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THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION

IN MODERN BRITAIN



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Wellcome Centre for Medical Science

Birth and Breeding

the politics of reproduction in modern Britain

AN EXHIBITION
AT THE
WELLCOME INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

October 1993

KEN ARNOLD
LESLEY HALL
JULIA SHEPPARD



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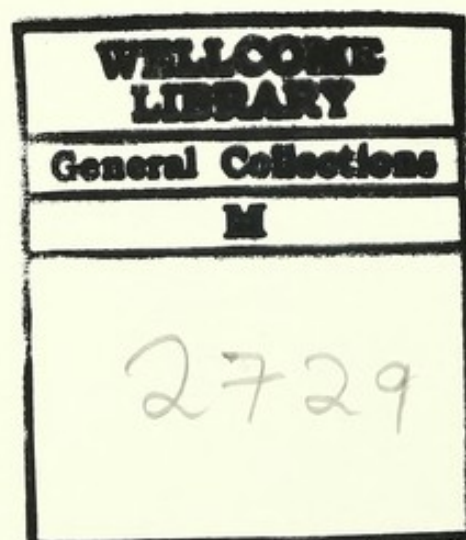
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INTRODUCTION

The history of childbirth in the twentieth century is inevitably a history of contention and debate. Mothers, doctors, policy makers, feminists, scientists, philosophers and journalists have all sought to influence the politics of reproduction.

Drawn from papers kept in the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre in the Wellcome Institute Library, this exhibition portrays various aspects of this history as it has unfolded in modern Britain. By focusing on six influential organisations and individuals it seeks to put in historical context arguments that continue today: arguments about who should control the place and process of birth; about the role of contraception, sterilization and abortion in modern society; and about the extent to which it is right to interfere with 'natural' processes.

This catalogue is composed of three sections: Lesley Hall's introductory essay setting out the broad history of reproduction in Britain since 1900; then the text and labels from the exhibition; and finally, Julia Sheppard's outline of the nature and history of the archives on which the exhibition is based.

KEN ARNOLD

QUESTIONS OF CONTROL AND CHOICE:
WOMEN AND REPRODUCTION IN BRITAIN
SINCE 1900

In 1900 women ran a high risk of dying in childbirth. The vast majority gave birth at home, in circumstances ranging from fairly pleasant to squalid, attended by a midwife or local untrained 'handywoman', seldom a doctor. Pain relief during parturition was rare. Although in 1902 registration of midwives was introduced, for many years most midwives qualified through experience (which might mean considerable skills) not formal training. In difficult cases they were supposed to call in the local doctor, often lacking obstetric training and with probably less experience than the midwife.

Women had little control over becoming pregnant. Husbands might practice abstinence or withdrawal; contraceptive devices such as condoms or chemical pessaries were expensive and unreliable, produced by unscrupulous commercial firms (apart from a few run by idealistic Malthusians), which also dealt in abortifacient pills. These were seldom efficacious in ending pregnancy (and if so would have been extremely dangerous for the woman), and purchasing them sometimes laid women open to blackmail. Backstreet abortion flourished.

High infant mortality caused considerable public concern, given increasing anxieties about the decline, both in quantity and quality, of the population, at a time when Britain faced external competition from other European nations as well as the United States, and the blow to national self-esteem of the Boer War. Accounts of the poor quality of potential army recruits led to the appointment of an Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, which reported in 1904. Successive governments, however, deemed active measures for the improvement of maternity and infant welfare to be unacceptably expensive as well as politically objectionable, being thought to interfere in family life and/or undermine self-reliance. It was cheaper and easier to blame the ignorance of working-class mothers, and approve initiatives to educate them in domestic hygiene.

These were mostly undertaken by middle- and upper-class women philanthropists, and some progressive local authorities, sometimes in conjunction with Milk Depots. Women of the higher social classes were thus enabled to

engage in activity outside the home in an impeccably womanly sphere: a considerable attraction. Only instruction and advice were offered, not treatment, and many poor women could not afford medical treatment for either their children or themselves; when National Insurance was introduced in 1911 its provisions excluded most married women, though a 30/- (£1.50) maternity benefit was payable at childbirth (to the husband until 1913). Nothing was done about inadequate nutrition, or living conditions which made following advice on domestic hygiene almost impossible. Several legislative enactments during the first decade of the twentieth century introduced child welfare provisions (e.g. school meals), but the home and the mother were the target of educational strategies rather than tangible benefits.

These policies assumed the population crisis was due to preventable wastage responsive to public health measures, but a strong school of thought believed that questions of quality were just as important, if not more so. In extreme versions of this view, infant mortality allegedly weeded out undesirable weaklings, so attempts at its eradication would have debilitated the national 'stock'. Less desirable groups in society were feared to be producing too many children (in spite of the ravages of infant mortality), while the 'better' classes limited their families due to the expenses of maintaining an appropriate lifestyle. The Eugenics Education Society was founded in 1907 to influence public opinion as to the national importance of eugenics, and to spread knowledge about the laws of heredity (these were, at the time, rather less well known than this implies, with the work of Mendel only just being rediscovered). Eugenic ideas were widely pervasive, but the Society itself was never large, although it attracted a number of influential thinkers, and the munificence of supporters placed it on a sound financial basis.

In its early years the Society was very hesitant about discussing birth control, which might seem to have practical relevance to any eugenic programme. Contraception was not regarded as suitable for general discussion, being associated with sexual immorality, sleazy purveyors of 'rubber-goods', and irreligious and socially subversive neo-Malthusians. Medical writings tended to detail the pathological effects brought about by its practice. The supposition that the most desirable elements of the population (prudent, intelligent, educated) were practising 'limitation', with deleterious effects on the nation, increased antipathy to the subject; changes in taxation were felt to be an appropriate approach to this problem.

It was not until after the First World War that birth control began (though still very slowly) to emerge from the backstreets. Some men encountered condoms as part of venereal disease prevention programmes in the forces, but it was Dr Marie Stopes (1880-1958) who made contraception an acceptable part of marriage. In *Married Love* (1918) (written when she was still, according to the legal annulment of her first marriage, a virgin, and issued in a small edition by an obscure publisher for a subsidy of £200) birth control underlay a new erotic vision of marriage but was not discussed in detail. *Wise Parenthood*, published later the same year, dealt with the subject more technically for a middle-class audience (recommending, for example, routinely inserting the cap while dressing for dinner), and shortly afterwards *A Letter to Working Mothers* explained simple means of avoiding frequent debilitating pregnancies.

Stopes's 'constructive' birth control message emphasised happy, healthy, wanted babies in the right places, appealing to women unable to achieve desired pregnancies as well as those who too readily succumbed to undesired ones. *Radiant Motherhood* (1920) ensued from practising *Wise Parenthood* in the context of *Married Love*, resulting in *Enduring Passion* (1928). Stopes's ideal was the provision of birth control through existing maternity and child welfare centres: her Mothers' Clinics, the first of which was established, with the aid of her husband, convinced birth-controller Humphrey Verdon Roe, in Marlborough Road, Upper Holloway in 1921, were meant as a model. In the same year she founded the Society for Constructive Birth Control with many distinguished supporters. What brought Stopes and her birth control message popular fame was her widely reported 1923 libel suit against Catholic doctor Halliday Sutherland's accusations of experimenting on slum women.

Stopes was not alone in promoting birth control during the 1920s, as other organisations also set up clinics and lobbied for advice to be given in local authority clinics. Successive governments took very little action generally to ameliorate maternal mortality. This was actually rising during the 1920s, and Dora Russell of the Workers' Birth Control Group, representing women impatient with the Labour Party's cautious line, pointed out that child-bearing was far more risky even than coal-mining, the most dangerous male occupation. Population anxieties continued, exacerbated by the losses

in the Great War and the succeeding Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918. Birth control was still a touchy subject very few people wanted to add to the political agenda.

In spite of the efforts of such women as Eleanor Rathbone, family allowances payable to mothers were similarly a long way from becoming part of the system. The issue of expense, and fears that payments to mothers would undermine family life and erode paternal responsibility, were added to eugenic anxieties that such allowances would encourage the undesirable to breed still more recklessly than they already did. Antenatal provisions were sporadic (early accurate diagnosis of pregnancy was not even possible before endocrinological advances of the 1930s) and many women did not use the facilities available. The reliance of women on 'old wives' tales', and their lack of uptake of such professional assistance as was available, were deplored. However, in spite of continuing working-class hostility to 'interfering' health visitors, women of all social levels were being increasingly influenced, for example through magazines, to trust in and seek out professional, 'scientific' guidance.

Voluntary bodies were able to go where governments, fearing loss of votes or commitment to expenditure, were reluctant to venture. In 1928 a group of upper-class women philanthropists established the National Birthday Fund (later renamed the National Birthday Trust Fund, NBTF), stimulated by a report on maternal mortality by Dr Janet Campbell of the Ministry of Health. They aimed at 'safer motherhood' through improvement of existing maternity services: at first they promoted anaesthesia in maternity hospitals, where it was still not routinely employed, but soon realised that the greatest need was improved facilities in home confinements. They therefore became concerned with midwife training and methods of analgesia readily portable and capable of application without assistance by the midwife. The socially elite Fund organised balls, gala performances of plays and films, sometimes under Royal patronage, to raise money, although more humble methods such as flag-days were not spurned.

The supporters of the organisations whose activities were coordinated from 1930 by the National Birth Control Association (NBCA) were of the educated middle-class rather than traditional upper-class philanthropists—women who, but for marriage, might have had careers, and in many cases

pursued occupations to which no marriage-bar applied—writing and journalism, experimental education and private medical practice. Their ideal, like Stopes's, supported by some Medical Officers of Health, was to make birth control part of existing preventive welfare provisions. However, throughout the 1920s Parliament and the Ministry of Health, while refusing to legislate against birth control, resisted granting it any kind of official recognition. Following numerous queries about local discretionary powers under the 1929 Local Government Act, in 1930 the Labour Minister of Health, Arthur Greenwood, issued Memorandum 153/MCW permitting (but not requiring) welfare centres to give birth control advice to married women on medical grounds (not minutely specified, allowing some leeway to local medical officers). The Memorandum was not generally disseminated or publicised until Marie Stopes published a leaked copy in her *Birth Control News* and the NBCA began encouraging local officials to implement its recommendations.

Few doctors were trained in contraceptive methods, even when sympathetic to their use: instruction had to be acquired by private initiative—hundreds of doctors wrote to Stopes asking to attend her clinics for training. The NBCA already had trained doctors and experience in running clinics and over the next decade they established local clinics at an increasing rate, in collaboration with local authorities. While the use of contraception was becoming more widespread, only a small proportion of couples were supplied by clinics: withdrawal and condoms continued to be the most widely used methods. The NBCA created standards for contraceptive products by testing them for efficacy and reliability, and produced approved lists. They also continued training doctors and other health professionals, and lobbying for the wider provision of birth control services.

The Eugenics Society (which had changed its name in 1926) underwent some changes around the beginning of the 1930s, following a very generous bequest from Australian sheep-farmer Henry Twitchen in 1929. Within the Society there was a power-shift towards the new 'Reform Eugenists', anxious to dissociate the Society and eugenics from its old class-biased agenda, and to incorporate recent developments in genetic science. There was increasing sympathy towards birth control: development of a cheap, reliable, simple to use contraceptive was seen as vital to 'negative' eugenics, and the Society supported research in this area. Although the Society was unsuccessfully

involved in attempts to legalise voluntary sterilisation, its main efforts during the 1930s concentrated on educating the public. Touring lecturers addressed groups ranging from Women's Cooperative Guilds to Rotary Clubs, while stands at Health Exhibitions displayed charts illustrating the laws of genetics and sold informative literature, with someone on hand to answer queries. A film, produced in the mid-1930s, on heredity in animals and man, was sometimes shown, and was also distributed for educational showings. Recurrent anxieties about population decline characterised the 1930s, in particular the greater decline in family size among the middle classes: the Eugenics Society saw part of its task as encouraging the 'fit' to have larger families. In spite of the Society's dissociation of itself from the racist policies of Nazi Germany, membership slumped from the late 1930s and never regained its peak, as the entire concept of eugenics became contaminated by association. Financial support was given to the development of artificial insemination, and to social research, including into both 'promising' and 'problem' families.

Early birth control advocates in the 1920s and 1930s had argued that wider dissemination of reliable birth control methods would reduce the horrendous rate of illegal abortion, responsible for much maternal morbidity as well as fatalities. The 1929 Infant Life Preservation Act clarified the legality of the accepted practice of doctors performing therapeutic abortions on women fatally endangered by the continuation of pregnancy. This was a highly restricted right, exploited to some extent for the benefit of those who could afford their services by Harley Street gynaecologists. However, most women attempting to terminate a pregnancy were forced to resort to 'female pills' of dubious efficacy, with backstreet or self-administered abortion if these failed. The Joint Council of Midwifery, established at the initiative of the NBTF, undertook a survey of 'non-therapeutic abortion' during the 1930s. There was also a British Medical Association Committee, and an official Inter-Departmental Committee (the Birkett Committee) on the subject.

In 1936 a group of women already active in the birth control movement, feminists with advanced views on sexual morality, established the Abortion Law Reform Association. In their experience many women did not clearly distinguish birth control from abortion, too often husbands would not practice contraception and resisted their wives doing so, and even the

most reliable methods, conscientiously used, sometimes failed. They felt that the full dimensions of the problem were not widely enough realised; most doctors shrank from advising or undertaking termination of pregnancy although the law was abused for those who could pay, while national health was endangered by the effects of backstreet abortion. Mr Justice MacNaughten's judgement in the landmark Bourne case of 1938 extended the legal grounds from physical health alone to psychiatric danger, in the context of the abortion performed by Aleck Bourne on a 14-year-old girl gang-raped by soldiers. However, even when the NHS came in, few abortions were performed by qualified medical practitioners other than privately, and illegal practice continued to flourish. Although many backstreet abortionists had some notions of hygiene, and desired to assist women in distress, they had no backup if anything went wrong.

Maternal mortality finally began to decline from the mid-1930s, only partly due to the advance of medical science, though sulphonamides, the first antibiotics, dramatically reduced puerperal fever. Increasing standards of living also played a part, and so too, indirectly, did reductions in family size: age and number of previous births were major risk factors in childbirth. Antenatal care was still sporadic, and seldom addressed the pressing problem of inadequate nutrition of pregnant women: the NBTF was involved in the distribution, through the JCM, of food supplements in 'distressed areas' in the late 1930s. A major if surprising improvement in maternal and child welfare came about during the Second World War, partially due to special ration allowances for pregnant and nursing women.

The number of births taking place in hospital rose constantly, increasingly controlled by doctors rather than midwives, as obstetrics developed as a speciality (with its own Royal College) leading to a more interventionist approach to parturition. Doubts as to whether this was always entirely justified were expressed by Grantly Dick-Read, a general practitioner, who contended in *Natural Childbirth* (1933) that nearly all women could deliver safely without analgesia or instrumental intervention. This book seems to have gained little attention at that time, presumably because high maternal mortality made survival of childbirth seem, to both doctors and mothers, more important than the quality of the experience. In this work and in his later, much more successful *Childbirth without Fear* (1942), Dick-Read

argued that most pain and distress in childbirth was due to fear (caused or exacerbated by 'old wives's tales') creating tension. A woman prepared for the event and enabled to overcome the tension through breathing exercises, could go through labour with no need for anaesthesia or intervention, provided that she was supported by her attendant and allowed to deliver in her own time.

This approach appealed to women alienated by the production line techniques of maternity wards in which childbirth was managed for the convenience of doctors rather than mothers. Women wrote in large numbers to Dick-Read to complain, for example, of being left alone and fearful for long periods while in labour. Dick-Read's teachings appealed more to women than the medical profession, who, with a few exceptions, were hostile to theories promulgated by someone who was not a fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology and did not even hold their Diploma. Dick-Read actively promoted the message that childbirth could be a fulfilling experience rather than a nightmarish ordeal: through journalism, extensive lecturing to groups within the health professions both in the UK and abroad, a film showing labours conducted on his principles, and a gramophone recording of a woman breathing her way through natural labour.

Dick-Read claimed that with removal of the fear from childbirth women would no longer restrict their families to the same extent. However, even during the 'baby boom', families were increasingly being spaced and planned with the aid of contraception. The Family Planning Association (formerly the NBCA) was opening more and more clinics, although the subject was still neglected by the medical profession as a whole and ignored by the government. The National Health Service Act made no explicit provision for birth control, although some general clauses enabled productive collaboration between local authorities and the FPA in the field. A considerable boost for the FPA was the visit to their headquarters by the then Minister of Health, Iain Macleod, for its silver jubilee in 1955, and his public speech in support of their work. The media ban on the FPA lifted virtually overnight, and gradually overt sympathy and support for their cause increased. Changes in contraceptive technology—the oral female contraceptive pill and the IUD—developed interest among doctors who had previously shunned the hands-on skills needed to fit barrier methods. Shown by experience that the

practice of birth control was not simply a question of mechanics but involved deeply embedded attitudes and emotions, the FPA became increasingly involved in outreach through publicity, sex education, and the introduction of domiciliary services. Ancillary services such as marital counselling and infertility work also continued to develop.

Under the Welfare State there was universal free and unstigmatised provision of antenatal care and birth attendance, as well as infant welfare clinics and nutritional supplements for young children. By the 1950s maternal and infant mortality and morbidity rates had dramatically improved as a result of this, and of generally rising standards of living. Population anxieties refocused around the dangers of explosion rather than decline. In 1967 the Labour Government introduced legislation specifically permitting local authorities to provide birth control services, and in 1974 these were fully integrated into the NHS, and free. One stimulus for this was the anomaly created in 1967 when abortion became legal and free (which also applied to male and female sterilisation), while contraception had to be paid for (except in certain localities).

The Abortion Act was the result of increased activism by the Abortion Law Reform Association during the 1960s, revived by new, younger, members. Stimulus was also given by the recognition of the teratogenic effects of rubella during pregnancy, and the enormous furore over the severe deformities caused by Thalidomide. Those with contacts and £100 had no difficulty in obtaining abortions but poorer or less sophisticated women were driven to the backstreet abortionist or to bear an unwanted child. The Private Members's Bill put forward by Liberal MP David Steel was granted government time and aid in drafting: it gave statutory force to existing case-law concerning physical and psychiatric risk, and introduced adverse social factors as grounds for abortion. In spite of considerable opposition, including the formation of organised anti-abortion groups, the Bill passed into law and came into operation in April 1968. It was almost immediately subjected to attempts to restrict or rescind it which have continued up to the 1990s. Although the Act pre-dated the 'second wave' of feminism the maintenance of its provisions soon came to be seen as a central feminist concern.

Opponents of the Act have concentrated on curtailing the time-limits but the reductions which have taken place largely reflect changing practice in the light of developments in neonatology and the technical problems of late abortions.

It might appear that the last hundred years have seen a progression towards increased choice and control in reproductive matters for women in Britain. In some respects this is illusory: extremely low success rates in infertility treatment, for example, demonstrate that not everything is subject to choice or the application of medical skill. Control of the conduct of child-birth is still a contested area: midwives have been persistently reduced from independent practitioners expert in normal deliveries to subordinates of interventionist obstetricians. Increasingly high technologies in birth have generated demands for 'natural' alternatives.

Anxieties have been aroused by the growing sophistication of prenatal diagnosis, with arguments that this may introduce eugenic judgements about 'fitness': concerns recently articulated (July 1993) over the so-called discovery of a 'gay gene'. The possibility of sex-choice of children arouses fears of creating sex-ratio imbalance through cultural preferences for males. The effects of maternal well-being on the fetus are so well-recognised that women (and men too) are recommended to undertake 'pre-conceptional' programmes of health improvement, and pregnant women condemned for continuing habits potentially deleterious to the coming child.

Developments in neonatology affect debates on abortion as viability moves back to earlier stages of fetal development, yet the existing system—and the increasing constraints upon the health service—militates against safer, less traumatic early abortions. The 1974 inclusion of family planning within the NHS was apparently the final achievement of the aims of the movement since the 1920s, and most voluntary clinics were closed as local health authorities took on birth control services. However, few general practitioners registering to provide contraceptive services were adequately trained: and many individuals, especially in the younger and most vulnerable age groups, do not wish to consult their family doctor about contraceptive matters. Local health authority family planning services are now being restricted or cut out altogether as easy targets for 'economies'. Contraception becomes harder to obtain without determination and knowing the ropes, while old wives' tales and superstitions are still prevalent.

As the gap between rich and poor widens, and the ideal of the universality of the NHS is eroded, with adverse implications for health and welfare, it is by no means unlikely that maternal and infant mortality may rise once more, as is already happening with tuberculosis. Choice and control become available to those who can pay (as in the recent case of the 58-year-old woman having an fertilised embryo implanted by an Italian specialist), while there is no choice, and little control, for those who cannot: have stigmatised young single mothers any real choice about their condition? Recent proposals allegedly increasing women's choice in maternity care arouse cynical suspicions that the projected community midwifery service is much cheaper than high-tech hospital obstetric units: what of women who might for whatever reason prefer delivery in these circumstances?

LESLEY HALL

Further Reading

- B Brookes, *Abortion in Britain, 1900-1967* (London, Croom Helm, 1988)
K Hindell and M Simms, *Abortion Law Reformed* (London, Owen, 1971)
A Leathard, *The Fight for Family Planning* (London, Macmillan, 1980)
J Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England 1900-1939* (London, Croom Helm, 1980)
A Noyes Thomas, *Doctor Courageous: The Story of Doctor Grantly Dick-Read* (New York, Harper, 1957)
A Oakley, *The Captured Womb: A History of the Medical Care of Pregnant Women* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1984)
J Rose, *Marie Stopes and the Sexual Revolution* (London, Faber, 1992)
R A Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1990)

BIRTH AND BREEDING: THE EXHIBITION

The experience of childbirth in Britain has undergone revolutionary changes during this century. At the same time, the topic of reproduction has been the focus of numerous political and cultural disputes: about the best ways to achieve maternal health and welfare, about control over the place and process of birth; about the relationship between heredity and national strength; and about the rights and wrongs of contraception, sterilization and abortion in British society.

Based on material from the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre in the Wellcome Institute Library, this exhibition is about the activities of six organizations and individuals that have helped make these such potent public issues. As well as presenting the particular causes of the individuals and organizations, each section of the exhibition also aims to portray the campaigning efforts that enabled them so effectively to communicate their various messages.

The first section is based on the archives of the Eugenics Society (founded 1907). The Society's interest in the issue of childbirth was strongly influenced by a concern with how children inherit characteristics from their parents, and this section looks in particular at the Society's energetic attempts to disseminate eugenic ideas.

A keen proponent of eugenic thought was Marie Stopes (1880-1958). The second section focuses on her pioneering efforts in the area of birth control, both in the frank advice on sex she offered to couples and in her work of setting up birth control clinics.

Section 3 is concerned with the work that the National Birthday Trust Fund (founded 1928) did in advancing the cause of safer motherhood, and in particular at its promotion of the use of analgesic (pain-relieving) equipment and drugs.

Grantly Dick-Read (1890-1959) was also concerned with the relief of pain in childbirth. The method he advocated was a 'natural' one in which labour pains were reduced through alleviating what he felt was its root cause: fear. Section 4 deals with his efforts to publicise and promote these methods.

Section 5 is drawn from the archives of the Family Planning Association (founded in 1930 as the National Birth Control Council). This section looks at its work in testing and approving contraceptive devices and at its involvement in sex education.

Finally, section 6 is based on the papers of the Abortion Law Reform Association (founded 1936). A display of selected publicity material and correspondence from the Association highlights its campaign for a reform of the abortion law, which achieved success in 1967.

INTRODUCTORY EXHIBITS FROM THE ICONOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS

Int.1 X-ray photograph of a boy's skeleton from G Leopold and Th. Leisewita, *Geburtshilfflicher Röntgen-Atlas* (Dresden, 1908) sample issue, Tab. VI, fig.5

Int.2 Photograph of a nurse with a baby inside the recently invented incubator in the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, 1908

Int.3 Photograph of nurses weighing a baby in the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, 1908

Int.4 Photograph of a nurse with a crying baby in the General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Lambeth, 1908

Int.5 Lithograph (*Children's clinic*) of a scene in an American hospital by Mabel Dwight, 1936

Int.6 Lithographic poster (*Nature's food is best*) published by the Institute of Infant Welfare Fund, London, [1940s]

Int.7 Etching (*L'enfant malade*) by Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (1859-1923), 1902

Int.8 Reproduction of woodcut of a woman lifting a baby out of a bath, by William Strang, 1904

FILMS

The exhibition includes a selection of clips from the following films:

Film 1

Maisie's Marriage (1923) Marie Stopes. Made by G B Samuelson Productions

The film is a cinematic version of Stopes's ideas presented in the form of a popular melodrama. At the request of the British Board of Film Censors its title was changed from the original *Married Love*. The censors also made a number of cuts to the original version. The film only took a fortnight to make.

Film 2

Heredity in man (1935-38) Gaumont British Instructional for Eugenics Society

Narrated by Julian Huxley, the film illustrates the hereditary transmission of physical and mental characteristics through a series of family pedigrees.

Film 3

Childbirth Without Fear (c.1956) Grantly Dick-Read with *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Presenting the same basic message as his books, articles, interviews, records etc. this film was another medium in which Dick-Read argued for the value of natural childbirth.

Film 4

Birthright (1957) Family Planning Association

This film was produced by the FPA to promote its causes of sex education for the public and freely available contraceptives.

SECTION 1

EUGENICS SOCIETY: HEREDITY IN MAN

The term eugenics was coined by Francis Galton (1822-1911) to define the scientific discipline of "improving inborn qualities of a race". It rested on the idea that national health and welfare could be shaped by public policy, and that policy should be formulated to take account of Mendel's laws of inherited characteristics.

Founded in 1907, the Society aimed to spread knowledge of the laws of heredity and to publicise the national importance of eugenic issues. The eugenic doctrine was based on encouraging the reproduction of 'positive' characteristics and discouraging the continuation of 'negative' ones. Stated in extremes, eugenicists were for genius and against mental defects.

Always a contentious creed, eugenic ideas were internationally discredited by being widely associated with the racist policies of Nazi Germany. Membership of the Society fell substantially after the Second World War; though even at its height it never rose far above 1000. Among those members, however, were a number of influential supporters of various political persuasions. The Society was also blessed with financial security and permanent premises.

The Society lobbied parliament for legislation concerning the 'feeble-minded' and voluntary sterilization; it undertook investigations into family histories and surveyed public opinion on eugenics; it encouraged couples to undergo pre-marital health examinations; and it actively advocated the treatment of mental and physical 'defects', the development of birth control methods, and the use of artificial insemination. To raise public awareness of eugenic ideas the Society also published a journal *Eugenics Review*, produced a film *Heredity in Man* (1937), held meetings, gave talks and mounted numerous exhibitions.

EXHIBITS

I.1 *Only Healthy Seed* poster.

This is one of a series of posters published by the Eugenics Society in the 1930s. It was designed by Haywood Norfolk.

SA/EUG/G.49

I.2 Notices for talks, 1925 and undated

From the time of its foundation, one of the main ways in which the Eugenics Society sought to educate the public was through lectures and talks. These are just two of the numerous examples of announcements for such events contained in the Society's archives.

SA/EUG/G.1

I.3 The Central Council for Health Education *Poster Services* leaflet (1936)

As the leaflet explains "these poster sets [were] specially produced for display... at the request of the Ministry of Health". They were to be displayed in private or Local Authority sites, schools, welfare centres, clinics and hospitals. Along with those pictured on this page others tackled such subjects as inoculation, balanced diets and dental health. A version of the *Healthy Seed* poster can also be seen in this case.

SA/EUG/J.19

I.4 Reels of 20mm films: *From Generation to Generation* and *Heredity in Man* (1937)

In the mid-1930s the Eugenics Society produced a propaganda film; a half dozen different versions were made for various audiences and purposes. Narrated by Julian Huxley, the films described the physiology of reproduction, showed human pedigree charts and presented family case histories illustrating the inheritance of genius and of 'mental defects'. Shown alongside the film reels is a leaflet for teachers explaining the use of the film.

SA/EUG/G.50-51, D.74

I.5 Volume of "Birth Rate Press Cuttings March 12, 1937 to 30.11.37" and article from *News Chronicle*, 25 August 1936

The papers of the Eugenics Society contain more than 20 boxes of press-cuttings relating to subjects of concern to it: heredity, birth rates, population, pedigree, sterilisation, birth control, etc. As can be seen from the *News Chronicle* article and the cartoon in the *Morning Post*, low birth rates and a perceived ageing of the population caused particular alarm in the mid-1930s.

SA/EUG/N.46, G.29

I.6 *Family Record* information form

From the early 1910s the Eugenics Education Society (renamed Eugenics Society in 1926) undertook investigations of family pedigrees. This form, produced by the Research Committee, was "to be used in a study of human heredity". Amongst other characteristics, it sought information about "general mental ability", "special abilities", sight, hearing or speech defects, harelips, abnormal fingers or toes and "complexion or skin colour".

SA/EUG/J.17

I.7 Selection of photographs illustrating "defects and defectives"

This set of photographs of children's feet were used to illustrate characteristics displayed in "mongols", "cretins", "imbeciles", "hydrocephalic children", and "normal children".

SA/EUG/G.43

1.8 *Live, Love, Marry Wisely* and *The Burden of Hereditary Unfitness* images

The eugenics movement in general repeatedly used the symbol of a tree to convey their ideas. The two images shown here were used in the Society's lectures and exhibitions. The self supporting healthy tree embodies the eugenics creed in its positive guise: the unfit specimen supported by crutches suggests the negative version. The crutches are labelled "mental hospitals", "certified institutions" and "special schools & institutions".

SA/EUG/G.43

1.9 Eugenics emblem

This image of healthy parents surrounded by energetic offspring served as an emblem for the Eugenics Society. The simple flowing garments and the use of a child raised heavenward at the apex of the image added a mixture of Christian, classical and natural resonances to the picture.

SA/EUG/J.18

1.10 Selection of Eugenics Society leaflets

In its efforts to make the public more aware of eugenics issues the Society produced a considerable amount of literature aimed at a variety of audiences. Displayed here are leaflets outlining the basics of eugenics and heredity, and a brochure about teaching eugenics in schools and colleges.

SA/EUG/J.17

1.11 Wooden boxes of lantern slides

The Eugenics Society was keenly aware of the enhanced impact that visual material would give to its talks. Many of their lectures were accompanied by the projection of slides like these. Some of the images presented heredity charts and graphs of statistics, while others showed examples of inherited characteristics.

SA/EUG/G.37, G.39

1.12 Selection of material relating to Eugenics Society exhibitions: ticket, photographs, calico and wooden charts, medals, drafts and plans

One of the more elaborate ways in which the Society sought to educate the public was through display stands, often mounted at health exhibitions. Along with the displays of information, they also acted as sales points for relevant publications, and were staffed with a member to answer visitors questions. Plans of the exhibition layouts could involve the type of careful and detailed drawings shown here. Much of the information about heredity was presented in charts made either from wood or calico, examples of which can be seen. The calico chart of the "Pedigree of a woman who married twice" originally read "... a woman with two husbands" before the potential ambiguity was noted. The rough sketch of a heredity chart concerns inheritance of eye colour. The effort and care that the Society put into these exhibitions was rewarded by trophies like the Royal Sanitary Institute medals shown.

SA/EUG G27,G29,G33,G35,G40,G46,G48

SECTION II

MARIE STOPES:

CONSTRUCTIVE BIRTH CONTROL

As a pioneer of birth control and sex education, Marie Carmichael Stopes (1880-1958) exerted an enormous influence on public opinion concerning reproduction and sexuality. In an era when this aspect of life was shrouded in Victorian decorum and secrecy, she gave people both the confidence and competence actually to talk about sex. For her, birth control was in part a means to social ends, and she strongly advocated the eugenic idea of reducing the fertility of the poor while encouraging 'fit' mothers to bear healthy, planned babies. She strongly dissociated birth control from abortion, believing in fact that effective use of the former would make the latter unnecessary.

Her most influential work *Married Love* first appeared in 1918 and sold 2000 copies in the first fortnight of publication. By 1952, over a million copies had been sold. This hugely successful book was followed by a number of others aimed at a variety of audiences. She further promoted her 'new gospel' by founding a Society for Constructive Birth Control, publishing the newspaper *Birth Control News* and holding many public meetings and talks.

To put her ideas into practice, Stopes set up a series of Mothers' Clinics under the banner "Joyous and deliberate motherhood. A sure light in our racial darkness". The first was founded in 1921 in Holloway and, like those that followed, it both dispensed advice and fitted women with contraceptive devices.

EXHIBITS

II.1 Marie Stopes, *Wise Parenthood: A Practical Sequel to "Married Love"* (5th edition, London, 1919)

First published in the same year as *Married Love*, Stopes wrote this book in "an attempt to answer innumerable inquirers" who had read the earlier work. She dedicated it "to all who wish to see our race grow in strength and beauty". The illustrations in this appendix compared the type of vaginal caps of which she approved (A) with those of which she did not (B). Alongside the work is a draft of a label that was to appear in the book.

PP/MCS/G.7

II.2 First and 26th editions of Marie Stopes, *Married Love* (London, 1918 and 1952)

Though she partly funded its publication herself, this book was almost immediately a huge success. By the 26th edition it had sold over a million copies. Written in a frank and clear style, for many people it represented their first serious introduction to the subject of sexual relations. It stands as one of the pioneering works in sex education.

II.3 Two anonymous letters addressed to Marie Stopes

Many of Stopes's readers were prompted to write to her, some in gratitude, others in anger. Her papers contain dozens of boxes of such correspondence. These two examples are both anonymous. The one dated 5 July 1918, is from a man who had read her *Married Love* and wanted to thank her "for the immense hope for the future of my married life which it has given me". The other was written in opposition to her perceived views on sterilization. PP/MCS/A.1

II.4 Annotated typescript of *Radiant Motherhood* (published 1920)

Much of Stopes's work and reputation was in principle concerned with avoiding unwanted pregnancy. Like many in the eugenics movement, however, Stopes was also eager to make clear the positive side of her message, that when motherhood was desirable it could be 'radiant'. To the dedication in this typescript that originally read "to all who are creating the future," she has added "young husbands". PP/MCS/G.8

II.5 'Old Low's Almanack' from *The Evening Standard*, 6 December 1930; *New York Herald Tribune*, 5 March 1931

Many of Stopes's works were controversial, receiving attention from censors in various countries. This cartoon made fun of the situation in the Irish Republic, where all of her works were banned. The article from the *Tribune* reports how in April 1930, an edition of her *Married Love* was sent back to England from America with the request that the birth control information be eliminated. It goes on to report how the Treasury Department nonetheless still sought to ban even the expurgated version. PP/MCS/B.26, F.8

II.6 *Empire News*, 23 August 1953

In this article headed "Marie Stopes Attacks Kinsey 'Nonsense'", she poured scorn on the famous American report concerning sexual activity. Kinsey had not, she said, "contributed one solitary new scientific fact". What she rejected in particular were the statistics dealing with sex before marriage and 'unfaithfulness' in marriage, which she felt were both overestimated. PP/MCS/G.30

II.7 *Outspan*, 12 June 1953, *The Sketch*, 7 March 1923

Despite its praise for her having done "more than any other single human being to remove the veil of ignorance about sex", Stopes's own autograph note at the top of

the article in *Outspan* reads: "This is most inaccurate. I never saw this man at all". The article in *The Sketch* is one of many that attempted to portray a more personal side of the famous writer.

PP/MCS/G.30

II.8 Announcement for *Our Ostriches* by Marie Stopes

Written in a single night, after another of her plays *Vectia* was banned by the Lord Chamberlain, *Our Ostriches* was billed as "An original play of modern life." It opened at the Royal Court Theatre in London on 14 November 1923, and was generally well received by the press. The life of the heroine, Evadne, bore striking parallels with Stopes's own.

PP/MCS/F.13

II.9 *Kingdom Come, Summer*, 1941

Stopes had literary as well as social interests. She wrote a number of poems and plays. In this journal founded in war-time Oxford she contributed a two-verse poem entitled "To Churchill, 1941", which began with the line "When Britain needed coarseness she got you."

PP/MCS/G.30

II.10 Reproduction of a lithograph of Marie Stopes by Sir David Low, c. 1931

This unflattering impression bears an inscription in Stopes's own hand: "*very* unlike Marie C Stopes!"

Iconographic Collections

II.11 Photograph of Stopes, c. early-1920s

This photograph is from the authorised life of Marie Stopes by her close friend Aylmer Maude, published in 1924 when she was only 44. The biography was written under her supervision, and was meant to redress adverse publicity she had received.

II.12 Selection of leaflets, letters and samples sent out by 'Female Pill' manufacturers, 1926-1927

Marie Stopes did not approve of any of the preparations of this kind, which, though claiming various uses, were most often intended to induce abortions. Much of the language in which this promotional literature is couched testifies to the decorum which continued to surround the subject of sex.

PP/EUG/B.23

II.13 Photographs of Marie Stopes's birth control clinics, and introduction card for Belfast Branch

Marie Stopes set up her first 'Mothers' Clinic' in Holloway in 1921. Four years later it moved to Whitfield Street, where it still exists. The premises are shown in the photographs. Others were set up in different parts of Britain. One of the photographs shows a mobile clinic, one of the two that was fitted up in caravans in 1927. The clinics were aimed in particular at poorer women, and in them mothers were offered 'practical advice' in the use of contraceptives by qualified nurses. Careful examination of the photographs reveals a number of images of happy, smiling children, which helped counter the notion that Stopes and her clinics were somehow 'against' children.

PP/MCS/C.45

II.14 *The Mothers' Clinic* leaflets

The smaller draft leaflet explains the aims of the clinics. The larger one was put out by the Society for Constructive Birth Control executive to introduce their own range of contraceptives under the trade name 'Racial'. These included 'solubles,' 'sponges' and an improved version of the vaginal caps, since, as the leaflet explained, "the dome of the cap was universally made too low".

PP/MCS/G.5, C.45

II.15 Mothers' Clinic Visitors book (1921-1940), and case sheets for individuals seen (1935)

Visitors recorded during this period (July-September 1926) include Margaret Mead, the American anthropologist. Those who came to seek advice from the clinic each had their cases recorded on these report sheets, which were designed by Stopes herself to solicit the maximum information "while giving the minimum of offence".

PP/MCS/C.2, C.3

II.16 Notice advertising talks given by Marie Stopes, *Chimes of the Times* poster and *Constructive Birth Control Society* poster

In order to spread her teachings and gain support for her cause Marie Stopes spoke at many meetings throughout the country. Although much of her practical work was aimed at the poor, as this poster for talks at Claridge's indicates she was also keen to disseminate her ideas amongst the middle and upper classes. The two posters are examples of the literature the Constructive Birth Control Society produced to bring attention to its cause.

PP/MCS/C.46, C.44, C.51

II.17 Marie Stopes, *The First Five Thousand* (London, 1925)

In this book, Stopes reported on the first five thousand visits made to her Mothers' Clinic, "the first Birth Control Clinic in the British Empire".

II.18 File of *Birth Control News* and first issue from May 1922

Edited by Marie Stopes, this newspaper was promoted as "the only paper that deals with the vital issue of today".

PP/MCS/C.50

II.19 Selection of contraceptives collected by Marie Stopes

Marie Stopes held strong opinions regarding contraceptives. Advocating the use of sponges and caps, she was fundamentally opposed to the use of the 'Female Pills', which though thought the promotional material rarely made clear, were at the time sold for the purpose of inducing abortions. In 1923 she wrote a technical treatise '*Contraception: its theory, history and practice*'.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum



The Expectant Mother

Published by the
NATIONAL BIRTHDAY TRUST FUND
(for Extension of Maternity Services)
57, LOWER BELGRAVE STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1

The Expectant Mother. See item III. 4



L'enfant malade by Théophile Alexandre Steilen. See item Int. 7

Women
your body
belongs
to you!

Abortion Law Reform Association leaflet. See item VI.9



Detail from page of Grantly Dick-Read's travel scrapbook. Reproduced by kind permission of the Grantly Dick-Read Estate. See item IV.10



NBTF fund-raising stamps. See item III.6

**ONLY *HEALTHY* SEED
MUST BE SOWN!**



ISSUED BY THE EUGENICS SOCIETY 69, ECCLESTON SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1

Only Healthy Seed poster. See item I.1

C.B.C. CONSTRUCTIVE BIRTH CONTROL SOCIETY AND FREE CLINIC

Founded by
DR. MARIE STOPES.

The Free Clinic is under the patronage of a distinguished Committee, staffed with qualified Lady Doctors and Certified Midwives.

The C.B.C. Headquarters are the Pioneer Centre for advice, instruction, and help.

108, Whitfield Street, W.1.

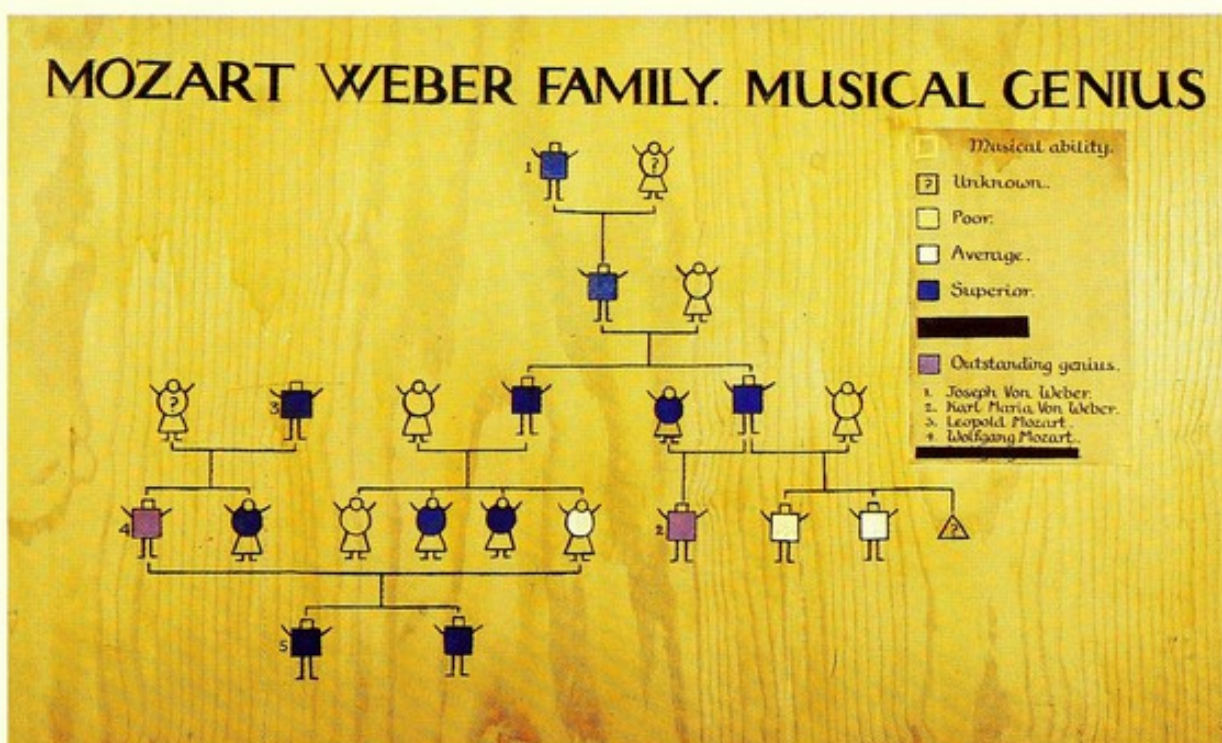
Telephone: Museum 9528

READ THE BIRTH CONTROL NEWS

SIXPENCE MONTHLY.

Ask for it at the Railway Bookstalls

Constructive Birth Control
Society poster. See item II.16



Mozart Weber Family heredity tree. See item I.12

for a happy home

have



MUM



Dad

children

when you



Me

want

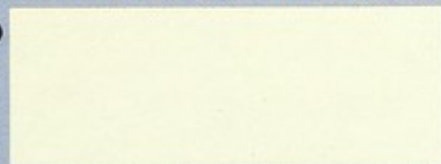


Joan



baby

you can get help and advice from



them

FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION

64, SLOANE STREET LONDON S.W.1 SLOANE 0451-9112

Family Planning Association poster. See item V.9

SECTION III

NATIONAL BIRTHDAY TRUST FUND:

SAFER MOTHERHOOD

Alarm at the high rate of maternal mortality and the lack of provision of trained midwives led to the foundation of the National Birthday Fund in 1928. The society initially aimed to raise money to supplement midwives' fees and improve their training. Its investigative and campaigning work helped establish midwives as salaried officers; some, however, felt that these efforts also represented an attempt to restrict the activities of midwives.

From its beginnings, the Society benefited from connections with high society. Money was originally raised through donors subscribing a shilling on their birthdays. This was soon supplanted by more ambitious schemes like the sale of stamps, flag days, 'snowball' (i.e. chain) letters, and music, theatre and cinema gala performances, sometimes attended by royalty. This energetic fund-raising enabled the Society to amass a substantial capital fund with which to pursue its goals.

The Society was mainly involved in campaigning both for the relief of pain during childbirth, and for antenatal care and nutrition. During a period when pain relief methods were only used in difficult or abnormal labours, the Society worked to get analgesic treatment more widely available. From the early 1930s it made trials of both chloroform capsules and various gas/air machines, and then set up schemes to ensure their ready distribution. Then, beginning in the mid-1930s, it worked to distribute food to expectant mothers. It also worked through publications, leaflets, films and, from 1945, an audio-visual presentation (using 'synchrophone' equipment) to inform expectant mothers of healthy practices.

EXHIBITS

III.1 Material relating to 'synchrophone' lecture: photograph of Birmingham lecture, equipment brochure, records

'Synchrophonic' lectures were one of the more technologically sophisticated means used by the NBTF to publicise and promote its cause of increased maternal health and reduced perinatal mortality. As the manufacturer's brochure explains, the synchrophone projected "coloured pictures on a plate glass screen" and played records to

accompany the images with sound. The records are for the NBTF lecture 'The Expectant Mother', which was used in ante-natal clinics from 1945. The photograph shows a 'synchrophonic' lecture given in a Birmingham maternity hospital.

SA/NBT/G.31/1, G.31/5, G.31/7/5

III.2 'To make you mothers proud', *Daily Express* article, 12 September 1955

This newspaper article triumphantly heralded the success of campaigns like that mounted by the NBTF in reducing maternal and infant mortality. Asked to explain this rise in "healthy and happy births... one of Britain's most eminent gynaecologists" is quoted prescribing, "care before the baby is born, care during its birth, and still more care in the first few critical years".

SA/NBT/G.1/6B

III.3 Three National Birthday Trust Fund Leaflets: *Happy Birthdays* (1956); *Help us to make... every birthday a happy one* (1962); *There can be no more worthwhile cause...* (1960s)

Throughout their history, the NBTF produced hundreds of leaflets, several boxes of which are now housed in the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre. The 1956 leaflet explained anaesthetic treatment. The 1962 leaflet described the fall in maternal mortality statistics from 100 000 for the 25 years before 1936 to 22 000 for the quarter-century after 1936; and that from the 1960s, with messages from Princess Alexandra, the Fund's patron, and Richard Attenborough, set out their aim to "find and remove the cause of early infant deaths".

SA/NBT G4/1 (2), G4/1 (3)

III.4 Front cover art work and proofs of *The Expectant Mother* booklet (1946)

This booklet was produced as part of the NBTF's efforts to educate expectant mothers in order to help them have healthy pregnancies and births. Set out in simple language with light-hearted but didactic drawings it gave tips on dress, diet, exercise and, on the pages displayed, "vices".

SA/NBT/G.31/4

III.5 Red Manilla file of "birthdays" (c. 1930); donations receipt book for February-March 1935; clipping from *The Times*, 13 June 1951

Raising funds was, initially at least, the core activity of the NBTF. The first idea for receiving donations was to encourage people to give a shilling a year on their birthdays. The manilla folder contains correspondence with people initially contacted through this scheme, including Sir Robert Baden-Powell. More ambitious forms of giving were soon devised. The receipt book records donations of over £1000 for two months in 1935. The page displayed shows a single donation of £500. The clipping from *The Times* indicates that birthday donations continued into the 1950s.

SA/NBT/G.6/1/2, G.7/5 (1)

III.6 Selection of material relating to fund-raising schemes: stamps, flags, map of flag-sellers, badges, card

The NBTF was very enterprising in its attempts to raise money; it coordinated appeals through the radio, cinemas and churches, held raffles, and sold promotional cards, stamps and flags. The sketch-map is for the positioning of flag-sellers for the selling of children's day badges (1930); the stamps and pinned flags were for the mother's day appeal (1930); the artwork is for a 'charity card' (1960s).

SA/NBT/G.6/3 (2), G.6/4, G.6/5

III.7 Poster, leaflet, souvenir programme and ticket for performance of *Elijah*, February 1935

The NBTF's efforts to raise funds were considerably aided by the Fund's association with a number of people with power and influence. Mrs Stanley Baldwin, for example, hosted benefit entertainments at 10 Downing Street. This poster, leaflet, programme and ticket relate to the fund-raising performances of *Elijah* at the Royal Albert Hall during February 1935. Contained in the Fund's archives is correspondence about the Queen or the Duchess of York possibly attending the event. Another elaborate fund-raising event was the air pageant organized at the Hansworth Flying Club in 1930.

SA/NBT/G.20/3 (2), G.20/3B

III.8 Programmes for *Porcelain Ball*, 24 November 1931

The Porcelain Ball was held in aid of the NBTF on the occasion of the opening of a new ballroom at Claridge's. In the programme the Fund announced that it had already made two grants each to no less than 11 hospitals, but asked for more help to improve and extend maternity services "which are so deplorably inadequate". Other benefit balls organized included a Strauss Ball, a Lace Ball and a Bridge Ball.

SA/NBT/G.17 (2)

III.9 Box of chloroform capsules and order book

One of the main areas of practical concern for the NBTF was the provision of anaesthetics for childbirth. An appeal fund under the name of Mrs Stanley Baldwin was used to pay for the appointment of anaesthetists in hospitals. Other funds were used to investigate the use of anaesthetics by midwives, for example the experiment in the use of chloroform capsules for pain relief in labour, conducted at Queen Charlotte's Hospital in April 1932. Orders for the capsules were placed with J F Macfarlan & Co. of Bethnal Green Rd.

SA/NBT/H.1/4, H.1/7

III.10 Leaflet, letter and distribution notebook relating to gas and air analgesic machines

The NBTF was extensively involved in both the trial and distribution of various analgesic machines for the relief of labour pains. The leaflet is the manufacturer's promotional brochure for the "Queen Charlotte's" gas-air analgesia apparatus from the late 1930s,

when it cost around £14. The Fund supplied such machines free to hospitals and at the reduced fee of £5 to District Nursing Associations. Distribution of “Queen Charlotte’s” and Minnitt machines was monitored in the notebook. The letter from the Sussex Maternity & Women’s Hospital (20 June 1940) reported that “the two gas-air machines have been safely received and are giving complete satisfaction”.

SA/NBT/H.3/3 (2), H.3/5

III.11 Photographs of midwives transporting and using analgesic equipment and copy of plaque attached to machines

Unlike anaesthetics used in hospitals, those designed to be administered by midwives had to be portable and relatively simple to use. The photograph showing a midwife applying the mask was produced for promotional purposes by the British Oxygen Company (c. 1950s). The photograph of the midwife with a gas-air machine strapped to her bicycle is from c. 1937/8. Plaques like the one displayed were attached to the machines to indicate that they had been donated by the NBTF.

SA/NBT/H.3/2/2, H.3/11

III.12 “Autogesia” anaesthetic apparatus, c.1938

This self-administered analgesic apparatus used a mixture of air and nitrous oxide as its anaesthetic agent. Patented in 1937, it was produced by the Dental Manufacturing Company Ltd. This actual machine was given to the Science Museum by the National Birthday Trust Fund in 1988.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

III.13 Midwife’s soapbox (English c.1940); bag (English, late 19th early 20th century); and badge (English 1880s/90s)

The role of midwives in childbirth has frequently been the subject of fierce debate. The efforts to restrict childbirth exclusively to hospitals tended to weaken their position. Even attempts to establish them as salaried officers were seen by some as a means of controlling their activities. The contents of a midwife’s bag like this one shows the range of obstetrical operations that they might be called on to perform, while the soapbox with its nail brush indicates the importance attached to hygiene in their activities. The badge symbolically depicting a fruiting seed head was possibly used to indicate that the wearer was a certified midwife.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

III.14 Preludin Calculator (c. 1960)

The weight of a baby has always been used as an indication of its health and ‘normality’. A refinement in this practice has been the statistical determination of averages of height and weight for given ages and sexes. The ‘Preludin’ instrument shown is used for such calculations.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

SECTION IV

GRANTLY DICK-READ:
CHILDBIRTH WITHOUT FEAR

Grantly Dick-Read (1890-1959) worked strenuously as a propagandist for 'natural childbirth'. Questioning the value of medical intervention, he was amongst those who argued that the experience of birth had become too clinical and that as a consequence, pregnancy had come to be viewed as a kind of illness.

For Dick-Read the key to a 'natural' yet still relatively painless birth, lay in the controlled elimination of fear. While many in the established medical professions basically rejected his views, he gained considerable support amongst women who felt that too much had been sacrificed in the search for medically efficient deliveries.

To get his message across, he used every medium of communication at his disposal: books, magazines, newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, lecture tours, courses, films and records. His first book on the subject was *Natural Childbirth* (1933). This work gained relatively little attention, and it was not until his *Childbirth Without Fear* appeared in 1942 that he became, as one contemporary newspaper had it, "the world's most discussed doctor".

EXHIBITS

IV.1 Photograph of Grantly Dick-Read with a cat

This photograph was taken during Dick-Read's extensive tour of Canada in 1958. He died the following year.

PP/GDR/C.100

IV.2 Notebook with some autobiographical reflections (mid-1940s[?])

The first page of this undated notebook headed "*Childbirth*" begins: "To take myself back nearly forty years [to] when I was a pre-clinical medical stud[ent]..." Under the heading "*Why did I think of childbirth*" he writes "The fauna- Birds beast[s] and butterflies- their habits and customs," and under "*What did I think,*" he asks "What was wrong with women?"

PP/GDR/C.81

IV.3 *Der Spiegel*, 1 June 1955

The teachings of Dick-Read gained him international fame. The title of this cover story in the German periodical reads "Against the myth of the most difficult hour".

PP/GDR/C.121

IV.4 Grantly Dick-Read, *Childbirth Without Fear* (New York, 2nd Rev. Edn, 1959) Though he wrote on childbirth as early as the 1920s, his book *Natural Childbirth* did not appear until 1933, with Dick-Read himself contributing to its publication costs. In 1942 he published *Revelation of Childbirth*, later known as *Childbirth Without Fear*. In these works he put forward his ideas about the value of natural childbirth and the means of reducing labour pains through conquering fear. In the preface to *Childbirth Without Fear* he explained that what gave his ideas “security” was “women, whose inborn faith in the goodness and greatness of motherhood was closely associated to spiritual forces and designs”. The illustrations show various antenatal exercises recommended by Dick-Read.

IV.5 Grantly Dick-Read, *Mutterwerden ohne Schmerz* two editions (Hamburg, 1950) and (Hamburg, 1971); *Vi Venter et Barn* (Copenhagen, 1953); Telegram (11 September 1950)

As these German editions of *Childbirth Without Fear* and Danish edition of *Introduction to Motherhood* indicate, Dick-Read’s works were translated into other languages. *Childbirth Without Fear* in fact appeared in Italian, Dutch, Danish, French, Swedish, Norwegian, Afrikaans, Spanish, Portuguese and Hebrew. The telegram concerns the American publication of *Introduction to Motherhood*.

IV.6 Artist’s sketchbooks of illustrations for *Introduction to Motherhood* and *Antenatal Illustrated*

Dick-Read published *Introduction to Motherhood* in 1950 and *Antenatal Illustrated* in 1955. The former gave “practical instructions to young people contemplating ... parenthood”, and the latter outlined “education, correct breathing, relaxation and exercises” that would help a healthy woman achieve a natural birth. One illustration depicts progressive changes in a pregnant woman’s body, the others show successive stages of one of Dick-Read’s antenatal exercises.

IV.7 Selection of material relating to childbirth films: *Childbirth Without Fear* preview list; newspaper article; cast and synopsis of *Le Cas du Docteur Laurent*, letter concerning German film (21 August 1958); notice of Italian film

The subject of natural childbirth received numerous treatments in film, both documentary and feature. In 1956 Dick-Read’s own *Childbirth Without Fear* was released. The list of people attending the preview is shown here. The clipping from *The People*, 17 February 1957, describes how the film *Birth of a Baby* was ridiculed by jeering teenagers. In France a feature film *The Case of Dr Laurent* was produced. The synopsis is shown here. The letter from Dieter Fritko describes “difficulties with censors” over including clips of Dick-Read’s documentary in another film, and the page from the German magazine *Illustrierte Film Bühne* (1957) describes an Italian film

Women’s Suffering- Women’s Happiness.

PP/GDR/C.23, C.52, C.121

IV.8 *Daily Mirror* billboard

As this billboard indicates, Grantly Dick-Read's work on natural childbirth received extensive coverage in the tabloid press.

PP/GDR/C.142

IV.9 Selection of press coverage of Grantly Dick-Read's cause: 'Must a Mother Suffer' *Sunday Graphic*; 15 January 1956, *Woman*, 25 May 1957; 'Cripes' *Daily Mirror*, 1 November 1956; 'Taboos and Secrets...' *The Sun* 1 October 1954; 'Why try to bamboozle us...' *Woman's Sunday Mirror*, 1 September 1957

Tagged "this great doctor" and "the world's most discussed doctor", Grantly Dick-Read was tremendously successful in getting coverage in the popular press for his cause of natural childbirth. The article in *The Sun* about learning "life from primitive native tribes" is based on his investigations of childbirth practice amongst non-westernised Africans. The article in the *Daily Mirror* concerns Princess Ira's choice of natural methods for the delivery of her baby; another article describes Princess Grace of Monaco's similar decision. The letter in *Woman's Sunday Mirror* is from a Mrs Pat Wilkinson who having 'trained' to have a natural childbirth, decided instead to do it "the modern way". "This talk about natural childbirth is so misleading" she concludes.

PP/GDR/C.22, C.48, C.50, C.52, C.117, C.122

IV.10 Two pages from Grantly Dick-Read's travel scrapbook (1957-58)

A year before he died, Grantly Dick-Read made an extensive lecture tour of the USA and Canada to promote and discuss natural childbirth. These are two pages from the scrapbook of that trip compiled from the photos, tickets, programmes etc. that he collected while on tour.

PP/GDR/C.98

IV.11 Selection of material from lecture and discussion tours: post-talk question; lecture announcement; telegram; diary; tapes of talks; and travel scrapbook

To promote his cause, Dick-Read gave numerous lectures and talks throughout Europe, South Africa, North and South America. The announcement is for a talk given in San Francisco in December 1957. The scraps of paper are the questions asked after a talk in May 1957. The telegram concerns arrangements for a talk in Mississippi in November 1957. The diary is open at the page for 7 June 1958. The travel scrapbook shows a baggage sticker for the *Queen Mary*, which sailed from Southampton on 10 October 1957. The tapes are of lectures he gave in Buffalo, New York (November 1957) and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (January 1958).

PP/GDR/C.93, C.94, C.80, C.98, C.101, C.145, C.146

IV.12 Glass infant's feeding bottle (*Griptight*) with carton and cleaning brush (English, 1930-50)

Though most women used bottles, and were often encouraged to do so, Dick-Read was basically opposed to their use. The 'naturalness' of breast feeding far more closely fitted his philosophical outlook.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

IV.13 *Mothereze* Raspberry Leaf Tablets (English, 1940-65)

As an alternative to Dick-Read's methods, a wide range of pharmaceutical products that were meant to induce easier, 'natural' childbirth were also available. Along with raspberry leaf, these tablets contain senna.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

SECTION V

FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION: LEARNING TO LIVE WITH SEX

Built on the pioneering activities of such pioneer campaigners as Marie Stopes, Helena Wright and Joan Malleson, the work of the Family Planning Association emerged alongside the growing conviction that women should make their own choices about having children. Particularly significant in this development was the part the Association played in making contraceptives more readily available.

The institutional history of the Association is complicated. In 1930 a whole series of existing organizations banded together to form the National Birth Control Council (NBCC), renamed the National Birth Control Association (NBCA) a year later. Finally, in 1939 it took the name Family Planning Association.

A central concern of the Association was the availability of safe, reliable contraceptives, and an important part of its work was in testing and approving different devices. For a while the Association even marketed its own brands. To provide advice and practical help in this area it also ran Family Planning Clinics, the 1000th of which was opened in Thamesmead, London in June 1970. The Association also energetically promoted public understanding of birth control methods, releasing a film *Birthright* and mounting a series of leaflet and poster campaigns to spread its message.

EXHIBITS

V.1 Posters, leaflet and carton of Family Planning Association's own brands of contraceptive

In 1972 the Family Planning Association started marketing two 'own brand' contraceptives: *Forget me not* sheaths and a combination package of sheath and foam or sheath and cone given the name *Two's company*. As the leaflet explained, the price was kept at "clinic-level prices that will help keep down the cost of responsible birth control".

SA/FPA/A.16/13

V.2 Selection of Family Planning Association notes, leaflets and booklets

One of the main activities of the Family Planning Association was in sex education for the public. In much of the material it produced, the Association adopted a frank and straightforward, but also somewhat light-hearted style of presentation.

Considerable thought was given to audiences, with specific publications being aimed at particular groups: *Learning to live with sex* (1972) for example was published “for teenagers”.
SA/FPA/A.6/9, A.16/24

V.3 Cartoons from *Daily Express*, 5 February 1970 and *Daily Mirror*, 13 March 1970
Much of the Family Planning Association’s work received wide public attention. The cartoon from the *Daily Mirror* concerns the notorious poster used by the Association in which a ‘pregnant’ man was shown with the caption “would you be more careful if it was you that got pregnant?”.
SA/FPA/B.10/18

V.4 Photograph, telegram and press cuttings relating to use of toads in pregnancy test
For many years the Family Planning Association performed pregnancy tests using South African *Xenopus Laevi* female toads. In 1964, the tests were changed and came to be based on purely chemical methods. As the press cuttings describe, this left the Family Planning Association with the task of finding new homes for some 20 000 toads.
SA/FPA/A.3/13, A.23/9/5

V.5 ‘The No Baby Pill,’ *Daily Mirror*, 3 July 1962; ‘Birth control: The Pill and the Church,’ *Newsweek* 6 July 1964.
The 1962 article in the *Daily Mirror* claimed that because it was “changing the face of the world by controlling life and stopping women becoming pregnant”, the importance of the recently introduced ‘birth control pill’ was second only to the nuclear bomb. The *Newsweek* report surveyed the spectrum of Roman Catholic opinion from papal denunciation of the pill to the rebellious attitude of more liberal theologians.
SA/FPA/A.17/98A, A.15/9

V.6 Miscellaneous material from birth control manufacturers, 1930s
The Family Planning Association throughout its history collected material from birth control manufacturers. These examples from the 1930s are for Rene Dubois’s ‘Energy Tabs for Ladies’ and ‘Pilules’ “For all Female irregularities” and Le Brasseur’s ‘VI-VIM’ tablets for “Lost Vigour, Nervous Debility, Premature Decay...”. Le Brasseur also published Douglas Neale’s *Guide for Husbands and Wives*, which dealt extensively with birth control methods.
SA/FPA/A.7/119A

V.7 Family Planning Association, *Approved List of Contraceptives*, 1953
One of the main activities of the Association was, as the *Approved List*’s introduction had it, “investigat[ing] the qualities of those proprietary contraceptives brought to their notice”. This was partly to make up for the fact that contraceptive products were not listed in the *British Pharmacopoeia*. The *Approved List* was kept continually under review, with new editions being frequently produced.
SA/FPA/A.7/5

V.8 Selection of samples and manufacturer's promotional material for contraceptives
Eager to appear on the FPA's *Approved List of Contraceptives*, manufacturers sent the Association considerable amounts of material about their products, in a wide range of media. Items displayed here include packages, labels, leaflets, sample condoms, advertising material in various forms, a leaf of a scientific paper concerning a new contraceptive, an experimental dosage scheme for the pill, a physician's instructions chart for the diaphragm, a sample intra-uterine contraceptive ring, leaflets and two promotional records of talks on family planning. Some of the promotional material makes overt use of the fact that the product had appeared in the Association's *Approved List*.

SA/FPA/A.7/23, A.7/27, A.7/51.1, A.7/76, A.7/86, A.7/127, A.7/135, A.7/136

V.9 *For a happy home...* Family Planning Association poster, 1950s

SA/FPA/A.17/159

V.10 Four photographs depicting various Family Planning Association staff and activities

Clockwise from top left: Mrs Kirke's photograph of the FPA Advice Department (September 1956); contact sheet of images for 'Happy Families' poster (c. 1970); photograph of protest against ban of FPA poster on London Underground (March 1961), Margaret Howard holds a banner showing the 'offending poster'; member of staff in laboratory at 64 Sloane Street (1957).

SA/FPA/A.23/6/4, A.23/30/1, A.23/9/7, A.23/48/3

V.11 Packets of contraceptive pills by various manufacturers, 1976-80

The pill was introduced into Britain in 1962. It quickly became the most widely used contraceptive, and remains so, although since 1975 its popularity has decreased following scares concerning harmful side-effects. Many doctors welcomed it as a contraceptive measure that did not involve them actively in fitting devices.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

SECTION VI

ABORTION LAW REFORM ASSOCIATION:

BREAKING CHAINS

Until 1803, when Lord Ellenborough's Act criminalized the procurement of abortions, the termination of pregnancy had been legally permissible up to 'quickening'—the stage in pregnancy when fetal movement could be detected. From the 1920s onwards, attempts to secure legal approval of abortion gained strength, fuelled particularly by the profound alarm at the prevalence of back-street abortions. The Abortion Law Reform Association was founded in 1936.

The severe deformities caused by the Thalidomide disaster in 1961 helped the Association's cause gain public support, and from the mid-1960s the Association's activities increased dramatically. It commissioned surveys, mounted public campaigns and corresponded widely on the issue. The main focus of its work was in Parliament where a series of bills to reform the law were introduced by Kenneth Robinson, Lord Silkin and Simon Wingfield Digby. Success finally came when David Steel's private members bill was passed. Coming into force in April 1968, it broadened the grounds on which an abortion could be procured.

Since the passing of this bill numerous attempts have been made to amend, restrict or revoke its measures. In 1971 the Association switched its activities towards the task of protecting the bill and ensuring its fullest implementation. Heated debate on the issue rages still. Influenced in part by medical technology that has made fetuses 'viable' at increasingly early stages, attempts to restrict abortion have recently become more militant.

EXHIBITS

VI.1 Articles from *Evening Standard*, 11 May and 14 May 1948

These two articles concern the case of Eleonore Bergmann and Bell Ferguson, two doctors who stood trial for "using an instrument to procure the miscarriage of four women". After both were found not guilty at the Old Bailey, Eleonore Bergman was subsequently tried and convicted of attempted suicide and sentenced to 11 days imprisonment.

SA/EUG/A.2/3

VI.2 'Abortion: the ABC and the Lsd,' *Queen*, 3 June 1964 and 'Baby by mistake,' *Family Doctor* April 1964

The article in *Family Doctor* focuses on the 'tragedy' of abortion and advocates accepting even unwanted pregnancies. It concludes optimistically that "usually it turns out all right in the end". The article in *Queen* is more sympathetic to the activities of the Abortion Law Reform Association.

SA/ALR/A.11/2/13, A.11/2/18

VI.3 Two National Abortion Campaign posters

Founded in 1975, the National Abortion Campaign aims to defend the 1967 abortion act from attack by anti-abortionists. Under the slogan "our bodies, our lives, our right to decide", the Campaign is committed to empowering women legally to decide, without interference, if they want to have an abortion.

SA/EUG/G.258

VI.4 'Log cards' of radio extracts concerning abortion (August-December 1971)

Through press services like this, the Association was able to monitor media coverage of abortion issues. Included in this selection are a report from Radio Birmingham claiming that more abortions were carried out in that city than any other in the country, and from BBC Wales 'Today' about 1000 British pilgrims travelling to Lourdes to pray for the government to abolish legal abortions.

SA/ALR/E.66

VI.5 Letter from the BBC (30 November 1953)

In this letter to Alice Jenkins of the Association, the editor of *Woman's Hour* explains that she is "a little doubtful about our being able to touch this subject in *Woman's Hour*".

SA/ALR/A.3/2/53

VI.6 Programme and article about the play *The Fallen Sparrow*

Supported by the Association, this play about a young woman dying after a back-street abortion was premiered in 1950. Much controversy surrounded its frank portrayal of a subject that was attracting increasing public attention.

SA/ALR/A.3/1/18 & 19

VI.7 'Abortion Law' opinion poll (1965) and 'Abortion Survey' questionnaires (1969)

A major activity pursued by the Association was conducting and commissioning surveys and polls. The National Opinion Poll report on "attitudes towards abortion law" amongst "electors in Great Britain" found that 66.1% of the population thought abortion should be "legal in some cases". The pink and yellow questionnaires were sent out to assess medical trends in the provision of abortions after the passing of the 1967 reform bill.

SA/ALR/A.13/1/1, A.13/3/3

VI.8 Four pro-choice leaflets

Since the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act, a major cause of groups in favour of abortion has been the protection of its provisions. As this selection of leaflets indicates,

much of the campaigning has been couched in terms of the right of women to choose for themselves.

SA/ALR/G.29

VI.9 Abortion Law Reform Association leaflets, first *Annual Report* (1936-7), ALRA newspaper *Breaking Chains* No.7, May/June 1978, and booklet *In Desperation* (1952)

Like all campaigning organizations, the Association produced a vast amount of published material in various forms. The blue leaflet set out differences in the law consequent on the enactment of the 1967 abortion act. Their newspaper *Breaking Chains* was first issued in mid-1977. The booklet *In Desperation* gathered together a "collection of (abridged) letters" sent to the Association which, as the foreword lamented, was unable to supply a "list of doctors and hospitals who will receive and deal with such correspondence".

SA/ALR/A.1/3/1, A.3/1/49, A.11/2/77, B.37

VI.10 Campaign against the Corrie Bill, *Rock Against Sexism* (1977[?])

John Corrie's bill sought to limit legal abortions from 28 to 20 weeks into a pregnancy. This leaflet concerns the practical details of the protest march and demonstration against the bill held in central London.

SA/ALR/H.66

VI.11 Abortion Law Reform campaign poster

Urging supporters to lobby their MPs, this campaign poster was produced in the period leading up to the crucial third reading of David Steel's reform bill in 1967.

SA/ALR/A.14/3

VI.12 Analysis of Parliamentary voting for Lord Silkin's Abortion Bill (1965-67); *Hansard*, 27 February 1953, concerning Joseph Reeves's Abortion Bill

Before the passing of David Steel's bill in 1967, numerous other attempts were made in Parliament to reform the law on abortion. These voting lists and the House of Commons Official Report relate to Lord Silkin's and Joseph Reeves's proposed bills respectively.

SA/ALR/A.16/9, A.3/2/19

VI.13 John Barr, 'The Abortion Battle' in *New Society*, 9 March 1967

In this article, John Barr reviewed the "clashes between pressure groups" that had surrounded the attempts to get David Steel's abortion bill through Parliament. For the bill, it listed the Abortion Law Reform Association, the National Secular Society, the British Humanist Association, the Cooperative Women's Guild and the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds; against it were the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholic Union of Great Britain, the Lamp Society, and the Link Society.

SA/ALR D3

VI.14 Selection of material against reform of abortion law: letter, poem, drawing, petition and leaflets

This selection of material against abortion law reform gathered by the Association includes an angry letter to David Steel, a poem 'Abortion' that begins "Hello, dear God, I'm back again", a petition sent to Members of Parliament and two leaflets. These last two are examples of the considerable use made of images of unborn babies, which have proved a very powerful tool in the anti-abortion lobby's argument.

SA/ALR A10/1, A10/24, A10/43, A15/2/1

VI.15 Selection of material for reform of abortion law: petition, Tories' leaflet and congratulatory cards

The supportive petition was sent to David Steel by a Mrs Frosch in November 1966. The leaflet produced by 'Tories for free choice' indicates how the issue cut across party-political boundaries. The cards and telegram are examples of the numerous messages of congratulation sent to David Steel on the successful passage of his bill.

SA/ALR A15/1/2, A15/4, G29

VI.16 Letter from David Steel to Vera Houghton [ALRA Chair] (25 July 1966)

At the time of writing, David Steel's private member's bill was about to enter its committee stage.

SA/ALR/A.5/1/6

VI.17 Selection of letters from MPs in favour of abortion law reform

This selection of letters written to the Association is from Anthony Wedgewood Benn, Michael Foot, Denis Healey, Michael Heseltine, David Owen, Margaret Thatcher, Jeremy Thorpe, and Edward Heath's private secretary, Antony Fletcher. All are supportive, except the last, which indicates no commitment either way. The fact that they include members of Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties indicates the cross-party support given to the bill.

SA/ALR/A.5/1

VI.18 National Abortion Campaign badges (1970-81)

These badges are examples of material produced during campaigns against the various Parliamentary bills that were aimed at reducing the scope of the 1967 abortion bill.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

VI.19 Disposable Karman vacuum aspirator apparatus (1981)

This apparatus was produced by Rocket of London for use in abortion operations conducted during the first seven weeks of pregnancy.

Kindly loaned by the Science Museum

SIX ARCHIVES FROM THE CONTEMPORARY MEDICAL ARCHIVES CENTRE

The Contemporary Medical Archive Centre (CMAC) was established in 1979 when the Wellcome Trust recognised the need to take a more active role in encouraging the preservation of records relating to twentieth-century medicine and health care. Since then, it has acquired over 300 collections and there has been a corresponding increase in the amount of research based on these collections.

The papers of individuals and the records of associations and organisations make their way into the Wellcome Institute in a number of ways. Frequently archives are offered because the Institute is recognized as an appropriate repository for them. Sometimes historians learn of a collection in private hands and recommend that it should be housed in the CMAC. In other cases archivists learn of records as a result of their own investigations: from survey work undertaken, or because enquiries are made following the publication of an obituary or after a suggestion made at a seminar or conference.

It may take months of discussion and negotiation before a collection is transferred to the CMAC, either as a gift or on loan. Some collections arrive in several accessions, and organisations often continue to transfer non-current records as they are produced. The archivists then need to consider issues of reprography, copyright and access. Sorting material, discarding duplicates and ephemera, and in some cases transferring published or iconographic materials to other departments in the Wellcome Institute Library is subsequently undertaken before a full catalogue and index are produced. Only after this are collections made available for research to those who sign a 'reader's undertaking'.

What follows is some background information on the provenance and content of each of the collections featured in this exhibition. It describes some aspects of the work involved in the acquisition and custody of archives and will, it is hoped, provide an indication of material that can be consulted by those interested in doing further study. It might also begin to answer a frequently asked question: 'What do archivists do?'.

The Eugenics Society

The eugenic movement and attitudes towards the existence of hereditary qualities have recently pre-occupied historians of medicine. Consequently this collection has been regularly consulted and continues to attract the CMAC's greatest number of readers.

The Society enquired if the Wellcome Institute would house their records: the British Library had initially taken them, but decided that they did not fall within its remit. The collection was transferred to the Wellcome Institute in 1980 and 1981, and further deposits were received in 1988. The Society's Library, which included that of Marie Stopes, was also transferred to the Wellcome Institute.

Founded in 1907 as the Eugenics Education Society, its main aim was to promote public awareness of eugenic problems, which it continued to do until 1963 when it was granted charitable status and abandoned this role to concentrate on a more scientific approach. Hence the archive contains much propaganda and publicity material, such as wall-charts, posters, photographs, magic lantern-slides, press-cuttings, tape-recordings and films. A series of reports on the Society's lectures and meetings survive alongside this material.

Apart from a set of minutes, annual reports, some scrap books of press cuttings and a few files of papers, very little has survived from the early years of the Society, an almost inevitable consequence of the fact that it did not have a permanent home until 1933.

The majority of the collection consists of the correspondence of members, Fellows and those associated with the Society and its activities. Many, such as Aldous Huxley, Sir Julian Huxley, Dean Inge, Mrs F Laski, Lord and Lady Keynes, Lord Horder and Margaret Sanger, were eminent in the arts, sciences, church, economics and politics. The collection contains photographs and portraits of some of them. A number of members completed 'Family Record Forms' in order to build up valuable eugenic evidence. Family histories and pedigrees of gifted families, such as the Terry-Guieguds and the Wedgewoods, were sometimes made into colourful banners for display, which are also preserved in the collection.

Various organisations and committees had dealings with the Society: the Association for Social and Moral Hygiene, the National Birth Control Association (subsequently the Family Planning Association), the International

Union of Family Organisations, the National Council of Women, the People's League of Health, the Voluntary Euthanasia Legalisation Society, and the Pioneer Health Centre, amongst others. Records of these contacts show up in the collection. Links with other branches of the Society in the UK and overseas also appear in the correspondence, especially those in America, Australia and India. Separate sections of the collection contain papers relating to Henry Twitchin and the Twitchin Bequest, Sir Bernard Mallett, the Marie Stopes Memorial Fund and Dr G C Bertram.

Access to the collection is granted to those who have obtained the prior written permission of the General Secretary, Galton Institute (the name adopted by the Eugenics Society in 1988), and by appointment with the CMAC Archivist.

(See Lesley Hall, 'The Eugenics Society in the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre', *Medical History*, 1990, 34, 327-333)

Marie Stopes

The bulk of Marie Stopes's papers are to be found at the British Library to which she bequeathed them. The staff there extracted the papers they considered worth preserving, which included her correspondence with politicians, literary figures, doctors, publishers, and many eminent people. Whilst this made up a very large collection (324 volumes), it only included a small sample of the many letters which Stopes received from the general public and readers of her works.

It was this material which her son, Harry Stopes-Roe, offered to the CMAC in 1979. The Stopes material in the Wellcome Institute is smaller in bulk (70 boxes), but has proved to be of wide interest to historians for attitudes and beliefs surrounding sexuality, reproduction and related issues in the first half of the twentieth century. Stopes clearly felt that her importance merited her own papers being housed in a national library. However, the development of an interest in 'history from below' since her death in 1958 has been reflected in changes in libraries' and other repositories' acquisitions policies. From this point of view the CMAC Stopes papers, which include much material written by 'ordinary' people, have proved of enormous value and the collection is well used, indeed possibly more so than her papers at the British Library.

The CMAC collection consists of correspondence (c.1915-57), mainly letters of enquiry from readers of her work, *Married Love*, in many cases including carbon copies of her replies. There are also separate series of correspondence with the medical profession, the clergy, international contacts etc, as well as Stopes's stock reply letters.

(See the article on the collection in the *Society for the Social History of Medicine Bulletin*, 1983, 32, 50-51.)

The National Birthday Trust Fund

It is rare for as complete an archive series as that of the NBTF to survive. To a large extent this was due to the zeal and energy of Mrs D V Riddick, its Secretary from 1939-1972. Another significant factor is that from 1933 until 1988, the NBTF was housed in the same building. A researcher using the collection in 1986 found that the records were virtually inaccessible, having been stored in a cupboard under the stairs in the basement. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists invited the CMAC to join in discussions about what should be done with the archive. It was decided that the CMAC should take it and in July 1987 the bulk of the records were moved to the Wellcome Institute and Penny Baker began cataloguing the collection with the generous assistance of a grant from the NBTF. The list was completed in June 1988.

The archive is large: 200 boxes plus additional oversize items, the list and index for which runs to 117 pages. The records are invaluable for research into maternity services and medical aspects of childbirth in this century. Apart from minutes and committee papers the collection contains typical records of AGMs, accounts, administration, and correspondence with members, organisations and individuals. The charity needed money for its various activities, and the archive contains much material relating to fund-raising activities.

During the 1930s, through the Joint Council on Midwifery, the NBTF conducted extensive surveys on the benefits of antenatal care and nutrition and an important survey of abortion practices. After World War II, it funded research, contributed to several governmental reports on maternity provision, and organized surveys including the Perinatal Mortality Survey of 1958, the administrative records of which are in the archive. The NBTF merged with

Birthright in 1993. Further papers of Lady Rhys-Williams, one of the NBTF's founder members have recently been given to the CMAC.

(See Penny Baker, 'The NBTF records in the CMAC' *Medical History*, 1989, 33, 489-494.

A commissioned history of the NBTF is currently being written by Susan Williams.)

Grantly Dick-Read

In 1981 the Wellcome Institute was approached by Dr Dick-Read's literary executor, Laurence Pollinger Ltd, about the possibility of housing a large collection of his papers and books, which were in a warehouse in Chichester. They had been in store for some 20 years. After a preliminary visit with Mrs Jessica Dick-Read (Grantly Dick-Read's widow), the books and papers were initially sorted through. One unfortunate gap in the collection that was revealed was the absence of a copy of his classic work *Natural Childbirth* (1933). Many of the non-medical books were subsequently sold, and a percentage of the documentation which was in very poor physical condition was discarded. A final list of the papers was prepared by March 1985.

After weeding out duplicates, ephemera, routine correspondence, financial records, proofs and corrections, the collection ended up occupying 64 boxes. With the exception of the files of correspondence from mothers and doctors on natural childbirth (a useful source for the study of obstetric theories and practice during the period 1932-59), there was virtually no order in the papers as they were found. Part of the archival work was, therefore, a matter of creating categories in which to organize the material: personal and biographical; medical; publishing, press, lectures, films, tours; etc, natural childbirth correspondence; legal and business; works by others were the headings chosen. Some evident gaps in the collection are probably explained by the numerous moves which Dick-Read made during his career.

The Family Planning Association

The archive of the FPA is the largest single collection held by the CMAC, currently occupying some 333 feet of shelving, with an additional 144 feet of non-current records to be incorporated in several years time.

Work had been done on this collection prior to its move to the CMAC, with a large typed catalogue being compiled in the 1970s. The original introduction to this list has been incorporated in our revised list as an appendix,

since it describes the content of the archive, the work done on it, and its physical moves and condition. Such background information is invaluable to historians wishing to understand how records have survived in the state and arrangement in which they are found. The records had moved about considerably, reflecting the many changes of address and amalgamations of organisations which made up the FPA. Their transference as a gift to the Wellcome Institute Library will, it is hoped, provide them with a more permanent home.

The FPA repeatedly faced the problem of where to store its archives, and following discussions in 1988, it was decided that they should be housed at the CMAC. It was agreed that the FPA should finance a records management survey of their post-1974 records. In order to accept the collection, some 300 feet of shelf space had to be found in the Wellcome Institute Library store. It was felt that in spite of the large commitment involved, this archive was of great historical importance and would complement other related collections already in the CMAC (notably the papers of Marie Stopes, Dr E F Griffith, Helena Wright, the Abortion Law Reform Association, the Birth Control Campaign and the Eugenics Society). The papers of Caspar Brook (Director of the FPA 1968 -1974) were also transferred and subsequently integrated into the FPA archive.

Following the move of the records in August 1988, a professional archivist, Penny Baker, was appointed, who initially undertook the survey and made recommendations about the files at the FPA offices. By June 1989 the files for the years 1976-88 were ready for transfer to the CMAC; a final report on the survey of the FPA records was completed in March 1990. Two major archival problems connected with the collection were how best to deal with the variable quality of the existing list and how to integrate more recent files into the FPA list. Once a collection has been consulted and reference numbers cited in publications, it is obviously preferable not to re-number items. On the other hand, using a list which has endless separate sections into which later accessions are incorporated is also very confusing. The decision was made to retain, when possible, the old reference numbers and if necessary make cross-references within the list. The new two-volume catalogue, representing some 250 hours work, was completed in June 1992. The next task is to integrate the more recent records from the period 1976-1988.

The FPA is a large and active body producing considerable numbers of records. Consequently, the CMAC archivists could not have found the time to undertake the extensive cataloguing work required to make the archive easy to consult. At the same time, even fairly large organisations cannot always justify the employment of a permanent archivist. The compromise arrangement adopted in this case, in which the Wellcome Institute planned and supervised work partially financed by the FPA, has much to recommend it.

The Abortion Law Reform Association

The question of abortion, like that of contraception, has raised much debate. One material consequence of this is that vast amounts of correspondence, ephemera and other papers on the subject are produced. Any suggestion that the passing of the Abortion Act in 1968 would end the work of the ALRA must soon have been seen as risible. Since then, it has been active in making sure that the Act is implemented and not restricted, as well as playing an important role in the broader discussion of the whole issue.

The archives of this pressure group were, from 1971, housed in the Institute of Medical Sociology, Aberdeen, where one of the main activists for the 1968 Act, Professor Raymond Illsley, was based. Quite where they had been stored prior to this is uncertain, presumably with the Secretaries and others who worked for the Association, and later with Vera Houghton, Chairman of ALRA from 1963. At his retirement in 1982, Professor Illsley suggested that the archive might best be preserved on a long-term basis at the Wellcome Institute.

From 1963 the work of the ALRA increased dramatically, and this is reflected in the relative quantities of surviving records. The original list compiled at the Institute of Medical Sociology forms the basis of Section A of the CMAC revised list. Sections B-H cover the further records handed over to ALRA since 1980: papers of Madeleine Simms; Dame Josephine Barnes's papers from the Lane Committee; press cuttings; reports of the Brook Advisory Centres; and a supplementary series of papers.

The archive is complemented by several other collections in the CMAC including records of the Birth Control Campaign, the Birth Control Trust and the National Abortion Campaign. Although at present the CMAC does not hold any archives collections from the pro-life lobby, it would be pleased

to do so, since historians of the topic will inevitably want to consult relevant primary source material from all sides of the debate. However, those archives which are held by the CMAC do already contain some literature produced by pro-life groups as well as sympathetic press coverage.

JULIA SHEPPARD

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