands, had the opportunity to brood upon what had happened to him—but he unfortunately had plenty of opportunities to repeat himself. When one reads several of the letters it becomes difficult to believe that Davidson was suffering from mental malaise: these letters are long and sometimes convoluted, but also periodically penetrating, lucid and well argued. Whilst the wronged-man persona is clearly a reason for Davidson's tiresome repetition of detail, we might also conceivably see something else at work. Davidson's narrative emphatically retells

a purity of vocation long before his actions were deemed shameful, as they were later corrupted by the assumptions and insinuations of others and the retelling of these versions in court and by the media. Davidson here was recapturing his own sense of personal motivation, thereby restoring his own reputation. This was a most effective form of the archaeology of reputation where for an individual, the purity of thought and action could be recaptured and relived, if only for an audience of one.⁸²

Indeed, it is this ‘reliving for an audience of one’ that is perhaps the really important issue here for the wider twentieth-century history of shame. This century was one in which the conventional life cycle and the foundation of many modern career structures took shape, or at least began to conform to a semi-permanent pattern. Given this, individuals over the century nurtured expectations and assumptions about their material and moral progress through life that were potentially more stable than those of their forebears. Expectations about the latter would have been exceptionally true of those who, in the earliest years of the century, inherited any lingering sense of professional and moral vocation as the Victorians understood it. Though he may not have lived up to their stringent ideals, Harold Davidson would certainly have understood these codes and strictures. Although two world wars intervened, for many this in itself placed a further premium upon the re-establishment of normality for individuals after the conflicts. Davidson endlessly wrote, over and over again, the account of his vocation and its flowering from such promising seedlings. As is evident in the archives of Lambeth Palace, many of these documents were seen by an external readership of one (if they were letters to the bishop, the archbishop or their respective advisers). Likewise the unfinished condition of others perhaps indicates that only Davidson himself saw them. Yet for him, and possibly for many others over this century for whom he is a representative, these documents were a clear and obvious chance to recapture what he once was, to restate his vocation and to relive those things that had both motivated, harmed and shamed him. Perhaps in undertaking the archaeology of his own ‘reputation’ he was in search of the fatal tragic flaw that had led to his shame—something which so captivated and beguiled authors, playwrights, film makers and television documentary history in the decades since his death.

NOTES

1. There have been a range of retellings of the Rector of Stiffkey affair, and there is scarcely room to consider them all. This chapter chooses to focus on those still relatively accessible within the public

- domain. Amongst those also offering exposition, entertainment and investigation are the radio documentary *A Proper Little Gent*, which contained wistful reminiscences of the place and period which made Davidson appear eccentric whilst toying with anti-clerical themes, and likewise a 1994 BBC documentary about Davidson called *Matter of Fact*. There were three musicals of the rector's life: *A Life in Bedrooms*, *God Made the Little Red Apple* and *The Stiffkey Scandals of 1932*, the last of which was filmed and broadcast on BBC television in 1969. In 2000, Ken Russell made a short film about Davidson entitled *The Lion's Mouth*.
2. J. Tucker (2007) *The Troublesome Priest: Harold Davidson, Rector of Stiffkey* (Norwich: Michael Russell), p. 166.
 3. For an example of this genre in relation to the Davidson case see http://www.london-books.co.uk/speakers_dirtyvicar.html, accessed 3 July 2015.
 4. Tucker (2007) *Troublesome Priest*, Chaps. 1, 2 and 3.
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 6. This relates to the service record of Harold Davidson quoted in *ibid.*, p. 15.
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
 8. Exeter College Archive, Oxford, Members' Personal Affairs: L.III.6, Harold Davidson (1934) 'The Reason Why', *passim*.
 9. Tucker (2007) *Troublesome Priest*, p. 13.
 10. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
 12. See for example Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4873, Correspondence and Papers Relating to Rev. Harold Davidson (1932–7): Ff14–22, Davidson, letter to Bertram Pollock, 12 January 1932. See also Ff244, A.C. Don, letter to Davidson on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, asking Davidson to desist from suggestions that a third party funded the prosecution against him at the behest of the Bishop of Norwich, Bertram Pollock.
 13. Tucker (2007) *Troublesome Priest*, p. 70.
 14. *Ibid.*, pp. 87–91.
 15. Exeter College Archive, Members' Personal Affairs, L.III.6: Davidson (1934) 'The Reason Why', p. 2.
 16. Quoted in Tucker (2007) *Troublesome Priest*, p. 43.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
 18. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 18, p. 20, p. 132, p. 139, p. 150 and p. 161.
20. R. McWilliam (2007) *The Tichborne Claimant: A Victorian Sensation* (London: Hambledon Continuum).
21. Tucker (2007) *Troublesome Priest*, pp. 38–9.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
27. R. Blythe (1983 edition) *The Age of Illusion: Some Glimpses of Britain between the Wars 1919–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), back cover.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
35. See K. Collier (2004) *Harold Francis Davidson—Rector of Stiffkey (1875–1937): A Biography of his Life and Trial* (London: Zevrika Publications).
36. T. Cullen (1975) *The Prostitutes' Padre: The Story of the Notorious Rector of Stiffkey* (London: Bodley Head), p. 10.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 14. See also Chap. 3 of this book for Bottomley.
40. Cullen (1975) *Prostitutes' Padre*, p. 15.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–1.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 32 and p. 51.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 158–60 and p. 179. See also C. Robson (2003) *Men in Wonderland: The Lost Girlhood of the Victorian Gentleman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) for a scholarly account of the male Victorian interest in depictions of innocence associated with young girls.
53. Cullen (1975) *Prostitutes' Padre*, p. 197.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
55. Tucker (2007) *Troublesome Priest*, *passim*.
56. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 89 and p. 91.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 27, p. 33 and p. 35.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
73. *Ibid.*
74. It is interesting to observe how the interest of the creative industries in the Davidson case mirrors similar interest in the Tichborne claimant episode. See McWilliam (2007) *The Tichborne Claimant*, p. 276.
75. J. Walsh (2008) *Sunday at the Cross Bones* (London: Harper Perennial).
76. *Ibid.*, 'Postscript—A 16 Pocket Skirt Chaser', pp. 2–3.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
79. See Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4873: Ff299, manuscripts text by Harold Davidson, 1932.
80. Lambeth Palace Library, Miscellaneous Correspondence of Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury (1932), MS VO 14/7/30: John Gordon, letter to Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 December 1932.

81. See for example Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4873: Ff219, Miles Mason, letter to Archbishop of Canterbury, 27 March 1937. Mason was Davidson's old schoolmaster, speaking up on his behalf, applauding his actions in saving young women and suggesting that the Church was the agency losing its reputation here which 'estranged, and do estranged a number of members of our Church'. See also *ibid.*, Ff234 for the Rector of Exeter College also defending Davidson, who was by 'now taking up the cudgels for me most strenuously'.
82. *Ibid.*: Ff291–6, 'Special Points I Hope to Have Emphasised'.

The Silent Scream of Shame? Abortion in Modern Britain

INTRODUCTION

Historically, abortion and its consequences have been considered a divisive issue that motivates individuals to closely examine both their actions and their consciences. It is, and regularly has been, a touchstone of how a society debates the current state of morality within it. As one recent historian of abortion commented:

Abortion is one of the few social issues in our times with the potential to agitate public opinion to the point of violent street protests and acrimonious discussions in television studios, law-courts and lecture theatres. For a historian the study of an issue as complex and diachronic as the debate on abortion is intriguing in itself, but it also illustrates the profile, values and beliefs of the particular society under discussion.¹

Historians have long accepted the association between unwanted pregnancy, methods of infant disposal and shame.² Infanticide, for instance, showed this link in the very legal statute defining the crime which also acknowledged the imperative of concealment. In the ‘Acte to Prevent the Destroying and Murthering of Bastard Children’ of 1624, it was stated that: ‘many lewd Women that have been delivered of Bastard Children, to avoid their shame and to escape Punishment, do secretlie bury or conceale the Death of their Children’.³ In instances of infanticide, infant abandonment or exposure, wet-nursing, baby-farming and other postpartum methodologies, shame has been a significant factor motivating certain mothers

to take progressively more drastic steps in order to avoid maternity.⁴ But what about prior to parturition? How does shame actually fit into the act of pregnancy termination?

Abortion and the feelings that surround it have, for some considerable time, been a deeply divisive issue which has generated and continues to generate passionate debate.⁵ As the historian Barbara Brookes explains in relation to England, 'Abortion is a universally practiced but by no means universally approved procedure.'⁶ Indeed, the concept of abortion is charged with different psychological and emotional reactions for different people depending on the context. For instance, it can be seen variously as a mortal sin, a therapeutic medical procedure, a practical necessity, a popular method of fertility control, a business enterprise, a desperate measure, a shameful by-product of modern sexual freedoms and, indeed, a criminal act.

Rather than explore the extent to which shame has been a key feature of these different reactions, the scholarship on abortion in Britain has converged on just three key aspects of the subject's history. The first relates to the legal history of abortion and, in particular, the campaigns and debates after the 1930s to legalise the practice. Further work focussed on the ongoing legal debates and implications associated with the passing of the Abortion Act in 1967 and the key amendments made to it in 1990 via the Human Fertilisation and Embryo Act.⁷ The second focus of existing historiography, studies the extent of the involvement of medical professionals in abortive procedures over time. Scholarship in this context has concentrated upon the evolution of medical attitudes to termination, the professionalisation of medicine's impact upon the legal reform of abortion and how medical procedure itself has developed over time.⁸ The third and final area of scholarly focus relates to the place of abortion within the general spectrum of contraceptive options open to British women and how this has changed during modernity.⁹

This last area of study provides the foundation for analysis of the relationship between shame and abortion during the modern era, as distinct from earlier periods. As scholars like Jane Lewis, Wally Seccombe, Angus McLaren and Hera Cook have shown, attitudes to motherhood were transformed in modern Britain. As women craved more effective fertility control alongside increasingly independent lifestyles, sexuality became divorced from reproduction.¹⁰ As we will see in this chapter, attitudes to abortion were also transformed during the twentieth century (albeit slowly), and contraception became more widely understood and practised

across the British Isles during that time.¹¹ Moreover, the state and modern health care systems saw it as their duty to support this transition. They made determined efforts to disavow the population of traditional presumptive shame-based mentalities which limited advancement and modernity, and which inhibited those individual freedoms that modern social democracy had long promised.

Through the analysis of a wide range of primary and secondary sources, this chapter examines the relationship between shame and abortive practices in British history, a subject yet to be given any scholarly attention. One reason for this lacuna of interest lies in the inherent difficulties associated with the study of this topic. As various historians emphasise, there is a lack of accurate data related to abortive interventions, largely because the practice was a covert one. Primarily and initially at least, this was so in order to avoid legal prosecution, but also because the termination of a pregnancy (as we will see) is an intensely private and personal experience and thus a taboo, shame-ridden subject for both practitioners and patients.¹² Until compulsory registration, the vast majority of discovered abortions were either botched terminations, where tragedy had befallen the mother concerned, or episodes involving the blackmail of one or more of the individuals involved.¹³ Consequently, for several centuries of British history, the precise nature and incidence of abortion in Britain and the shame surrounding it have been elusive.¹⁴ However, it was within modernity that the most knowledge about the phenomenon's existence came to light.

Despite difficulties with the data, this chapter examines the apparently shameful nature of termination during the twentieth century and how much this owed to older attitudes. Did different 'agencies' regard the practice differently? In instances of infanticide, for instance, shame was used universally by medical professionals, by judicial and social authorities and, perhaps more importantly by the women concerned, to explain acts of new-born child murder. Was this also true in episodes of abortion or were there different, or arguably more modern, ethical, moral and personal standpoints to consider? Case study material enables the chapter to determine how shame related to abortion became manifest and identifies how far these representations changed over time and for what reasons. This will facilitate an understanding of why the subject of abortion remains such a highly emotive and divisive issue in an apparently liberal and post-permissive Britain.

SHAME ASSOCIATED WITH UNWANTED PREGNANCY AND ABORTION: TWENTIETH-CENTURY PRECURSORS

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that abortion—like infanticide—has a long history and that the avoidance of maternity has been craved for a wide range of reasons since the earliest times.¹⁵ By the early modern period, however, this tactic was commonly adopted in order to evade the social stigma of a bearing and rearing an illegitimate child.¹⁶ Moreover, it has been noted by scholars that many women chose to deal practically with an unwanted pregnancy after the fact, rather than take precautions before sexual activity took place, seemingly oblivious to the idea of shame.¹⁷

According to Cyril C. Means Jr., ‘During the late seventeenth, the whole of the eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, English and American women were totally free from all restraints, ecclesiastical as well as secular, in regard to the termination of unwanted pregnancies, at any time during gestation.’¹⁸ In the religious context and from the period before 1500, it was widely believed that an unborn infant did not possess a soul before the quickening (the moment when the mother first detects the foetus moving, typically from eighteen to twenty weeks into the gestational period).¹⁹ Therefore, a deliberate abortion was not actually considered *sinful* (and thus shameful) until as late as the second half of the nineteenth century, when certain ecclesiastical figures declared that ensoulment began at the precise moment of conception.²⁰

Moreover, it is clear from court records and judicial writings that abortion was never considered a serious legal offence.²¹ Criminal accusations were generated under common law only if a child had been born alive but then subsequently died on account of ill-treatment in the womb or if the mother died in suspicious circumstances. Instances such as these were difficult to prove given the rudimentary nature of forensic medicine in the early modern period.²² British attitudes to abortion appear to have been relatively relaxed and tolerant for the most part of the pre-modern era. In Scotland prior to the twentieth century, abortion ‘was a common law offence with no strictly defined limits’, which meant in practice that unless criminal intent could be proven, there was no case to answer.²³ Similarly, and as previously indicated, in England prior to the nineteenth century, the practice of abortion remained a rarely prosecuted common-law crime until Lord Ellenborough’s Act of 1803, which deemed causing a miscarriage a capital offence.²⁴

According to John Keown, three prevailing factors explain the timing of the Act. The first was Lord Ellenborough's intention to clarify the legal position on infanticide, which had consequent implications for the judicial stance on abortion and wilful miscarriage.²⁵ In addition, there was a perception at the turn of the century that abortion was a growing social problem in need of control and that the pre-existing common-law provision failed to suppress the practice.²⁶ Finally, Keown cites the increased influence of medical practitioners upon legislative concerns. Some doctors criticised the moral significance attached to the quickening, arguing that foetal life should be protected by the law at all stages of the gestational cycle. This simultaneously extended their control and attacked illicit, untrained practitioners of abortions, who were 'irregular competitors' during a period when medical professionalisation intensified.²⁷

It was not until 1837, in the Offences Against the Person Act, that capital punishment for post-quickening abortion was abrogated.²⁸ The 1837 Act also abolished the distinction between pre- and post-quickening interference. Although this made the administration of abortion no longer a capital offence, the provision for punishment that remained was still fairly harsh and was reiterated in the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861. In these revisions, both procuring an abortion and self-abortion became punishable by life imprisonment. Likewise, anyone providing an individual with the means to commit an abortion was liable, upon conviction, to five years' imprisonment.²⁹

It remains exceedingly difficult to determine how common abortion was in Britain, especially before the Victorian era. Only a handful of cases came to the attention of medical professionals, and fewer still were brought before the courts.³⁰ Nevertheless, it is likely that abortion had been regularly practised for centuries by British women within a long-standing and widespread folk-remedy tradition where abortifacients such as ergot of rye, pennyroyal and savin were clearly discussed and consumed.³¹

Abortifacients became increasingly available from the eighteenth century onwards, and by the nineteenth century, the Victorian press regularly advertised pills which would get rid of stubborn 'obstructions' (meaning unwanted foetuses) at prices from 7s 6d to 22s.³² In the main, these pills, pessaries and solutions were utterly useless for the purpose they had been advertised and were regularly mixed with dangerous and toxic substances such as iron.³³ Women also had increasing recourse to instruments which, when applied internally, would induce premature labour.

Instrumental abortion was performed either by the woman herself or by a protagonist with or without a medical background.³⁴ Self-abortion of this type was attempted through the use of knitting needles, crochet hooks or douching implements, but with limited anatomical knowledge and under non-sterilised conditions, this endeavour could be both tricky to achieve successfully and fraught with danger. Terminations induced by abortionists could be procured relatively cheaply in Britain before 1900. For instance during the 1860s, the *British Medical Journal* reported that midwives were charging from £3 to £4 for performing an abortion, sometimes less. Although this price amounted to about a third of the annual disposable income of a domestic servant at that time, it seems that women regularly found the money to pay for the procedure borrowing from family or friends or by persuading the man responsible to contribute an appropriate share.³⁵ The methods employed by abortionists could also be cruder still, such as beating the pregnant woman or administering an electric shock to stimulate premature labour.³⁶ More typically, however, abortionists used the same instruments and techniques as the women who attempted self-abortion, and likewise, the procedure could be a very dangerous one if performed by an untrained or unscrupulous individual.

Many women will no doubt have successfully managed to abort unwanted pregnancies in secret and with the minimum of fuss. From the evidence it seems that women chose to have abortions either because they did not want to face the shame of illegitimacy, as we have already surmised, or because they could not afford to have a child in their present circumstances. Crucially, however, and for the purposes of this chapter, whilst the context for the abortion may in some instances have been shameful to the women concerned, it appears that the act of abortion itself was not held to be opprobrious or problematic.³⁷ Abortion enabled women to have a degree of control over their fertility, and it was regarded as advantageous, as it could be conducted with or without the knowledge of a partner or spouse.³⁸ Terminations were regularly employed as a back-up to other contraceptive methods, which in the period before 1900 were often odious, unreliable or simply ineffective.³⁹ Women appear to have had few qualms about resorting to abortion. For them, it was a practical solution to a personal problem.

Wider social and authoritative attitudes towards abortion in the pre-modern period seem to have ranged from both tacit and overt acceptance, or regret that the provision was not more widely available, to vehement repugnance and objection.⁴⁰ During the second half of the nineteenth cen-

tury, however, attitudes to termination of pregnancy visibly hardened in Britain. From the 1850s onwards, contemporaries came to associate abortion with gross immorality and the malevolent by-product of illicit sexual relations. Increasingly, they made their opinions on the subject clear. In 1858, for instance, Lord Brougham (1778–1868) chastised unmarried women seeking abortion as they had added ‘the deliberate sin of murder to the former one of the passions’.⁴¹ Married women were not safe from criticism in this respect either. In 1897, Sylvanus Stall (1847–1915) castigated wives who sought to control their fertility through termination by saying that they were entering ‘the marriage relationship for the purpose of practically leading a life of legalized prostitution’.⁴² Others, peddling the strong moralistic line, referred to abortion at this time as ‘antenatal infanticide’, ‘murder’ and ‘the slaughter of the innocents’, and reported that ‘diabolical arts’ were involved in inducing a miscarriage.⁴³

One of the main reasons why contemporary opinion became so overtly anti-abortion in the latter decades of the nineteenth century was its response to reports—chiefly in the medical press—of a surge in the procedure across Europe and the Americas, representing an endemic desire to limit family size.⁴⁴ Whilst social pressures on women to restrict their fertility increased from the 1870s onwards as opportunities for female employment grew, effective contraception was simply unavailable to the majority of the population. Women, who maintained their right to restore their menses prior to the quickening, turned to mechanisms which would induce a miscarriage. If medical ‘therapeutic’ abortion was unobtainable or unsuccessful, then alternative means had to be found.

The significant growth of newspaper advertisements offering the services of quack doctors and abortifacient medicines, especially in the 1890s, suggests that there was a late nineteenth-century increase in abortive practices in Britain. This would itself suggest a heightened moral climate of shame surrounding unwanted pregnancy. Some contemporary commentators estimate that up to a quarter of all conceptions were terminated at this time, leading historians to call the period ‘the abortion age’ when the practice was at its zenith.⁴⁵ Widespread opinion was best summarised by Robert Reid Rentoul, a prominent figure in Victorian medical politics, when he recounted in 1889:

everyone must notice that, although the number of marriages is on the increase, the number of births to each couple is decreasing, and also that no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming ... Instead of the number of cases

of abortion undergoing a diminution an enormous increase is taking place and this is all the more strange since our knowledge of maternal, paternal and foetal causes of abortion being investigated is steadily growing large. It is not too much to suppose that for every arrest for this crime at least one thousand cases escape public notice.⁴⁶

In essence, the rhetoric of contemporary commentators like Lord Brougham, Stall, Rentoul and countless other Victorians who wrote to the press during this ‘moral panic’ in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, was that doctors should not become embroiled in the ‘shameful’ and illegal practice of abortion through personal choice, but only through absolute necessity.⁴⁷ As one writer warned his peers in 1890:

To give directions for the prevention of conception, or instructions in the guilty use of syringes, and other expedients to aid crime or to defeat nature, although not offences within reach of the law, are nevertheless most derogatory and degrading to the assenting practitioner, and a gross abuse of his professional knowledge.⁴⁸

Commentators in late Victorian Britain shamed women who underwent abortions as ‘immoral’ and labelled the doctors who performed the procedure as ‘unprofessional’. Some also based their anti-abortionist stance upon growing levels of maternal mortality after attempts to induce miscarriage.⁴⁹ In addition, some of the abortion rhetoric in the last decades of the nineteenth century sought to protect medical authority and to outlaw irregular, unqualified competition.⁵⁰

THE CONTEXT FOR ABORTION IN MODERN BRITAIN

By the dawn of the twentieth century, the anti-abortionist attitudes which had come to the fore particularly in England and Wales in the 1890s still prevailed, and termination of pregnancy was still an illegal and shameful procedure and a taboo subject.⁵¹ One of the main reasons for this was published evidence suggesting a marked decline in the birth rate after the First World War, which appeared to have been caused by growing recourse to termination of pregnancy.⁵² Yet medical experts also sought to enhance their professional control over female reproductive health, concentrating their attentions on the relationship between maternal mortality and abortion. After 1926, the statistics on maternal death attributed to abortion were disaggregated from the general data. This facilitated more detailed

calculations of maternal mortality, and it was estimated that between 13 and 14 % of these deaths between 1926 and 1937 were caused by complications related to termination of pregnancy.⁵³ Thus, in the 1930s, five maternal deaths in every 1000 births were attributed to or directly caused by a botched abortion, and doctors believed that this number could be significantly reduced if the proliferation of illegal abortionists was stopped.⁵⁴

Despite growing concerns over abortion rates and their links to maternal mortality, over time and certainly by the 1930s, the merits of abortion, as well as its failings, came to be more openly discussed in the public sphere. There was, for instance, a more explicit appreciation of mechanisms by which women's desire to limit their fertility could be achieved. More and more women sought employment during the inter-war period and thus needed to limit the size of their families and the scale of their responsibilities.⁵⁵ In an era where contraception was prohibitively expensive for many, and fundamentally unreliable, abortion became the most economical and effective means of family limitation.⁵⁶

In the 1930s, abortion became part of the debate about women's rights. Many feminists, such as Janet Chance (1886–1953), argued that women had the right to control their own bodies, and that choosing to terminate a pregnancy was an intrinsic right rather than a shameful practice.⁵⁷ As a result, and over time, sexual relations became increasingly distant from reproduction.⁵⁸ Abortion also became both a welfare and a class issue during the inter-war period. In an era of declining infant mortality, working-class women increasingly described their experiences of frequent pregnancies, regular miscarriages, poor housing and overcrowded living conditions, bad health, suppressed earning power and general, unrelenting poverty.⁵⁹ For them, the emotional and physical burden of an extra mouth to feed within a context of grinding impoverishment threatened the welfare of the household and the futures of the children they already had. Moreover, it was becoming increasingly plain to these women that their experience was distant from that of their middle-class contemporaries, who could discreetly pay for a 'therapeutic' abortion under private health care.⁶⁰ Consequently, feminists and working-class activists (particularly in the Labour Party) initiated campaigns to enhance women's rights and to bridge this class divide.⁶¹ Abortion became much more frequently discussed and debated in a wide range of popular, political and legal fora. Another result was the formation of the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA), which campaigned for the legalisation of surgical abortions and for an amnesty for those individuals already imprisoned for conducting illegal terminations.⁶²

The Infant Life Protection Act of 1929 attempted to remedy the loophole in English law that although a murder charge could result from killing anyone who had been born, and an indictment could ensue from killing a child still in the womb, it was no crime at all to kill a child during the process of parturition.⁶³ The legislation also enacted that an individual had to prove that an abortion had been necessary to save the life of the woman concerned. On paper, the Act's provisions seemed to sanction abortions after twenty-eight weeks, the gestational period beyond which a child was deemed capable of being born alive. However, it said nothing about terminations of pregnancy before twenty-eight weeks, nor did it apply in Scotland.⁶⁴

The absence of legal clarity surrounding abortion troubled the medical profession, who felt increasingly vulnerable when it came to performing terminations. Doctors could be prosecuted for performing apparently 'therapeutic' abortions before the twenty-eight-week limit, most typically if the procedure went wrong in some way. Dr Laura Sanders-Bliss and a nurse called Nancy Bickell, for instance, were indicted at the Central Criminal Court in London in 1936 for performing illegal operations on five women. Sanders-Bliss argued that the abortions were inevitable given the health status of the patients and that she had followed her professional duty in carrying out the procedures. In effect, she rejected any notion that her conduct was inappropriate, unethical or opprobrious and argued instead that it was in the best interests of her patient. The court disagreed, finding both women guilty and sentencing Bickell to twelve months' imprisonment and Sanders-Bliss to three years' penal servitude.⁶⁵

In 1938, just two years after the Sanders-Bliss trial, one medical man, Dr Aleck Bourne (1886–1974), an obstetrician and gynaecologist at St Mary's Hospital, London, decided to challenge the legal reproach dispensed to qualified practitioners who performed 'therapeutic' abortions. Bourne sought legislative clarity over this issue, but also, more importantly, he wanted to establish that decisions about termination of pregnancy should be within the domain of medical professionals alone and not enter the jurisdiction of the courtroom. A fourteen-year-old patient of Bourne's had become pregnant after being gang-raped by soldiers. Bourne carried out a therapeutic abortion on the girl, for no fee and with the consent of her parents, as he believed that the pregnancy would cause her serious injury. He then reported his actions to the authorities.⁶⁶

Bourne was prosecuted under section 58 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. However, in the summing-up of the case, the judge in

the trial, Mr Justice Macnaghten, effectively persuaded the jury to acquit the doctor, referring to the part of the Infant Life Protection Act of 1929 which permits abortion if it is done to save the mother's life. He also said that in his view, there was no essential difference between performing an abortion when there was danger to the mother's life and doing so when there was danger to her general health or well-being. In effect, therefore, he argued that although Bourne's actions had contravened the clear wording of a criminal statute, his actions were not illegal, nor were they shameful.⁶⁷ By his actions, Bourne had shown that society's presumption that doctors should be shamed for carrying out terminations was anachronistic and redundant in the modern era. Outdated socio-legal opinion forced doctors to agonise over their humanity, their professional conduct and what the limits of the law allowed instead of doing their best to care for their patients.

The acquittal verdict in this case seemingly opened the door for legalised therapeutic abortions in England after 1938, but in effect that did not happen for another thirty years. Aside from the devastating and long-lasting socio-economic and political impacts of the Second World War, there were two other reasons for this stasis. First of all there were clear regional variations in support for abortion, mirroring the varying personal and moral attitudes of medical practitioners. In Scotland, for instance, Sir Dugald Baird (1899–1986) bravely campaigned for women's 'freedom from the tyranny of excessive fertility' via effective contraception and abortion provision in his role as Regius Professor of Midwifery at the University of Aberdeen.⁶⁸ Conversely, Baird's counterpart, in Glasgow, Ian Donald (1910–87), dismissed Baird's 'doctrine of hideous atheistic expediency' and likened abortion to the holocaust.⁶⁹ According to Donald, even before the 1967 Abortion Act, one pregnancy in fifty was terminated in Aberdeen, compared with one in 3750 in Glasgow.⁷⁰ Similar discrepancies existed in England, where it was reported that terminations were relatively easy to come by in some regions but not in others, depending on the attitudes of local medical professionals.⁷¹ The dilemma faced by medical professionals over abortion during the inter-war period appeared as part of a debate between medical professionals in July 1932, reported in the *British Medical Journal*. One of the participants, Dame Louise McIlroy, argued that the medical aspect of termination was not as controversial as the moral one. She explained her comment by saying:

The lay public was demanding abortion, and women were asserting categorically that pregnancies belonged to them and they could do as they thought

fit. There was *no shame now* in the demand for abortion. The medical profession must decide where they stood on the matter. Her own attitude was that she reserved the right to induce abortion in any case where the welfare of the mother demanded it, but she could not help feeling that in bringing about abortion she was committing homicide.⁷²

Through McIlroy's comments, we can see a further example of the growing resolve amongst many medical professionals that the presumptive shame associated with abortion ought to be rendered redundant in a progressive, modernised society. However, the legacy of shaming discourse associated with pregnancy termination, which had been firmly established in earlier periods, was difficult to dismantle and reform and, as a result, was slow in coming.

The second key reason for a lack of progress regarding the legalisation of abortion relates to the findings of the Interdepartmental Committee on Abortion published in 1939. Known as the Birkett Committee, after its chair, Sir Norman Birkett (1883–1962), a barrister and one-time Liberal MP, the group heard evidence from a range of individuals such as the ALRA, the British Medical Association, the Joint Council of Midwifery and the National Council for Equal Citizenship in order to establish whether abortion should be legalised and on what grounds.⁷³

The Birkett Committee made it clear that 'the Committee is strongly opposed to any broad relaxation of the law designed to make social, economic, and personal reasons a justification for the operation'. Their view was based on the members' belief that legalising abortion would undermine 'religious and ethical teaching and ... [the] fundamental principles on which society is based'.⁷⁴ However, the shadow of shame still hung over these deliberations since they believed that abortion would encourage sexual freedoms and would promote 'a tendency for promiscuous sexual intercourse to be more common' in an era which had already witnessed 'a loosening of the bonds of sexual morality ... [and] a tendency for the gratification of sexual desires by unmarried persons'.⁷⁵

Despite the obvious set-back that the Birkett Committee's findings gave to campaign groups such as the ALRA and other supporters of abortion reform, the procedure was eventually legalised, albeit with qualifications, on 27 October 1967. There were various factors which contributed to the passing of this legislation. First of all, its proponents thought that society's own approach to abortion and its desire simply to ignore a hidden menace had been shameful and that the Act would combat the increasing rate of

illegal abortions being carried out every year: estimates by the 1960s put the number performed per annum in England at 100,000.⁷⁶ In turn, this impacted upon maternal mortality rates alongside the lack of (successful) prosecutions for the offence.⁷⁷ Of the 2204 instances of procuring an abortion known to the police at assizes and quarter sessions in England and Wales between 1930 and 1965, only 709 or 32 % went on to be prosecuted.⁷⁸

It might also be assumed that another key reason for the legislation on abortion being passed in the 1960s was the more liberal context of the debate at that time. The advent of the contraceptive pill meant that matters relating to sexuality and fertility control were more openly and more readily discussed within popular culture and the media. Arguably, this exposure played a key role in dismantling the presumptive shame formerly associated with these issues.⁷⁹ Whilst this development, and the growing feminist voice which underpinned it, aided the legislative reform process where previous attempts in the 1950s had failed, there were in reality two further issues that were more important in having the legislation ratified in 1967.⁸⁰ The first was the Thalidomide tragedy of the early 1960s. By 1964, 349 children had been born in Britain with serious deformities due to this drug. The threat of foetal deformity became a key issue in the abortion debate after this, and served to highlight that the choice of termination was not always as straightforward as some commentators had insisted. On the back of this, the reform campaign also urged that abortions should be permitted if the social or economic circumstances into which the child would be born would hinder its future development.⁸¹

The second important catalyst in having the legislation passed in 1967 involved the persistence of many medical professionals to retain authoritative control over the reproductive health of their female patients.⁸² Since the late 1930s, doctors and nurses across Britain had criticised the inconsistencies in the current law, refuting attempts to prosecute them when they had performed therapeutic terminations and arguing that shame no longer had a part to play in modern medicine. Although the medical profession did not oppose law reform relating to abortion, it was, however, 'firmly opposed to any reform which compromised clinical freedom either by taking the final decisions out of the hands of the medical attendant or specifying the indications for abortion too exactly'.⁸³ In effect, the professionals' worry was that legislation might enable a woman to effectively determine herself that she qualified for a termination and to demand one as her legal right. Consequently, although some medical professionals

refused to be explicitly involved in abortion law reform on moral and/or ethical grounds, several others were shaping the actual draft legislation itself, such as the aforementioned Sir Dugald Baird.⁸⁴

Essentially, and in practice, the 1967 legislative reform enabled the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act to remain in force, but it legalised medical termination of pregnancy under certain fairly strict conditions.⁸⁵ Certainly, the Act did not recognise a woman's right to abortion as many feminist campaigners would have wished, but it 'served to strengthen medical autonomy and left women reliant on the profession's goodwill'.⁸⁶ Thus the Act effectively transferred termination of pregnancy from the courtroom to the consulting room, where different standards, professional ethics and judgements prevailed.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1967 Abortion Act, the number of emergency admissions to hospitals on account of non-professional abortions decreased dramatically.⁸⁷ At the same time, and as we might have expected given the specific clause requiring compulsory registration, the number of recorded therapeutic abortions increased rapidly too.⁸⁸ In 1959, 1800 abortions were reported in England, Scotland and Wales. By 1969, the number was 58,375. Ten years later there was a significant increase to 157,530. Thereafter the growth in pregnancy terminations was slower, with figures of 194,183, 195,418 and 208,851 for 1989, 1999 and 2009 respectively.⁸⁹ Historical data on the rate of abortions per 1000 women of child-bearing age (aged fifteen to forty-four) also testifies to the increase in recorded terminations and reflects the fact that England and Wales were both keener and quicker to embrace the new legislation than Scotland. For instance, in 1969 the abortion rate in Scotland was 3.5 per 1000; it grew to 7.3 in 1979 and was 9.8 by 1989. In England and Wales, by the comparison, the abortion rate was 5.26 in 1969, 11.97 in 1979 and 15.49 by 1989.⁹⁰

These statistics show that the regional disparities associated with unsatisfactory and piecemeal abortion provision before 1967 still prevailed after that date, right across the British Isles. Inconsistent resource allocation played its part, but it was also due to the differing attitudes of medical professionals and their willingness to perform the procedure.⁹¹ The regional lottery of abortive provision, coupled with the marked increase in terminations more generally for social rather than medical reasons, along with a rise in the establishment of private abortion clinics particularly in England, began to cause significant concern.⁹² Then, in 1969, a case of abortion at a Glasgow hospital made the headlines and queries were raised as to how the 1967 Abortion Law was working in practice.

On 20 January 1969, after receiving consent from two doctors and a consultant, a student underwent a termination at Stobhill Hospital. Her pregnancy was at twenty-six weeks' gestation, and the abortion was carried out for social and medical reasons. When the incinerator attendant came to dispose of the body, he heard a cry emanating from the bag the body had been placed in. The baby was rushed back to theatre and efforts were then made by the consultant to save the child's life, but it died about eight or nine hours after the original termination procedure. A post-mortem revealed that 'the child was normally developed, was premature to the extent of more than four weeks, but had passed the twenty-eighth week of intrauterine life and was therefore capable of an independent existence'. Indeed, the pathologist concerned, Professor Gilbert Forbes, believed that the child was in fact thirty-two weeks old at the time of the abortion. The cause of death of the infant was deemed to be threefold. It died from its prematurity, the absence of resuscitation attempts at its birth and subsequent exposure to the cold.⁹³

The Stobhill case not only highlighted the potential for doctors (and indeed lawyers) in being placed 'in the no-man's-land between the law of the Abortion Act and the law that says there is a right to life', but perhaps more importantly, it revealed a serious legal loophole in the provisions of the 1967 Abortion Act. The Act made no reference to the gestation period at which an abortion could be legally carried out: an arguably shameful omission. Instead, it implied that the twenty-eight-week viability clause from the 1929 Infant Life Protection Act still applied. However, as we have noted, the 1929 Act did not apply in Scotland, and so technically there was no gestational upper limit for abortion north of the Tweed. The judge and the jury of the fatal accident inquiry held into the Stobhill abortion case recognised this legislative failing and called upon the government to reform the law.⁹⁴

In 1970, the government announced that it was to establish a committee, to be chaired by Justice Elizabeth Lane (1905–88), to evaluate how the Abortion Act was working. Amongst a range of other issues, it was asked to consider the growing role of the private sector in abortion provision, the appropriateness of 'social' indicators in the legitimisation of terminations, the pressure that abortions put on gynaecological services across the country and the increased prevalence of foreign women seeking abortions in Britain.⁹⁵ Because of the concerns over the rapid increase in abortions, questions over the medical procedure itself, regional variations in provision and rules over gestational viability, it was expected that the

1967 law would be repealed and replaced with a more conservative piece of legislation. However, somewhat surprisingly, this did not happen.

Instead, and arguably cutting through the web of presumptive shame so long associated with pregnancy terminations, the Lane Committee reported that the Abortion Act was both necessary and humane, and that its advantages more than outweighed the negatives associated with its enactment. Moreover, the committee strongly believed that the best mechanism to avoid irregularities in the application of the law was more rigorous, consistent enforcement across Britain. Finally, it recommended greater family planning education amongst the young as the most effective way of lessening the need for abortion in the first instance.⁹⁶

The Lane Committee's failure to sanction conservative legal reform of the 1967 Abortion Act did not quieten Britain's anti-abortionists. Although the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) had been formed too late in 1967 to influence the Abortion Act, it increasingly galvanised support, particularly from religious groups, in the aftermath of the Lane Committee report.⁹⁷ As a result, and as we will see, popular and political opinion became divided between those individuals who wanted to outlaw abortion amidst re-emphasising their view of the practice as shameful ('pro-life'), those content with the current legal provision, and those arguing for a more radical rights-based approach allowing abortion on demand ('pro-choice').

Repeated attempts to repeal the legislation on various grounds were made in 1969, 1970, 1973–4, 1975, 1977, 1978 and 1979 but they all failed, largely because of a reluctance to engage with the issue's complexities and limitations on parliamentary time.⁹⁸ The last significant modernisation of the legal context for abortion in modern Britain came in 1990, when the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act set the upper limit for termination of pregnancy across Britain at twenty-four weeks.⁹⁹ This legislative amendment finally eradicated the potential for regional discrepancies regarding foetus viability, which had hitherto been unresolved for over a century.

THE EXPERIENCE OF ABORTION IN MODERN BRITAIN

Fig. 5.1 shows the national incidence of reported legal and illegal abortions between 1930 and 2010.¹⁰⁰ Fig. 5.2 breaks the data up to show the Scottish experience compared with that of England and Wales over a shorter period of fifty-three years. The general trend in recorded abortion

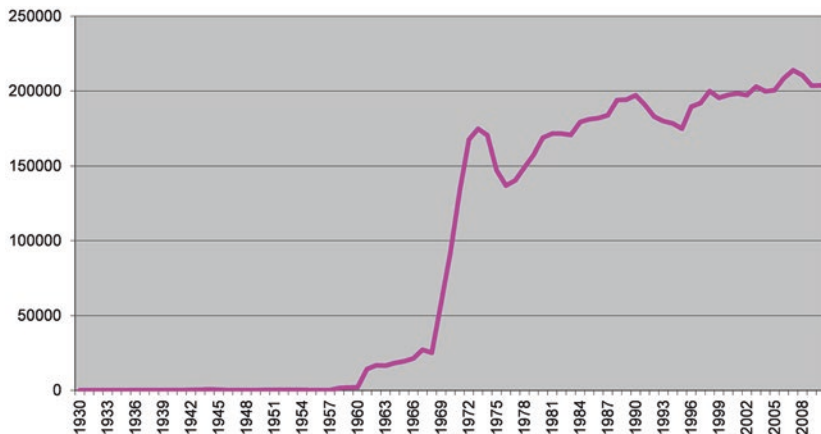


Fig. 5.1 Reported abortions in the UK, 1930–2010

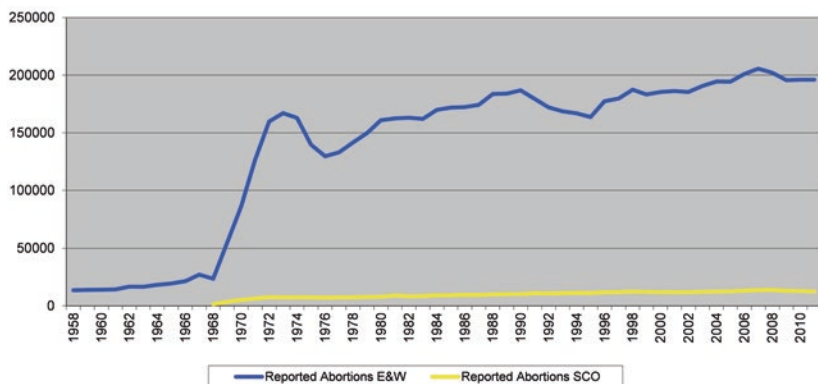


Fig. 5.2 Reported abortions in Scotland, England and Wales, 1958–2011

incidence over time in Britain is clearly upward, especially—as we would expect—after 1967, when the procedure was effectively legalised and when registration became compulsory.

There are two notable dips in this general increase. The first of these comes after 1975, when there was a general decline in the birth rate owing to the introduction of free contraception on the National Health Service (NHS) in 1974. This caused a demographic downturn, particularly

relating to births amongst women under the age of thirty-five.¹⁰¹ The second dip occurred in the early 1990s, when medical professionals began to voice concerns regarding the association between prolonged ingestion of the contraceptive pill and a relatively high risk of thrombosis.¹⁰² Despite these two downturns, the graphs show continued growth in recourse to abortion over time and evidence the decay of presumptive shame associated with pregnancy termination in Britain.

Fig. 5.3 shows the abortion rate, or the number of abortions per 1000 women of childbearing age, in Britain between 1968 and 1989. Although as we have already suggested, Scottish abortion statistics do not make a significant contribution to the national trends as the number of reported terminations has remained relatively low, the data in this graph mirror the general upturn in recourse to termination of pregnancy across the nation as a whole.

Why were women increasingly prepared to resort to abortion in Britain after 1900? In the main, their reasons for doing so echoed those recorded in the pre-modern period. Studies of women's experience of abortion have revealed some motivational factors specific to married women, some specific to single women and some common to all. The typical reason given by married women for terminating pregnancy during the twentieth century related to their belief that their family was complete and further children would jeopardise the quality of the life experience of their existing offspring.¹⁰³

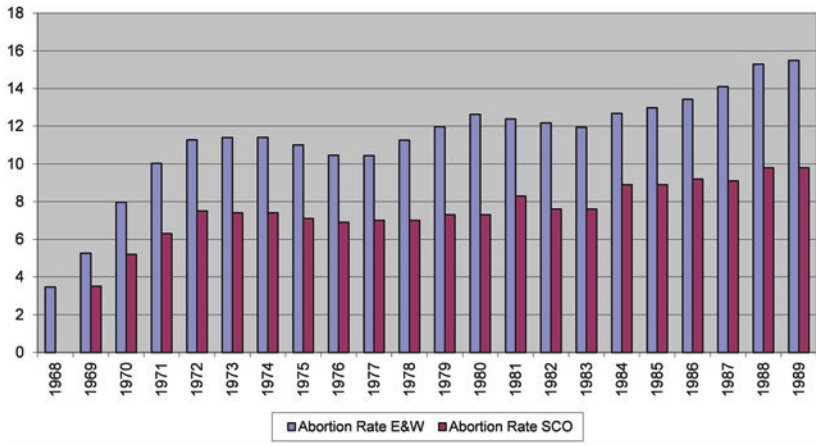


Fig. 5.3 Abortion rate in Britain, 1968–89

In the first half of the twentieth century, many married women's terminations reflected health concerns—sometimes related to their spouse, but more commonly about the physical and emotional demands of incessant child-bearing.¹⁰⁴ As one woman reported in 1914: 'I'd rather swallow the druggist shop and the man in't than have another kid.'¹⁰⁵ Married British women also commonly cited other causal factors such as marital difficulties, financial woes, concerns that they were too old to bear more children and anxieties about the physical health of the foetus they were carrying.¹⁰⁶ Some married women had abortions because they were pregnant as a result of an extra-marital affair. The evidence suggests, however, that these women underwent the procedure because they were concerned about their husbands discovering their infidelity, rather than because of scruples about having an illegitimate child.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that misgivings about abortion often had to vie with other emotional pressures.

Evidence relating to single women choosing abortion in twentieth-century Britain reveals a notable change from the pre-1900 era. Avoiding the shame of illegitimacy became less of an influence upon unmarried women's terminations in the modern era, especially after the 1960s, when the social stigma of bastardy declined alongside an increase in illegitimacy rates across Britain.¹⁰⁸ Instead, single women explained their reasons for having an abortion through their particular personal circumstances and the uncertain futures they faced. Either they considered themselves too young to have a baby, or their partner was married or had deserted them, or they were impoverished or unemployed, or, more commonly, they were now paying the price for casual intercourse and were not in a relationship strong enough or mature enough to cope with a new-born child.¹⁰⁹

Other rationales for abortion in twentieth-century Britain were given by both single and married women. The first related variously to the unavailability, unreliability and unaffordability of contraception for most of the population. This factor necessitated termination as a contingency when contraceptives failed, and it also persuaded some women to consider abortion as their solitary method of family limitation.¹¹⁰ The other increasingly common factor for resorting to abortion was women's growing desire for autonomy over their own sexual health and reproductive experiences. Women wanted control over their own bodies and to choose when, or indeed whether, they gave birth. They increasingly voiced a belief that it was their right alone to determine the nature of their experiences of sex, reproduction and maternity.¹¹¹ One woman who wrote to

the ALRA in the 1960s summed up this burgeoning feminist sentiment by recounting:

I went to the hospital to terminate my pregnancy. I was only a few weeks and I had to wait to see one doctor and then another, and so on until I got into such a state. I thought it would be done, but they said 'No'. I begged them as this is my tenth child. My husband has a bad heart and is off work a lot. My children's ages run from 16 years to my youngest who is 13 months and it's just too much for me. I go mad sometimes with worry, also I get so upset I sit and cry for hours. If I could have had £15 I could have got it done from a woman, but who would have that amount of money with all my children. I can tell you sometimes I wish I had the nerve to end it all, that is how I get, so I think if a woman wants it done she is entitled to it.¹¹²

Although for many British women in the twentieth century, termination of pregnancy must have seemed a relatively straightforward procedure,¹¹³ to historians at least, the methodologies of abortion between 1900 and the regulation of the practice in 1967 remained just as crude and as reckless as they had been during the pre-modern era. Consequently, for much of the twentieth century, abortion was regarded as a dangerous and scarcely reliable or routinely successful procedure, whether self-conducted or instigated by another.¹¹⁴ Abortifacients were still employed well into the modern era, especially in the initial stages of pregnancy. Most commonly used were pills of dubious origin, sold for around 7s 6d per packet, which could contain dangerous or toxic substances such as lead, absinthe oil, gunpowder or rat poison. More traditional and commercial remedies and laxatives that were available, such as Epsom Salts or Beecham's Pills, vied with age-old methods of excessive alcohol consumption and rigorous physical exercise to attempt foetal termination.¹¹⁵

Although abortifacients retained their popularity, it is noticeable that the methodologies of abortion during the twentieth century became increasingly invasive, or at least that more examples of these came to light at that time. The use of douching via syringes filled with iodine, carbolic soap, vinegar, turpentine and disinfectants such as Lysol were regularly reported by a range of women, with an unpredictable success rate.¹¹⁶ Apparently more effective, but also more dangerous, were attempts at dilation and curettage, where instruments or foreign bodies were inserted into the uterus to scrape and pull away any unwanted tissue therein.¹¹⁷ Examples used by British women in the twentieth century for

this particular procedure included leeches to invade the womb, 'slippery elm' tree bark (which dilated the uterus as it absorbed moisture), crochet hooks, wax tapers, umbrella pins, wire coat hangers, meat skewers, pen holders, knitting needles, goose quills, curtain rods and even a hairpin attached to a battery.¹¹⁸

Obviously if used without due care and medical knowledge, invasive procedures could be exceedingly dangerous, as was the case in October 1966 when, after a botched criminal abortion, a woman presented to hospital surgeons with a significant amount of her small bowel (at least 360 cm) protruding from her vagina.¹¹⁹ Moreover, if the abortion occurred under insanitary conditions, or if the curettage did not fully expel the foetal tissue, the procedure might have to be repeated several times over, and sepsis or infection could result and might well prove fatal unless swift medical intervention was sought.¹²⁰ Of course, prior to 1967, confessing to an illegal abortion attempt was not an easy thing to do, even if medical attention was required, and social commentators often recounted unnecessary deaths from septic abortions, as we have already seen.¹²¹

The prevalence of illegal 'back-street' abortionists was obvious from the extensive advertisements for their services appearing in newspapers despite repeated attempts at censorship and regulation via legislative reform.¹²² Moreover, according to Lesley Hall, during the Second World War the number of criminal abortions known to the police quadrupled, yet this recorded figure probably captured only a fraction of the actual extent of the practice.¹²³ One study of forty randomly chosen herbal, chemists' and other shops located in Birmingham and London in 1965 by Dr Martin Cole, of Aston University, discovered that no fewer than thirty-one of these premises sold preparations designed or claiming to facilitate abortion.¹²⁴ Even in the immediate run-up to the legislative change of 1967 then, termination of pregnancy was seemingly a booming business.

Although social commentators decried the prevalence of these services, describing them as 'pernicious traffic',¹²⁵ many others tolerated illegal abortionists, and the women in need of their help certainly saw them in a different light.¹²⁶ For instance, the trial of the abortionist Mrs Florence Lee at Gloucestershire Assizes in 1936 led her to admit to facilitating abortions on a range of women, but she was arrested after two of her 'patients' had died in her care. Lee was convicted and sentenced to five years' penal servitude, but whilst she was being taken away from the assizes to begin

her sentence, a large demonstration orchestrated by a crowd of women cheered when she came outside. As one newspaper reported:

A sobbing woman ... insisted on kissing her [Mrs Lee] before she was helped into the motor which was waiting. Another woman pushed her way towards Mrs Lee saying 'Let me kiss her; I must kiss her.' From the car Mrs Lee waved kisses to her friends and as the car left the precinct of the Shire Hall the cheering was renewed. This was changed to 'booing' when witnesses in the case were seen at the windows of the building, and shouts such as 'Come out of it!' and 'Come down, you dogs!' were heard.¹²⁷

Clearly, public opinion did not consider all abortionists to be shameful charlatans intent on exploiting desperate women. Many individuals were sincere in their sympathy and genuinely wanted to help women out of their situations. Some abortionists did not charge for their services, some deliberately made the cost affordable for the woman concerned, and some even took payment in kind.¹²⁸

The Abortion Act of 1967 effectively outlawed and eradicated recourse to such abortionists as the procedure became legally available under proper medical supervision. As pregnancy testing became more widely available and more reliable in Britain from the 1970s onwards, an increasing proportion of abortions occurred earlier in the gestation period. Consequently, by the year 2000, 28 % of abortions in England and Wales were conducted within the first twelve weeks of pregnancy.¹²⁹ Unwittingly the Act may have altered the culture of shame that had previously clung to abortion: whereas before its enactment women were likely to postpone this dreaded event until it seemed absolutely necessary, the Act, by seeking to locate legalised abortion within an early time limit, now actively encouraged women to avail themselves of the procedure before evidence of pregnancy attracted attention. Furthermore, abortion became a much safer and less invasive procedure with the advent of vacuum aspiration alongside effective drug treatments such as mifepristone.¹³⁰ These medical and scientific breakthroughs in the modern era, along with blood transfusions and antibiotic medicines after the Second World War, must, at least in part, go some way to explain the increased (and now visible) recourse to pregnancy termination in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century.¹³¹ In addition, the arrival of holistic approaches to patient welfare has resulted in better pre-procedure and anti-procedure care, alongside the advice now regularly offered to women by medical professionals.¹³²

Evidence relating to how British women in the twentieth century felt about abortion is no less hard to come by than it was in the pre-modern period. Much depended on their own personal and religious beliefs and, to a larger extent, on the circumstances of the individual choosing to abort and whether the termination was self-induced or had been carried out through interventionist means.¹³³ Prior to legislation, women's reluctance to talk about direct experiences of termination was inspired by fear of self-incrimination, and indeed much discussion of abortion occurred in the third person.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, direct evidence of abortion experience can be found for the modern British context.

Many women who felt shame about their termination should have this shame understood in the context of an undesired pregnancy, rather than regarded as evidence of opprobrium tied to the abortive act itself. As Jean Morton Williams and Keith Hindell explain,

A woman with an unwanted pregnancy was necessarily apologetic and anxious. She always had reason to be anxious about whether or not she would secure the abortion and she may or may not have been anxious about the abortion itself. The law, the traditional hostility of the medical profession and the general mores of the time all combined to influence the woman in her attitude.¹³⁵

Moreover, displays of anxiousness do not necessarily equate with explicit demonstrations of shame and may have been more associated with fear over the actual termination procedure.¹³⁶

Indeed, the evidence suggests that although some twentieth-century British women felt sadness or grief after having an abortion, in the main they did *not* feel shame or remorse at what they had done. Even by the 1960s, women still maintained their enduring belief that if the abortion was conducted before the quickening, then it was neither a criminal nor a sinful act.¹³⁷ For these women, their actions in seeking abortion were merely efforts to restore their menses, and there was nothing inherently immoral or shameful about them. For many, then, abortion was undertaken without any qualms whatsoever and provided a practical solution to a personal problem.¹³⁸

Interviews conducted with abortion patients in modern Britain showed that women commonly felt some guilt or depression in the immediate aftermath of the procedure, but that these feelings and emotions quickly subsided.¹³⁹ Certainly, serious psychiatric sequelae were rarely reported.¹⁴⁰

More often, the women concerned felt relief after a termination, typically believing that the procedure was essential to their future health and wellbeing.¹⁴¹ This perspective is summed up in the views of one Scottish patient in the 1960s, who commented:

It was less to me than having a tooth out. I think maybe if it had been four or five months on and I'd felt movements it would have been different and I'd really have thought twice, but to me it was just a – nothingness. I've never regretted it, no.¹⁴²

Likewise, Aberdonian single and married women who had had abortions on the NHS between September of 1968 and June of 1969 predominantly felt they had done the right thing in going through with their termination.¹⁴³ In a wider study of pregnant women from the same geographical location, only 8.7 % of those who went on to have an abortion remained severely upset about their decision, compared with 19.4 % of those who decided not to abort.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, and more generally, many women were so unaffected by and wholly accepting of terminations that they sought them on more than one occasion.¹⁴⁵

REACTIONS TO ABORTION IN MODERN BRITAIN

Despite the distinct lack of evidence of shame or guilt being voiced by modern British women, there was nonetheless a growing degree of anti-abortion sentiment perceptible across twentieth-century Britain which emanated from a variety of quarters and in a variety of different ways. On 1 February 2007, the talented artist Emma Beck was found hanging at her home in Helston, Cornwall. She had committed suicide the day before her thirty-first birthday after becoming overcome with grief in the aftermath of aborting twins at eight weeks' gestation.¹⁴⁶ Evidence from the inquest revealed that Emma had been pleased to discover she was pregnant in the autumn of 2006, but that her boyfriend 'reacted badly', indicating he did not want to have any children. After a series of rows, they spilt up. Emma, who had a documented history of anxiety and depression, decided that in the absence of support from a partner, she ought to have an abortion. Emma visited her general practitioner, who recorded in her medical notes that she regarded her patient as 'extremely vulnerable'.¹⁴⁷ Emma missed two appointments at a clinic at the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Treliske but later turned up there unannounced, only to find that the counsellor

she needed to speak to was on holiday. Following standard procedure, a doctor at the hospital encouraged Emma to contact a pregnancy counsellor. Eight days later, the same doctor performed the termination. Staff at the clinic were wholly satisfied that Emma had consented to the surgery.

In the aftermath of the procedure, Emma Beck was distraught, and in January 2007, she committed suicide after watching a television programme which featured fetuses. As her general practitioner recounted at the inquest, ‘Emma was extremely distressed by the abortion procedure, and I didn’t think she ever came to terms with it.’¹⁴⁸ Emma refused to see the counsellor offered to her after the termination, and her mother believed that her daughter took her own life because ‘she could not live with what she had done’. In her suicide note, Emma explained:

Living is a hell for me. I should never have had an abortion. I see now I would have been a good mum. I told everyone I didn’t want to do it, even at the hospital. I was frightened, now it is too late. I died when my babies died. I want to be with my babies – they need me, no-one else does.¹⁴⁹

Recording a verdict of suicide, the Cornwall coroner, Dr Emma Carlyon, said, ‘It is clear that termination of pregnancy can have a profound effect on a woman’s life.’¹⁵⁰ Although there was some suggestion of negligence on the part of several of the medical professionals involved, the coroner was ‘reassured’ that Emma Beck had received and been offered all the care and attention that her circumstances required.

We have already seen in this chapter that the overwhelming majority of women who chose to terminate their pregnancies in modern Britain were neither ashamed nor remorseful, nor did they feel guilty about the decision they had made, and thus the Emma Beck case, with its tragic conclusion, is somewhat unusual. Yet its significance lies in how certain individuals reacted to the story of Emma’s plight. Rather than evoking empathy, her case was used to reignite the vigorous debate on abortion in twentieth-century Britain and to give voice to certain extremes of opinion on the subject. Typically, these were articulated from an anti-abortion or ‘pro-life’ standpoint. Ignoring much of the detail and context of Emma Beck’s situation, anti-abortionists used her case to make the somewhat outlandish and unsubstantiated claim that abortion resulted in intense feelings of shame which caused suicide and that termination of pregnancy could be linked to modern psychiatric diagnoses such as post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁵¹ These campaigners suggested that Emma’s tragic suicide

was a natural outcome of abortion due to the horrendous physical and emotional trauma of the experience, which would probably be unrelenting and long-lasting. As one such commentator described:

It should be obvious to one and all that not only does a mother who aborts her children suffer greatly and in many ways, but that she too often realises after the fact that rather than being the mother of a living child, she has by her own decision become the mother of a dead child. This reality is what brought Emma Beck to her end.¹⁵²

Although medical professionals and scientific researchers dismissed any direct link between abortion, shame and suicide, save for a few isolated cases of extreme historic mental instability,¹⁵³ anti-abortionists cited the Emma Beck case as a warning to other women considering termination of pregnancy. Arguably, by describing Emma's circumstances in this way, anti-abortionists used her story in the same exemplary and didactic manner as the authorities used the published confessions of convicted criminals on their way to the gallows in the eighteenth century. For 'pro-life' supporters, Emma's case not only could be used to deter others, but also justified their campaign against the procedure. Through this moral crusade they believed that not only would the lives of countless foetuses be saved, but the lives of many mothers too. Perhaps because there were so few instances of women publicly expressing remorse or shame about terminating their pregnancies, anti-abortionists jumped on personal tragedies such as the Emma Beck case for their own ends. Increasingly over the course of the modern era as we will see, British anti-abortion campaigners have felt the need to fill this glaring void of opprobrious sentiment from women who have chosen abortions by selectively affixing shame to the procedure from a distance and through a variety of different means.

With Emma Beck's case, the kind of calculated attitude evident from anti-abortionists' reaction to this story appears especially remarkable when we consider it alongside considerably different reactions to instances of infant murder in modern Britain. Ten years earlier, in December 1996, for instance, twenty-one-year-old Emma Gifford pleaded guilty to a charge of infanticide relating to her new-born son. This was her second child, the first having been given up for adoption some fourteen months before. Gifford had killed her baby son and then kept the child's remains in her freezer for a few days until they were subsequently discovered by her brother.¹⁵⁴ She offered no explanation for her crime. In sentencing her to

three years' probation, the Recorder of London, Sir Lawrence Varney, was moved to say:

In a situation such as this the law does not wish to punish. The law wishes to help because help is required. The circumstances of this birth could not have been more lonely for you and what occurred immediately afterwards, although it must of course cause you great remorse and does I am sure, is not something which should be allowed to cloud your life for the whole of your future.¹⁵⁵

As well as a more explicit degree of sympathy being evident in relation to this case than in the later Emma Beck episode, the other stark contrast lies in the attempts made to better understand and support infanticidal women. Family support groups, medical and legal professionals, judicial authorities and other officials, as well as the press and the general public, were all united in their empathy for Emma Gifford and women like her who had found themselves in this 'tragic predicament'. These were reactions devoid of shameful sentiment or content. Media commentators were also uncritical, and instead they offered suggestions as to how these women might be cared for and nurtured in the aftermath of their crimes, suggesting that better support mechanisms and educative provision could prevent similar episodes from occurring in the future.¹⁵⁶

It might be reasonable to assume that the wide availability of contraception by the mid-twentieth century would make abortion even more of a shameful act than had been the case before that era, as by that point in time there seemed little or no excuse for an unwanted pregnancy. Instead, by then such a predicament suggested recklessness, irresponsibility and promiscuity. Indeed, many of the cultural references after the 1950s portrayed abortion as a tragic consequence of precisely that context. This is evident in works such as Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (first performed in 1958), Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* (1963), the film *Alfie* starring Sir Michael Caine (1966) and a poem by Spike Milligan entitled 'Unto Us' (1972).¹⁵⁷ However, such portrayals were one-sided and simplistic, as the abortion debate from the late 1950s onwards became infused with feminist arguments over women's rights to make choices about both sexuality and fertility. Consequently, even though it might appear that the pro-abortion or 'pro-choice' movement was largely redundant in Britain after 1967, it nonetheless retained a fairly high profile through its campaigns against the numerous attempts to repeal legalised abortion and its more radical efforts to establish the principle of abortion on demand.¹⁵⁸

Although support for abortion was clearly evident across Britain during the second half of the twentieth century, what was far more striking, was the contemporary rise of the anti-abortion or 'pro-life' movement. This was evident in the formation of socio-political and socio-religious groups such as the SPUC (formed, as we have seen, in 1967) and LIFE (formed in 1970). The rise of the anti-abortionist movement after the mid-century established the clear lines of debate on this issue, and it should be noted that in the main, the key instigators of these more modern campaigns and the chief proponents of both sides of the debate since the 1950s have been men rather than women.¹⁵⁹

Pro-abortionists argue that a non-viable foetus is not a human life; that legalising abortion removes the need for women to undergo dangerous back-street abortions with a consequential improvement in maternal mortality; that legalising abortion reduces the number of illegitimate births; that it ensures that only 'wanted' children are born which improves infant care in the longer term; and that as long as some countries permit abortions whilst others outlaw them, this discriminates against the poor, as it is far easier for wealthy women than poor women to travel for a termination. Finally, they also argue that in a modern, pluralistic society, opposition to abortion on moral or religious grounds imposes such views on others who do not share them. Abortion, in their view, becomes solely an individual woman's choice and is a choice which should be free from antiquated presumptions which associate the procedure with opprobrium and shame.¹⁶⁰

Anti-abortionists, however, dispute the suggestion that legalising the practice reduces the number of women attending unqualified practitioners, instead arguing that the maternal mortality rate is little affected by legalised termination. They also argue that the abortive procedure produces long-lasting negative physical and psychological effects on women, and that by sanctioning abortion, society lessens respect for human life, creating a slide towards moral anarchy where widespread deviancy, abuse, promiscuity and unlicensed euthanasia will follow. Most importantly of all, however, anti-abortionists argue that a foetus is a human life from the very moment of conception and that as a result, abortion can only *ever* be regarded as a shameful act of unlawful killing or murder.¹⁶¹

Anti-abortionists and 'pro-life' campaigners in Britain regularly voice the key tenets of their side of the debate in the strongest terms. Typically, and repeatedly over time, they inspire moral panics in the media by producing sensational statistical information on the rates of abortive procedures, referring to Britain as 'the abortion capital of the world' and the

prevalence of abortion as a 'holocaust'. In essence, their aim is to revitalise the now largely dispelled notion that termination of pregnancy is a shameful act.¹⁶² More formally, they have pressurised governments, medical professionals and local authorities to repeal the 1967 Abortion Act or to at least cut the regional and national funding supporting abortive procedures. In 1990, for instance, when the aforementioned legislation change to reduce the term of pregnancy within which abortion was legal was being debated in Parliament, members of SPUC sent each MP a plastic replica of a twenty-week-old foetus in an attempt to sway opinion.¹⁶³

Sometimes anti-abortionist groups have instigated more 'positive' campaigns advocating better social provision for poor mothers and improved sex education for young girls. Organisations such as SPUC and LIFE have also offered what they deemed to be impartial advice to women considering abortion and have provided them with limited, short-term financial support if they chose to keep the child.¹⁶⁴ In more recent years, the anti-abortionist campaign has promoted the rights of fathers in the decision to terminate a pregnancy and has promulgated the right to life of the unborn child itself.¹⁶⁵ In 1987, for instance, a twenty-three-year-old Oxford student, active in the university's anti-abortion society and given support from SPUC, sought a court injunction against his twenty-one-year-old former girlfriend, who was pregnant with his child. The father of the child was not only attempting to restrain his ex-girlfriend from having an abortion, but also attempting to prevent the local health authority from carrying out the procedure. He argued that, under the 1929 Infant Life Protection Act, it was a criminal offence to kill a foetus capable of being born alive and that as his ex-girlfriend was now eighteen weeks pregnant, the child inside her was capable of life. His motion was denied, however, and in providing an explanation for her decision, the judge in the case, Mrs Justice Heilbron, noted that 'psychological, moral and profound religious objections aroused profound feelings, but that these matters were not her concern because the court's job was to interpret the law only'. She ruled 'that on the basis of expert medical evidence she had heard, the aborting of an 18-week-old foetus would not amount to the killing of a child which had been capable of being born'. Moreover, she explained that 'the foetus had no legal standing to mount a court action through a third party, in this case its putative father, to save it from abortion'. Although the father's case failed, anti-abortion groups were slightly heartened by the amount of publicity the case had received and the opportunity it had provided them to further their grievances in Britain and beyond.¹⁶⁶

Aside from these tactics, what has been most evident about the campaigns of anti-abortion organisations over the modern era has been their creeping militancy and radicalism, and the part that shame has played in attempts to put the 'pro-life' message across to the populace at large. As we know, women who undertake abortions rarely express their feelings and emotions about the procedure publicly. When they have done this, it is usually without remorse, and the few studies of post-operative reactions that exist tend to reflect relief at the procedure being over, or portray the termination as a sensible, practical and justifiable action from the woman's perspective. Anti-abortion organisations have tried to use the relative absence of direct patient opinion on abortion to their advantage. They attempt to fill this void of information with what they see as the most appropriate reaction to termination of pregnancy: shame. In other words, the 'pro-life' movement has increasingly applied shame to the abortive procedure as the women directly involved do not provide it themselves.

This kind of campaign has existed for longer in North America, where especially since the 1970s, protest groups in the USA and Canada have argued for the rights of the unborn child using far more aggressive tactics and direct action. According to the National Abortion Federation, property crimes committed against abortion providers in the USA and Canada since 1977 have included 41 bombings, 173 arsons, 91 attempted bombings or arsons, 619 bomb threats, 1630 incidents of trespassing, 1264 incidents of vandalism and 100 attacks using butyric acid. In the USA alone since 1993, moreover, direct violence towards abortion providers has killed at least eight people, including four doctors, two clinic employees, a security guard and a clinic escort paid to shield patients from protesters when entering an abortion clinic.¹⁶⁷ The situation in North America has become so fraught in fact that scholars, politicians and journalists alike refer to the ongoing 'abortion wars' in their midst.¹⁶⁸

This kind of hostile or more direct form of anti-abortion protest did emigrate to British shores, but the levels of aggression experienced in North America have not crossed the Atlantic as yet, despite attempts by key American anti-abortion campaigners to deploy more militant forms of protest in Britain.¹⁶⁹ On the whole, modern 'pro-life' campaigns in Britain have preferred the adoption of shaming tactics over violent ones. British anti-abortion campaigns since the 1980s have resembled the early North American crusades in that they have picketed selected hospitals and private clinics offering abortion services. They have attempted to dissuade medical professionals from working in such institutions and to dissuade patients

from going through with a termination. Such early anti-abortion protests in Britain were relatively peaceful and unobtrusive and simply involved displaying placards saying 'Choose Life' or 'Women Regret Abortion' while distributing anti-abortion literature. There were, however, growing instances of a more direct approach being adopted, especially in England, which, whilst not as severe or violent as North American protests, was nonetheless terrifying and opprobrious for the 'victims' concerned.¹⁷⁰

One typical incident of this direct action was recounted by an abortion patient in a *Guardian* newspaper story in 1993. In this, a thirty-one-year-old woman arrived with her husband at the Marie Stopes Fairfield Clinic in Essex to have a termination.¹⁷¹ The woman was eight weeks pregnant, and the couple had decided after counselling to have an abortion, as they already had one nine-year-old child and could not afford to have another. Upon leaving the car park and walking to the clinic, the woman described how she and her husband were:

surrounded by anti-abortion protesters who began shouting at her, urging her not to go ahead. Some carried photos of aborted fetuses and pictures of Jesus and a woman protester tried to hand her a photo of an eight-week foetus. They were shouting 'Think of the baby, look at what you are doing to yourself! How can you kill another human being?'

The woman had to push through the protesters and with the help of clinic staff managed to get inside, where she promptly burst into tears. She explained:

I couldn't believe the way they just descended on me. They swarmed around me and I was very frightened. Having an abortion is not an easy decision and I was already feeling emotionally unstable. These people took advantage of that. I was shaking and crying and had to go and sit in a room to calm myself down.

She went on to have the procedure in any case and then told the newspaper:

I am telling my story because I want these anti-abortionists to know the effect their demonstrations have. It was very distressing and occurred at a time when I have enough to worry about. Having an abortion is not easy. I feel angry and it will take me a long time to get over what happened. They are not going to achieve anything like this. Women think very carefully about having abortions and these people are not going to change anybody's

mind. I think they are all sick and very intimidating. I believe that everyone has the right to hold an opinion but these people hounded me. I felt like a criminal and am still very disturbed by what happened.

This kind of direct action has been maintained through to the twenty-first century in Britain, with similar forms of protest still occurring outside abortion clinics and hospitals. Nowadays, not only are medical professionals and practitioners verbally targeted and visually intimidated when entering these centres, but they are filmed when doing so too, in order to stimulate further potential shaming action. Such activity has been financed and encouraged by the formation of more radical anti-abortion groups in Britain such as Abort67 and 40 Days For Life. The protesters claim that they film medical professionals and patients for their own security and to show that they are not acting illegally, rather than for more sinister reasons. They challenge those individuals who feel unnerved or distressed by their tactics and who deem them to be ‘enemies of reason and freedom’ or nothing more than ‘playground bullies’.¹⁷² As one spokesman for Abort67 put it, ‘If people feel uncomfortable then it is because they feel uncomfortable with the truth.’¹⁷³

These organisations have also recently begun to hold demonstrations at university campuses to educate young people in particular about what they believe to be the evils of abortion. One campaign held at the University of Sussex in 2012 outraged the largely ‘pro-choice’ student body, who took to social media and the press to express their ‘distress’ and ‘concern’ over the graphic and disturbing pictures of aborted foetuses which had been displayed at the entrance to their campus by protesters from Abort67.¹⁷⁴ One student commented, ‘Funny, I don’t think education when I see that, I think cruel, heartless and completely ignorant.’ Another said, ‘7 billion people on the planet and there are protests about aborting unwanted pregnancies, as if the human race will cease to exist. If a woman wishes to abort, it’s her choice, and as for those foul pictures, that is what I term pornography.’¹⁷⁵ Abort67 did have some support from students in their endeavours, however, and justified their use of graphic images by saying:

There is no way to sugar coat an image of abortion. We understand that seeing images of what abortion looks like is extremely distressing but feeling distressed about it is an appropriate response. It is definitely not our aim to upset women who have been through the trauma of abortion, however we absolutely believe that the life on an unborn person is considerably more

important than hurt feelings. We also believe in order for more women not to be damaged by killing their sons and daughters they need to come to terms with the horror of abortion.¹⁷⁶

Such distress caused to the general British public by the employment of these shock and shaming tactics resulted in attempts by local and judicial authorities to clamp down on anti-abortion protests, effectively considering them to be public order offences. In 2010 and again in 2012, two individuals, Andy Stephenson and Kathryn Sloane from Abort67, were arrested by the police in Brighton and charged with obstructing the police in their duties by refusing to hand over a graphic banner. Stephenson was additionally charged with causing ‘harassment, alarm or distress’ under the Public Order Act of 1986. The first arrest resulted in a trial, which was later abandoned because of insufficient evidence. In the second trial, both individuals were cleared of all charges against them. Abort67 regarded this as a victory for its protest methodology and a victory for freedom of expression. Shame and shock were now deemed to be lawful tools in its war against abortion.¹⁷⁷

What this trial also demonstrated was the persistence and extent of extremes of opinion regarding abortion in modern Britain. Open comments in the newspapers reporting on the trial revealed that abortion remains an issue which is utterly divisive and generates emotive and impassioned responses. ‘Pro-life’ proponents made comments such as ‘It makes no sense that people showing an illustrated banner of an aborted child are arrested ... while people who kill innocent unborn children are not’; ‘Abortion is pre-meditated murder full-stop’; and ‘Abortion is another indication of the fallen nature of mankind and the fact that the whole world lies under the power of the devil. People gasp at the shows on TV about the Holocaust. In Britain, they murder children on the NHS and call it “family planning”.’ ‘Pro-choice’ supporters on the other hand argued that such comments were ‘rubbish’, ‘ill-informed’ and examples of ‘anti-choice misogyny’ and asked, ‘Why is it whenever the subject of abortion comes up, all the religious nut jobs come out of the woodwork and stick in their two-penneth?’ Instead, they offered counter-arguments which suggested that ‘Aborting a teaspoon of cells is morally neutral, but condemning innocent children and women to a miserable life on account of an unwanted pregnancy is morally wrong’ and restated their position that the issue of abortion is one that is about ‘individual choice’ and ‘a woman’s right to choose’.¹⁷⁸ These lines of argument have clearly persisted

for centuries and are set to endure. Moreover as they do so they emphasise the transitional function of shame within this issue as both contexts and emphases change.

This chapter has traced the modern history of abortion in Britain for the very first time. It has shown that throughout history, the concept of shame has pervaded discussions regarding the nature and practice of abortion. However, on the whole, this shame and opprobrium has been applied by others to those women who have chosen to terminate their pregnancies; it has not stemmed from any sentiment articulated by the women themselves. Prior to 1900, attitudes to abortion were relatively relaxed as it was not deemed to be a serious legal concern or a matter for moral chastisement as long as it was carried out before the 'quicken-ing'. Although legislation to outlaw abortion was eventually passed over the course of the nineteenth century in Britain, in the main this had less to do with the nature and end-product of the procedure itself, than with regulating who could perform it. Medical men argued well into the next century for the right to retain control over women's reproductive health and to prevent unqualified quacks from colonising their professional territory. They also persistently demanded that the presumptive shame long associated with pregnancy terminations be forsaken by modern society, so that objective, professional judgements could be made about what was in the best interests of patients.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, more and more women sought control over their fertility. They came to realise that if their parturitions were reduced in number or at least spaced out, then their own health and the well-being of their families would improve commensurately. Women also saw fertility control as a necessary prerequisite to entering the world of work. However, in the absence of effective and inexpensive contraceptive options, abortion remained the only real solution to an unwanted pregnancy for most women throughout the modern era. Moreover, as the practice was illegal, many women fell victim to unscrupulous and unqualified back-street abortionists who were intent on making money out of their desperation and misery. Resultant fears about increased maternal mortality and a perceived increase in recourse to abortion initiated a hardening of attitudes towards the procedure on the one hand and the beginnings of a campaign to legalise abortion on the other. This divergence, which began in the 1930s, really marked the start of the abortion debate in Britain, which only intensified as decades passed.

Beyond this wrangling, the women who opted for abortions in the aftermath of the practice being legalised were as unashamed about the procedure as their forebears. Although some admitted to feelings of shame, these sentiments centred on being pregnant with an unwanted child and were not tied to the procedure itself. Some women did experience post-operative remorse, but such feelings were generally fleeting and short-lived. Instead, modern British women facing an unwanted pregnancy regularly embraced abortion as a practical solution to an otherwise interminable problem. Moreover, they now considered it their right to undergo this procedure if they chose to do so.

Nevertheless, in Britain during the modern era, the rise of the anti-abortion movement has been significant. Its key belief that human life begins at the very moment of conception has led it to conclude that abortion is a form of unlawful killing and should be outlawed by legislative and social change. Effectively, the movement wants to re-establish the presumptive association between pregnancy termination and opprobrium which largely dissipated in Britain over the second half of the twentieth century. It promoted its message through education, debate and political pressure, arguing for the rights of both the foetus and the father and providing scaremongering press stories regarding the increasing incidence of abortive procedures in Britain. These tactics have had only a limited effect and, for this reason, have been supplemented with elements of direct action, clearly based on North American models of anti-abortion terrorism. This approach has involved shocking and shaming those individuals likely to come into contact with abortion either as patients or as providers.

The way more radical anti-abortion groups have, since the 1990s, increasingly resorted to militant tactics in their attempts to re-establish the antiquated link between shame and abortion has arguably revived the traditional and historic community shaming practices of *charivari* or rough music. Consequently, female patients and their families, doctors, nurses and co-workers face a barrage of grisly and graphic images, raucous taunts, intimidation and threats as they walk towards abortion clinics and hospitals. They are publicly harangued to make them feel ashamed about their actions in the context of abortion provision in the hope that this might deter their involvement or that of others. The effectiveness of these shaming tactics on the individuals concerned is as little known and variable now as it was in the earlier centuries, when they were deployed against cuckolded husbands and disobedient wives, but this localised societal

disapproval of what these individuals were about to engage in is still registered, and is publicised nonetheless.

Abortion is still seen as an unacceptable practice by many, even in a liberal, progressive society. Others argue that abortion is simply a matter of choice for women themselves concerning how they manage their fertility and their bodies. Society remains utterly divided on this issue and the debate rages on.¹⁷⁹ Crucially, however, we lose sight of the women caught in the centre of this ongoing maelstrom. Women who face an unwanted pregnancy today face just as difficult a decision as they did two centuries ago, and even now, abortion remains a taboo subject across British society. As Shyama Perera argues, ‘even though we effectively have abortion on demand in the twenty-first century, we have created a climate where it is easier to admit to having the clap than to having had a pregnancy terminated’.¹⁸⁰ As this chapter has shown, women who seek abortions today can still be ‘stigmatized and demeaned’ by campaigners on both sides of the debate who are intent on putting their opinions across regardless of the consequences of their actions and the effect that they might have on individuals who find themselves in a desperately difficult and sometimes traumatic situation.¹⁸¹

NOTES

1. K. Kapparis (2002) *Abortion in the Ancient World* (London: Duckworth and Co.), p. vii.
2. A-M. Kilday (2013) *A History of Infanticide in Britain c. 1600 to the Present* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), pp. 153–60. See also D.S. Nash and A-M. Kilday (2010) *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600–1900* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), Chap. 3.
3. Parliamentary Papers, 21 Jac. 1, c. 27 (1624).
4. Kilday (2013) *A History of Infanticide*, Chap. 4.
5. The term ‘abortion’ comes from the Latin word *aboriri*, which means failure to be born and can be used to refer to instances of spontaneous miscarriage as well as intended terminations. See L.A. Parry (1932) *Criminal Abortion* (London: John Bale and Sons), p. 1, and M. Potts, P. Diggory and J. Peel (1977) *Abortion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 1–2.
6. B. Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England 1900–1967* (London and New York: Croom Helm), p. 1.

7. See for instance M. Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics: The Family and Morality in the Thatcher Years* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), Chap. 2; S. Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), Chaps. 4, 6 and 7; E. Veitch and R.R.S. Tracey (1974) 'Abortion in the Common Law World', *American Journal of Contemporary Law*, 22, 4, pp. 652–96; J. Keown (1988) *Abortion, Doctors and the Law: Some Aspects of the Legal Regulation of Abortion in England from 1803 to 1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*; and C. Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom: A Worldwide Movement* (London: George Allen and Unwin), *passim*.
8. See for instance A. McLaren (1978) *Birth Control in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm); A. McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality* (Oxford: Blackwell), *passim*; Keown (1988) *Abortion*; Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*; and R. Davidson and G. Davis (2012) *The Sexual State: Sexuality and Scottish Governance, 1950–1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), Chap. 5.
9. See H. Cook (2004, 2005 edition) *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex and Contraception 1800–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
10. For further discussion see J. Lewis (1984) *Women in England 1870–1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Harvester: New York); J. Lewis (1992) *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years* (Oxford: Blackwell); A. McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (Oxford: Blackwell); W. Seccombe (1990) 'Starting to Stop: Working-Class Fertility Decline in Britain', *Past and Present*, 126, pp. 151–88; and B. Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction, 1860–1939' in J. Lewis (ed.) *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850–1940* (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 165–6.
11. See Cook (2004, 2005 edition) *The Long Sexual Revolution*, *passim*, and Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, *passim*.
12. For further discussion see E. Roberts (1984, 1995 edition) *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890–1940* (Oxford Blackwell), pp. 80–1; L.A. Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and*

- Social Change in Britain since 1880* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), p. 111; and K. Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain 1918–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 55.
13. For further discussion see D. Gittins (1982) *Fair Sex: Family Size and Structure, 1900–1939* (London: Hutchinson), p. 162; J. Thomas and A.S. Williams (1998) ‘Women and Abortion in 1930s Britain: A Survey and its Data’, *Social History of Medicine*, 11, 2, p. 284; Roberts (1984, 1995 edition) *A Woman’s Place*, p. 97; Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, p. 117; P. Knight (1977) ‘Women and Abortion in Victorian and Edwardian England’, *History Workshop Journal*, 4, p. 57; T. McIntosh (2000) ‘“An Abortionist City”: Maternal Mortality, Abortion, and Birth Control in Sheffield, 1920–1940’, *Medical History*, 44, p. 81; and A. McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals: The Perception of Fertility in England from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Methuen), p. 90.
 14. For further discussion see M. Woodside (1963) ‘Attitudes to Women Abortionists’, *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 11, 2, p. 93; Cook (2004, 2005 edition) *The Long Sexual Revolution*, p. 108; and Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, pp. 5–6.
 15. For further discussion see for instance J.M. Riddle (1997) *Eve’s Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p. 14 and p. 18; Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, p. 2, and Kapparis (2002) *Abortion in the Ancient World*, p. 30.
 16. For further discussion of the spectre of illegitimacy in the pre-modern period see Kilday (2013) *A History of Infanticide*, pp. 31–7 and pp. 153–57.
 17. See for instance Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, p. 2.
 18. C.C. Means, Jr. (1971) ‘The Phoenix of Abortional Freedom: Is a Penumbral or Ninth-Amendment Right about to Arise from the Nineteenth-Century Legislative Ashes of a Fourteenth-Century Common-Law Liberty?’, *New York Law Forum*, 17, p. 335 and p. 373, cited in Keown (1988) *Abortion*, p. 3.
 19. For further discussion of the prevalence of this attitude in the pre-modern period see P. Crawford (1994) ‘Sexual Knowledge in England, 1500–1700’ in R. Porter and M. Teich (eds) *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 99; McLaren (1984)

- Reproductive Rituals*, p. 107; McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 161; and R.P. Petchesky (1984, 1985 edition) *Abortion and Women's Choice* (London: Verso), pp. 29–30.
20. For further discussion of the significance of the quickening see M.E. Wiesner-Hanks (2000) *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (New York and London: Routledge), pp. 43–4, p. 83 and p. 109; McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 107 and pp. 117–23; and Riddle (1997) *Eve's Herbs*, p. 131.
 21. See for instance R. Sauer (1978) 'Infanticide and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Population Studies: A Journal of Demography*, 32, p. 83; C. Fradd (1985) 'An Introduction to the History and Present State of the Law relating to Abortion in England' in J.H. Channer (ed.) *Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life* (Exeter: Paternoster Press), pp. 139–40; and Riddle (1997) *Eve's Herbs*, pp. 128–9.
 22. For further discussion of the lack of prosecutions for abortion before 1900 see Keown (1988) *Abortion*, p. 7 and p. 11; Riddle (1997) *Eve's Herbs*, p. 88; and McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 120.
 23. Another key difference between Scots and English law was that in Scotland, a conviction for abortion could be made only if the woman on whom the abortion was performed was proven to be pregnant. This requirement was not part of English law. For further discussion see G. Davis and R. Davidson (2006) "'A Fifth Freedom" or "Hideous Atheistic Expediency"? The Medical Community and Abortion Law Reform in Scotland, c. 1960–1975', *Medical History*, 50, pp. 31–2; G. Davis (2009) 'The Medical Community and Abortion Law Reform: Scotland in National Context, c1960–1980' in I. Goold and C. Kelly (eds) *Lawyers' Medicine: The Legislature, the Courts and Medical Practice, 1760–2000* (Oxford: Hart Publishing), pp. 145–6; and K. McKnorrie (1985) 'Abortion in Great Britain: One Act, Two Laws', *Criminal Law Review*, 3, pp. 475–88.
 24. Parliamentary Papers, 43 Geo. III, c. 58 (1803). See the references at n. 21 above as well as A. McLaren (1977) 'Women's Work and Regulation of Family Size: The Question of Abortion in the Nineteenth Century', *History Workshop Journal*, 4, p. 73 and p. 75, and Sauer (1978) 'Infanticide and Abortion', p. 84.

25. See Keown (1988) *Abortion*, pp. 12–21.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–2.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–4. For further discussion on the early nineteenth century abortion laws see McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, Chap. 5.
28. Parliamentary Papers, 7 Will. IV and Vict., c. 85 (1837). For further discussion see Keown (1988) *Abortion*, pp. 29–33.
29. Parliamentary Papers, 24 and 25 Vict., c. 100 (1861). For further discussion see Keown (1988) *Abortion*, pp. 33–5.
30. For a similar view see Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, p. 154; Knight (1977) ‘Women and Abortion’, p. 57; and McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 90.
31. For further discussion see McLaren (1978) *Birth Control*, p. 232 and p. 81; McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 104; and also M. Chamberlain (2006) *Old Wives’ Tales: The History of Remedies, Charms and Spells* (Stroud: Tempus).
32. McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 191.
33. For further discussion of these products and their effectiveness see *British Medical Journal*, 9 November 1876; Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, pp. 169–74; McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 106; and A. McLaren (1994) ‘“Not a Stranger: A Doctor”’: Medical Men and Sexual Matters in the Late Nineteenth Century’ in Porter and Teich (eds) *Sexual Knowledge*, p. 267 and p. 271. See also the poisoning cases outlined in the *British Medical Journal*, 1 July 1893; Knight (1977) ‘Women and Abortion’, p. 59; and P.S. Brown (1977) ‘Female Pills and the Reputation of Iron as an Abortifacient’, *Medical History*, 21, pp. 291–304.
34. For further discussion see McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 161.
35. See *British Medical Journal*, 12 December 1863 and 15 December 1865, as well as Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, p. 164.
36. For examples of this sort see McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 101, and McLaren (1978) *Birth Control*, p. 123.
37. For further discussion see A. McLaren (1977) ‘Abortion in England, 1890–1914’, *Victorian Studies*, 20, 4, p. 396, and McLaren (1978) *Birth Control*, p. 31 and pp. 245–46.
38. For further discussion of the reasons women resorted to abortion in the pre-modern era see L. Pollock (1990) ‘Embarking on a Rough Passage: The Experience of Pregnancy in Early-Modern Society’ in V. Fildes (ed.) *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial*

- England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London and New York: Routledge), pp. 56–7; McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, p. 89, p. 90, p. 94 and p. 98; McLaren (1977) ‘Women’s Work’, p. 72 and p. 77; Sauer (1978) ‘Infanticide and Abortion’, p. 91; McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 189; E. Shorter (1982) *A History of Women’s Bodies* (London: Allen Lane) p. 177; Knight (1977) ‘Women and Abortion’, p. 59; McLaren (1978) *Birth Control*, p. 32; Kapparis (2002) *Abortion in the Ancient World*, p. 199; and D. Cressy (1999) *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 48.
39. For further discussion see Knight (1977) ‘Women and Abortion’, p. 58; McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 189; and McLaren (1984) *Reproductive Rituals*, pp. 89–90.
 40. See G.R. Quaipe (1979) *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasant and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England* (London: Croom Helm), p. 119.
 41. W. Burke Ryan (1862) *Infanticide: Its Law, Prevalence, Prevention, and History* (London: Churchill) [Bodleian Library, (OC) 151 c/345], p. 152.
 42. S. Stall (1897) *What a Young Man Ought to Know* (Toronto: Briggs) [Bodleian Library, 26521 f. 19], p. 198.
 43. McLaren (1994) “‘Not a Stranger: A Doctor’”, p. 274.
 44. McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 189, and Knight (1977) ‘Women and Abortion’, pp. 58–9.
 45. See respectively McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 191, and C. Francome (1986) *Abortion Practice in Britain and the United States* (London: Allen & Unwin), p. 19.
 46. R.R. Rentoul (1889) *The Causes and Treatment of Abortion* (Edinburgh and London) [Bodleian Radcliffe Science Library, 1623 d. 88], p. 14.
 47. McLaren (1994) “‘Not a Stranger: A Doctor’”, p. 270, and McLaren (1978) *Birth Control*, p. 240.
 48. J. De Styrap (1890) *The Young Practitioner: With Practical Hints and Instructive Suggestions as Subsidiary Aids for his Guidance on Entering into Private Practice* (London: H.K. Lewis) [Bodleian Radcliffe Science Library, 1518 e. 4], p. 52.
 49. See for instance reports such as that in *Provincial Medical Journal*, 19 August 1843, and *British Medical Journal*, 28 August 1858.

- For further discussion of this scholarly diversion see McLaren (1978) *Birth Control*, p. 123; Keown (1988) *Abortion*, p. 37; and McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 162.
50. See for instance the campaigns against the ‘abominable traffic’ of the sale of abortifacients in *British Medical Journal*, 9 July 1889, 16 July 1898 and 2 December 1899.
 51. See Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 111.
 52. For further discussion see Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 2 and p. 23, and M. Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain Before the Abortion Act: A Survey of the Historical Evidence* (London: Birth Control Trust) [Bodleian Radcliffe Science Library, 1623 c. 152], p. 5.
 53. J. Lewis (1980) *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900–1939* (London: Croom Helm), pp. 209–11.
 54. Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. 93. For further discussion see also Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 5, and McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 75.
 55. For further discussion see S. Brooke (2001) ‘“A New World for Women”? Abortion Law Reform in Britain during the 1930s’, *American Historical Review*, 106, p. 431, and Brookes (1986) ‘Women and Reproduction’, pp. 153–4.
 56. See Brooke (2001) ‘“A New World for Women”?’, p. 434.
 57. For further discussion see Brooke (2001) ‘“A New World for Women”?’, p. 440 and p. 448, and S. Rowbotham (1997) *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London: Viking), p. 141.
 58. See Brookes (1986) ‘Women and Reproduction’, pp. 165–6.
 59. For further discussion see Brooke (2001) ‘“A New World for Women”?’, p. 448; Brookes (1986) ‘Women and Reproduction’, p. 156; and Lewis (1980) *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 196. For more on the decline in infant mortality see Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 5, and Brookes (1986) ‘Women and Reproduction’, p. 153.
 60. See Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 159; Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. ; and Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, front cover.
 61. See Brooke (2001) ‘“A New World for Women”?’, p. 440.

62. The ALRA was formed in 1936. For further discussion of this organisation see Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, pp. 128–9; Rowbotham (1997) *A Century of Women*, p. 194; and especially Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, pp. 79–104; Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, pp. 83–91; and Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, pp. 97–103.
63. Parliamentary Papers, 19 and 20 Geo. V, c. 34 (1929).
64. For further discussion see Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 27; Veitch and Tracey (1974) ‘Abortion in the Common Law World’, p. 653; Fradd (1985) ‘An Introduction to the History’, p. 142; and Davis and Davidson (2006) “‘A Fifth Freedom’”, p. 42.
65. *The Times*, 1 July 1936. Dr Sanders-Bliss was later struck off the Medical Register: see *The Times*, 26 November 1936.
66. For further discussion of this case see *The Times*, 1 July 1938, 19 July 1938 and 20 July 1938, as well as Keown (1988) *Abortion*, pp. 49–59; Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 130; and Veitch and Tracey (1974) ‘Abortion in the Common Law World’, pp. 653–4.
67. See *R v Bourne* [1939] 1 K.B. 687, [1938] 3 All ER 615 [from www.lexisnexis.com, accessed 6 August 2016]. See also Fradd (1985) ‘An Introduction to the History’, pp. 143–4; Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. 94 and pp. 103–5; and especially B. Brookes and P. Roth (1994) ‘*Rex v. Bourne* and the Medicalization of Abortion’ in M. Clark and C. Crawford (eds) *Legal Medicine in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 314–43.
68. *British Medical Journal*, 13 November 1965.
69. *The Scotsman*, 31 December 1966. For further discussion of these differences see also Davis and Davidson (2006) “‘A Fifth Freedom’”, pp. 29–48, and Davis (2009) ‘The Medical Community’, pp. 147–9.
70. *The Scotsman*, 23 December 1966.
71. See for instance M. Abbott (2003) *Family Affairs: A History of the Family in Twentieth Century England* (London and New York: Routledge), p. 137.
72. *British Medical Journal*, 6 August 1932. Authors’ emphasis added.
73. For further discussion of this committee, the evidence presented to it and its published findings see Brooke (2011, 2013 edition)

- Sexual Politics*, pp. 105–12, and Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, pp. 105–32.
74. The National Archives, Ministry of Health and Home Office, ‘Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Abortion’, MH 71/30 (1939), paragraph 230.
 75. *Ibid.*, paragraphs 235 and 301.
 76. Abbott (2003) *Family Affairs*, p. 137. For similar concerns over the abortion rate in the run-up to the legislation of 1967 see Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 133, and Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 6.
 77. See Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. 160, and McIntosh (2000) “‘An Abortionist City’”, pp. 75–96 on maternal mortality concerns, and Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 28 and p. 65 on anxieties regarding the lack of successful prosecutions.
 78. Our calculations based on the evidence presented in Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 159.
 79. For further discussion of this see Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, pp. 79–81; Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. 148 and p. 158; and Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 134.
 80. For attempts to introduce abortion reform legislation in 1952 and 1954 see Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 159; Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, pp. 168–9; and Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, pp. 147–9.
 81. For further discussion see Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, pp. 81–2; Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. 160; Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 170; Veitch and Tracey (1974) ‘Abortion in the Common Law World’, pp. 654–5; and Lewis (1992) *Women in Britain*, p. 57.
 82. See Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 134.
 83. Keown (1988) *Abortion*, p. 87.
 84. See *ibid.*, Chap. 4; Davis and Davidson (2006) “‘A Fifth Freedom’”, pp. 35–40; and Davis (2009) ‘The Medical Community’, p. 150.
 85. Parliamentary Papers, Abortion Act, c. 87 (1967). For further discussion of the passage of the bill initiated by David Steel MP into law, see Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, pp. 169–75.
 86. Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 156. For further discussion, see Keown (1988) *Abortion*, pp. 159–66; Fradd (1985) ‘An

- Introduction to the History', pp. 144–5; Veitch and Tracey (1974) 'Abortion in the Common Law World', pp. 655–7; and Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, Chap. 8.
87. Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, p. 158. For concerns regarding this increase see *British Medical Journal*, 5 June 1971.
 88. *Ibid.* See also Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, Chap. 9, and Lewis (1992) *Women in Britain*, p. 41 and p. 58.
 89. *Historical Abortion Statistics (UK)*: <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/ab-unitedkingdom.html>, accessed 8 August 2016. For specific data on England and Wales see <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/uk/ab-ukenglandwales.html> and for Scotland <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/uk/ab-ukscotland.html>, both accessed 8 August 2016.
 90. R. Whelan (1992) (ed.) *Legal Abortion Examined: Twenty One Years of Abortion Statistics* (London: SPUC Educational Research Trust) [Bodleian Library, M93. C0077], p. 6. These figures were checked against the data provided in the sources at n. 89 above and were proved to be accurate, although of course all such data have to be considered in light of non-fixed contextual variables such as fertility patterns and age structures within populations, as an article in *British Medical Journal*, 8 October 1983, reminds us: J.R. Ashton (1983) 'Induced Abortion in England and Wales', *British Medical Journal*, 287, 6398, p. 1001.
 91. See Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 178, and Davis (2009) 'The Medical Community', pp. 157–63. For further discussion of these issues see respectively Davis and Davidson (2006) "'A Fifth Freedom'", p. 45; Keown (1988) *Abortion*, p. 110 and pp. 114–17.
 92. For further discussion of these issues see respectively Davis and Davidson (2006) "'A Fifth Freedom'", p. 45; Keown (1988) *Abortion*, p. 110 and pp. 114–17; and Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 178.
 93. The episode resulted in a Fatal Accident Inquiry and was reported in the *British Medical Journal*, 14 June 1969.
 94. *Ibid.* For further discussion of this legal discrepancy see Davis (2009) 'The Medical Community', p. 155.
 95. For further discussion of the remit of this committee see A. Wivel (1998) 'Documents and Sources: Abortion Policy and Politics on the Lane Committee of Enquiry, 1971–1974', *Social History of Medicine*, 11, 1, pp. 109–35, and Davis (2009) 'The Medical Community',

- pp. 153–8. For more on the specific Scottish evidence presented to the committee see G. Davis and R. Davidson (2005) “Big White Chief”, “Pontius Pilate”, and the “Plumber”: The Impact of the 1967 Abortion Act on the Scottish Medical Community, c.1967–1980’, *Social History of Medicine*, 18, 2, pp. 283–306.
96. For further discussion see Wivel (1998) ‘Documents and Sources’, p. 129; J. Temkin (1974) ‘The Lane Committee Report on the Abortion Act’, *Modern Law Review*, 37, 6, pp. 657–63, and Parliamentary Papers, ‘Report of the Committee on the Working of the Abortion Act’, Cmnd 5579 (1974), 3 vols.
97. See Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 174.
98. For further discussion of these attempts, see Keown (1988) *Abortion*, pp. 138–58; Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, pp. 158–83; and Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, Chap. 7.
99. Parliamentary Papers, Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, c. 37 (1990). See also Brooke (2011, 2013 edition) *Sexual Politics*, pp. 185–6 and pp. 223–4.
100. The data used to construct this analysis were found in the items referred to in nn. 89 and 90 above. It should be noted that as the figures represent only reported instances of abortion and not actual incidence, they may be inaccurate. Further caveats relating to the data can be found in the sources themselves.
101. For further discussion see M. Hughes (2010) ‘Households and Families’, *Social Trends*, 40, pp. 23–5.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
103. See Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 4; Woodside (1963) ‘Attitudes to Women Abortionists’, p. 102; G. Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion: A Case Study of North-East Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 98; and J.M. Williams and K. Hindell (1972) *Abortion and Contraception: A Study of Patients’ Attitudes* (London: PEP) [Bodleian Social Science Library, HQ767.5.G7.WIL], p. 11 and p. 16.
104. See Thomas and Williams (1998) ‘Women and Abortion’, pp. 303–4; M. Simms (1974) ‘Midwives and Abortion in the 1930s’, *Midwife and Health Visitor*, 10, p. 115; and Brookes (1986) ‘Women and Reproduction’, p. 160.
105. E.M. Elderton (1914) *Report on the English Birthrate* (London: Dulau) [Bodleian Radcliffe Science Library, Per. 18919 c.4/19–20], p. 136.

106. See Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion*, p. 98; Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 7; Simms (1974) 'Midwives and Abortion', p. 114; and Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 160.
107. See Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion*, p. 98, and Woodside (1963) 'Attitudes to Women Abortionists', p. 102.
108. See Lewis (1992) *Women in Britain*, p. 45, p. 58 and p. 109, and Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 161.
109. See respectively Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion*, p. 98 and p. 133; Williams and Hindell (1972) *Abortion and Contraception*, p. 12; Woodside (1963) 'Attitudes to Women Abortionists', p. 102; C. Francome (2004) *Abortion in the USA and the UK* (Aldershot: Ashgate), p. 36; Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 7; and Simms (1974) 'Midwives and Abortion', p. 115.
110. See Thomas and Williams (1998) 'Women and Abortion', p. 306, and Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', pp. 157–9.
111. See Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 162, and Lewis (1992) *Women in Britain*, p. 58.
112. ALRA (1966) *In Desperation: Letters Sent to the Abortion Law Reform Association* (London: ALRA) [Wellcome Library Archive, London, SA/ALRA/Section A 11/3/15].
113. See for instance the personal opinions expressed by women in J. McCrindle and S. Rowbotham (eds) (1977) *Dutiful Daughters: Women Talk About their Lives* (London: Allen Lane), p. 45 as well as Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 163, and Woodside (1963) 'Attitudes to Women Abortionists', pp. 97–8.
114. See for instance *British Medical Journal*, 15 July 1990; Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, p. 200; and especially Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, Chap. 6.
115. See Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 160; S. Perera (2004) *Taking Precautions: An Intimate History of Birth Control* (London: New Holland Publishers), pp. 134–6; Lewis (1980) *The Politics of Motherhood*, p. 200; Abbott (2003) *Family Affairs*, pp. 47–8; Brookes (1988) *Abortion in England*, p. 117; Roberts (1984, 1995 edition) *A Woman's Place*, p. 100; K. Fisher (1998) 'Women's Experience of Abortion before the 1967 Abortion Act: A Study of South Wales c. 1930–1950' in E. Lee (ed.) *Abortion Law and Politics Today* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), p. 36 and Gittins (1982) *Fair Sex*, p. 150.

116. See Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 160, and Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, p. 4.
117. For further discussion of this procedure, see McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 76.
118. See Parry (1932) *Criminal Abortion*, p. 57; Simms (1974) 'Midwives and Abortion', p. 114; Fisher (1998) 'Women's Experience of Abortion', p. 36; and Brookes (1986) 'Women and Reproduction', p. 160.
119. P.M. Sheno, B.J. Smits and S. Davidson (1966) 'Massive Removal of Small Bowel During Criminal Abortion', *British Medical Journal*, 2, 5519, pp. 929–31.
120. See for instance one example from the 1950s described in McCrindle and Rowbotham (eds) (1977) *Dutiful Daughters*, pp. 228–9.
121. See the references at n. 114 above as well as Perera (2004) *Taking Precautions*, pp. 52–3.
122. For an example of a published complaint regarding the numerous advertisements for abortifacients see *British Medical Journal*, 3 March 1934. For further discussion of attempts to regulate these advertisements see H.G. Cocks (2009) *Classified: The Secret History of the Personal Column* (London: Random House), *passim*, and H.G. Cocks (2004) 'Saucy Stories: Pornography, Sexology and the Marketing of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, c.1918–1970', *Social History*, 29, 4, pp. 465–84.
123. See Hall (2000) *Sex, Gender and Social Change*, p. 133.
124. M. Cole and A.F.M. Brierley (1968) 'Abortifacient Drugs', *Journal of Sex Research*, 4, 1, pp. 16–25.
125. *British Medical Journal*, 23 February 1929.
126. For further discussion of a tolerant attitude to illegal abortion and its practitioners see Simms (1980) *Abortion in Britain*, pp. 4–5.
127. *Gloucester Journal*, 14 June 1936.
128. For further discussion see McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 228, and Woodside (1963) 'Attitudes to Women Abortionists', pp. 100–2.
129. For more on the history of pregnancy tests see M.J. Wheeler, S. Lamph and S. Halloran (2007) 'Evaluation of Home Pregnancy Test Kits for Reliability', *Nursing Times*, 103, 27, pp. 30–1. For more on earlier abortions being practised after 1967 see Francome (2004) *Abortion in the USA and the UK*, p. 37.
130. For further discussion see Potts, Diggory and Peel (1977) *Abortion*, Chap. 6; Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion*, pp. 69–71;

- Francome (2004) *Abortion in the USA and the UK*, pp. 43–4; and Perera (2004) *Taking Precautions*, pp. 136–41.
131. Evidence for increased abortions in Britain over the course of the twentieth century has already been presented in this chapter. For more on the forms of medical support available after 1950 see Thomas and Williams (1998) ‘Women and Abortion’, p. 284.
 132. See for instance Francome (2004) *Abortion in the USA and the UK*, p. 46.
 133. See for example opinions expressed in McCrindle and Rowbotham (eds) (1977) *Dutiful Daughters*, p. 262, and also Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, p. 68. For further discussion of factors which can influence general opinion regarding abortion see Fisher (1998) ‘Women’s Experience of Abortion’, pp. 27–8, and Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, p. 163.
 134. See for instance evidence from interviews conducted such as Fisher (1998) ‘Women’s Experience of Abortion’, p. 31 and p. 33; E. Roberts (1995) *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940–1970* (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 80–1; and Thomas and Williams (1998) ‘Women and Abortion’, p. 285.
 135. For further discussion see Williams and Hindell (1972) *Abortion and Contraception*, p. 4.
 136. See for instance McCrindle and Rowbotham (eds) (1977) *Dutiful Daughters*, p. 20, and Fisher (1998) ‘Women’s Experience of Abortion’, pp. 30–1.
 137. For further discussion see Fisher (1998) ‘Women’s Experience of Abortion’, pp. 33–4; Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, pp. 159–60; McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 228; and McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 76.
 138. Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, p. 157. and Fisher (1998) ‘Women’s Experience of Abortion’, p. 39.
 139. See for instance a letter sent to the *British Medical Journal* by R.F. Law and published therein on 7 October 1989. *British Medical Journal*, 7 October 1989, and Williams and Hindell (1972) *Abortion and Contraception*, p. 5 and p. 7.
 140. Williams and Hindell (1972) *Abortion and Contraception*, p. 5.
 141. *Ibid.*, p. 5; Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion*, p. 115, pp. 145–50 and pp. 245–300; McCrindle and Rowbotham (eds) (1977) *Dutiful Daughters*, p. 3; McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 211; and L. Clarke, C. Farrell and

- B. Beaumont (1983) *Camden Abortion Study: The Views and Experiences of Women having NHS Private Treatment* (Solihull: Austy Press for the British Pregnancy Advisory Service) [Bodleian Radcliffe Science Library, 1623 d.229], p. 78.
142. Horobin (1973) *Experience with Abortion*, p. 116.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 115 and pp. 147–50.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
145. See for instance McCrindle and Rowbotham (eds) (1977) *Dutiful Daughters*, p. 228, and Fisher (2006, 2008 edition) *Birth Control*, pp. 114–15.
146. For further details on this incident see *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2008 and *The Telegraph*, 22 February 2008.
147. *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2008.
148. *Ibid.*
149. *Ibid.*
150. *The Telegraph*, 22 February 2008.
151. See for instance <http://Lifesitenews.com> and commentary on a blog of 27 February 2008: <http://michellemalkin.com/>, accessed 2 March 2016.
152. Commentary on a blog of 26th February 2008: <http://www.ewtn.com/vexperts/conference.asp>
153. With specific reference to the Emma Beck case see P. Casey (2013) *Suicide in Pregnancy and Abortion: Considering the Expert Group Report to the ABC Ruling by the European Convention of Human Rights*. Report submitted to the Joint Committee on Health and Children (Irish Parliament): <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/committees/healthandchildren/PatriciaCaseySubmission.pdf>, and *Sunday Times*, 16 March 2008. See also M. Gissler, E. Hemminki and J. Lönnqvist (1996) ‘Suicides After Pregnancy in Finland, 1987–94: Register Linkage Study’, *British Medical Journal*, 313, 7070, pp. 1431–34 and 22 March 1997, as well as D.C. Reardon, P.G. Ney, F. Scheuren, J. Cogle, P.K. Coleman and T.W. Strachan (2002) ‘Deaths Associated with Pregnancy Outcome: A Record Linkage Study of Low Income Women’, *Southern Medical Journal*, 95, 8, pp. 834–41.
154. For details on this case see *The Times*, 16 May 1996 and 10 October 1996 and *The Guardian*, 14 May 1996 and especially 21 December 1996.
155. *The Guardian*, 21 December 1996. A similar outcome occurred in July 1999, when a fourteen-year-old girl was indicted for infanticide

- after drowning her new-born daughter in Wolverhampton. She was seemingly frightened that her parents would find out about her pregnancy and parturition and worried that her boyfriend would be prosecuted for having sexual intercourse with a minor. She was convicted and sentenced to two years' probation by the judge Mr. Justice Hidden, who told her to 'pick up the pieces of her shattered life'. For further detail, see the report of the case in *The Guardian*, 14 May 1996.
156. For evidence of this in relation to the Emma Gifford case in particular see *The Times*, 21 December 1996, and *The Guardian*, 8 February 1997.
 157. For further discussion of abortion portrayed as tragedy see McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 183. For the literary works mentioned see respectively S. Delaney (1959, 1992 edition) *A Taste of Honey* (Oxford: Heinemann); N. Dunn (1963, 2013 edition) *Up the Junction* (London: Virago) and S. Milligan (1972, 2005 edition) 'Unto Us' in D. Kitchen (ed.) *Fifty Strong: Fifty Poems Chosen by Teenagers for Teenagers* (London: Heinemann), pp. 25–6.
 158. For further discussion see especially Francome (2004) *Abortion in the USA and the UK*, pp. 121–2, and Rowbotham (1997) *A Century of Women*, p. 416, p. 425 and p. 430, as well as Perera (2004) *Taking Precautions*, p. 142, and S.L. Markson (1985) 'The Roots of Contemporary Anti-Abortion Activism' in P. Sachdev (ed.) *Perspectives on Abortion* (Metuchen, NJ, and London: Scarecrow Press), p. 33. For more on the basic tenets of the pro-abortion movement see Veitch and Tracey (1974) 'Abortion in the Common Law World', pp. 671–2.
 159. This is a point that has also been noted by Paul Ferris: see P. Ferris (1993) *Sex and the British: A Twentieth Century History* (London: Michael Joseph), p. 198. For more on the establishment of anti-abortion organisations in Britain see Rowbotham (1997) *A Century of Women*, p. 361; Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, p. 17; and especially Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, p. 92 and pp. 160–83.
 160. For further discussion see Veitch and Tracey (1974) 'Abortion in the Common Law World', pp. 671–2. See also S. Staggenborg (1991) *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
 161. See the references in n. 160 above and also Rowbotham (1997) *A Century of Women*, p. 361, and Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, pp. 32–4.

162. See Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, p. 160, and Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, p. 34.
163. Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, pp. 25–35; Ferris (1993) *Sex and the British*, pp. 294–5; McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 203; K. Hindell and M. Simms (1971) *Abortion Law Reformed* (London: Peter Owen); and especially Francome (1984) *Abortion Freedom*, pp. 92–5 and pp. 158–83.
164. For further discussion see Rowbotham (1997) *A Century of Women*, p. 430, and especially Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, p. 17.
165. See for instance McLaren (1999, 2008 edition) *Twentieth-Century Sexuality*, p. 217; Ferris (1993) *Sex and the British*, p. 198; and Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, pp. 24–5.
166. For further detail on this case see *The Guardian*, 24 February 1987.
167. For further discussion see various news pieces in the *British Medical Journal*, 13 August 1994, 31 October 1998 and 1 February 2010, as well as Perera (2004) *Taking Precautions*, p. 133; Markson (1985) ‘The Roots of Contemporary Anti-Abortion Activism’, pp. 33–43; and F. Ginsburg (1996) ‘Saving America’s Souls: Operation Rescue’s Crusade against Abortion’ in L. Steffan (ed.) *Abortion: A Reader* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press), pp. 431–50.
168. For further discussion see the editorial (1995) ‘Ironies in the Abortion War’, *British Medical Journal*, 310, 6974, p. 267, and also P. Baird-Windle and E.J. Bader (2001) *Targets of Hatred: Anti-Abortion Terrorism* (New York: Palgrave); D. Granberg (1978) ‘Pro-Life or Reflection of Conservative Ideology? An Analysis of Opposition to Legalized Abortion’, *Sociology and Social Research: An International Journal*, 62, 3, pp. 414–29; D. Granberg (1981) ‘The Abortion Activists’, *Family Planning Perspectives*, 13, 4, pp. 157–63; and J. Reiter (2000) *Live from the Gates of Hell: An Insider’s Look at the Abortion Underground* (New York: Prometheus Books).
169. In 1993, for example, the Home Office excluded and subsequently deported Don Treshman, director of an extremist American anti-abortion group, who wanted to radicalise British protests against the procedure during a week of well-publicised campaigns. For reports on this incident see *The Guardian*, 27 March 1993, *The Times*, 27 March 1993, *Daily Gazette*, 31 March 1993 and *The Independent*, 2 April 1993.

170. See for instance the campaigns of the Roman Catholic priest Father James Morrow as described in *The Times*, 13 April 1990, and *The Guardian*, 13 April 1990, and outlined in more depth in his obituary found at *The Herald*, 23 September 2010. See also Durham (1991) *Sex and Politics*, p. 35.
171. *The Guardian*, 2 April 1993. For further commentary on this type of direct action see *The Independent*, 2 April 1993.
172. For criticisms of this type of protest see the open comments published after 'Special Report: Pro-Lifers Target Brighton Clinic' in *The Argus*, 30 March 2012.
173. *Ibid.*
174. The incident was recounted in *Huffington Post (UK)* on 22 October 2012: see <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/>, accessed 21 July 2016.
175. For these comments and others see *ibid.* as well as the open comments published after the article.
176. *Ibid.*
177. For further details of these incidents see *The Telegraph*, 18 September 2010 and 15 July 2012 as well as *The Guardian*, 17 September 2012.
178. For further discussion see the open comments published after the article in *The Telegraph*, 15 July 2012.
179. For more recent debate on the issue and evidence of the ongoing complexities surrounding the arguments regarding abortion see for instance *The Guardian*, 23 June 1999 and *British Medical Journal*, 7 September 1991, 4 August 2005, 1 May 2008, 24 May 2010, 22 January 2011, 5 July 2011 and 8 October 2012.
180. Perera (2004) *Taking Precautions*, p. 133.
181. McLaren (1990, 1994 edition) *A History of Contraception*, p. 242.

Modern Charivari or Merely Private Peccadillo? Lord Lambton and the Archetypal Sex Scandal

INTRODUCTION

Some considerable time before the onset of the twentieth century, T.B. Macaulay displayed his customary insight into national character and human nature, with a penetrating pronouncement on allowing the open and critical judgement of those who held high office:

We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces and family quarrels pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly, some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping-boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflected very complacently on our own severity, and compare with great pride the high standards of morals established in England with the Parisian laxity. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heart-broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.¹

This opening quotation suggests that throughout British history, scandals, and particularly those that relate to sexual relationships, appear to have been exercises in public humiliation. Even in the more modern permissive context of the twenty-first century, the scandalous behaviour of certain powerful individuals can still result in the application of ritualised shame which regularly reinvent the types of charivari and rough music from much earlier periods. But why are some scandals deemed more shameful than others? What ingredients are needed to exist to turn a private indiscretion into a public scandal? Has the ability of these episodes to invoke lasting and damaging opprobrium on individuals waned or waxed over the course of the twentieth century? Are the reach and significance of the shame applied to modern sex scandals in particular, different from those of previous eras, and what factors have influenced change over time in this respect?

There is an evident dearth of academic research on scandals, particularly amongst social and cultural historians. This disinterest at first seems surprising, but it may be perceived, in academic circles at least, that scandals are somewhat frivolous, fleeting episodes that are of little scholarly importance. Particularly when reported by the media, they tend to pre-empt more serious or significant issues from being discussed. For that reason, some would argue that scandals are best considered the domain of more populist writing such as tabloid journalism.² Yet scandals, and sex scandals in particular, reveal much more than a few lurid details of sordid indiscretions which brought shame upon certain individuals and those closest to them at a given time. Rather, studying scandal provides us with a better appreciation of the kinds of behaviour society deemed acceptable and unacceptable at certain periods, as well as where the boundaries of intrusion into the private affairs of public figures actually were. We also appreciate the extent to which the concept of shame still had an influential role to play within and across British society and how this changed over time. We gain an understanding of the rationale of those involved in the application of shame as well as the wider public, political and personal reactions to socially enforced humiliation in the historical context. Finally, a scholarly approach to the study of scandals uncovers the role and influence of the modern media and the various mechanisms utilised supposedly in an attempt to realign or manipulate the moral compass of the populace.

This chapter addresses the lacunae in British historical scholarship related to public humiliation of this sort by examining *sex* scandals and the nature and significance of their relationship to cultures of shame over the

course of the modern era. It does this firstly by defining the term ‘scandal’ before briefly looking at the history of sex scandals in British history to analyse why sexual indiscretions, in the British political arena in particular, have routinely attracted so much interest from the media, social commentators and the public. The chapter then includes a detailed examination of the Lord Lambton affair of 1973, when Antony Lambton (1922–2006), then a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, was forced to resign in shame following allegations of drug-taking and risqué behaviour with prostitutes. As well as offering a detailed examination of what transpired, a further section of the chapter will analyse how the shaming of Antony Lambton was regarded by various sections of the British populace both at the time and in the wake of his departure from public office. The chapter then concludes by considering the extent to which the twentieth-century sex scandal has become a contemporary form of charivari: a shaming ritual for modern Britain.

THE SEX SCANDAL IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In etymological terms, the word ‘scandal’ originates from early Greek derivatives which denote an obstacle or trap that results in a ‘moral stumbling’ of some sort.³ According to the sociologist Ari Adut, a scandal can be defined as ‘an episode of moral disturbance, marked by an interaction around an actual, apparent or alleged transgression that draws sustained and negative attention from a public’.⁴ Although we need to acknowledge that what is deemed scandalous in one context may not be so in another, Professor John Thompson, a sociologist at the University of Cambridge, has established five characteristics typically associated with scandals which build on Adut’s basic definition. First, their occurrence or existence concerns the transgression of certain norms, moral codes or values and usually involves money, power and/or sex. Second, scandals contain an element of concealment, but they are known, or are strongly believed to exist, by ‘non-participants’ or individuals not directly involved. Third, some ‘non-participants’ disapprove of the action or events in question and may be offended in some way by the transgression that has occurred. Fourth, some ‘non-participants’ express this disapproval by publicly denouncing the events in question. Typically they use ‘opprobrious discourse’ which implies that the transgression ought to be considered shameful and thus stigmatising for the individual or individuals concerned. Finally, the transgression’s disclosure may damage the reputation of the individual or

individuals responsible, although it is important for us to note that, particularly in the twenty-first century, the outcome of a scandal is not always predictable.⁵

As previously indicated, a scandal broadcasts events that would otherwise be kept secret, and, as William Cohen has explored, the potential impact of the disclosure of a scandalous act often ‘hinges on the degree of secrecy requisite to its commission’.⁶ Linked to this suggestion, and evidently overlooked by Thompson, is the fact that a scandal must also relate to the disclosure of personal or private information regarding someone of status who is already of interest to the general populace: a celebrity or public figure who already has a degree of ‘public curiosity’ associated with them.⁷ A low-status individual would be unlikely to generate a scandal, as interest in what they had said or done would be limited. The elements which make a scandal different from gossip, are that the latter tends to occur in a delineated local grouping, and its object is typically a low-status individual known personally to those engaged in the tittle-tattle. Scandals, on the other hand, typically involve individuals with a higher public profile; facilitated by the function of the mass media, they can reach a much more anonymous audience which is often removed from the event’s specific dramatis personae.⁸ As Adut has described, scandal is ‘the disruptive publicity of transgression’,⁹ and it is clear that in the modern era in particular, this ‘publicity’ can have a long reach and significance for those embroiled within it. Indeed, despite an acute awareness of media scrutiny and a significant expenditure on public relations, since a scandal often touches key sources of power, it loses ‘none of its capacity to disrupt the flow of events, to derail the most well-constructed plans and, from time to time, to destroy the reputations and careers of those engulfed by it’.¹⁰

Probably the most common and most powerful form of scandal involves the exposure of the sexual transgressions of a public figure. Such instances appear to be the quintessential examples of scandal, and they have evidently occurred throughout time and across cultures.¹¹ In Britain, sex scandals have a long history and attracted considerable attention even before the arrival of modern media. In 1631, for instance, the Earl of Castlehaven, Lord Audley, was tried at Westminster Hall for the rape of his wife and two counts of sodomy against his servants. After the submission of what we would now regard as wholly dubious evidence, Lord Audley was convicted and beheaded for his crimes.¹² Sex scandals of this sort were not merely salacious news stories presented for the titillation of the early modern populace: they were regularly used for political and moral purposes, proving

a useful tool by which power could be leveraged between individuals of rank and status.¹³ In the eighteenth century, we could similarly point to the context surrounding the bigamy trial brought against the Duchess of Kingston in 1776 and the separation scandal involving Lord and Lady Worsley in 1782.¹⁴

By the Victorian era, in the midst of a burgeoning social purity movement and the development of a sensationalist press, sex scandals became almost ubiquitous. For instance, the apparent indiscretions of Queen Caroline were famously exposed at the start of the nineteenth century. Then came the revelations associated with the Mordaunt divorce case of the 1860s. By 1889, the ‘Cleveland Street Scandal’ had very publicly embroiled noblemen, politicians and members of the royal family in intrigue associated with under-age homosexual brothels in London.¹⁵ Numerous other examples could be cited. One noticeable change in the focus of sex scandals that was initiated in the Victorian era was that they increasingly came to be located in the political arena. The increase in middle-class voters during the nineteenth century, with values firmly rooted in the Church, the family and the virtues of respectability and self-help, resulted in an enthusiasm amongst politicians to adapt their public behaviour accordingly. Honour, honesty and integrity thus became non-negotiable qualities for Victorian public figures. An absence of these virtues would result in a review of an individual’s fitness to hold public office, as politicians were increasingly persuaded to hold themselves up as beacons of moral virtue. After all, they established and oversaw the laws and rules for the rest of society to obey. However, if an individual deviated from this virtuous image for whatever reason, they could expose themselves to charges of hypocrisy and to sensationalised shame and disgrace over a sustained period of time, as their fall from grace would be further and more dramatic than that of an ordinary citizen.

The establishment of such high standards of behaviour for our politicians over a century ago has meant that even today, politicians’ private lives are often scrutinised without reference to their professional capabilities or behaviour.¹⁶ Indeed, as Thompson has articulated, political sex scandals are deemed to be more significant than other controversies because

scandal can deplete the symbolic capital upon which the exercise of political power depends. Scandal can erode the foundations of political power precisely because it can destroy (or threaten to destroy) a vital resource upon which politicians must to some extent rely – namely their reputation and

good name, and the respect accorded to them by other politicians and the public at large. To destroy or damage their reputation is to destroy and damage their credibility, and thereby to weaken or undermine their capacity to persuade and influence others, to secure a bond of trust and to turn their words into deeds.¹⁷

The clamour of interest in political sex scandals which evidently gathered pace during the Victorian period had significant ramifications for the more modern era, but these were not immediate. Rather, during the first half of the twentieth century, the momentum of salacious revelation appeared to have stalled, as sexual impropriety amongst the political elite seemed to virtually disappear. However, recent scholarship emphasises that such behaviour still existed, but it was largely concealed in a gentlemen's agreement between political and media elites in order to maintain an impression of virtuousness. As a result, the media regarded the reporting of politicians' sexual indiscretions as 'off limits' in order to preserve deference towards the political system. Historians such as Rupert Davenport-Hines, Oliver Popplewell, John Grigg and D.R. Thorpe have shown that there was a far more flamboyant political sexual culture in the first half of the twentieth century than has previously been appreciated.¹⁸ Moreover, if we consider the revelations about Lord Boothby and Tom Driberg to be accurate, we might suggest that far from being righteous and straight-laced, British political life prior to the 1960s was positively bacchanalian.¹⁹

Although a more tolerant attitude prevailed in the years after both world wars, by the second half of the twentieth century the media's deference to the political elite had waned significantly, and as a result, indiscretions by MPs were once again made public. Over time, politics came to be regarded as 'a dirty game', and politicians themselves were regularly mistrusted. Evidently, sexual indiscretion was condemned more than any other character flaw and came to be associated with duplicity and fecklessness.²⁰ This provoked greater scrutiny of the private lives of politicians, causing further scandalous revelations to surface as the twentieth century wore on.²¹ Additional explanations for the growing prevalence of political sex scandals in Britain over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, have emphasised either some sort of slide into moral decay or the establishment of tougher moral standards across society. Changes in British political culture may also have been a factor. For instance, political leaders became more visible and more powerful. Some arguably encouraged risk taking in their private lives, whilst simultaneously adhering to

newly prescribed codes of conduct in their professional careers. Political ideologies waned and were replaced by trust-based policy initiatives where credibility had to be tested on a regular basis. The second half of the century also saw important changes in the technologies of communication (including surveillance) and the arrival of an investigative journalistic culture. These two factors, in particular, rendered the scope, scale and consequences of modern political sex scandals more significant than had been the case in earlier periods.²²

Although sex scandals have prevailed in various countries, they do seem to have featured particularly prominently in British political history. In part, this can be explained by a long-standing fascination with the sexual proclivities of others (and the elite in particular) and an acknowledgement of the prevailing undercurrent of *schadenfreude*, especially where it relates to individuals in prominent positions being humiliated or disempowered.²³ We should also consider the experience of political sex scandals alongside a historic commitment to press freedom. Not only has this factor facilitated the exposure of more scandals in and of itself, but it has also evidently blurred the boundaries of what is public and what is private across British society in the modern era.²⁴

Arguably the modern blueprint of the British political sex scandal came in 1963 with the revelation of John Profumo's affair with a call-girl called Christine Keeler. The central controversies in the episode related to Profumo being economical with the truth when speaking before the House of Commons about his relationship with Keeler. This breached parliamentary etiquette and accepted standards of behaviour in public life. In addition, the scandal had implications for Cold War politics and occurred at a time when traditional anxieties about sexual discussion were being swept aside and deference towards the elites was—as we have seen—in decline. Although the scandal was certainly momentous at the time and its ramifications were long-lasting in British political history, the episode has already been well researched by scholars and there is a general consensus regarding its significance.²⁵ Despite the intensive media interest surrounding the Profumo affair and the shame and degradation explicitly experienced by those directly involved, political sex scandals persisted in Britain after the 1960s. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the nature of the sexual activity practised became a more prominent feature in the disgrace of the individuals involved in these subsequent episodes. This chapter focuses on one such scandal: that involving the MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, Antony Lambton.

THE LORD LAMBTON AFFAIR

Antony Claud Frederick Lambton was born on 10 July 1922, and on the death of his elder brother in 1941 he became the sole heir of the fifth Earl of Durham. As ably depicted in the photograph shown in Fig. 6.1, Lambton's middle-aged appearance was that of a louche aristocrat, and according to one commentator, 'he was tall, willowy, elegantly dressed [and] had a studied, languid air about him which women found attractive'.²⁶ Lambton's outward persona was, paradoxically, no doubt aided in part by the dark glasses he constantly wore owing to a childhood illness.²⁷ In 1942, Lambton married Belinda Blew-Jones after a whirlwind week-long engagement, and they went on to have six children together and a marriage that lasted some sixty-one years until Belinda's death in 2003. As a wealthy landowner (the Lambton estate in County Durham consisted of some 25,000 acres and was valued at £12 million in 2013²⁸), a superb



Fig. 6.1 Photograph of Lord Lambton, *The Times*, 1973 (reproduced with kind permission of the National Portrait Gallery)

shot and a renowned wit and raconteur, Lambton could have simply settled into the relatively unchallenging lifestyle of the English 'county set'. However, he was a man driven by political ambition.

After working for Durham City Council and then Durham County Council, Lambton became the Conservative MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1951. Over his years in office, he acquired a reputation as a forthright but honourable political figure unafraid to speak his mind or stand up for his beliefs, even if it meant criticising his own political party. For instance, he resigned as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Selwyn Lloyd (then Foreign Secretary) over the government's handling of the Suez crisis and very publicly criticised the premiership of Harold Macmillan.²⁹ Interestingly, given what was to follow, Lambton also played a key role in the passage of Roy Jenkins' Obscene Publications Act of 1959 and vocally supported the decriminalisation of cannabis and the liberalisation of the laws against homosexuality.³⁰ Lambton's outspoken views on many issues undoubtedly provided him with many political enemies. Nevertheless, his dedication to duty earned him promotion in 1969 to Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence for the Royal Air Force, where he effectively operated as Air Minister.³¹

Lambton first came to public prominence in the early 1970s not long after his father died. Because of the 1963 Parliamentary Peerages Act, he had to renounce his newly inherited earldom in order to remain an MP.³² Whilst happily renouncing his ancestral peerage formally in early in February 1970, Lambton insisted that he should still retain the self-styled courtesy title of 'Lord'.³³ Initially, the speaker of the House of Commons acceded to his request. However, this decision sparked argument over the next two years, eventually resulting in a heated, but at times comical, parliamentary debate in February 1972, with Lambton's political adversaries in the Labour Party accusing him of 'snobbery' and of seeking 'to have his cake and eat it'. The debate ended without resolution but with the fire-brand Bolsover MP Dennis Skinner proclaiming his indignation over the parliamentary time spent on such trivial matters by declaring, 'What a stupid place this is.'³⁴ The controversy continued for a further four months, with Lambton carrying out a very impassioned crusade to retain his title. His twenty-eight-month campaign was well publicised in the press and was only resolved when a Committee of Privileges finally recommended to the Commons, in June 1972, that his request be denied and he be referred to as 'Plain Mr Lambton'.³⁵ Lambton was said to be humiliated and personally devastated by the decision. Yet far worse opprobrium was to come.

In early April 1973, a prostitute named Norma Levy visited New Scotland Yard and divulged that her husband, Colin, intended bringing drugs into Britain and that a search of his person would reveal papers which confirmed an illicit relationship between her and a government minister. She confided in the police that her client was Lord Lambton and that her husband intended to blackmail him. Levy declared that the revelation of her story to the authorities was motivated by patriotism, since Lambton was a government minister.³⁶ As a result of the revelations, the security services and the Prime Minister were informed and investigations were ordered to determine whether any security risk was evident and whether any criminal activity had been perpetrated. It was agreed that Lord Lambton should not be privy to these enquiries in case any criminal proceedings might result from the information uncovered.³⁷

Whilst Lambton's private life was being scrutinised in great detail by the authorities, Colin Levy and his friend Peter Goodsell visited the office of the *News of the World* offering to sell it a story regarding a government minister (Lambton) who visited prostitutes on a regular basis. The two men claimed to substantiate their story with photographs, film, sound recordings and a personal cheque made out to Norma Levy which Lord Lambton had signed. Moreover, it was clear from these revelations that the story involved much more than a simple transactional arrangement for sex between a peer and a prostitute. The men revealed that Lambton liked the company of both male and female prostitutes, that he enjoyed sadomasochism and other 'unconventional' forms of sexual activity including fisting, the use of sex toys and urophilia, and that he repeatedly required narcotics during his regular visits to the brothel at which Norma Levy worked. They told the newspaper that the price for the exclusive was £30,000.³⁸

Although the *News of the World* was interested in the story, to the extent that it dispatched its own staff to the brothel to take better-quality pictures of Lambton *in flagrante delicto*, it decided not to publish the story and returned all relevant material and evidence back to Levy and Goodsell. The journalistic entrepreneurs then took their story to the *Sunday People*, charging it an inflated £45,000 for the scoop. The newspaper's editors expressed an interest and paid the pair £750 as a holding fee, but then took all of the material and the lurid details to the police.³⁹ The police in turn interviewed Lord Lambton on 17 May, when they presented him with the uncovered evidence and warned him of a likely press leak with rumours circulating of a 'Profumo-type story' involving a junior minister.⁴⁰ It was only at this point that Lambton knew he was in trouble, since

it was evident that neither of the Levys nor Goodsell had ever attempted to blackmail their client. Lambton admitted to visiting prostitutes at the brothel in question for at least twelve months. He endured a police search of his office and residence, where officers uncovered illegal drugs and an unlicensed gas gun. Whilst describing how he felt about his situation to the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of New Scotland Yard, Ernest Bond, Lambton admitted, 'I have been made a complete monkey out of.'⁴¹

On 21 May 1973, Antony Lambton wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, Edward Heath (1916–2005), tendering his resignation from the government for 'personal and health reasons', and this was quickly accepted without fuss or debate.⁴² Although the suddenness of Lambton's departure was surprising to many, the press, initially at least, ascribed the decision to his defeat in the battle over his courtesy title.⁴³ However, the day after Lambton's resignation had been made public, the German magazine *Stern* reported in an article entitled 'The Latest Rumour' that:

A senior British diplomat is said to be involved in a brothel scandal which is at present still being hushed up by the British Press. The diplomat is alleged to come from a well-known aristocratic family, to have access to numerous military secrets, and to be a regular customer in a chain of luxury brothels. The affiliated brothels in London, New York, Germany and Paris are at present being checked by international Secret Services as they have specialised in diplomats as clients.⁴⁴

This piece might have gone unnoticed in Britain, if it had not been for rumours already circulating in the national press regarding the existence of a vice ring which involved British political and public figures and put them at risk of blackmail.⁴⁵ It was evident from the copy produced that although only limited details of the scandal had emerged at this point, more was likely to follow and, more importantly, there was a potential security risk concerning the episode which was under investigation. When the public linked this sordid revelation with the sudden and largely unexplained departure of Lambton, the pieces began to fit.⁴⁶ The press for their part, who clearly knew more about the story than they had let on, began to increase the pressure on Lambton, and in an attempt to avoid a 'Second Profumo' (as one Australian newspaper put it),⁴⁷ he decided to come clean just one day after the *Stern* article was produced. Lambton said in a statement on 23 May 1973:

I have been in politics long enough to know that if any unpleasant truth is covered up rumour multiplies and the innocent become involved ... I had a casual acquaintance with a call girl and one or two of her friends ... Some

sneak pimp has seen an opportunity of making money by the sale of the story and secret photographs to papers at home and abroad. My own feelings may be imagined but I have no excuses whatsoever to make. I behaved with credulous stupidity and consequently have let down those I most wish to please – the Prime Minister, the Conservative Party, my electorate who have given me 22 years of loyalty, and my family ... I alone am to blame for a situation that I hope this statement will restore to its right perspective. All that I would ask is for criticism to be instantaneous and not prolonged as, apart from myself, those who will suffer most are those to whom I should be offering protection ...⁴⁸

Whether Lord Lambton got his wish in the medium and long term is analysed in the next section of this chapter. In any case, the events which followed the immediate aftermath of his public confession garnered more attention rather than less, and merely served to accentuate the opprobrium experienced by Lambton and his family. First of all, another minister, Lord Jellicoe (1918–2007), became embroiled in the scandal after admitting that he also used the services of prostitutes. He was forced to resign a few days after Lambton, on 24 May 1973.⁴⁹ The press then frenetically questioned who else was involved and what other scandalous details might be revealed.⁵⁰ Then, just a few weeks later, on 13 June 1973, Antony Lambton endured the further ignominy of appearing in court charged with the illegal possession of drugs (including cannabis and amphetamines). He pleaded guilty to the charges against him and was fined £300.⁵¹ Four key players were involved in the initiation, articulation, management and perpetuation of the public shaming ritual that followed Lambton's resignation: Lambton himself, Parliament, the press and the general public.

THE LEGACY OF SHAME

Personal Reaction

Antony Lambton was a junior minister when the Profumo scandal broke in 1963. Commenting on the affair at the time, he said that the worst thing about episodes like these were their torturous longevity caused by the slow drip feed of scandalous revelations by the press. As he said in June 1963:

In many of this morning's papers there appeared to me to be optimistic forecasts that Mr Profumo's resignation would mark the end of this affair.

I greatly regret that I do not believe that this will be the case. It is merely the beginning of another unfortunate chapter which may end heaven knows where ... I hope the government will not hush up the affair. It will be far better for the party – which is bound to go through a difficult period as a result of what has happened – if all the facts are brought out.⁵²

Perhaps mindful of these comments and aware of John Profumo's personal experiences in the wake of his own exposé, Antony Lambton decided on a very unusual strategy for dealing with the opprobrium surrounding his private life. He resolved to make a series of full and very public confessions regarding his extra-marital exploits. He did this for two reasons: first, so that he could expose all of the sensational details in the public domain quickly to make his shame acute but short-lived, and second, so that he alone controlled the information being released and the timing of its disclosure. Arguably, in doing this, Lambton created a template for the type of self-inflicted public humiliation via mass media and anti-shame which is now standard for public figures and celebrities embroiled in sex scandals during the modern era.⁵³

Lambton's first confession came in a press interview with the *Daily Express* journalist Chapman Pincher, which made the front page of the newspaper on 24 May 1973. In this interview Lambton took great care to separate out the drugs allegations against him, for which he had at that point not been tried, declaring them 'ridiculous' and 'completely untrue'.⁵⁴ He was more forthcoming about his relationship with Norma Levy and other prostitutes (although only ever referring to the women), but here once again, Lambton used the interview for his own ends, personally choreographing the content of the article. He emphasised that the scandalous activities which had come to light related purely to his private life and had never impinged on his professional capabilities. He said, 'I can only hope, that the public will see this sorry affair for what it is – a stupid act in my private life.'⁵⁵

Furthermore he reinforced the message that although he had never been subject to any blackmail attempt, he nevertheless understood the need to resign, considering it the right and only appropriate course of action. As he said to Pincher, 'Any man who has access to secrets and goes to bed with a woman looks a security risk.'⁵⁶ Clearly in this interview Lambton was trying to minimise the impact of the scandal on both himself and on the government by labelling it as a private indiscretion with little personal or political importance. He further emphasised this to reporters

at his estate just one day later, after the publication of the Pincher interview, saying, ‘Naturally, my wife and the rest of the family are standing by me. It is a matter of no domestic importance.’⁵⁷

Lambton’s public confession did not end simply with a few carefully constructed press interviews, however. Arguably the zenith of his self-enforced humiliation and attempt to invoke anti-shame came in a television interview on the programme *Talk-In to Day* broadcast on BBC1 at 10.10 p.m. on Friday 25 May 1973, where he was interviewed by Robin Day.⁵⁸ A full transcript of the interview resides in the official government papers related to the Lambton affair held in the National Archives, and its contents made headline news at home and abroad in the days that followed.⁵⁹ Lambton began the interview by expressing his regret at having let down the Prime Minister over the revelations regarding his private life, but stated that given what had happened in the Profumo scandal, he knew it was imperative that he quickly told the truth about what had transpired.⁶⁰ Day asked Lambton why he had not learned lessons from the Profumo affair, especially given his own comments to the press at the time. Surely he knew that consorting with prostitutes would likely endanger his position? Lambton responded by saying: ‘I think unfortunately one of the frailties you might say of human nature is that one can very often see things in other people which one cannot see in oneself.’⁶¹

Day then asked Lambton, ‘Why should a man of your social position and charm and personality have to go to whores for sex?’ Lambton replied nonchalantly: ‘I think that people sometimes like variety. I think it’s as simple as that and I think that impulse is probably understood by almost everybody. Don’t you?’⁶²

Day did not offer a response, preferring instead to ask Lambton whether drugs were part of the social scene in which he and the prostitutes were involved. Lambton somewhat candidly replied:

if anyone asks me have you ever taken a drug I would have to say upon occasions yes because I have travelled ... and in many parts of the world drugs are a way of life ... so I cannot say that I have not taken drugs. But for instance taking opium in China is totally different from taking it in Berwick-on-Tweed. One is I think an experience, ‘do in Rome as the Romans do’ and the other is a violation of the laws of the country.⁶³

When asked whether he had suspected he might be blackmailed as a result of what he was doing, Lambton reiterated that he considered it a ‘private matter’ which was of no concern to anyone else. He went on:

infidelity is not really a national issue. The Prime Minister has to deal with this country's recovery in the world, its trade position, its internal position, the trade union. My petty problem compared to that is a personal one almost and to overdo it or over-state it is to exaggerate very greatly my importance.⁶⁴

Lambton's audacity continued when Robin Day remarked on how understanding Mrs Lambton had been given the circumstances. Lambton commented: 'Yes, I think curiously enough that most men would expect their wives over an incident basically unimportant like this to understand it.'⁶⁵

Day, perhaps only too aware that Lambton was trying to trivialise the scandal and deflect opprobrium from himself, then asked, 'Do you take the view that the private life of a public man with particular responsibilities need not be more strict than that which is expected of ordinary people?' Lambton replied:

I don't think that people can be expected to be one type of person for the first thirty-five or forty-five years of their life and suddenly become a totally different type of plaster saint. I don't think you can expect people to change their personalities and ... their way of life and in the society really in which we are living I think there is a danger that the rulers could become totally divorced and separated from the rules ... and from the people.⁶⁶

Lambton admitted nonetheless that he had broken these rules and that he was now 'paying the price' for his actions in terms of the loss of his career. He was adamant, however, that he had not divulged any official secrets to Norma Levy or to any of the other prostitutes he had entertained. As he explained:

People don't go to call-girls to talk about business affairs or secret affairs and anyone for instance who was with a call-girl, I mean if the call-girl suddenly said to me 'Please, darling, tell me about the laser ray' or 'What do you think of the new Rolls Royce engine for the MRCA?' I mean I would have known that something was up, that this was a deliberate plant ...⁶⁷

Lambton went on to say that his main regrets were two-fold: the disgrace that the scandal had brought to his family name and the fact that politics, which he described as 'the ruling passion' of his life, was no longer a part of who he was or what he did.⁶⁸

Robin Day concluded the interview with Lord Lambton by saying:

I can't think of any other politician in this main stream of political life in this country who would talk about this matter as you have done with such

frankness for so long and many people might say courage too, why did you want to ... why did you accept this invitation to do a television interview in which you could talk about these matters?⁶⁹

Lambton replied:

Well my first reaction when I got the producer's telegram was not to do it and of course my first reaction to the whole thing was that I will not really show myself again, I think that is the natural reaction of someone in these circumstances. But it really occurred to me when I re-read the letter that one has to face things again and this was perhaps the most indirect and honest way of doing it in which one could show something of oneself.⁷⁰

Clearly, Lambton believed that honour via honesty drew the sting from the lasting power of shame, and at face value at least, as we will see in the section 'Public Reaction' below, it seemed that his bold strategy of transparency had been effective. Lambton was able to mitigate some of the personal opprobrium generated by the scandal and elicit a great degree of public sympathy over his situation. However, as we will see, much of his public performance was arguably what might be described as 'libertine bravado', and in reality, the scandal made him into a reclusive, ashamed and broken man.

Political Reaction

By employing a similar tactic to Lord Lambton, the political establishment in the aftermath of the revelations regarding Lambton's private life distanced itself from the specific and libidinous details of the scandal, concentrating instead upon an investigation of the potential security risk. In the wake of the Profumo scandal and in the context of Watergate, the British government was anxious to downplay the moral opprobrium associated with one of its members and instead concentrated on professionally mitigating any potential political fall-out or disgrace.⁷¹ It was clear that, for the reputation of Parliament and for the political careers of many, they could scarcely afford to do otherwise.

The initial reaction from both sides of the House over the Lambton affair was to sympathise with the Prime Minister's difficult and uncomfortable situation and to praise the transparency and speed with which he reacted to events as they unfolded.⁷² Both Heath and his Labour opponent

Mr Harold Wilson (1916–95) realised the potential significance of the scandal and quickly agreed to an investigation into any latent security risks associated with it, despite both Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe insisting that this was wholly unnecessary. The experiences of history, alongside the prevailing global political climate, meant that Parliament had to be seen to scrutinise itself carefully, and thus Heath ordered an independent Commission of Inquiry to be chaired by the English Law Lord and judge Lord Diplock (1907–85).⁷³

Lord Diplock was tasked with investigating the narrative of the Lambton affair, to ascertain the extent of the security risks involved, to determine whether any other individuals were involved in the alleged prostitution ring and to make recommendations for future security measures in light of the evidence uncovered. The papers of the so-called ‘Security Commission’ reflect that a wide range of evidence was collected and analysed, although much of it was indirect and second-hand material. Although the Security Commission debated at length whether it should (or indeed could) have key witnesses brought before it to give evidence (such as Colin and Norma Levy), it was agreed that this was unnecessary.⁷⁴ This decision led to subsequent criticism of the accuracy and usefulness of its findings.⁷⁵ Yet the papers do reveal that meetings did take place between Lord Diplock and Lords Lambton and Jellicoe—a fact that seems to have been overlooked by critics of the commission.⁷⁶

The report of the Security Commission was published in July of 1973, and its findings confirmed the results of a police investigation which had concluded that no other ministers were involved beyond Lords Lambton and Jellicoe.⁷⁷ In addition to this deduction, the commission came to two further conclusions about the security risks involved. First, it intimated that it was rather unfortunate that Lord Jellicoe had been caught up in the affair. Although he had admitted to using prostitutes, this activity was in no way related to the vice ring that Lord Lambton had unwittingly become involved in. Jellicoe’s conduct had not been ‘criminal’ or ‘abnormal’ and had also been discreet.⁷⁸ He posed no security risk and had unluckily been implicated along with Lambton as his surname was found in Norma Levy’s diary. However, it transpired that this was because ‘Jellico’ (note the different spelling) was the name of a London hotel used by the prostitution ring and not because Lord Jellicoe was one of their clients.⁷⁹

The second conclusion reached by the commission was that although Lord Lambton did not disclose any classified information as part of his experiences with prostitutes, he nevertheless did pose a security risk. This

was because of his involvement with drugs and his enjoyment ‘of sexual practices which deviated from the norm’.⁸⁰ The photographic evidence presented to the commission regarding Lord Lambton’s sexual proclivities left the members in no doubt that he was ‘wide open to blackmail’.⁸¹ More concerning from their point of view was his admitted cannabis use. As the report explained:

Under the influence of this drug we consider that there would be a significant danger of his divulging, without any unconscious intension to do so, items of classified information which might be of value to a foreign intelligence service in piecing together from a number of different sources a complete picture from which conclusions dangerous to national security could be drawn. We do not suggest that Lord Lambton would consciously commit indiscretions in his normal state of mind; but we think that there would be a real risk that he might do so in a mood of irresponsibility induced by drugs; and although we are satisfied that none of the prostitutes whom he actually used had any sort of connection, however remote, with any foreign intelligence service, there could be no guarantee that this would always be so if he continued in his course of conduct.⁸²

In consequence of this particular finding and its implications for standards of security, the commission made several recommendations: first, that on becoming a minister, individuals (under the guidance and monitoring of the Permanent Secretary of the department in question) should be fully briefed about the security arrangements appropriate to their responsibility by the security services; second, that any minister appointed to a post which involved the handling of more sensitive information than his or her previous post should be re-briefed by the security services; and third, and in the wake of allegations that Lord Lambton had regularly left his official briefcase in communal areas located in the brothel he visited,⁸³ that cabinet ministers should have security containers installed in their homes to ensure that confidential material was secure at all times. Finally, although the commission considered recommending a system of positive vetting for ministers, it concluded that this was unnecessary and instead recommended that the Prime Minister regularly remind ministers of appropriate conduct and the potential security implications of scandalous behaviour.⁸⁴ The commission further recommended that when the Prime Minister was considering the appointment of a minister who was not known to him personally, that he should satisfy himself ‘that there is no character defect or other circumstance which would mean that the appointment of that person would endanger security’.⁸⁵

In his statement to the House of Commons regarding the findings of the Security Commission made on 12 July 1973, the Prime Minister accepted all of the report's recommendations and pledged to adopt all of them with immediate effect.⁸⁶ In the wake of this speech, in the following week Mr Charles Loughlin, MP for West Gloucestershire, led the submission of an Early Day Motion along with five other Labour politicians (James Wellbeloved, David Stoddart, A.W. Stallard, Thomas Cox and Neil Kinnock) arguing that the commission had not gone into enough depth in their investigations and instead demanding a public inquiry into the affair.⁸⁷ On the following day, as part of a parliamentary debate on the findings of the commission, Loughlin engaged in a prolonged verbal tussle with the Home Secretary, Robert Carr, who steadfastly refused to countenance a public inquiry.⁸⁸ Indeed, in the main, the Security Commission's report and the government's handling of the affair were praised by politicians and the electorate to the extent that Heath's popularity dramatically improved in the summer opinion polls of 1973. This even led some ministers to relax and suggest somewhat cavalierly that the government could do with *more* sex scandals, not fewer, in the run-up to the next general election.⁸⁹

The other key reaction to the Lambton affair amongst politicians was to complain about the press invasion of the privacy of public figures such as politicians. Concerns such as these were voiced in the days following the resignations of Lords Lambton and Jellicoe, with ministers from across the political spectrum decrying 'the sacrifice of human beings ... for the purposes of journalistic gain'.⁹⁰ This disquiet continued, and in June 1973, Mr John Gorst, Conservative MP for Hendon North, wrote to the Press Council demanding an inquiry into the 'unethical conduct' exhibited by the *News of the World* and the *Sunday People* in their coverage of the Lambton–Jellicoe affair and, in particular, their alleged use of surveillance devices such as bugs, phone taps and infra-red cameras.⁹¹ Mr Winston Churchill, Conservative MP for Stretford, also voiced his contempt for the press in a radio interview broadcast at the time, and suggested that by photographing Lord Lambton in bed with a call-girl, the *News of the World* had shown the 'unacceptable face of journalism'.⁹² Mrs Shirley Williams, Shadow Home Secretary, then added a further contribution to the growing concern, saying:

One does not want to restrict press freedom. It is one of the most delicate lines to draw between the right to privacy and the right to investigate. The real difficulty about some devices is that the individual does not know he

is being investigated. It really is the case that you could get this spreading into a Big Brother situation. We are only just waking up to the technological revolution, which has thrown the delicate balance out of balance.⁹³

In effect, politicians were suggesting that the press should bear the brunt of the shame afforded by a sex scandal because of the questionable methods it employed in exposing the private indiscretions of public figures.⁹⁴ Not everyone agreed with this sentiment, however. As one member of the public who wrote indignantly to *The Observer* put it:

I am getting the impression that the late Walt Disney is directing the Lambton affair from the great beyond. The latest fantasy is that ministers of the Crown have no *privacy*. I was under the illusion that they usually had large *private* houses, large *private* incomes and sent their children to large public schools, which are, in fact – *private*.⁹⁵

Press Reaction

The initial press reaction to the Lambton affair involved perpetuating the story, and the shame associated with it, for as long as possible in order to maximise newspaper sales. This task, however, was made difficult for two reasons. First, the details of Lambton's sexual liaisons with prostitutes were unsuitable for wide public consumption, even by the standards of the relatively sexually liberated 1970s. More importantly, through his various public confessions, Lambton had largely divulged much of the story already, leaving the press only scraps with which to keep the story current and newsworthy, at least in relation to his own involvement.⁹⁶ The only exception to this was a press allegation that Lord Lambton had behaved inappropriately with regard to his office in the Ministry of Defence by giving Norma Levy advice about avionic shares. Upon investigation, however, this suggestion was disproved and was even refuted by Norma Levy herself.⁹⁷ Aside from this scurrilous report, in the immediate aftermath of Lambton's resignation, the press concentrated on providing details about Norma Levy and, to a lesser extent, her husband Colin. These articles concentrated on the Levys' flight to foreign climes to evade the police and the press and their subsequent criminal exploits, as well as Norma Levy's intention to publish her memoirs in a book entitled *I Norma Levy*, which was to contain a chapter entitled 'On Her Majesty's Sexual Service'. In actuality, the book was published but not distributed.⁹⁸

Rather than shaming them for their part in the Lambton affair, newspapers used the Levys, in the first instance, as a conduit through which to keep the story in the public domain. This interest in the Levys became a means to suggest that other public figures were actively involved in their prostitution ring. For leading journalists at that time, the real scandal of the Lambton affair was that the government seemed complicit in a substantial cover-up intended to protect the identities of various public figures who regularly patronised London brothels and who, by their actions, may have placed national security in jeopardy. Thus for the press, it was the government and the security services who were much more deserving of shame and disgrace than Lord Lambton, who had merely been the vehicle through which this larger ‘scandal’ had been uncovered.

The press conducted various lengthy interviews with Norma Levy and Jean Horn (the ‘madam’ ultimately in charge of the prostitution ring which employed Levy). In light of some probably leaked ‘intelligence’ from the various interrogations of individuals embroiled in the Lambton affair, the press promoted a conspiracy theory suggesting that a duke, a judge, a top television personality, a foreign royal and a so-called ‘Third Minister’ were all implicated in the sex scandal alongside Lord Lambton.⁹⁹ However, a Scotland Yard investigation found no evidence to support the claims.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Norma Levy’s well-publicised and calculated statement in *Stern* magazine on 20 June 1973, ‘Last time, I voted for the Tories because they are my best clients’, only served to inflate the media’s pre-occupation with exposing the true extent and full story of the scandal.¹⁰¹ Moreover, recently released cabinet file papers from the National Archives show that the press was on to something and indeed that evidence *was* submitted to the Security Commission by Norma Levy and other prostitutes in the form of witness statements, client logs and diaries. These clearly alleged the regular involvement of various high-profile individuals in the vice ring in question, including the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Ashcombe, the newsreader Andrew Gardner, a member of the House of Lords known as ‘Eddie’, Mr Peter Walker MP, Mr Geoffrey Rippon MP, Mr Anthony Royle MP, Mr Michael Heseltine MP and three other cabinet ministers, one of whom, it was alleged, could easily be recognised by his ‘shrunkened testicles’.¹⁰² None of these details were made public, and instead the unsubstantiated information was buried, with one important exception. On 17 September 1973 an article entitled ‘Scandals in the Club’ appeared in a publication for young Liberal supporters entitled *The Liberator*, and it was later published by the *New Statesman*. The article alleged that a

cover-up had taken place in the wake of the Lambton scandal, disguising the debauchery and corruption involved since it would threaten the position of MPs. The anonymous author then named the Secretary of State for the Environment, Geoffrey Rippon, as one of the individuals involved in the 'call-girl affair'.¹⁰³ Geoffrey Rippon released a statement a day later, denying involvement in the sex scandal and refuting any relationship with Norma Levy. The Prime Minister endorsed this statement, pledged his full support for Rippon and refused to be drawn on the matter further.¹⁰⁴ After this, rumours implicating other individuals in the Lambton scandal largely dissipated.

Despite press attempts to perpetuate the story surrounding the Lambton affair to shame the government into revealing the full details of what transpired, the press were nevertheless very conscious that they were being roundly criticised by the political establishment for their methods of investigative journalism. As we have already seen, complaints were made about the methods, tactics and surveillance technology that news reporters used in order to evidence their stories.¹⁰⁵ However, it could also be argued, in light of the evidence presented in this chapter, that these criticisms were also a form of self-defence, deflecting press' attacks on the name and reputation of the government and the security forces but also intending to wreak wrath and disgrace upon members of the so-called Fourth Estate. Leading newspaper magnates such as Larry Lamb, Rupert Murdoch and Geoffrey Pinnington, along with several well-known journalists, tried their best to exonerate the activities of the press in the Lambton affair. The *News of the World* in particular repeatedly emphasised the fact that although it had investigated the details of the sex scandal involving Lord Lambton, it ultimately had chosen not to publish what it knew, at least until he had resigned from office.¹⁰⁶ These comments did not silence the critics, and nor did a promise by the executive of the National Union of Journalists that it would discuss the matter in the context of its sixteen-point code of conduct.¹⁰⁷ Instead the pressure brought to bear by the political establishment prevailed, and the Press Council conducted a full inquiry into the methods and standards of the newspapers most significantly involved in the Lambton scandal: the *News of the World*, the *Sunday People*, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*.¹⁰⁸

The Press Council's report entitled *Press Conduct in the Lambton Affair* was published in March 1974. As well as documenting the various criticisms levelled at the press in the wake of the scandal by the political establishment, the report also methodically investigated the activities

of the newspapers in question.¹⁰⁹ In the case of the *News of the World*, for instance, the council found that the efforts to secure evidence against individuals embroiled in the scandal was justified, as it was done in an attempt ‘to frustrate dishonesty and prevent serious public ill’. Meanwhile the potential blackmail capabilities of Colin Levy and Peter Goodsell had occurred in a context where ‘there was a lack of diligence on the part of the police in pursuing the matter’. However, the council did conclude that it was ‘indefensible’ and ‘an error of judgment’ on the part of *News of the World* employees to return the said evidence to the ‘persons of ill repute by which they made a large profit’. For this reason, the Press Council ‘severely censured’ the newspaper and ordered that its forthcoming publications be scrutinised.¹¹⁰ Concerning the activities of *The Times*, the *Sunday People* and the *Daily Mail*, however, the council found that these three newspapers were justified in intruding into Lord Lambton’s private life and that of others, since this had been done in the public interest.¹¹¹ In effect, the press argued that the shaming of Lord Lambton was neither its fault nor its responsibility. Instead this was caused by Lambton’s own indiscretion, and the investigations of his actions, in the view of the press, were motivated by the serious risk posed to national security. The council had no further criticisms to make, concluded that ministers could not expect protection from press exposure if they behaved scandalously and, furthermore, saw no reason to amend its code of conduct, the Declaration of Principle, established in 1966.¹¹²

The reaction of the political establishment to the Press Council’s findings was not a positive one. Feelings were best summed up by Mr John Gorst MP, who said in an interview for *The Observer*:

This is a pathetic and cynical report. It reveals the gross inadequacy of the Press Council machinery as a watchdog in the interests of both the Press and the public. The Council has bent over backwards to whitewash the *Sunday People* and accepted their evidence and explanation with the naivety of a total abject simpleton. I fail to see how Parliament can remain inactive as a result of these Press Council failings.¹¹³

Fuelling this scathing sentiment, the editor of the *News of the World* then gave an interview to *The Guardian* the day after the report was published, saying: ‘The censure need not be taken too seriously. It is common gossip in Fleet Street that it was added to the original report of the council’s complaints committee as a sop to the critics.’¹¹⁴

Politicians from across the political spectrum were furious with the outcome of the Press Council's inquiry and dissatisfied that the recommendations of the Younger Committee's report into privacy of 1972 had seemingly been utterly ignored.¹¹⁵ The government then established a Royal Commission into corruption in British public life, which had a remit to investigate the conduct and ethics of the British press.¹¹⁶ The Royal Commission on the Press, as it came to be known, took three years to publish its findings, and when it did so, its recommendations appeared somewhat tame and limited. No legislative change was advocated and no opprobrium was directed at any particular newspaper or media outlet. Instead it was suggested that a code of practice be established for the Press Council and that its membership be widened.¹¹⁷ However, both of these suggestions were eventually rejected, and it was clear that the clamour for privacy was held to be insignificant when compared with the merits of a free press. Arguably, however, and as has been seen in the wake of the Leveson inquiry (2011–2012), the debate on this issue was far from over by the end of the 1970s.¹¹⁸

Public Reaction

The public's reaction to the personal details of the Lambton affair, its immediate impact and how it was handled by the government and the press split into two distinct camps. Some wanted to heap more shame and scorn on the scandal's leading protagonists, whilst others had a great deal of sympathy for Lambton and a moral distaste for what had transpired. Research undertaken for this chapter reveals that correspondence sent to newspaper editors, at least, contained an almost equal balance of opinion. We might assume that, in the aftermath of the so-called 'permissive era' of the 1960s, and in the context of a significant rise in the divorce rate in the early 1970s (aided by legislative reform), attitudes to adultery and extra-marital sex had softened by the time of the Lambton affair. However, this has not been borne out by historical scholarship on the subject.¹¹⁹ Instead, historians such as Lesley Hall have demonstrated that although some change was evident, in the main, exposure to extra-marital encounters was still fairly limited during the 1970s and constraints on sexual experimentation remained strong.¹²⁰

As a result, for some members of the public Lambton's behaviour was immoral, shameful and unforgivable, and given the nature of his public office, he had little alternative but to resign. Indeed the results of a national opinion poll showed that in answer to the specific question 'Do

you think Lord Lambton was right or wrong in resigning his post as Minister?', 74 % of respondents said 'right', 25 % said 'wrong', and just 1 % were uncertain. A further poll which asked the more general question of whether government ministers should resign if they are involved in an illicit affair resulted in 63 % of respondents saying they should resign and 30 % saying they should stay.¹²¹

Three women who wrote separate letters to the *Daily Express* at the time of the scandal emphasised the reasons why they agreed that Lambton's resignation was appropriate:

because we are living in a permissive society never equalled before in our history it seems more vital that men in high places should set an example in clean living. How can the young be anything else but corrupt when important people like Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe behave with total disregard for moral values – especially when both are fathers of large families?

If a man wants to figure in public life, it's his duty to keep his private life clean. It's his choice!

People in public life must live in a way that we, the public, can always respect them. Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe – and probably many more – have let our country down. It goes back to the teaching of the Bible: Of those to whom much has been given much shall be required.¹²²

In *The Times* too, comparable forms of public moralising could be found:

we must require from public men the strictest adherence to morality in its widest sense in their private lives, so that they are themselves witnesses to the faith held by the majority of their electors. It may be said that this is asking for more than we as private individuals are able to give ourselves. There may be truth in this, but we have the right to demand from our public representatives, observance of the highest ideals as an example to ourselves. If a public man cannot strive to this end he should not offer himself for public duties ... sexual immorality can have disastrous consequences because of its potentiality for causing hurt and injury to others. It is time for our public men to stand up and be counted in the cause of morality.¹²³

In a similar vein, the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland called on the government to hold a day of humiliation and prayer over the disclosure of immoral conduct in its ranks, whilst the conference of the Scottish National Party gave a standing ovation to its MP Mr Donald Stewart, who said in reference to the Lambton scandal that 'England, in

addition to economic and other disasters, was being eaten by the maggots of permissiveness and decay'.¹²⁴

The moral rigidity of some of the opinions expressed in the summer of 1973 was largely tempered by a far more substantial outpouring of public sympathy for Lord Lambton. This stood in stark contrast to the various attempts made by the press (and to some extent by the political establishment) to shame and humiliate him. Some support came directly from friends, colleagues and constituency members who paid credit to his professionalism and thanked him for the work he had done on their behalf.¹²⁵ Some commentators deplored his treatment as essentially unchristian. As one woman writing to *The Times* put it: 'To expose prominent figures, whatever their faults by political, social and moral standards, to such incessant public humiliation is inhuman, insensitive, and unwelcome to the greater part of sympathetic humanity.'¹²⁶

Others commended Lambton for his courageousness in being so open and honest about his weaknesses and for 'taking his disgrace on the chin in a manly way'.¹²⁷ By far the most common reaction amongst the British public, however, was to regard his treatment as being overly harsh and to argue that it was unrealistic to expect public figures to behave in a chaste and spotless manner. One commentator wrote to the *Daily Express* saying: 'Can we really afford to discard men of talent, wit, and patriotism because their personal lives fall short of blameless perfection? There will be many that assert that this is going too far.'¹²⁸

Many did, as is evidenced by a flurry of correspondence sent to *The Times* and other newspapers in May 1973 which included comments such as:

Now it appears that extra-marital affairs are equally disastrous to persons in public life – allegedly on security grounds. Everyone knows that such affairs are common in all walks of life. There is no law against them and they do not by any means always result in divorces. Surely what matters is that persons in responsible positions should not break the criminal law, and that those who have access to classified information should not betray this to prostitutes or anyone else? If they have done neither of these things, whose business is it to accept their own what they do with their private lives?¹²⁹

If impeccable marital fidelity is to be made a condition of political office, this should be explicitly stated at the time that such offence is offered. But can anyone dispute that such a condition would result (and would have resulted in the past) in debating persons, the loss of whom would have greatly impoverished our public life?¹³⁰

The political and social price paid by those who fall below the standards demanded is a terrible one. That they have brought this fate upon themselves must add to their agony. They are denied any consultation and a man must be without feeling and imagination to withhold from them a certain sympathy.¹³¹

The very public forum in which Lord Lambton's discretions had been laid bare (partly because of his own very public confession) meant that popular reaction to the scandal and to Lambton himself was strongly articulated by many individuals who might otherwise have stayed silent. The general consensus undoubtedly frowned upon Lambton's private indiscretions, but it also queried the extent to which his behaviour negatively impinged on his professional capacity.

The Lambton affair carries much more significance in the history of scandals than scholars and commentators have hitherto afforded it.¹³² For one thing, we can argue that it was the first major scandal in British political history where sexual indiscretion and the related proclivities of the individuals involved were the key focal point for the shame subsequently inflicted.¹³³ Secondly, Antony Lambton's public confessions in the aftermath of his downfall were the archetype for the kind of self-debasement that is now *de rigueur* when sex scandals involving public figures are exposed. Moreover, and as we have seen, the scandal initiated a prolonged and fractious debate over what should be deemed public and what should be deemed private. Finally, this scandal became a powerful institutional morality tale for both the political establishment and the press which not only showcases what they were prepared to do in order to retain and enhance their power and influence, but also demonstrates the extent to which the rest of society was able to curb the behaviour of these institutions, through the application of shame and suggested conspiracy theories.

THE SEX SCANDAL AS MODERN SHAMING RITUAL

Arguably even more than the Profumo scandal which preceded it, the Lambton affair can be seen as the quintessential British sex scandal, because it was the aberrant nature of Antony Lambton's sexual tastes and added peccadilloes that ultimately proved his undoing. For a variety of different reasons, scandals based on *sexual* misadventure generate the most intrigue and are evidently the most damaging in the modern era.¹³⁴ Moreover, the shaming rituals which they typically trigger occur in the public gaze on a

national scale, transformed into a species of popular entertainment.¹³⁵ The disclosure of sordid intimate details attracts voyeurism, and the disgrace and opprobrium inflicted on the high-profile protagonists seem at times to be almost addictive in their relentlessness; they have been likened to ‘a twenty-first century gladiator sport with the camera lens replacing the lion’.¹³⁶

Shaming rituals applied to public figures embroiled in sex scandals are deemed to have been effective only if the subject is suitably embarrassed and remorseful and if he, or she, visibly pays some sort of penalty for the moral indiscretion that transpires.¹³⁷ To the interested public at least, Lord Lambton’s attempts to trivialise the scandal by appearing nonchalant did deflect some opprobrium for a short period of time, but soon he was widely ridiculed. His former comments on the Profumo affair came back to haunt him, and much fun was made of the fact that the Lambton family motto was ‘Le Jour Arrivera’ (‘The Day Will Come’), with writers suggesting that Lambton was now getting his just desserts for his high moral stance and condemnatory attitude in 1963.¹³⁸ People also lampooned Lambton’s colourful private life by contrasting it with that of his superior, the Prime Minister Edward Heath, who was characterised as ‘a prim and proper confirmed bachelor’.¹³⁹ Behind the scenes, however, a different picture of Lambton emerged from that shown to the public. Transcripts of interviews with Lambton conducted by the security services in June 1973, held in the National Archives, disclose that Lambton was a man in despair. In rationalising his indiscretions, Lambton explained to the interviewing officer that after he had been told that he could not retain his courtesy title, ‘he felt nothing but futility’. The officer went on to explain that Lambton felt that

he had been made to look a perfect fool, that he had almost won the battle and had only been foiled at the last moment by the dishonesty of two Parliamentary clerks. This had become an obsession with him to the extent that he was no longer able to read – and he had been a great reader – and had sought to forget his obsession in frantic activity. He had for example become and enthusiastic and vigorous gardener. Another example of this frenzied activity was his debauchery. After the disclosures in the press he had been in such a state of shock that he was no longer able to recall with any certainty the details of his debauchery. They had been erased from his mind.¹⁴⁰

The officer concluded that Lambton was ‘broken’, and appeared ‘agitated’ and ‘in a condition of extreme mental stress as a result of recent events’.¹⁴¹

Further evidence of the effectiveness of Lambton's shaming was that he did of course 'pay the price' for his reckless behaviour. Not only did he resign from office and give up his beloved politics altogether, but he also fled the country to become something of a recluse, writing well-received historical novels at his villa in Tuscany. His wife, for her part, remained in Britain.¹⁴²

A further key element of the shaming ritual in the modern era is the need for a public confession. This rite of passage in public humiliation not only provides the scandal's protagonist with an opportunity to explain their actions, recognise and admit wrong-doing and ask for clemency: by creating a spectacle, the public confession also vindicates the need for the shaming ritual in the first place.¹⁴³ Lord Lambton was the first high-profile figure to use mass media to make a public confession of his shame to a national audience, although he clearly miscalculated its eventual effect. Such public confessions serve another function in that they create an opportunity for public moralising over the specific details of the scandal concerned. We have already seen from the extent of the political, press and public reaction to the Lambton affair that such sermonising did indeed occur in 1973. However, it is fair to say that the reach and significance of this moralising and its impact did significantly diminish over the course of the twentieth century and beyond, in both Britain and North America more particularly.¹⁴⁴

Academics have described this social transformation as 'the return to reticence',¹⁴⁵ but its causes are the subject of intense scholarly debate. Some scholars have argued that because of changing moral standards during the modern era, sexual activity that was once considered shameful and immoral (for instance adultery or homosexuality) is now much more widely accepted and that thus reports of its incidence rarely cause a fuss.¹⁴⁶ This theme will be explored in more depth in Chap. 8 of this volume. Others point to the 'culture of personality' becoming more important than the 'culture of character' for those in public office, so that public moralising has less value and impact now than in the past. A greater respect for privacy, the growing belief that an interest in scandal is indicative of a vulgarity and the extension of libel law provision have all been suggested as additional causal factors in the demise of public didacticism.¹⁴⁷ The sociologist Ari Adut has offered a further explanation. He has argued that from the 1960s onwards, there is clear and unequivocal evidence of what he terms 'declining modesty'. As he explains, the effect of this has 'dramatically lowered the threshold of shame associated with the public-

ity of sexuality. As a result, sex talk in public has been normalized, indeed banalized.¹⁴⁸ Regardless of causation, this reticent attitude had become far more prevalent by the twenty-first century—so much so, in fact, that although a public confession remains a key aspect of the shaming ritual associated with scandals (and sex scandals in particular), such episodes can now facilitate the rehabilitation of the shamed and their reintroduction into public life. This is arguably best evidenced by the career, scandal and resurgence in popularity of the US President Bill Clinton; a feat in successful public relations management which would scarcely have been deemed possible in the Britain of 1973.¹⁴⁹

As we have already seen from some of the public reaction and sympathy directed towards Lord Lambton, there were some feelings of unease about the very public nature of his humiliation. In relation to this episode and indeed to other sex scandals of the twentieth century, part of the modern shaming ritual involved an analysis of the appropriateness of public humiliation and disgrace to the circumstances and context in question. Typically, individuals come to question whether the application of public opprobrium goes against the values and norms of a modern, civilised society. A series of debates then routinely ensue and are played out in both the press and in Parliament regarding rights to privacy and whether, in contemporary society, it is still reasonable for the populace to expect such high standards of behaviour from public figures.¹⁵⁰

On the one hand, there were arguments that what an individual did in their private life was not for public consumption (regardless of the accepted merits of free speech) if it did not impinge upon the performance of professional duties.¹⁵¹ A clear delineation of public and private was craved. Yet, on the other hand, it is clear that over the course of the modern era, the lines between what information should be defined as public and what private became essentially blurred by the impact of the mass media's intrusiveness, especially with the advent of global electronic communication.¹⁵² Consequently, no such delineation was possible. Similarly, some were concerned that too much was expected of public figures in the modern era in the wake of the Lambton affair and similar episodes in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁵³ There was nevertheless a general consensus that public officials, by the very nature of their role and remit, were duty-bound to uphold their reputation and that of the public they served, rather than tarnish it.¹⁵⁴ As Lord Lambton himself told the NBC anchor-woman Barbara Walters, '...if you are put into a position where you make a fool of yourself and consequently the government of which you are a member, there is no alternative but resignation.'¹⁵⁵

The debates held in the wake of sex scandals over the degree of shame applied to the individual or individuals concerned were not only somewhat predictable: they were also largely rhetorical.

The final aspect of the sex scandal as an example of a modern shaming ritual relates to when it works most effectively. As Joshua Gamson explains, many sex scandals appear to be ‘...simply barometers of sexual moralities, moments in which a society reminds itself what is and is not acceptable sexual behaviour by punishing with public humiliation and the risk of status loss, those highly visible people caught doing the unacceptable stuff.’¹⁵⁶

Yet, in certain circumstances, sex scandals are much more than this. Shame is heightened and prolonged in those instances where its remit can be widened to include an institution’s shortcomings, rather than just those of an individual. Such episodes can reveal much about the true sources of power within a given societal context as various elements fight for moral supremacy and institutional morality tales emerge to curb future misadventure by the parties involved.¹⁵⁷

As we have seen in the Lambton affair, both the press and the political establishment were embroiled in the scandal that ensued, and both tried to extricate themselves from the prevailing opprobrium. Such attempts run the risk of generating conspiracy theories, as the institutions concerned are accused of a cover-up or of instigating a scandal in order to divert attention from a more serious matter.¹⁵⁸ Conspiracy theories did abound in relation to the Lambton affair. It was quite clear from the material held by the Security Commission that other high-profile individuals (many of whom were arguably of more political importance than Lord Lambton) may well have been involved in the call-girl scandal, but their names and activities were suppressed from public view. Indeed, in his meeting with Lord Lambton, the chair of the Security Commission, Lord Diplock, mentioned to Lambton that as ‘an old colleague of his’ was going to chair the Press Council’s review of the press’s involvement in the scandal, it was unlikely that any more information regarding the prostitution ring and its clients would ever come to light.¹⁵⁹ Lord Diplock’s statement implied that the press and the political establishment reached a tacit agreement about the confines of the scandal and the details and recriminations which would and would not become public.¹⁶⁰ His comment also confirms, however, that Lambton was to be the sacrificial lamb in this particular institutional morality tale.

Further intrigue associated with this episode comes with the suggestion that the government and Scotland Yard deliberately colluded to disclose the details of the Lambton affair to the press. This allegedly happened so that the scandal would deflect attention from the long-running and embarrassing scandal of police corruption associated with the Obscene Publications Branch of the Metropolitan Police, commonly known as ‘the Dirty Squad’. The argument goes that by conducting a high-minded, transparent and rigorous investigation of the Lambton affair, the establishment was able to salvage some of the reputation it had lost.¹⁶¹ Another conspiracy theory, suggested more recently by the former MI6 agent Lee Tracey, was that his superiors deliberately helped to expose Lord Lambton’s activities in order to embarrass their great rivals in MI5, who had repeatedly failed to act on information that Lambton might be open to blackmail and was thus a security risk. Lee claims it was he who supplied the *News of the World* photographer with a night-vision lens in order to take better-quality pictures of Lambton’s bedroom antics with Norma Levy and her colleagues.¹⁶² At present, no evidence substantiates these allegations, and perhaps more importantly, we ought to remember, of course, that suggestions such as these can exist only if scandalous behaviour pre-empts them. As the BBC journalist Gerald Priestland once famously said, ‘Journalists belong in the gutter because that is where the ruling classes throw their guilty secrets.’¹⁶³

This chapter has argued that the public humiliation associated with sex scandals is a powerful example of a context where shaming rituals still persist in the modern era. Scandals enable the historian to study social boundaries at a given time in order to investigate what people found acceptable or unacceptable and what was deemed public and private.¹⁶⁴ They also illustrate the methodologies and mechanisms by which shame was applied and the reactions to the shaming of public figures, and how these elements changed over time.

Sex scandals involving politicians were particularly prominent in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century as deference towards the political elites faded and at the same time, political figures became more prominent and the press became more interested.¹⁶⁵ In many ways, the call-girl scandal involving Lord Lambton was *the* most significant sex scandal of the modern era, not least because it resulted in the resignation of two government ministers. It was a controversy firmly based upon sexual impropriety and misadventure. It established the precedent of the protagonist making a full and frank public confession in the full media spotlight, which occasioned further ridicule and disgrace from the reaction

that ensued and was partially reminiscent of former shaming rituals such as charivari or the use of the pillory. The affair instigated debates on issues such as morality, the right to privacy and expected standards in public life amongst prominent figures. These debates were played out in Parliament, in the press and amongst the public and prolonged the ritual of shame and helped to extend its reach and significance.¹⁶⁶ Finally, the Lambton scandal is significant because it embroiled two institutions which emerged during the twentieth century to replace the monarchy as the gatekeepers of power in Great Britain: the political establishment and the press. The tussle between these two institutions to apportion blame and shame over the Lambton affair not only led to inquiries over their own conduct in relation to national security and to a suite of conspiracy theories, but was also indicative of their battle for supremacy, which was set to continue over the rest of the century and beyond.

Political sex scandals still occur in contemporary Britain, but political, press and popular reaction to them has changed. Scandals undoubtedly still inflict shame on the individuals involved, but the impact of that opprobrium is more explosive yet more fleeting because of the speed of modern mass communication media and need not be fatal to the career of the public figure concerned. Arguably, the extent of our exposure to the cult of celebrity through tabloid journalism, social media and reality television is such that because we already know many of the intimate and personal details of high-profile individuals, revelations of their sexual proclivities no longer shock as they once did. Perhaps for this reason, there has been a recent clamour of interest in what we might call ‘retrospective scandals’ where stories and allegations held secret for decades about respected public figures, in many cases since deceased, are revealed for public scrutiny. Arguably, on the one hand this suggests that the ‘golden age’ of scandal has passed into the realms of history. On the other hand, however, it indicates that past scandal is still more than capable of causing shame in the present day.

NOTES

1. T.B. Macaulay (1831) ‘Moore’s Life of Lord Byron’, *Edinburgh Review*, 53, pp. 547–8.
2. For further discussion see J.B. Thompson (2000) *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age* (Cambridge: Polity), pp. 5–6.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

4. A. Adut (2008) *On Scandal: Moral Disturbances in Society, Politics and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 23.
5. For further detailed discussion see *ibid.*, pp. 13–24.
6. W.A. Cohen (1996) *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press), p. 5, see also p. 1.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
9. Adut (2008) *On Scandal*, p. 3.
10. Thompson (2000) *Political Scandal*, p. iv and p. xi.
11. See Cohen (1996) *Sex Scandal*, p. 9. Much of the scholarship on sex scandals has been directed to the North American context. For further discussion of this see Adut (2008) *On Scandal*, Chap. 5; D. Rosen (2009) *Sex Scandal America: Politics and the Ritual of Public Shaming* (Toronto: Key Publishing House); S. Wise Bauer (2008) *The Art of the Public Grovel: Sexual Sin and Public Confession in America* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press); P. Apostolidis and J.A. Williams (2004) (eds) *Public Affairs: Politics in the Age of Sex Scandals* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press) and the essays in A. Dagnes (2011) (ed.) *Sex Scandals in American Politics: A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Construction and Aftermath of Contemporary Political Sex Scandals* (New York and London: Continuum).
12. For further discussion see C.B. Herrup (1999) *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the Second Earl of Castlehaven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) and M. Touchet (1708) *The Case of Sodomy, in the Tryal of Mervin Lord Audley, Earl of Castlehaven, for Committing a Rape and Sodomy with Two of his Servants* (London: J. Morphew), [reference number ESTC 20139 [accessed from *Early English Books Online*: <http://www.jisichistoricbooks.ac.uk/Search.aspx>], accessed 20 January 2016.
13. *Daily Mail*, 12 July 2014.
14. For further discussion of these and other sex scandals from this period see A. Clark (2004) *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) and M.J. Kinservik (2007) *Sex, Scandal and Celebrity in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
15. For further discussion of these and other sex scandals from this period see D. Wahrman (2007) *The Making of the Modern Self:*

- Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press); E.A. Smith (2005 edition) *A Queen on Trial: The Affair of Queen Caroline* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing); K. Flieger Samuelian (2010) *Royal Romances: Sex, Scandal and Monarchy in Print, 1780–1821* (Basingstoke: Palgrave); D.S. Nash (2010) ‘Writing “Cuckold on the Forehead of a Dozen husbands”’: Mid-Victorian Monarchy and the Construction of Bourgeois Shame’ in D.S. Nash and A.M. Kilday (eds) *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 153–72; T. Fisher (1995) *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of Late Victorian Britain* (Stroud: Sutton); H. Montgomery Hyde (1976) *The Cleveland Street Scandal* (London: W.H. Allen); L. Chester, D. Leitch and C. Simpson (1977) *The Cleveland Street Affair* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson); H.G. Cocks (2003) *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: I.B. Taurus); and T. Aronson (2013) *Prince Eddy and the Homosexual Underworld* (London: Thistle Publications).
16. For further discussion of this see A. Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon* (London: W.H. Allen), pp. 14–16 and pp. 45–6.
 17. Thompson (2000) *Political Scandal*, pp. 102–3. See also A. Dagnes (2011) ‘Introduction’ in Dagnes (ed.) *Sex Scandals*, p. 2.
 18. See for instance R. Davenport-Hines (2013) *An English Affair: Sex, Class and Power in the Age of Profumo* (London: William Collins); Sir O. Popplewell (2014) *The Prime Minister and his Mistress* (Raleigh, NC: Lulu Publishing Service); J. Grigg (2002 edition) *Lloyd George: The People’s Champion, 1902–1911* (London: Penguin); and D.R. Thorpe (2011) *Supermac: The Life of Harold Macmillan* (London: Pimlico).
 19. See F. When (2001) *The Soul of Indiscretion: Tom Driberg, Poet, Philanderer, Legislator and Outlaw—his Life and Indiscretions* (London: Fourth Estate).
 20. For further discussion see A. Dagnes and J. Smith (2011) ‘The Politics, Geography and Constituencies of Political Sex Scandals’ in Dagnes (ed.) *Sex Scandals*, pp. 89–90.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–1. See also C. Sipes (2011) ‘Men, Mistresses, and Media Framing: Examining Political Sex Scandals’ in Dagnes (ed.) *Sex Scandals*, p. 95.
 22. *Ibid.*, pp. 108–16.

23. For further discussion of these issues see Adut (2008) *On Scandal*, p. 182.
24. For further discussion see K.O. Garrigan (1992) 'Decorum, Scandal and the Press' in K.O. Garrigan (ed.) *Victorian Scandals: Representations of Gender and Class* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press), p. 7, and *The Guardian*, 5 July 2009.
25. For further discussion of this episode see Davenport-Hines (2013) *An English Affair*; A. Summers and S. Dorril (2013 edition) *The Secret Worlds of Stephen Ward: Sex, Scandal and Deadly Secrets in the Profumo Affair* (London: Headline); Parliamentary Papers, 'The Denning Report (The Profumo Affair)', Cmnd 2152 (1963); P. Knightley and C. Kennedy (1987) *An Affair of State: The Profumo Case and the Framing of Stephen Ward* (London: Jonathan Cape); and G. Swanson (1994) 'Touching Masculinity: Governing Sexuality and the Profumo Affair', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 5, 1, pp. 53–63.
26. H. Montgomery Hyde (1986) *A Tangled Web: Sex Scandals in British Politics and Society* (London and Sydney: Futura), p. 274.
27. For further discussion of Lambton's biographical details see *The Times*, 24 May 1973; *Time Magazine*, 6 April 1973; various authors (1991) *Scandal: Inside Stories of Power, Intrigue and Corruption, Part 31, Lord Lambton: The Peer, The Prostitutes and the Press* (London: Orbis); and the obituaries produced shortly after his death in late December 2006, such those as in *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, 2 January 2007.
28. *The Telegraph*, 9 October 2013.
29. See *Manchester Guardian*, 20 May 1957 and *The Observer*, 3 July 1960. For further details see the obituaries in *The Independent* and *The Telegraph*, 2 January 2007.
30. See Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 29 March 1957, vol. 567, cols 1491–581, and *Manchester Guardian*, 23 and 30 March as well as 25 April 1957. For further discussion of the issues Lambton felt particularly passionate about see *The Guardian*, 3 February 1967, and *The Telegraph*, 2 January 2007, as well as M. Garnett (2011 edition) 'Antony Lambton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/97561>, accessed 5 February 2016; Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 156, and J. Green and N.J. Karolides (2005 edition) *Encyclopaedia of Censorship* (New York: Facts on File), pp. 404–5.

31. *The Guardian*, 31 October 1969, and Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 156.
32. Parliamentary Papers, Peerage Act, c. 48 (1963), and *The Times*, 11 February 1970.
33. See *The Guardian*, 27 February 1970 and *The Times*, 27 April 1970.
34. Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 7 February 1972, vol. 830, cols 975–8, and *The Times*, 8 February 1972.
35. Parliamentary Papers, ‘Third Report from the Committee of Privileges: The Style and Title of the Honourable Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed’, Cmnd 324 (1971–2). See also Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 10 February 1972, vol. 830, cols 1574–88, and 22 June 1972, Vol. 839, cols 731–3; Hansard, Business of the House, 1 March and 3 May 1973; as well as *The Guardian*, 24 June 1972, and *The Times*, 7 and 17 July 1972.
36. See National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: Reference to the Security Commission of the Case of Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe, CAB 164/1240.
37. See National Archives, Prime Minister’s Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1970–4, PREM 15/1904, and *The Guardian*, 25 May 1973.
38. See the detailed statements of various individuals who were interviewed by police and provided similar testimony in National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: Security Commission, Minutes, Papers and Reports, 1973, CAB 194/8.
39. *Ibid.*
40. See National Archives, PREM 15/1904.
41. See National Archives, CAB 194/8.
42. See National Archives, PREM 15/1904. It is interesting to note that Lambton in fact produced two letters of resignation. The first indicated that he had tried to resign from the government in 1972 but had been dissuaded from doing so. The first letter also made no reference to the reasons for his tendering his resignation a second time. It is likely that he was made to redraft the letter in order to minimise the intrigue associated with his sudden departure from office.
43. See *The Times*, 22 May 1973, and *Daily Express*, 2 May 1973.
44. National Archives, Ministry of Defence, Security Papers relating to the Lambton Affair (1973), DEFE 23/207. See also *The Sun*, 30 April 1973, and *News of the World*, 20 May 1973.

45. *News of the World*, 29 April and 20 May 1973, and *Private Eye*, 18t May 1973. For further discussion see Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 158, and various authors (1991) *Scandal*, pp. 974–7 and pp. 982–3.
46. See for instance a letter published in the *Glasgow Herald* on 23 of May 1973. Evidence of government panic over the likely leak can be seen in National Archives, Ministry of Defence, Private Office, Registered Files (1973), DEFE 13/844.
47. *The Age*, 24 May 1973.
48. See National Archives, PREM 15/1904. See also *The Times*, 24 May 1973.
49. *Ibid.* For further discussion see also Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 161, and M. Parris and K. Maguire (2005 edition) *Great Parliamentary Scandals: Five Centuries of Calumny, Smear and Innuendo* (London: Robson Books), p. 191.
50. See for instance *Daily Express*, 25 May 1973.
51. National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: The Case of Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe, 1973, CAB 164/1242. See also *The Times*, 24 May and 14 June 1973.
52. *Evening Standard*, 6 June 1963, and *The Guardian*, 10 June 1963.
53. The concept of anti-shame will be explored in more detail in Chap. 8 of this volume.
54. *Daily Express*, 24 May 1973.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *The Times*, 25 May 1973.
58. Lord Lambton also conducted a similar interview in the USA in June 1973 with Barbara Walters for the NBC *Today* show. For details of this see the *Eugene-Register-Guard*, 24 June 1973.
59. See for instance *Daily Express* and *The Times*, 26 May 1973, as well as *The Age*, 28 May 1973.
60. National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: Security Commission, Minutes, Papers and Reports, 1973, CAB 194/7, p. 2.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
70. *Ibid.*
71. For more on the aftermath of the Profumo affair see the references cited in n. 25 above. For more details on Watergate see B. Woodward and C. Bernstein (1998 edition) *All the President's Men* (London: Bloomsbury).
72. See for instance Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 24 May 1973, vol. 857, cols 666–75, and *The Times*, 24 and 25 May 1973; *The Spectator*, 25 May 1973; and *The Observer*, 27 May 1973.
73. See Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 24 May 1973, vol. 857, cols 666–75, and *The Times*, 24 and 25 May 1973. The other individuals on the commission were Lord Simon of Glaisdale (Law Lord), Lord Sinclair (Law Lord), Lord Garner (former head of the Diplomatic Service), Sir Philip Allen (former Permanent Under-Secretary in the Home Office), General Sir Dudley Ward and Sir Harold Kent (former Procurator-General and Treasury Solicitor): see National Archives, CAB 194/7.
74. See National Archives, CAB 164/1240 and CAB 164/1242.
75. See for instance *The Times*, 18 July 1973.
76. National Archives, CAB 194/7.
77. See Parliamentary Papers, 'Report of the Security Commission (Earl Jellicoe and Lord Lambton)', Cmnd 5367 (1973), p. 10, and *The Times*, 29 May 1973.
78. Parliamentary Papers, 'Report of the Security Commission', pp. 6–7.
79. See National Archives, CAB 194/7.
80. *Ibid.*
81. *Ibid.*
82. Parliamentary Papers, 'Report of the Security Commission', p. 9, and *The Times*, 13 July 1973. A subsequent newspaper report poured scepticism on the suggestion that cannabis had an 'inevitable effect' on its users: see *The Guardian*, 13 July 1973, and further commentary provided in G. Marshall (1984) *Constitutional Conventions: The Rules and Forms of Political Accountability* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 104.
83. See for instance National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: Correspondence from Arthur Lewis MP and Members of the

- Public Relevant to the Case of Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe, 1973, CAB 164/1243; CAB 194/8; and DEFE 23/207.
84. Parliamentary Papers, 'Report of the Security Commission', pp. 10–11.
 85. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
 86. See Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 12 July 1973, vol. 859, cols 1782–90. For further discussion of this see *The Guardian* and *The Times*, 13 July 1973, as well as the implementation protocol in National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: Implementation of the Report of the Security Commission, July 1973, CAB 164/1244.
 87. National Archives, Cabinet Office Papers: Reference to the Security Commission of the Case of Lord Lambton and Lord Jellicoe, CAB 164/1241.
 88. See Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 19 July 1973, vol. 860, cols 845–75, as well as *The Guardian* and *The Times*, 20 July 1973.
 89. For further discussion see Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 162.
 90. *Daily Express*, 25 May 1973.
 91. *The Guardian*, 5 June 1973.
 92. *The Times*, 4 and 5 June 1973.
 93. *The Guardian*, 5 June 1973.
 94. Similar worries were voiced in the House of Lords at this time (see *The Times*, 5 and 7 June 1973), with Lord Wigg describing Lords Lambton and Jellicoe as having been unnecessarily 'pilloried' by the actions of the press.
 95. *The Observer*, 10 June 1973.
 96. The only attempt to do this was the publishing of short interviews with Mrs Lambton. However, as she was very vocal in her dedication to her husband regardless of his transgressions, there was little that was newsworthy about her opinion: see *Daily Express*, 25 May 1973.
 97. See *The Times*, 26 June 1973; Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 25 June 1973, vol. 343, cols 1705–10; and National Archives, DEFE 23/207.
 98. See for instance the press material found in National Archives, DEFE 23/207, as well as *The Guardian*, 2 June 1973; *The Guardian*, 17 and 24 July 1973; *The Guardian*, 5 September

1973*; *Daily Mirror*, 7 September 1973*; *The Times*, 8 October 1973; *The Times* and *The Guardian*, 15 December 1973*; *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*, 14 March 1974*; *Daily Mail*, 8 July 1978*; *The Sun*, 27 September 1978*; and *The Telegraph*, 28 September 1978*. I am grateful to the Metropolitan Police Service for providing me with copies of newspaper cuttings from its archived files (collated from MEPO 26/377-9) (see asterisked references).

99. See for instance *News of the World*, 27 May 1973, and *Daily Express*, 28 May 1973.
100. *The Times*, 28 May 1973, and *Daily Express*, 28 May 1973.
101. National Archives, DEFE 23/207, and see also *The Times*, 21 June 1973.
102. National Archives, CAB 194/8.
103. See discussion in *The Times*, 18 September 1973.
104. See *The Times*, 22 September 1973.
105. See *The Guardian*, 6 June 1973. For detailed information regarding press practices in the Lambton affair, see the testimony of the journalist Trevor Kempson and the photographer Brian Thomas found in National Archives, CAB 194/8.
106. See comments reported in *The Times*, 24, 26 and 30 May as well as 23 July 1973.
107. *The Guardian*, 7 June 1973.
108. See *The Observer*, 25 November 1973.
109. For discussion of the content and findings of the report see *The Observer*, 10 March 1974, and *The Times* and *The Guardian*, 11 March 1974.
110. The Press Council (1974) *Press Conduct in the Lambton Affair* (London: Press Council), p. 21-3.
111. See *ibid.*, pp. 23-36.
112. See *ibid.*, pp. 36-7.
113. *The Observer*, 10 March 1974.
114. *The Guardian*, 11 March 1974.
115. Parliamentary Papers, 'Report of the Committee on Privacy' (The Younger Report on Privacy), Cmnd 5012 (1972).
116. See discussion of the remit of the commission in *The Times*, 2 and 3 May 1974.
117. Parliamentary Papers, 'Royal Commission of the Press' (Finer and McGregor Commission), Cmnd 6810-1 (1977).

118. For full details of the report and the evidence submitted to the committee members see: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/>, accessed 5 February 2016; <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1213/hc07/0780/0780.asp>, accessed 5 February 2016. For further discussion of this debate see also J. Stanyer (2013) *Intimate Politics: Publicity, Privacy and the Personal Lives of Politicians in Media-Saturated Democracies* (Cambridge: Polity) and also G. Johnson (2012) *Hack: Sex, Drugs and Scandal from Inside the Tabloid Jungle* (London: Simon and Schuster).
119. For further discussion of the apparent rise in ‘permissiveness’ in twentieth-century Britain see H. Cook (2007 edition) *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex and Contraception 1800–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). For evidence of the impact of Parliamentary Papers, The Divorce Act, c. 55 (1969) on the divorce rate in England and Wales over the course of the twentieth century see *The Guardian*, 28 January 2010.
120. See L.A. Hall (2013 edition) *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), pp. 136–65; L.A. Hall (2001) ‘Sexuality’ and J. Lewis (2001) ‘Marriage’ both in I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.) *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson), pp. 51–68 and 68–85 respectively; M. Collins (2003) *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Atlantic Books); and A. Bingham (2009) *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918–1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
121. See *Daily Express*, 28 May 1973, and *The Times*, 14 June 1973.
122. *Daily Express*, 29 May 1973.
123. *The Times*, 31 May 1973. See also *The Times*, 28, 29 and 30 May 1973.
124. For further discussion see *The Age*, 28 May 1973.
125. See for instance *The Times*, 24 May, 28 May and 26 July 1973, and *Daily Express*, 24 May 1973.
126. *The Times*, 28 May 1973.
127. See *The Times*, 24 May 1973, and *The Guardian*, 7 June 1973.
128. *Daily Express*, 24 May 1973.
129. *The Times*, 26 May 1973.
130. *Ibid.*
131. *Ibid.*

132. The author would argue that *The Spectator's* decision to number the Lambton affair as thirty-fourth in the top fifty political scandals in British history is based on a limited understanding of the significance of the scandal. See *The Spectator*, 11 July 2009.
133. This point was made at the time by a North American newspaper, the *Toledo Blade*, 3 June 1973, and is also an opinion proffered in S. Berlinkski, T. Dewan and K. Dowding (2012) *Accounting for Ministers: Scandal and Survival in British Government 1945–2007* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 131.
134. Dagnes (2011) 'Introduction', p. 3. See also L.S. Maule and R.K. Goidel (2003) 'Adultery, Drugs and Sex: An Experimental Investigation of Individual Reactions to Unethical Behaviour by Public Officials', *Social Science Journal*, 40, pp. 65–70.
135. See Sipes (2011) 'Men, Mistresses, and Media Framing', pp. 96–7, and P. Apostolidis and J.A. Williams (2004) 'Sex Scandals and Discourses of Power' in Apostolidis and Williams (eds) *Public Affairs*, p. 6.
136. Rosen (2009) *Sex Scandal America*, p. 8. See also Adut (2008) *On Scandal*, p. 182.
137. Thompson (2000) *Political Scandal*, p. 85.
138. *Time Magazine*, 6 April 1973.
139. *The Journal (North East News)*, 13 May 2013.
140. National Archives, CAB 194/7.
141. *Ibid.*
142. For further discussion of Lambton's life after 1973 see his obituaries which appeared in *The Independent* and *The Telegraph*, 2 January 2007. One irony of the scandal was that owing to his resignation, Lambton was able to keep his title and was thereafter known as 'Lord Lambton': see *The Guardian*, 29 May 1973.
143. Wise Bauer (2008) *The Art of the Public Grovel*, pp. 2–3 and p. 108.
144. For further discussion of this in the British context in particular see *The Observer*, 5 July 2009, and *Daily Mail*, 7 December 2014. For the American context see J.A. Williams (2004) 'Privacy in the (Too Much) Information Age' in Apostolidis and Williams (eds) *Public Affairs*, pp. 213–31.
145. J.H. Summers (2000) 'What Happened to Sex Scandals? Politics and Peccadilloes, Jefferson to Kennedy', *Journal of American History*, 87, 3, p. 835.

146. Berlinkski, Dewan and Dowding (2012) *Accounting for Ministers*, p. 148.
147. For further discussion of these arguments see Summers (2000) 'What Happened to Sex Scandals?', pp. 838–41.
148. Adut (2008) *On Scandal*, p. 181 and also pp. 190–209. For a similar argument see Berlinkski, Dewan and Dowding (2012) *Accounting for Ministers*, pp. 148–9.
149. For further discussion see C.K. Drenovsky (2011) 'Game Changer: The Clinton Scandal and American Sexuality' in Dagnes (ed.) *Sex Scandals*, pp. 12–27, and D. Owen (2000) 'Popular Politics and the Clinton/Lewinsky Affair: The Implications for Leadership', *Political Psychology*, 21, 1, pp. 161–77. An example closer to home might be the scandal surrounding Cecil Parkinson in the 1980s.
150. For the historical typicality of these debates in the wake of sex scandals see for instance Clark (2004) *Scandal*, p. 1.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 221, and with reference to the aftermath of the Lambton affair see *The Guardian*, 14 July 1973.
152. See Thompson (2000) *Political Scandal*, p. 6; Dagnes (2011) 'Introduction', p. 17; and Adut (2008) *On Scandal*, p. 288.
153. See for instance in reference to the Lambton affair see *The Observer*, 27 May 1973, and *The Times*, 14 June 1973. For further discussion of ministerial accountability in the 1980s and 1990s see D. Woodhouse (1994) *Ministers and Parliament: Accountability in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
154. For further discussion see C. Pincher (1978) *Inside Story: A Documentary of the Pursuit of Power* (London: Book Club Associates), p. 276; Marshall (1984) *Constitutional Conventions*, p. 105; and Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 318.
155. *Eugene-Register-Guard*, 24 June 1973.
156. J. Gamson (2001) 'Normal Sins: Sex Scandal Narratives as Institutional Morality Tales', *Social Problems*, 48, 2, p. 186.
157. Gamson (2001) 'Normal Sins', p. 186 and p. 199; Clark (2004) *Scandal*, pp. 1–2; and Thompson (2000) *Political Scandal*, pp. 6–7.
158. For the historical typicality of this see Clark (2004) *Scandal*, p. 3.
159. National Archives, CAB 194/7.
160. For further discussion of the growing power of the press in the modern era see C. Browne (1996) *The Prying Game: The Sex,*

Sleaze and Scandals of Fleet Street and the Media Mafia (London: Robson Books).

161. For evidence that gives credence to this theory see *The Times*, 30 May 1973; various authors (1991) *Scandal*, pp. 968–73; and Doig (1990) *Westminster Babylon*, p. 158. Lord Lambton may have been selected for this humiliation because of former comments he had made against the press (see *Manchester Guardian*, 20 January 1956), which may have made them only too keen to participate in his downfall. For more on the police corruption scandal itself see *The Times*, 29 November 1969; B. Cox, J. Shirley and M. Short (1977) *The Fall of Scotland Yard* (London: Penguin); and M. Hames (2000) *The Dirty Squad: The Inside Story of the Obscene Publications Branch* (London: Warner Books).
162. See *Mail on Sunday*, 18 January 2004, and *Sunderland Echo*, 19 January 2004.
163. R. Andrews (1993) *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 486.
164. See Rosen (2009) *Sex Scandal America*, p. 7.
165. For further discussion of the history of British political sex scandals in the second half of the twentieth century see *The Times*, 27 October 1986.
166. The Lambton affair was debated across the globe largely on account of its contemporaneousness with the Watergate scandal. The journalist Hugh McIlvanny dismissed such comparisons, saying that ‘the sex scandal in British politics relates to Watergate as a dirty postcard does to a letter bomb’: see *Daily Express*, 28 May 1973. Americans were equally indifferent to the significance of the affair. As one correspondent wrote in the wake of Lambton’s resignation, ‘The British have had a lovely week indulging in one of their periodic fits of morality and inverted snobbery’: see *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 26 May 1973.

Lady Isobel Barnett: Shoplifting and Sympathy—The Last Gasp of Presumptive Shame?

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of a personal tragedy that culminated in the suicide of a prominent female broadcaster, beloved by her generation, her biographer tried to rationalise her actions as prompted by intense feelings of shame:

The real Isobel Barnett remains an enigma. Her professionalism demanded the utmost correctness and propriety in every situation, her public appearances were always faultless. But behind the strong resolve acquired from a Presbyterian upbringing and a Quaker education, there were anxieties and insecurities crushed in the iron control of her obsessive self-discipline.¹

On 19 October 1980, the former television personality Lady Isobel Barnett, privately distraught after her conviction for shoplifting, deliberately took a very large number of distalgesic painkillers and died as a result some time after this.² It was the end of a period of intense trauma for a highly distressed woman with a widely known and trusted public persona who had become the television face of caring gentility. From being one of the most recognised women of her generation, she had become, in later years, a reclusive individual who had suddenly taken to shoplifting in her local area, for reasons that arguably remain in the realm of speculation. Yet her death further provoked and brought to light many issues associated with shame and the twentieth century, and indeed its further ‘discovery’ in connection with new forms of social and personal relationships. Isobel Barnett’s story is about personality constructed in the mind of the consuming public. But

it is also a story about an individual pulled in several directions by upbringing, place in the local community and place in the wider community of modern media, and an individual affected by issues of contemporary duty, propriety and status. Moreover, the story also showcases society's reaction to the whole phenomenon of shoplifting and how this came to be pathologised as much more than simple theft. From the example of Lady Isobel Barnett, modern society was able to see shame functioning in a nexus of emotions that also contained boredom, loneliness, confusion, old age, emotional trauma and intense loss of esteem. Lastly, the case shows a surprisingly modern instance of a local community seeking to hide and submerge the shame of one of its members, only for this to be eliminated when one of them decided to break ranks and seek a modern solution to a genteel shoplifter in his midst. This final episode again instigated the local community's shame upon this same individual who had damaged the good name of a renowned pillar of the community, guilty or otherwise.

ISOBEL BARNETT—A LIFE IN DUTY

Lady Isobel Barnett was a ubiquitous television personality who embodied many virtues that post-war Britain wanted. By the time the 'construction' of her personality was complete, Lady Barnett exuded landed *noblesse oblige* and the natural authority which went with this. However, she was also indicative of the rise of professional Britain and the growing power of specialist knowledge which television was increasingly coming to trust and showcase. Elements of this were also a product of her own upbringing and certainly contributed to her later status as an authority figure. Isobel Morag Marshall was born into a genteel, professional Glasgow family in 1918. Her leading biographer, Jock Gallagher, was keen to stress a likely and important role for her father as a stern disciplinarian 'who ruled his household firmly in the prevailing traditions of Scottish Presbyterianism'.³ These ideas also appear later when we consider Isobel's eventual fate. Gallagher believed that the shame-filled reaction to her conviction was so emotive and final, 'because her upbringing had instilled in her such high moral standards that – whatever anyone else might say – she could not bear to have fallen short in her own estimation'.⁴

Isobel Marshall was also supposedly unaware of the apparently unusual decision to send her to boarding school, away from the social deprivation and turmoil of 1930s Glasgow.⁵ Although her school days now exposed her to the conflicting twin influences of Presbyterianism in her background and Quaker values in her schooling, Isobel nonetheless appears to have

flourished. One aspect of this education, which was to later prove invaluable, was a schooling in the art of conversation which involved attaining the skills of a good listener. Her autobiography outlined the terrors of initiating conversation to the extent that it had an effect upon her self-confidence.⁶ This jars somewhat with the Gallagher account, which talks of the school's apparent success in stimulating conversations and eventually adult conversationalists. Fairly soon, Isobel decided upon a career in medicine, which she earnestly felt would not necessarily have met with her father's approval, since he remained conscious of the sanctions and limitations exercised against women by a male-dominated profession.

Nonetheless, Isobel was undeterred and was arguably spurred on by a financial crisis in the family which would have meant the end of her genteel education south of the border. The situation was saved, ironically, by her father's erstwhile colleagues, who managed to arrange for Isobel to enter Glasgow University Medical School one year ahead of schedule. Her training, and the subsequent contact with the real world that this involved, brought her into prolonged contact with considerable deprivation and the diseases of poverty that still plagued inter-war Britain.⁷

After a successful period of training, Isobel became a hospital houseman and, at the same time, attracted the attentions of her future husband, Captain Geoffrey Barnett, whom she married soon afterwards. Her husband was some sixteen years older than her, and because of his various postings, she endured a number of wartime privations which led her to display a resourcefulness which would later be obvious to her television public.⁸ After the war, the couple established themselves in Leicestershire and Geoffrey became prominent in Leicester municipal politics and a focus for the Conservative group on the city council, becoming its leader as the 1950s began. Isobel herself went into politics, representing the local village on the rural district council.⁹ In 1952, Geoffrey became Lord Mayor and Isobel the Lady Mayoress, a role which she discharged with considerable skill and diplomacy, winning many friends in both the urban and rural circles of Leicestershire, where she also became a magistrate. These triumphs were crowned the following year, when Geoffrey Barnett was given a knighthood in the Queen's birthday honours list. It was from this event that Isobel acquired her title of Lady Isobel Barnett. As a stickler for decorum, she would always insist on being referred to as Lady Barnett rather than Lady Isobel; the latter would have indicated that her title was hereditary and inherited and not courtesy of her husband's elevation. However, it was extremely likely that most of her audience crucially could

not tell the difference and continued to invest her with authority whilst also showing her undue deference.

It was Isobel's work in local government that initially led to her involvement in the media. She was asked to take part in a television programme entitled *Town Forum*. Although initially personally sceptical, when encouraged by her husband, Isobel went ahead with the appearance. The next day the press was effusive in its praise and was especially delighted with the cachet brought to proceedings by a glamorous newcomer sporting an apparently landed title. As Jock Gallagher suggests, 'they went overboard'.¹⁰ Isobel had also, however, been 'spotted' by Maurice Winnick, the effective 'owner' of one of television's first light entertainment success stories, *What's My Line?*.¹¹

After a couple of indifferent performances, Isobel managed to convince the previously reticent press and public that she was an authoritative, eye-catching and thoroughly competent performer. Thereafter she became a regular on the show, which cemented her status as a television personality. This in itself established highly visible aspects of her character that the general public came to believe in. She personified a collision of old and new. Her 'authority' came from the easily made (but mistaken) assumption that Isobel was naturally from a landed background. However, this was merged with the consideration of her as a knowledgeable and fully trained member of a specialist profession. When this was combined with her local government work, Isobel was thus invested with gravitas, knowledge and experience by a public who came to consume her.

From her residency on *What's My Line*, Isobel Barnett's career began to take in public appearances. Indicative of how these would operate was an invitation for her to open the 1954 Ideal Home Exhibition, which was followed by an interview in which her authoritative advice was sought about choosing a home and the practicalities of decorating and furnishing it within a restricted budget.¹² As Gallagher suggests, the advice turned around creating an ideal and typical 1950s household, and by offering this, Isobel was endorsing and underwriting popular views and aspirations. Similarly, Gallagher also suggests that this moment of fame and authority was a symptom of a post-war world which needed distractions in the years before the 'kitchen sink drama' and its ilk would later commence a challenge to authority, deference and the establishment:

'When Lady Barnett joined the panel, she seemed to open the door a little bit wider and viewers were then able to imagine they were seeing something

of how the titled classes lived. Without any apparent envy, they enjoyed what they saw and Isobel took pleasure in her role as a bridge between two worlds.¹³

She was further invited to describe and glorify her transformation and her new social and cultural position in a column in the *Daily Sketch*, which further reinforced and publicised this cultural role.

Isobel noted that women were especially taking to television with a verve and gusto that had been hitherto unexpected and thus were gaining exposure and authority from the experience. Seen by Gallagher as an individual anxious to keep up appearances, she exuded a calm which made audiences perceive her as ‘...every bit the lady, always calm and controlled’.¹⁴ Once again, elements of her television image became inextricably linked with what viewers thought she represented. In a pejorative review, one journalist dubbed her ‘every inch the efficient bazaar-opener’.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Isobel also felt herself to be on the cusp between an old and a new world, trying to juggle her upbringing, which had instilled in her a clear sense of duty, against the potential frivolity of the world of entertainment. Gallagher notes that she was capable of communicating this ambivalence in some quite harsh tones:

Each of us is his own judge and jury. We have got to live with our own private conscience, and praise for the public is dust and ashes compared with your private shame if you fail to follow the dictates of that nagging conscience ... A lifetime of criticism is worthwhile if you stick to the principles you believe to be the right ones.¹⁶

In the embryonic age of television, Lady Isobel Barnett’s rise was meteoric, and she rapidly became a ubiquitous individual who would bestow grace and authority upon any broadcasting venture. Once she had established herself on *What’s My Line?*, where she was a fixture for many years, other broadcasters would regularly envisage her suitability for other programme ideas. One of these was an outside broadcast programme of 1963 entitled *At Home*, which further invested her personality with a species of imagined nobility when her lifestyle and genteel home life were consumed by the cameras.

Beyond television, Isobel Barnett was such an authoritative figure that she was asked to front a considerable array of what might be described as public service products and enterprises. Again this irresistible combination of the landed lady and the trained practitioner carried all before it in these contexts. She was asked to compile a cook book and also a guide to

exploring London. The latter was produced by the Shell Oil Company and gave anxious provincial readers a guide to the lively tourist sites of London which, in addition to the usual, offered the suggestion of viewing a national newspaper or large bakery at work. A quasi-conversational style also relaxed the reader by presenting a provincial lady who was communicating her impressions of the capital. For those operating on a budget, the soothing words of Lady Isobel Barnett assured the readership that some attractions were free and that further money could be saved by consuming home-prepared sandwiches ‘in one of London’s large parks’. Individuals would have been significantly reassured by such advice emanating from such an obvious, yet friendly authority figure.¹⁷

ISOBEL BARNETT—DUTY UNRAVELS

Isobel Barnett remained a regular on *What’s My Line?* until the programme eventually went off the air in 1963. She was still sufficiently in the public mind to rejoin the programme for a twenty-week revival some ten years later. In between what were now more fitful television appearances, she remained popular on the after-dinner speaking circuit and undertook more regular work on radio.¹⁸ Many accounts of her life suggest that she was greatly upset by the death of her husband in 1970, and this coincided with bouts of ill-health brought on by arthritis and a thyroid condition. Rumours circulated that she had a drink problem, but these was capable of being explained away through her arthritic movements and the effect of high doses of pain relieving medication.¹⁹

A far more damaging allegation emerged in 1980 in the shape of accusations that Lady Isobel Barnett was a compulsive shoplifter. Jock Gallagher was able to repeat stories that suggested that this had been a problem for anything between two and fifteen years.²⁰ One element behind the apparent longevity of this problem was that the local shopkeepers of Leicestershire had reached a tacit agreement to hush the matter up. The most regularly employed tactic was to add the cost of the stolen items to Isobel’s bill, which she apparently never questioned. Gallagher also hints that some of her friends had harboured suspicions but, like local shopkeepers, had sought to hide the truth. However, one fateful day in 1980, Roger Fowkes, a shopkeeper in the village of Rothley, decided to break ranks and confronted Isobel about the fact that she had hidden items from her wire shopping basket in a ‘secret pocket’ inside her coat. According to the testimony of Fowkes, Isobel hurriedly vacated the shop, claiming she had to turn her car headlights off. Fowkes pursued her, noting that her car

headlights were not turned on, and led her back to the shop forcibly. He then insisted the police were called and, as it turned out, this last aspect of the incident was to prove crucial to its eventually fatal outcome.²¹ Two officers arrived and witnessed Isobel's strong denial that she had intended to steal the two items found in her 'secret pocket'—a tin of tuna fish and a carton of cream—putting this down to absent-mindedness.²²

Lady Isobel Barnett's denial of guilt remained a constant throughout what followed and perhaps eventually explains her sad end. She may even have convinced herself of her innocence. Certainly the public exposure of being caught shoplifting was an immense strain to bear, especially for a woman of her background in which earnestness and duty were immensely important watchwords. When the news of this episode leaked out, many appeared perplexed by what had happened. Why should a respectable (in Isobel's case we could even say exaggeratedly respectable) woman indulge in the theft of items she could plainly afford and in many cases had little or no need of? What appears obvious from reactions to the incident is that the phenomenon of shoplifting, and those who practise it, seemed at this stage to be only dimly understood. Subsequent investigation revealed that Isobel actually fitted an archetype of shoplifting in the shape of the celebrity who regularly lived on a diet of both limelight and risk. Nonetheless there also appeared to be esteem issues involved in the incident, and the high number of celebrities caught stealing in the years since indicate that this may well have been the case.

Throughout, Isobel protested her innocence and refused to accept the idea that she had behaved with intent, despite both admitting to taking the items without paying and the obvious inferences that anyone could draw from the 'secret pocket'. Gallagher linked this to the idea of a confused Isobel making a catastrophic misjudgement in electing to go to the Crown Court, eschewing the option of a trial before a magistrate.²³ Others, however, have suggested that Lady Barnett's denial of the charge meant that the case could only go to court. Likewise, the shopkeeper supposedly had no option but to call the police because after making an accusation, he could have been sued for false arrest. The police could not simply have cautioned her since the offence had been denied.²⁴ However, this latter version of events is not borne out by the facts, since all press reports record Isobel's conscious election to go for trial by jury.²⁵ Interestingly, however, Gallagher's musings upon Isobel's reasoning touched further on the nature of her celebrity status. Was it possible, he wondered, that Isobel believed that the jury would be swayed by her respectability or celebrity status? In a surprisingly modern-looking insight, Gallagher also wondered whether she was 'subconsciously looking for another thrilling escape

from monotony and depression'. But also conjectured that she was 'cold bloodedly trying to save face'.²⁶ Certainly the appearance in the Crown Court on 15 October 1980 was traumatic, especially since the premises were filled with press reporters. The trial lasted two days, and at the end of this the jury delivered a verdict of guilty, with Isobel promptly fined £75 and ordered to pay £200 in costs. By all accounts, Isobel was visibly shaken by the verdict and sentence, although the words of the judge indicated that such situations were clearly double-edged for anyone of celebrity status: 'No sentence that I can pass can match the punishment you have already suffered by way of waiting for this trial and also, no doubt, the disgrace from this finding of guilty ... People who enjoy public esteem and acclaim should set an example'.²⁷

After the court appearance, Isobel Barnett was shattered and retired to her house, to be disturbed only by the telephone calls and letters of numerous well-wishers. After the case she clearly admitted her guilt and declared, 'I regard it as one of the most stupid and casual things I have done for a long time.'²⁸ When asked if this event would tarnish her wider reputation Isobel replied, 'I'm not sure I've got any these days, I have only myself to live with, and I can live with myself.'²⁹ By the weekend after her court appearance, she seemed to have rallied and expressed a desire to start replying to the numerous goodwill messages. However, at some point on the Sunday evening, she took a doubly fatal dose of distalgesic painkillers which she had been prescribed, and she was found in the bath the following morning.

Thereafter, all opinions focussed upon the shame that Isobel Barnett must have faced in her last hours. An individual driven by duty and the display of assured authority found herself convicted of abusing such authority and deeply confused and upset by the whole experience. A household figure of constancy and trust had betrayed such trust, and obviously the shame was too much for a distressed and lonely woman to bear.³⁰ Isobel must have felt the sharp and intense pain of presumptive shame in her last hours and was its unfortunate victim. In her mind, her shoplifting may well have been capable of being explained as the result of a specific psychological condition. However, she knew that for others, it remained a crime which individuals ought to be ashamed of. Moreover, the stigma of undertaking it after a distinguished record of professional and public service must have served to heighten the gaze and power of this presumptive shame, which had a lineage stretching back to the Victorian period.³¹ Perhaps most tragic of all was that Isobel Barnett forgot the mitigating

circumstances of her case and wholly embraced the shame associated with her crime. True to character, she felt no option but to blame herself and, unlike the Rector of Stiffkey, was prepared to do what her upbringing told her was ‘the decent thing’. She perhaps saw this as a last noble and legitimate way out of scandalous behaviour and a method of avoiding exposure to presumptive shame and its penetrating reach.

However, a remarkable facet of the incident is that the public were never especially condemnatory. They were generally shocked by Isobel’s suicide, and many tributes appeared in the media celebrating her life and work for both local government and the entertainment industry. These tributes were also supplemented by the attitudes of many members of the public, not least in the local area, where she had been a respected member of the local magistracy and government. The local parish clerk, Olive Harrison, had difficulty believing that Isobel had been guilty, but then added a narrative for such wayward behaviour that was to become a populist explanation for such actions: ‘I know she had been very sick for a long time and she was a very lonely woman since her husband died.’³² Indeed for many, Isobel’s record of service seemed to trump easily any shame or loss of reputation she may have felt as result of shoplifting.

Some anonymous individuals took this line of thinking firmly into their own hands and dispensed some rather older customary justice of their own, which ran counter to the judgement of conventional justice that Isobel’s career seemed to embody. Isobel’s accuser, Roger Fowkes, was shamed in a manner reminiscent of the previous century, since he received a number of threatening letters and phone calls in the aftermath of the case and its tragic consequences.³³ This was an interesting inversion of traditional shaming rituals which indicated some semblance of moral economy surviving in this instance into the last quarter of the twentieth century, and is a further example of the reverberatory nature of shame in the modern era. It also differed from popular and even official perceptions of justice, since it argued that the blatant tragedy of Isobel’s draconian self-inflicted punishment scarcely fitted the crime.³⁴ Fowkes had departed from what looked like a previous tacit agreement to protect the reputation of a local worthy. He thus appeared to deserve shaming because he had sacrificed the community’s way of doing things quietly to instead embrace what the community saw as the inadequacy or inappropriateness of official justice.³⁵ Fowkes was caught in a dilemma. He knew shoplifting was on the increase and had to be stopped, yet equally he chose, rashly as it turned out, to transgress the assumptions and mechanisms of local community ‘justice’.

This was another instance in which those seeking to utilise shame found the power of shame turned upon themselves.

PATHOLOGIES OF SHOPLIFTING

Gradually, however, attention began to shift away from Isobel's own personal tragedy and towards the nature of her apparent crime and how it was treated by contemporary society. The Isobel Barnett case simultaneously highlighted the problem of celebrity shoplifting, the association of the crime with loneliness and its continuing link to psychiatric conditions. Although Victorians had already noted the connection between middle-class women and shoplifting, there was a new dimension to this by the latter part of the twentieth century.³⁶ Isobel Barnett certainly fitted what came to be considered another archetype of the crime's perpetrator: the celebrity shoplifter. By 2012, in a work summarising accumulated criminological and psychological thinking on the subject, Joshua Bamfield described one type of shoplifter as an actress, politician or celebrity who is at the mercy of qualities that made them succeed in life, such as 'their natural authority and risk taking behaviour', which could be found manifestly in their shoplifting: 'Shoplifting and celebrity may therefore be perfectly compatible and easily understood rather than being atypical.'³⁷ Shoplifting was a species of theft, but equally the way society began to view this was itself indicative of people's responses to the problems of modernity and the new forms of consumption it had bequeathed them. Perhaps the cornerstone of this was that society, in various ways, debated the nature of the stigma that clung to the crime of shoplifting and the culpability that surrounded it. The theme associated with many of these discussions was that the shoplifter was not so much criminal as victim.

Indeed, this tide had begun to turn as early as the nineteenth century. The latter part of that period had seen what later commentators term the 'invention of kleptomania' and its construction as an ailment chiefly afflicting middle-class women.³⁸ Although some located it within the paradigm of psycho-sexual illness and the menstrual process, others saw it as a species of moral insanity: 'If kleptomania was under the control of biology, doctors reasoned, the kleptomaniac was physically defective, but not evil.'³⁹ Individuals guilty of the crime had lost the power of reason, and medical opinion on both sides of the Atlantic suggested they should be judged accordingly.⁴⁰ There was also a notion that such an illness was strongly linked to the esteem issues already alluded to, since kleptomania

appeared to be defined as ‘an impulse control disorder’ which is really ‘buying mood enhancement’ in the face of ‘low self-esteem’.⁴¹

Alongside this, popular opinion increasingly came to link lapses in moral responsibility with the vagaries of the female disposition and specific gender stereotypes, particularly the concept of women’s apparent instability.⁴² One of these lines of thought also blamed society’s invention of the department store as something which filled ‘an elemental need for women’.⁴³ Shopping as a major leisure activity had evolved rapidly, and it was readily realised that this involved a stimulation of acquisitive desire which could not always be held in check.⁴⁴ This linking of the compulsion to stimulate consumption with the acquisitive propensities of individuals would resurface in another guise when the very mode of consumption changed again in the post-war years. Even some psychiatrists would focus upon this as an explanation rather than make allowances for psychological disorders, which, as one correspondent suggested, had given shoplifting ‘an aura of respectability’, and followed this up with the judgement that ‘greed does not justify dishonesty’.⁴⁵

In 1980, Lawrence Conner added further credence to this view when he published the influential volume *The Shoplifters are Coming: Don’t Steal this Book*.⁴⁶ Although this had been written as a counterpoint to an anarchist-inspired shoplifter’s manifesto, some of its conclusions had a much wider applicability. Conner, perhaps most importantly of all, noted that the comparatively new phenomenon of self-service shops was an important element that had unwittingly stimulated shoplifting. What had been developed in post-Second World War North America to create a greater level of contact between consumer and product, and thus lure shoppers into becoming purchasers, had extended the scope and depth of covetousness. This in turn had greatly increased the likelihood of shoplifting.⁴⁷ This explanation was also widely proffered in Parliament, especially by the Conservative MP for Christchurch, Mr Robert Adley, who frequently indicted supermarket displays and the mechanism of shopping associated with them, as the villains of the piece.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, it was also clear that shoplifting was growing at an alarming rate in the 1970s.⁴⁹ This is evident in a considerable number of questions asked in Parliament about the issue. These ranged from requests for information about how the government felt it was going to tackle this crime wave, through to those concerned for innocent and otherwise incapacitated individuals, who would be invariably caught up in whatever policing measures would be implemented.⁵⁰ Adley even mentioned individuals driven to suicide by a pending court appearance for

shoplifting, citing one woman who had taken her own life while waiting to appear in court for stealing an item worth £1.49.⁵¹

When the Theft Bill was debated in June 1978, Sir Anthony Meyer (MP for Flint West), in supporting yet another probing question from Robert Adley, noted the shame attendant upon being caught shoplifting, which now manifestly appeared to be disproportionate in comparison to individual and societal responses to other crimes:

There are a great many offences which nowadays one can commit by mistake. One can go through a red light, park in the wrong place, or exceed the speed limit ... I am well aware that these are offences which from time to time all of us commit. When one commits this sort of offence one is had up in front of the courts and perhaps fined. Perhaps one even has one's licence endorsed. But it is not a matter of disgrace. One's reputation is not thereby ruined. However, if a vicar doing some shopping for his wife and mentally composing his sermon as he goes around the shelves, leaves the store without having paid for a box of matches, he is liable to read in the local paper the following week 'Vicar accused of shoplifting' or 'Vicar accused of theft from store.'⁵²

Some of this became still more evident within material that came before the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, which met in this same year. The Portia Trust, an organisation founded in the early years of the decade to help individuals in emotional distress and to protect those wrongly or falsely accused, was especially anxious to give evidence.⁵³ This organisation had been concerned for some time that the psychologically distressed and vulnerable were increasingly at the mercy of a mechanistic and crude judicial system. It was greatly concerned with the consequences for those vulnerable women whose crimes included child snatching and shoplifting. In the midst of this evidence, the Trust offered to establish a bail hostel or 'retreat project' where women could be helped with the 'personal problems that had been instrumental in their offence: here they would evade "degrading punishment"'.⁵⁴

The Portia Trust also cited men falsely accused of sexual assault whose families endured punishment that forced them to move house.⁵⁵ The Trust's aim in using these instances was to further draw the distinction between what it called the 'deliberate criminal' and the 'first offender'. Mechanisms that would enable this included more fixed-penalty offences, the greater involvement of probation officers in the pre-examination of offenders, the diversion of distressed offenders from court appearance,

informal private hearings, reporting restrictions on minor offences and more lenient sentencing for those ‘not confirmed criminals’.⁵⁶ The habit of allowing wide publicity of minor convictions was considered ‘insidious’ and, to the mind of the Portia Trust, echoed ‘branding ... upon the forehead with the letter “F”’ (presumably indicating ‘felon’).⁵⁷ Courts were thus involved in ‘procedures which are highly suited to provide retribution for toughs and thugs, and apply[ing] them blindly and uncaringly to folk of the opposite ilk ... women in states of nervous anxiety and hypersensitivity, verging upon breakdown. This is the cruel face of the law.’⁵⁸

Two years later, the consequences of the Isobel Barnett case were added to this tide of feeling when, during the course of a parliamentary question to the Solicitor General, the Leicester MP Mr Greville Janner argued that he should take action to prevent the prosecution of individuals accused of shoplifting who were manifestly ‘old and ill’.⁵⁹ In particular, Janner was anxious to establish that Isobel’s state of mind could legitimately have been known by the court and those presiding, so that her suicide as a result of presumptive shame was scarcely an unforeseen consequence. Janner later drew Parliament’s attention to the fact that a disproportionate number of people had recently become caught up in the increasingly frenetic policing of the crime.⁶⁰

Alongside politicians, medical opinion in Britain was extremely open to pathologising the shoplifting impulse, and this significantly occurred both in the years leading up to the Isobel Barnett case and also in the years immediately after it.⁶¹ For instance, one correspondent to the *British Medical Journal* in 1976 noted that shoplifting could be caused by the ‘hang over effect of sedation’, ‘Schizophrenia’, ‘Depressive states’, ‘Anxiety’, ‘Mental handicap’, ‘distraction through physical illness’, ‘abnormal distracting influences’ ‘stress’, a combination of these factors or—in the end—absent-mindedness.⁶² The tide of pathologising or removing culpability from individuals was partly driven by sympathy.

A subsequent writer focussed upon the ‘absent-minded’ explanation, which seemed to fit in with the narrative of Isobel Barnett’s story. As the author argued, the *actus reus* of the crime could be proven when an accused left the shop, but the *mens rea* (or intention to steal) was notoriously difficult to establish—a fact similarly recognised in parliamentary debates.⁶³ Such an explanation fitted with Isobel Barnett’s clear and regular assertion that she had left the shop with the items in question, but had no intention to actively steal them. Individuals like Isobel, who clearly differed from the career shoplifter, were apparently falling foul of legal

practice which directly inferred motivation from the accused's behaviour. The poor, absent-minded, shoplifter, such as Lady Isobel Barnett, was no longer receiving the benefit of the doubt from the courts and was thus being treated like a common criminal. This was a central part of the shame experience that had engulfed her and, as the writer pointed out,

‘the charge of theft, let alone the conviction, can wreak disproportionate havoc on the small proportion of individuals who are caught ... the effects of newspaper publicity are easy to see and behind these few cases lie many respected but less well-known citizens whose lives are severely damaged by two or three lines in the local paper.’⁶⁴

SHOPLIFTING, CLASS AND THE LAW

This began to create a class-ridden narrative of a crime that had genteel victims who needed protection from the full force of the law—people for whom the natural propensity to feel presumptive shame would loom large and make them the severest critics of their own actions once discovered. This view had already been aired at Isobel Barnett's inquest by Kenneth Norman, the national organiser of the Portia Trust.⁶⁵ Norman stated at the inquest that he had written to Isobel in the aftermath of her conviction to invite her to join the organisation, presumably in the hope that she would be a highly influential mouthpiece and raise the profile of the issue. Sadly this was not to be, although the inquest itself did bring considerable publicity. Norman indicated that he had a number of prominent friends in Parliament who had grown very concerned about the number of suicides that followed in the wake of minor shoplifting convictions. This, it was hoped, would be the prelude to an official inquiry which would investigate the scale of the problem. Norman hinted that the elements of presumptive shame which clung to such accusations were themselves instrumental in hiding the magnitude of the issue. As he stated to the inquest ‘The actual numbers of such suicides might never be known because inquests would not necessarily be told of the circumstances which were embarrassing to relatives and friends as well as to the defendants themselves.’⁶⁶ This hidden figure was augmented by his revelation that ‘we have had hundreds of letters from women who threatened to kill themselves if a trivial charge goes to court if there is a finding of guilty’.⁶⁷

The identification with Isobel Barnett's fate was made plain in Norman's statement that he ‘was appalled at the way in which courts dealt with those cases, “totally ignoring any defence which implies that the defendant had

suffered a momentary lapse of memory”⁶⁸. In short, Norman was indicting the English legal system for heaping unnecessary shame and opprobrium upon an otherwise defenceless group of individuals. This argument strongly stressed that presumptive shame had no place in a modern and supposedly civilised system of justice. Yet this stood in stark contrast to some currents in contemporary criminological thinking where shame punishments were being rethought—especially in connection with the offence of shoplifting!

Norman’s appearance at Isobel Barnett’s inquest was the culmination of wider work that the Portia Trust had undertaken with the Isobel Barnett case in mind. Three weeks after her initial case had been heard at Loughborough Magistrates’ Court, and five days after her committal for trial at Leicester had occurred, another member of the Portia Trust, Colin Geeves, approached the Prime Minister in a carefully worded letter. Geeves, writing as the Southern Regional Organiser of the Portia Trust, wanted to alert the Prime Minister to what he referred to as ‘the latest known case of a person committing suicide following an accusation of shoplifting’.⁶⁹ Geeves enclosed a newspaper report about an unfortunate woman from Birmingham who had been charged with shoplifting a short time after receiving an accidental head injury. He then outlined that he had recently dealt with ‘more than 60 people accused of shoplifting in the last nine months’. Geeves stated that most individuals entering a ‘not guilty’ plea and supported by his charity were recorded as having a medical or domestic problem ‘that could account for an absent minded action being interpreted as dishonest intent by a store detective’.⁷⁰

In all the cases I have dealt with, the person has been degraded and humiliated by their experience in a way that is out of all proportion to the seriousness over the alleged offence. In all cases the person has been treated as guilty long before the courts have had an opportunity to hear the case. Yet, to quote other circumstances where the law is involved with ‘obviously guilty’ people: I have been found guilty of speeding in the distant past and have paid the due penalty. This is not a fact that I would hide from family and friends but I am not proud of it because driving at an excessive speed could have resulted in tragedy? However because of various anomalies in our social attitudes, if my offence had been shoplifting, I could well have been ostracised as a result and the fear of ostracism would have been more injurious than a fine, as it is in the case of most people I try to help.⁷¹

Geeves noted that store detectives could be over-zealous and, in some instances, had a fiscal interest in detecting shoplifters since they were operating on a payment-by-results basis. He also outlined that many of

those accused had internalised presumptive shame, leading them to feel compelled to plead guilty to avoid newspaper publicity and cost.

Noting how sympathy for the shopkeeper was akin to the discomfort felt when an individual was a victim of burglary, Geeves suggested that an accusation of shoplifting was akin to the burglary of reputation:

the person accused of shoplifting (among the cases I have encountered) is more concerned with the fact of being accused than the level of any fine that may be imposed if found guilty? Also, the fact of being found guilty is of more consequence to ordinary people than the level of the fine. This is why people have been prepared to take their case to a court of appeal at an expense that is far greater than the cost of any expected fine.⁷²

Geeves wanted a first offence to be dealt with like a parking offence. Shops, he argued, should report first offenders to police, who could then use discretion over prosecution whilst not ruling out a subsequent private prosecution by the shop. Police should go to the shop only on a second offence, whilst store detectives should be more forthcoming in informing individuals of their rights, and constabularies should similarly advise them of the right to refuse the request to fingerprint them.

Many correspondents to national newspapers picked up further on this theme, whilst re-echoing the growing pathology of middle- and upper-class shoplifting as having psychological causes, which clearly distinguished it from professional shoplifting. Taken together, these different facets are interesting evidence of how widespread these ideas were becoming amongst the populace at large.⁷³ For instance, David Green, writing to *The Times* from Haverfordwest in 1980, argued for an ‘acute distinction between “professionals” and the rest – one which the law barely acknowledges, and then only in general principle on extreme cases’.⁷⁴ Green then offered a summation of Isobel Barnett’s case, noting that it was ‘unique only in that so many knew of her, also of what befell her’.⁷⁵ He also believed that the theft of such small items should be removed from ‘the criminal category’, arguing that such a process was ‘an affront to human decency’.⁷⁶

Another correspondent, S. Allen Fox, in the same edition of *The Times*, reiterated the range of medical and psychological conditions that could bring about a shoplifting episode. However, this correspondent echoed the desire to remove petty shoplifting cases from the courts by establishing a form of ‘intermediary justice’ for dealing with cases where the defendant had taken a form of ‘unintentional action’.⁷⁷ However, John Stephens, a shopkeeper, argued that a focus upon the circumstances of the individual

shoplifter, whilst necessary, should not detract from society offering its protection to the shopkeeper. Clearly in a dilemma, Stephens finished by arguing that the intervention of authority was necessary but ‘it is what happens after the police had been called ... which requires careful reconsideration’.⁷⁸ Another correspondent who brought the focus back upon the issue of guilt in the offence was John J. Smyth, QC, of the Temple, who pointed out that Isobel Barnett’s legal training indicated that she knew entirely what she was doing in electing to go for trial at Crown Court. Moreover, he argued, those who sought to meddle with such a right were perpetrating an assault upon individual freedom: ‘To deprive a citizen of this right is to remove him from the sphere of justice and place him in the hands of technical experts who know nothing of justice and punishment but only compulsory “care”.’⁷⁹ To Smyth, who quoted C.S. Lewis on the humanitarian approach to punishment, this far too readily confused the concept of mercy with the concept of justice.⁸⁰

This was an interesting statement in the light of the wave of opinion seeking to pathologise shoplifting and the shoplifter and thus remove responsibility and shame from the action. To a legal mind, this appeared to be eroding people’s freedom to react to the consequences of their own actions and the precise culpability for those actions. Even if such individuals reacted badly, the line of Smyth’s thinking indicated that the law was not itself responsible for the consequences. Following Smyth’s suggestion, Professor Robert Bluglass of the Midland Centre for Forensic Psychiatry suggested that more humane methods of summary justice were actually already in operation. Bluglass quoted a study undertaken by one of his colleagues, in which it was discovered that only 45.6 % of shoplifters were actually charged with the offence.⁸¹ In effect the police had begun to adopt a considered policy of leniency towards ‘the elderly, some children, and the obviously mentally ill’.⁸² However, this leniency did not stop at the police, since courts were supposedly ‘ready to listen to reasonable explanations and act upon medical advice’. From this, Bluglass concluded that the tragic outcomes involved were the consequences of individuals either concealing their distressed condition or taking the advice of well-meaning (but uninformed) friends and professionals who had persuaded them to plead guilty.⁸³ In addition to this, Bluglass noted that several opted for ‘trial in a higher court despite the trivial amounts involved because it is believed the jury is more likely to be understanding (and this sometimes seems to be true)’.⁸⁴ This was further corroboration of Gallagher’s theory about Isobel Barnett’s actions once she had been apprehended.

Nonetheless, it was the pathologising tendency which began to win the argument. Less than a month after Isobel's suicide, Hampshire police introduced a new code of practice which allowed elderly people guilty of minor offences to escape merely with a reprimand. This was targeted at offenders aged sixty-five and over and was greatly welcomed by Age Concern, who saw it as 'the first step in a nationwide attempt to support vulnerable members of the community who find themselves caught up in complex legal machinery'.⁸⁵ This appeared to be part of a wider belief in a return to community justice which had support from other sources. E.N. Poland, the Chairman and Director of the International Prisoners Aid Association (UK), for example, wrote to *The Times* declaring that there had been a worldwide survey of opinion which concluded that communities should claw back 'responsibility for their own social ills'.⁸⁶ Poland ended his letter with the suggestion that 'juvenile and petty crime generally cannot be eliminated or even much reduced by the application of criminal law but the return of social responsibility to communities would do a great deal to remove the causes'.⁸⁷ This appeared to place great faith in the rationality and humane nature of community approaches to punishment, as opposed to the apparently cold and grinding logic of impersonal institutions and mechanisms begotten by the state. Indeed this collective amnesia about how harsh communities could be in practice was itself an interesting theme thrown up by this offence and the injection of sentiment into public reaction surrounding it. Moreover, it seemed to have little relationship with, or indeed knowledge of, the findings of social historians, who knew much more about the dark side of how community punishment operated in the nineteenth century. Likewise, it could scarcely know anything about the renewed role and the shape for punishment—embedded squarely in community—which would later be envisaged by John Braithwaite and by numerous local justices in parts of North America far removed from federal interference.

This trend towards administering police cautions gathered momentum with Geeves, who, in the wake of twelve more suicides, argued that the initial measures adopted by some police forces should become standard practice.⁸⁸ Eventually, with a change in attitude by 1984, schemes were operating in Essex and in Leicester—the city where Isobel had been tried and convicted.⁸⁹ Adjacent to this development, there followed attempts to prevent private prosecutions for shoplifting, although these would not have been relevant in Isobel's case. In January 1983, Greville Janner tried to introduce a Private Member's Bill which would have prevented such

private prosecutions. Nonetheless, this occasion still involved a further evocation of what had happened with Janner's declaration that 'The dock was no place for poor Lady Isobel Barnett.'⁹⁰ Eventually a rather different solution emerged with the introduction of an independent private prosecution service in the mid-1980s. This took power away from individuals and retailers and placed far more emphasis on issues surrounding the public interest and the question of whether this was served by prosecutions.⁹¹ Thereafter, press coverage began to distinguish between shoplifting by organised gangs and unfortunate instances where 'to put a case of shoplifting in the court would be crazy'.⁹² Interestingly, the enduring fact that an accusation of shoplifting could damage the good name of the genteel accused, in the manner exemplified by Isobel Barnett, was noted by the serving lawyer John Ellwood. In 1990, he showcased the fact that more obviously plebeian crimes (such as driving whilst disqualified or taking and driving away a vehicle without permission) were now tried solely on a summary basis, unlike shoplifting, which stubbornly retained the right of a trial by jury. This situation was to have considerable longevity and was indeed preserved in the creation of the offence of low-value shoplifting within the context of the 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act.⁹³

Thus shoplifting was, in a series of increasingly identified instances, removed from the mechanisms operating in the area of conventional criminal justice. However, the whole furor surrounding shoplifting and the circumstances highlighted by the Isobel Barnett case indicate an extremely significant aspect of modern shame and its relationship to some of the processes and mechanisms of modernity. Theft was universally acknowledged to be a crime. Those convicted of theft had a range of assumptions made about their motivations and their precise level of culpability, and, by and large, the criminal justice system had no problem in dealing with the consequences of its sentencing policy.

However, the same authorities were very easily persuaded to envisage that shoplifting was different. Thus those who committed this crime for gain, or out of economic imperatives, were to be readily separated from the rest. This left society with a vast range of 'inconvenient' criminals to deal with: apparently respectable and sometimes economically prosperous individuals who, authority and public opinion could be readily convinced, did not deserve a place in the dock. Criminal became victim because, for such respectable people, this crime involved an assault upon reputation. Thus the presumptive shame it induced was seen as vastly disproportionate

to the nature of the crime itself. As many noted, the implications surrounding trust, as compromised by a shoplifting conviction, created far worse psychological consequences and presumptive shame than the other victimless crimes of speeding and illegal parking.

In seeking to analyse this issue, numerous agencies and individuals from the legal, political and academic professions readily blamed society for its own ills. The supermarket, the department store and the self-service mode of shopping were seen as relentlessly encouraging aspiring consumerism so that the creation of a 'help yourself mentality' had lured individuals into a species of trap. Those who were unable to cope with this, as demonstrated by a veritable myriad of different pathological explanations, found themselves guilty of a crime, and the establishment of such guilt had irreparable consequences on some people.

Incidents like the Isobel Barnett case, and many others, shook this society into confronting its fundamental dilemma of simultaneously protecting property (amidst a perceived epidemic of shoplifting) alongside the psychological well-being of vulnerable individuals. The discovery of this problem was something of a shock and showed that the legal and medical professions sought to define the problem with different emphases. To an extent, both tried to actively take possession of the problem and solve it with their own solutions and mechanisms. Whilst the law's more draconian instinct eventually had to satisfy itself with lesser penalties, it also still consoled itself with the fact that shoplifting remained a crime subject to legal resolution.

Nonetheless, the medical profession had very successfully transformed the perpetrator into a victim. Explanations for this invoked a range of pharmacological, medical, psychological and behavioural explanations to remove culpability from what were perceived to be shoplifters unmotivated by economic gain. Shoplifters, particularly middle-class ones with no economic motive, were increasingly seen as people in need of help rather than punishment.

From all of this, it could be argued that the application of specialist knowledge and the seemingly wide acceptance of interdependence suggest elements of the 'civilizing process' at work. As the state sought to provide more 'civilized' procedures with which to deal with a breakdown in social relationships in its midst, seemingly barbaric approaches were abandoned in favour of the 'civilized' and the humane application of mercy. Nonetheless, considerations about the validity of explanations linked to the 'civilizing process' are double-edged. Hilary Freeman's 2010

novel *Lifted: If You Could Steal Fame, Would You?*⁹⁴ takes as its premise the real possibility that shoplifting, like any activity that is sensational enough, may genuinely be a route to celebrity fame. The central character is a compulsive thief who donates all she steals to charity shops and then seeks fame through describing her experiences in a blog. This novel, like much other literature about shoplifting, suggests that a quest for excitement and arguably a distorted attitude to risk are capable of driving some individuals to this form of transgression. This also adds to thinking about the displacement of crime and transgression within modern life into the controlled compartments envisaged by the culmination of Norbert Elias' 'civilizing process'.

Yet, it is worth noting, that dialogues about the vulnerability of shoplifters have focussed greatly upon the elderly and, very often, have had the Lady Isobel Barnett case clearly in mind. Certainly this reflects the specific moment in history when a generation brought up on a sense of duty inspired by (in Isobel Barnett's case) two world wars, found itself in a position whereby a committed indiscretion could induce shame and cause the edifice of duty and reputation to come tumbling down. Nonetheless, what potentially also damaged these people, was a confrontation with new methods of consuming and new inducements to consume that had been absent from a world of pre-war austerity and post-war rationing. There seems little doubt that this strongly influenced Isobel Barnett, and as we have discovered, she met a sad end as a victim of the presumptive shame that her experience of duty and status had ingrained in her. In the years since her death, the celebrity shoplifter has grown in prominence and significance, and it is noteworthy that perpetrators have less obviously internalised the impact of any shame they might feel for their actions. As we saw to some extent in the previous chapter, 'braving it out' or 'facing down' criticism has become more possible with the waning of presumptive shame. Such celebrities are assured of a reaction that does not invite them to endure presumptive shame; instead they more obviously trust that they will meet with the language of compassion of professionals who have successfully pathologised the offence.

Nevertheless, this episode does point to places where the modern world may be unwittingly creating new temptations and dangerous opportunities for individuals to damage their reputations and induce forms of personal shame through the consequences of their consumption patterns and unfulfilled desires. Everything from the boom in consumer credit to the increasing ease of shopping and gambling aided by the Internet and

by smartphone and tablet technology may arguably provide further time bombs for culture and society. These have the further potential to produce situations in which individuals feel shame at the consequences of their indulgence.

NOTES

1. J. Gallagher (1982) *Isobel Barnett: Portrait of a Lady* (London: Methuen), jacket text.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 19, and Lady I. Barnett (1956) *My Lifeline* (London: Hutchinson), p. 30.
6. Barnett (1956) *My Lifeline*, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–8.
8. Gallagher (1982) *Isobel Barnett*, p. 52 and p. 54, and Barnett (1956) *My Lifeline*, pp. 56–66.
9. Barnett (1956) *My Lifeline*, pp. 85–9.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 73–4.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
14. Gallagher (1982) *Isobel Barnett*, p. 80.
15. Barnett (1956) *My Lifeline*, p. 83.
16. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 84.
17. Lady I. Barnett and R. Searle (1965) *Exploring London* (London: Ebury Press), p. 6.
18. Gallagher (1982) *Isobel Barnett*, p. 92 and p. 106.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
21. *Glasgow Herald*, 16 October 1980, p. 3, and *The Times*, 16 October 1980, p. 2.
22. *The Times*, 16 October 1980, p. 2.
23. Gallagher (1982) *Isobel Barnett*, p. 5. This account is corroborated by John J. Smyth, Q.C., of the Temple: John J. Smyth, letter to *The Times*, 27 October 1980, p. 13.
24. D.J.I. Murphy (1986) *Customers and Thieves: An Ethnography of Shoplifting* (Aldershot: Gower), p. 231. Murphy's judgement on

- Isobel is more prosaic, offering the suggestion that ‘The repercussions of an 87 pence theft, however, were horrendous.’
25. This account is corroborated by John J. Smyth of the Temple: John J. Smyth, letter to *The Times*, 27 October 1980, p. 13.
 26. Gallagher (1982) *Isobel Barnett*, p. 6.
 27. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 6.
 28. *Glasgow Herald*, 21 October 1980, p. 7.
 29. *St. Petersburg Times*, 21 October 1980, p. 20.
 30. This was the thrust of the report entitled ‘Death Came After Shame’ which appeared in *The Age*, 21 October 1980, p. 7.
 31. T.C. Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 134–5. Noting Victorian attitudes, Whitlock suggests: ‘If middle-class women did steal it was surely a more heinous offense than that of their lesser educated and disadvantaged sisters. Middle-class women were idealised as the moral exemplars of the era.’
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. *The Times*, 21 October 1980, p. 1.
 34. E.S. Abelson (1989) ‘The Invention of Kleptomania’ *Signs*, 15, 1, p. 136. In this piece Abelson noted the juxtaposition between class and the petty nature of the item stolen in the celebrated case of Elizabeth Phelps, who was accused of stealing candy from Macy’s in 1870. The social class of the perpetrator appeared to trump all other considerations, since the employees who reported the incident were victims of press and public opprobrium for so doing. Subsequent attempts to pursue gender analysis of shoplifting incidents were also quite numerous in the 1970s. See, for example, T.C.N. Gibbens, C. Palmer and J. Prince, ‘Mental Health Aspects of Shoplifting’ and ‘Letter of Montague Segal to Department of Psychological Medicine, Halifax General Hospital’, both in *British Medical Journal*, 11 September 1971, pp. 612–15.
 35. There are several other instances of this phenomenon spread throughout twentieth-century Britain. One of the most baffling instances is the celebrated Bashall Eaves murder case of 1934, where the victim (who survived for ten days) refused to name his assailant in the hope that he would eventually be able to dispense his own solution to and justice for the antagonism that had provoked his murder. See J.L. Cobban (2005) *Wall of Silence: The Peculiar Murder of Jim Dawson at Bashall Eaves* (London: Demdike Press).

36. Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture*, p. 206.
37. J.A.N. Bamfield (2012) *Shopping and Crime* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 38.
38. Abelson (1989) 'The Invention of Kleptomania', *passim*.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
40. Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture*, p. 205.
41. Bamfield (2012) *Shopping and Crime*, p. 47.
42. Abelson (1989) 'The Invention of Kleptomania', p. 134. Abelson cites a letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle arguing this in relation to a notorious case against a Mrs Castle in 1896. See also the conclusion on p. 143. For material on the pre-kleptomania defence of being under the influence of 'brain fever' see Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture*, p. 149.
43. Abelson (1989) 'The Invention of Kleptomania', p. 135.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 136–7 and p. 139. See also Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture*, p. 129.
45. S. Bockner, Department of Psychological Medicine, North Middlesex Hospital, London, letter to *British Medical Journal*, 20 March 1976, p. 710.
46. L. Conner (1980) *The Shoplifters are Coming: Don't Steal this Book* (Wilmington, DE: Wilmington Reports Inc.).
47. R. Shteir (2011) *The Steal: A Cultural History of Shoplifting* (London: Penguin), p. 157.
48. See, amongst numerous examples, Robert Adley, question to Solicitor General, Hansard: House of Commons Debates, 23 July 1979, vol. 971, cols 24–6; Robert Adley, question to Solicitor General, House of Commons Debates, 28 April 1980, vol. 983, col. 970; House of Commons Debates, 9 June 1980, vol. 986, cols 22–4, *passim*; and Robert Adley, question to Secretary of State, Home Department, House of Commons Debates, 24 June 1982, vol. 26, cols 426–7.
49. See *The Times*, 26 August 1972, p. 3 for the assessment that shoplifting had gone up by 9.3 % in the first six months of 1972; see also *The Times*, 20 February 1973, p. 2, 15 August 1973, p. 5, and 18 August 1973, p. 1 for shoplifting 'tourism'; *The Times*, 22 August 1973, p. 4 for an article entitled 'A London Court Continues its Campaign against the Shoplifters', *The Times*, 30 March 1976, p. 2 for concern about individuals fashioning apparatus with secret compartments intended for shoplifting; *The Times*,

29 April 1976, p. 2 for concerns about growing levels of ‘female’ crime such as shoplifting; and *The Times*, 26 May 1976, p. 15 for an estimate from Baroness Philips that shoplifting had reached the value of £550 million per year.

50. Even members of the House of Commons would plead a lapse of reason over shoplifting charges. See *The Times*, 13 May 1980, p. 3 concerning the case against the former Northern Ireland Minister James Dunn, who admitted stealing goods worth £15.13, but cited the strain of office as a contributory factor in the offence.
51. Robert Adley, question to Secretary of State, Home Department, House of Commons Debates, 8 April 1976, vol. 909, col. 613.
52. Sir Anthony Meyer, debate on the Theft Bill, House of Commons Debates, 6 June 1978, vol. 951, cols 127–55. Meyer then outlined a case in which one of his mentally frail constituents had been found guilty of stealing a plastic lid worth 49p. This shed poor light on the actions of store detectives and the store manager.
53. National Archives, Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1978), Evidence of Portia Trust First Submission, BS 19/96, and National Archives, Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1978), Evidence of Portia Trust Second Submission, BS 12/97.
54. National Archives, Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1978), Evidence of Portia Trust Second Submission, BS 12/97.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Portia Trust circular ‘Are We All Criminals?’ submitted to Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1978), Evidence of Portia Trust Second Submission, BS 12/97.
57. *Ibid.*
58. Memo by Ken Norman, ‘The Penalty of the Court is Slow Death’, submitted to Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1978), Evidence of Portia Trust First Submission, BS 19/96.
59. Greville Janner, question to Solicitor General, House of Commons Debates, 9 March 1981, vol. 1000, cols 613–15.
60. Greville Janner, question to Secretary of State Home Department, House of Commons Debates, 12 January 1981, vol. 996, cols 746–7.
61. See Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture*, p. 205. The appearance of the medical profession came as a consequence of the ‘kleptomania defence’, which was recognised in 1855. *The Lancet* regularly carried the banner for greater medical involvement in the issue during the 1870s and 1880s.

62. Montague Segal, letter to Department of Psychological Medicine, Halifax General Hospital, *British Medical Journal*, 28 February 1976, pp. 723–4.
63. ‘The Absent-Minded Shoplifter’, *British Medical Journal*, 20 March 1976, pp. 675–6. For discussion in the House of Commons see House of Commons Debates, 9 March 1981, vol. 1000, cols 613–15, and the answer of Attorney General to Robert Adley on 9 March 1981.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *The Times*, 22 October 1980, p. 3.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. ‘Letter from Colin J. Geeves on behalf of the Portia Trust to art Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher’, 15 September 1981, Bodleian Law Library, Oxford, Crim. 555 G298a (Sec Coll.).
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. See Whitlock (2005) *Crime, Gender and Consumer Culture*, p. 216. Whitlock suggest that the interface between court reporting and popular culture during the Victorian period commenced a long historical relationship which ensured that ‘kleptomania was built on popular myth as much as it was influenced by court cases and actual case studies’.
74. David Green, letter to *The Times*, 23 October 1980, p. 17.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. Mr S Allen Fox, letter to *The Times*, 23 October 1980, p. 17.
78. John Stephens, letter to *The Times*, 23 October 1980, p. 17.
79. John J. Smyth, letter to *The Times*, 27 October 1980, p. 13.
80. *Ibid.*
81. Professor Robert Bluglass, letter to *The Times*, 31 October 1980, p. 13.
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. *The Times*, 1 November 1980, p. 22.

86. F.N. Poland, letter to *The Times*, 10 November 1980, p. 13. This letter mentioned the Isobel Barnett case and its influence on the search for alternative approaches to petty crime.
87. *Ibid.*
88. *The Times*, 10 February 1982, p. 4.
89. Greville Janner, question to Secretary of State for the Home Department, House of Commons Debates, 17 May 1984, vol. 60, cols 498–9. See also *The Times*, 25 August 1983, p. 3 for the estimate that approximately one-third of individuals arrested for shoplifting were now merely cautioned.
90. *The Times*, 13 December 1983, p. 3, and 20 August 1984, p. 3.
91. See David Mellor, Secretary of State for the Home Department, answer to Greville Janner, House of Commons Debates, 6 June 1985, vol. 80, col. 426.
92. *The Times*, 30 December 1985, p. 3.
93. *The Times*, 19 March 1990, p. 31. See also <https://www.kingsley-napley.co.uk/news-and-events/blogs/criminal-law-blog/new-offence-of-low-value-shoplifting-created>, accessed 2 June 2015.
94. H. Freeman (2010) *Lifted: If You Could Steal Fame, Would You?* (London: Piccadilly Press).

From Blackmail and the Closet to Pride and Shame: Homosexuality and Identity— The Military Example

INTRODUCTION

In the process of considering the wider experience of homosexuality in Britain throughout the twentieth century, one of its leading historians noted: “Coming out’ is usually seen as a personal process, the acceptance, and public demonstration, of the validity of one’s own homosexuality. But it can also be seen as a historic process, the gradual emergence and articulation of a homosexual identity and public presence’.¹

In any assessment of the impact of shame in the twentieth century, homosexuality and societal responses to it have a central place for many and varied reasons. The social and legal situation for homosexuals for the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, was arguably created by a single aspect of late nineteenth-century legislation. Also, the history of homosexuality and its acceptance in British society shows interesting and significant evidence of aspects of uneven development.² That is, homosexual lifestyles and identities were accepted and rejected within different contexts and chronologies throughout the century.

The material discussed here, which covers the years from the inter-war period to the present, demonstrates both the longevity of shame in different forms and contexts and also how aspects of contemporary culture reinvented it and turned it to new purposes. As such, it is a fitting final example in this book, because it examines both of these simultaneously from institutional, cultural and personal perspectives, illuminating an overarching picture of significant change. It commences with a very brief discussion of the shame that generally lay in wait for homosexuals should they

disclose or unwittingly expose their sexual and psychological nature, and it draws on the testimony of some who recorded the sum of their experiences some time after the events themselves. Whilst reform of the law and assaults upon the spectre of blackmail occurred in the third quarter of the twentieth century, this period was also remarkable for the exceptions to reform and liberalisation that were tolerated in Britain. The chapter then investigates the foremost of these: the situation for gay personnel in the armed services, individuals who effectively forfeited the rights extended to their civilian counterparts. These individuals endured a range of shaming experiences and feelings on the way to eventual emancipation around the turn of the millennium. However, the narrative and image of these gay people turning themselves into respectable citizens were also one catalyst for a significant cultural development: Queer Theory. This destabilised the image of the gay individual as potential conforming citizen and instead gloried in the transgressive and the otherwise unacceptable. The leading impetus behind Queer Theory was its reconfiguration of shame, which turned this previously negative emotion into a powerful method of individualising, experiencing and glorifying Queer identity.

GAY SHAME AND THE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY EXPERIENCE

Many earlier conventional histories veer towards a Whig progressive version of the history of homosexuality in which lifestyle and identity move away from being part of a covert subculture and eventually reach widespread acceptance and the achievement of full citizenship.³ Such a version of events is, however, overturned by evidence that the development of homosexual identities was much more episodic and uneven. Whilst homosexuality was legalised on the English mainland in 1967, the reach of this was only partial. The situation for gay men and women in the armed services, for example, remained much as it had been for rest of the homosexual population before legalisation. Thus the panoply of hidden identity, blackmail, threats of disclosure and guilt paradoxically existed side by side with gay liberation and Gay Pride.

However, this last development also points towards another aspect of the history of this phenomenon, which further derails the Whig historical version of the recent history of homosexuality. Gay Pride was a movement which quintessentially adopted Whig perceptions of history and internalised that achievement of progress to full citizenship in a manner

that other Whig and liberal campaigners of the previous hundred years would recognise.⁴ This movement saw the normalisation of homosexuality as both a lifestyle and an identity as the central focus of its mission. It wanted the rights and privileges of citizenship to be extended to all individuals regardless of sexual orientation. It therefore confronted wider society with its own prejudices and sought to persuade the world at large that other lifestyles and sexualities should be accepted as normal and that previously unacceptable behaviours were now no longer society's business. It was arguably the most ideologically articulate and effective movement of anti-shame that we have hitherto uncovered in our investigation of the twentieth century.

Gay Pride may have sought to bring homosexuality into the mainstream, but there were important elements within the gay community that did not necessarily want it there. Certainly within academic circles, the development of Queer Theory arguably led in this direction. Queer Theory diverged from the quest to turn gays into citizens by asserting that the homosexual outlook on life and culture was fundamentally different, emphasising the separateness of homosexual development and identity. Gays were not to be assimilated into mainstream culture: they were to stand assertively apart from it. The ideas associated with Gay Pride also eventually withstood a backlash from those who wanted to recapture the past. For these people, shame, with its otherwise turbulent history, was a central part of the homosexual experience that actively needed to be reclaimed.

Most historians of homosexuality date its modern history and its trajectory through the twentieth century to the circumstances created by the notorious Labouchère amendment, which was aimed at ensnaring predatory child procurers. This was an especially nasty addition to the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act which instead ensured that homosexual activity was both criminalised and demonised.⁵ Jeffrey Weeks noted that the law was in sympathy with other legal and social developments unfolding in late Victorian society, most notably an emphasis upon the family promoted by Josephine Butler's campaigns over the Contagious Diseases Acts and social purity.⁶ Most historians accept that this legislation thereafter shaped societal responses to homosexuality and the attitude of homosexuals themselves.⁷ It is even suggested that a fear of the consequences of discovery was an integral part of law's intention.⁸ Most significantly, it drove homosexual culture underground and substantially away from public view. Although penalties for committing homosexual acts had been in the process of liberalising during the nineteenth century, these were

still regarded as criminal, warranting a custodial sentence. Much has been made of the fact that the previous legal attitude and indeed legislation saw homosexual acts as a separate entity from those who committed them. In other words, most prohibitions were framed with the idea of preventing so-called unnatural acts being committed by individuals who could be reasonably expected to commit 'normal' sexual acts for most of the time. Such an attitude fed, and was fed by, the responses which saw homosexuality as deviant and an illness worthy of treatment. Moreover, according to this view, it was an aberration which individuals occasionally fell into as result of moral lapses, rather than an essential component of an individual's sexual identity. Since the law categorised homosexuality as an abnormality, this also led to the dispensing of summary justice for a shameful act in the form of violence and 'queerbashing'. The fact that homosexual identity itself remained covert produced feelings of shame amongst victims who had to explain injuries to friends, colleagues and family.⁹

With some justification, the Labouchère amendment has been described as a 'blackmailer's charter'.¹⁰ Certainly its role in promoting blackmail also suggests that in its time, it was a powerful vehicle for presumptive shame. Evidence exists to suggest that as early as the eighteenth century, blackmail was a common experience for gay men, with later surveys estimating that approximately one-third could expect to be blackmailed.¹¹ The sheer prevalence of this strongly emphasises a historical link with the phenomenon of shame stretching across the first half of the twentieth century that could sometimes even lead to suicide.¹² Connections between the original Act's desire to protect the vulnerable and how this extra stigma may have further encouraged blackmail were still being voiced on the eve of The Report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution (better known as the Wolfenden Report) in 1957.¹³ The Act also instigated an near-institutionalisation of the concept of the respectable double life, where outward conformity was a cloak for private dissent.¹⁴ It is possible that this striving to conform created the cultural quest for the acceptance of homosexuality and a belief that society should find a way to normalise same-sex relationships. As Leo Abse noted in 1966, 'the law offered homosexuals the "brutal choice" of either celibacy or criminality with nothing in between'.¹⁵

However, in the absence of this acceptance, the prevalence of blackmail is striking, again because it supposedly 'wrapped itself around the existing law'.¹⁶ Precise data for the levels of blackmail perpetrated against homosexuals are extremely difficult to uncover and perhaps represent a

dark figure of considerable magnitude, especially since they so rarely came to court.¹⁷ Perhaps the most cogent expression of its ubiquity came from the former Attorney General Lord Jowitt, who, in 1954, reflected back upon his twenty-five-year time in office. Jowitt asserted that 95 % of all blackmail cases ‘arose out of homosexuality either between adult males or between males and boys’.¹⁸

A clearer insight into this murky world is perhaps afforded by Basil Dearden’s film *The Victim* (1961), which is often described as an advert for the liberalisation inherent in Wolfenden.¹⁹ In this we see many of the components of blackmail at work and the tools of this iniquitous trade. The central character, Melville Farr, has a promising legal career ahead of him, but this is derailed by his earlier romantic involvement with another man, who is currently targeted by a blackmail ring ruthlessly on the trail of others.²⁰ These other victims are terrorised by fear and covert knowledge gleaned from blackmail as well as items such as photographs that can be interpreted as compromising. To combat this blackmail ring, Farr almost certainly jeopardises his career and possibly his marriage (emphasising how past and even forgotten sexual episodes could return to haunt individuals), enduring public opprobrium in order to assist the police.

Eventually, the unacceptability of blackmail and shame would seek a change in legal practice if not in the law itself. The Law Reform Society noted that the condition of the law actively produced a range of lawless behaviours, of which blackmail was only one. It resulted ‘directly in a far greater amount of blackmail, robbery, petty theft, and other crimes of extortion and intimidation than would otherwise exist’.²¹ Thus the offence of homosexuality was simply not worthy of prosecution and produced tangible social evils through its very existence. Moreover, the shame element which the offence encapsulated actually caused the blackmail of civil servants and military personnel to be more likely and more successful. This led to growing requests for the police to ignore homosexual offences when blackmail was reported.²² However, the damaging implication that the law’s operation had for national security, would lead to imperatives to address legalisation and change. The 1962 prosecution of William Vassall, a foreign office clerk in Moscow who was blackmailed over his homosexuality into selling secrets to the KGB, drew attention to this. The public’s reaction to this incident created an atmosphere in which the Wilson government felt empowered to act over Wolfenden.²³

Beyond campaigning and a progressive desire to move society forward, there were human tragedies unfolding in the private lives of individuals. Thus a sense of isolation and complete ostracisation experienced by closeted gay men was clearly a manifestation of early twentieth-century shame which echoed earlier experiences. The intolerance and sense of leading an entirely alien existence in the era between the wars are vividly captured by 'Charles':

I am able to go back in time in my memory a half century when homosexuality was looked upon either as a plague of the mind or the practice of a male who had been spawned by the Devil no less. Getting out of the closet in my earliest days was a formidable proposition as one was automatically earmarked for disinheritance from the family, loss of one's job and being the target for alienation by 'normal' people, and even being referred to a mental institution ... I well remember the rage of my father and the subsequent tirade of abuse I received plus the threats to expose me to the army command. This latter caused me the greater concern as I was aware that I would not only lose my rank and identity but be publicly disgraced.²⁴

Again the shadow of the Labouchère amendment and the air of hostility it created are markedly evident in the testimony of many individuals. 'Dennis' was arrested at seventeen for having sex in a cottage. He recounted, 'I was immediately expelled from school by my very religious headmaster. I was put through a County Court trial and placed on probation for two years.' After being referred to a psychiatrist, who pronounced him cured after two visits, 'Dennis' himself was left with a lifelong negative attitude to homosexuality.²⁵ He then outlined a life blighted by society's slights (great and small) upon his homosexual identity and concluded by recounting his experience of the late 1970s:

'I had to take early retirement as I was informed by a sympathetic superior that I had no chance of promotion and would always be pushed back because I was gay. This was in the cabin crew of a major airline where there are numerous gays in the operational ranks, but none should aspire to managerial status as I had. Even now I am still paying for my 'misdemeanour' at seventeen. I have now applied for several part-time jobs and been turned down because there was a possibility that I might have contact with and therefore be a danger to young people. Presumably my record was revealed during checks with the police which are permissible in such circumstances despite the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. I had asked for positions as a

French language tutor, as an ambulance driver for disabled people and I currently expect to be turned down for a position as a mobile librarian for the same reason. The hetero-world is bent on lifelong revenge!²⁶

GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE MILITARY

The long road to formal recognition of gay sexuality and gay lifestyles has been outlined before in several works, and it is scarcely the role of this particular chapter to revisit these in any detail.²⁷ However, it is especially noteworthy that the oppression of gay men and women did not cease with the legalisation of homosexuality in 1967. Furthermore the exemption from the logic of this law that was handed to the armed services was a clear case of uneven development within society. Indeed the situation within the armed services was manifestly worse than it had ever been in civilian life. Whilst the earlier laws in civilian life prohibited homosexual activity (and these laws were only ever implemented during a number of moral panics) it remained an offence within the military just to ‘be’ homosexual: an offence which attracted a custodial sentence until the very end of the twentieth century. Moreover, and as will become apparent, the exceptionally harsh nature of the laws within the armed services provided an especially fertile climate in which the application of shame, alongside aspects of coercion and blackmail—reminiscent of the worst excesses of earlier years in civilian life—could still flourish in this context.

Writing in 1995, Edmund Hall noted that whilst liberalisation for all homosexuals occurred in public life, there was a ‘wall’ that prevented these changes from occurring inside the armed forces. This context was deemed to be an exception to most other aspects of twentieth-century life, where simple and otherwise widely accepted rules simply did not apply. Priests and doctors for instance, were no longer permitted oaths of confidentiality, and their duty to disclose was strongly emphasised. In the military, however, serving officers and ranks still suffered strip searches and unwarranted searches of their homes as well as harassment and blackmail. Modern understanding of the essential nature of homosexual personality long hindered the position for gays in the military. For many years it was deviant acts that were punished because they made homosexuality seem an aberration rather than an expression of inherent sexuality. Ironically, a belated recognition of this meant that new approaches to this ‘problem’ in the armed forces probed the intrinsic identity of individuals, so that one could be dismissed from the service ‘simply’ for being gay without necessarily seeking to prac-

tise this.²⁸ Although this was obviously callous, Hall also noted the futility and waste of summarily dismissing highly and expensively trained individuals who were otherwise assets to the services they worked in.²⁹

Ironically, there were also cultural aspects of military service which were especially attractive to individuals who were, or eventually found themselves to be, gay. Service in the armed forces was frequently portrayed in advertisements as a career where individuals could test all aspects of themselves and their character. Such advertising was frequently empowering to impressionable individuals in late adolescence, and especially to those whose characters were still in the process of formation. Thus it was particularly uncomfortable for military authorities to discover that their much-vaunted exciting voyage of discovery had resulted in individuals discovering aspects of their own sexuality which did not fit with the military model. Lesbians, for instance, also regularly noted that aspects of service life appeared to be especially attractive to them, so that the percentage of lesbians in the armed services was higher than in the rest of the population.³⁰

Homosexuals in the military could easily find glowing and even admired careers derailed by chance encounters, chance incidents and sometimes the capricious behaviour of straight colleagues or other homosexuals. Once an individual was suspected of having a homosexual nature, the actions of military authorities, and often the military police in particular, were harsh and unforgiving. In this they echoed unenlightened behaviour that had long since disappeared from conventional forms of policing. Long-term surveillance, spot searches of premises and living quarters, forms of entrapment and inordinately long interrogations were all regularly used by the policing wing of each of the armed forces.³¹ Some service personnel were able to demonstrate that these units were openly homophobic and were prepared to use information from blackmailers to ensnare suspected gay servicemen and servicewomen.³² Proceedings against these individuals were unorthodox and frequently unsanctioned and, because mere suspicion of 'aberrant' sexuality was enough, victims had no right of appeal.

Some proponents of the ban on homosexuality in the armed forces argued that it was there to actively protect homosexuals, since they would receive very poor treatment at the hands of heterosexual colleagues. This seemed to institutionalise the acceptance that the military was inherently homophobic. Until the introduction of the Ministry of Defence's guidelines on homosexuality in 1994, the navy was the only service that had its

own regulations, which unhelpfully classed homosexuality, transvestism, sadism and masochism as a single group.³³ Up to this point, the other services had generally used Section 64 (Disgraceful Conduct by Officers), Section 66 (Disgraceful Conduct of an Indecent Kind) and Section 69 (Conduct Prejudicial to Good Order and Service Discipline) of the Army Act 1955 and Air Force Act 1955 alongside Sections 36, 37 and 39 of the Naval Discipline Act 1957 for the Royal Marines.³⁴ The removal of the criminal offence element of sexual acts in service life was part of the Criminal Justice Act of 1994, but this did not alter the situation for service personnel.³⁵

Those found guilty of transgressing these aspects of military law would almost certainly be shamed and dismissed from the service, losing their career, their pension and often their housing in the process. Given such potentially life-altering punishments, many gay military personnel just felt that they were living on borrowed time whilst waiting to be caught and shamed. Other recognisable strategies from the past also persisted in these circumstances. Some explicitly denied their sexuality; some invented a different sexuality and pretended to go along with it, effectively leading a double life. A retired wing commander noted, for instance, that during his war service he deflected questions about why he never talked about women by claiming that his religious beliefs forbade such attitudes and that he was forbidden to engage in sex before marriage.³⁶ Some others were so oppressed by their double life that suicide often felt a welcome alternative to the act of dismissal and shaming. One twenty-four-year-old man recalled:

I got home and sat down wondering what to do ... I lost hours and hours just staring at the wall, deciding that it would be easier if I killed myself. I thought about all the ways of doing it. I remember looking in the draw at the pills and trying to work out how many I would need.³⁷

Whilst a national scandal, this situation remained almost unknown to the civilian world. Nonetheless it was something of an open secret in military circles that the Ministry of Defence was aware that gay servicemen and servicewomen had killed themselves rather than face public exposure.³⁸

Military authorities often used tactics that would have caused an outcry in civilian life; occasionally the procedures involved individuals implicating themselves, and these could touch levels of absurdity. As one pilot officer noted:

I was twenty-eight, he was twenty-four, and we were having a consensual relationship that would have been entirely legal in civilian life. It was only on the basis of our statement that they were able to list all the sixteen offences – I had given them the information myself, and since we were involved in a relationship sixteen offences were not difficult to come up with. I corroborated the statement voluntarily and was court-marshalled as a result of having done so. They told me to talk to them in order to make things easier!³⁹

Since there was a *Sun* reporter in the courtroom and the officer wanted to protect his family, he pleaded guilty, to avoid the details of the charges being read out and the resultant shaming. After this experience, the officer ‘... had no job, and no reference for the previous thirteen years of his life, a criminal conviction for an offence that was not criminal or shameful in civilian life and no pension contributions or terminal benefits after thirteen years’ payment and service’.

His final sad reflection on all this was: ‘I had always tried to be professional and discreet – but I might as well have slept with every steward I ever fancied! Or every airman under my command? I was given no credit whatsoever for being the honest person I tried to be’.⁴⁰

Because of this proscription, even suspicion of an individual’s potentially homosexual nature gave unwitting power to other unscrupulous, malevolent or fearful and cornered individuals. One RAF sergeant was betrayed by a friend who used knowledge of his homosexuality as a bargaining chip when he himself was in trouble with the RAF police.⁴¹ A lesbian officer, Elaine Chambers, outlined a situation where she chose to keep quiet, ironically to defend the integrity of another gay officer forced to investigate her. As she explained:

When I went into the office in Britain to be finally thrown out there were several women officers there who worked for the boss. One of them was the girlfriend of the woman major who started all the investigations into me – she knew that I knew who she was and looked terrified as I went in to be sacked. Of course I didn’t say anything, but it just goes to show how stupid it all is. We are everywhere, and if we’re good at our job we should be left alone to do it.⁴²

Another frequent occurrence, reminiscent of the plot of *The Victim*, was blackmail resulting from a gay acquaintanceship, or alternatively even the venom and rage of an abusive and manipulating partner. One of Edmund Hall’s stories included a protracted narrative in which a serving naval

officer was constantly emotionally blackmailed with the threat of exposure by an unstable and vindictive individual. This kept the officer in a prolonged abusive relationship with the man, where the latter repeatedly used the threat of exposure to control and bully him. The disturbed individual even joined the Royal Naval Reserve to gain privileged information with which to blackmail other serving officers. None of this would have been possible without the legislative ban and its draconian consequences.⁴³ Given society's increasingly liberal attitude, the maintenance of the prohibition on homosexuality in the military actually still fed the potential for blackmail. 'Outing' themselves to friends, colleagues and relations may have no longer felt dangerous to homosexuals, but the threat of the loss of employment or income remained just as potent and gave power to blackmailers.

Proponents of the ban on homosexuality in the armed forces as supposed protection for homosexuals seemed to institutionalise the acceptance that the military was inherently homophobic, albeit in a somewhat sophisticated manner. One surgeon, Commander Richard Jolly, wrote that it 'has a corrosive effect on the cohesion and fighting efficiency of a warship'.⁴⁴ Other senior serving officers could likewise make executive decisions that had far-reaching consequences for any serving member of the armed services who was thought to be gay. A seaman, Peter Williams, who had declared himself 'out' but was celibate, was nonetheless on the receiving end of complaints from his ship's executive officer. He was thereafter given a series of punishments that were not very different from those meted out to the conscientious objectors encountered in Chap. 2 above. Williams was forcibly imprisoned, maltreated, given degrading fatigues to undertake and forced to undergo an unnecessary rectal examination in the presence of four witnesses.⁴⁵ Occasionally, straight colleagues would protest about the inhuman treatment handed out to homosexual colleagues. For instance, one heterosexual officer trainee wrote back to Commander Jolly to contest his persistent attitude, declaring it to be needless and homophobic. Jolly stressed the cleave between military and civilian life by inviting this trainee to ensure that he did not confuse his duties as a naval officer with his feelings as a private citizen, following this with 'you'll still not be able to convince me about the merits of a way of life in which the main sewer gets regular usage as a playground'.⁴⁶

Yet some were prepared to take the issue into higher circles and, in doing so, demanded a full and precise explanation from the Ministry of Defence. When Edmund Hall persisted by tabling a question to the

Secretary of State for Defence, Malcolm Rifkind, requiring a statement of current Ministry of Defence policy, he discovered that the shadow of Philby, Burgess and Maclean still shrouded ministry thinking. In amongst reasons associated with the restrictions and constraints of service life, the possibility of the senior coercing the junior into ‘acts in which they would not choose to engage in normal circumstances’ was mentioned. This appeared alongside the fact that homosexuals ‘...might be vulnerable to blackmail and therefore present a security risk: not all those who are of homosexual orientation or engage in homosexual activities are prepared to admit it as they may fear the reactions from their family and friends’.⁴⁷ This also echoes elements of the security establishment’s treatment of Lord Lambton which we saw in Chap. 6.

A statement such as this revealed the security imperatives behind some Ministry of Defence attitudes. However, interestingly, this statement also indicated that shame, for service personnel, still ought to play a significant role in their thinking and behaviour. Was it the case that the Ministry of Defence believed being homosexual was especially shameful for service personnel and their families? If so, it indicated that attitudes surrounding military service were still significantly homophobic. Perhaps, further than this, it indicated that within military service there were extremely rigid expectations of gender roles and of masculinity and femininity, a phenomenon described by the American philosopher Judith Butler as ‘a paranoia that forms the possibility of military citizenship’.⁴⁸ Similarly, Butler argued that conventional heterosexual thinking required a ‘deflection of narcissism’ which it believed would be unlikely to be achieved with male homosexuals in its midst.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, centuries of harsh treatment left generations of gay men and women serving in the military scarred and unfulfilled. They were made to hide, pretend, cover their tracks and actively feel ashamed for their emotional and psychological makeup. Others sought a better alternative elsewhere, whilst the cost of their pain and suffering remains probably incalculable and certainly beyond scandalous. In his research Edmund Hall eventually uncovered a very senior serviceman who was prepared to admit to his homosexuality. His considerable career, still inside the closet, offered a sad picture of the fate of homosexual servicemen and service-women of past generations, as well as giving glimpses of all of the above strategies that they were faced with.

I followed the proper pattern in the 1950s and got married. There was no question whatsoever of announcing your homosexuality – in fact it was not until many years later that I would have listened to that label without hating it ... Until the rules change, and I'm afraid that may be sometime away, I would not recommend people to follow in my footsteps without really thinking about what they are giving up? Unless a senior management career is what you really want, be honest to yourself and leave. I will always regret the fun and relationships I never had, despite my success.⁵⁰

However, it became increasingly obvious that the armed forces could simply not shut out the liberalisation that was going on elsewhere in wider social attitudes forever, and indeed sometimes these changes could not be foreseen. The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, for example, unwittingly created a language about groups not being discriminated against because of aspects of their identity. This eventually opened the door for the tabling of other concerns.⁵¹ The age of consent for homosexual sex became a fiercely contested issue in the early 1990s, which resulted in being lowered from twenty-one to eighteen in 1994. This also occurred alongside considerable opposition to Section 28, which had politicised both gay and straight people and led them to protest against what seemed to be a return to the dark ages of hiding homosexual identity from view.⁵² All of this seemed to offer the prospect that a climate of change was occurring in public opinion in wider society, and this was to find its way even into educational policies that promoted tolerance and understanding and were at some ideological distance from Section 28.⁵³

The interaction of gay service personnel with what seemed to be the 'enfranchised world' outside created a glaring mismatch between the increasing visibility of homosexuality in mainstream life and its continued ban in the military. Some gay members of the military took a step into this 'enfranchised world' and persisted with a strange double life in which they were 'out' to friends and confidants in the wider world, but were still denying their identity in the context of military service. Yet also some of these personnel found themselves driven to new degrees of militancy which both persuaded and enabled them to actively 'come out' despite the risks, choosing to express indignation at their poor treatment.⁵⁴ This was an anti-shame strategy that was in tune with the philosophy of Gay Pride.

The armed forces' practice of acting as though Wolfenden and legalisation had never happened, meant that the world of the homosexual security risk brought down by entrapment, blackmail and shame was alive and

well. This was emphasised when, in 1985, seven signalmen serving in Cyprus were lured and entrapped by foreign secret service agents who seduced and blackmailed them. This led to them supplying, against their will, an apparently copious supply of sensitive intelligence information.⁵⁵ Such a course of action seemed ostensibly to have been caused by the military's prohibition on enlisting gay personnel. The incident led the then Labour opposition Defence Spokesman Kevin McNamara, in the context of debating the Armed Forces Bill, to request that the punishment of homosexuals in the military be severely restricted to issues that were manifestly only prejudicial to 'good conduct and discipline'.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, and throughout the 1990s, the Ministry of Defence would regularly cling to the idea that 'homosexual behaviour can cause offence, polarize relationships, induce ill-discipline, and as a consequence damage morale and unit effectiveness'.⁵⁷

When change came, it was initially piecemeal and sporadic and, in many respects, somewhat incoherent. The first attack upon the ban on homosexuality in the military came during discussions about the 1991 Armed Forces Bill, in which the exemption that the armed forces enjoyed from the 1967 Sexual Offences Act was finally recognised as untenable.⁵⁸ Within a year, the Ministry of Defence had moved to stop criminal proceedings for anything that was not illegal under the civilian legislation of 1967. Soon after this, equalisation was cemented in the form of the 1994 Criminal Justice Act. Whilst steps towards lifting the ban had been taken, and homosexual acts illegal in the rest of society were now permitted, homosexual military personnel still faced discharge for being gay.⁵⁹ This situation persisted, and a compendium of figures suggests that up to 150 homosexual service personnel per year were either discharged, or opted to leave.⁶⁰ Again the Ministry of Defence persisted with the argument that homosexual service personnel undermined order, efficiency and discipline. Likewise, it also foregrounded the welfare of its personnel, through its instructions to medical officers to think deeply about the psychological issues of discovery and disclosure when they were dealing with gay personnel.⁶¹

Whilst Britain had been one of the signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights, this seemed distant to most British citizens since it could be invoked only once all British legal remedies had been exhausted. The provisions in precedents of the European Convention came a lot closer when Parliament passed the Human Rights Act in 1998. This incorporated the convention's principles and the rights it guaranteed

into British law, so that these would now shape legal decisions and precedents established in British courts. Yet still, the worries of senior officers persisted. The discomfort of heterosexual soldiers was mentioned, as was a lingering concern that young and impressionable recruits might still be potentially at the mercy of predatory senior ranks. Several senior officers therefore felt it necessary to maintain the ban as a means of reassuring potential recruits to the military and their parents.

Things began to move on when four homosexual individuals decided to challenge the ban against them serving in the armed forces. Yet here were also visible some of the last remnants of the malevolent shame and blackmail culture which had existed in the wider world before Wolfenden and 1967. These were evident in the stories that each of the four told about what had prompted them to come together, with the strong support of the pressure group Stonewall, to take this action. Lieutenant Commander Duncan Lustig-Praen, a former naval supply officer, who was on the verge of becoming a senior defence adviser to John Major, had sought a discharge in 1994 on the grounds that he was subject to a blackmail attempt. Sergeant Graeme Grady, a former RAF intelligence worker, had been reported to his superiors after he had been seen attending a counselling group for gay married men whilst on secondment in the USA, also in 1994. Jeanette Smith, a nurse in the RAF, had been the victim of an anonymous caller who had informed the service that she had commenced a relationship with a female civilian in 1993. This story also demonstrated that the worst excesses of policing the ban were still operative in the 1990s. Smith was interrogated at length and was asked unwarranted and intrusive questions about her sexual behaviour within the relationship. John Beckett, a naval weapons systems engineer, had disclosed his sexual nature to a well-meaning chaplain, who had encouraged him to pass this information on to his own commanding officer. This strategy, however, apparently fell foul of Beckett's encounter with a profoundly unsympathetic service psychiatrist who suggested electric shock aversion therapy.⁶²

Although these four service personnel lost their cases (they would later be awarded £400,000 in compensation) the presiding judge suggested that such a judgement might only be temporary, since it would be unlikely to stand up to scrutiny in the light of the more robust protection for human rights offered by the European Convention.⁶³ Within a year, the Ministry of Defence had responded by establishing a Homosexual Policy Assessment Team (HPAT) tasked with investigating and assembling data that might produce a way forward and a workable solution. In the course

of its deliberations, HPAT investigated policies enacted by a number of other countries. Consideration of the US services' 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy discovered that it was universally derided, since it perpetuated ignorance and merely proposed hiding the problem. HPAT's investigations still clung to the need to protect heterosexual personnel from feelings of discomfort and the resultant effects that these would potentially have upon military efficiency. However, it later became clear that HPAT had encountered reactions from serving military personnel that were strongly homophobic.⁶⁴

Although this seemed to be stalling the issue, it did not do so for very long. In July 1999, the European Convention found against Britain in a case where a transsexual had been discriminated against.⁶⁵ Thus in the following month, the armed forces had no option but to permit the service of transsexuals in the military. Although the ban on homosexual personnel serving in the military continued after this, it was clear that the clock was ticking very fast indeed. In the following month, the European Court of Human Rights declared that the ban had effectively violated the human rights of Lustig-Praen, Grady, Smith and Beckett.⁶⁶

From this point onwards, the momentum towards the final and unequivocal removal of the ban was unstoppable. The eventual solution reached by the Ministry of Defence was suggested by Stonewall, and was modelled closely on the arrangements adopted by the Australian Defence Force.⁶⁷ Henceforth military regulations would equalise the situations for gay and straight service personnel. Both would now be prevented from engaging in any overt displays of sexuality or affection. Rather than 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell', this was a policy more akin to 'don't engage, don't distract'. Moreover the approach must have greatly appealed to service chiefs, since it kept many of the other policies that had otherwise stood in the way of accepting gay service personnel squarely in mind. If all forms of sexual engagement were to be removed from the view of service personnel and from service space, then this new situation practically ensured that the operational directives and efficiency imperatives could more obviously be met than they ever used to be. If homosexuals could be institutionally accepted, and their sexuality immediately hidden, then they would never again pose a potential problem for military efficiency. Likewise, the policy appeared to offer the much-prized reassurance to juvenile recruits and their parents. If all forms of sexual engagement were now covered by regulations, then there would be greater vigilance about other issues such as heterosexual harassment and bullying. Interestingly,

the new regulations left a great deal of discretion with the commanding officer on the spot. In its way, this also solved some worries that the Ministry of Defence must have had about unwieldy rules and regulations which were constantly under review by the press and libertarian 'snoopers' and 'troublemakers'. This discretion could also be painted in a positive light, since it appeared capable of being used sensitively on a case-by-case basis. It also gave some responsibility back to individuals, who were thereafter tasked with judging the character and prejudices of their commanding officer, as well as the context in which they indulged in certain forms of behaviour.⁶⁸

Thus the ban on homosexual personnel serving in the military was removed in January 2000. However, there was still a considerable range of subsidiary issues that needed addressing before gay servicemen and women could achieve the same level of benefits and privileges enjoyed by their heterosexual counterparts. Issues concerning housing arrangements and the treatment of spouses would eventually be addressed, albeit gradually. Nonetheless, and in the short term, there were a number of issues which created headaches for those in charge of social occasions. Here again it is possible to see changes occurring within modernity, creating new sites and occasions for feelings associated with shame and embarrassment, alongside lingering legacies derived from presumptive shame. Service life was close-knit, and a significant part of it was the social life enjoyed in the mess. Such occasions now became potentially fraught with difficulty and provided endless opportunities to encounter, and have to negotiate, delicate situations. Whilst the Ministry of Defence realised this, the advice it gave was neither helpful, nor likely to inspire confidence in any party who was involved:

Where partners wish to dance together, the circumstances will need to be judged: on some occasions this might pass virtually unremarked and cause no difficulty, on others it could cause offence (with, perhaps, further consequences). Where necessary, those responsible for the function should intervene as discreetly as possible with a view to minimising any disturbance. It will always be appropriate for couples attending such functions to bear in mind that any overt displays of a partner's affection can cause offence.⁶⁹

In the period that immediately followed this, Belkin and Evans proceeded to investigate the implementation of the new policy in an attempt to anal-

use its effectiveness. What was striking was just how prepared Britain's armed forces were to actively implement such a policy. In practice, Belkin and Evans found that a great deal did not change. Individuals on the ground had carried on with many compromises and allowances that they had already been making for their colleagues. One respondent summed up this range of feelings by saying:

A lot of gay people have gone about like before and not said anything. But in most cases with those that have said that they're gay, it was probably known already. Close associates who worked with them probably already knew, but they kept quiet about it, because they didn't want to get the person in trouble. So often it hasn't been a surprise. It just has not been an issue.⁷⁰

Similarly, an executive officer noted that the services adopted an attitude of 'resigned acceptance' and that the situation would also increasingly normalise itself as generational change took place. He concluded: 'There is a more relaxed attitude among younger people towards those of a different sexual orientation, and by and large it has been, therefore, a non-issue; it really has.'⁷¹ This motif of the change constituting 'a non-issue' would be echoed elsewhere in Belkin and Evans as well as mainstream contemporary reporting, such as one commentary in the *New York Times* in 2007 which stated:

Since the British military began allowing homosexuals to serve in the armed forces in 2000, none of its fears – about harassment, discord, blackmail, bullying or an erosion of unit cohesion or military effectiveness – have come to pass, according to the Ministry of Defence, current and former members of the services and academics specializing in the military. The biggest news about the policy, they say, is that there is no news. It has for the most part become a nonissue.⁷²

Although it suited the Ministry of Defence to proffer this analysis, it remains the fact that opposition to the lifting of the ban leaked out only later. Writing for *The Times* under the headline 'Officers Quit Navy after the Forces Lifted the Ban on Gays, Secret Paper Reveals', Dominic Kennedy told a different story from the 'non-issue' narrative of seamless assimilation. Kennedy uncovered a litany of disquiet amongst mid-ranking officers and the rank and file about sharing communal washing and toilet facilities with homosexual colleagues. Others expressed concern about

same sex-marriage quarters providing gay couples with the potential to influence the 'moral' outlook of their children. A small number had even been prepared to leave the service in which they had enlisted, citing issues associated with the apparent breach of privacy.⁷³

Despite this, the final integration of gay servicemen and servicewomen and their sexuality into the ethos of the service was a strategy firmly in line with the Gay Pride philosophy. It was founded on a fundamental principle that gay service-people were just like their colleagues and deserved to be treated in the same way. Attaining Pride and strident elements of anti-shame were absolutely crucial in the strategy adopted by gay service personnel. It was aimed at highlighting and demonstrating the unreasonableness of a two-tiered separate system in the recognition of gay rights. Society had moved forward but the armed forces had not. Worse than this, the dark, prurient and secretive nature of military police action was rooted in the worst excesses of entrapment that had occurred in the dark days before legalisation within wider society. Even this comparison was false, since in the outside world there had never been regulation or legislation that sought to probe the minds and identities of individuals. Indeed, in the outside world one would have been extremely unlikely to have been dismissed for being suspected of 'being homosexual'. Moreover, in the world beyond the military, the concept of 'being homosexual' had little or no meaning and no legal definition. Thus it remains a surprise just how long the armed forces maintained a situation where the application of a harsh and unforgiving presumptive shame culture persisted beyond its removal in everyday life. Whilst they clung to operational efficiency as the watchword that prevented homosexuals from joining the military, it was somehow ironic that military efficiency was a central component of the change when it eventually came. Indeed the military came around to congratulating itself on how the change had the real potential to tighten such efficiency. Moreover, another context for the change had been its capacity to improve the image of the armed services as open to all and thus to provide a stimulus for recruitment. The armed services very soon found themselves unexpectedly welcome at university freshers' fairs and careers events because they had institutionalised equality and diversity in line with other areas of life.⁷⁴

REDISCOVERING SHAME AND EMBRACING IT: THE RISE OF QUEER THEORY AND ITS NARRATIVES

The eventual triumph and adoption of codes of practice that allowed 'out' gay service personnel to be assimilated into service alongside their colleagues, was arguably the ultimate and quintessential demonstration of the Gay Pride approach in both its positive and negative connotations. Military service was arguably an extreme demonstration of belonging and citizenship. Time and again, gay service personnel performed, demonstrated and narrativised their devotion to their particular roles and occupations, alongside the wider purposes and associated ethics of their respective armed services. They also were otherwise likely to be socially conservative, and indeed this was reinforced by some of the pressures and practices of service life. Their homosexual identity was hidden through layers of visible and role-playing conformity, and even their physical appearance was obviously constrained by the requirements of uniform, rank and overarching conceptions of duty. We might even argue that, for gay service personnel, this stance was heavily reinforced because the policing and detection apparatus of the military encouraged other elements of conformity. This pretence at conformity, actively created fear and shame in equal measure amongst those deceiving the service, their colleagues, their friends and their families. Shame was a natural consequence of keeping things so hidden for so long, and in itself stimulated feelings of fear, ostracism and lingering disappointment with the poor behaviour of individuals and institutions. This cocktail of shame and conformity eventually manifested itself in Pride when the dissonance with the outside world could no longer be maintained by individuals and eventually the services themselves. This was the catalyst which transformed shame to Pride.

Homosexual servicemen and servicewomen also obviously embodied ideals of fitness and further layers of bodily conformity that further marked them out as representative of 'hyper-citizenship'. They were the individuals literally prepared to sacrifice themselves for a society that was substantially conformist. Indeed, one of the earliest acts of Gay Pride was to place remembrance wreaths in memory of the unknown gay servicemen and servicewomen who had perished in both world wars. All of these qualities meant that homosexual servicemen and servicewomen were a demonstration of the power of Gay Pride *par excellence*. This factor was further demonstrated by the history and privations they had undergone in their journey from the shame of hiding their identity (and even their

thoughts—anonymous or otherwise) from the armed forces in which they served. This had also, in some instances, involved such individuals hiding such thoughts from themselves. Some had contemplated suicide, and some had been cashiered from their respective armed forces or had simply left quietly. This in itself indicated an important connection between military service and masculinity, initially discussed in Chap. 2 in relation to the white feather phenomenon. Interestingly, the shame discussed earlier had, by the later context, been transformed into a species of Pride. Gay military personnel had gone through all these privations and had come out on the other side having transmuted hiding and shame into visibility and Pride. How could this realistically be anything other than a progressive triumph?

Yet the victory of service personnel and their quest to manifest Pride in becoming ‘hyper-citizens’ alongside their straight colleagues, was not entirely in keeping with all aspects of gay politics as it had been developing at the end of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first. They had fought agonisingly against the presumptive shame that society wanted to heap upon them and to expunge it from their lives. But now they found gay individuals and groups who thought differently about shame and even criticised them for their quest to merely seek equality with the heterosexual world. Gay politics were profoundly changed by the arrival of Queer Theory, a harsh critique of gay acceptance of the heterosexual world’s dominance and the oppressive power of its agendas that sought conformity. Queer Theory developed from the work of the aforementioned Judith Butler, and by the middle of the 1990s it had followers and proponents on both sides of the Atlantic; although the Americans would generally predominate.⁷⁵ Queer Theory was a development which set itself deliberately against the ideological stance associated with Pride. As such, it borrowed ideas of destabilised identity from both poststructuralist theory and Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalysis.⁷⁶ It was also heavily indebted to Foucault and his quest for both subjectivity and the removal of interfering specialists and authority figures intent on producing stable and conforming identities. The Queer Theory approach argued that Gay Pride marginalised people’s gay sexualities which did not fit a model and instead concentrated upon ‘acceptable’ gays and turned them into ideal citizens—a process labelled ‘homonormativity’.⁷⁷ For example, the fact that apparently benevolent actions could have unforeseen consequences, became evident when heroic motifs in AIDS activism narratives themselves further relegated and displaced gay shame narratives and outlooks.⁷⁸ Heroism

became necessary in the wake of the AIDS epidemic, not simply because of the wide impact of the disease itself, but also because the reaction of some parts of society heaped opprobrium and exacted older organic shame punishments upon members of the homosexual community once more.⁷⁹

Pride neglected the world of transgressive sexualities that were not accepted by society, those that could never hope to be part of even a tolerant society pushing other agendas associated with model citizenship.⁸⁰ Thus Queer Theory tried to empower transvestites, queens, the disabled gay, homosexual sex workers, immigrants and all others who made it difficult for gay citizenship to disappear into the mainstream. This was the case even if, perhaps especially if, individuals celebrated their shame—that which made them distinctive from the rest of society. Queer Theory argued that homosexuals, and indeed all people, were fundamentally and individually different, and all should glory in this difference by rejecting norms and conformist stereotypes. Very often Queer theorists tried to produce alternative readings of situations to introduce transgressive elements—in other words to effectively ‘queer’ them.⁸¹ Moreover, there was also a growing suspicion that ‘heteronormativity’ was a quiet side project being conducted by neo-liberal capitalism.⁸² Some had also found themselves politicised into rejecting the normal world, in outrage against the treatment of gays during the height of the AIDS epidemic.⁸³ Thus within queer studies, queer history looked back to deny the Whig progressive story so that it could potentially, thereafter, become the ‘lives of infamous men’. It also looked forward to deny the ongoing normalising agendas of late capitalism and its quest for safe homosexuals. However, there was also a trap in this response, since the act of rescuing queer figures from the past effectively channelled this queer identity into Pride.⁸⁴ In addition, George Chauncey noted how Queer Theory had ambitions to change the conventional history of homosexuality and its relationship with shame. It was not so much an anxious striving to be accepted, as a history of defiance. Chauncey noted that there is enough historical and anecdotal evidence to strongly suggest that considerable numbers of, admittedly elite, gay men were not conscious of elements of shame in their behaviour in the first half of the twentieth century.⁸⁵

For Queer Theory, the notion of Pride was conformist and remarkably exclusionist in its outlook. In its quest to turn gay people into model and ideal citizens, it foregrounded ideal personalities, ideal behaviours and ideal bodies. In other words, the logic of Pride’s quest for citizenship was starkly embodied in those service personnel who had made far-reaching

attempts to conform, in almost all ways except one. Even here, in their very identity, they had been faced with pressures to deny it, to behave in ways that undermined it or perhaps even to enter the armed forces in some attempt to be ‘straightened’ out.⁸⁶ For those who rejected the Pride approach, the resolution of the issue of homosexuality in the military was anathema. The solution brokered by Stonewall, an arch Pride-style organisation and pressure group, had produced a situation where homosexuality was not so much brought out into the open celebrated as hidden and denied—a situation which some queer theorists would go as far as to suggest was a re-creation of shame.⁸⁷

In their own lives and practices, those who developed and thought deeply about Queer Theory entered into profound dialogues about the nature of shame and came to argue that the removal of shame marginalised human experience. Shame thus became central to most, if not all, queer identities which established themselves in a problematic relationship with the rest of society. Although it foregrounded a refusal to conform, there were also deeper layers of self-expression and self-realisation that distilled themselves into the phrase ‘don’t allow others, the enemy “to tell you who you are”’.⁸⁸ This rejection of Pride could go even deeper and thus enter into an unforeseen relationship with shame:

Pride, because it is predicated on its dichotomous opposition to shame, always reasserts what it repudiates. Moreover, Pride produces an additional level of shame – it makes us ashamed of our shame. No matter how you look at it, shame, it seems, just won’t stay away. So what interests me more is to raise the question of what kind of community could be grounded in feelings of shame.⁸⁹

However, another indictment of Pride was its complicity, its passivity and ultimately its fragility. This comes out clearly in the personal meditations of Ellis Hanson, another queer theoretician:

However eagerly I might seek it, pride is embarrassing. I also find it inert. Shame is invariably assaultive, but pride is generally construed in gentler more passive terms, a feeling one struggles for but not a feeling that stalks one ... However enviable it may seem when I do have it, pride can easily appear arrogant, delusional, self-indulgent – in a word, shameful – when I do have it. As soon as I embrace my pride, I am assaulted again by a shame that strangles my enjoyment. I cannot be seen enjoying my pride, or I will be punished. I have to be modest about it, as if it were something to be

ashamed of. I feel obliged to disguise pride however thinly as humility to take pride only in others, especially in God, or in institutions, or in other people, never in myself.⁹⁰

The establishment of shame as central to queer identities became obvious and visible as numerous American cities such as New York and San Francisco began to hold Gay Shame parades in opposition to Gay Pride parades.⁹¹ David Caron put this renewed emphasis on shame succinctly, whilst also putting the queer attitude to homosexual service in the military into perspective:

Gay Shame activists and scholars are reclaiming practices and identities that have now been abjected not only by the dominant heterosexual culture but by many gay people as well. Public and anonymous sex, gender indeterminacy, promiscuity, class specificities, and other markers of nonconformity may be reclaimed as alternatives to more mainstream values such as marriage or the right to wear military uniforms for real.⁹²

Queer theoreticians such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Michael Warner saw that heterogeneous experiences of rejection were central to the establishment of community organisation around shame. This was an important re-enactment of the first feelings of most homosexuals who realised that they did not share 'sameness' with the rest of their families.⁹³ It was also likely to create what another commentator describes as 'the queer sort of generosity that comes from a mutual recognition of abjection'.⁹⁴ However, this valorising of shame could feel narcissistic since Queer Theory and politics were criticised for having an unwarranted and unnecessary level of contempt for normal life.⁹⁵

As we have seen, the relationship between gay identities, homosexuality and shame changed greatly over the course of the twentieth century. The first part of this period was marked by a progressive liberal struggle to break out of society's shackles, whilst also claiming legitimacy within that very same society. This was thus a classic struggle pitched within the terms and confines of modernity. Pre-modern and primitive attitudes to an aspect of human identity and behaviour would be shown for the offensive and barbarous crimes that they were. Gay individuals would be liberated, given rights and found an equal place within society where they could usefully contribute to that society. Central to this was the removal of all

aspects of shame and its resultant power that had previously clung to an identity which had suffered from being proscribed, denied and hidden.

Yet from the end of the century, this attitude to the shame that had so hampered and damaged previous generations, was turned spectacularly upon its head. No longer was dutiful and conspicuous citizenship the only legitimate aim and goal for gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual people. On both sides of the Atlantic, Queer Theory was remarkably ambitious and, for our purposes, was an especially prominent example of how some identities and their advocates would strenuously argue for post-modern identities, which emphatically saw shame as a tool that society had done its best to marginalise. The very fact of this marginalisation made it attractive to those seeking to transgress and, through this, find and celebrate both their sexuality and their shame-ridden identity. As one further queer theoretician put it: ‘And if we no longer subscribe to certain structures of identity that have sustained gay shame in the past, that doesn’t mean we’ve eliminated such shame from our current identities or identifications, nor that we should be any less engaged with shame’s rich and complex productive effects’.⁹⁶

The treatment of homosexuals in Britain during the twentieth century had been governed by the shame encouraged through the cultural politics of the Labouchère amendment and its promotion of presumptive shame. This had criminalised and ostracised gay men whilst encouraging a culture of blackmail that further enhanced the power of many forms of shame in the twentieth century. When liberalisation came, it was episodic and piecemeal, liberating sections of society whilst leaving others still heavily policed and under draconian control. When liberation came to the military, it followed the Gay Pride philosophy of eradicating shame and enabling gay individuals to aspire and become full citizens. This, however, was profoundly out of step with cultural developments which rediscovered the power of shame as a tool to shape affirmative lifestyles and characters. Thus from shame shaping homosexuals’ lives in an intrusive and damaging manner, by the end of the century, it was actively enriching and affirming them.

NOTES

1. J. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books), p. vii.

2. Deborah Cohen's account of early twentieth-century reactions to the presence of homosexual family members tells varying stories. Whilst there are accounts of ostracised sons and uncles, there are also narratives of such individuals being hidden and in some sense protected from social opprobrium. See D. Cohen (2014) *Family Secrets: The Things We Tried to Hide* (London: Penguin), pp. 143–77.
3. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, p. 7. Jeffrey Weeks notes how opposition to the tolerance of homosexuality under such progressive histories is always (in enlightenment style) attributed to species of male unreason.
4. The comparison between the situation for homosexuals in Britain for much of the twentieth century and for secularists in Britain for much of the nineteenth is remarkable. In their respective centuries both secularists and homosexuals were considered unnatural and were thus ostracised from society. In response both movements had 'constitutional' wings which made the attainment of full citizenship a reality and likewise had individuals who wanted to transgress and celebrate the identity's status as an outsider world view and lifestyle. Likewise both were held together by a strong journalistic tradition and able writers who could bring together and fortify their respective imagined communities. However, there is a powerful school of thought that resists this teleological framework and emphasises the heterogeneity of experience. See for example B. Reay (2009) 'Writing the Modern Histories of Homosexual England', *Historical Journal*, 52, 1, pp. 213–33. Weeks also notes this characteristic of self-organisation; see Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, p. x and p. xiii.
5. V.L. Bullough (1979) *Homosexuality: A History—from Ancient Greece to Gay Liberation* (New York: Meridian), p. 40.
6. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, p. 18.
7. P. Purton (2006) *Sodom, Gomorrah and the New Jerusalem: Labour and Lesbian and Gay Rights, from Edward Carpenter to Today* (London: Upstream), p. 19.
8. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, p. 11 and p. 15.
9. See the account 'On being Bashed' in P. Burton (1995) *Against the Aliens: Some Aspects of Gay Life* (Brighton: Millivres Books), pp. 43–7.

10. J. Weeks (2012) 'Queer(y)ing the "Modern Homosexual"', *Journal of British Studies*, 51, 3, p. 536. See also P. Higgins (1996) *Heterosexual Dictatorship: Male Homosexuality in Postwar Britain* (London: Fourth Estate), p. 98 for its mention by Travers Humphries in the context of initial meetings of the Wolfenden Committee.
11. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, pp. 21–2.
12. Kenneth Williams listed eloquently the numerous reasons why an author might contrive to have a homosexual character commit suicide. See H. David (1997) *On Queer Street: A Social History of British Homosexuality 1895–1995* (London: Harper Collins), pp. 104–8.
13. See for example the 1957 report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution quoted in *The Times*, 5 September 1957, p. 7.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *The Guardian*, 20 December 1966, p. 2.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Higgins (1996) *Heterosexual Dictatorship*, p. 101.
18. *Manchester Guardian*, 20 May 1954, p. 2. Another lawyer estimated in the context of the Wolfenden discussions that three-quarters of all suicides were blackmailed homosexuals. See Higgins (1996) *Heterosexual Dictatorship*, p. 98.
19. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, p. 174; M. Cook (2007) 'Queer Conflicts: Love, Sex and War, 1914–67' in M. Cook (ed.) *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex between Men since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Greenwood), p. 173, and Higgins (1996) *Heterosexual Dictatorship*, pp. 96–8. For a more critical view of the film and its tone see David (1997) *On Queer Street*, pp. 162–3.
20. This was possibly modelled on an infamous Soho blackmail gang that operated successfully in the 1930s at the behest of Harry Raymond, who claimed that these activities secured him an income of £60,000 per year. Higgins (1996) *Heterosexual Dictatorship*, pp. 102–3.
21. *The Guardian*, 7 May 1965.
22. See *The Times*, 13 May 1965 and 12 February 1966.
23. Purton (2006) *Sodomy, Gomorrah and the New Jerusalem*, p. 27. See also David (1997) *On Queer Street*, pp. 190–3. For more on Wolfenden see Higgins (1996) *Heterosexual Dictatorship*, *passim*.

24. National Lesbian and Gay Survey (1993) *Proust, Cole Porter, Michelangelo, Marc Almond and Me: Writings by Gay Men on their Lives and Lifestyles* (London: Routledge), p. 21.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
27. It is interesting that the ‘road to legalisation’ narrative that leads to Wolfenden has been criticised as narrowing the definitions and even the identities of homosexuals and their lifestyles. Moreover this was also reinforced by a quasi-heroic ‘Great Queers from History’ approach. See Weeks (2012) ‘Queer(y)ing the “Modern Homosexual”’, pp. 526–7.
28. E. Hall (1995) *We Can’t Even March Straight: Homosexuality in the British Armed Forces* (London: Vintage), pp. 2–4.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
31. See also *The Times*, 22 November 1985, p. 4.
32. See the personal testimonies of individuals quoted in Hall (1995) *We Can’t Even March Straight*, pp. 14–15.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–6.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–6.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 98–111.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
48. J. Butler (2005) ‘Contagious Word: Paranoia and “Homosexuality” in the Military’ in I. Morland and A. Willox (eds) *Queer Theory: Readers in Cultural Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave), p. 144.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 152.
50. Hall (1995) *We Can’t Even March Straight*, p. 126.
51. Purton (2006) *Sodom, Gomorrah and the New Jerusalem*, p. 33.

52. Weeks (1990 edition) *Coming Out*, pp. 237–43.
53. For further discussion see I. Warwick, E. Chase and P. Aggleton with S. Sanders (2004) *Homophobia, Sexual Orientation and Schools: A Review and Implications for Action* (London: University of London).
54. Hall (1995) *We Can't Even March Straight*, p. 113.
55. *The Times*, 11 June 1985, p. 3.
56. *The Times*, 22 November 1985, p. 4.
57. Ministry of Defence (1994) *Armed Forces Policy and Guidelines on Homosexuality* (London: Ministry of Defence), p. 1.
58. A. Belkin and R.L. Evans (2000) *The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers in the British Armed Forces: Appraising the Evidence* (Santa Barbara: Centre for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, University of California at Santa Barbara), p. 10.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
61. Ministry of Defence (1994) *Armed Forces Policy and Guidelines on Homosexuality*, Annex A.
62. Belkin and Evans (2000) *The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers*, p. 19.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
64. See Martin Bowley QC, President of the Bar Lesbian and Gay Group, letter to *The Times*, 2 April 1997, p. 21.
65. Belkin and Evans (2000) *The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers*, p. 23. See also S.E. Bulmer (2011) 'Securing the Gender Order: Homosexuality and the British Armed Forces', DPhil thesis, University of Exeter, pp. 305–6.
66. Belkin and Evans (2000). *The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers*, p. 23.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
68. Ministry of Defence (2000) *The Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct Policy Statement: Guidance Notes for Commanding Officers on the Practical Aspects of Implementation* (London: Ministry of Defence).
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.
70. Belkin and Evans (2000) *The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers*, p. 42.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

72. 'Gay Britons serve in Military with Little Fuss, as Predicted Discord does not Occur', *New York Times*, 21 May 2007.
73. *The Times*, 15 October 2007, p. 25.
74. Ministry of Defence (2000) *A Review of the Armed Forces Policy on Homosexuality* (London: Ministry of Defence), p. 2.
75. A. Stein and K. Plummer (1994) "I Can't Even Think Straight": "Queer" Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology', *Sociological Theory*, 12, 2, pp. 178–87, especially p. 178 and pp. 180–1, and A.I. Green (2007) 'Queer Theory and Sociology: Locating the Subject and the Self in Sexuality Studies', *Sociological Theory*, 25, 1, pp. 26–45. For Judith Butler's main works on the subject see J. Butler (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge) and J. Butler (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (London: Routledge). For an analysis of its unfolding in Britain and impact upon history see Weeks (2012) 'Queer(y)ing the "Modern Homosexual"', pp. 526–7, and M. Cook (2007) 'From Gay Reform to Gaydar, 1967–2006' in Cook (ed.) *A Gay History of Britain*, pp. 207–9.
76. T. Spargo (1999) *Foucault and Queer Theory* (Cambridge: Icon Books), pp. 40–1. See also K. Namaste (1994) 'The Politics of Inside/Out: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism and a Sociological Approach to Sexuality', *Sociological Theory*, 12, 2, pp. 220–31.
77. T. Boellstorff (2014) 'Seeing Like a Queer City' in M. Cook and J.V. Evans (eds) *Queer Cities, Queer Cultures: Europe since 1945* (London: Bloomsbury), p. 283.
78. D. Gould (2009) 'The Shame of Gay Pride in Early AIDS Activism' in D.M. Halperin and V. Traub (eds) *Gay Shame* (London: University of Chicago Press), pp. 221–55, especially p. 233. See also Weeks (2012) 'Queer(y)ing the "Modern Homosexual"', p. 525.
79. Cook (2007) 'From Gay Reform to Gaydar', pp. 200–1 and pp. 204–7.
80. E. Glick (2000) 'Sex Positive: Feminism, Queer Theory, and the Politics of Transgression', *Feminist Review*, 64, pp. 19–45.
81. For emphasis upon the role of transgression in this area see R.L. Caserio, L. Edelman, J. Halberstam, J.E. Muñoz and T. Dean (2006) 'The Antisocial Thesis in Queer Theory', *PMLA*, 121, 3, pp. 819–28.

82. Boellstorff (2014) 'Seeing Like a Queer City', p. 283.
83. Cook (2007) 'From Gay Reform to Gaydar', pp. 207–8.
84. H.K. Love (2009) 'Emotional Rescue' in Halperin and Traub (eds) *Gay Shame*, pp. 256–76, especially p. 263.
85. G. Chauncey (2009) 'The Trouble with Shame' in Halperin and Traub (eds) *Gay Shame*, pp. 277–82.
86. This point is made by Edmund Hall in (1995) *We Can't Even March Straight, passim*.
87. In an article in *The Times*, Sir Ian McKellen noted how the ethos of Stonewall was a constant quest for equality that occasionally alienated his peers like Derek Jarman. He described, with elation, *The Times*' first inclusion of a notice announcing a civil partnership in its marriage column as the newspaper recognising that at last marriage of all kinds was 'equal'. See *The Times*, 23 June 2009, p. 7.
88. N. Hubbs (2009) 'On the Uses of Shame and Gifts of a Bloodmobile' in Halperin and Traub (eds) *Gay Shame*, p. 114.
89. D. Caron (2009) 'Shame on Me, or the Naked Truth about Me and Marlene Dietrich' in Halperin and Traub (eds) *Gay Shame*, p. 120.
90. E. Hanson (2009) 'Teaching Shame' in Halperin and Traub (eds) *Gay Shame*, p. 137.
91. Boellstorff (2014) 'Seeing Like a Queer City', *passim*. Boellstorff notes the ubiquity of the urban environment for queer politics and performativity. However, it is worth contrasting this with the world sketched by Matt Houlbrook, which deliberately analyses pre-Wolfenden society as centring upon the connection between the metropolis and pre-legalisation homosexual cultures finding 'spaces' in which covert liaisons and a variety of relationships could occur. See M. Houlbrook (2005) *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis 1918–1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
92. Caron (2009) 'Shame on Me', p. 120.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 126 and p. 129.
94. Hanson (2009) 'Teaching Shame', p. 136.
95. Spargo (1999) *Foucault and Queer Theory*, p. 66.
96. Hubbs (2009) 'On the Uses of Shame and Gifts of a Bloodmobile', p. 115.

Conclusion

As will have become evident from the preceding chapters, shame has a reconstituted and reconfigured place within modernity, often aided and abetted by events, social change and the construction of new cultures. These use and employ shame in manners reminiscent of the past, as evident in the chapters about the white feather phenomenon and those concerning abortion and homosexuality, where the ideas and tropes which appear are recognisable from the nineteenth century and thus reprise the discussions which were engaged upon in our first book. Whilst many are quite closely related to their nineteenth-century forebears, it is noticeable that they are writ large and occur on a national rather than a local scale. One important part of this has been the increasing modernisation of attitudes to conduct and increasing bureaucratisation. Whilst these regulated and professionalised behaviour, it remains a paradox that still more codes of conduct created still more room for transgression and opportunities for shaming to occur, and certainly this is evident from the case studies of Horatio Bottomley and Lord Lambton.

Equally, however, some startling and unexpected things have happened during the modern era which have made shame become a component of malleable identities. Some of our foregoing examples demonstrate that shame is sometimes cyclical, or can be reflexive or reverbatory. We saw how Horatio Bottomley's ability to convince defrauded investors to further invest relied heavily upon their own sense of shame and their exposure as having been deluded. In other instances, such as the white feather phenomenon and the decision to prosecute Lady Isobel Barnett, shame

often comes back to haunt those who apply it – almost as though shame becomes, however fleetingly, the mode of opinion formation and communication. Likewise in confident hands, it has become a mode of self-empowerment, as subscribers to Queer Theory would readily attest.

In the modern era, shame does not so obviously discredit individuals and usurp their power. Indeed the function and power of shame have been augmented since its previous scope appears almost insufficient in some instances. Arguably, shame has thus become almost a sport in its own right, related to aspects of its consumption both as a didactic form and as entertainment. Through the facilitation of modern forms of media, it can spread out in a giant web implicating and involving people as it goes. We can see evidence of this in the chapter about abortion and in those concerning Horatio Bottomley, Harold Davidson, Lord Lambton and Lady Isobel Barnett.

Whilst this mobilised power of shame appears formidable, the modern period seems equally to have allowed the invention, and application, of anti-shame. Several of our chapters demonstrate evidence of anti-shame, where the shamed opted to stand their ground, or indeed to fight back—something possible perhaps only in the modern era. Eventually, and especially from the second half of the twentieth century, the media frequently demanded both sides of a story in order to retain and prolong public interest. Indeed the press reporting described in the chapters on Harold Davidson, Lady Isobel Barnett, Lord Lambton and homosexuality serve to bear this out. However, press reporting of shame generates further stories which themselves follow and pursue other agendas. The recent scandal concerning the sexual misdemeanours of Lord Sewell, for example, was transformed remarkably rapidly into a call for reform or, in some eyes, the abolition of the House of Lords.

Sometimes individuals can equally appear impervious to shame, despite the pressures that stem from the impact of the multi-media age. When shaming attempts were especially aggressive and unrelenting, our investigations suggest that it would have been rare for individuals to resist this in the earlier periods we have studied, when reputation and status were key and irretrievable when lost. So why is it potentially possible to resist shame in the modern era? Certainly evidence exists in our chapters on Horatio Bottomley, Harold Davidson and abortion that this is largely successful. Perhaps our answers lie in some of the wider theories which were alluded to in the introduction to this work. Shame, supposedly, should have dissipated as part of Norbert Elias' 'civilizing process'. Yet interdependency

and communality were important preconditions for John Braithwaite's reapplication of shaming in criminal justice. Perhaps interdependency might provide some tentative answers for us at this point. Certainly Elias craved that classes and groups should use influence to marginalise people from their own society or class status. In some of our chapters, this fear of being unable to hang on to the credentials of class and citizenship does indeed become a significant motivation for individuals to speak out, when previously they may have accepted their fate or simply remained silent. Such credentials, at least for some, were arguably hard won and manifestly appeared to be well worth defending, even if, on occasion, only damage limitation was ultimately possible.

Interestingly, there are sometimes glimpses of individuals and even organisations that have grasped the implications and fundamental spirit of Elias' 'civilizing process' and its application to modern class societies, even if this happened unwittingly. The clearest example of this comes from an issue opened by the Isobel Barnett case which really highlighted shame's association with social position, citizenship and human worth. The Portia Trust, so vocal in the period leading up to and just after Isobel Barnett's conviction, regularly voiced such sentiments in its communications with government. Indeed, its briefings to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure of 1978 foregrounded these very sentiments.¹ As we saw in Chap. 7, these commenced with barbed judgements about the cost to society of 'problem families', citing documented instances where their nefarious work accounted for a disproportionately high level of recorded crime. The Trust argued that such issues were shaping the criminal justice system in not only the present, but most probably the future as well. Given this, the Trust realised that the strong application of justice and the mechanism of the punishment system would always be necessary.²

Yet, in its defence of the other world of middle-class civilized individuals, it came to rather different conclusions. It saw these as defenceless in the face of a toughened and jaundiced legal system, suggesting that these people should be exempt from its full force and the logic of its decisions. Confused and disturbed shoplifters, child snatchers and those in need of psychiatric care rather than punishment should all be spared. The law, so the Trust argued, was intended to police the 'problem families' and not the individuals unfortunate enough to make silly mistakes after previously blameless lives. It argued, in effect, that the civilized should know how to deal in a humane, compassionate and effective way with the occasionally wayward member of their fellow civilized population, a population created

by the onward march of interdependency which itself could, and should, be expected to fuel such humanity and compassion.³

Thus the civilized should be saved from the full implications of the law and its penalties—laws which curbed and sought to change the habits of the uncivilized. The Trust thought that this also looked like a battle which the criminal justice system was likely to lose, with some profound implications for all of us. Those undeservedly caught up in the web of the criminal justice system should instead be exposed to benign, care-based solutions to their problems and issues. This would remove them from the public gaze and from arenas which encouraged intense personal shame, public exposure of faults and potentially criminal wrongdoing.⁴

However, some elements of the ‘civilizing process’ remained absent from this context. The Portia Trust had misgivings that all crime could be detectable and resolvable, an implication which, it claimed, had been ‘mistakenly’ bequeathed to the system by Robert Peel’s early nineteenth-century reforms. Thus the criminal justice system and its attendant bureaucracy, both creations of modernity, were at fault for failing to adapt and be civilized. This was happening whilst the system was, paradoxically, retaining its more obviously ‘civilizing’ role of policing and dispensing justice to the recalcitrant and the unruly. Moreover, the application of such justice upon the ‘wrong people’, in the eyes of the Trust, was occurring in the full glare of the public gaze. Such intense scrutiny, very obviously heightened by the panoply of media outlets provided by modernity, was thus bringing shame to bear upon individuals to a quite unfortunate degree. Such scrutiny and its attendant shame were thereafter leading to anxiety, mental instability and, all too regularly, the suicide of distraught individuals. Thus modernity and its relationship with shame had heightened the importance of clinging on to membership of the civilized and civilizing group. However, in doing so, this relationship had also escalated the terrifying potential cost of losing that membership. The benefits of an apparently ‘civilizing process’ appeared to have atrophied and had itself created a precipice and an abyss of the uncivilized over which the civilized dared not fall. Civilization, so the Portia Trust seemed to argue, had become brutal and savage in its selection of who was to be regarded as ‘civilized’.

But there were still more sophisticated descriptions and cultures associated with class-created narratives and rhetorics, which had their impact on everything from ideas of fraud, deviant and threatening sexuality, theft and shoplifting right through to the ability and desire to peer at the misdeeds of others. This last aspect had an importantly growing dimension in

modern society's burgeoning and ambivalent relationship with the idea of both fame and celebrity. Celebrity figures remained paragons of virtue, yet their indiscretions became a staple of moralising, more often now couched in the medium of quasi-entertainment. A vast number of celebrity autobiographies contain an element of shame discussed as a fundamental formative episode, sometimes with the intention of justifying or rounding out a reputation for poor behaviour. This is the modern confessional, but also the modern self-constructed pillory. The individual manages their own access to shame. As we know, even in eighteenth-century London, the reactions to individuals in the pillory were starkly unpredictable and ambivalent. Those who could create sympathy from the crowd or could otherwise stage-manage their performance were liable to elicit favourable responses from the crowd. The celebrity use of the self-constructed pillory is arguably no different. The creation of the celebrity autobiography, sometimes ghost-written, enters the public sphere in an attempt to either put the record straight, or act as some form of penance and absolution, after which the miscreant is restored.

Other aspects of modern confessionalism that also become evident in the more modern era are the attempts of individuals to 'brave it out' or 'save face' (with spouses and close family 'standing by them'), when confronted with the consequences of their own behaviour. We saw this, arguably for the first time in the public arena at least, with the case study of Lord Lambton in Chap. 6. These actions disclose to us how some individuals choose to mitigate their shame. Yet equally they ask questions of those who are called upon to share shame and ultimately forgive as part of the rehabilitation process. Just as acts and instances of shame have a history, so too does the legacy of coping with the shame of others.

It is also worth considering how far elements of shame have provided rich and varied raw material for twentieth-century popular culture and, in particular, for the work of comedy writers and comedians. In answering our question about the willingness of individuals to create anti-shame, we may suggest that more and varied 'accounts' of shame and their availability provide inspiration and role models for managing and resisting shame. We have already noted how far the Rector of Stiffkey has been made, and remade, in the image conjured by writers of musicals films and novels. One who tried this path, Michael Palin, has made a feature of investing the idea of shame with an early twentieth century anachronistic quaintness and distance. We have already seen, in Chap. 4, how his film *The Missionary* sifted through the rich material associated with the Rector

of Stiffkey story and managed to heap shame on the institutions that he touched. However, Palin's series *Ripping Yarns* also contained meditations upon other aspects of shame in the modern era. *Roger of the Raj*, for instance, lampooned the codes of honour of the militarised upper class, whose punishment for a word out of place at dinner was to leave the room with a loaded service revolver—precisely what the Rector of Stiffkey failed to do. Elsewhere in this story, Roger himself is disdained for his choice of escape: the opportunity to go into 'trade' with his beloved sweetheart. Palin's *Golden Gordon* also explored the shame associated with lifelong support for what has become an ailing and hopelessly inept football team. However, in this latter instance, the central character is at least enabled to transform the team's fortunes through his own actions.

SHAMING INSTITUTIONS: A CONSEQUENCE OF MODERNITY

In many respects, our society is more readily used to adverse and potentially damaging results coming from attempts at the archaeology of reputation. The first years of the twenty-first century have seen many of these phenomena in action. Similarly, it is interesting to note how the fallout from each of these episodes enables society to indict its own actions and sometimes inaction. Since the year 2000, for instance, there been many instances of cruelty and neglect in care homes for the elderly and mentally infirm.⁵ Whilst these are contemporary front-page news, they also indict the evolution of care practices stretching back many years. Likewise, the discovery of human remains in and around the Haute de la Garenne care home on the island of Jersey in the early years after the millennium, uncovered a record of abuse and maltreatment that even stretched back decades. This has now provoked an entire investigation into the structure and procedures of the whole Jersey care system.⁶ The Roman Catholic Church has also been rocked by a number of scandals involving priests who have abused young children. In Ireland these have been augmented by the ongoing scandal surrounding the Magdalen homes, in which unmarried mothers were incarcerated and subjected to long periods of cruel and unnecessary treatment.⁷

When examined together, these instances have provoked recriminations about how aspects of the modern world ought to be functioning. Abuse in care homes also speaks to the guilt of many contemporary families who still retain the idea that caring for an elderly relative ought to be the function of the family, even in the twenty-first century. Likewise, the Haute de la

Garenne scandal provoked a similar species of wider social guilt about the care of neglected and unwanted children. Similarly, the various scandals in the Roman Catholic Church reflected badly on an institution charged with the care of individuals below the age of consent and discernment. In Ireland, the scandals surrounding the Magdalen homes, in particular, have called into question the paternalistic ethos that has underpinned the country's society since independence.

Another aspect that emerges from the obvious scandals mentioned previously is the level of expectation apparent amongst modern populations. Where once morality was regulated by issues of shame and culpability, it is now standards of service provision and action that most readily meet the public gaze and scrutiny. Although it is also noticeable that, through institutions, the reach of shame can identify and vilify specific individuals nonetheless. Almost every service industry has well-publicised and available codes of conduct and customer charters that set standards and cultivate levels of expectation. These provide new boundaries within which the behaviour of institutions and individuals within them is judged, with the consequence that opinions about them are often reiterated and shared.

Such a scenario was evident in the Irish population's shock and subsequent indictment of the Catholic Church. Individuals were identified who had abused their position (confounding the expectations and standards of a vocation), whilst the institution itself similarly came under fire. Its inaction was indicted, whilst its old-fashioned method of simply removing individuals from the site of their transgressions infuriated those expecting higher standards and more elevated motives.⁸ Likewise, the occasional vilification of the social work profession in Britain has also highlighted many of these issues. A modern profession which adopts and maintains publicly accountable ethical standards, is occasionally the victim of incidents which expose less than strict adherence to such standards. Incidents such as the 'Baby P' scandal readily illuminated the shortcomings of some local authority provision and the ability of individuals to implement ethical standards in practice.⁹ The impact and aftermath of such incidents also serve to make such institutions subsequently vulnerable, and the persistence of variations (and reimaginings) upon the themes of anti-clericalism, readily attests to the power of how criticism can be fused into a cultural constant or shaming trope.

One related phenomenon that also becomes visible from this study is that shame has been a site that has attracted the attention of professional groups intent upon the regulation and control of contemporary

behaviour. In several of our instances it is significant that lawyers, the medical profession and occasionally politicians have attempted to enter debates centring on shame, shameful behaviour and society's attitudes to this. Questionable sexual behaviour, abortion and shoplifting became contested areas where lawyers and doctors sought to gain possession of the debate and to legislate about precisely what should happen to the 'guilty'. Lawyers sought legal solutions which did their best to maintain the balancing act between morality, humanity and the minimisation of harm. Throughout, these approaches thought less about the individual than about the impact of the individual's acts upon wider society. Conversely, many of the medical approaches to such problems started squarely with the individual. Generally these found their subjects to be worthy of—by turns—study, evaluation, help and pity. This scrutiny often manifested itself in episodic quests to pathologise behaviour, in the hope of both determining the cause of it and exonerating hapless individuals from culpability and from suffering the consequences. In some instances this battle was played out, whilst in others, different contexts and times allowed one or other profession to predominate.

In our contemporary world, it is also possible to observe aspects of shame being remoulded by many of the forces we have already discussed: new technology, new perceptions of morality and cultural change. The growth of the Internet and social media, for instance, has created new public spaces for the exposure of opinions, facts and fiction. Not surprisingly, this has rejuvenated the concept of shame within technologically advanced societies that increasingly seem to resemble older ones which historians can readily recognise, albeit with some new twists.

With the passage of time, the rise of the Internet has reflected the Janus-faced nature of the popular. Alongside the informative and the empowering are the crass, the puerile and the disgusting, stretching our thresholds of repugnance to hitherto unenvisioned limits. As has already been suggested, many of the developments in the technological and communication media have themselves been led by the pornography industry. These have created new arenas and activities associated with the consumption and indulgence of sexuality, leading to new fears, new panics and new addictions as well as new opportunities to construct unsatisfactory versions of the self. Without the technological advances that enable pornography to be beamed into the average household on demand, there would not have been incidents such as the shame and embarrassment felt by Jackie Smith when her satellite television bill, paid for by the taxpayer, contained charges for two

pornographic films downloaded by her husband.¹⁰ However, a classically modernist attempt to salvage reputation emerged in her decision to host a television investigation into pornography and the sex trade.

Whilst libertarians lauded the Internet as a species of organic commons, this Janus-face of the popular would bring disquieting paradigms associated with shame back into fashion. The report of the Leveson inquiry poured dramatic scorn upon the Internet. The ability to exhibit profound and sustained ill-opinion of individuals and their actions was seen as intrusive and oppressive. The Internet gave voice to all which was empowering the expression of opinion, above and beyond accepted definitions of the public interest. Individuals would indict and culturally criminalise others, whilst also exhibiting a wayward propensity to damage themselves through the now resonant and publicly consumed off-the-cuff remark. The report of the Leveson inquiry labelled the Internet as displaying the worst characteristics of mob rule, and the breakdown of order and propriety that this implied.

This whole phenomenon has recently been skilfully investigated by Jon Ronson in his best-seller *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*.¹¹ Ronson discovered: 'When we deployed shame, we were utilising an immensely powerful tool. It was coercive, borderless, and increasing in speed and influence. Hierarchies were being levelled out. The silenced were getting a voice. It was like a democratisation of justice'.¹² But Ronson also discovered the myriad ways in which people were transgressing and being found out. These incidents themselves were actively becoming the product of public fora and public opinions which were being empowered to a hitherto unimagined degree. Ronson disclosed how a respected journalist could be brought down and effectively lose his living for his sloppy, but essentially harmless, invention of a remark that Bob Dylan could or might have said—but did not.¹³ Essentially, with the 'always on' Internet, the tools now nearly exist for the archaeology of reputation to occur in perpetuity.

Whilst thus far the story told by Ronson was of a rampant and vengeful genie released from its bottle, he also uncovered ways in which this genie was having its power undermined. Firstly, the very success of the Internet and its status as an effective tool for the archaeology of reputation industry was challenged by new legislation. In the very recent past, the European Court of Human Rights created the so-called 'right to be forgotten ruling', which enabled individuals to have their fifteen minutes of infamy eradicated from the Internet. Thus modern legislation was called upon to save individ-

uals from the consequences of shame enacted within contemporary society. We must remember, however, that this was a society which, only a few short years ago, comforted itself that it was civilized enough to question both the effectiveness and humanitarian credentials of shame within modernity.

Although some were prepared to enact such legislation, others used the technology to their advantage in a much more subtle method of escaping shame. Jon Ronson's last port of call was a visit to Lindsey Stone, who, as part of a long-running visual joke, had been photographed transgressing the instructions conveyed by nearby public signs. However, Lindsey unwittingly took a step too far when she was photographed making an obscene gesture next to an Arlington National Cemetery sign demanding 'silence and respect'. She then became the unrelenting target of Internet abuse, which indicated the fractured nature both of perceptions of the sacred and of context.¹⁴

Certainly Lindsey Stone's life changed irrevocably after this, and she was anxious to obtain a remedy for her unfortunate situation. Jon Ronson introduced her to a technology company whose purpose was to make poor and unwelcome reputations disappear from the Internet. This was achieved largely through the construction of pages containing innocuous and mundane information about such individuals, with the intention of supplanting the scandalous and shameful. The more material was created and websites were fabricated, the further the damaging, scandalous and shameful information fell down the hierarchy of Internet hits. With significant and sustained intervention, the damaged reputation of an individual or an organisation could at least be deeply submerged, even if it could never quite be removed entirely.

Thus in the contemporary world, civilized individuals immersed in twenty-first-century ideas and values took offence just as easily as their forebears and steadfastly remained indignant, judgemental and vengeful in equal measure. Although privacy legislation sought to limit and outflank this mixture of feelings, there seemed to be every expectation that new spheres and methods of responding to the shameful behaviour of others would emerge and take their place. In the modern age, society and culture were creating more opportunities for shame, but individuals were far more likely to transcend its power. In other words, it failed to take on the destabilising phenomenon of stigma so desperately feared by John Braithwaite and those individuals shamed in earlier ages.

Thus shame has not only survived into modernity, but the evidence offered by this book suggests that an apparently primitive emotion and

reaction has remained a central part of modernity and was probably enhanced by it! Whilst shame changed its form in some contexts, and could appear unexpectedly in others, it certainly appeared to be a surprisingly important part of who we are and our understanding of what it means to be modern and civilized. Within modernity, people continued to shame and be shamed, and the evidence of the contemporary world suggests that this may even be heightened as the still further democratisation of opinion proceeds.

Unlike the Skimmington ride, where the individual had to face, and then lose face, when confronted head-on with the opprobrium of others, in the modern world, at the end of a process that we have investigated over two monographs, the individual seems to have a distinct number of behavioural choices in response to shame. Traditional martyrdom and taking shame upon the chin remains an option just as it has always been. However, other choices are now available. Attempts at denial may prove successful, as may attempts to deflect focus and opinion to another issue. The shamed may seek rehabilitation through confession and species of modern penance, or go on the offensive and deploy various methods associated with anti-shame and its performance. Lastly, the shamed can wait for the ephemeral nature of news and opinion to simply move on, even if they are occasionally prepared and empowered to hasten the process of this happening. Shame has now modernised and taken its place as central to human interactions, it is no longer anathema to civilization, but has instead become an intrinsic part of it!

NOTES

1. National Archives, Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure (1978), Evidence of Portia Trust Second Submission, BS 12/97.
2. *Ibid.*
3. For further discussion see *ibid.*
4. For further discussion see *ibid.*
5. See for instance *Sunday Express*, 4 May 2014.
6. See for instance *Daily Mail*, 3 October 2009.
7. See for instance *The Guardian*, 20 May 2009.
8. *Ibid.*
9. See for instance *Daily Mail*, 12 November 2008.
10. *The Telegraph*, 4 April 2009.

11. See J. Ronson (2015) *So You've Been Publicly Shamed* (London: Pan Macmillan).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–29.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 197–221.

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