‘Silenced, Suppressed and Passive’? A Refocused History of Lanarkshire Women, 1920-1939

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Declaration of Author's Rights

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the impact that mass unemployment had on the lives of women living in Lanarkshire's industrial towns and villages during the interwar years. Before the onset of the Depression, Lanarkshire was renowned for its distinctive male identity, with women being only marginally involved in the public world of work and politics. However, the closure of many of Lanarkshire's collieries and steel and iron works during the interwar period threatened the gender 'norms' upon which community life was based. Thus, the issue at the centre of this work is the extent to which gender and power relations within the family, but also in the wider community, were altered by the experience of the Depression.

It is argued that the Depression facilitated the increased presence of women in the public sphere, with many wives and mothers attempting to make social welfare concerns, such as housing and child health care provision, high profile issues. Moreover, as male unemployment reached unprecedented levels, women often found themselves in the position of being the new 'providers'. Thus, the chapters in this thesis will examine women in relation to the family economy, popular culture, paid employment and public protest.

This thesis attempts a 'reshaping' of Lanarkshire's interwar history by analysing the subject in terms of gender and gender identities. Most research on industrial communities during the Depression has tended to be viewed solely from a male perspective and has focused on the intricacies of industrial decline, the fortunes of the trade union movements and the miners' strikes of the 1920s. By investigating the private world of the family, as well as the public issue of welfare politics, this thesis restores women to the analysis, while challenging the conventional historiography that has classified women as being 'silenced, suppressed and passive'.

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LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

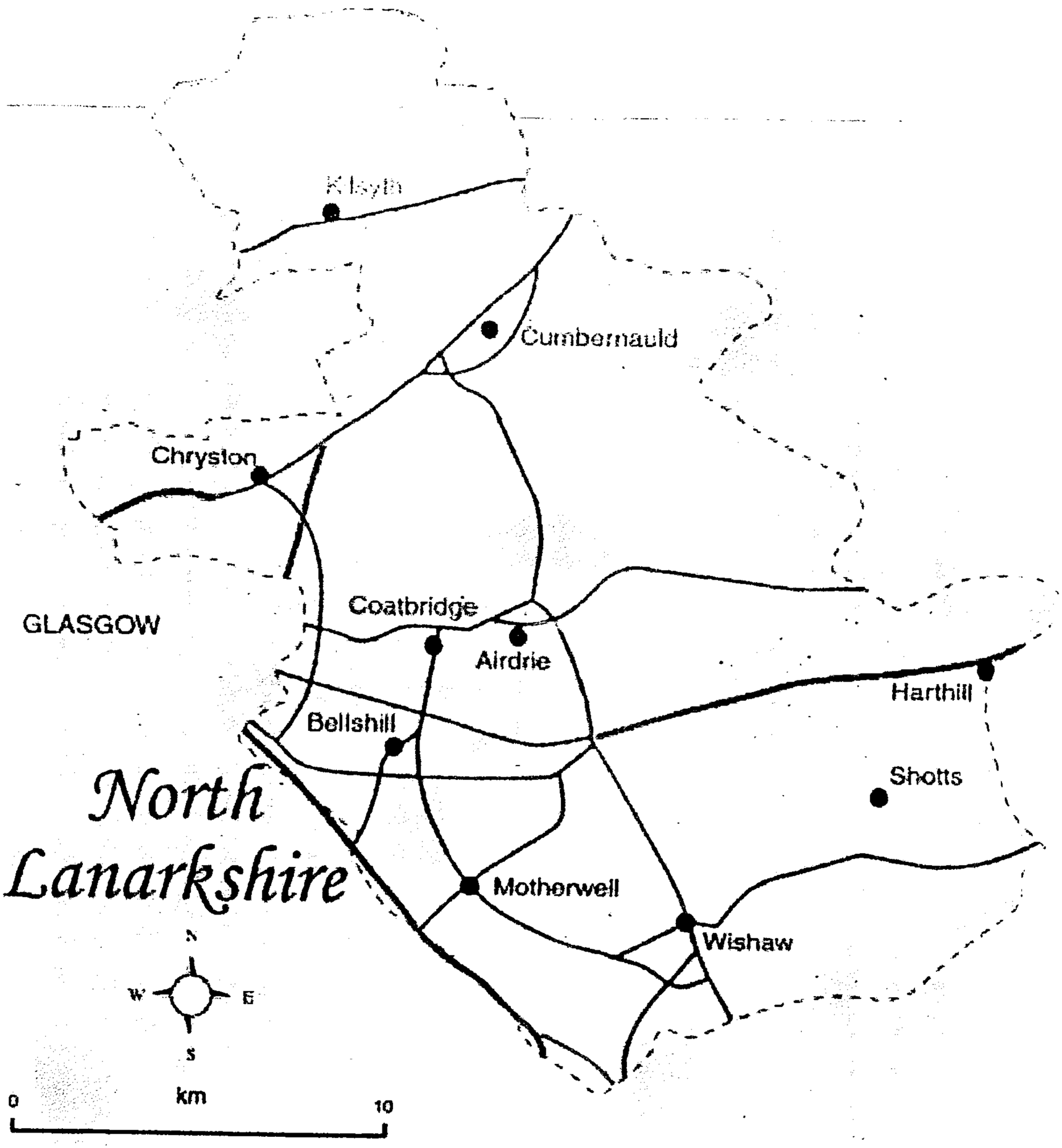
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BWTA	British Women's Temperance Association
DUL	Durham University Library
GCCA	Glasgow City Council Archives
GCUA	Glasgow Caledonian University Archives
GGHBA	Greater Glasgow Health Board Archives
GUAS	Glasgow University Archive Services
HCL	Hamilton Central Library
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IOGT	Independent Order of Good Templars
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LMPU	Lanarkshire Medical Practitioners' Union
MHC	Motherwell Heritage Centre
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MPL	Methil Public Library
NA	National Archives
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLCA	North Lanarkshire Council Archives
NUWM	National Unemployed Workers' Movement
SBA	Scottish Brewing Archive
SCWG	Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild
SLCA	South Lanarkshire Council Archives
SOHCA	Scottish Oral History Centre Archive
UMS	United Mineworkers of Scotland

MAP OF NORTH LANARKSHIRE

The map below shows the locations of the main towns and villages mentioned in this thesis.

N.B. The map illustrates the modern local authority jurisdiction of North Lanarkshire Council, outlining the boundaries that have been in existence since the most recent local authority reorganisation of 1996.

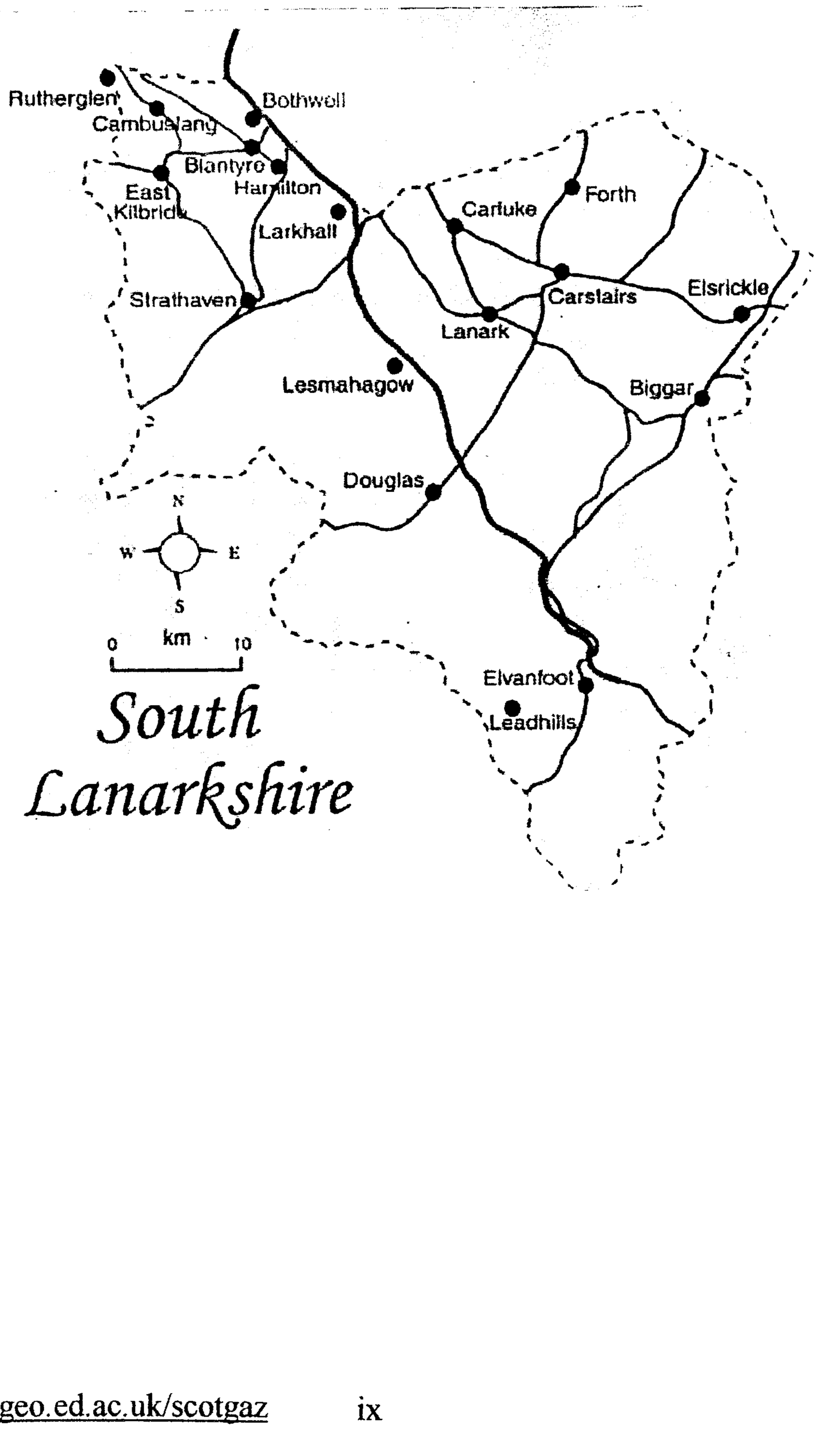


Source: www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz

MAP OF SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

The map below shows the locations of the main towns and villages mentioned in this thesis.

N.B. The map illustrates the modern local authority jurisdiction of South Lanarkshire Council, outlining the boundaries that have been in existence since the most recent local authority reorganisation of 1996.



Source: www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

> Lively street scenes were witnessed around the Cross and Brandon Street last night when there was another march of the workless … numbering some three or four thousands the marchers set their faces downhill marching in columns of fours and keeping good order in their ranks. Women were prominent among the marchers and despite the undoubted difficulties many of them experienced under the Means Test, they yet presented a cheery front.[1]

The 'lively street scenes' reported above were witnessed in and around the Lanarkshire town of Motherwell in March 1933. Demonstrations were by no means unusual in Lanarkshire during the interwar period, nor was the involvement of women in such public and open displays of protest. Despite this, accounts of the period have continued to characterise working-class women as 'victims weighed down by poverty, children and violent men, unable to exert any control over their daily lives'.[2] It will be the purpose of this thesis to challenge such enduring images, by investigating the impact that mass unemployment had on the lives of women living in Lanarkshire's industrial towns and villages during the interwar years.

The area at the time was renowned for its distinctive male identity. In terms of demographics, males outnumbered females at every census from 1841 to 1931, which was in marked contrast to Scotland as a whole.[3] Lanarkshire owed its development, its politics and its character to industries in which women were only marginally involved. The culture of the local coal, iron and steel industries had accentuated the supremacy of the male breadwinner over the female, which in turn defined femininity as something to be sustained within the home.

The close links between work and culture, but also work and identity, in industrial communities have been advanced by many writers. For example, as Howard discovered in his study of the autobiographies of miners and miners' wives, the information contained within these texts 'points to work and the organisation and conditions of work

as the primary conditioner of consciousness, since the pit is almost always the mechanism through which the subject is identified and defined'.[4] Similarly, in investigating the impact of mass unemployment on three working-class localities between the wars, Macintyre identified a situation where 'the wage earning role of the husband and the domestic duties of the wife' had given 'rise to an oppressively masculine definition of the public sphere, and pushed the female to the margins of organised collective activity'.[5]

Just as women gathered their models of womanhood from a variety of sources and had societal norms and values to aspire to, men were also confronted with 'ideals' relating to masculinity.[6] Mary Murphy identified in her recent study of the copper mining city of Butte, Montana, that between the wars 'working-class masculinity or manliness was intimately related to work and its skills, to camaraderie and to the quality of "toughness"'.[7] Men had to be physically and mentally tough to withstand the rigours involved in such heavy work. However, Murphy noted that in the 1920s these notions of manliness were 'joined by new, less work-related models of masculinity. Increasingly, public attention was devoted to men's roles as father and husband, to notions of marriage based on companionship'.[8] H. V. Morton made such observations with regards to the connections between work and identity in his account of a visit to a Motherwell steel plant in 1929:

> I went into an enormous city of steel. They told me how many miles of railway track it contained, but I have forgotten… I could see only the drama of Man, with his soft little body and his puny white arms, torturing this terrible metal into life, heating it until it screamed …. Men stood at the mouth of furnaces with long rakes, like devils at the mouth of hell.
>
> Steel workers at home are probably kind to their children and to their wives. They probably love dogs and grow vegetables. There is nothing human about them at work …

> on their faces is the sweat of heat and in their casual bearing the contempt of familiarity.[9]

The image of the male breadwinner as sole provider for his dependant wife and children was one of the most powerful images used not only to represent but also to justify the 'gendering' of the public and the private spheres.[10] This could be seen with regards to waged labour. The public world of work remained highly patriarchal, and agencies like the Scottish Trade Union movement failed to challenge the 'prevailing system of gender apartheid'.[11] As has been argued in studies by Hurstfield and McKibbin, the state also played an important role in marginalising the significance of female unemployment.[12] It was the popular view that unemployment struck at men's identities as workers, while women were affected primarily as wives and mothers. Many interwar surveys focused upon the psychological distress suffered by men who lost the weekly routines and personal satisfactions associated with work. On the other hand, it was assumed that unemployment did not significantly alter women's everyday lives and that they simply carried on with their daily routines within the privacy of the home.[13] The fact that women have been so openly excluded from contemporary studies of industrial communities has only served to perpetuate such false ideas.

It can be argued that the First World War also played a significant part in shaping the gender discourses that characterised the interwar period. Susan Kingsley Kent has contended that the 'blurring of gender lines occasioned by the upheaval of war and the social and economic disorder that followed' led many in society to see in a 're-establishment of sexual difference the means to create a semblance of order'.[14] As cited by Wodak, a definitive ideal of womanhood permeated politics and society, with attempts being made to re-establish and orchestrate the behaviour of females through the categorisation of women as 'exalted housewives and mothers', confined to a private sphere.[15] Indeed, as Breitenbach and Gordon have shown, middle-class ideals of housewifery and domestic economy were still being used to police working-class women in the 1930s.[16] However, the gender discourses of the interwar period were largely incompatible with the economic realities of many working-class people's lives. This was because the 'male breadwinner norm was fictional in many, perhaps most,

working-class families because of the low pay, unemployment, disability or absence of an adult male'.[17]

The industrial communities of Lanarkshire were representative of the problems, both social and economic, that the Depression caused at a local level. The Lanarkshire economy was based almost entirely on the manufacture of steel and iron, and the mining of coal. The development of mining in Lanarkshire had occurred over three distinct periods. Extensive mining of fossil fuel did not begin until the 1830s, although domestic coal had been used for centuries. In each decade after 1830, new districts witnessed the transformation brought about by more intensive and larger scale mining operations. Between the 1830s and 1840s, mining centred on the triangle of Coatbridge, Airdrie and Holytown. It then moved outwards to Motherwell and Wishaw in the 1840s and 1850s.

It was also in the 1850s that Motherwell became a centre of the malleable iron industry, with David Colville proceeding to open the Dalzell works in the town in 1872.[18] The period of expansion continued into the 1870s, with large collieries being opened in the Hamilton, Larkhall, Blantyre and Cambuslang districts. By the early 1870s, and the end of this first phase of development, the western coalfields were producing some 80% of all Scottish coal.[19]

The next phase in the industry's development in Lanarkshire lasted from the 1870s until World War One. During this period the tonnage mined and the numbers employed in the Scottish coal industry roughly doubled.[20] Lanarkshire's population increased substantially during this phase of development. For example, in 1871 the combined population of Motherwell and Wishaw had been 17,511, but by 1911 it had risen to 65,643, a four-fold increase.[21] At the same time, however, there was a move towards the more intensive exploitation of the eastern coalfields. Indeed, whereas in 1870 the west central field produced 80% of Scotland's coal, in 1913 this had been cut back to just over half the total by the astonishing growth of the eastern coalfields.[22] Nevertheless, by 1910, 220 of Scotland's 499 collieries remained in Lanarkshire.[23]

The final phase, which is the subject of this study, constituted the twenty years after 1918, and was one of massive decline. Scotland's economy in the interwar era experienced insurmountable structural problems that owed something to the legacy of the First World War itself, but which owed much more to changing conditions in domestic and world markets. The result of these deleterious trends was a contraction in the size of the textiles, shipbuilding, coalmining and iron and steel industries and the emergence of mass unemployment 'which cast baleful shadows across the strongholds of heavy industry in the west central belt'.[24] It was due to these problems being structural, rather than cyclical in nature, that they affected the heavy industries disproportionately to the rest of the economy.[25]

Lanarkshire, particularly north Lanarkshire, was most affected by structural unemployment, although cyclical influences increased the proportion of the population out of work between 1931 and 1935 to one third.[26] Indeed, Motherwell and Wishaw experienced unemployment rates of 49% and 53% respectively during late 1932 and early 1933.[27] An additional problem was that many of the area's workable seams were exhausted; fresh iron ore and supplies of high grade coke were no longer available.[28] As a result of this, and changing managerial strategies, coal production contracted by 28% between 1929 and 1932.[29]

Consolidation in the steel industry between 1933 and 1937 was also responsible for increasing unemployment. By 1936 Colville controlled over 90% of Scottish steel capacity but this concentration of ownership was accompanied by a closure of old plants in Lanarkshire. The 'Steelopolis' of Motherwell particularly suffered from this trend, with the Globe Works plant and Brandon Bridge Company closing in 1931 and 1933 respectively. The Motherwell Iron and Steel Company closed its gates in 1934.[30] A further complication encountered by the local iron industry was that its obsolescent blast furnaces could no longer compete with the more modern English and continental models.[31]

The government was aware of the particular problems that faced industrial areas like Lanarkshire. In real terms more money was being spent on Poor Law provision in the

1930s than had been the case in the 1890s. For example, in 1934, 9% of the Scottish population was dependant on poor relief, whereas in 1890 the figure had stood at 2%.[32] It was due to statistics such as these that the government was forced to appoint commissioners to identify the most depressed areas in Britain and advise on what may be done to help them. The Depressed Areas Bill was presented to Parliament in November 1934, with the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act being passed a month later.

Under the terms of the act, England and Wales were represented by one commissioner, Sir Malcolm Stewart, and Scotland came under the charge of the businessman, Sir Arthur Rose.[33] Not all areas in Scotland, for example Glasgow and Edinburgh, were brought under the jurisdiction of the Act but Lanarkshire was given the dubious distinction of being classed as one of the 'Special' areas that was in need of assistance. The government took the optimistic view that the 'temporary difficulties' of the depressed regions would be 'significantly eased by the timely intervention of its newly appointed commissioners'.[34] However, in Special areas like Lanarkshire and Durham the Commissioners proved unable to develop any fundamentally new approach to the problem of chronic regional unemployment.

The starkness of the situation facing Lanarkshire was not lost on any of its residents. In 1933, the *Motherwell Times* printed an article under the banner 'Are Our Local Collieries Doomed?'[35] By that date the impact of closures, further mechanisation and job rationalisation had accounted for the loss of 3000 jobs in Motherwell's mining industry alone. The closure of pits in the neighbouring villages of Bellshill, Orbiston, Cleland and Carfin was responsible for many more redundancies.[36] This was the region's first experience of modern unemployment and life on the dole. In the past, unemployment had been a phenomenon that might be expected to recur from time to time but which would always alternate with far longer spells of work. For many, this was no longer the case.[37]

Historiography

The Depression in Britain has traditionally been understood within a 'standard of living' framework. Perspectives have fallen into two categories; the 'pessimists' who claim that the period is best remembered as a time of massive unemployment and falling living standards;[38] and the 'optimists' or 'revisionists' who are drawn towards evidence of positive social and economic changes in the lives of the mass of the population.[39] Indeed, A.J.P. Taylor summarised the issue contested by those people researching the period when he asked, 'which was more significant for the future – over a million unemployed or over a million private cars?'[40]

There are various problems associated with assessing the Depression within a standard of living framework, from either the pessimistic or revisionist points of view. The most obvious criticism that can be levelled at such an approach is that, in attempting to identify numerical trends and categorise groups of people, it oversimplifies the period. Indeed, few generalisations can be made about the Scottish experience of the 'Devil's decades'[41], let alone the British one. As T.C. Smout argued, an individual's experience of the Depression depended on 'who you were, where you lived, and whether the shadow of unemployment fell on your life or passed you by'.[42]

While the total size of the labour force in coalmining contracted in Lanarkshire by 55% between the wars, for example, the service-based economies of Aberdeen and Edinburgh escaped the worst effects of economic depression.[43] Moreover, as A.D. Campbell argued, figures taken between 1924 and 1948 indicate that Scottish real incomes rose as a whole by about 40%, half of that coming in the Depression, and half thereafter.[44] The middle classes in Scotland benefited particularly from this trend, as rarely more than 5.5% of them were unemployed during the thirties.[45] As these figures show, national statistics and surveys were, and remain, incapable of creating a complete portrayal of how the Depression impaired local economies and communities. Indeed, little consideration has been given to what Harvie called the 'unlovely "third Scotland", sprawled from South Ayrshire to Fife … neither much liked nor at all well known … lacking city facilities or country traditions'.[46]

When historians have chosen to analyse the interwar period using a 'community' model, however, the approach has not been without its problems. For example, most of what has been written about coal mining communities has been very limited in focus. There has been an over-concentration on the intricacies of industrial decline, the fortunes of the trade union movement and the failures of the miners' strikes of the 1920s, as best demonstrated in the work of Arnot, Church and Supple.[47] The issues that have gained recognition could be classed as being specifically male in nature, a problem that has affected most studies of mining areas, regardless of time and place.

Sociologists, such as Bulmer and Salaman, have also attempted to analyse mining regions within a community context. Bulmer recognised how ties of loyalty and a sense of community bound many people who lived in mining districts to each other. He viewed them as being 'separate' communities with 'their own myths, heroes and social standards'.[48] Such findings complement sociological models of the 'occupational community', whose members Salaman defined as being 'affected by their work in such a way that their non-work lives are permeated by their work relationships, interests and values'.[49] However, focusing on the 'masculine' domain of work fails to explain the role or experiences of women living within industrially-based communities.

This was recognised by Ronald Frankenberg in his critique of accounts of mining communities, with him observing that most have internalised the 'male miners' eye view' at the expense of women who lived within the same social groups.[50] Indeed, while most contemporary works of social history have attempted to include women, a criticism that could be levelled at studies of industrial communities is that women are still 'tagged on, not integrated into the overall understanding of a society or even its parts'.[51]

Angela V. John directed such criticisms at coalmining history as it stood almost twenty years ago, and unfortunately her concerns have yet to be rectified:

> In this field women have been accorded only scant attention. Not only have they been ignored as waged

workers … but even in the many districts where they did not work at the pit, their position has tended to be viewed solely in terms of the wife's "back-up support" for the male miner …. Instead of being incorporated into a pre-defined andocentric structure of mining history, approaching the subject by and through female perspective can begin to help the reshaping of that history itself. [52]

This thesis will attempt a 'reshaping' of Lanarkshire's interwar history by disregarding the various stereotypes that surround the concept of the industrial community. Analysis of the subject will be approached in terms of gender and gender identities, something that has been missing from previous accounts of Lanarkshire. For example, Alan Campbell has conducted extensive research on the Scottish coal industry during the early twentieth century, including parts of Lanarkshire, (though not specifically on the Depression), with his objective being to '… reconstruct the social and labour history of an important body of workers' i.e. men.[53] However, Campbell's approach, like that of Paul Brook Long, has over-concentrated on the experiences of the male breadwinner, while failing to discuss family power structures and gender relations.[54] This work will address this imbalance by restoring women to the analysis.

Recognition must be given to the 125,000 adult women in Lanarkshire who had no career under normal economic conditions and whose experience of the Depression was not one of dole queues and the 'buroo'.* When a man became unemployed he was faced with the problems of a loss of occupation and responsibility, but precisely the opposite difficulty was presented to his wife, or in some cases, daughter or sister. She was called upon to carry out her domestic responsibilities with less money and in many cases she had to find some way of earning money to keep the family. This has been substantiated in the work of Ross, Roberts and Tebbutt.[55] They have argued that women's networks and survival strategies were of crucial importance to many working-class families, and that the efforts of these 'sub-penny capitalists', as John Benson christened them, should not be forgotten.[56]

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* Employment Exchange

Thus, a common theme running through this work is the interdependence that existed between women, families and communities. In Lanarkshire, as in many industrial areas at that time, people formed allegiances to their town or village, much of which was based on a shared sense of place and experience.[57] These ties of loyalty were best demonstrated during times of crisis, with the Stanrigg Pit disaster of 1918 providing a powerful example. On 9 July 1918, at the Stanrigg Colliery in New Monklands, Lanarkshire, nineteen men and boys lost their lives when they were 'entombed by an inrush of moss, the bog-like soil which covered the pit workings'. The youngest victim, Bernard McAdams was just fourteen and the eldest, John Queen, was sixty-six.[58] However, until the bodies of all the miners had been recovered, most members of the small mining community gathered together and held a vigil beside the pit:

> Work without remission by night and day, was continued for nearly a week and relatives in some cases never left the scene and the enormous crowd of human beings seemed to increase rather than decrease. Sympathy and willingness to help, more than morbid curiosity, was the prevailing mood. [59]

As was the case in many such communities following industrial accidents, people felt obliged to help the families of the victims. Thus, a 'disaster fund' was established in Stanrigg to assist the many women and children who had been affected. For over a decade the fund helped the fourteen households that had lost male breadwinners as a result of the disaster. For example, a Mrs Brady, who lost her husband and an eighteen year old son in the accident, was provided with the money to help her and her seven young children to emigrate to Canada. She continued to receive money from the fund while living in Canada. May Queen, an illegitimate child who was being cared for by her grandfather before he was killed in the mining disaster, was given financial assistance by the fund until she reached adulthood.[60] The actions of the people of Stanrigg showed the ways in which the precarious and dangerous nature of the mining industry forged links between neighbours and bound entire communities together.

In his study of British unemployment between the wars, Garside noted how coal miners and their families had a 'strong, almost immutable, tradition of local community'.[61] Indeed, Garside found that attempts by the government to relocate unemployed miners to more prosperous regions of the country, where they had a greater chance of gaining work, ultimately failed:

> In coalmining districts the strongly developed sense of home and community proved an enduring obstacle. Miners saw little point in seeking an opening in an unfamiliar industry and locale …. Between 40 and 50% of persons transferred from Lancashire, South Wales and Scotland during the period 1928-31 had subsequently returned home.[62]

Joanna Bourke has discussed the meanings of 'community' within the context of 'twentieth century histories of Britain', in her book *Working-class Cultures in Britain 1890-1939*. She argued that, in general, a community is said to 'include elements of identification with a particular neighbourhood or street, a sense of shared perspectives and reciprocal dependency'.[63] This model is more inclusive than that of the occupational community, as it does not hide from view those who did not gain their identity solely through work, i.e. women. As Bourke has shown, in the early twentieth century the 'culture of poverty' contributed to the creation of a sense of community among the working classes. Indeed, 'community consciousness was a strategy for coping with low and unpredictable incomes'.[64]

The most powerful factor at the centre of community relationships was gender. Some authors have demonstrated how gender could have a direct impact on a person's experience of work, leisure and even poverty. For example, in his study of working-class culture in Salford and Manchester from 1900-1939, Andrew Davies argued that poverty affected family members in different ways. Women were less likely to have money available to spend on leisure, indicating that women's living standards were

significantly lower than those of their husbands. Moreover, he felt that any examination of male leisure patterns had important implications for understanding power relations within the family in the early decades of the twentieth century.[65] Davies found that access to commercial leisure was structured by both gender and poverty. For men, poverty and unemployment regulated access to the male domains of public houses and football terraces, while for women 'leisure was constrained by convention as well as by shortages of time and money'.[66] Both men and women faced pressure to limit their spending on leisure for the sake of the family economy during times of increased hardship, but as Davies notes, tensions were heightened by heavy spending on drink and gambling by male 'breadwinners'.[67]

Most writers have recognised that gender had a direct impact on women's experiences of paid employment in the early decades of the twentieth century but the personal value that work held for women has traditionally been a highly contested topic. In the 1970s and 1980s Elizabeth Roberts argued that domestic ideology grew stronger among working-class women from the 1840s, culminating in 'a full flowering' during the interwar period. She concluded that women worked because of financial necessity and their ambition was to stop work and to be at home.[68]

Such views have come under increasing criticism in recent years.[69] For example, Stephenson and Brown challenged the notion that working-class women only derived their identity from domestic life and regarded work as a negative or peripheral experience. They concluded, as part of their research on women's memories of work in Stirling, that:

> In the pre-1939 context, in which proletarian women's access to leisure and sports was restricted, work was a crucial part of women's popular culture because the workplace provided almost the only venue in which it could develop.[70]

Similarly, McIvor has suggested that the prevailing image of a quiescent female

labour force is a mythical one and that 'work assumed a wide variety of forms and meant different things to different individuals, depending partly on social class, age, race and the region in which they resided'.[71] This concurs with Devine's argument that although 'it is tempting to paint the experience of women in the interwar period in dark colours ... women at the time did not see their lives in such negative terms'.[72] Women took on demanding and fulfilling responsibilities, including bringing up several children, keeping their homes clean and tidy and managing tight household budgets. Moreover, Devine suggests that, although some might see women as 'ghetto-ized' in the home and in poorly paid jobs, 'oral evidence suggests that groups as varied as domestic servants, shop assistants, seamstresses, teachers and nurses derived considerable satisfaction and pride from their work'.[73]

While much remains to be written about women's experiences of work, poverty and leisure in Lanarkshire, there has been some research conducted in relation to other industrial regions of Britain. Ann McGuckin highlighted the experiences of working-class women living in Glasgow's Blackhill housing estate during the 1930s.[74] She was interested in the everyday experiences of the women, most of whom were desperately poor. McGuckin found that they provided each other with mutual support and this collective self-help was employed as a means of defence against poverty and the insidious threat of eviction if rent payments were not maintained. Anderson and Jamieson, in their studies of family life in Scotland during the early twentieth century, have produced similar findings.[75] They found that women often formed mutually supportive networks in a joint struggle to do the best for their children and their families.

The work of Annemarie Hughes has directed attention towards the position of women on Clydeside during the interwar period, 'and the complex inter-relationship between different forms of working-class feminisms and behaviour'.[76] For example, through their active involvement in the Independent Labour Party, women tried to make welfare issues a political concern. However, in keeping with the pre-war ideal of womanhood, 'the identification of women's practical politics as "personal" rather than "public"' continued.[77] Indeed, Hughes has suggested that such 'sexual antagonism' was

the result of a situation on Clydeside where, owing to the extremities of the Depression, masculinity was in 'crisis'.[78] The actions of women on Clydeside gives credence to the appraisal that Breitenbach and Gordon applied to women in Scottish society in general during the same period. They argued that, despite Scottish society in the early twentieth century being 'exceptionally male dominated', the characterisation is problematic as it seems to give rise too easily to the assumption that women were 'silenced, suppressed and passive'.[79] Indeed, the participation of women in formal and informal workplace and community struggles has generally been ignored in Scottish accounts of the Depression, a situation that this thesis will attempt to rectify.

The exact nature of 'power relations' within working-class families and communities during the early twentieth century has aroused the interest of historians. This is despite the assertion by the anthropologists, Dennis et al, in their influential study *Coal is Our Life* that:

> It is not relevant in connexion with a study of family life to describe in detail the activities of men. The wife, after all, is essentially confined to the home and family, so that her activities are always directly relevant to the functions of family life. The significant aspect of the husband's participation in social life is its isolation from his family.[80]

It has been contended in other studies, however, that men and women were not isolated from each other in such a strict sense, despite the phenomenon of public and private spheres. Within the working-class family 'the husband's steadiness and capacity to earn were not more important than the wife's administration of the earnings'.[81] Indeed, the historiography of the Depression has seen the emergence of a debate surrounding the important role of women as 'household managers' and the ways in which it affected power relations within the family.[82] Some writers have viewed the role of household manager as being one that actually empowered women. In Roberts' studies of Lancaster during the early decades of the twentieth century, she attempted to record the hidden lives of ordinary working-class women, through the use of extensive

oral testimony. In doing this she stressed the importance of recognising the power which women exercised by virtue of their central role within the family economy. Moreover, the existence of two spheres of labour was acceptable to many housewives because it was seen as a 'way of increasing their power over their own lives and the lives of their families'.[83] An important way in which many women gained status during the Depression was by competently managing scarce resources.

Bourke recognised behaviour similar to that noted above in her study of the changing nature of women's economic roles in Ireland. She found that, as there were few employment opportunities for women, they were compelled to maximise their possible economic contribution by focusing their energies on domestic work within the family home as a way of increasing their bargaining power.[84] As has been discussed by Thane, women in the labour movement between the wars also came to acknowledge the power and control that women could potentially wield within the home. Labour women 'sought a feminism which valued rather than devalued the home and maternal experience of women without simultaneously devaluing women's paid labour'. They came to see 'the home … as potentially a base for the empowerment of women rather than as necessarily the source of their inescapable bondage'.[85]

Not all historians, however, have seen interwar domesticity as being an empowering experience for women. Jan Lambertz and Pat Ayers applied a method similar to that of Elizabeth Roberts in their studies of Liverpool, as indeed did Ellen Ross in her investigation of working-class communities in London before the First World War.[86] In contrast to Roberts, they have taken a more conflictual view of family relationships, seeing women's responsibilities for managing household finances in terms of a domestic burden imposed upon women, rather than as a source of power. In their examination of family economy they drew attention to the importance of the allocation of resources within the family and provided evidence of profound inequalities in living standards, which were structured by gender roles.

Methodology

The fact that little secondary material exists with regards to women's lives during the Depression means that the researcher must turn to alternative sources in order to 'rediscover' their stories. Rendall wrote in 1991 that 'very rich source material exists from which the history of women in Scotland might be written' but owing to the 'conservatism of academic establishments' these materials had yet to be fully exploited.[87] Such a situation still exists in this new millennium in relation to Scottish gender history and, when the situation is brought down to a regional level, the need for more research becomes even clearer. In order to tell the story of women living in Lanarkshire between the wars, this work has been based on a methodological approach that combines the use of conventional documentary sources with retrospective testimonies gathered through oral history interviews. The oral testimonies have proven essential for the completion of this investigation into the nature of family life and gender relations in Lanarkshire between the wars.

The problems associated with using oral testimonies as an historical source have been well documented elsewhere.[88] 'Conventional' historians have often regarded oral testimonies as being unreliable and tainted by personal subjectivity, with Eric Hobsbawm once describing them as a 'remarkably slippery medium for preserving facts'.[89] However, it must be understood that for many groups, most notably women and ethnic minorities, oral history continues to be one of the most efficient methods for enabling their narratives of the past to be heard. Most official publications and reports on unemployment tended to overlook conditions within the private sphere, especially in regards to the everyday experiences of women. The majority of women were confined to the home and so their history is rooted in the realities and experiences of everyday life. As Thompson pointed out, the major strength of oral history lies in the 'particular facts and detailed accounts of everyday events',[90] the types of events that women were most likely to be involved in.

This thesis, however, is not solely concerned with women in the home, but also with those who entered the public sphere, in an attempt to highlight the problems facing them and their families. Thus, a major attraction of using oral history in this case is that it

'can provide insights into people as agents, as well as subjects, of change'.[91] This study contains material from interviews with sixteen individuals, the majority of whom were recruited through appeals published in the local press. This method of recruitment obviously had implications for the representative nature of the project. For example, in depending on appeals in the local press to attract participants a process of self-selection had taken place prior to the interview. Moreover, a number of people responded to the newspaper adverts with letters and supplied written accounts of their experiences. This meant that before the interview process had commenced some participants had already constructed a narrative with which they were comfortable. However, while this could be considered a weakness of the survey, it was one that could not be avoided.

When interviews commenced in early 2002 over seventy years had already passed since the beginning of Lanarkshire's economic depression. This meant that there was not a wide 'pool' available from which to select participants. Nevertheless, through coincidence rather than design the sample did prove to be representative of the households that existed in Lanarkshire between the wars. Interviews were conducted with people from all over Lanarkshire, with some interviewees having been born in industrial centres such as Coatbridge, and others in isolated mining villages such as Hareshaw. The oldest participant was born in 1914 and the youngest in 1932, with both sexes being represented in equal numbers. The people who volunteered to be interviewed had lived in families where the heads of household were employed (or unemployed) in many of the occupational sectors that dominated Lanarkshire's economy i.e. mining, iron and steel production. Different types of family structures were also represented. For example, households that were headed by women were part of the sample, as well as families where there was only one child or, in complete contrast, eight or nine siblings.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured in nature, in that they commenced with some direct questions and then descended into a more 'free-flowing' format with certain subjects being introduced into the conversation at the prompting of the interviewer. This approach was felt to be the most appropriate method for reaching the desired outcome of gaining data for the project, while discovering what the interviewees

most wanted to talk to the interviewer about. This was in keeping with the approach that Anderson and Jack recommended for the conducting of oral history interviews:

> Realizing the possibilities of the oral history interview demands a shift in methodology from information gathering, where the focus is on the right questions, to interaction, where the focus is on the process, on the dynamic unfolding of the subject's viewpoint.[92]

While conducting these interviews it was necessary to be mindful of the fact that my presence would play some part in the narrative that each interviewee would eventually construct. To use Summerfield's definition 'inter-subjectivity, understood as the relationship between the narrator and his or her audience, is a necessary and inescapable part of the production of memory'.[93] My identity as a woman in her early twenties had some bearing on the accounts that these elderly participants wanted to present. Some were concerned that their anecdotes should have some 'entertainment' value for me, with humour often being introduced to their narratives even if the subject matter was of a sensitive nature. Moreover, my own subjectivity became apparent when I had to prompt interviewees to discuss the more mundane aspects of everyday life such as family budgets, shopping and housework. On the other hand I feel that the respondents were able to relate to me on some level despite our differences in age and experience. For example, as I am from Lanarkshire I had the advantage of being a 'local girl', of speaking like them and being familiar with the places to which they referred. This allowed them to open-up to me in a way which may not have been possible with an 'outsider'.

It has been important to view the transcripts or 'memory texts' that resulted from the interviews as products of a relationship between a subject and their audience. However, the oral testimonies in this thesis will hopefully be regarded as no less useful than histories based on more conventional sources. As stated previously, care was taken to use these oral testimonies in conjunction with surviving contemporary sources, not only as a way of testing the accuracy of people's recollections of events but also of

identifying the bias of those who were responsible for constructing the contemporary record.

Using the methodological approach described above, each chapter works towards creating a clearer picture of how gender and power relations within Lanarkshire were affected by the experience of the Depression. Chapter Two will concentrate specifically on the theme of 'family life' and on the many women in Lanarkshire who did not work in paid employment but performed the role of housewives. Key issues that will be addressed include the impact that unemployment had on male and female relations within the home and the effects of increased poverty on women's everyday lives.

The third chapter on popular culture will discuss the strains (or otherwise) that the quest for recreation placed on the relationships between married men and women. The male 'pub culture' was a part of men's leisure time that impacted directly on the lives of many women in Lanarkshire. It was responsible for many marital disagreements but also for influencing the types of leisure pursuits that women chose i.e. temperance and church organisations. In attending church and temperance meetings, women were matching their social concerns with their recreational needs, while remaining firmly aligned with 'respectable' Godly pursuits. Thus, it will be contended that women's social activities often came into direct conflict with the men who lived within their own homes and communities.

The fourth chapter moves away from the private sphere and looks more closely at those women who were engaged in paid employment in Lanarkshire between the wars. Women who took up paid employment, whether out of financial need or through choice, have been under-represented in historical research on Lanarkshire. This chapter will attempt to 'discover' these women, while analysing the impact, if any, that their employment had on work culture and female identity in Lanarkshire. Moreover, attention is paid to the involvement of women in industrial disputes and the question of whether they protested as workers or on issues that were concerned with the private sphere.

Chapters Five and Six also focus on the public sphere and discuss the issue of 'welfare politics' and the impact it had on Lanarkshire women. Chapter Five deals specifically with the nature of female protest and organisation in Lanarkshire by focusing on the actions of women within formal labour movements and political groupings. Following the miners' strikes of 1921 and 1926, women's allegiance to political organisations such as the Labour Party Women's Sections and the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guilds began to grow. This chapter will address the issue of whether or not the Depression facilitated the increased presence of women in Lanarkshire's male dominated public sphere and will argue that the interwar years provided them with their first real opportunity to embrace the concept of women as citizens with genuine political concerns, as well as being dutiful daughters and housewives.

Chapter Six is a continuation of the themes raised in the previous section but it focuses more closely on the actions of women who chose to campaign and organise themselves outside formal political parameters. The chapter argues that women attempted to make social welfare concerns, such as housing and child health care provision, high profile issues. Female militancy became increasingly apparent as women engaged in regular confrontations with the local authorities and took part in public mobilisations. Such activity will be used to support the theory that gender roles in Lanarkshire were affected by the Depression and that, when the focus is placed on the actions of women within the family and local community, new definitions of political effectiveness emerge.

The women in this investigation are not being viewed in isolation. Only by examining the networks between individuals, whether they be husband and wife or mother and child, can power relations be truly understood. As Faragher, an historian of American women, wrote: 'an important step in creating a society of free and equal women and men is the creation of a history of women and men in their real connectedness'.[94]

This thesis will argue that the Depression had a distinct influence on the lives of women in Lanarkshire, and placed pressure on the accepted culture of male dominance. This thesis challenges the notion that, during the Depression, women were passive observers. In the patriarchal society that was Lanarkshire, women attempted to make unemployment and poverty women's issues. Moreover, as male unemployment reached unprecedented levels, women often found themselves in the position of being the new 'providers'.

Women gained empowerment through their ability to keep home, family and community together. However, the wives and mothers in this work should not be viewed as atypical. The challenges faced by these women were representative of those being experienced by working-class families in towns and villages throughout most of the industrial world during the Depression. In this refocused account of Lanarkshire's industrial communities, such women will finally be given a voice.

END NOTES

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[3] G. Thomson, *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Lanark* (Glasgow, 1960), p.116.

[4] W.S. Howard, 'Miners' Autobiography: Text and Context', *Labour History Review*, Vol.60, Part 2, (1995), pp.89-99.

[5] S. Macintyre, *Little Moscows. Communism and Working-class Militancy in Interwar Britain* (London, 1980), p.143.

[6] Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor's recent work on the Clydeside heavy industries, c.1930 to the 1970s, provides much useful information on this subject. They examined how working in such tough and hazardous occupations as coal mining, the iron and steel works and shipbuilding, nurtured and reinforced masculine identities: see R. Johnston & A. McIvor, 'Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydeside Heavy Industries, c.1930-1970s', *Labour History Review*, Vol.69, No.2, (2004), pp.135-51.

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[18] R. Duncan, *Steelopolis. The Making of Motherwell c. 1750-1939* (Motherwell, 1991), p.168.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] A. Slaven, *The Development of the West of Scotland: 1750-1960* (London, 1975), p.234.

[22] Ibid., p.168.

[23] G. Hutton, *Lanarkshire's Mining Legacy* (Ayr, 1997), p.3.

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[25] W. Knox, *Industrial Nation. Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh, 1999), p.189.

[26] Slaven, *West of Scotland*, p.198.

[27] Duncan, *Steelopolis*, p.165.

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[56] J. Benson, *The Penny Capitalists. A Study of Nineteenth Century Working-class Entrepreneurs* (London, 1983).

[57] Murphy, *Mining Cultures*, p.xiii.

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[59] NLCA, Stanrigg Colliery Disaster Fund, 'Brief Narrative of Events and Formation of Provisional Committee', 2 August 1918. U52 3/2.

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[65] A. Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*. Working-class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900-1939 (Buckingham, 1992), pp.1-2. See also E. Roberts, *A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-class Women* (Oxford, 1984).

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[67] While both Knox and Smout have looked at male working-class sociability and culture in Scotland during the interwar period, little attention has been paid to women living within the same communities. See Knox, *Industrial Nation*, pp.196-202; Smout, *Scottish People*, Chapter 6.

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[72] T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London, 1999), p.537.

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[74] McGuckin, 'Moving Stories', pp.197-220.

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[76] A. Hughes, 'A Rough Kind of Feminism: The Formation of Working-class Women's Political Identities, Clydeside, c.1919-1936' University of Strathclyde, PhD Thesis, 2001, p.4.

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[79] E. Breitenbach & E. Gordon (eds.), *Out of Bounds. Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.2.

[80] N. Dennis, F. Henriques & C. Slaughter, *Coal is our Life. An Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community* (London, 1956), pp.210-11.

[81] C. Chinn, *They Worked All Their Lives. Women of the Urban Poor in England, 1880-1939* (Manchester, 1988), p.59.

[82] Davies & Fielding, *Workers' Worlds*, p.11.

[83] Bourke, *Working-class Cultures*, p.64.

[84] J. Bourke, *Husbandry to Housewifery Women. Economic Change and Housework in Ireland 1890-1914* (Oxford, 1993), pp.201-6.

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[86] J. Lambertz & P. Ayers, 'Marriage Relations, Money and Domestic Violence in Working-class Liverpool, 1919-1939' in J. Lewis (ed.), *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940* (Oxford, 1986), pp.194-239; Ross, 'Survival Networks', pp.4-27.

[87] J. Rendall, 'Uneven Development: Women's History, Feminist History and Gender History in Great Britain' in K. Offen, R. Roach Pierson & J. Rendall (eds.), *Writing Women's History* (London, 1991), p.57.

[88] There is a wide range of books available for consultation regarding the case for and against oral history. What follows is a small sample: A. Green & K. Troup, *The Houses of History. A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory* (Manchester, 1999), Chapter Nine; P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History* (Oxford, 2000); T. Lummis, *Listening to History* (London, 1987).

[89] E. Hobsbawm, *On History* (London, 1997), p.206.

[90] P. Thompson, *The Edwardians* (St Albans, 1977), p.13.

[91] G.R. Smith, 'Protest is Better for Infants: Motherhood, Health and Welfare in a Women's Town, c.1911-1931', *Oral History*, Vol.23, No.1, (Spring, 1985), p.63.

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CHAPTER TWO

MANAGING FAMILY LIFE

INTRODUCTION

The ability to 'make ends meet' was a fundamental component in the widely understood definitions of what it meant to be a 'good wife', or a 'good husband', in many Lanarkshire homes and neighbourhoods between the two world wars. If a family was seen to be struggling to exist on the income coming into that particular household, it was often the abilities of the wife that were brought into question. From the point of view of local authorities, blaming women for not being thrifty or not budgeting properly could provide a rationalisation for low-cost 'solutions' to poverty, such as 'education' for mothers, rather than supplementary income and nutrition provisions. On the other hand, men's insecure wages or failure to find employment, were somewhat less readily attributed to personal moral deficiency. A new understanding of men's problems as breadwinners tended to absolve them from blame.

The years of Depression severely challenged one of the most fundamental of criteria for masculinity, that of breadwinner status. Indeed, in a district like Lanarkshire where clear distinctions were drawn between the male and female spheres, work conferred a status on working-class men that no other activity or attribute could replace. Oral testimony clearly shows admiration for men who worked in the mines and iron works of Lanarkshire and the 'manly' standing that these occupations held, both within the home and in the wider community. One man, recalling the rituals that accompanied his father's arrival home after a shift in the coal mine, demonstrated the respect that was reserved for the family breadwinner:

> The pit boots came off and some of us would clean them. You took them out the back and you scraped all the muck off them and brushed them up and he went out to work the next morning with his boots all shining. And his moleskins were taken out, and you used to have kind of wire brushes, to scrape all the hard muck off them, you know what I mean?[1]

Another interviewee remembered the men who worked in the steel and iron works in his area, and the smells and sights associated with the men who worked in such 'manly' occupations:

> And you could smell the workers coming out of the Lanarkshire yonder, you know, or Dalziel's or whatever. It was a kind of an oily, irony smell you know, they sat next to you and you knew this guy's working in the Lanarkshire because of the smell off him. It wasn't a repulsive smell, you know, but it was the Lanarkshire smell.[2]

Women also had a clearly defined role, that of housekeeper and carer. Furthermore, they were judged by other members of the family unit in terms of their 'usefulness'. While husbands often judged their wives in terms of their abilities to keep the home functioning on an ever declining budget, the same can also be said of their children. Often, when interviewees were asked to describe their mother's personality or character and what they remembered most about her, the majority responded in a similar way; they described their mother in terms of her 'usefulness' or abilities in the home. For example, one woman's assessment of her mother was that 'my mother was good, she was a good housewife, you know, she done her best'.[3] Another respondent described his mother in glowing terms, but again in relation to how she performed as a housekeeper:

> She was a perfect mother, you know. She could knit and sew. She could make a suit, she could bake, cook … My mother was clever in that way with her hands, and she looked after us very well but she didn't speak anything about her life.[4]

It was felt, however, that unemployment, and the poverty that often accompanied it, posed more problems for men than it did for women, an argument which has been perpetuated in recent studies of the period. For example, Macintyre has argued that 'since the recreational world of the male was closely tied to work, he was likely to find

unemployment more disturbing than the woman, whose round of informal social intercourse was less vulnerable'.[5] This is true in part, as the lives of women were more closely tied to the home than any workplace. However, the effects of unemployment permeated this private sphere of the home, the traditional domain of women, and as such their lives were duly affected, something which is too often overlooked.

Groups that were formed to highlight the problems facing mining families, by raising government and public awareness, often portrayed men and women within the same families in quite different ways. This can be seen in a 1928 circular entitled 'Appeal on Behalf of Unemployed Miners and their Dependants' that was issued by the National Union of Scottish Mineworkers.[6] While the obvious bias of such a source must be noted, as the NUSM was trying to use sentimentality to gain financial support, it nevertheless provides an interesting insight into how the roles of men and women were portrayed at the time. For example, the circular acknowledged that 'a feeling of despair is creeping into the minds of men', but at the same time it characterised miners as being 'strong and courageous, typical of the best of our race'. On the other hand, the appeal described wives and mothers in the following terms: 'the women, long suffering and patient, are doing their best under the most cruel circumstances. Gradually but surely their anxieties and privations are sapping their health, mentally and physically'. It can be seen that women were portrayed as victims rather than active agents, while men were cast in a more heroic role.

This chapter will argue that within the family, women were far from being victims of circumstance. In families affected by unemployment and low wages, women were ultimately the new 'providers'. The extremities of the Depression forced women to take on roles that had in the past been typically the preserve of men. As Chinn has discussed in his work, the desire to see women of those times as 'merely the tools or dupes of their men belittles their determined efforts to overcome the often insuperable problems which beset them'.[7] Indeed, he has gone as far as to make the case for a 'hidden matriarchy', where women gained power through the twin roles of mother and household manager. In controlling the family finances women were able to leave men 'the semblance of power whilst they, in reality, controlled the family'.[8] This chapter will also discuss the impact that increased poverty had on women's everyday lives. Thereafter, it will be

argued that, despite the obstacles that the oppressive masculine culture placed before them, Lanarkshire women were also deserving of the accolade of being 'strong and courageous'.

Family Finances

Most wives were responsible for dealing with the family budget, and factors like wage levels, poor relief and unemployment benefit were therefore of major concern to them. After handing a portion, or all, of their wages or benefit payments to their wives, husbands largely avoided further involvement in household affairs and maintenance. For example, one woman stated: 'I always remember my father saying "Here's my docket Bess". And he put it on the mantlepiece and then she put out whatever had to be used'.[9] This practice seems to have been common in many Lanarkshire homes. Any children living in the home who earned a wage or received benefits were also expected to contribute to the family purse.

Whether the main source of the family income was from an actual wage, or from unemployment benefits, the monetary value of both sources decreased as the Depression continued. This was particularly true of wages gained through mining. A Scottish Office report of 1928 recognised that 'the rate of earnings of even fully employed miners is certainly not high. On a five-shift basis it works out for the underground worker somewhere in the neighbourhood of 45/- a week'. An above ground worker on a five shift week, was found to earn on average 35/- a week. However, in both cases it was found that the amount was 'subject to substantial deductions of various kinds e.g. payments of accrued arrears of rent'.[10] Wages in Lanarkshire were in keeping with this trend. Following the 1926 General Strike, mining wages in Lanarkshire had declined to 10/- per shift. By 1932 the amount was static at about 9/3.[11]

An important point to note with regards to the economy during the Depression is that prices were actually falling. Therefore, in employment sectors where wages were stable or fell only slightly, real incomes increased as a result. This meant that in Lanarkshire not all workers were necessarily adversely affected by the Depression, as while their incomes did not increase, due to the price of everyday goods falling they could afford to

either save money or buy higher quality products. As T.C. Smout stated, unskilled workers in Glasgow saw their real wages rise by about 10% between 1914 and 1920. Moreover, real incomes continued to rise during the Depression and the years that followed it in Scottish society in general.[12] Nevertheless, Smout cautioned against placing too much emphasis upon statistical aggregates of income as, 'though they are vital to establishing proper perspectives [they] inevitably conceal the very different individual experiences of which social history is composed'.[13]

People employed in retail or service-based occupations were most likely to find themselves in the fortunate position of experiencing an increase in real income. However, men who were employed in mining or any of Lanarkshire's other heavy industries and were accustomed to relatively high wages in a dangerous job with full employment, now found themselves 'on the rubbish heap, disregarded and virtually starving'.[14]

The precarious nature of the employment situation in Lanarkshire, especially in the heavy industries, posed numerous problems for wives attempting to balance meagre budgets. For example, due to closures and a surplus of labour, men were rarely guaranteed to get more than a couple of shifts a week. Therefore, the Scottish Office figures provided in 1928 were rather optimistic, as few mine owners were able to provide men with five shifts a week. This reality did not escape the notice of many family members, even children, who knew from a young age when the week had resulted in a good pay for their father:

> Well his wage, don't misunderstand me, it wasn't a huge wage he got. I mean I remember if he got twenty-seven shillings that was a big pay, that was a lot of money. If he got that as a salary, yes that was a big pay he had.[15]

For those families where a wage was not coming into the household, the wife had to base her budget on the relief that was provided by the local parish in the 1920s, and by the Public Assistance Committee [PAC] in the 1930s. The amount of money provided by either source was dependant on a number of factors, primarily how many people in

the house, if any, worked and the number of children in the family. It is worth noting that during the Depression in Lanarkshire, birth rates, and thus family size, did gradually decrease. For example, over the period 1926 to 1930 the number of live births per 1000 living (crude birth rate) was 22.41. On the other hand, the equivalent figure for the years 1931 to 1935 was 20.06.[16] This move towards smaller family sizes was in keeping with national trends with the corresponding figures in Scotland for the periods 1926 to 1930 and 1931 to 1935 being 20 and 18.2 respectively.[17] Having less children no doubt eased some of the financial burdens that married couples faced. However, it would be misleading to suggest that in working-class areas family size was drastically reduced or in any way began to resemble modern standards. Contraceptive advice was not readily available to the working classes, while some men and women were reluctant to practice family planning on religious (i.e. Roman Catholic) grounds.[18] Oral testimony bares witness to the fact that many women still had large families and dually had to deal with the financial and emotional complications involved:

> There was no such thing as the pill or anything to stop having babies. That was why there were so many children born. There was a couple up there who had twelve of a family, they were always breeding. They used to make a joke about her, they used to say "If her man throws a pair of troosers* over the bed she's pregnant"'.[19]

The following table shows the levels of relief that were being paid by Cambusnethan Parish Council in November 1929 to 'traditional' family units, that is families that consisted of a husband, wife and one or more children.

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* Trousers

Table 2.1 – Scales of Relief in Cambusnethan Parish Council, November 1929

Number of People in Family	Scale of Relief
Husband and Wife	20/-
Husband and Wife + 1 Child	22/-
Husband and Wife + 2 Children	24/-
Husband and Wife + 3 Children	26/-
Husband and Wife + 4 Children	28/-
Husband and Wife + 5 Children	30/-
Husband and Wife + 6 Children	31/-
Husband and Wife + 7 Children	32/-

Source: GCCA, Cambusnethan Parish Council. Committee Minute Book No.4. CO1/26/20

It was decided by Cambusnethan Parish Council, as by many others, that there was a maximum amount of money that any one family was allowed to receive in relief. Cambusnethan Parish set this amount at 32/6 in 1928. Of course, not all households followed the traditional family structure shown above. Therefore, the Parish had to make allowances for them too. For example, a widower living with a daughter who acted as housekeeper was allowed 20/- per week, and a mother living with a single son was allowed the same amount. A single man or widower (householder) living alone was granted 10/- to 12/6 per week. Lodgers only received relief in exceptional circumstances, with the maximum allowed being 10/- per week. In all cases no relief was to be granted to a household where the income exceeded 35/- per week.[20]

By the 1930s relief rates in some parishes had increased slightly, with the council having to take account of the myriad of family structures that existed in Lanarkshire. For example, the relief scales of Dalziel Parish Council in 1930 took account of the fact that many children in Lanarkshire did not always live with their own mother or father, often for reasons of overcrowding within large families or the inability of some parents to financially provide for their children. Therefore, Dalziel Parish provided 9/- per week for children boarded out with relatives and 10/- per week for those boarding with 'strangers'. However, as before, all allowances were subject to deductions. Half

earnings from cleaning and sub-lets were taken into account, as were the wages of a son earning over 12/- per week or a daughter earning over 10/- per week.[21]

The one piece of legislation that had the most impact on family income that was derived from benefits was the Means Test. This was permanently introduced in 1932 and in many cases it greatly limited the amount of money available to women for the upkeep of their homes and families. Under this scheme it was the responsibility of every claimant to give full details of the income of all adult family members in his or her household, under threat of prosecution. The total weekly income of the family was then calculated, and the amount by which it was greater than Poor Law Relief was then deducted from the claimant's benefits. In many cases, the claimant was entitled to nothing. For example, a young man living with his parents, who had been unemployed for over twenty-six weeks, and wanted to receive any form of benefit had to be means tested. If the assessment of the family's relief entitlement was 30/- per week, but the father earned 31/- per week, the son would receive nothing and have to be kept by his father.[22]

What was particularly distressing for families, was that the Means Test officer had the right to come into their homes and pass judgement on how well off they were. It was often the case that families were forced to sell 'luxury' items like radios, before they could be granted any benefit.[23] In many cases, the Means Test also placed strain on the relationships between parents and grown children living in the same house as, if one was unemployed but the other working, the employed person had to support the rest of the family. As one man recalled, 'I started work and I was only quite young. I was getting tuppence ha'penny an hour and I discovered after a while that what I earned my father lost because he was on the dole'.[24] Situations such as this led to children moving out of the family home sooner than they had done in the past, so as not to be a burden on their parents.[25]

The Means Test was at the centre of the unemployment movement's campaigning and was given added publicity by the appeals of those taking part in the Hunger Marches of the 1930s. The minutes of a meeting in Edinburgh between some hunger marchers and a representative of the Secretary of State for Scotland reported that a Mrs

Stewart from Fife had argued that: 'the privations caused by the Means Test were felt most by the mothers; on the "dole" mornings there was never any food in the house'. Harry McShane, a high profile hunger marcher, was at the same meeting. It was stated in the minutes that he had demanded that the Means Test be ended, and that 'in three different areas of Lanarkshire he had heard of sons and daughters having to leave home in order to qualify under the test and this fact alone was sufficient to condemn it'.[26] Protest marches against the Means Test also made it onto the streets of Lanarkshire, with a highly publicised one taking place in April 1932. The marchers were accompanied by bands and banners, with those in the procession singing the 'Red Flag' and 'The International'. The press made note of the fact that the march numbered 'a good many women in their ranks, and even children, including "babies in arms"'.[27]

The Means Test was an important issue for men and women, due to the sheer number of people who depended on benefits in order to survive. The extent to which people in certain areas of Lanarkshire were dependant on relief was at times startling, with whole neighbourhoods no longer relying on wages but on unemployment benefit or parish relief. For example, this could be seen in the homes of people living in the Scott Rows in the Wishaw area.[28] 112 families lived in the Scott Rows in 1928 and of these only 55% of households were headed by a person who had some form of employment. In the case of male providers, the occupations were miners, labourers, railwaymen, iron workers and steel workers. Therefore, even though they may have been in work at that particular time, the types of work they were employed in were subject to local fluctuations and their wages could never be counted as being part of the family income on a regular basis. Moreover, in this particular neighbourhood, 12% of households were headed by women. Of these women only one was part of the 'formal' economy, as she was employed as a shopkeeper. This meant that fifty families (45%), whether headed by a man or woman, were strictly dependant on some form of relief, as can be seen in the following table:

Table 2.2 – Relief being paid to residents of the Scott Rows, Wishaw, April 1928

Number of Households	Type of Relief Claimed
27	Parish Relief
5	Parish Relief & Health Insurance
9	Unemployment Benefit
5	Pension & Parish Allowance
4	Pension

Source: NLCA, Burgh of Motherwell & Wishaw – Slum Clearance. UJ 1/49/0194

It can only be assumed that, in the majority of the households that were situated in Scott Rows, regardless of who the main provider was, the family budget was controlled by a woman. Surprisingly, the benefit system actually had some positive effects. As has been stated, those who were employed on a shift basis were not guaranteed regular work, and so wages varied from one week to the next. Therefore, unemployment benefit enabled many women to plan their budgets with comparative accuracy, although the regularity of such income was offset by its inadequacy. Furthermore, unemployment benefit carried with it an unreasonable stigma, and a family's inability to get by on the sum they were given, was often seen by local authorities as being due to some fault on the part of the mother. As has been argued by Ayers and Lambertz, social welfare workers of the period managed to convey the message that women who made naïve budgeting decisions and drove families deeply into debt, were bad, foolish or ignorant managers. [29] For example, Professor E.P. Cathcart, who conducted surveys on nutrition in Glasgow and Aberdeen during the thirties, considered that poor nutrition was a result of 'bad housewives not lack of cash'.[30]

Some independent relief agencies, such as the Distress in Mining Areas (Scotland) Fund, were also reluctant to pay recipients in cash, something that posed numerous problems for housewives. A letter of January 1929, that was sent to the Lanarkshire division of the fund, stated that 'payments should not be made in cash but should be by means of vouchers drawn on local shopkeepers. Boots or articles of clothing should be supplied only where those already in use are not reasonably fit for wear or are clearly inadequate'.[31] This demonstrated some suspicion on the part of such agencies, that

women could not be trusted to deal responsibly with relief money. A prerequisite of being granted aid from charity was that both parents and children needed to appear as deserving of help. Thus, a family had to be seen as poor as a result of misfortune and not as a result of their own personal failings. As one man, who worked for the St Vincent de Paul Society in Lanarkshire during the 1930s, recalled:

> Some families, we couldn't give them any money because we knew the father or the mother would drink it. And so we would give them a wee slip so they could go down the co-operative to get their messages* or maybe for the children a pair of shoes or boots or something.[32]

A working-class woman who did not at some point have recourse to seek the aid of at least one relief agency during the Depression could be considered rare. Nevertheless, although receiving charitable aid was common practice, many women still felt humbled and degraded by the 'shame' of being in that position:

> Well my father had been ill several times, one after the other, with pneumonia, which he was really ill with. And the teachers in the school sent me down there [the parish] for boots and they were long legged and they had the hoops, you know you put your laces round them? Anyway, I was really ashamed. I lived with my gran and I went home breaking my heart crying. And she modelled my boots into shoes and near cut the feet off me [laughs]. She hacked at them. I can see those boots now but I can remember it vividly because I was ashamed of it. I can remember my mum crying about those boots too. I can remember my mother actually sitting weeping about them.[33]

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* Groceries

Not all women in Lanarkshire were able to depend on a male breadwinner to provide for the family unit, owing to the fact that they were widows, unmarried women or single mothers. The Great War was obviously responsible for increasing the number of widows who lived in Lanarkshire at that particular time. However, owing to the various dangers that were involved in coal mining and working in steel and iron works, the chances of losing the male breadwinner through an industrial accident were perhaps more common to a heavily industrialised area like Lanarkshire, than in other parts of Scotland. Thus, the likelihood of being widowed while still relatively young and with children to rear, was something that had affected many women in Lanarkshire even before the First World War. Nevertheless, the impact of the war on Lanarkshire's population was still profound. As one interviewee recalled of her grandmother: 'I used to think that she was a hard, hard old woman and looking back on her, her husband had been killed just shortly before in the works and then losing two sons [in the war] … no wonder the woman was hard'.[34]

The Depression brought with it problems that were particular to widows and single mothers. They were often overlooked in public and political debates on the plight of the working classes, with unemployment and poverty being viewed as a problem that affected only men and their families. The problems that faced a widow with a large family were rarely broached. For example, the types of employment that were available to women were few, were mostly low paid, and without someone to help look after their children, the chances of a widow being able to hold down a full-time job were slim. The local parishes did make financial provisions for widows and their children. However, the differences a male provider made to the family budget were obvious, if the incomes of widows and their families were compared to other families living in the same neighbourhoods. For example, one widow living in the Scott Rows, with two people other than herself to provide for, had a weekly income of 10/-. On the other hand, her next door neighbour who was employed as a labourer and who also had two other people to support, had a weekly income of 30/-.[35]

Women without male support were even more dependant on their ability to earn. The most common form of employment for widows was as cleaners and they were actually viewed by employers as most deserving of this form of employment. For example, in

1934 the school board of Carfin Roman Catholic School decided that, in regards to the future appointment of all school cleaners, preference was to be given to 'widows or married women whose husbands are incapacitated from working, and that the income coming into the home, as well as the capability for work on the part of the applicants, be taken in to consideration'.[36] In Lanarkshire at that time, most school cleaners could expect to earn about 18/- per week.[37]

Another common form of employment for widows was as charwomen. In numerous surveys that were taken during the period, widows chose to have their occupation classed as charwoman, rather than being simply labelled as a widow. After all, they were the providers in their particular households, and felt deserving of being listed alongside the male providers in the same neighbourhoods who were occupied as miners, iron workers and labourers and such like.

Whatever money a widow was able to earn was quickly used up, especially if she had children to support. This meant that widows probably had more contact with the local parish than any other group, as even buying basic items of clothing were often beyond their means. As with married mothers, the relief they received rarely came in the form of cash:

> My mother was a widow and she was working in the library, cleaning the library, she got ten shillings a week for that … but she had about four or five bob* of that to pay for rent. Another four or five shillings was to keep my sister and I … I think I was going to school and she applied for a suit and I got it. She asked for money for a suit, but no way, they gave her a line to go down to Ross Brothers down in Motherwell … that was the tailor you were sent to. So I went down there and got a suit for school. That was on the Parish.[38]

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* Shilling

Another trend that affected some women and their children with increasing regularity during the interwar period, was the problem of desertion by husbands. Due to the relief system and the many constraints that were put on the amount of money that a family could receive, some men took the view that their families would be better off without them around. As well as this financial motive, feelings of inadequacy and psychological distress also led some men to make the decision to leave their families.[39]

Women with children who were affected by desertion found that it was not something that they could usually hide from their neighbours or the authorities for very long. This was due to obvious reasons such as they now found themselves in the situation of having to apply for more financial support from the authorities, or of having to ask their extended family for help. Sometimes stories of neglect by husbands even made an appearance in local newspapers. For example, the *Motherwell Times* reported the case of an Alexander Yule of Jerviston and his abandonment of his wife and six children. It was stated how, despite the fact he was in receipt of 35/- weekly unemployment benefit, 'he spent the money on gambling and betting, and his wife had to get provisions from her own people to keep the children from starving'. In this case, Yule pled guilty to 'wilfully ill-treating and neglecting his six children' and was sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment.[40]

In many cases, however, it was the school authorities that were the first to recognise that a family had been abandoned by the male provider. This was because the school authorities investigated any cases of children who had prolonged absences from school. One such case was brought before the Larkhall School Management Committee in 1933. In a meeting of 24 March, it was reported that three children belonging to the Patterson family had not attended Strathaven Academy for some time and, although they had been in ill health, it was the opinion of the School Medical Officer that the main reason for their absence from school was 'parental neglect'. He did add, however, that 'it is my information that the father of the children has deserted the family'.[41]

Reports were submitted from the Hamilton Branch of the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and by a local doctor. This meant that, as well as suffering the stigma of being abandoned by her husband, the wife involved also had to

endure the indignity of having her capabilities as a mother subjected to investigation by local officials. The representative for the RSSPCC explained the situation thus:

> This woman complained to me on 8 November 1932, that her husband was apart from her and he was failing to provide. I saw the children, they were clean and well clad except for boots. On 16 February 1933 I again called due to a complaint that the father had again left the house. I found that the woman was still in receipt of money from the Public Assistance Officer, her husband had left her for no reason at all, she admitted that he could not provide for her, as he was idle and only drawing his own unemployment benefit of 15/3 per week … They were clean and well clad, the house was untidy, beds clean and fairly well covered.[42]

The female doctor who called upon the woman was less sympathetic than the RSSPCC officer. She decided that the children had genuinely been ill but believed that they were well enough to return to school. However, her report also contained some comments on the housewifery skills of the mother. For example, she found one of the daughters to be wearing a tweed dress and boots that were 'in good order' but felt that 'the combinations were a bit ragged but not beyond repair if mother would darn them'. She was also disapproving of the state of the other daughter's boots, as they 'were in a bad state of repair – due to running about outside – judging from the mud caked on them'. It seems that despite the hardships that the mother had suffered in the past few months, not least the shame of her husband abandoning the family, in the opinion of this lady doctor, the failure to darn some underwear was inexcusable. [43]

'Making Ends Meet'

During the interwar years, as before them, much of women's time was taken up with housework in diverse, but often cramped and overcrowded, domestic conditions. In all but the most modern houses in Lanarkshire, there was no hot water supply and in many

older houses no running water at all: it was collected from a standpipe in the row.[44] As one women living in a sublet room with her husband and two sons lamented at the time, 'you have to carry water in a pail for every household purpose and carry the dirty water upstairs to the lavatory which has to do four families'.[45] Cleaning the home involved numerous problems, as did the family wash, such as the need to fetch and heat up water and the sheer toil of scrubbing and mopping.

Given the surroundings of the typical miners' row, with their sooty coal fires and the state of the colliers' pit clothes, keeping the house clean was an unending task. Most pits did not have bathing or showering facilities, which meant that a miner's wife was responsible for having hot water available at home for her husband to wash with at the end of a shift: 'the old lady would be boiling soup pots full of water and a big tin bath in front of the fire. And he got a bath … everybody seemed to wash him down'.[46] Moreover, if the miners in a house worked on different shifts, a situation which became more likely with the spread of mechanisation, the burden on the housewife was complicated by disrupted meals and sleeping patterns.[47] Nevertheless, a woman could receive much praise for her abilities to cope with the shift patterns, which was a demonstration of her credentials as a 'good wife'. For example, a man who was one of five working brothers living with his mother, recalled how, 'she was a great worker because she was the best riser I've ever seen. I mean we all went out at different times, you know, some earlier in the morning and some later. She was always up to get us all to our work'.[48]

Shopping, cooking and child care were other vital components of domestic labour. Between the wars there was a great variety of specialist shops, which added to the time it took to shop.[49] It was in shopping for food that women demonstrated a great deal of initiative in saving money. A common practice amongst women on a Saturday night in Lanarkshire was to wait until the shops were about to close to buy items like fish, meat and bread at reduced prices. It was also common practice to buy cracked eggs because they were cheaper and could be used in baking. Cutting scones, that were 'left overs' from the day before, were bought and usually fried or toasted.[50]

A common meal on a Sunday was stew as it was made from the meat that housewives had managed to get at a cheaper price the day before: 'the old wife would get a shilling, a parcel out the cheap butchers and make Irish stew and you got that for your breakfast, would you credit it? On a Sunday morning a bowl of stew'.[51] Soup was usually made from the less desirable choices of meat, such as sheep's head, ham ends, and nap bone. Other popular choices of meat were elder (cow's udder) and tripe.[52] However, for many families any type of meat was a luxury. One man recalled how his father, who was employed as a miner, would have for his dinner 'a hunk of cheese, a jug of soor dook* and a raw onion'. Moreover, 'he never ate meat, well very seldom, you couldn't afford it'.[53]

Despite the many chores and economies that housewives had to deal with as part of their everyday lives during the Depression, many took a great pride in what they were able to achieve under difficult conditions and on such limited budgets. Indeed, Diana Gittins demonstrated in her study of women's work between the wars that 'the domestic ideology' which grew up around housework and dictated how and when tasks were to be performed, arose as a reaction to the lack of paid employment for married women. When women had no choice but to work at home they elevated the status of that work by adding ritual to it. For example, most housewives had a set time in the day by when various chores had to be completed, in much the same way as men employed in the heavy industries had to have their work completed within a certain length of time. For women, the ritual of housework was the norm, a standard to live up to, and it gradually acquired the status of a moral principle.[54] On the other hand, as women found a purpose in working intensively at home, many unemployed men found that their life was lacking a purpose and so they 'sought the company of their mates rather than "getting under the feet" of their wives'.[55]

As Mourby argued in her study of the wives of unemployed men living in Teeside during the Depression, the day-to-day problems that faced both sexes were quite different in nature. Mourby found that when a man became unemployed he was faced with the problems of a loss of occupation and responsibility, but precisely the opposite

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* A type of soured milk that was very popular among mining families in Lanarkshire

difficulty was presented to his wife. She was called upon to carry out her domestic responsibilities with less money (which inevitably meant extra work) and in many cases to find some way of earning money to keep the family.[56] This was also true of many married women who lived in Lanarkshire. How family income was defined at the time became a complex matter. For most families the single most important element in family income was the wage, or in the absence of this, dole or poor relief. However, family income also included all sources of money that were contributed to the family housekeeping purse over and above the main source. Thus, an important element of additional income was the earnings that married women gained through their various economic ventures.

To earn extra money married women had to operate within informal economic networks, due to the constraints that the male 'breadwinner' culture of Lanarkshire placed upon them. Most wives accepted the idea that women should take responsibility for home and family and that men should be the breadwinners; in the context of hard domestic labour and frequent pregnancy it was a model that made sense. However, male unemployment, and the poverty that often accompanied it, did not make the preservation of this domestic model possible. Poverty dictated that women engaged in paid employment as and when necessary to help their families. Yet, as Ayers showed in her study of the Docklands area of Liverpool during the 1930s, which had a male dominated economy and culture similar to that of Lanarkshire, certain economic activities were more acceptable than others.[57] Indeed, the source and amount of supplementary income a wife was able to earn was dependant not only on the burden of her other responsibilities or circumstances (for example whether she was pregnant or a nursing mother or whether she had young children to look after), but also on the desire to maintain pride and respect in her own eyes as well as those of her husband and the members of the wider community. Ideas of respectability and maintaining self-respect in terms of being seen as a 'good' wife were very important.

Female economic ventures that appeared generally acceptable to women, their husbands and neighbours were taking in lodgers, going cleaning, sewing, all types of home-work and taking in laundry. Most paid work for women mirrored the unpaid work women were expected to do inside the home, that is the production of use values:

caring, cleaning, sewing and so on.[58] As one woman commented, 'your mother had to do washings to help out with the money. Our mother did a washing for a lady she knew and she did her ironing'.[59] Moreover, the ingenuity of some women knew no bounds in times of hardship. For example, accounts can be found of women charging others for the use of their mangle on washdays; 'you used to take all the bed sheets and that, down in a bundle, and you got them run through the mangle, you'd probably turn the handle but she maybe got four pence for doing this bundle'.[60] Other women managed to make alterations to simple, cheap household items so that they could be sold; 'mother could get flour bags and they were washed and scrubbed and boiled and made into wee pillow slips'.[61] The desire to make money, or spend less of it, brought women in Lanarkshire into contact with people from outside their own communities, for example the 'rag women' who travelled from Glasgow:

> The rag women came and they had all their second hand clothes, it was clothes they came with. And they had them in a big sheet and they tied the four ends together and had them on their back and spread them out. And all the women came round and went through them and that was you dressed.[62]

It is important to emphasise that, in spite of their impoverishment, working-class wives could and did attempt to insure their families against hard times through saving. One interviewee who collected contributions towards life insurance policies in Wishaw during the 1930s remembered how, 'they were determined to pay their insurance. It doesn't sound much, maybe a penny or tuppence, some of them more than that'.[63] It was not uncommon for a woman to work with other women in her neighbourhood as a way of making or even saving money. One example of this is the 'menage' system that was set up in some miners' rows or tenements. This was a type of savings club. If there were twelve women in a group, each would contribute the same amount of money to the 'pot' each week, sometimes as little as sixpence or sometimes as much as a shilling. They would do this for twelve weeks, which mirrored the number of women in the group. At the end of the twelfth week, one woman would be selected to receive all the money in the pot and at the end of the next block of weeks another women would

receive it. The system continued by rota until all the women had shared in the 'pot'. This was a simple way of saving money and the funds were usually used to buy items like clothes. However, it was a struggle for many women to keep enough money aside to contribute to the menage each week and, if they failed to present their money faithfully from week to week, they could no longer take part.[64]

All these household strategies were essential domestic skills if 'respectability' was to be maintained under a financial regime of fluctuating wages, unemployment and short time working. Although there was little full-time employment for women, especially married women, it was by no means uncommon for married women to find some kind of part-time work to augment the family income, while remaining within the bounds of what was socially acceptable. Some women in south Lanarkshire, who lived in places like Carluke and Lesmahagow, had the option of fruit picking for money during the summer months.[65] One woman recalled how her mother worked in the Clyde Valley planting and growing potatoes and strawberries, and then picking them when they were ready to take away. This was all year round work for her but, as her daughter said, 'there were a lot of women, it was all women that did that work in the Clyde Valley in those days'. Moreover, this was appreciated by her family as 'she was the breadwinner'.[66]

It was also the case that anything that children earned, no matter how meagre, ended up in the family purse. Children's incomes were not usually regarded as their own to spend. The same was true of adolescents who left school and found employment. One man, who was a farm worker from the age of fourteen, recalled: 'It was five shillings a week I had. That was from five in the morning until sometimes seven o'clock at night and in the summertime you worked until it was dark'. The majority of the money he earned was sent home to his mother and younger brothers and sisters and of the five shillings, 'I got sixpence a week pocket money'.[67] Nevertheless, many children felt pride, as well as resentment, about the contributions they were expected to make to the family economy.

Children were also required to help with household chores, such as cleaning the fire place and running errands, as one man remembered: 'my mother would wake me up,

being the eldest, at six in the morning, Wednesdays and Saturdays, to go to William Austin the Bakers' back door for the previous day's bread. No matter how early I arrived, there was always a queue of people there before me'.[68] It was daughters, however, that were expected to assist their mothers with the majority of household tasks. As Lynn Jamieson has shown, mothers often had no option but to insist on daughters contributing to the arduous work of the household.[69]

The most common form of help that an older daughter could offer was in assisting with the care of younger siblings. In some cases this permitted mothers to leave the house and get some part-time work. One woman remembered her elder sister as, 'more or less another mum. She did all the housework and the caring and the shopping, while my mother went out and worked'.[70] Daughters were also expected to run the household if their mother was ill, often from a young age, and occasionally this came to the attention of the authorities. For example, when an officer of the Larkhall School Management Committee was investigating the continued absence of a girl from school in 1933, he wrote that:

> I do not think it could reasonably be argued that the girl's mother, who is meantime an inmate of Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow, could in the circumstances be held responsible for her child's non attendance. It seems to me that the eldest of the family residing at Glentassie – I refer to Jessie, born 29 November 1914, who incidentally it is observed receives 12/- per week Public Assistance – is the proper person in all the circumstances to summon, if need be, as a defaulter in respect of the absence of her sister, Mary Rose from the Academy.[71]

In later life, the expectations of the family were that an older unmarried woman would stay at home contributing her income and taking over household affairs when her mother died. In such cases the single woman frequently assumed responsibility for dependant relatives, such as an aged father and younger siblings. As one man recalled, 'the eldest girl in any family was often sacrificed, you know if there was a lot of young

ones, to help to look after them. The oldest girl often didn't get an education'.[72] However, as Ellen Ross has argued, love in working class homes at the time 'must be seen as taking the form of service, and the reciprocal obligations of mother and daughter in respect to labour should not be assumed to be without emotional content'.[73]

Not all money that came into the home was derived from conventional sources, such as unemployment benefit, home working or the part-time jobs of family members. Access to credit constituted a fundamental part of numerous household budgets in the period between the wars, as Melanie Tebutt and other investigators have shown.[74] The most convenient source of credit was the local pawnbroker, where all manner of items could be exchanged for different amounts of money. As with most other household chores, it was wives who tended to visit the pawnshop and barter with the broker. Numerous sources indicate that at the start of the Depression valuable possessions, such as radios and watches, were being pawned by women but as times became more desperate and people were unable to redeem such items, it was not uncommon for Sunday suits and bed clothes to be exchanged for cash.[75]

Sometimes the practice of pawning brought people into conflict with the local authorities. At the height of the Depression in Lanarkshire some parents took to pawning boots that had been supplied to their children by the Education Authority. For example, during an inspection of a pawnshop in 1932, the Chief Attendance Officer found thirteen pairs of boots that belonged to the Education Authority. The case became a police matter and eight of the parents involved were dealt with by Airdrie Sheriff Court. Only one woman was admonished, with the rest being fined or faced with the prospect of going to jail. Indeed, one parent was given the choice of paying a £3 fine or spending twenty days in prison.[76]

Attitudes also varied between women about the respectability of using the pawnshop as a source of credit. Some women felt no shame in using the services of the pawnshop, whereas some wives tried to keep it a secret from their neighbours and husbands. One woman living in Airdrie went to great lengths to prevent her neighbours from seeing her using the pawnshop:

> She thought herself a cut above everybody else. She used to go down to Coatbridge pawnshop because she didn't want anyone to see her at the Airdrie one … I mean, it was so stupid because everybody was in the same boat, you know?[77]

The use of pawnshops as a way of obtaining money became increasingly necessary as shopkeepers became more reluctant to grant credit to customers. As a report of 1928 said of continued unemployment in mining areas, 'it affects not only the ability of members of the community to bear one another's burdens, but also reacts upon both the willingness and the policy of trades people to give continued credit to unemployed persons'.[78] Thus, when the pawnshop or store credit was no longer an option, a small minority turned to the illegal services of moneylenders. Moneylenders were often loathed by the local community, with people having little to do with them.[79] However, when they lent money or granted credit, the moneylender used various means to get it back. Moreover, not all lenders were necessarily men:

> Gracie Nolan was her name. She was a moneylender, she gave you messages on tick, them that couldn't afford to buy them. Then you had to go and pay them at the weekend. She'd put your name up in the window of the shop if you didn't pay your debt. Again, ours was never in it. I did know people who were in it right enough.[80]

Many moneylenders were working class themselves and were distinguished from their neighbours by circumstances which made them financially slightly more fortunate. For example, it was often the case that spinsters, if they worked, had more financial resources than a wife and mother of a large family. The operation of a money lending business became self-financing because, 'in settled, tightly-knit communities the urban poor placed the highest importance on honouring small debts, particularly those between themselves'.[81]

Female Neighbourhood Networks

Women did not always seek help from impersonal sources like the pawnshop or moneylenders. In Lanarkshire, as in other parts of Scotland, help from kin and neighbours was crucial to married women. Mutual aid was extended from borrowing and bartering to moral and material support at times of illness and crisis. Women with smaller families frequently helped to feed the children of women who were struggling to support their large families.[82] Money was often loaned in times of crisis or even on a regular basis. One man remembered how his father, a tram driver, always got paid on a Tuesday and how 'he got £2 10 shillings a week and nearly everybody in the building came and got a shilling off my mother and they paid it back on the Friday'. His mother did it out of goodwill but also because to her it felt like getting two pays a week, one on the Tuesday when her husband was paid, and one on the Friday when her neighbours paid her back.[83]

It was also common for women to temporarily look after other women's children when they themselves were unable to because of illness. Moreover, in some cases they took over the care of the children permanently: 'my mother had the four of us and she had the four of us in five years, so that was a handful. But then my Uncle's wife died, he came with his three children to stay and that meant my mother had more'.[84]

As Rosemary Crook demonstrated in her study of the Rhondda Valley, women's support for other women during the interwar years was dependant on their adoption of the conservative moral values of the community.[85] The same can also be said of women living in Lanarkshire's industrial communities. The maintenance of firm moral values was seen as a way of combating the degradation that poverty often brought with it and a way of holding families and communities together. Thus, respectability in the eyes of a woman's neighbours was very important. Visible manifestations of this respectability included whitened doorsteps and a clean rent book, the latter of which became increasingly difficult to maintain. Housewives continued to be meticulous about the outward appearance of their homes, the part most visible to the community around them. Indeed, one woman remembered how:

> An old man used to come round this village years ago with a barrow and he sold white chalk. It was horrible stuff, I hated it and the miners used to paint their steps with them. It was to make the house attractive outside. Lots of miners always did that in they days, white chalk … my mother always did it. Look at the steps I've got out there, my steps are spotless, absolutely spotless.[86]

Communal areas and closes were also cleaned to a high standard, so as to prevent any disapproving talk by neighbours. Indeed, appeals by women to be re-housed were often backed up by statements about how the housewives involved were concerned about how the appearance of their homes was affecting their standing amongst other women in the neighbourhood. For example, a Mrs Brown wrote to the Motherwell Clerk's Department in 1938: 'This house is one room and kitchen, very small and that and of the very old type … you can judge for yourself the situation when we are even being slurred outside that it is a disgrace the way in which we are living'. Another woman wrote to a housing officer, 'I wish you could come to Motherwell and see this property for yourself, as it is an eyesore to people who pass it by'.[87] When women did have friends or neighbours in their homes, their endeavours to appear respectable in front of these visitors continued, often at great financial cost to the hostess involved:

> The old lady, as I say, she would be socialising with all the church people and she was a rare baker, oh a class baker and she would invite crowds of church people to come, and oh the lace table cover and the silver service, out twice a year. And I would come in from my work and she would say "hurry you up, and get to, I've got visitors coming" and all this fancy baking was for them. I didn't like her for that. She was sort of putting on a face, I mean it's no disgrace if you're poor, it's just a fact of life, you can't hide it, you do your best. But to hide behind a veneer of respectability, that didn't go with me.[88]

Sometimes the strain of 'keeping up appearances' did cause conflict between women, and led to a heated exchange of words or, on rare occasions, violence. Due to the design of the miners' rows and tenements of Lanarkshire, there was little chance of escaping from the prying eyes and gossip of neighbours. Moreover, the lack of back yard space and facilities often meant that tempers became frayed, especially on wash days. For example, one local paper reported a fight between two women that had occurred at the local wash house in Berryhill. It was said how 'one woman came out with her sweeping brush, but she did more "sweeping up" with her tongue than she ever did with her brush'. Indeed, one of the women involved in the fight told the journalist: 'every time I put my nose out of the door I got the lash of that woman's tongue … I stood it until I could stand it no longer. I went to call the police. She then caught hold of me by the face and neck and struck me against the wall'.[89] This is an extreme example, but demonstrates the extent to which stress, and the inability to escape the drudgery of everyday life, could put strain on women's survival networks.

Conclusion

It has been the intention of this chapter to show that during the interwar years, women in the home were far from being passive victims of circumstance. While many men saw the interwar period as wasted years, a time of depression and loss of identity, in some respects women had the opposite experience. In controlling most domestic activities, wives expanded their sphere of power, even if their world revolved largely around the needs of others. Their role was not an easy one, and was fraught with difficulties. However, if a wife was skilled in exercising her control over the home, she gained self-esteem, something that many men were losing at the time. On the other hand, some people who have also researched the experiences of working-class women during the Depression, such as Ayers and Lambertz, have adapted a more conflictual view of family relationships. They have seen women's responsibilities for managing household finances as a burden that had no gains in terms of power relationships within the family.[90]

Bourke has taken more of a middle ground on this topic. She has argued that, while women accepted that their place was in the home, they also tried to improve their

position in that domain by resisting 'unlawful power over them'. Many wives saw 'marriage as something worth striving for – as a way of increasing their power'.[91] The source of that power lay in the reality that, while women appeared to be relinquishing independence by being in the home, they were actually bettering their position by making men more dependant upon them.

It is important to remember that, despite much discussion of the rigid separation of the sexes in relation to work and employment, there was also much cross-gender solidarity to ease the burdens of household management.[92] There was a realisation by men and women that, in order for a family to survive the economic problems of the period, relationships had to be shaped by co-operation, not conflict. The unemployed men of Lanarkshire were not passive receivers of the support of their wives and it would be doing them an injustice to show them in this light. For example, many cultivated allotments (as a way of providing extra food for their families), walked all over the region looking for any work that was available and did odd jobs to earn a few casual pennies.[93]

Some husbands became involved with household tasks that had traditionally been considered women's work. For example, one woman remembered how when she and her family went to Blairgowrie to work during the potato harvest, her father could not participate as 'if the labour exchange found him working, they'd have taken the money off him'. Instead, 'he used to make the meals for us coming in. Big pots of potatoes and sausages and liver and bacon. He was good, he would make soup and everything and he would have those all ready for when we came in'.[94] Moreover, one of the few advantages that the Depression offered men was the opportunity to become more involved in the upbringing of their children: 'Oh he was a wonderful father, wonderful father. He used to take us walks every Sunday, away out to Hammy's Glen, and he showed us all the different trees and the names of things'.[95]

Thus, what can be concluded is that the Depression posed a challenge to the gender roles and values upon which the industrial community culture was based. It put many men firmly in their homes, full time, for the first time in their lives and passed the

responsibility of being the 'provider' to many women. On the whole, women succeeded in this role, under the most demanding of circumstances.

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CHAPTER THREE

POPULAR CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

> You couldn't run to the dancing and the booze the way they do nowadays. I mean, you had maybe your sixpence and it would cost you thruppence to get into the dancing, that was you left with thruppence and that was you until you got your next pocket money.[1]

The above testimony relates to one of the main themes of this chapter, that is the pressures faced by both men and women to limit their spending on leisure for the sake of the family economy during the interwar period. Although there was general consensus amongst most couples that spending on recreation should be restricted, it remained to be negotiated just how much each person was willing to sacrifice. Indeed, in Lanarkshire, as in other areas of Britain, disputes over male spending on leisure were one of the most common sources of conflict in working-class marriages.

Drinking and gambling were popular, but expensive, recreational activities indulged in by men, while women were attracted to more respectable pursuits, such as attending church and temperance meetings. Indeed, as this chapter will demonstrate, the religious and secular worlds of married women often overlapped. Women did not always attend church and temperance organisations purely out of religious devotion. Working-class wives rarely had the opportunity to leave their own street or neighbourhood, so attendance at religious meetings was one of the few social outlets available to them, which offered a degree of companionship and entertainment.

In aligning with church and temperance organisations, women were able to match their social concerns with their recreational needs, while remaining firmly aligned with 'respectable' Godly pursuits. Thus, it will be contended, whether women were involved with church organisations or the temperance cause, their activities often came into direct conflict with the 'Masculine Republics'[2] of pubs and football terraces that flourished in Lanarkshire at the time.

Contrasts in Male and Female Leisure

In her studies of neighbourhood culture in working-class areas of Britain during the first half of the twentieth century, Ellen Ross found that women played a pivotal role in structuring culture, while remaining separate from the male domain.[3] Men and women socialised separately and often knew different people in their own streets. For Ross, 'working-class culture … was a compound of household, marriage and child rearing practices … [and] male and female workplace culture'. For men, neighbourhood institutions focused around 'politics, drinking, sports and gambling', whereas for women the focus was 'female-centred institutions of domestic sharing'.[4] On the other hand, the work of Roberts has found that women living in Lancashire during the same period had a different experience. In this district, where a culture of two income families existed, wives shared their spouse's leisure.[5]

Both the cases mentioned above show that women within the same class could have different experiences in relation to leisure. This becomes most apparent when variables like age and marital status are taken into account. For example, some women, particularly married women, had little experience of commercial leisure and depended upon street and family networks for most of their social life. Surveys conducted during the 1930s showed that, for many working-class women, everyday life still centred around the unremitting struggle against poverty, and for such women to manage a visit to a cinema or a dance hall often required great resourcefulness. Indeed, a common response in oral history interviews to the question of how women, particularly mothers, socialised during the interwar years is that they rarely did as 'she was too busy looking after the family'.[6] Indeed, one interviewee explained that 'people were more communal because women couldn't go nowhere. It wasn't like they could go out to bingo or pubs and clubs like they do now. Women just couldn't go nowhere'.[7]

According to Margery Spring Rice's study of working-class wives that was conducted during the 1930s, the majority of women only had two hours leisure each day, and this was usually spent shopping, taking the baby out, mending, sewing and doing household jobs of an irregular kind which could not be fitted into working hours, such as tidying cupboards and gardening.[8] Moreover, leisure for the working-class

mother, if not spent in extra work activities, often consisted of social intercourse with other women in similar situations or, in some cases, vicarious enjoyment through the family.[9] On the other hand, young single women were more likely to be able to socialise regularly and it was they who became part of the crowds that frequented the cinemas and dance halls.

For the many women who rarely left the confines of their own street, except to go shopping or attend church, their leisure was largely rooted in neighbourhood life. Women's talk or 'gossip' had a powerful cohesive effect in the maintenance of neighbourhood networks, and was an essential foundation of so-called 'community life'. Melanie Tebbutt has gone so far as to describe gossip as being 'a complex and ambivalent process which if, at times, oppressive was also an important weapon and a source of strength'.[10] Indeed, oral testimony does refer to the sight of women congregating in doorways and back courts discussing local events and 'scandal'. However, it appears that most enjoyment for women came through spending time with their own and neighbour's children in the communal street areas: 'when there was a lot of children in a communal building, your mother used to come down the road and she moved the rope and we jumped'.[11]

Male culture was a very public affair. Mass unemployment created new arenas in which male sociability could function. As Richard Croucher argued, the process of 'signing-on' at the Labour Exchange twice a week concentrated large numbers of men together for long periods of time and created 'a Labour Exchange subculture in which people exchanged greetings, complaints and cigarettes'.[12] As well as meeting old work mates at the Labour Exchange, it was also common for men to congregate on street corners in the towns and pit villages. As was recorded in one Scottish autobiography, for many unemployed men of the 1920s and 1930s 'hanging around street corners offering each other opinions on everything from how prosperity could be regained to what had the best chance in the 3.30 [race] was all that poverty afforded them in the way of leisure'.[13]

Edwin Muir's seminal work *Scottish Journey*, that was published in 1935, revealed much about the situation confronting unemployed men in Lanarkshire. Muir's drive through Lanarkshire in 1933 exposed him to what he described as groups of 'idle, sullen-looking young men' standing at street corners. Muir concluded from this that, 'Airdrie and Motherwell are the most improbable places imaginable in which to be left with nothing to do; for only rough work could reconcile anyone to living in them'.[14] However, as stark as these images are, unemployed men did find activities other than 'standing at street corners' to occupy them.

An investigation that was conducted in Lanarkshire before the Second World War to determine 'the social adequacy of existing mining communities' found that 'for the miner the cinema, football matches and the "pub" are the three places attended by the largest percentages; further 59% attend the cinema, 52% the "pub", and 33% football matches once a week or oftener'.[15] One of the most obvious things about male leisure pursuits was that they tended to be very competitive. As McKibbin has shown, even when men banded together, the implied objective of their co-operation was individual competition. In many hobbies this was self-evident. For example, the whole point of breeding pigeons and dogs was to win races and a man's success at such a hobby was measured by public competition:[16]

> Everywhere you went there was wee pigeon huts and they used to have races with their pigeons. They made a bob or two off of that. That was their entertainment, their greyhounds, walking their greyhounds and then taking then up to the Wishaw Dog Track to try and make some money.[17]

This was in complete contrast to the ways in which women tended to socialise together, in that a hobby or allegiance to a particular organisation would be for some mutual benefit. An example of this was the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (see Chapter Five). By the 1930s the SCWG had over 3000 members in Lanarkshire. The work of the guilds was often involved with fundraising for Co-operative causes. For

example, at the annual meeting of the SCWG in 1930, Mrs Whyte (President of the Lanarkshire divisions), presented £17-15/- that had been collected by the local branches in aid of the Co-operative Convalescent Homes Association.[18] The SCWG was also an institution that provided most women with their initial experience of organisation and one which gave them the confidence to engage in public speaking.[19] Nevertheless, most of its 'social intercourse' revolved around cookery, dress-making lessons and discussions.[20] The Co-operative hall was also often used as a venue to complete household tasks, while in the company of other women. The activities that took place at SCWG meetings reflected an important aspect of most female leisure pursuits; they involved little or no financial expenditure.

Recreational Spending and Marital Conflict

Money problems obviously had enormous potential for creating tensions between husbands and wives. Women were often judged by their husbands to be failing in their roles if they were unable to make the house function as it had done before unemployment had affected the family. Indeed, a good homemaker was expected to be capable of putting aside 'pocket money' for the male head of the household. Many women were sympathetic to the notion that pocket money made men feel independent of their wives, and 'functioned as his sweetener'.[21] As Hoggart put it, 'a man cannot be without money in "his pocket"; he would then feel less than a man, feel "tied" to his wife and inferior to her, and such a situation is against nature'.[22]

In Lanarkshire it seems that many arguments between men and women were caused over the right of men to have money set aside from the family budget for leisure pursuits, especially drinking. In Scottish society 'pub culture' remained an important part of male working-class leisure, although one that was apparently seeing something of a decline. For example, studies have shown that the consumption of alcohol actually fell between the wars. Convictions for drunkenness decreased along with the consumption of spirits and the licensing of public houses.[23] However, conviction rates in Scotland were more than double those for England and Wales. For example, in 1921 the average rate of convictions processed for England and Wales per 10,000 of the population was 22.4, with the corresponding figure in Scotland being 52.2. Moreover,

while conviction rates had decreased by 1931, in Scotland the figure still sat at 27.7, more than double the figure of 12.3 that was to be found in England and Wales.[24]

This decline in the consumption of alcohol was not apparent to everyone living in Lanarkshire, and the problem of excessive drinking was still a part of everyday life. As one man remembered:

> You saw …, I can't compare the amount of drinking then and now but you saw more drunk men because the pubs …, I can't remember the exact opening hours, but say the pubs opened at nine o'clock till maybe one, and then they didn't open again until four. At nine o'clock everybody was turfed out, you see? So they were drinking hard because they knew they were going to be turfed out at nine o'clock.[25]

Drink was an important ingredient in defining masculine culture in working-class communities, and with unemployment depriving men of the manly status that was attached to work, drinking in the local pub was one way of maintaining the divide between the private and public spheres. After all, pubs remained closed to women in this period, which only reinforced the male bounded nature of public drinking and the patriarchalism it reflected.[26] As Patrick McGeown, a steel smelter who lived and worked in the Lanarkshire village of Craigneuk, wrote in his autobiography: 'the first accolade to Craigneuk manhood for a teenage boy was drinking in the public bar, while every public house in the village bore the legend "No Women Allowed"'.[27]

Within individual communities there was a noticeable divergence in women's attitudes towards male drinking. For example, some women refused to tolerate it, as demonstrated by the following testimony:

> But my father was good. I never saw drink in the house, my father never drank in the house. The odd time he

> would slip a bottle of beer in and my mother would give him "Don't you bring that into my house again" and things like that.[28]

Moreover, while many women took on the responsibility for their husbands' moral well being, it was often the case that they used their children to convince errant husbands of the futility of drinking and gambling. As the following account shows, children were often unaware of the role they were playing in limiting their fathers' spending on leisure:

> Down the stair was Willie Reid's pub. The pubs shut at nine o'clock, then my mum used to say – I'd be in my dressing gown – and my mum used to say, "Go down and tell your father it's time to come up, it's nine o'clock" [laughs]. And I would go down and chap the door and Mr Reid who owned the pub would say "Here's my wee angel" and my dad used to say "Aye, the wee devil". He'd bring me in and give me a drink, a lemonade or something and he'd say "Tell your dad what he's to do" and I would say "Daddy you've to come home. It's nine o'clock" [laughs].[29]

Of course many family men did not need a woman to regulate their drinking, and were more than capable of moderation: 'No my daddy's limit was about four o'clock on a Saturday. He'd sit with a couple of pints and come up the road and that was it. Oh he wasnae a drunk, a drinker and a drunk, it was just a wee bit of socialising he did on a Saturday'.[30] However, men were not always completely responsible for their drinking habits. In some instances it was their employers that were at fault. For example, it was often the case that men in iron and steel works who managed to make company targets, or exceed them, were not rewarded with extra money. Instead, a common reward was alcohol.[31] This was quite popular with workers, as the furnaces in such work places

made the heat unbearable at times, and 'because it was warm work you were allowed to drink. The heat would sweat it out of you, you never got the chance to be drunk'.[32]

This method of payment was not popular with wives, as a few extra shillings would benefit the whole family, whereas free alcohol in the workplace made no difference to the financial situation at home. Similarly, it was an unpopular form of bonus amongst men who did not drink. For example, a man who worked in the Gartsherrie Iron Works in Coatbridge recalled how he was not keen on being rewarded with alcohol:

> And when I was in there I worked at one of the furnaces and we broke the record for the amount of metal we produced. And the men on the furnace got a bonus, it was a bottle of whisky and twelve bottles of beer. And I shot my neck out because I didn't drink.[33]

While some wives made a stand against the family budget being spent on alcohol, others had a grudging respect for the importance that the public house held for many men, and how in times of unemployment and declining wages it was a piece of normality that men sought to protect. It was often the case that women treated the need that unemployed men had to be in the pubs with other people in the same position as themselves with a degree of sympathy and actually tried to defend the escalating rates of drinking indulged in by some men:

> The men used to stand at the street corners. Stand and talk or, you know, go and look for work and go down the steel works and things and stand at the gates and just get turned away. It was really demoralising. A lot of them, it just got to them and they just drank.[34]

While it was culturally acceptable for men to spend their recreational time in public houses, the situation was completely different for women. In most towns and villages it was generally frowned upon for women to socialise in pubs. Indeed, in most public

houses in Lanarkshire it was actually physically impossible for men and women to share the same drinking space:

> Women didn't go to the pub. What they done was they went to the family department. That was a different place in the pub. It was just a wee alcove thing, maybe just two or three could get in and there was a counter. It was the same counter for the bar but it was partitioned off and the barman would come along and you would put your order in.[35]

Females who chose to enter a pub were generally viewed harshly by both men and other women, this striking divergence in women's attitudes towards drink highlighting the subjective nature of conceptions of respectability. As one woman who lived in the small mining village of Cambusnethan during the interwar period remembered: 'Well it was terrible in they days, women would not go into pubs, it wasn't very nice. I knew a couple myself who went but there weren't many women who went to pubs in they days, they were looked down on'.[36]

In working-class neighbourhoods ideas of respectability amongst women were extremely important. As Ross has shown, 'wives' dress, their sexual, drinking and socialising habits and supervision of children – all contributed to the establishment of their family's (and often their street's) reputation on the continuum between "rough" and "respectable"'.[37] Thus, a woman's leisure time was also constrained by notions of respectability. This was because women were regarded as the moral centre of the family; a woman's designated role was as the moral guardian, not only of her children, but also of her husband. It was believed that a woman's influence could prevent the moral 'downfall' of her husband by example and, more importantly, by providing a satisfactory home life which would keep him from seeking less wholesome pleasures. It was therefore seen as particularly shocking if a woman indulged in vices such as alcohol or gambling; as while it was thought that a woman could reform a man, it was unlikely

that a man could reform a woman. Indeed, if a woman fell into unrespectable behaviour there was the added danger that she would set a bad example to her children.

Many wives saw themselves as having a part to play in helping their spouses to remain good providers and be morally respectable, which often involved trying to limit male drinking. Some wives chose to make concessions in regards to male alcohol consumption but others demanded an influence over how pocket money was spent, which is when tensions were likely to surface. These tensions could manifest in cold silences or angry words, to actual violence by husbands against their wives. Although domestic violence was something that was rarely talked about in public, it was common knowledge that it was a feature of married life in a significant number of homes during the Depression; 'Oh aye, there was a lot of battered women in they days, oh aye, you knew it was going on. Oh you saw many a woman in they days with black eyes … it never happened in our home right enough but it did happen in a lot of homes'.[38]

Women who undermined their husbands in front of other men were particularly resented in male drinking circles. Indeed, when women dared to cross the pub threshold and undermine the 'superiority' of their husbands in front of other men, there is evidence of them physically paying the price. For example, Patrick McGeown recalled women being 'battered' in public houses on Fridays and Saturdays by their drunken husbands for having the temerity to demand a share of their wages before any more was spent on alcohol.[39] Stuart Macintyre's work on domestic violence in Welsh and Scottish coal mining villages during the 1920s has shown that wife beaters typically justified their activities by claiming 'provocation'. By this they meant a woman's refusal to give over money or her offering offence with word or manner.[40]

Tebbutt has argued that, as a response to such oppressive treatment, women developed many verbal skills, ranging from deliberate silence to garrulousness, which helped them survive their daily lives.[41] This meant a wife often had to be more articulate than her husband, which was not always appreciated, and his ultimate recourse was to his physical strength, as the following testimony demonstrates:

> And I remember the old man, I don't know what it was, but she must have exasperated him. As I said, he had a temper but she must have exasperated him to some tune and he drew out and she was sitting on a chair and he knocked her off the chair and she split her head. Well, nowadays they'd report that to the police but no in they days. You can understand, the pressure both of them was under. All they weans and there's no money and they don't know where the next meal is coming from.[42]

As Hughes has identified in her work on Clydeside between the wars, while the Depression heightened the struggle between husbands and wives for scarce resources, and thus exacerbated instances of domestic violence, other catalysts contributed.[43] Hughes has contended that, 'the First World War and the post-war economic climate threatened the foundations of male identity' which were 'intensified by the expectations placed upon males to be 'ideal husbands'.[44] The fact that such conflict often revolved around the squandering of the family budget by men on recreational drinking 'implies that both sexes had very different social and economic concerns which, when disputed, caused conflict that could erupt into violence'.[45] Thus, Hughes has made the case that domestic violence or the 'provocation to aggress' was often a feature of family life because 'the home was the terrain in which the struggle over resources took place' and the 'expectation and provocation to behave aggressively, as perceived by many husbands, was a wife's challenge to his "right" to expenditure'.[46]

Ayers and Lambertz, in their study of Liverpool, added an interesting angle to the question of domestic violence before the Second World War. They have argued that when a woman was particularly successful in the task of 'making ends meet', and demonstrated a degree of power in the home, it actually went against her. The image of the empowered household manager (not weak or vulnerable) and the related assumption of provocation constituted a major reason why wife beating was never defined as a real social problem in the interwar period.[47] The same reasoning can also be applied to Lanarkshire. Contemporary sources and oral testimony indicate the extent to which wife

beating was often viewed as being provoked or as a result of male frustrations in regards to unemployment and loss of status.

On the rare occasions that cases of domestic abuse were purposely made public knowledge, the point of view of the husband was often regarded with a degree of sympathy. This can be seen in a newspaper account of a case that was brought before magistrates in Hamilton in 1934. The unemployed man who was involved told the court how 'the wife and I have been at loggerheads for a week and this thing had to come out to "clear the air"'. Note was made of the fact that the wife had had 'a good and sufficient answer to all his complaints'. The husband was freed but with a good behaviour bond. The newspaper concluded:

> To do him justice the assault with which he was charged was not so serious as it might have been. It is true that her head struck the wall, but this was accidentally; all that was laid to his charge was that he seized her by the arm, and pulled her about the house whereby her head struck the wall.[48]

Thus, although the evidence is sparse and contradictory, it would seem that the allocation of family resources had the potential to cause much conflict within working-class marriages. As has been shown, a particularly contentious issue was whether pocket money should be allowed to be spent on alcohol. Indeed, it was the most obvious area of male culture that women tried to gain some control over.

Drink and Temperance

Given the high incidence of alcohol consumption in Lanarkshire and the part it played in male social activity, it is remarkable that a strong temperance movement managed to operate alongside it. The reasons that Lanarkshire women had for becoming involved in temperance were varied. In relation to drink, as both King, Brown and Stephenson suggested, working-class women, in their positions as wives and daughters, had a great deal to gain from a temperance environment. Temperance organisations

offered an attractive proposition to those who were often the victims of male drinking and alcoholism.[49] After all, it was the purpose of these organisations to promote prohibition and put an end to the drinking culture that blighted many areas of Scotland. In theory, prohibition would mean that family income could not be wasted on alcohol and men would no longer be faced with the temptation of spending their wages in the pub. Moreover, attending temperance meetings and adhering to its teachings, were in keeping with the role of women as 'moral guardians'. Being part of the temperance movement gave many women a sense of pride and self-worth perhaps denied them in other spheres of activity.[50]

Temperance movements were very popular among women in Lanarkshire. Among the organisations that women demonstrated their allegiance to were the Rechabites, the Daughters of Temperance, the Good Templars and the British Women's Temperance Association (BWTA).[51] The majority of these societies were non-denominational. However, some were arranged along religious lines, such as the League of the Cross, which was a Roman Catholic temperance organisation.[52] At times the popularity of temperance movements actually outstripped more traditional women's organisations in some areas of Lanarkshire. For example, in 1926 the Motherwell branch of the BWTA had 730 members. This was a year in which the Women's Co-operative Guild in Motherwell feared closure because of its vast membership loss due to the economic impact of the General Strike. Moreover, the supremacy of the BWTA also came at a time in Motherwell when the annual membership fee of the Temperance Movement had gone up to 2/2.[53]

Many of the orders, moreover, provided environments in which some women could gain 'promotion' and an elevation in status within the meetings themselves. Some orders had an almost masonic element to them, in that they were viewed by their members as exclusive clubs, with those seeking to gain entry having to meet the approval of the group hierarchy. The following testimony comes from a woman who grew up in Coatbridge, an area that was familiar with male masonic traditions:

> My mother used to be the bible reader in the Rechabites but she [aunt] was very quiet and sedate. My mother's tongue would strip paint. Anyway, when she [aunt] tried to join the Rechabites, was she no blackballed? And my mother took exception and threw the holy bible into the body of the Kirk.[54]

The above example, while quite humorous, demonstrates the way in which some women treated the temperance experience with a great deal of solemnity and reverence. A sign of such reverence, and an accolade that many women within the BWTA hoped to receive, was the 'Star of Honour'. A common reason for women being given this award was due to their success in recruiting other people to BWTA meetings. For example, in an edition of the *Scottish Women's Temperance News,* the Bellshill branch reported how, on 15 April 1920, 'a very interesting feature of [their] meeting was the presentation to Mrs Gold and Mrs George Porter of badges of honour, each of these members having made an addition of eighteen new members to the roll of the Association'.[55] Similarly, in February 1920, the Craigneuk branch of the BWTA had boasted how, in one of its meetings, 'Stars of Honour' were presented by Mrs Barton on behalf of the branch to Mrs Murie, Mrs Currie and Miss Peggy Reid 'making in all seventeen ladies who have received this distinction since the inauguration of the Branch fifteen months ago'.[56]

It was also the case that the meetings were seen as a social occasion and an opportunity to enjoy some time away from home. As well as the expected lectures and lantern slides on the possibilities offered by temperance, being a member also provided access to concerts, dances and tea meetings. For example, at a meeting of the Craigneuk branch on 6 January 1920, 'Miss Taylor, Wishaw, sang two solos' and a 'quartet party of Miss McCulloch, Mrs J. R. Cantley, Mr James Pope and Rev J. R. Cantley, rendered two choral pieces'.[57] Temperance organisations also provided a break from the drabness of village surroundings. The Rechabites displayed colourful banners at their meetings and on special occasions some members chose to wear the special Rechabite dress: full colour silk and satin sashes, aprons and when on procession blue trimming denoted

which districts members belonged to.[58] A well-attended event in Wishaw each year was the crowning of the 'Temperance King and Queen' in Belhaven Park.[59]

The temperance movements were aware that they needed such colourful events to attract young women to their meetings. For example, the Airdrie branch of the BWTA was interested in 'securing as members all young women between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five'. In keeping with this purpose it was decided that, 'our aim should be to capture all the young women and to make our meetings with them as bright and attractive and up-to-date as possible' with a particular emphasis being placed on the 'development of musical talents'.[60]

While some orders, such as the BWTA and the Daughters of Temperance, were exclusively female, other organisations provided an opportunity for men and women to socialise together. For example, it appears that by the interwar years Airdrie no longer had a Daughters of Temperance section. Instead, women met with men under the auspices of the Airdrie Excelsior Division No.587, which was part of the Sons of Temperance movement.[61] Indeed, women in this section of the Sons of Temperance often became office holders, demonstrating the equality that the movement embraced. For example, in 1918 and for a number of years afterwards, a 'Sister Smith' was listed as being the Cadet Commissioner.*

Another temperance organisation which allowed men and women to socialise together was the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT). This section was very popular in Lanarkshire, as it was in most of Scotland. It seems that its admission of women on equal terms with men and its extensive provisions for juvenile lodges and education served to give it unprecedented popularity. This was shown by the fact that the Airdrie division, with its 4198 members, was the world's largest lodge.[62] The huge membership of some temperance orders was made possible by the way in which they included all family members:

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* The Cadets were the juvenile branch of the Sons of Temperance and appear to have been hugely popular, as there were branches all over Lanarkshire during the interwar years.

> Oh my family were all temperance, the Rechabites. And that was another social occasion. They used to have socials at night and you got it drummed into you about the demon drink. And then there was the Good Templars, the family were into that as well. And they were all strictly tee-total.[63]

Some parents saw the temperance gatherings as a way of providing teenage children with a form of entertainment, while exerting some control over their behaviour. The many dance halls that operated in Lanarkshire were a popular source of entertainment for young men and women. However, during the interwar years concerns were raised about the popularity of dance halls in the larger towns and the bad influence that they were allegedly having on the young, with the Labour movement going as far as to compare them to the 'opium dens' of yesterday.[64] Dancing, like the cinema, was used as a way of conducting a courtship. Entry to a local dance was relatively cheap ('you went to the dancing and it was sixpence to get in. If you went up at half time you could pay thruppence')[65] and it was also a good place to go with workmates. However, young women who attended dances in Lanarkshire often had to try and hide the fact from older family members:

> Mrs L: At the Gin in Hamilton you got in for hardly anything
> Mrs R: It was coppers
> Mrs L: And the guys all danced with a cigarette in their mouth and they were all up to my navel. They were all short, well it seemed that way to me, you know. But the Gin at Hamilton, my Gran would have had my guts for garters because if you went to the dancing, she thought, pregnant immediately. It was just debauched people that went to dancing. The Gin at Hamilton was really cheap and then nobody you knew went there because people

tattle-tailed to her. She was kind of hard my Gran, you know.

Mrs R: Well I went to the Gin, all the girls in the factory were going, so they said "you come Jenny". So I went and I had just walked in when Uncle Jimmy and Uncle Sammy walked in.

Mrs A: That happened to me in the Cosy Corner up in Airdrie.

Mrs R: He was younger than me Uncle Sammy. And he said "Right, out. Don't let me see you in here again".[66]

It was due to such 'moral' concerns regarding young adults that dances were often arranged by temperance organisations and church groups, meaning that young people were kept under the watchful eye of older adults. However, on some occasions dances were prevented from going ahead by the church, even when the purpose of their taking place was for charitable reasons. For example, in 1934 when a Mr Lloyd made an application to St Andrew's Church in Gartcosh to use the church hall for a public dance in order to raise funds for the hall's maintenance, objections were raised. It was reported that the 'Secretary pointed out to the Committee the dangers of letting the Hall for such a purpose, in view of what had happened in the past'.[67] It was not stated in the minutes of the meeting what 'had happened in the past' but it can be guessed that participants at previous dances had been judged to have behaved inappropriately.

Temperance organisations also catered for younger children and inadvertently aided women in their quest to gain more leisure time. Organisations like the Band of Hope removed children from under the feet of their mothers for an hour or so each week, while providing children with some sort of entertainment. Much temperance effort was invested in juveniles. For example, the Band of Hope was inter-denominational and provided free lantern lectures, soirees and excursions. It was felt that educating children about the dangers of alcohol was easier than curing alcoholic adults. Thus, children were taught rhymes and songs, some of which are remembered to this day by people

who were brought up in the temperance movement. The following verse was taught to children who attended the IOGT meetings during the 1920s:

Look not upon the wine when it is red
When it giveth its colour in the cup
Alas it moves like a serpent
And stingeth like an adder.[68]

Another unintentional advantage of the children's orders during the Depression, a time when mothers often struggled to feed their families, was that they occasionally supplied food at their meetings. This was eagerly accepted by children and relieved mothers of some of the worry of what to feed their children that afternoon or evening. As one man joked 'Oh I went to them all to get a plate of peas. I went to them all. Well they used to give you wee teas and that and maybe you would get a bun or something'.[69]

As Brown and Stephenson cautioned, it would be wrong to see temperance occasions as merely sources of tea, cakes and dances. Social enticements apart, there was tangible pride in dramatic processions and displays of what was perceived as moral righteousness.[70] A further factor that attracted people to the temperance organisations was that they traditionally provided good medical and funeral insurance schemes, for relatively low contributions. However, with the onset of the Depression welfare benefits began to be affected, due to the inability of people to pay their membership fees. Moreover, some members found themselves being excluded from meetings due to their failure to make payments. In the records of the Airdrie Excelsior Division numerous references can be found of members being summoned before the Organising Committee because they were in arrears. For example, at a meeting of May 1926 it was reported that:

A number of members were in arrears over the thirteen weeks. After some discussion it was agreed to summon the following members to meeting on 7 June: Bros D McLonachan, Wm McNeil and Sis Susan McNeil. It was

> also agreed that letters be sent to the following who were also in arrears: Bros Richard Black, Sisters Agnes Black, Jessie Thomson and Bessie Thomson.[71]

For most of the interwar years the temperance cause only affected those who chose to attend meetings or go to lectures. However, there was a brief period in the early 1920s when the temperance movement posed a genuine threat to those who did not subscribe to its teachings, namely the male working-class. It was at this time that church- promoted local veto plebiscites were conducted to instigate local prohibition of alcohol. The local veto polls were made possible by the Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913, but due to the intervention of World War I, the first polls were not conducted until November and December 1920. The Temperance (Scotland) Act had many different clauses but in essence it allowed voters in each Burgh or Parish three options: no licence, limitation or no change. No licence would be carried if it had 55% of the votes cast and, in addition, 35% of the electors on the register. Limitation could be carried on a majority, but again, this had to include 35% of the electors on the voting register. No change was carried if a majority voted for it, or if the other two options failed their requirements.[72]

It is interesting to note that, in the campaigns that led up to the veto polls, it was the female vote that was courted with most enthusiasm by the opposing sides. This was despite the fact that men were the main consumers of alcohol. The 'wets' appealed to the concepts of nationhood and motherhood in their campaigns. For example, the Scottish Licensed Trade Veto Defence Fund published pamphlets that rallied against 'The Anti-Saloon League' of the United States and asked voters: 'Will you allow these aliens to dictate to you, interfere with your liberties, close your public houses, hustle you into compulsory teetotalism?' A similar pamphlet demanded that voters 'send the Pussyfoot cranks back where they belong'. It was argued that, owing to beer being 'a thoroughly sound and healthy drink', it was not for 'outsiders' to dictate about it and that 'grown-up Scotsmen and Scotswomen' did 'not need nursery government'.[73]

Anti-prohibitionists often made outlandish claims that were designed to appeal to the mothering side of female voters. One advert revealed that 'pussyfoots' were great sugar-eaters as, in not drinking alcohol, they consumed large amounts of tea, coffee and cocoa, all of which required the addition of sugar. Thus, the anti-veto campaign warned that 'prohibitionists consume large quantities of milk and sugar, thus depriving or robbing little children of these valuable foods'. The wholesomeness of beer was also emphasised and, in the interests of sexual equality, it was asked 'why should mother go without her nourishing glass of ale or stout on washing day or during the rearing of healthy children because pussyfoot says so?'[74]

The prohibitionists also aimed their campaigns at women voters, mostly through gaining access to female organisations. For example, in April 1920, a Mrs Juille, who was the vice president of the National Citizens Council, addressed a meeting of the Central Council of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild. During the meeting she 'explained the method of bringing into force the Temperance (Scotland) Act 1920, a subject which was of supreme importance to the women of Scotland'. Indeed, in the build up to the veto polls the National Citizens Council organised an educational campaign throughout Scotland, including Lanarkshire, 'in order to awaken the women electors to their responsibilities as voters'.[75] Temperance organisations like the BWTA also emphasised 'the importance of the women's vote' and within their meetings many reasons were supplied for voting 'against the drink traffic', including:

1. It [alcohol] never beautifies the home, but often wrecks it.
2. It never stills the tongue of slander, but loosens it.
3. It never makes happy families, but miserable ones.
4. It never builds up the Church, but peoples the prisons and asylums.[76]

It could be argued, however, that the most effective recruitment of female voters to the 'dry' cause was undertaken by the Church of Scotland. Callum Brown's work has contributed significantly to the literature on the relationship between the Scottish

churches and the championing of women as the moral guardians of the family during the first half of the twentieth century. Churches expected women to sustain moral behaviour in families where male behaviour was often compromised by exposure to drink and to 'unhealthy' environments like the public house.[77] As Brown has demonstrated, in the 'war against vice' women were regarded as having a moralising effect on the main source of these vices – men. As wives and daughters, women were seen to be of great potential in reforming the behaviour of working-class husbands and fathers.[78] Indeed, ministers tended to target women, and not men, with lectures and educational material on the 'war against vice', and it was women who were expected to take the lessons they learned into their homes. Few women who were in regular contact with the church could have failed to realise that the most effective way of putting the 'moral' lessons they had learned into practice, was by voting for the 'no licence' option at the local veto polls.

Despite the best efforts of prohibition and church groups, few wards reached the necessary majority for going dry. In Lanarkshire, as a result of the 1920 polls, only two wards, both in the North of the county, voted for no licence, these being Kilsyth and Motherwell (First Ward). In Kilsyth the results of the veto poll were: 1396 no licence, 904 no change and 13 limitation. 1920 was the only year in which Motherwell (First Ward) returned a dry vote. The results from an electorate of 3017 were 1322 voting no licence, 11 votes for limitation and 1002 votes for no change. Airdrie came close to going dry that year when the poll was won by 'no change' 54%, over no licence 46%.[79] The fact that so few people in Kilsyth and Motherwell voted for the moderate option of licensing limitations, shows that there was no middle ground in the debate over prohibition in Lanarkshire; people were either wholeheartedly for or against the sale of alcohol in their locality.

It seems that in the areas where 'no licence' was endorsed, the female working-class vote was numerically decisive.[80] However, men looked upon the 1913 Act as 'class legislation' that attacked their public houses but did not affect licensed hotels and restaurants frequented by the middle classes.[81] In Kilsyth, a mining area, drinking was deeply imbedded in the local culture. The parish was home to just 7600 people, yet

there were fifteen public houses, a hotel and two licensed grocers. It was also common for many of the pit workers to receive their wages in the pub from the contractor they worked for, which no doubt caused friction at home. Thus, before the poll the village was divided into two camps. On one side were the local publicans and many of their male customers, and on the other side were the local temperance organisations, which included the BWTA, the Good Templars and the Rechabites, all of which had a high female membership. The local paper was in support of the publicans, with the *Kilsyth Chronicle* editorial stating that 'there can be no such thing as a free people where the right to partake of the moderate use of alcoholic beverages is controlled by a fanatical minority'.[82]

This 'fanatical minority', or rather the women who were the most vocal on the prohibition side, had more of an influence than the wet supporters had bargained for. Three polls were held in Kilsyth during the 1920s, with the dry vote triumphing each time.

Table 3.1 - Kilsyth Veto Polls Results, 1920-1926

Year	Dry Vote	Wet Vote
1920	1396	904
1923	1564	1076
1926	1730	919

Source: Summerlee Heritage Park [Coatbridge], 'On the Bevvy'. Drink and Temperance Exhibition, August – October 2004

Publicans tried at regular intervals to get their pubs reopened, but with little success. In 1926, the Hoggan's bar re-opened for a while selling 'Munition Beer', which was non-alcoholic, but it was not popular among drinkers.[83] The experience of Kilsyth was not just unique to Lanarkshire but to Scotland as a whole because of the way in which the zeal of prohibition lasted beyond the early 1920s.* Nevertheless, although no other

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* Prohibition was not overturned in Kilsyth until 1967

area of Lanarkshire was able to sustain prohibition in the way in which Kilsyth did, the temperance spirit continued throughout the interwar years.

Attempts continued to be made by women's groups to instigate new veto polls, which was their prerogative under the terms of the Temperance (Scotland) Act. For example, in the Third Ward of Hamilton the result of the poll of 1920 had been that limitation was put in place, which meant that six grocers and eight public houses still had licenses. However, in 1923 some electors in the area attempted to force another poll in the hope of introducing prohibition in its entirety. The petitions that were handed into the town council indicate that entire streets were often in full support of the temperance cause, with some husbands and wives joining the campaign together. Nevertheless, in Hamilton at least, the quest for prohibition appears to have remained a predominantly female concern. Indeed, just 36% of the signatures on the Hamilton petitions belonged to men.[84] The eventual poll that was conducted in 1923 failed to enact 'no licence' legislation, but demonstrated that temperance was a cause that working-class women continued to identify with.

Temperance rallies and public demonstrations continued in Lanarkshire throughout the interwar years, as did the popularity of the orders themselves. The message that was preached at these rallies continued to be the same throughout the Depression. For example, during a rally of the Scottish Temperance Alliance at Wishaw in 1926, part of the address warned that 'even in homes and in lives where drink had not gone to excess there was always a danger that it might go on to that and bring trouble on the individual, on the home and all concerned with it'.[85] It cannot be denied that for many women the temperance meetings simply remained a venue that provided outside contact and comradeship; for them it was a source of 'tea and dances'. However, this is not to dispute the impact that the temperance message had on many women and the stoic resolve they showed in abiding by its teachings and promoting them to others.

Gambling

Male gambling, like drinking, was another form of male leisure that some women attempted to curtail. Gambling was a popular part of male working-class leisure in

Lanarkshire, as it was in most parts of Britain. It is difficult to estimate gambling turnover at the time, but the total value of all bets staked in Britain more than trebled in the interwar years, so that by the early 1930s annual expenditure was between £300 million and £400 million.[86] Dog racing was particularly popular, with the amount spent at dog tracks in Britain rising from £10,000,000 per annum to £75,300,000 between 1927 and 1938.[87] It was also the case that street gambling escalated phenomenally in Scotland, particularly in working-class communities, where it was associated with sport.[88] All this gambling activity took place despite the existence of the Gambling Act of 1906, which prohibited working-class gambling, and the churches' condemnation of street betting.

By the interwar years popular gambling had grown to sufficient proportions to excite much alarm and official attention. In 1924, the Church and Nation Committee reported to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland that popular gambling had become so 'widespread as to constitute a challenge to the Christian Church'.[89] It was felt that gambling, like drink, sapped the social and political potential of the working classes. The Rev David Watson of the Scottish National League Against Betting and Gambling (SNLABG), went as far to say that 'it is not religion that is the dope [of the people] it is gambling … what does the gambler care for social well being, for housing, for child welfare?'[90] Similarly, in his address marking the opening of the new premises of the Churches' Council Men's Club in Airdrie, Sir James Knox argued, 'I am not against horse-racing or any other legitimate sport, but when I see these sports become degraded and hurtful to the great mass of the people I can have nothing to do with them'.[91]

Another way of looking at the gambling trend would be that betting provided a form of distraction from boredom, as well as offering the hope of adding to the family income through incidental winnings.[92] Indeed, gambling was the only form of leisure which offered the prospect of a lucky coup which could relieve financial hardship among families for whom saving was not a viable option, or was at least considered too lengthy and difficult a process. Social conditions aside, however, the single most important cause of increased gambling during the interwar years was the wider availability of facilities which, in the words of the Royal Commission, 'have not been so much the

means of meeting an existing demand, as the instrument for fanning a latent propensity'.[93] These facilities came in the form of automatic gaming machines, the football pools and greyhound racing.

The most popular forms of gambling in Lanarkshire varied from gambling on dogs and horses, to street games of dice, 'pitch and toss' and local card schools. Indeed, the Motherwell Police reported in 1929 that they had witnessed over 200 men engaged in a game of 'pitch and toss' one Sunday afternoon but before they were able to make any arrests 'scouts' had warned the gamblers about the approaching policemen.[94] Illegal gambling of this type was reinforced by business on a larger scale, with quite a sophisticated system of street bookmakers, croupiers and runners often operating through the local pub.[95] Moreover, while gambling brought with it excitement and interest, it also forged community links and produced feelings of group solidarity and mutual respectability. This was recognised in an investigation into casual workers in Lanarkshire conducted by representatives of the Commissioner for the Special Areas. The part of the investigation dedicated to bookmakers reported that:

> This class includes runners, watchers, tote manipulators, pool agents, checkers and clerks operating at race meetings or dog tracks and all the allied fraternity of odd job men. Their employment is itself not infrequently illegal and they are not without support in their efforts to evade the law. There is a free masonry among them which extends to their clients with the result that evidence sufficient to support a prosecution can only be obtained by way of police convictions.[96]

There is evidence to show that many women were against gambling, and used whatever means were at their disposal to prevent it happening in their neighbourhoods. For example, it was reported in a local newspaper that when a group of young men in Motherwell started to demand their 'turn' of the washhouse on a Sunday, the local women began to grow suspicious, 'as they had nothing to show for their day's

occupancy of the wash-house, not a single shirt put up on the rope to dry'. The women realised that the washhouse was being used by men to play cards, and reported them to the police.[97] In doing this, the women were upholding the 'respectability' of the neighbourhood, while setting a moral example.

Some women acted as individuals in combating local gambling schools, as the following extract from a newspaper report of August 1929 demonstrates. This particular case lead to one gambler being prosecuted and fined:

> A few days ago at Oakfield Place a young woman came out to the drying green and found it occupied by gamblers. She rightly resented the presence of gamblers on the green, and despite the fact that she was there alone facing a crowd, she told the gamblers point blank that the drying green was to be used for drying clothes and not as a 'howff' for the gamblers. She told the crowd that they were getting Oakfield Place a bad name with their gambling away from morning until night.
>
> Face to face with a woman who had dared to tell them the truth, the gamblers, afraid of this modern Joan of Arc who had determined to liberate the back green from the unlawful invaders, turned on their heels and slouched away – all but one and it would have been better for this one had he gone quietly with the others. The young woman insisted on the complete evacuation of the back green by the gamblers and she sent for the police in order to enforce her demand the more.[98]

While betting did on the whole remain a male leisure pursuit, it should be recognised that women were not above being involved in illegal gambling. As the work of Clapson has shown, despite certain proletarian conceptions of respectability and gender roles,

women were just as capable as men of joining the ranks of 'those working-class entrepreneurs who turned to bookmaking' or of simply indulging in the odd 'flutter'.[99] Nevertheless, the fact remains that far less women than men gambled. This can be partly attributed to the fact that to be seen to gamble could impair a woman's claim to 'respectability'.[100]

As was the case with the temperance message, the church targeted women, and not men, with lectures and educational material on the 'war' against gambling. For example, the Rev J Ramsay Thomson of Bargeddie Parish, stated in his foreward in the monthly church magazine in December 1925 that 'I hope to give my next lantern address to the Sisterhood on December 8, when I shall show a story, entitled, "Beware, or the Effects of Gambling"'.[101] The most efficient control on female gambling, however, was financial constraint. Women often had to struggle to balance the family budget, rarely leaving extra resources for gambling or any other form of leisure. In working-class households, 'pocket money' for recreational purposes, independent of the housekeeping, remained a largely male specific luxury.

Church and Guild Organisations

In Lanarkshire, church and religious organisations were the main cultural outlets available to girls and women during the interwar years. Church guilds and sisterhoods were popular, not just because they were a sign of religious devotion, but because such organisations also acted as an arena of leisure in areas where few sources of recreation were available to women. This situation was common throughout many other parts of Scotland, as shown in the interviews that were conducted by Brown and Stephenson in relation to women living in Stirling before the Second World War. Through the use of oral testimony and autobiographies they sought to establish the extent and nature of women's links with organised religion. Brown and Stephenson reported that:

> None of the eighty respondents mentioned even the existence of non-religious or non-temperance organisations during their youth … Even as adults, church-based organisations like the Women's Guild,

> mothers' groups and church choirs predominated; only a handful of women mentioned 'secular' organisations like the Co-operative Women's Guild and the Miners' Welfare.[102]

Another factor that Lanarkshire had in common with Stirling at this time, was that women's participation in religious organisations and events was usually higher than that of men. For example, this can be seen in the Clyde Valley Regional Plan of 1946, which revealed valuable information on the 'recreational' activities of mining families.* It was reported in the survey that 55% of miners' wives but only 25% of miners attended a place of worship more than once a week. The figure for women actually seems quite low but it must be taken into account that the survey was only interested in women who had husbands in the mining industry, and so did not take into consideration women who were married to men from other occupational groups. Moreover, the rate of participation in religious organisations by unmarried women was not measured.[103] Nevertheless, the survey does give some indication of the importance that women attached to attending religious meetings. On the other hand, female participation could have been higher than that of men owing to the lack of alternative forms of recreation available to women.

A review of female involvement in church activities in Bargeddie provides an insight into the importance women attached to religion as part of their everyday lives, not just in this particular mining village, but in Lanarkshire as a whole. For example, women in Bargeddie had their own organisations in the Church of Scotland or the 'kirk' as it would have been known to the local congregation. A popular women's section in the Bargeddie church was the 'sisterhood'. This group met on Tuesday evenings during the winter, and attracted the involvement of between forty and fifty of the women of the congregation. It was said of the women that they 'gather together, often from long distances, to meet over a cup of tea and then they have a little service before separating again for the night'.[104] The closing social was popular with women as it involved

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* It must be noted that while this Report was not published until after the Second World War, a number of the interviews actually took place during the 1930s.

'music, games, dancing, readings and charades'.[105] The popularity of the sisterhood was recognised by the Rev J. Ramsay Thomson, when he wrote in 1930 that:

> Of all the church organisations, that which approaches nearest to the worship of the Church is the sisterhood. It is a real testimony to those in charge that during all these years the attendance at this week night service has been so consistently good, and never better than this last winter. The average attendance, I think, would be nearly fifty.[106]

As well as a sisterhood, Bargeddie Church had a women's guild, something that could be found in churches throughout Scotland. The women's guild in Bargeddie was established in 1926 and had an immediate impact on the social lives of the women who were able to attend. The guild meetings were held on alternate Thursdays, but in the afternoons and evenings, 'thus making it possible for all the women of the congregation to attend at least once a month'.[107] The guild appears to have had more of a church fundraising role than the sisterhood. For example, at the height of the Depression in the village, the guild was able to raise over £16 through a cake and candy sale. Moreover, at the time of the 1926 General Strike 'very satisfactory and encouraging reports were submitted, the guild having a balance on hand of £13-11/9'.[108]

The Roman Catholic Church also had a network of women's guilds throughout Lanarkshire. They operated along similar lines to the Protestant guilds and provided Catholic women with a source of recreation and companionship. As well as holding weekly meetings, the Catholic guilds organised monthly dances. For example, in November 1936, the Women's Guild of the Sacred Heart Church in Motherwell held a 'social and dance', which was attended by 120 women.[109] Moreover, many of the guilds demonstrated great resourcefulness and succeeded in raising sufficient funds to allow their members to go on summer excursions. For instance, in September 1928, St. Anne's Women's Social Guild of Wishaw arranged a popular outing:

A party numbering about 200, and accompanied by the Rev. Father O'Kane, on Sunday last, made an excursion to East Seton, via Liberton, where a visit was made to the grave of Margaret Sinclair and the Sacred Heart Convent. After spending about an hour there, the excursionists started en route for Port Seton. On arriving there they partook of a hearty dinner and then dispersed to enjoy bathing, boating and sightseeing.[110]

The guild featured prominently in the lives of many Catholic and Protestant women and for some, the weekly meeting was the only day other than a Sunday in which they left the immediate vicinity of their street or neighbourhood. As one respondent remembered of her mother, 'the church guild, she hadn't much time for anything else, but she was a good one in the church guild, she was a great one for that'.[111] However, while the guild could be viewed as an hour off from home and family, some women still had to take their children with them. This was often because their spouses could not or would not look after the children.[112]

Involvement with a local church was, of course, more often than not an occasion that involved the whole family, with attendance at church on a Sunday being an obvious example: 'We were all church going folk. Well everybody was in they days, that's what you did, you went to church, whether you liked it or not, you went'.[113] Indeed, attendance at church was a sure sign of how 'respectable' a family was in working-class districts and women usually took on the task of ensuring that their families 'looked the part' too, even when many women were struggling to clothe and feed their families: 'I must admit that she [mother] kept us all nice and tidy and you were all dressed with your Sunday best going to the Church. And the minute we came back home they were all off and put back in the wardrobe and you got the old ones on again'.[114]

Despite the part that women played in filling church pews on a Sunday and the contributions that they made to church funds and surroundings, women were not rewarded with any kind of ranking or office. For example, before the Second World

War, women were unable to become elders in the Church of Scotland i.e. they could not sit on the kirk session, meaning that they had no say in the running, or future, of their local church. On the other hand, it was felt appropriate for women to be involved in the running of Sunday schools. Indeed, in Bargeddie Church the Sunday School Organising Committee was evenly made up of men and women. Furthermore, eight out of the thirteen Sunday School teachers were women and all of them were unmarried.[115] Similarly, within the Catholic Church, women were much involved in the running of children's groups, such as the Children of Mary.[116] This is evidence of the practices of the secular world being reproduced in the clerical one, a practice not peculiar to Lanarkshire.

It should be noted that the great involvement of women in church activities was at a time when male affiliation to such organisations actually appears to have been falling. For example, during the early 1930s, working-class congregations of the Church of Scotland experienced as much as 60% unemployment among male members, and it was reported that church attendance and recruitment of men fell sharply because those on the dole would not appear in church without suitable clothes and money for collections.[117] Indeed, in interviews, most people remember that, in times of hardship, the 'Sunday best' was often pawned, with the hope being that it could be retrieved within a few days, which unfortunately was not always the case:

> Well you had a good suit for Sunday and when Sunday was by it was down the pawnshop on Monday, when you maybe got five bob or something. You got it back out next Friday, you went and you paid, and you lost in the deal obviously. I mean, the man's no a philanthropist, he gives you a dollar for it and he charges you six bob to get it back or something.[118]

Female involvement with religious organisations, and their actual attendance at church itself, is evidence of how women's social lives were strongly influenced by the tenor and recreational structure of organised religion. Moreover, the church often

provided its congregation with some secular forms of entertainment, albeit with some constraints in place. For example, in 1927 a Mr Kilpatrick submitted a request to the St Andrew's Church Hall Committee in Gartcosh that he be allowed to hire part of the hall for a cinema box and operating room. The request was granted, on the condition that Mr Kilpatrick include religious pictures in his programme. The venture was a success but by 1929, by which time the cinema box was being managed by a John Brown, the church committee was becoming increasingly concerned that, 'the conduct of the audience in the past had been detrimental to both Mr Brown and the interests of the Church Hall'.[119]

The Roman Catholic Church was particularly successful in providing its followers with sources of recreation. However, many of the activities were influenced by the former immigrant status of Catholics in Lanarkshire. The majority of Catholics living in the area were of Irish descent and still had close ties with their 'spiritual' homeland. Indeed, various Irish societies flourished within Lanarkshire's Catholic community, with many of the organisations catering for women. The Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.) was a type of Irish Catholic friendly society that admitted men and women as members from the age of sixteen, although the meetings were divided along gender lines.[120] The A.O.H. was popular with women due to the benefits that being a member brought. For example, it did much fundraising on behalf of the Catholic community, as well as arranging social events. In November 1920, the Chapelhall division of the A.O.H. held a musical evening that both men and women attended. Along with much dancing, 'songs were rendered by sisters Airlie, Hines, Hughes and Dearie'.[121] The A.O.H. was keen to attract women members, as it saw the auxiliaries as playing an important role within the organisation:

> There is a satisfactory increase in the auxiliary membership, but there is still room for greater numbers in their ranks. Let us aim at procuring the mothers of the future generations here. When you have the mothers you will get the sons and daughters and children for the junior section: when any philanthropic work is to be done, you

> may rely on the mothers and daughters carrying it through successfully.[122]

The Sinn Fein groups that existed in Lanarkshire played a similar role to the A.O.H. within the Irish Catholic community. For instance, a Sinn Fein branch was opened in Hamilton in 1920 with 250 members. It was started with the aim of promoting Irish culture and of being a source of recreation for its members. Mothers were encouraged to send their children to Gaelic classes, as well as to attend fundraising and social events themselves.[123]

Not all Roman Catholics who lived in Lanarkshire were of Irish descent. A small, but important, minority had Lithuanian lineage.[124] Indeed, immediately prior to the outbreak of World War I, it had been estimated that 7000 Lithuanians were living in the Lanarkshire and Glasgow districts.[125] Lithuanian Catholics, like the Irish, were also concerned with preserving some of the traditions of their homeland. They did this through the creation of organisations like the Lithuanian Catholic Women's Society, which was based in Bellshill. For example, at the society's annual social and dance in August 1933, which was presided over by Father McMenemy and Father Petranski, the women sang Lithuanian songs and the dances were of a 'Lithuanian national character'. As well as providing a social outlet for its members, it was said that an important function of the society was to, 'keep alive the remembrance and customs of their fathers and to inspire them to be worthy citizens in the land of their adoption'.[126] Thus, for many Catholic women, social groups of a 'nationalist' character played an important part in shaping their recreational activities. However, in both the Lithuanian and Irish cases, it was the endeavours of the Roman Catholic Church that made the establishment and continuation of such cultural organisations possible.

'Alternative' Religious Organisations

It was also the case, that women took advantage of the religious sects, other than the mainstream churches, that gained in popularity during the interwar years. Since the 1880s, a 'proletarian evangelicalism' had been developing into the major counter-socialist influence in industrial districts like Lanarkshire and, in the dire economic

conditions of the 1920s and 1930s, it became a major feature of working-class culture, and one which was very popular with women. As Brown has demonstrated, this 'proletarian evangelicalism' was characteristically composed of temperance societies and of small missions operating out of hired halls.[127] For example, the Scottish Christian Union had close links with the BWTA and both organisations worked together to try to have what they saw as a positive effect on working-class culture. For both these groups religion, and not radical politics, was the solution to the current woes affecting society. For example, the May 1921 edition of the *Scottish Women's Temperance News* noted how 'it was with feelings of great relief and gratitude to God that we read on Friday night, 15 April, that a general strike had been cancelled'. This women's group saw the alternative to such 'radical' activities as being a 'religious revival':

> What our country needs most today is a baptism of Pentecostal fire; a little more regard for the sacredness of contract, a lot of self-denial, a spirit of sacrifice and the intelligent appreciation of the great fundamental issues of life. In such an atmosphere only God fearing people can live; extremists, anarchists and sociological parasites are scorched and withered.[128]

Visiting missions managed to gain huge audiences in Lanarkshire, and these were mainly composed of women and children. Moreover, some meetings were so popular that the crowds that gathered outside the premises where meetings were held became of some concern to the local police. The Superintendent of Police for the Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw complained of the increasing congestion of ordinary street traffic and how 'religious and other bodies holding open air meetings are mainly responsible for this'. He acknowledged that the 'religious meetings have gone on for years and have become a matter of use and wont' but that the 'time has come when the Magistrates should deal with the whole subject'.[129] However, for the women who comprised this 'street traffic', an evening spent listening to a visiting preacher was an opportunity to mix with other housewives and escape the confines of the home:

> We had a wee gospel hall near us and the women, although they maybe went to different churches on a Sunday, they used to go to the tea meeting. Oh it was a wee gospel hall and they used to go like that. And I suppose that got them out the house, away from the family, you know.[130]

The Salvation Army also grew in popularity in Lanarkshire during the Depression, not just because of the charitable assistance it offered to unemployed men and their families but also again because of the companionship it offered to its followers:

> Well she [mother] went to the Home League in the Army. That was a women's meeting, what they called the Home League. The younger generation, they were involved in the Army work, so the older women went there. They went on a Wednesday night … [and] they had their tea and a talk.[131]

The above testimonies give an indication of the way in which working-class women distributed their religious favours amongst a variety of religious organisations. Tent missions and religious alternatives like the Salvation Army became sanctuaries to many working-class people during the 1920s and 1930s. This was because such organisations offered 'an open and effectual door to those suffering through unemployment and poverty' while making 'little financial demands upon followers'.[132] Moreover, the great success of independent missions like the 'gospel hall' was indicative of the variegated religious culture that came to characterise Lanarkshire during the interwar period.

It is also necessary to understand the important role such religious missions played in providing working-class women with some sort of leisure time. After all, as Hughes has argued, it would have been difficult for men to contest women's involvement with the church or chapel, which were respectable religious pursuits. In this respect, women

challenged the sexual division of leisure and the restrictions to their public profiles embedded in the ideal of separate spheres.[133]

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that men and women living in Lanarkshire during the Depression tended to participate in separate tight knit social groups, with each group having their access to leisure structured by gender and poverty. Both men and women faced pressure to limit their spending on leisure for the sake of the family. Disputes over male spending on leisure were one of the most common sources of conflict in families, with the subject of 'pocket money' being of particular importance.

In many situations, the main beneficiary of this 'pocket money' was the local bookmaker or publican. One way women found of combating this facet of male culture was by channelling their own energies into alternative leisure pursuits, such as the temperance movement. Working-class women, in their positions as wives and daughters, had a great deal to gain from a temperance environment. It was the purpose of these organisations to promote prohibition, which would in turn save any of the family budget being wasted on alcohol. Moreover, the temperance movement gave many women a sense of pride and self-worth perhaps denied them in other spheres of activity. The fact that the 1920 veto polls to instigate local prohibition of alcohol met with some success in Lanarkshire, demonstrated how some women were able to gain a degree of control over the domain of male drinking culture.

Church and religious organisations provided important venues for female recreation between the wars. Indeed, church guilds and sisterhoods were popular because, while they acted as a sign of religious devotion, they also acted as an arena of leisure for women. What the social activities of most working-class women in Lanarkshire reveal is that the family remained at the centre of women's lives and accordingly determined the nature of female popular culture. Whether involved in church or temperance organisations, women were embracing their roles as the 'moral guardians' of the family. The limited access that women had to commercial leisure reflects the nature of power relations within the family, in that male members were most likely to be the

beneficiaries of any extra money. However, it was only through compromise, careful planning and sacrifices on the part of women, that such money was available in the first place.

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CHAPTER FOUR

WORK AND UNEMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

The impact of paid employment on the lives of women living in interwar Britain is a subject that has suffered much neglect. This lack of scholarly interest mirrors the low status that women's work was awarded by many sectors of society during the 1920s and 1930s. Women's attitudes and responses to work were assumed to be indifferent and of little importance. This was because their primary identification was seen as being with the home and the family, as shown in contemporary social surveys, government reports and newspaper articles. Such prejudice has been reproduced to a certain extent in the work of some feminist historians, who have identified women in the world of work as docile, apathetic and subservient.[1] For example, Elizabeth Roberts dismissed working-class women's work as simply a useful way of filling in time until marriage and insisted that women, 'saw their liberation as away from full-time work and towards domesticity'.[2]

Research of recent years, especially that involving oral testimony, has significantly challenged such assumptions. The work of historians such as Stephenson, Brown, Gordon and Glucksmann has argued that paid employment played an important part in the lives of many women and the rewards it brought were more than financial.[3] Following the research they conducted into women's experiences of work in Stirling before the Second World War, Stephenson and Brown concluded that work, however brief, was a major element in the life memories of the women they interviewed. They openly challenged the view that working-class women derived their identity from domestic life alone and that they necessarily regarded work as a negative or peripheral experience.[4]

This new theoretical outlook has highlighted how attention must be paid to 'historically derived localised and regional attitudes' to female labour, as they have been crucial in influencing gender-specific economic roles.[5] For instance, by the time of the Depression, Lanarkshire's economy was based on iron and coal, both 'masculine industries'. The work experiences of women in this region would thus be expected to differ from those in a textile dependent economy. As argued by Hudson and Lee, 'only by neglecting some of the more generalised models of change in the family economy in

favour of regional and local studies can one proceed to rebuild the general picture at a more sophisticated level'.[6]

In Lanarkshire, work definitely played an important part in the lives, and therefore memories, of women who participated in paid employment between the wars. While many women were certainly in employment due to financial necessity, work also formed an important part of their identity and it was often something that gave them a degree of self worth and dignity. However, the types of work that were open to women in the area were few, and those that existed were usually poorly paid and subject to dismissal at short notice. Thus, men in Lanarkshire saw women's work as being of a lower status than their own. Indeed, an essential part in the construction of masculinity at the time was the ability of a man to provide for a wife and children, without them being forced to labour in the workplace. Indeed, a non-working wife was a measure of masculinity, as well as respectability.[7] Nevertheless, while women knew that their ultimate role was to marry and become a mother, this did not stop them from entering the workplace or valuing the time they spent there.

Many young women tried to exercise some control over the type of employment that they entered, just like their male counterparts, but they did it with the realisation that their working lives would probably not be long in duration. The fact that some women tried to control the type of industry they entered, showed that, like men, they saw their work as giving them a degree of status. It was also a chance to exert some independence. This was shown in the case of one female respondent who left school in 1929 and who succeeded in entering the occupational sector she desired:

> I mind I got the job I wanted because we got dress making at school and I wanted to go into the factory, to make clothes, so I was lucky I got that. I think I pestered the man that much that he was glad to give me a job … I knew I was getting this job but I hadn't had word from Mr Ford and she [mother] says, 'there's a job in a shop in the paper, you'd better go and see about it because you can't afford

to wait'. And I was going down, and this is as true as I'm sitting here, I kept saying 'Please God, let that job be away, please God let that job be away'. And I went in and the lady says 'Oh you're just too late hen, that job's away'. So I came home and my mother says 'Now did you go?' I said 'Yes I went'. But then she said 'You'd better go down to see Mr Ford again'.[8]

Those women who did work, whether out of need or through choice, have rarely been represented in literature on Lanarkshire. This chapter will attempt to 'discover' these women, while analysing the impact, if any, that their employment had on work culture and female identity in Lanarkshire between the wars. This will be done through surveying the types of employment that most women were attached to and the extent to which they identified with the work that they did. Moreover, the issue of how women responded to the increasing levels of unemployment in traditional areas of female labour will also be addressed. Finally, attention will be paid to the involvement of women in industrial disputes and whether they protested as workers or in reaction to issues that concerned the private sphere.

Female Employment

Before discussing women's experiences of work and unemployment in Lanarkshire between the wars, it is first necessary to construct an occupational profile of women who lived within the region. The source for this information is contained within the statistics of the 1921 and 1931 Scottish Censuses, and conclusions will be drawn in relation to the four largest burghs in Lanarkshire at the time: Airdrie, Coatbridge, Hamilton and the joint Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw. [9] However, in using any census as source material, it is vital to recognise that it has 'a number of inherent weaknesses'.[10] As recently discussed by McIvor, the most important problems associated with using the census when analysing the changing structures of an occupied population include there being errors in classification and a lack of consistency over time. There can also be a tendency towards the under-representation of certain groups,

with the most serious example of this being 'in relation to married female labour'. Indeed, in the past the recording of married women in employment has been:

> affected by the dominant chauvinist and patriarchal values of the day, the 'household heads' who completed the forms failed to accurately record the economic activity of wives and mothers within the family home, whilst census enumerators were not particularly vigorous in ensuring that such participation was recorded.[11]

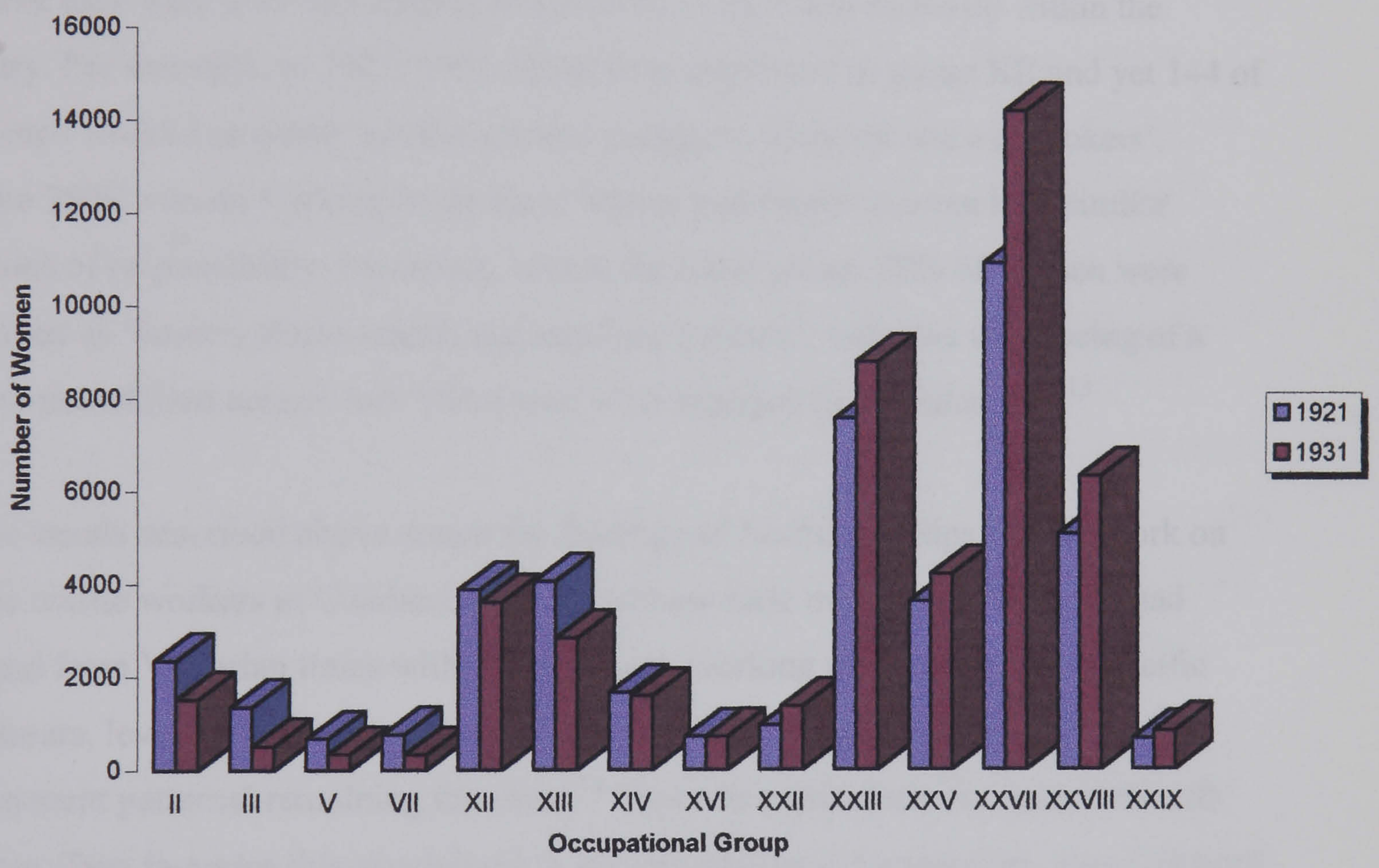
As long as these limitations are recognised, the Scottish censuses of 1921 and 1931 are still invaluable sources for analysing the work patterns of Lanarkshire's female population. The censuses show that the types of employment available to women in Lanarkshire between the wars was very limited, as was the case throughout Scotland. Lanarkshire had a distinct male identity which was characterised, not only by the masculine character of its dominant heavy industries, but also the composition of its population. In Lanarkshire, unlike in Scotland as a whole, the number of men exceeded women. For example, at the time of the 1931 Census, 48% of the Scottish population was male, but in Coatbridge the equivalent figure was 52% and in both Hamilton and Motherwell and Wishaw, 51%.

Men were far more likely than women to be listed in the census as having an occupation, regardless of marital status. In all burghs in 1931, over 90% of men were able to list themselves as having an occupation, even if not employed in it at the time, which was in keeping with the national average. The corresponding figure was far lower for women. Indeed, by 1931, 29% of women in Airdrie and Hamilton could list themselves as having an occupation, 27% in Coatbridge and 26% in Motherwell and Wishaw. This was lower than the national average of 35%, and other burghs outside of Lanarkshire, such as Dundee and Paisley, which recorded figures of 55% and 43% respectively. It must be noted, however, that Dundee's working population was significantly different from that of Lanarkshire. Many women worked in Dundee owing to the predominance of the area's jute and textile industries, with industrialists viewing

women as a prime source of cheap labour. Similar occupational outlets did not exist for Lanarkshire women where the main source of employment was heavy industry.

The occupations which women in Lanarkshire engaged in corresponded to those of women in Scotland as a whole. Moreover, waged employment was typically the preserve of young, single women. In Lanarkshire, female workers tended to be employed as typists, textile workers, in personal service or in commercial occupations, as can be seen in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 – Principal Occupations of Women in Lanarkshire, 1921 and 1931



Key

II. Agricultural
III. Mining and quarrying
V. Makers of bricks, pottery & glass
VII. Metal workers
XII. Textile workers
XIII. Makers of textile goods & articles of dress
XIV. Food, drink and tobacco
XVI. Paper makers, workers, printers
XXII. Transport & communications
XXIII. Commercial, finance or insurance occupations
XXV. Professional (inc. nurses & teachers)
XXVII. Personal service
XXVIII. Clerks, draughtsmen; typists
XXIX. Warehousemen, storekeepers & packers

Sources: Census of Scotland, 1921. Volume I, Part 22. County of Lanark;
Census of Scotland, 1931. Volume I, Part 21. County of Lanark.

Textiles

Following the First World War, the textile industry remained a relatively large employer of young, single women in Lanarkshire. The census divided textile occupations into two main categories; group XII referred to 'textile workers', whereas group XIII covered people employed as 'makers of textile goods and articles of dress', with the distinction being that one group actually made cloth and the other made marketable goods from that cloth. Few men in Lanarkshire worked in textiles, with only 1% of occupied males being employed in textile manufacture in 1921. On the other hand, 8.5% of working women were employed in occupational group XII and 8.9% in group XIII in 1921.[12] Despite the male presence in textiles being small, it was still the case that they were over-represented in positions of skill and authority within the industry. For example, in 1921, 1002 males were employed in group XII and yet 144 of these men worked as either 'employers and managers, foremen and overlookers'. Despite 3898 women working in the same sector, just fifteen women held similar positions of responsibility. Moreover, within the same group, 22% of women were employed as 'hosiery frame tenters and machine knitters', with this work being of a semi to non-skilled nature. Just 5% of men were engaged in a similar way.[13]

The trends described above match the findings of Andrew Philips and his work on female textile workers in Colchester. He noted how little the interwar industry had changed from Victorian times with, 'recruitment, working methods, gender-specific jobs, hours, levels of remuneration and the centrality of marriage-delineated employment patterns' remaining the same.[14] This was particularly the case in the silk industry. Two factories that specialised in silk production in Lanarkshire were Caldwell, Young and Company in Larkhall and Anderson and Robertson Ltd. in Motherwell. [15] Most of the work practices in silk production were divided along gender lines. For example, the 'throwing' process was mainly done by women, with the dyeing and printing of cloth being a male preserve. Weaving could be done by either sex, although women predominated. Thus, men's work was either dirty or heavy work (washing, dyeing), supervisory or skilled, whereas women's work was mainly semi-skilled machine minding. Thus, it can be said that wage rates were typically determined according to two criteria, skill and sex.[16]

Norris made similar observations with regards to female employment in the Macclesfield silk industry, summarising that 'along with low wages, the silk industry offered low status to its women workers … [and] very few women held positions of authority' with there being a 'correlation of authority with masculinity'. Norris concluded that, 'the silk industry, in other words, did not offer women workers a career and status, any more than it offered them high rates of pay. Its beneficial effects upon women cannot be found in material recompenses'.[17]

Changing consumer demands and technical advances in the manufacture of silk and silk-related products during the interwar years had major repercussions for people employed within the sector. For example, a trend that had potentially dire consequences for Lanarkshire's small silk factories was the collapse of the local silk trade and an increasing dependency on foreign imports. However, it was the increasing demand for rayon (artificial silk) that was by far the most significant change. Indeed, during the 1920s the demand for rayon grew enormously and new factories sprung up all over the world, while some traditional silk factories, like Anderson and Robertson Ltd., began to adapt their premises for the production of the material. The costs seemed relatively unimportant at the time, as demand seemed unlimited. However, the years of expansion came to an end with the onset of the world-wide depression in 1929 and, in tandem with this, the price of rayon declined rapidly. In order to be able to compete, employers were forced to cut costs and they did this through the mechanisation of production. One consequence of this was that 'rayon factories changed from women's factories into men's factories', due to a preference amongst employers for hiring men to operate the new machinery.[18]

The textile industry in Lanarkshire, therefore, was devastated by the Depression. The employment of women in occupation group XIII (makers of textile goods and articles of dress) decreased by 30% between 1921 and 1931.* The figures became more startling when the sectors within this occupational group were viewed individually. For example,

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* One factor that would have contributed to this decrease was that in the 1921 census enumerators recorded the occupations of people aged twelve years and above, while in 1931 only workers aged fourteen years and above were noted. However, due to changes in employment and education

female representation in 'dress and dress making' decreased by 56% and the number of female milliners decreased by 66%. Moreover, certain burghs were worse affected than others. In Airdrie, 70% of female textile workers lost their jobs, whereas in Coatbridge the equivalent figure was 23%. A higher percentage of jobs were lost by women in Lanarkshire's textile industries than by men in mining, and yet it occurred with little ceremony or comment. As one woman remembered, 'you were just told that was you finished. That's all that was said. And I used to be mad at that'.[19]

Mining

By the early 1920s mining still remained a relatively high employer of women, especially in the Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw. Indeed, in that burgh the 1921 census showed that more women were employed as pithead workers, than in the individual textile industries in the region. Despite the changes in technology that were affecting mining, especially in relation to skill and labour requirements, women were still employed as above ground workers, albeit in reduced numbers. As discussed in the work of Angela V. John, the pithead women represented a 'dichotomy between the fashionable ideal of womanhood and the necessity and reality of female manual labour'.[20] Women in Lanarkshire had been employed in mining from the onset of the region's industrialisation. Indeed, there are scattered references to female mine workers in Lanarkshire before the nineteenth century.[21] The Mines and Collieries Act of 1842 had forbade all females from working underground in British mines, but this did not stop pithead women from still being associated with this 'earlier unsavoury employment' and being seen as an 'aberration in a masculine domain'.[22]

Women employed at pitheads worked at the 'tables', 'hutches' and in cleaning the lamps. People engaged at the tables had to pick stones out of the coal before it went into the wagons. One woman, who was born in 1901 and worked at the pitheads in Bellshill, recalled how, 'when I left the tables, I got a step up to the scraping of the hutches that were down underneath. They came out to a sort of turntable and that was all emptied to a conveyor belt and, as it was working, you were picking out stones at the side'.[23] Other

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legislation prior to 1921, it is unlikely that many people under fourteen years of age would have been working at that time.

ways women were occupied at the pitheads was in helping to operate the cages that brought the men up from, and down to, the pits and also in cleaning the lamps and filling them with oil. Most shifts lasted for eight hours.

A significant memory of the Bellshill pithead worker was the relationships that existed between the employees: 'At the scraping was where I finished working … and we had two ladies and two men. You could talk on the job, oh yes, you kept talking. There would have been a union for the men, no for us'. In 1921, the census recorded 1331 Lanarkshire women as being employed at pitheads. By 1931, the figure had dropped to 494. Despite this being a dramatic decrease of 63%, it demonstrates that despite the hurdles to employment the Depression placed before them, women were still able to retain their place in a male dominated environment like the mining industry.

Food and Confectionary

Occupational Group XIV (makers of food, drink and tobacco) is worthy of attention as it was one of the few industries where women in Lanarkshire continued to have quite high representation and also one where they worked alongside men in equal numbers. However, whereas men tended to work as bakers and pastry chefs, women were more likely to be employed in sugar confectionery and jam boiling. The town of Wishaw was particularly well known for its 'sweetie' factories, namely the Battleaxe and Kings, and as one respondent commented, 'that's where all the women worked. Kings was a famous sweetie factory. They exported sweeties all over the world at one time, Kings. Oh they were famous, Kings and the Battleaxe'.[24]

The business records of the Kings factory provide some interesting insights into the conditions that their female employees worked under. The women who were employed demonstrated different skills and possessed varying levels of responsibility. This can be seen if the standing of three women who were employed in the factory in 1938 is considered. By 1938 Marion Beveridge was thirty-nine years old and working an average of forty-seven hours a week, for which she earned £1-7/2. She was employed as a charge hand, which meant that she washed bottles for the confectionery department and jars for the preserve department. Annie Sutherland, at age thirty-seven, worked as a

'sugar boiler's assistant' for which she earned around £2-9/8 a week. Her job would have required more skill than Marion's and would also have been far more dangerous. Finally, Alice Scoals, who was twenty-five, was earning £1-12/2 a week as a wrapper.[25]

All of the women mentioned above were earning respectable amounts of money, especially when compared to women employed in other occupational sectors, and even within the same factory. For example, a sixteen year old woman named Esther Mathieson, who was employed as a typist, was earning just 11/- a week. The records do not show whether Sutherland and Beveridge were married women, but regardless of this, their ages prove that Kings factory was a place of work where women could hope to have a job of some duration. To work in the factory women also had to prove themselves to be adaptable, as new machinery was being introduced on the shop floor throughout the 1930s.

The records show that, in an environment where many women worked, there were opportunities for promotion, something that was scarce in traditional areas of female employment. For example, Alice Scoals appears to have been a supervisor and had authority over other women in the wrapping section of the factory. She had to make note of how productive each member of staff working on the conveyor belt was. For example, on 14 September 1937, she recorded in a book that was entitled 'Note of Girls' Work' that a J. Reid had managed to pack twelve boxes of Oddfellows in the morning and twelve in the afternoon. By way of contrast, M. Hislop had managed to pack nine boxes of Oddfellows in the morning and twelve in the afternoon.[26] It can only be speculated as to whether or not her position of authority affected her relations with the other female employees.

Clerical

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, Occupational group XXVIII (clerks and typists), saw an increase in size during the interwar years. Women's growing representation in this sector was in keeping with trends throughout Britain at this time. For example, by 1931 women accounted for 42% of the clerical workforce in Britain. However, although employment opportunities for women expanded in this sector, the jobs allocated to

women, such as stenography and typing, were considered to be the least skilled and were viewed as 'unsuitable for men who clung to the higher status, higher paid branches'.[27] As Anderson has argued, this expansion of lower-grade clerical work coincided with a contraction in white-collar promotion prospects, one of the characteristics that had defined clerical work as an entry point to a middle-class occupation for working-class boys.[28] Indeed, owing to the number of young, working-class women who were now entering this sector, clerking could no longer be classified as a middle-class occupation.[29]

In Lanarkshire clerical work was relatively well paid. For example, in 1926, typists (all of whom were female) employed in the General Office at R.Y. Pickering and Co were earning an average of £2 10/- in their fortnightly pay. Telephone operators were receiving slightly less with their fortnightly pay averaging £2.[30] Clerical staff's pay in this company remained fairly stable, usually rising rather than decreasing, for the duration of the interwar period. However, it should be noted that there was a high turnover of female clerical staff in Pickering's offices and that most of the women were unmarried. These trends correspond to those reported by Selina Todd with regards to clerical workers in England during the same period. Todd concluded that 'by the mid-1930s, low-grade clerical employment had been redefined as a respectable, relatively well-paid, and secure occupation suitable for women prior to marriage'.[31]

Retail

Most of the women who worked within occupational group XXIII (commercial, financial and insurance) were employed as shop assistants and a large proportion of these female employees were single. Moreover, like clerical occupations, retail was an expanding sector in Lanarkshire, with those employed in group XXIII increasing by almost 2% between 1921 and 1931.[32] This increase was in keeping with national trends.

Co-operative stores were a large employer of women in Lanarkshire and were usually one of the first places female school leavers would apply to if seeking work as shop assistants. For example, when the Wishaw Co-operative advertised in January 1923 that it had two vacancies in one of its shops, eighty-one girls applied for the two

positions.[33] Moreover, potential employees of the Co-operative stores had to sit examinations as part of the interview process, demonstrating how selective the Co-operative was able to be in choosing its workers. In November 1928 the manager of the Wishaw Co-operative Store appointed Miss Gibb to work on the counter of the Tobacconist Department 'as the result of a perfect paper'.[34] Retail work was usually popular with young women as it was well paid in comparison to other sectors such as domestic service. However, there was also another reason that was less to do with money and more to do with image. As Todd has argued, during the interwar years 'the socially accepted hierarchy of women's work was in many areas based not on skill, but niceness'.[35] Thus, shop work was popular amongst young women as it conformed to working-class ideals surrounding respectability and 'proper' jobs for women.

Domestic Service

It was domestic service, however, that remained the largest employer of women in Lanarkshire during the interwar period. Domestic service, especially the kind that required the worker, usually a young woman, to move away from home, acted as an important resource for communities in Lanarkshire that were burdened by high unemployment. It removed the girl from her own home, making more space and relieving the family of the burden of keeping her. It also gave the girl herself a job, a home and some supervision, without which leaving home for a 'respectable' fourteen year old would have been unthinkable.[36]

In Lanarkshire, as in many working-class areas, girls were 'prepared' for domestic service in several important ways. As Pam Taylor has shown, girls in working-class homes received training in housework, laundry and other chores. Moreover, many were members of large families, which meant they learned to be resourceful in the care of smaller children. Above all, they understood that their main loyalty was to their family and there was a need to comply with parental decisions, which were reinforced, ideologically and economically, by the fact of the family's poverty.[37] This respect for authority was an important requirement of any domestic servant.

Domestic service may have been the main source of employment for young women, but it was by no means a popular one. The work was low paid, commanding 5/- to 10/- a week for school leavers and 15/- to £1 for women over eighteen, accommodation was often poor, hours were long and social life was severely restricted.[38] Thus, some women did offer resistance to the notion that domestic service was the only occupation that they should strive to enter. However, when they did so they were lambasted in the press and threatened with the refusal of unemployment benefit, as they would be classified as 'not genuinely seeking work'. This became a major complaint of the NUWM and the Hunger Marchers of the 1930s. For example, when Harry McShane and a deputation of Scottish Hunger Marchers were received by the Ministry of Labour at a meeting in June 1933, it was recorded that 'strong reference was made to the cases of women whose claims to unemployment benefit were disallowed because they refused to go into domestic service, or left it voluntarily'.[39]

Jennie Lee, the Labour MP for North Lanark between 1929 and 1931, was also particularly vocal on the situation confronting unemployed women. Lee challenged the fact that women were being denied welfare benefit if they refused to work in domestic service. As she told Parliament, 'the Labour Exchange is perhaps unwittingly being made an instrument in reducing the status and very often the wages of women once they become unemployed. Domestic service would not be so unpopular if it paid a decent wage and was an insured occupation'.[40] Nevertheless, the authorities continued to argue that domestic service was a 'natural' sphere of employment for women and it was repeatedly recommended, in and out of Parliament, as a solution to women's unemployment between the wars.[41]

Women who were part of the post-war generation that refused to enter domestic service, were a minority who went against general trends. Indeed, the number of women employed as domestic servants in Lanarkshire grew quite significantly over the decade 1921-1931, with an increase of 25% being recorded. However, the increase was far more dramatic when viewed at burgh level. For instance, over the same period, the Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw saw women's employment in the domestic service sector increase by 43% and in Airdrie Burgh the comparative figure was 66%.[42] This

increase was despite the fact that there was little demand in the Lanarkshire area for domestic servants and so most young women had to move away from home to cities like Edinburgh or Glasgow in order to procure work.

The demand for domestic labour was not confined to family homes but was also apparent in hotels, hospitals and private nursing homes. A move into domestic service, and consequently a move away from home and family, was often a disorientating experience for young women:

> I remember it was hard work, you had to work hard. The first one I went to I was looking after a wee boy of three years old. I think I spent a year and a half there but it wasn't a big house, it was just a two bedroomed flat with a living room and a bathroom and a kitchen. I slept in the kitchen and I had nowhere to keep my clothes, they were just kept in a case underneath the bed. It was in Paisley and I went there myself. I had to carry my case two miles to get a bus into Glasgow and the woman met me in Glasgow and took me. Then I left there and I went to a big house near Oban. It sat by itself, twenty miles from Oban, and I was there from April until October, and I was never home once in that time. I had my sixteenth birthday there. And that was hard work, it was nothing else but work, there was nowhere to go and you spent your life working.[43]

In entering domestic service, women became part of an occupational sector that was untouched by government regulation and which had no union representation. The regard in which the TUC and the STUC viewed the plight that faced women was not high. For example, the TUC made deputations to the government demanding that training schemes be implemented to alleviate the plight of unemployed women. Their schemes for training women were somewhat limited. For example, the 1933 TUC Women's

Conference suggested training in 'plain cooking, mothercraft, hygiene and physical culture', schemes hardly designed to give women training for employment. Instead, it demonstrated the extent to which domestic service was regarded by the government and the TUC as the one great area of potential employment for women. [44]

This concurs with Norris' argument that, during the period under question, 'perceptions of women's work' were closely bound up with values attached to the industry they were employed in, values which had 'little to do with the actual work performed'. Indeed, much domestic service involved hard physical labour and contact with dirt, lifting heavy weights, scrubbing floors and cleaning grates. Yet domestic service was thought pre-eminently suitable work for women, 'since it was performed in the home, albeit someone else's, and the home was women's traditional sphere'.[45] The same correlation could be found in the food and confectionery industry, as it corresponded with accepted notions of femininity. For example, when the Clydesdale Chocolate Company's new factory opened in Wishaw in April 1921, a local journalist noted that 'as the business develops increased opportunity will be found for the employment of women and girls at quite a congenial industry carried on under healthy conditions'.[46]

Despite there being little demand for domestic servants in the Lanarkshire area itself, many girls were still persuaded to gain training in that occupation. A non-residential training centre, known as Auchinraith House, was established in Bothwell and catered for the training of girls from the Motherwell, Wishaw and Hamilton areas. It did not have a great success rate. It was found by the Work for the Unemployed Committee of Wishaw that 40% of those who entered domestic service did not settle down in their situations, in most cases due to homesickness. It was recognised that, 'most employers fail to appreciate that trainees are not experienced domestics and that this is their first experience of living away from home'.[47] Girls suffering from homesickness were given one piece of advice, 'become attached to an organisation'. Nevertheless, the local press played a part in advertising the things to be gained by going into service. It was reported:

In these times domestic service offers more advantages to a girl than almost any other employment. From the point of view of health, variety and good conditions, there are few callings to compare with it. Not the least of its attractions, to the modern maid servant is 'a room of one's own' – a luxury out of reach of many of her more opulent sisters.[48]

Most young women did not find domestic service provided the advantages that the local press and authorities claimed. There was little empowerment to be gained through working as a servant and it lacked the prestige or respect that was reserved for the 'masculine' occupations in the area, such as coal mining and steel production. Service could be lonely work, with a domestic servant often being the only employee in small middle-class households. Moreover, while female workers in factories had freedoms of expression, both on the job and in their spare time, the domestic servant was trapped in the house with perhaps only half a day off a week. It was also the case that while other workers got their weekly pay to spend as it came in, the domestic servant was often paid at long intervals. As one former servant from the Bellshill area commented 'when you went to service your pay was £1 a month and you had your uniform to keep off of that. I didn't like it and came home and got a job in the pit and that was my job until I was married. I had quite a good two or three jobs in the colliery'.[49]

The failure of domestic service to appeal to women was recognised in the 1938 Annual Report of the Glasgow II District (that included Lanarkshire) representative for the Special Areas. The report stated how, of the women under twenty-one years of age who had applied for allowances from the Unemployment Assistance Board in that area, only one in every five had ever worked at all. The 'disinclination to enter domestic service' was emphasised by the fact that only four girls out of the aforementioned group had 'taken advantage of the domestic training courses provided under the auspices of the Central Women's Committee'. Of those women who had worked before but were now affected by unemployment, the representative wrote:

> The prejudice to domestic training necessitating future domestic employment is as strong as ever. The applicant who has had experience of shop or factory work is very reluctant to consider another form of livelihood even although she is aware that her prospects of returning to her former employment are very remote. She has been used to work with regular hours and does not wish to take up employment which might mean a curtailment of her leisure.[50]

The people who were in a position to hire servants also changed somewhat between the wars. In Lanarkshire some people within the middle classes, who were not affected by unemployment, found themselves in the privileged position of being able to hire domestic help. This was due to the fact that while the cost of living fell, salaries within traditional middle-class occupations did not. Moreover, the wages of domestic servants were particularly low, which made it easier for the middle classes to afford them. For example, one man who lived in Wishaw between the wars recalled how his father, an insurance superintendent, was able to afford the cost of a domestic servant:

> Well we always had a maid. A stay-in maid, always. My mother didn't keep too well, so my dad got a maid in Saltcoats and she stayed in, then we had one in Wishaw and she stayed in. We had two or three in Wishaw as a matter of fact and again we always got on and my parents always thought that they should be treated properly and given the same consideration as the family might, you know? And they would sit down with us to the meals and things like that, you know? We didn't look upon them as maids, we just thought of it as somebody in to help as a friend. Maids were common, maybe coming in everyday.[51]

Women who entered domestic service rarely thought of themselves as 'somebody in to help a friend' and often perceived that they were being defined as inferior or of a lower status; 'we were always quite common and they mostly looked down their noses, you were treated like dirt'.[52] Indeed, in their research on the recruitment of British women for domestic service in Australia between the wars, Hamilton and Higman have noted that much reluctance was caused by the 'exploitation and subordination associated with the occupation'. Government agents felt that 'domestic servants needed only to be called "domestic assistants", "household assistants", "resident aides" or even "sisters" in order to take a more positive view of their status'. Nevertheless, 'throughout the period "domestic servant" remained the most common term … emphasising both the "female" (domestic) and "subservient" (servant) markers of the role'.[53] This can be seen in the recollections of one woman from the mining village of Cambusnethan who worked in a private institution:

> When I left school I went to Edinburgh to work in a private nursing home. It was like a big hotel with old people living in it, rich old people, and you skivvied after them. I used to go there on a Monday morning and come back here on a Friday night, travel up and down on the bus from here to Edinburgh. Oh aye, quite a few of us went to work in Edinburgh. I never liked Edinburgh and I never liked Edinburgh people, they're no as free as people in the West of Scotland … Make beds and scrub floors and wash dishes and help the cook to make meals for the patients, that was it.[54]

Many women experienced feelings of resentment but, for both material and ideological reasons and fear of the future, they could not make these feelings a basis for actions that openly challenged authority. Many domestic servants came from large families where money was scarce. Under such circumstances, the overall economic pressure on the family was very tight and this was relayed to the children. Therefore, children knew from a young age that they would eventually have to contribute to the

family income, and to perform this function many girls had to enter service. Moreover, it has been argued by Taylor that the authority relations within working-class homes made girls accustomed to taking orders, and this in turn helped them adapt to the strict codes of domestic service. Indeed, girls were used to a situation where parents' words were law and their decisions final. This seems to have been especially the case in the relations between mothers and daughters.[55]

Employment Opportunities for Young Women

The family was still dominant in working women's lives during the interwar period. Indeed, it was often the case that girls did not decide for themselves about their careers, but that relatives and family friends secured openings and provided training.[56] Community connections also played some part in the employment opportunities that existed for women. For example, when interviewed about her memories of teaching in Craigneuk during the interwar period, one woman recalled how she managed to find employment:

> In those days there were more teachers than there were places for them, strange though it seems now and there were only two of us got into Motherwell or Wishaw. The rest of the young teachers had to go to country places. I think the reason why I got into Craigneuk was Mr. Cantley. He was the minister of what is now Craigneuk-Belhaven Church. He was on the school board and of course I had joined the Guide Company up there and the only other person who got into Motherwell or Wishaw was Margaret Muirhead. Now, that is, she was the Provost's daughter.[57]

Most women in Lanarkshire did not have such esteemed connections, and when the chance of work arose they had to act quickly, especially girls of school leaving age. Indeed, school boards in Lanarkshire noticed a marked increase in requests by parents for their daughters to be permitted to withdraw from school early, either to begin paid

work or to help in the family home. However, at times the permission of the school was not sought from parents. For example, a report by one attendance officer in September 1934 stated the case of a girl named Jean McGhie. It was found that she had 'attained the age of fourteen on 24 May' but 'had been withdrawn from Holytown School, without first obtaining the necessary Certificate of Exemption, and sent to work in Bellshill Hosiery Factory'. The case was allowed to pass but not without the parent and employer being issued with a warning 'that in the event of a similar case occurring again, both parties run the risk of being prosecuted'.[58]

The case mentioned above was a rarity, in the sense that the most common reason for permission being sought for a girl to leave school early was so that she might help with domestic chores, not so she might work outside the home. Indeed, the education of girls into their teenage years was undervalued by many parents in Lanarkshire; by that age it was felt that daughters were of more use in the family home than in a school. The chance of improving a daughter's job prospects through a full education was not always considered, especially under such economic circumstances.

In Lanarkshire, the future of any miner or steel worker's daughter was viewed as being in the home. Nevertheless, the school authorities did take a dim view of such opinions and often turned down applications for Exemption Certificates. For example, one education committee turned down an application for an Exemption Certificate in January 1935, made by the father of a thirteen year old, Jeannie Hyslop, for the reason that it was 'not considered desirable to allow the withdrawal of a girl of Jeannie's age from school attendance to take over domestic duties at home, especially as there is an unemployed boy of fourteen years at home who could readily give his mother the assistance she apparently requires'.[59] A similar judgement was made in the case of another girl in 1933, where it was noted that 'the girl only recently attained the age of thirteen, and that, with three unemployed members of the household, inclusive of a girl, fifteen years of age, the assistance of Cathie for domestic duties at home, would not appear to be necessary'.[60]

There was a contrast, however, in the decisions made in relation to boys and girls being allowed to leave school. For example, in a meeting of March 1933, the cases of two fathers seeking exemption certificates were considered. The first father wished his son to be allowed to leave school so that he could assist in his 'business of hawking'. This application was refused, despite the father in this case being able to provide his son with paid employment. On the other hand, the second father discussed in the meeting was granted the permission of the school authority to withdraw his fourteen year old daughter from school. She would not be moving into paid employment but the decision was felt to be the correct one because, 'the child is required to attend the house as her mother is in a helpless position'.[61]

The decision made by parents to keep their daughters at home, without first gaining the permission of the education authority, often brought them into conflict with the local attendance officer. One such incident was recorded in September 1933. Mr Gilmour, an attendance officer, called on the house of a Mrs Robertson because her daughter had not been attending school. He reported that 'I called and found the girl with an apron tied round her waist, and her arms bare up to above the elbow, and she was sweeping the outside stair … I asked Mrs Robertson why Anna was not at school. She said she was sick. I said "In my opinion she is not sick today"'.[62] The mother denied this and retorted that, 'if it was not for me and the like of me you would be on the Parish like a great many more'. This was just one of many such instances when girls were kept from school to help at home, because school was seen by some parents as being of little benefit to their children at a time when jobs were so scarce. Girls were of more value at home.

Married Women

In mining districts very few married women were in formal, paid employment. As Tina James has noted in her study of mining communities, 'the idea of married women working was discouraged as a risk to the health and welfare of children'.[63] The Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw was the most extreme example of this trend. In 1921 it was found that of the women listed as gainfully employed in Motherwell and Wishaw, 22.7% were married. This meant that just 1.3% of married women were recorded in the

1921 census as being 'gainfully occupied', a figure that was the lowest one recorded in any area of Scotland. However, although these figures are extremely low, it is necessary to realise that as the Depression continued, far more married women in Lanarkshire entered the formal economy. In Lanarkshire as a whole, by 1931, 28.6% of women in the female work force were married, compared to 25.7% in 1921. Similarly, by 1931, 26.5% of women working in Motherwell and Wishaw were married, an increase of almost 4% since 1921. This meant that almost 7% of married women in the Burgh were 'gainfully employed' by 1931, a five-fold increase since 1921.[64]

The employment of just over 800 married women in the formal economy hardly reflected a dramatic change. Indeed, it would appear that by the interwar period occupational trends with regards to the employment of married women had altered little since the height of industrialisation in Lanarkshire. In 1861, 3 out of 680 colliers' wives in Coatbridge were in paid employment, with the figure in Larkhall (which by the 1920s was part of the Burgh of Hamilton) being 37 out of 321. This shows that occupational trends in the 1920s and 1930s were in keeping with precedents that had been established in the mid-nineteenth century.[65]

It was more common in mining areas for women to participate in casual labour which included 'homeworking' and tasks such as 'taking in the washing' and minding children for others (see Chapter Two).[66] In some areas of South Lanarkshire, such as Larkhall, women were able to gain employment in seasonal work. The nearby Clyde Valley provided employment on farms and in fruit picking.[67] However, the data contained within the census does not take account of women who were employed in these ways, despite such work being an important source of income for many working-class women.

The compilers of the reports on the 1931 Census placed great emphasis on the ways in which married women were employed in the formal economy. Indeed, a noticeable feature is that the profiles of the counties and burghs paid less attention to the occupations of single women. Compilers seemed to subscribe to the idea that married women should not work outside the home and closer scrutiny should be placed on those

who did. What the statistics do show is that the few married women who did work tended to be involved in similar occupations to single women. The only difference was that a married woman was more likely to be employed in category XXVII (personal service), than in category XXIII (commercial occupations).

Those married women who were employed in personal service tended to be engaged in two distinct activities; they were either charwomen (daily helpers) or domestic servants. For example, in the Burgh of Hamilton, 48% of married women employed within the personal service occupations were charwomen, 29% domestic servants and 8% laundry workers. These trends were very similar to national averages. Indeed, in their study of women living in Stirling, Brown and Stephenson found that, characteristically work after marriage was in retailing, clerical jobs, charring and laundry work.[68] It should also be noted that as the Depression endured, the number of married women employed in charring increased in Lanarkshire; in Hamilton their numbers increased by 37% between 1921 and 1931.

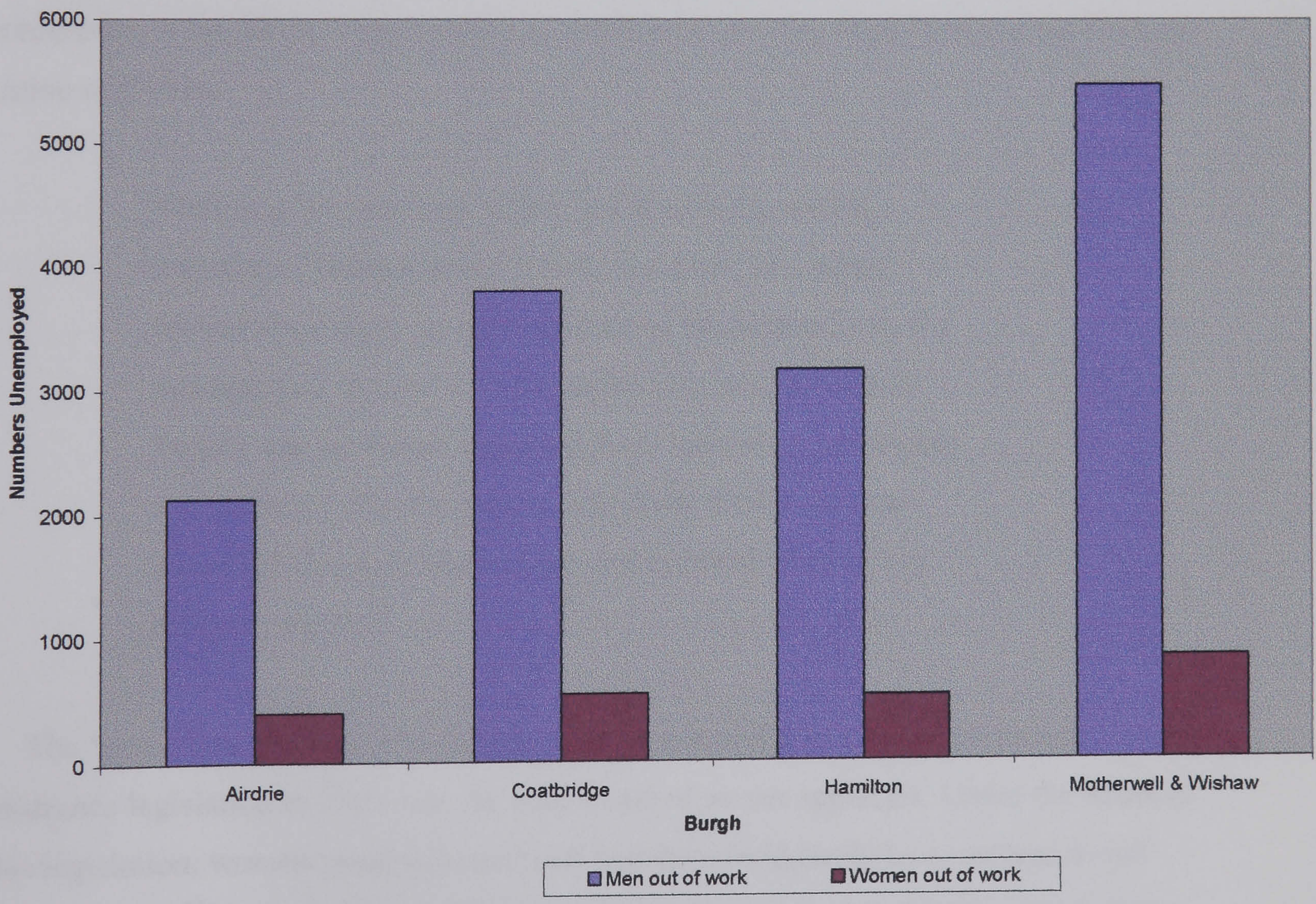
Charwomen were likely to have to resort to this type of work because they were either widows or the wives of husbands who were in irregular or low-paid employment. Chinn has noted that, while domestic service was unpopular amongst women, charring was not. He rationalised this by arguing that 'a charlady was more independent, she maintained her own home and could terminate her employment more easily if she wished, especially if her husband's earnings increased or if other part-time employment offered itself'.[69] A charwoman had to perform the 'rough and arduous tasks eschewed by the better-off of society' and at the same time develop 'attributes which were not needed by women belonging to other sections of society'. Nevertheless, while 'her triumph was gained at the expense of femininity' it was done so 'in favour of physical and mental strength and an independence of body and spirit'.[70] In making this argument, Chinn was suggesting that these women did not allow themselves to feel like victims and in many ways they gained some self-worth through their ability to provide for their families.

Female Unemployment

Unemployment was a genuine problem for women in Lanarkshire, particularly single women, but it was not judged to be so at the time, with their position being overshadowed by that of men. This was a concern of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades. As early as 1921 it noted in its Annual Report:

> There has been a marked tendency on the part of both the Government and of Local Authorities to assume that unemployment is an evil which mainly affects men, and on this assumption they have proceeded to make large grants, bring forward schemes and appoint committees, which have left women out of account.[71]

Figure 4.2 – Male and Female Unemployment in Lanarkshire (1931)



It cannot be denied that by 1931 a larger percentage of men were unemployed than women. In Airdrie and Hamilton, 26% of male workers were unemployed, in Coatbridge the figure was 27% and in Motherwell and Wishaw the number of men of working age out of work was 25%. This was higher than the national average of 18%. The corresponding figures amongst women were, 15% in Airdrie and 14% in the other three burghs. This was higher than the national average of 11%.

The general tenor of the 1920s and 1930s was one in which women's rights to earn a living were being challenged very forcefully by the State.[72] Its main vehicle for these ideas was the legislation passed at the time concerning the unemployed. In the 1920s the first of many versions of the household Means Test was introduced, which meant that a claimant's entitlement to benefit was judged not only on the basis of their own income, but also on that of other members of their family. According to calculations by Alan Deacon, approximately 3% of men and 15% of women were refused assistance on the grounds provided within the Means Test.[73] This concern was voiced at the annual conference of the STUC Organisation of Women in 1932 by Miss Brand of the National Union of Clerks:

> Women after strenuous effort had obtained a certain measure of independence which, however, was being filched from them by the operation of the Means Test. An unemployed woman who had exhausted her transitional benefit was no longer regarded as an individual person but was grouped with the family, and if the family income exceeded the scale allowed the unemployed woman was refused benefit.[74]

The 'genuinely-seeking-work' clause, that was introduced to unemployment insurance legislation in 1921, put the onus of proof on the applicant. Under the terms of this legislation, women running homes and families could easily be construed as not seeking work.[75] It was the Anomalies Act of 1931, however, that struck more than any other government measure at the married woman's right to benefit. The Act disqualified

women from unemployment benefit when they married, and it was not restored when they worked after marriage until they acquired a number of insurance stamps. The only exceptions were if a woman could prove that she was normally employed, would seek work and could reasonably expect to obtain work in the district.

Married women's participation in paid employment had previously depended on its informality, so that she could 'slip' back into domestic labour whenever there was a pressing need. Yet this was undermined by state procedures which demanded formality in terms of regular payment to the National Insurance Scheme or formal and frequent notification of unemployment. The labour market of the interwar years required 'total commitment to it, or total exclusion from it'.[76] As Savage has argued, in the past there had been no firm distinction between the formal and informal economy – particularly for women – 'state intervention directly enforced such a separation, and in the process tended to confine women to the informal (and household) economy'.[77] Significantly, by April 1933, of almost 300,000 claims refused under the Anomalies regulations, 84% were claims made by married women.[78]

The Scottish Hunger Marchers regularly drew attention to the unfairness of the Anomalies Act. For example, one deputation that was granted a meeting with a representative of the Secretary of State for Scotland, cited the case of a woman who had been affected by the Act. It was said that:

> A woman employed by the Gourock Rope Company aged forty-three years has been living apart from her husband for twenty-one years. She was employed for four years but is now unemployed and the Labour Exchange has disallowed benefit under the Anomalies Act as a married woman who is not normally employed.[79]

A Royal Commission enquiry into the disallowance of unemployment benefit and its results was conducted in 1931.[80] The areas surveyed included Clydeside, Tyneside, Liverpool, Manchester and several London boroughs. The commissioners were

interested in the fact that the sample of disallowed claimants they surveyed contained a disproportionate number of women and juveniles. They rationalised their findings thus:

> It is due to their greater sense of independence. Single women, young persons living at home and married women with able-bodied husbands can afford to take risks and follow their fancy more freely than men, particularly men with dependants. Indeed, any scheme of benefits which tries to discourage a light hearted attitude towards leaving or seeking employment will always debar a larger proportion of women and young persons than of men over twenty-one.[81]

The writers of the report did not hide their distain for female workers and, as shown above, they saw women as having flippant attitudes towards work. Such opinions had an impact on the strict unemployment insurance laws that the government chose to introduce. These laws were aimed at reducing public expenditure on the unemployed but in fact served to bolster and support the ideology which proposed that a woman's place was in the home.

A survey investigating the types of applicants in Lanarkshire who had made appeals to the Unemployment Assistance Board in September 1938 reported a number of findings. It was discovered that, of those women who applied for relief, 2% were married, 13% were widows or single persons with dependants and 85% were persons without dependants. Further note was made of the fact that 'the age-group figures show that 44% of the single women applicants are under twenty-one years of age' and that '41% of the total number of single women have been unemployed for over two years and 16% of them for over five years'. However, the compilers were not too concerned about these trends as, 'the problem of long unemployment is not so acute in the single women group as of course marriage tends to intervene to take persons out of this group and indeed out of the industrial field altogether'.[82]

Due to there being an almost dismissive attitude towards female employment in some sectors, there was a distinct lack of employment opportunities for female school leavers. This was supported by the findings of a report by the Motherwell and Wishaw Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment in 1933. The predicament facing girls was recorded in the following way:

> There is very little outlet for girls in the area. Employment is provided by the following industries, carried on in a comparatively small scale; silk spinning, tailoring and dressmaking, underclothing manufacture, hosiery manufacture, confectionery and preserve making and electrical appliance manufacture. Distributive trades also absorb a number of girls. The demand for domestics is negligible and is mostly for daily workers.[83]

When single women did find employment, they were often faced with the prospect of losing their job upon marriage. Indeed, marriage bars still operated in professions like teaching, while other occupations exercised an informal bar and, indeed, a preference for younger, unmarried workers.[84] For example, at a Teaching and Staff Committee meeting of the Lanarkshire Education Authority in October 1928, the case of Mrs Annie Jackson was considered. She had submitted an application to the Authority to request that she be appointed to the Authority's permanent staff of teachers. Mrs Jackson had been appointed as a Married Woman Temporary Teacher in 1919. It was decided by 'Minute of the Committee dated 11 September 1928 … that the engagements of married women teachers which terminated at or by the close of the last session should not be renewed so long as unmarried teachers within the county are available'.[85]

The Co-operative Society could also be accused of not always treating its female employees with the same equality as its male workers, despite its recognition of the precarious economic situation in Lanarkshire at the time. For example, in March 1931 the Wishaw Co-operative Society proposed that 'married women should be disqualified

and not be eligible to receive insurance money but that a percentage of their insurance money previous to marriage be handed back'.[86] As Rowbotham has stated, unemployment among women was made invisible by the marriage bar and by the tendency of women not to register because they could not claim unemployment benefit.[87]

There seemed to be a notion that work for women was a 'temporary stay' and thus the marriage bar was upheld with the minimum of disruption. The records of the general meetings of the Wishaw Co-operative Society provide numerous references to the resignation of women, such as a 'Miss Gilchrist, cash girl at Branch 5 Grocery on account of her approaching marriage'.[88] However, it would be wrong to assume that all women who left paid employment for marriage treated it as a sombre or negative experience. As Philips has argued, an engagement was treated as an important event in many workplaces, especially those where the vast majority of workers were women. The occasion was marked with appropriate rituals, such as the ring being passed around 'to bring it luck' and collections being made for wedding presents.[89] In some regions where there was little employment available for women after marriage, 'fulfilment centred on the formation of independent households, rather than on exerting long-term control over the labour process'.[90]

The Female Experience of Unemployment

While the impact of unemployment on the lives of women was played down by many sectors of society, for the women affected it could be a demoralising experience. An article that appeared in the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* in February 1935, investigated the ways in which unemployment was affecting men and women in the depressed areas. The article was very sympathetic to the situation confronting the unemployed men and how their 'nerves are on edge', but it also took time to consider the position of unemployed women. It was reported that, like men, 'the same state of affairs holds good for the girl or woman who has been employed, and who has lost her job. The areas which have been hardest hit are those where overcrowding is worst. There is not enough housework to be done in a single-roomed house to keep one woman employed all

day'.[91] Thus, when the Depression affected traditional female areas of employment, women, like men, felt disorientated and frustrated about losing their jobs:

> I started work in Harrison-Dixon's, it was a ladies' underwears [sic] and I had a big wage, seven and six because everyone else was making six and six but when I came eighteen, the lot of us when we came eighteen and were to go onto a big wage, we got our books. You were just told you were finished.[92]

With the availability of work for women decreasing as the Depression continued, some took the decision to leave the area. The 1931 census recorded that the Lanarkshire population had decreased by 1.5% since 1921. The equivalent figure for the whole of Scotland was 0.8%. The drop in population in 1921-31 was undoubtedly caused by the high rate of emigration in that decade. There was large scale migration to more prosperous areas such as London and the Midlands of England, while some young men and women travelled as far as the dominions and the United States.[93] As one woman remembered:

> I had a sister, a sister Sadie, she lived in London and Cathy [other sister] went there and Sadie got her a job in one of the hotels. She worked there and she did quite well. I mean it was educational for her because she was taught how to make beds and how to set tables and all this kind of thing. And she could buy herself clothes and send my mum some money and things like that.[94]

For the unemployed women who remained, they, like men, had access to clubs for the unemployed. These initiatives were closely linked to local churches and organised along strict sectarian lines. The Churches' Council of Airdrie provided occupational and recreational facilities for over 100 unemployed women and girls. The Flowerhill Church Women's Group started a scheme for the provision of clothing to, as they termed it, 'the

necessitous church-going Protestant unemployed'. Moreover, the Churches' Council provided the facilities for a cooking depot, which was run by women, many of whom were unemployed. They were able to supply soup four days a week for a penny per pint, stew two days a week and puddings six days a week, a penny a portion.[95] 1200 meals were served to the unemployed and their families weekly.[96]

By far the largest initiative conducted on behalf of the unemployed was that of Harkness House in Bellshill, where the object of the centre was to be of 'service to the community, particularly to those who are unemployed'. The location of Harkness House had been influenced by a survey of Lanarkshire, published by Glasgow University, that had disclosed that Bellshill was the most distressed place in the county.[97] Harkness House was started under the aegis of the Pilgrim Trust* in October 1931, with the initial intention being to provide 'educational and social welfare work for men and boys'. The centre was to be run on Settlement lines similar to the ones already operating in the Rhondda Valley, Merthyr, Gateshead and Doncaster.[98]

The Settlement Movement started in the last quarter of the nineteenth century as a link between 'the world of learning and the world of work'. Through such ventures, groups of university-trained students went to live in poor districts and made their common home 'a centre for every sort of social, recreational and educational activity'.[99] Indeed, women members of the Queen Margaret College Settlement Association of Glasgow had much to do with the establishment of Harkness House, with participating students viewing their involvement as an important type of social work.[100]

Although the original intention had been that Harkness House operate as a centre for unemployed men and boys, this outlook quickly changed owing to the keen interest shown by local unemployed women and the influence of the Settlement's warden, Miss Katherine C. Dewar. Dewar was appointed owing to her 'long and varied experience of

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* The Pilgrim Trust was established in Britain in September 1930, through a substantial charitable donation from the American multi-millionaire Edward Harkness. The trustees decided to use the money to 'assist agencies which were working to counteract some of the worst effects of continued unemployment, and to prevent many places where moral and intellectual leadership is absent from sinking into despair'. The minutes, annual reports and correspondence of the Pilgrim Trust can be found in London Metropolitan Archives.

social work' and due to the success she had found as the one time warden of a Birmingham Settlement.[101] She actively supported the involvement of local women in the Bellshill Settlement, as it was her opinion that all members of the community should be included.

When Harkness House was officially opened on 22 October 1931, the guest speaker, Professor James Bowman of Glasgow University, 'emphasised the novelty of such an experiment in a Scottish mining district, and the interest which has been taken in it throughout the west of Scotland'. The inaugural timetable for the craft centre, that was part of the Settlement, included classes on wood-modelling, needle craft and pottery. There were also classes on 'current events, modern poetry, drama and similar subjects'. Moreover, when the centre opened it had 145 members, most of whom paid a subscription of 2/6 a year.[102] This could be paid in instalments with a minimum first payment of three pennies being required and thereafter a penny a week or more until the cost of the subscription was met.[103]

As the Settlement began to grow, Dewar reported the importance it held in the community for the unemployed. She was sympathetic towards the miners and how, when they were made redundant, 'they went about like creatures with an inward bleeding wound, or they disappeared for a while, almost as if they could not even bear companionship'.[104] It was noted how, as time went on, the chief attraction amongst the unemployed members was the handiwork classes, as 'handwork gives less chance for that enslavement of the spirit to a particular faith, religious, political or social, of which Lanarkshire is at bottom very suspicious'.[105] Moreover, a large attendance by women was suggested by the classes that proved to be most popular among members i.e. (in order of preference) cobbling, gymnastics, lectures on health, cooking, photography, first-aid and French. The cookery lectures had much to do with home economics, with a class of February 1934 demonstrating how to make 'a three-course dinner for four persons for two days at a cost of two shillings'.[106]

Despite the outward success of the Settlement, it only survived until the mid-thirties. It was viewed by the Scottish Council for Community Service, the body that oversaw

the Scottish projects of the Pilgrim Trust, as not attracting enough members to legitimise its existence and the funds being expended on it. The Harkness House project ended in September 1936.

Women Workers and Industrial Action

In 1991 Eleanor Gordon wrote of the persistence amongst historians, feminist ones included, of legitimising 'the notion of the passive woman worker'.[107] She criticised the perpetuation of the argument that, historically, women's entry into the labour market was mediated by their subordination as a gender, and that this accounted for women's segregation into low-paid, low-status jobs. Gordon was critical of the general trend of women's labour market position being 'posited as an explanation for their quiescence and passivity in the workplace'.[108] Sarah Boston has also been critical of such generalisations concerning female behaviour and unionisation trends in the workplace during the period under question. Boston has cited how female workers were often accused by the TUC General Council of apathy, but at the same time there was a 'general apathy by trade unions towards women'.[109] This view has been endorsed in the work of McIvor. He has demonstrated how, in Scotland, women were 'largely neglected by the male dominated unions' who 'absorbed and reflected the sexist values of their day rather than championing the cause of gender equality'. Moreover, female trade union membership was lower in Scotland than in England, and women's representation in the decision-making positions and the hierarchy of unions was marginal.[110]

Women were also in an inferior position when it came to wage levels. The Trades Boards created two separate minimum wage rates within regulated trades for the same occupations, with the female rate averaging 60% of the male.[111] The debates at the Scottish Trade Union Annual Conference in 1918 revealed the situation which was facing women workers in the post war years. Charles Robertson of the Motherwell Trades Council asserted that the role of women in industry during the Great War had had a 'depressing effect upon public morality' and that women's 'natural sphere' was in the home to which they should now return.[112] Women tried to confront these issues using various forums. Eleanor Stewart, a Scottish feminist and chairperson of the Annual Conference for the Organisation of Women, made numerous appeals on behalf

of female workers. Stewart called for unity and, during her opening speech at the 1934 Women's Conference, she argued that:

> Recognising that we are workers, our desire is that instead of being divorced from male workers, our aims and objects in the factory, mill and workshop are essentially the same. We do not wish to be segregated, or to be regarded as in any way antagonistic to our male comrade … We must work, where work can be found. Necessity compels us. But it is also necessary that we receive a wage which will maintain us in decency and comfort without our having to depend upon the male members of the family'.[113]

In spite of numerous obstacles, some Scottish women were still attracted to joining a trade union. For example, the trade unions affiliated to the STUC Organisation of Women Committee in 1929 represented 49,412 women. Of these, 23,381 women were employed in textiles and clothing manufacturing. A further 12,037 were occupied in food and distributive trades and were largely employees of the Co-operative Societies. 5515 women worked in printing or similar occupations and 6000 women were members of general unions.[114] Nevertheless, as Annemarie Hughes demonstrated in her research on female political militancy on Clydeside, the extent of women's union membership lagged far behind that of men, as shown in the following table:

Table 4.1 - Trade Union Membership on the Clyde, 1923-1924

Region	Female Members	Percentage of total employed	Male Members	Percentage of total employed
Scotland	78,470	18.8	457,962	37
Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire	11,710	13.7	117,264	37.9

Source: A. Hughes, '"A Rough Kind of Feminism": The Formation of Working-class Women's Political Identities, Clydeside, c.1919-1936', University of Strathclyde, PhD. Thesis, 2001, p.98.

These figures show that, in the workplace, trade unionism failed to appeal directly to women. Indeed, in Lanarkshire alone, men were nearly three times more likely than women to be members of a trade union.[115] This was despite the initial enthusiasm demonstrated by some Lanarkshire women towards trade unionism in the years immediately following the First World War. For example, in January 1920 the Wishaw branch of the National Farmers' Union was keen to form a women's section in the area.* A Miss Barr of Carluke, who addressed a meeting regarding the matter, spoke of the unpaid work that was performed by many farmers' wives and their children and how the object of the Farmers' Union was, 'the amelioration of the untoward conditions under which they at present laboured'.[116]

Despite some initial enthusiasm, it was not until the late thirties that trade unionism began to find increasing resonance with Lanarkshire women. The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW) made particular inroads, especially amongst the various laundry workers in the region. For instance, in October 1937 a branch of the NUDAW was formed by the workers at the Harkness Laundry. Their reasons for forming a union were that 'the wage rates paid [there] were not as high as those operating in a neighbouring laundry where the workers were organised'.[117] In the same month, the workers at the Glencairn Laundry near Motherwell, also formed their own branch of the NUDAW.[118] Nevertheless, as the Second World War approached, the majority of female workers in Lanarkshire still remained outside the structures of trade unionism.

Boston has linked this failure by women workers to unionise to the fact that male trade unionists 'did not realise that unless they offered women improved wages, opportunities and conditions, women were unlikely to show interest'.[119] However, other commentators have contradicted this view and have cited women's primary identification with the home and family and the 'congruity between domesticity and passivity' as acting as a 'brake on the development of trade union organisation and collective action' amongst women.[120] However, in studying workplace militancy among

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* It must be noted that while the Farmers' Union had a strong base amongst the middle classes, there was also a working-class element to its membership.

women in Dundee's jute factories during the early decades of the twentieth century, Gordon has found evidence that challenges such gender-laden assumptions:

> The evidence of Scottish women's industrial action supports the importance of workplace conditions and circumstances in explaining their collective action. The issues at the roots of the disputes and the predominance of wage demands indicate that women's primary concerns in the workplace cannot be assumed to be derived from their association with the private sphere.[121]

This raises the question of the extent to which women in Lanarkshire participated in industrial action. Women in Lanarkshire were no strangers to participating in strikes (see chapters Five and Six), but they usually did so as the dependants of workers, not in the role of disgruntled employees. Moreover, many women viewed strike action with a great deal of alarm owing to the dire economic consequences that often resulted from strikes. For example, in April 1926 the Women's Guild of Empire held marches and demonstrations throughout Lanarkshire in protest at the proposed miners' strike. The women called these marches 'demonstrations for industrial peace' and viewed them as warnings against 'the disastrous and costly weapon of a strike'. In a letter supporting the protests, Flora Drummond wrote to the *Hamilton Advertiser* that, 'it is because the women have seen the terrible consequences of past strikes and lock-outs that they are determined not to have anymore'.[122]

As argued by Gall and Jackson, the data which is available does not allow for a comprehensive review of strike activity in Scotland before the Second World War. The published strike statistics for that period do not offer an analysis of strikes by 'region'.[123] The most detailed analysis of strikes in the UK prior to the Second World War was that completed by Knowles.[124] He attempted an analysis of strikes by region, with Scotland being seen as one region, and focused on only large disputes. In Knowles' classification 'principal stoppages' included only those strikes that involved more than 1000 workers.[125] Thus, it can be argued that Knowles' study was essentially

biased towards male workers, as stoppages at this time in industries where women predominated, rarely involved more than 1000 people and would therefore not be included in his analysis of strike activity.

A factor to be considered when measuring female strike propensity is that the nature of the disputes themselves often meant that they gained little publicity. For example, women's strikes tended to be spontaneous and of relatively short duration, many lasting only a matter of hours. Indeed, in researching the strike activities of female thread workers in Paisley, MacDonald characterised their strikes as being 'independent, spontaneous actions' which 'posed as the clear antithesis of the respectability fostered by the craft unions, yet as such was of the utmost importance as a defining feature of female protest'.[126] Moreover, the type of protests that women favoured cause problems for the researcher. Due to their short and 'spontaneous' nature there are few detailed references to strikes by women in newspapers and often the accounts that do exist are fragmentary and incomplete, rarely being followed through to the conclusion of a dispute.[127]

Having argued that strikes involving women appear to have been rare and were typically of a short duration, it is necessary to consider why this may have been. Gordon has suggested that the spontaneous strikes were a rational response to women's structural position in the labour market. After all, 'the brevity of the disputes meant that the backing of an organisation which could provide financial assistance was not so necessary as for a lengthy strike'.[128] The fact that many women workers remained outside trade union structures meant that they developed methods of protest that were not dependant on union involvement in the form of negotiations and bargaining. Alternatively, Chinn saw the fact that women were rarely involved in industrial disputes as being very much linked to their domestic responsibilities, as 'women were compelled to work and could not afford the luxury of dissenting from employers' opinion'.[129] Both these explanations carry equal plausibility, in that they consider the reality of women's working lives and that their positions in the workplace were affected by many mitigating factors. Indeed, these issues will shortly be discussed in relation to two strikes that occurred in Lanarkshire. However, a brief analysis of female strike patterns

in other areas of Britain will be provided first, making it easier for events in Lanarkshire to be placed within a national context.

Female strikes often took a quite distinctive form. Gordon has identified certain traits that characterised the nature of female protest in Dundee. These included 'behaviour and gestures which challenged patriarchal authority by ridicule and teasing'. Moreover, the demonstrations were not only carried on during working hours, but frequently spilled over into the evenings with crowds of women converging on the High Streets and indulging in what was usually described as 'unruly' behaviour.[130] MacDonald discovered similar behaviour amongst striking women in Paisley. These protests included marches through the town, with 'hooting and jeering'.[131] She has attributed their actions to 'an earlier radical tradition', but has cautioned against Knox and Corr's assertion that female strike behaviour was the transportation of female leisure activities into the sphere of industrial conflict.[132] Instead, she argues, it should be recognised as a 'tradition which was regularly brought into play by both men and women in protests and celebrations unconnected with the world of work'.[133]

Research elsewhere in Britain has shown that this behaviour was not particular to 'militant' Scotland, although at the time Glasgow and its surrounding areas did claim the reputation of being the 'Red Capital' of the British Empire.[134] Jill Norris' investigation of the Macclesfield silk industry during the interwar period, noted the example of a large dispute in 1930 that involved mainly women at the Neckwear Ltd factory, a making-up firm whose management attempted to introduce a wage cut in October 1930. The great majority of the 800-strong workforce, mainly young women, refused to accept it. The dispute continued for five months, during which time the National Silk Workers' Association (NSWA) tried to negotiate with the factory owners. However, while the officials talked, the workers held noisy demonstrations and mass pickets, with there being no suggestion that the demonstrations were organised by the union leaders. The eventual outcome of the dispute was that the lower rates were amended but the original pay not fully restored.[135]

Mike Savage's research on the Lancashire cotton industry produced similar findings to Norris. However, he found issues of gender and patriarchy to be of less significance than that found by the previous authors. Savage contended that during the major industrial disputes of the late 1920s and early 1930s, men and women usually did stand firm together. This was caused by the extent to which many families depended on the wages of mothers and daughters. For example, in north east Lancashire the removal of women from the labour force would have reduced family income and this could not have been compensated for by the increased wages of the male weaver, whilst in other areas there were too few men to make this a viable proposition.[136] Savage perceived in Lancashire a change in the way women workers viewed the labour process after the First World War. Before the War, the workplace 'offered little potential for women to mobilise as women … and it is unsurprising that many women desired to move out of paid employment into the home'. However, Savage contended that the following changes occurred after the War:

> Although women's capacities for collective action increased, they were less likely to be used in distinctly feminist ways. Whilst before 1914 any attempt to mobilise collectively inevitably questioned patterns of patriarchal authority more generally (since these were present in the workplace) after 1914 it was possible to organise over purely work based issues.[137]

Having considered female strike activity in other areas of Britain, it is now possible to focus on two strikes in Lanarkshire and place them within a similar context. This reveals the extent to which women workers in the area behaved in ways that were apparent throughout Britain during the interwar period. The first example concerns the employees of the Richmond Laundry Company in Rutherglen, which employed close to 800 girls and women. The employees 'struck work' on 4 March 1935 and supplied their employers with a list of demands. These demands included;

1. Recognition of their trade union, the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW).
2. Two weeks holiday with pay.
3. A general increase in wages.

The employers told the press that they felt that the workers did not have any grievances as the company currently met the 'standard rate of wages prescribed by the trade union', and the women were paid 'as much as 3/6 per week more than in other firms and in the last twelve years have distributed in the form of workers' service bonus something in the region of £18,000'.[138] The workers were not persuaded by this argument and they commenced picketing the laundry from early the next morning, so as to catch any 'blacklegs' on their way to work. Strikers who were not on the picket line spent most of the day in the Co-operative Hall in Cambuslang, but in the evening they marched from the hall to the Richmond Park premises 'where they awaited the appearance of the workers'. On the first evening following the walk-out by strikers, the remaining workers 'came from the works in relays to the tramway cars, but it was slow progress and when surging round one of the tramway cars some of the strikers became very threatening and were rushed back and warned by the police'. On this particular occasion a pane of glass in one tramcar was smashed.[139]

On the following evening of 6 March, the strikers became more aggressive. Stones were thrown at the police, forcing them to make a baton charge. When the police charged, the crowd 'scattered in all directions' only to re-group and throw more stones. Following another baton charge by the police some members of the crowd were 'knocked down' and others taken to police vans. However, events that night did not cease at the laundry. The crowd made its way to Cambuslang where 'a body gathered numbering about 600'. They then 'proceeded through some of the streets in the lower parts of the town and as they passed a number of windows in dwelling houses were broken'.[140] While the women had been protesting throughout the area, the Cambuslang Trades and Labour Council made an effort to settle the strike. The Secretary and Chairman had an interview with the Managing Director of the laundry company, but the conference terminated without any result.

Despite the initial failure in negotiations, the strike came 'to an abrupt end' on 10 March, 'just as Glasgow laundry workers were being urged not to undertake any work which might be sent to them from the Richmond Park Laundry Company'. The strike resulted in the women's trade union being given recognition by the company and a promise of negotiations with regard to wage increases being conducted on the resumption of work. The NUDAW and the Richmond Park Laundry Company issued a joint statement explaining that, 'the difficulties which brought about the strike at the Richmond Park Laundry have been overcome and work will be resumed at the laundry at nine a.m. this (Monday) morning by mutual consent'.[141]

The repercussions of the laundry strike went beyond the six days that it lasted. In April of 1935, four women were brought before Hamilton Justice of the Peace Court, charged with breach of the peace and assault at the time of the strike. The women were all from the same family and employed at the laundry, with Marion McLaren being the mother, and Mary Mullen, Christian Holden and Ellen McLaren her three daughters. Marion McLaren was singled out for her alleged assault of Christina Clark, a fore-woman at the Richmond Park Laundry, on 6 March. All the accused 'denied conducting themselves in a disorderly manner, forming part of a crowd which threw stones at or in the direction of Christina Clark and her sister Janet Clark'.

During the hearing, Christina Clark testified to the court that, on making her way home from work with her sister and two other employees of the laundry, they had been 'accosted by a group of about fifty women and children'. Moreover, she related how 'the four accused were in the front of the crowd' and it was Marion McLaren who pushed the witnesses on the shoulder and shouted to the crowd, "come on, boo them'. The assembled crowd responded to McLaren's taunts and shouted such expressions as 'dirty swine', 'scabs' and 'black legs' at Christina and her companions, while throwing ashes, sticks and stones, and trying to 'trip them'. The court found Marion McLaren and Christian Holden guilty, with the women being sentenced to £3 or twenty days imprisonment and £1 or ten days imprisonment respectively. The charges against the other women were found to be not proven.[142]

The strike at the Richmond Park Laundry shares many characteristics with the instances of industrial unrest involving women identified earlier in this text. The strike at Rutherglen was of a short duration, lasting only six days and, as we have already seen, MacDonald identified this as a 'defining feature of female protest'.[143] The women struck over wage demands and greater recognition for their union, the NUDAW, giving legitimacy to Gordon's theory that 'women's primary concerns in the workplace cannot be assumed to be derived from their association with the private sphere'.[144]

The protests in Lanarkshire also followed the patterns of crowd behaviour demonstrated in both Paisley and Dundee. For example, the demonstrations were not restricted to working hours, with crowds of women marching from Rutherglen to nearby Cambuslang in the evenings. The women indulged in 'unruly behaviour', such as breaking windows and throwing stones, and clearly challenged patriarchal authority, the ultimate expression of that being their disrespect for the law-enforcing role of the police. Moreover, as in Paisley, the strikers resorted to 'hooting and jeering', with words such as 'swine' and 'blacklegs' being in common usage.

The actions of the strikers were also similar to those displayed by women textile workers protesting in England. As in Macclesfield, noisy demonstrations and protests were not organised by the unions, but by the women themselves. Moreover, there is evidence of men and women standing firm together, as they did in Savage's study. The press made note of the fact that in Rutherglen men joined the picket lines and demonstrations, some of them also being arrested by the police.[145] There is also evidence of the women relating to each other as workers, not just as wives and daughters. Indeed, they were demonstrating over work-based issues and gaining the support of women from other regions who were occupied in the laundry sector. After all, it was the threat by Glasgow laundry workers that they might not 'undertake any work sent to them from the Richmond Park Laundry Company' that spurred on the conclusion of talks between officials.[146]

The behaviour of the laundry workers was not characteristic of 'the passive woman worker'. During the period under study, there was little or no precedent of workplace militancy among women in Lanarkshire. Nevertheless, the dispute conformed to all the characteristics of strike behaviour demonstrated in areas with high female economic participation i.e. the textile regions of Dundee, Paisley and Lancashire. This would suggest that, despite Lanarkshire's economy and culture being dominated by masculine occupations and the ideology of domesticity, during the Depression women were capable of developing strong identities which were not associated with home and family, but the public domain of the workplace.

Not all women workers in Lanarkshire, however, responded to calls for strike action, especially when union membership in their place of employment was low. Such an example is the failed 'picket' of the Seller Silk Factory in May 1933. The women who tried to excite a strike were representatives of the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union and the local Trade Union Organising Committee. *The Motherwell Times* printed a statement by the union explaining that:

> Their organisation is standing for the right to maintain its organisation in this factory. It is stated that a number of the workers were suspended for no other reason than that they were members of a trade union and they were insisting on the Trade Board rate of wages being paid. The workers suspended state that their places have been filled by non-union labour.[147]

Despite the strike notice by the union, 'the call to strike was not responded to'. The owner of the silk factory, Mr James Spence, disagreed with the union, stating that the Trade Board rate of wages were being paid and that his staff were 'loyal and contented'. Moreover, it was reported by a newspaper journalist who visited the factory that, 'far from wishing to strike, or, indeed, showing any sign of discontent, the girls were singing at their task … the girls commenced to sing before The Times representative left the building'.[148]

One can only speculate as to the reasons why the young women at the Seller Factory chose not to strike. An obvious answer would be that they genuinely had no grievances with their employer and saw little to be gained by following the union's advice. However, a factor that should be noted in this instance is the age and marital status of many of the workers in the silk factory, in comparison to those working in the Richmond Park Laundry. The textile industry in Lanarkshire was a sector dominated by single women, whereas laundries were a major employer of married women. Most women employed in the textile industry realised that upon marriage or once their wages became too high, there was every likelihood that they would lose their jobs. Textile factories were not a long term employer of women, which meant there was little incentive to join a union. Moreover, unlike married laundry workers, single women usually did not have families to support. As has been discussed, the main reason that married women in Lanarkshire were 'allowed' to work in the public domain was because their husbands or sons could no longer solely support the family unit and more money was needed. This would give married women some incentive to strike over wage rates, although not necessarily unionisation, in the workplace.

It can be contended that the failure of the Seller Strike says more about the unpopularity of unionisation among women in Lanarkshire than it does of female strike propensity in the area. The strike at the Seller Factory was to be predominantly about union issues, whereas the laundry strike was mainly concerned with pay and working conditions, making it more popular amongst women, particularly at a time when some had become the family breadwinners. This proves to a certain extent that because women were not integrated into the formal economy and labour movements in the same way as men were, women were not influenced to any degree by the dominant ideology of unionism and thus were less likely to strike in its defence.[149]

The protests described above relate to women who were in employment during the Depression, but this raises the question of the extent to which unemployed women chose to highlight their plight in public. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, the NUWM was the main political body that campaigned on behalf of the unemployed during the interwar years. However, the NUWM in Lanarkshire was slow to encourage

women to join its ranks and it was unemployed men who were the main beneficiaries of its activities. Nevertheless, unemployed women still protested alongside the NUWM and other labour organisations and with men who were in the same position as themselves. For example, in February 1935 a demonstration involving local unemployed men and women took place in Coatbridge, which was organised by the Labour members of the Town Council. It was estimated that 'over 6000 persons took part in the demonstration', with the ILP and the Communist Party marching alongside the 'Official Labour Group'. The Chief Constable monitoring the march noted that 'the official Labour Group who formed more than 90% of the demonstrators carried no banners or slogans, but the ILP party [sic] and the Communist Party carried red banners and slogans such as "Not a penny off", "Not a worker to slave camps", etc'.[150]

Similar scenes were witnessed in Motherwell in March 1936, when a demonstration was held in Clyde Park by the United Trades Councils of Lanarkshire. As well as there being detachments from Airdrie, Coatbridge, Bellshill, Uddingston, Cambuslang, Hamilton and Blantyre, there were also two brass bands, two pipe bands and three flute bands in attendance. It was estimated that 4600 persons were involved, 'which included women and children'. However, the Detective Sergeant who reported on the gathering noted that:

> The majority of the males present were youths who appeared to be taking part for the sole purpose of being present for any fun that should accrue and when [the] meeting was being addressed they spent their time in consuming lemonade and playing with girls who happened to be in the park.[151]

Whether the women who were present were any more attentive is not mentioned by the writer. However, what both these examples show is that when unemployment did affect them, women were capable of organising and demonstrating alongside men. This was despite the popular conception that unemployment was something that did not

particularly bother women, as their primary identification was with home and the family.

Conclusion

It has been the purpose of this chapter to show that during the interwar years in Lanarkshire, work did play an important part in the lives of many women. Obviously women never participated in paid employment to the same degree as men, or suffered the same levels of unemployment, but work still formed an important part of many women's lives and contributed significantly to their memories of the time. Moreover, they sought and held down jobs in a region that was highly masculine in character and patriarchal in outlook.

It has been argued that women's motives for working differed according to circumstance. Duty and obligation to family was a significant reason for some women 'choosing' to work. Indeed, for the many young women who entered domestic service between the wars, this was their prime motive. They entered it through lack of an alternative, and because of the great need they felt to be contributing to the family income. On the other hand, some occupations enabled women to experience pride in their work and to exercise a degree of independence, not unlike their male counterparts. Working relationships could develop in factories and shops, something that was out of the question for lone domestic servants. Women's workplace culture was extremely complex. It was focused upon both surviving the workplace, but also escaping it upon marriage.[152]

The increase in the number of married women who worked in Lanarkshire during the Depression, despite the restrictive employment practices of the time, is further proof of the role played by many wives and mothers in contributing to the family income, at a time when their husbands were no longer able to do so. In mining communities in particular, wives entered employment amidst a culture where there was a strong 'working-class stigma' against the married woman who worked.[153] It cannot be denied that the work married women did, for example charring, was usually of a low status, but the small income that accrued from it was enough to mean the difference between

starvation and survival for many families. On the other hand, it was also the case that Government employment legislation between the wars (marriage bars, the Anomalies Act) placed constraints on married women trying to enter or remain in employment. The 'ideology of housewifery' was accepted by many women, but rather than being seen as the cause of women's labour market position, it should be seen as a response to a new set of constraints and potentials.[154]

The women who could not find work, or lost that which they had, did not treat the situation lightly. They felt the same grievances as men, although their position was largely ignored at the time. Organisations like the NUWM limited the participation of women within its ranks for much of the Depression. However, they still protested alongside men, and the presence of women in demonstrations by the unemployed highlighted the extent to which unemployment affected female workers. Women were increasingly prepared to come out on the streets and be heard, rather than restricting themselves solely to the 'educational and recreational activities' of clubs for the unemployed. Indeed, these women had to deal with the same problems and rituals of unemployment that confronted men. Weekly visits to the unemployment exchange were not enjoyed, with women often being judged more harshly than men. As one woman said of the staff she had to confront when she 'signed-on': 'they were lucky, they had a job. They looked down their noses at you. And there definitely was a class system, you couldn't get away from that. They would think they were a class above'.[155]

This chapter has also questioned the image of the 'passive female worker'. Evidence has been provided of women participating in instances of industrial protest and relating to each other as workers. Trade unionism may have been unpopular amongst Lanarkshire women, but this did not in turn affect female strike propensity. Moreover, such trends relate to one of the main contentions of this thesis, namely that traditional gender roles and power relations were challenged under the extreme conditions of the Depression. Married women's increasing participation in the formal economy went some way towards increasing female social and political activism, although as shall be discussed later in this work, it was on the 'home front' of welfare politics that they played the most crucial role.

Thus, the workplace did feature in the lives, and thereafter memories, of a significant number of Lanarkshire women between the wars. Women identified with their work and, although most single women knew that they would leave employment upon marriage, up until that point they valued both the financial rewards and status to be gained through working. Of course, an important outcome of the Depression was that marriage did not always signal the end of a woman's working life, with financial necessity forcing her to return to the workplace. However, as has been recognised by other studies, it would take the Second World War to remove the stigma that accompanied a woman's decision to enter the workforce in a masculine environment like Lanarkshire:

> There was very few working because Airdrie and Coatbridge were dead towns. There was no work for the men, never mind women, you know. You see it was just before the Second World War started, that things began to pick up, people did get work. And women began to dress better and have a better life.[156]

END NOTES

[1] For examples of such views see: J .D. Young, *Women and Popular Struggles. A History of Scottish and English Working-class Women 1850-1984* (Edinburgh, 1985); M. Pugh, 'Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism 1930-1950' in H.L. Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 1990) pp.144-66; S. Walby, *Patriarchy at Work. Patriarchal and Capitalist Relations in Employment* (London, 1986).

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CHAPTER FIVE

PROTEST AND ORGANISATION

INTRODUCTION

The rare involvement of working-class women in political, ideological or trade union movements before the Second World War can lead to the conclusion that they were weak and powerless. Such a conclusion would be flawed. As Carl Chinn argued, 'the poorest women did not have the time to consider the merits of organised co-operation, to debate a different social and political system, to demand a more comprehensive medical system … Poverty alone united the women of the urban poor'.[1] This hypothesis also holds true for Lanarkshire women to some extent. However, certain circumstances did have the power to make wives and mothers unite and form into organised groups.

Female 'social activists' were usually motivated by the desire to improve the living conditions of women and their families. In doing so, as Koven and Michel argued, women were 'extending domestic ideals into public life'.[2] For example, this can be seen when women united in public to campaign against the Means Test. This type of legislation was a threat to 'domestic ideals', as it reduced already meagre budgets and often resulted in the disintegration of the family unit.

The following two chapters will discuss the issue of 'welfare politics' and the impact it had on Lanarkshire women. This chapter will consider the nature of female protest and organisation in Lanarkshire by focusing on the actions of women within formal labour movements and political groupings. The next chapter will be a continuation of the themes mentioned in this section, but will focus more closely on the actions of women who chose to campaign and organise themselves outside formal political parameters.

At the onset of the Depression, women were not necessarily aligned with political groups or even encouraged to be part of them, but they still managed to gain publicity for their various welfare concerns. This could be seen in the case of the 1926 General Strike. Women, both young and old, living within conventional family structures, or heading households, became involved in industrial action. As Gordon has accurately stated in her own work about women and industrial action, 'this indicates the need to

dispense with notions of exceptionalism and specially constructed explanations to account for militant collective action by women'.[3]

The main reason for female involvement in such public activities was in order to highlight the threat that unemployment and falling wages posed to, as the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild once described it, 'the holy office of motherhood' and that 'most sacred place on earth', the home.[4] In protecting 'the home', mothers within working-class communities exercised a power which contrasted with the general lack of authority exercised by women of more prosperous classes. This power accrued from the central place they occupied in their families, with mothers being aware that their position 'was reliant on the physical dependence of husband and children upon her'.[5] Thus, as the Depression persisted, more women started to organise within formal political groups.

Following the miners' strikes of 1921 and 1926, women's allegiance to welfare politics gained momentum, as demonstrated by the political organisations that they chose to support. It can be argued that the ability shown by Lanarkshire women to unite in support of welfare issues, whether through the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, the Labour Party Women's Sections, the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild or the United Mineworkers of Scotland Guilds, throws doubt on Macintyre's assertion that, 'economic participation has been the critical precondition of political mobilisation by women'.[6] Macintyre argued that women's political impact was somewhat greater when they were engaged in the formal economy. He cited the Vale of Leven, a textile-dyeing locality, as being an example of this, as there was more industrial and political participation by women there than in the mining communities of Mardy in Wales and Lumphinnans in Fife.[7]

In opposition to Macintyre's view, this chapter will contend that the Lanarkshire case proves that economic activity should not be considered as having been a precondition for the political mobilisation of women in the working-class areas of Britain between the wars. The defence of family life and the lure of welfare politics were motivation enough for these female 'militants'.

The Miners' Strike of 1926

The opportunities for women to become involved in political and occupational disputes were apparent long before the turbulent years that followed the First World War. Women had been heavily involved in the many strikes that had occurred in Lanarkshire since the mid-nineteenth century. They rarely participated in strikes or lockouts as workers, but rather as the dependants of the many miners and steel workers who were employed in the area. Indeed, women were aware that labour in the mine and the domestic economy were 'obviously and inextricably linked'.[8] The household's well-being depended on the health, strength and employment of the wage earning males of the family. Thus, a husband's falling wages or hazardous working conditions were as much of a concern to his wife as they were to him. She was the person responsible for managing the family budget, and the individual who was held accountable for the welfare of the family, both by her husband and society at large.

It was the right of a mother to defend her family from the 'unfair' practices of colliery owners and local authorities. Traditional domestic concerns, such as feeding the family and the state of general living conditions, were undoubtedly affected by the falling wages of a husband or son. Thus, during a strike or an industrial dispute, women were able to highlight problems that were usually relegated to the domain of the private sphere and present them as issues of political concern and worthy of a public platform. The most obvious and extreme example of this was during the Miners' Strike of 1926.

The Miners' Strike lasted for seven months but it had its origins in the nine-day General Strike of May 1926. The immediate concern of the strike which began at midnight, 3 May, was the refusal of the Government to continue the subsidy to coal owners that had been granted on 'Red Friday' (31 July 1925). However, its underlying causes were of a more long-term nature. A transitory post-war boom had, by 1921, given way to a slump which served to underline Britain's relatively weak world position. The unemployment, which occurred as a result of the slump, also meant a weakened position for the labour movement. Both these aspects were manifested in the employers' determination to become more competitive by reducing costs, that is cutting

wages, and in the inability of the trade unions to prevent this. The outcome was the miners' lock-out and the resultant strike.[9]

As has been discussed in numerous publications relating to Scotland and Britain as a whole, female involvement in industrial disputes often took the form of being both vocal and occasionally violent. This was particularly true of women's involvement in the General Strike and the subsequent Miners' Strike. As is the case with most historical documents, however, the actual presence of women in a demonstration or meeting is only noticeable when the author has chosen to comment on it. Therefore, the involvement of Lanarkshire women in the Miners' Strike could have been far greater than contemporary accounts would suggest. What can be concluded from these accounts is that, when references to women are included, it is usually because of the impact their participation or presence had on an event or demonstration. Moreover, most of the references to female participation are dated during the latter stages of the strike, which demonstrates the level of female commitment to the 'cause'.

The mere presence of women and children on a picket line tested the resolve of many men who tried, or even contemplated, breaking the strike in Lanarkshire. For example, in a letter sent to the Scottish Office on 24 July 1926, it was reported that about thirty-five men had presented themselves at Thankerton Colliery to work on 24 July. The commentator related that, 'they were satisfactorily protected by the Police and no incidents, beyond jeering by women and children took place. Yesterday, however, only a very few turned up, so it looks as if peaceful persuasion has been at work'.[10] It cannot be said with all certainty the extent to which the female presence had acted as a form of 'peaceful persuasion', but in an area in which such clear gender divisions were drawn, it would have no doubt troubled the 'macho' identity of men to be jeered at by a group of women and children.

As would be expected, the involvement of women in demonstrations or picket lines was usually of a vocal, rather than physical, nature. However, this form of intimidation was often very successful and noted by the authorities. Official reports note numerous cases of days passing without actual incident, bar the taunts and shouting of local

women at men attempting to return to work. For example, the following events were noted at the Greenfield Colliery on 30 October:

> A picket was at the entrance to the colliery in the mornings, and, when the men were leaving off work in the afternoon a considerable crowd assembled about the streets. Beyond some shouting by the female section, however, there was no trouble.[11]

The involvement of women was taken seriously by the authorities, and cases often reached court, with women receiving the same convictions as their male counterparts. The Chief Constable of Lanarkshire reported on 3 December to the Scottish Office that 'five men and one woman were at the Sheriff Court here on 2 instant convicted of intimidation on 11 November. One man was sentenced to twenty-one days imprisonment while the others, including the woman, were fined £3 or twenty days'.[12] Similarly, a communication dated 2 November, cited that a Maria Strain had been convicted of breach of the peace in connection with the current troubles and had been sentenced to £2 or ten days imprisonment.[13] The involvement of these women somewhat belied the stance of the authorities. They believed that the people who were involved in picketing and such like in Lanarkshire were 'dangerous people prepared to do much destruction in the coal areas' and it was said that, 'the people of this type are not the steady-going miners, however embittered they may be, but are Communists and Irishmen'.[14] A police report on a demonstration attended by 5000 persons on the recreation grounds at Hamilton Palace on 19 November, reinforced this stereotype. It was said that 'the demonstration was organised by the extremists who have recently acquired a considerable following in this locality, mostly irresponsible youths with no inclination for work'.[15]

Most of the women, who were reported to have been involved in disturbances during the strike did not fit the profile created by the authorities. For example, an Intelligence Report of 10 November 1926 recorded how, on the previous day, thirteen women had been reported to the Procurator Fiscal. Five of those women were accused of 'booing,

shouting and throwing mud' at a number of men returning from work at Tannochside Colliery, and eight for 'behaving in a disorderly manner and using taunting expressions' near the dwelling house of three men working at Northfield Colliery, Shotts.[16] At Airdrie Sheriff Court on 16 November, the women concerned with the Tannochside Colliery demonstration were each sentenced to pay a fine of £2 or undergo seven days' imprisonment.[17] The five women involved in the 'mud throwing' incident were all married, lived in Tannochside and their ages ranged from twenty-eight to fifty-two. Similarly, the eight women involved at the disturbances at Northfield Colliery were all married, lived in the village of Stane, near Shotts, and their ages ranged from thirty-three to sixty-five.[18]

Violence that involved the participation of women, or continued because they did not intervene to stop it, arose occasionally. One such incident of violence involved a young woman of eighteen years old, who was listed in the Chief Constable's report as being an 'out-worker'. She, a farm servant, and six miners (four of whom seem to have been her relatives; one was probably her father) were charged in connection with an assault at Blackwood on two working miners and the wife of one of them, on 16 November 1926.[19] All of the accused lived in the Draffan Rows, the same place as their victims.

The two miners who were assaulted, Hugh Storey and John Russell, had been working during the previous two months. A committee meeting of the local miners was held on the road near to the rows and thereafter they, 'marched to Storey's house, called him a coward and challenged him to a fight'. Russell, on hearing the disturbance, accepted the challenge to fight but was knocked to the ground. The crowd then assaulted Storey and his wife, who had gone to the assistance of Russell. They were beaten and kicked by members of the crowd. No one reported the assault to the police and it was not until the next day that arrests were made.

A similar incident occurred in October 1926 when two firemen who worked at Hamilton Palace Colliery, Robert Johnstone and James Hands, were assaulted and beaten by a group of up to nine men in the mining village of Bothwellhaugh.[20] The witness statements that were sent to the Procurator Fiscal in Hamilton demonstrated the

brutal nature of the attacks. Robert Johnstone recalled how he had only been back at work for two weeks after being 'idle' throughout the strike. He did realise, however, that there had 'been a good deal of ill feeling locally regarding this'. When he was being beaten he remembered that 'I begged on them for God sake to give me a chance', but that one of the attackers retorted 'have no mercy on the bastard, kick him, kick him to death'. When his assailants had moved on he managed to return home, only to collapse on the floor and urge his wife to fetch the police.

When his wife, Mary Johnstone, went outside she found 'a large crowd assembled near our house' and they 'booed me when I went to get the police'. On her return she had to be escorted back to her house by the police for her own safety. In her witness statement she also mentioned how, 'my husband was a mass of bruises; his mouth and nose were bleeding and two artificial teeth in his upper set were broken. His suit was torn and damaged'. The lack of support that Mrs Johnstone was given from her neighbours was supported by the statement supplied by John McDonald, a surface fireman at the colliery. Mrs Johnstone had gone to the colliery, as she had been unable to find a policeman. The manager asked McDonald to go to the house 'to see what like things were while he phoned for the police'. On his arrival McDonald 'found a crowd of three or four hundred people, mostly women and children, round about Johnstone's door. I tried to get to Johnstone's house but was jostled and booed. The Doctor arrived and was allowed in but they would not let me near the house'.

These demonstrations and incidents, whether they were of a vocal or physical nature, all involved the participation of women and quite often children too. This undoubtedly placed great strain on the traditional women's networks that were of crucial importance to the day-to-day survival of many working-class families. These networks were needed more than ever during a time when men were receiving no, or little, wages and when many families were on the verge of starvation. However, in towns and villages throughout Lanarkshire during industrial strikes, women were picketing the homes of neighbours and even participating in violent acts against them in some cases.

Survival networks, of course, did not always disintegrate and in some cases they actually flourished. Moreover, during strikes a great deal of co-operation between men and women was needed, and did materialise. Tales of soup kitchens and the sharing of limited resources are common in recollections of the General Strike. For example, a man, who was born in 1919, told how 'I was the height of a sparrow but I remember all the unrest and the soup kitchens down below the town hall'.[21] Similarly, another respondent who was born in 1919, and grew up in the small mining village of Hareshaw, remembered how it was the striking miners who often took on the responsibility for arranging meals for women and children, a traditionally female preserve:

> Well my uncle, he kept hens and he would give a hen and my father, we had a big garden, he would give vegetables. And anybody that had vegetables would give, you know, to make this soup. And the people would queue up with their jugs and their cans. Aye that was a bad time.
>
> I mean everybody was poor, you couldn't give your neighbours much because you had nothing yourself, sort of thing. That was the only way they could sort of help anyone, they could give towards making soup. That was maybe the only meal some folk would have the whole day.[22]

The propaganda of strike sympathisers, and the miners themselves, did not always credit the efforts of the women who were standing on the picket lines beside them or struggling to stretch the family budget. Nevertheless, the imagery of motherhood was used as a powerful tool against 'blacklegs' and was seen as a way of inducing a sense of guilt in those who went against the will of the community by returning to work. A poem

entitled *To a Scab*, part of which is printed below, was circulated in mining villages throughout Scotland at the time of the Strike.*

To a Scab – By John Heeps

Oh human skunk, outcast disrespected,
As one with pestilence infected,
Labour's ideals thou hast rejected
To lick the boots
O Coal lords, landlords' men dejected,
Ungrateful brutes

Before him with their face upraised,
Like the half-curious, half amazed,
The children of toil stood and gazed
At him in wonder
Who toileth for his master's praise
While millions suffer

Scum of the earth, hast thou not heard
The cry of the innocent "We want bread",
From sunken eyes the tears are shed
By mothers of men
Though poverty's pangs may strike them dead,
Their name's sublime[23]

The above verses demonstrate how the main intent of the writer was to demonise the character of the strike-breaker and portray him as an enemy of the working classes. By contrast, the sole mention made of women in this piece is as the 'mothers of men' and how, due to the actions of the villain, from her 'sunken eyes … tears are shed'.

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* This poem came to the notice of the Dumbarton Police and was forwarded to the Scottish Office when it was published in the *Kirkintilloch Gazette* on 1 April 1926. James B. Duncan, the Managing Director of the paper, was charged and pleaded guilty to a breach of the Emergency Regulations 21(2).

Moreover, immediately prior to the mention of the 'mother' and her sacrifice during the strike, reference is also made to the plight of the 'innocent', or rather a mother's main concern – her children. This can be taken as an expression of the emphasis that was placed on the importance of women as mothers and their 'natural' duty to their children.

Women and the National Unemployed Workers' Movement

The ability of women to organise and demonstrate for their families' rights was not confined to periods of industrial dispute. The NUWM had a great deal of support in Lanarkshire between the wars, even though it did little to encourage women to join its ranks. This was despite its main areas of concern being very similar to that of working women e.g. unemployment, rising rents, wage cuts and the Means Test. Nevertheless, although women were not given the recognition they deserved, they still gave the NUWM their informal support. Women protested alongside the NUWM in numerous demonstrations in Lanarkshire. For example, in November 1931 a demonstration by the NUWM to the newly elected Town Council in Motherwell was attended by over 600 people, with it being estimated by the police that 100 of the participants were women.[24]

Police reports on demonstrations that were made at the time, often mentioned the involvement of women. In relation to NUWM rallies, it was usual to find police correspondence that stated there were 'a number of women carrying young children in the ranks'.[25] The demonstrations themselves were often quite lively. This can be seen in a report by an Inspector Thomson in October 1931, in relation to a protest that involved 5000 people who were campaigning against a cut in 'bureau payments'. The 'Red Flag' was sung, as well as a new song 'We'll Hang Ramsay MacDonald on a Sour Apple Tree'. Inspector Thomson did concede that, 'while the crowd sang and shouted lustily, their conduct did not necessitate interference by the police, whose numbers were few in evidence'.[26] May Day demonstrations were another popular form of protest used by the NUWM, with women again being involved in what became a lively annual event. At one such demonstration in 1932, where Wal Hannington* was a guest speaker, over 800 people from Craigneuk, Wishaw, Bellshill, New Stevenson, Carfin and Hamilton

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* Leader of the NUWM

attended. The marchers were accompanied by at least two flute bands, with 'women and children included in the above numbers'.[27]

As Brian Harrison discussed in his article, 'Class and Gender in Modern British Labour History', the 'political arts' of the working woman were impressive but they were exerted within family and neighbourhood rather than at the national level. The housekeeping role of women fragmented their impact and 'anyone seeking to mobilise working women for public causes exposed them to a serious conflict of loyalties'.[28] The housekeeping role did limit the impact that women could have on national politics, but women in Lanarkshire still used any means at their disposal to make their voices heard at the local level, especially when the issues concerned fell under the auspices of welfare politics. As Harrison noted in his work, during the interwar years issues like the Means Test or cuts in child benefits could 'rapidly move even the more conservative type of working people leftwards when ideals of family life were threatened'.[29]

The interwar years permitted women to enter into a public sphere that was ordinarily the preserve of men, with their behaviour sometimes being far removed from the 'feminine ideal' that was continually portrayed in the media. When 1000 people, including many women, gathered in Bellshill to protest against the Means Test in November 1932, Assistant Chief Constable Syme noted how, 'there was no band but the marchers made the most of their parodies, their howls and their cat calls to keep the proceedings lively. They did no actual violence but threats were made in plenty'.[30]

On a few occasions violence did occur, with women sometimes being the perpetrators. For example, at a demonstration of unemployed men and women in Coatbridge in October 1932, as well as the marchers 'shouting at the pitch of their voices', it was also the case that a 'half dozen police officers were injured, one seriously'. Numerous weapons were picked up on the streets after the trouble was over and 'altogether four men and a woman were apprehended for disorderly conduct and assault on police'.[31] However, it should be noted that this case was exceptional, as violence rarely occurred in the many rallies that occurred in Lanarkshire. Instead, shouting and singing were far more common.

The determination and enthusiasm demonstrated by women did not go unnoticed by male activists. The NUWM gradually began to realise the asset that women members would be to their organisation. In May 1934, *The Unemployed Leader*, the official newspaper of the NUWM, stated in an article that 'greater efforts must be made to rally the women into our movement. We must continue to organise the women for activity alongside the men and every branch must make an effort to build a powerful women's section without further delay'.[32] The Lanarkshire sections do not appear to have heeded this advice and yet they still benefited from the participation of women in their rallies right up until the outbreak of the Second World War. Indeed, Harry McShane would later comment in his autobiography that, 'it was through the unemployment movement that the socialist movement came closest to the women in the twenties and thirties'.[33]

Female Participation in Political Organisations

The fact that working-class women became more 'visible' to local policy makers would suggest that, 'the boundaries between the public and private spheres were ultimately porous'. Lewis has argued that, this was true to a certain extent, as it appeared to be the case that women were able 'to domesticate the public' in pushing for welfare reforms. However, they did this within well-defined limits, with their influence being limited to local government and the voluntary sector, which were conceptualised as extensions of family and neighbourhood, whereas national politics and policy making were not.[34]

The success that women in Lanarkshire had in gaining office to local government during the interwar period was very limited, and even then their duties were curtailed to areas that were traditionally 'women's issues'. For example, after the local elections of 1921, Dalziel Parish Council had just one female member, Mrs Mary O'Conner. While a Council member, O'Conner was a representative to the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Society and also a member of the Local Schools Management Committee. While she did not belong to any of the more prominent committees, O'Conner's attendance and involvement was still above that of her male contemporaries. For instance, in December of 1921 the attendance of councillors at meetings was recorded.

O'Conner was the only council member to have been present at every meeting of council and every special committee meeting that had been called during that session.[35] However, it would be erroneous to dwell on this area of female involvement in local politics. As has already been seen, the involvement of working-class women in areas of welfare politics largely took place outside the offices of local government, and was of an informal nature.

Working women did become members of some political organisations between the wars, and their motives and impact have been investigated elsewhere. Of the major parties, it was the Labour Party that appears to have appealed to the most women in Lanarkshire, both in terms of party membership and voting preference. Savage has cited how the Party's recognition and harnessing of women's support for welfare policies, played an important part in Labour's growing popularity during the interwar years.[36] However, Campbell has argued in relation to Scottish mining constituencies that this female allegiance to the Labour Party 'must be viewed within the context of miners' wives political deference to their husbands'.[37] While Campbell's point can be easily understood, it would be wrong to label women in this subservient manner. A more plausible reason for their voting patterns being similar to that of their husbands, is that working-class men and women shared common concerns and so this would make them align with the same political party. Moreover, as will be discussed, the extent to which ordinary women became involved with welfare politics within the Labour Party, as well as outside it, does not lend itself to the assumption that women were incapable of developing views and outlooks that were uninformed by male interference.

As Pat Thane has argued, the reality of male dominance in the Labour Party during the first half of the twentieth century is unquestionable.[38] While women were members of party committees, such as the Hamilton Trades and Labour Council, they were in the minority.[39] However, it would be wrong to underestimate the important role that women played within the party, especially at the local level. For example, during the interwar years, women composed at least half the individual membership of the Labour Party in Britain.[40] Moreover, they maintained their memberships despite the difficulties that might have arisen in paying their annual fees. In 1920 it was decided that, 'individual

male members of local Labour parties shall contribute a minimum sum of 1/- per annum and female members a minimum sum of 6d per annum to divisional Labour Party'.[41] It can be assumed that men were expected to pay more as it was generally believed that they would be earning a wage, which obviously became less the case as the Depression and unemployment took hold.

After 1918, Labour had developed a national network of local parties for individual members of both sexes and separate women's sections to accommodate the majority of female members, who seemed to prefer their own meetings.[42] There was some growth of women's sections throughout Lanarkshire in the 1920s and 1930s. For example, by 1924 there were already sections at Bothwell, Coatbridge, Hamilton, Bothwellhaugh and Kilsyth.[43] As could perhaps be expected, the women's sections seemed to attract the most new members during times of crisis, such as during the miners' strikes of 1921 and 1926. For example, some of the women's sections that were formed in coal communities during the 1926 strike are shown in the table below.

Table 5.1 – Labour Party Women's Sections formed in Lanarkshire Coal Mining Communities, April-October 1926

Month	Location of Section
April	Dalserf
May	Bridgend
	Law
June	Holytown
	Tannochside
	Nackerty
July	Millerston
	Mavis Valley
Oct	Cleland

Source: *The Labour Woman*, April – Oct 1926.

Even by the mid-1930s, women's sections were being revived or newly established in areas such as Uddingston, Airdrie and Harthill.[44] Moreover, Labour women became a visible presence in their communities when they took to the streets in protest marches and held street corner meetings. A Miss Sutherland, detailing the Lanarkshire Labour

Women's Rally that was held in June 1926, printed the following report in *The Labour Woman*:

> The weather was against us this year, and, together with the lock-out, prevented many women from coming to Blantyre on Saturday, June 12. In spite of the rain, we held our procession with bands and banners complete. A fine procession that brought hundreds of people out to line the streets. Instead of going to the park, we held the meeting in Co-operative Hall, a large hall that was packed with women.[45]

The Labour Party women's sections also associated with other political bodies within Lanarkshire, with many women being members of more than one organisation. In February 1921, 'a very successful conference' was held in Hamilton. It was reported that 150 delegates were present, each representing women's sections, Co-operative Guilds, Trade Unions and ILP Federations.[46] However, it should be noted that the women's sections played a social as well as political role in the lives of many of their members. This can be seen in the minutes of the Larkhall women's section from the mid 1920s.* Meetings often included 'songs, reading and games', as well as 'a good tea'.[47] There was also a monthly social, with it being said of the one held in November 1923 that 'tea and pies purvey by Mount St Co-op were partaken of by those present and song and story enlivened the evening'.[48] Carpet bowling tournaments, picnics and rambles were among the other popular social activities that the women of the Larkhall section participated in.[49]

Many wives attended as a way of escaping from the various responsibilities they had at home, while being in the company of other women facing similar problems. Of course, at some of the social outings, mothers were accompanied by their children. This

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* Few records of the Labour Party women's sections remain, especially outside of the major cities. The minutes of the Larkhall women's section permit some insight into the activities and focus of such organisations.

was the case when the Lanarkshire and Glasgow Advisory Councils of the women's sections held a joint outing to the David Livingstone Memorial at Blantyre in September 1934: 'the outdoor sports for the children and the lovely rose garden made many of our women forget – for all too short a day – their home worries'.[50]

It would be doing the women who attended the women's sections a disservice, however, if their meetings were compared to little more than social events. As Pat Thane has shown in her research, Labour women did pay attention to issues of social concern within their meetings, especially those that affected women as mothers. The majority of members identified themselves as primarily workers in the home, with the women's sections often describing themselves as 'the housewives' trade union'.[51]

Women's sections were concerned about many controversial issues, such as the accessibility of birth control to working-class women. For example, in April 1924 the Larkhall women's section organised a petition regarding the 'Birth Control agitation', that they then forwarded to the Ministry of Health.[52] Women were further concerned about how the few Birth Control Clinics that existed were conducted. In a meeting of April 1927, a Mrs Auld who held a 'very prominent post' at the Glasgow Birth Control Clinic, lamented how the clinic was not run by 'Labour women, but by women of the opposite side'. On hearing this, the members decided to withhold the donation they usually sent to the clinic.[53]

Members were also involved with helping miners and their families during the miners' strikes of 1921 and 1926, with many women being affected on a personal level. In July 1921 it was reported that in Bothwell, 'the women in the Labour Movement here are very busy. They have white washed and cleaned out wash houses and secured boilers in order that these may be used for making soup to provide to those who are in distress owing to the present lock out'.[54] Women's sections also became involved by sending their representatives to meetings of the Council of Action in 1926, and holding discussions on topics like, 'the case of the child and how the Board of Health treats a woman and child'. Clothes were also collected on behalf of strikers and their dependants.[55]

As in other organisations, women's sections were prominent at all manner of demonstrations, such as the May Day rallies, Labour Day and even an Independent Labour Party Hardie Memorial march. The latter event, which was held in July 1924, was particularly popular, with an entire meeting being devoted to a report of the proceedings: 'Comrades Newlands and Mary Smillie gave their impressions. Several members spoke about having seen Keir Hardie. In memory of this great man Mrs Stirling sang "Annie Lawrie", his favourite song, and all stood and sang the "Red Flag"'.[56]

The women's sections were also heavily involved in raising party funds, mostly through social functions. For instance, a social evening was held in April 1924 to raise funds for the Labour Day rally that was to be held on 14 June. It was 'agreed that members bring their own eatables, and that the total proceeds be handed over to the Advisory Committee to help to defray [the] expenses of providing Bands'.[57] Moreover, the Larkhall women's section members participated greatly in canvassing for the Labour Party during general elections. At a meeting of December 1923, 'the President made reference to the strenuous electioneering campaign carried out by the members and which had so much helped the victorious return of Mr Graham again to Parliament as member for Hamilton Division'.[58]

The fact that the women's sections were responsible for fund raising and organising social functions does, nevertheless, show that there was a distinct gender division of responsibility within the constituency Labour parties. Graves has commented that these divisions 'bore more than a passing resemblance to the traditional gender roles in the working-class family'.[59] However, it must be remembered that owing to the constraints that their home lives placed on their free time, working-class mothers could not become involved in politics to the same extent as men. They used the time they had available to them to contribute to the party as best they could, with 'the need to fit their politics into the hours between "dinner and tea" usually confining them to the local Labour community'.[60]

Local Labour Party or ILP magazines often alluded to the valuable contribution that female members made to the success of various fundraising initiatives. In a 1920 edition of *The Rutherglen Searchlight*, the magazine run by the local branch of the ILP, mention was made of the cake and candy sale that had been held in the Rechabite Hall and how 'a handsome little sum has been realised by the effort'. The money raised was to go towards the building of the first ILP hall in Rutherglen. The compiler of the article added that, 'to the women members of the local branch belong the credit and thanks for the running of the Cake and Candy Sale, and for the very gratifying result'.[61]

When women went outside the women's sections and tried to become involved with the mixed political bodies, they found that they were expected to revert to 'stereotype' and not encroach upon male preserves. As Mrs Betty Fraser told the Labour Party Conference in 1935, 'some parties seem to think that we are the people who make the tea and do the washing up. We are not expected to be political people at all'.[62] In his own revue of the minutes of the Larkhall women's section during the year of 1926, Campbell concluded:

> The women appear as a small group of observers rather than actors, well aware that their primary political function was to raise election funds through raffles, socials and Burns' Suppers, and to act as auxiliaries in the next election campaign.[63]

He argued that, although such activities are important to all political organisations, 'any definition of tea-making as empowering is perhaps to retreat unduly before contemporary notions of gender relations'.[64] On the other hand, Graves has criticised this 'male definition' of fund-raising that regards it as not being 'real' politics:

> There is no indication in their writings or speeches that Labour women regarded their work in the sections as inferior to that of the mixed ward or constituency meetings because of its domestic and social aspects. They seem to

> have taken pride in their ability to use their skills in cooking, sewing and catering for the benefit of the Labour movement.[65]

The fact that the women's sections concentrated on serving the interests of the working-class family, and women and children in particular, gave them an area of political expertise to claim as their own. As Graves argued, 'the contention that gender segregation in the Labour Party … reduced women to auxiliary players, mere "cake makers" to the male majority is not supported by the evidence'.[66] Women's experiences within the home and local community, with regards to issues such as housing and childcare, encouraged them to think of themselves as social reformers and pay less attention to the dynamics of power politics.

Some objections can be raised to Campbell's argument about the contribution that the women's sections made to the Labour Party. Having viewed the minutes of the Larkhall women's section as Campbell did, this writer has found evidence of the members viewing their meetings with great reverence and as far more than a recreational evening. The Larkhall section members dedicated much time to encouraging women from nearby areas to start their own sections. For instance, Larkhall women played an important role in the formation of a women's section at nearby Dalserf.[67] Moreover, their commitment to the Labour movement was demonstrated quite poignantly during the Miners' Strike of 1926. For example, when the women could no longer afford the cost of hiring a hall, it was decided 'to hold our meetings during the summer in the open air'.[68] Moreover, as economic circumstances continued to deteriorate, they realised the 'need to put our shoulders to the wheel as our opponents are very active'.[69]

Historical analysis of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (SCWG) has often led to it facing similar criticisms to those levelled at the Labour Party's women's sections. Like the Labour Party guilds, SCWG meetings were often judged at the time, and since, as merely being an alternative entertainment venue for women and of little true political significance. It cannot be disputed that many women did view attending a

Co-operative meeting as a chance to escape the drudgery of daily life and socialise with people from similar backgrounds to themselves. Indeed, much of the SCWG's 'social intercourse' revolved around cookery and dress making lessons and discussions.[70] In this sense the SCWG had much in common with the church-run Women's Guilds, as they were both often used as a venue to complete household tasks, or to find out more about them, while in the company of other women, as shown in the following testimony:

> The Co-op, they used to run a guild. Aye they used to run a guild and sometimes they would run things like dress making classes. My mother was a cutter in the guild, she used to cut things out at the guild. Whenever there was anything on, we went, because it was your entertainment.[71]

Moreover, like the church guilds and similar forms of female popular culture between the wars, the Co-operative guilds were immensely popular. The organisers of meetings were often impressed by the loyalty Co-operative members demonstrated to the organisation. In December 1923, it was noted that there was a good turnout by women at the end of year meetings despite 'domestic duties [having] so many calls on their leisure'.[72] By the 1930s the SCWG had over 3000 members in Lanarkshire, most of whom lived in the mining and industrial districts. Indeed, it was during the 1930s that the SCWG experienced a significant growth in membership in Lanarkshire, with each year of the decade, except 1934, witnessing the recruitment of more women.

Table 5.2 - Membership of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild in Lanarkshire, 1930-1938

Year	Members	No of Branches
1930	2705	43
1931	2840	43
1932	3004	44
1933	3172	44
1934	3170	43
1935	3263	45
1936	3467	47
1937	3603	47
1938	3628	48

Source: GCCA, Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild. Annual Reports 1930-1938. CWSI/39/6/36 – CWSI/39/6/44

While it cannot be denied that the companionship the SCWG offered was one of its main attractions, the few surviving records that relate to the organisation in Lanarkshire do provide some perspective on how the women members themselves viewed its role. As early as 1920, a council member of Section III of the SCWG (the section that represented the Lanarkshire branches) reported to the Central Council that amongst its members 'there was a keen desire for discussions on political affairs and citizenship and a deep interest in the welfare of the children'.[73] The Lanarkshire branches also attempted to make women more politicised. For example, at a central council meeting in April 1923, a Mrs Murdoch told how, at the Lanarkshire meetings, the 'question of women in Local Government Boards' had been introduced and they were 'emphasising the need for women with knowledge and practical experience of industrial conditions to take a more active part in Local Government bodies such as Parish Councils and education authorities'.[74]

While these were amongst the main political aims of the Co-operative guilds, it is important to realise that the SCWG also provided many women with their initial experience of organisation and played a vital role in giving them the confidence to engage in public speaking.[75] The types of issues that appear to have concerned Co-operative guild members the most were those that related to children and the moral well-being of the family. For example, the SCWG became actively involved in campaigns to monitor the types of films that children were able to view in cinemas. Indeed, in 1930 members of the Bellshill branch of the SCWG reported that they were becoming concerned about the new 'talkies' and 'agreed that we communicate with the Film Censor Mr Short MP suggesting the formation of a National Committee to censor undesirable pictures'.[76] The Lanarkshire branches of the SCWG also played a significant part in the temperance campaigns of the 1920s, another issue which had much to do with the well-being of women and children within the private sphere.

As with the Labour Party women's sections, it would be wrong to underestimate the political as well as recreational importance that women attached to the SCWG. As has

been discussed by Gillian Scott, the Guild had a distinctive identity as the only organisation through which married working-class women could become active in 'tackling the social and industrial problems of the day', and whose 'interests were specifically those of married working women'. Despite its recreational appeal, the Guild's main concern was with improving 'the position of the majority of women, who were working-class wives' and dealing with their 'rights in the private sphere as well as in the public sphere'.[77]

Another political organisation that Lanarkshire women showed an allegiance to in their attempts to highlight their concerns regarding welfare issues was the United Mineworkers of Scotland (UMS). The militant UMS, which had strong Communist Party links, was formed in April 1929 as a rival to the National Union of Scottish Mine Workers.[78] In Lanarkshire the UMS was most prominent in the mining villages of Bellshill, Shotts and Tannochside.[79] From the outset the UMS tried to encourage the involvement of women in its organisation. This could be seen in an early meeting of the national UMS Women's Guild Committee, which had 'been convened for the purpose of extending the work of the guilds and for knitting more closely together the activities of the men and women members of the UMS'.* The minutes of the meeting recorded that:

> In the discussion which followed the women comrades showed clearly that they realised the important part the guilds could play and were playing in the class struggle. It was evident that in the existing guilds the members were prepared to assist in the formation of Committees of Action. In the struggles lying ahead the women would have to take a prominent part in demonstrating to the Parish Councils, Labour Exchanges, Education Authorities and County Councils. They could also assist in selling the

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* This particular meeting was held in Glasgow and attended by the Union President, along with Robert Eadie, David Proudfoot and eight women's guild members.

> "Mineworker" and in getting readers for the "Daily Worker".[80]

David Proudfoot, who became the General Secretary of the UMS in the early 1930s, often wrote letters to the left-wing London journalist George Allen Hutt about the fortunes of the Union but also of his hopes for the women's guilds.* In a letter to Hutt in September 1929, Proudfoot demonstrated obvious despair at the failure of many miners at that time to join the UMS. For example, he lamented that:

> To get some realisation of the Depression and the at times absolutely cowardly attitude being taken up by the miners at present one requires to have a spell on the door-knocking stunt. In many cases the men refuse to meet us on the door-step, either the wife or one of the kiddies being sent to us to inform us that that particular houses' representative of God's highest work is either out or in bed although in a number of cases we have seen him in the house … [in one case] the wife met us at the door. She refused to 'allow her "man" to argue wi [sic] a "Bolshevik"' and he refused to come out from behind her petti-coats.[81]

Proudfoot was further frustrated by the lack of encouragement that many men within the UMS gave to women members. He felt that the success of the UMS depended upon the creation of sections like the women's guilds but realised that, 'this is a part of the organisation that almost every cttee [sic] without exception are very timid and chary about facing up to'. Proudfoot concluded that 'this attitude can only be explained (I think) from the old antiquated idea still prevalent amongst the workers, that a woman's place is at the fireside'.[82] Indeed, Proudfoot was not the only political figure to

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* Much of Proudfoot's correspondence with Hutt, as well as the surviving minutes of the UMS women's guilds, can be found in Methil Public Library, Fife.

notice this situation in Lanarkshire. The Communist Party activist Marion Henery felt that Lanarkshire was 'backward and depressing, especially for women'.[83]

Despite obstacles such as those mentioned, women still managed to organise and run UMS guilds. Moreover, it was often local issues that made women join the ranks of the UMS. For example, a 'Comrade Mrs Ross' reported in October 1932 that, 'arising from the demonstration against the Means Test and the arrests of eighteen workers, that the membership of Bellshill UMS had been increased from eleven to forty-one'.[84] Recruitment drives were an important part of the guilds' work, with 'Comrade Mrs McGhie' citing in 1933 'that she had obtained thirty names of women in Motherwell prepared to form a UMS Guild'.[85]

The issues that the UMS guilds pursued were in line with the welfare concerns that troubled many women. For example, at a Women's Guild Committee meeting in January 1930 'the policy and work of the Guilds was considered, and suggestions made for the effective functioning in the Union's work and in dealing with the special problems confronting them in the localities e.g. rent questions, child welfare, Parish Relief, etc'.[86] A difference that the UMS leaders saw between their guilds and other women's sections was that they hoped to 'prevent them from becoming mere echoes of the Co-op Guilds, slander clubs and tea parties'.[87] In the early stages, the UMS saw one of the defects of the guilds as being that they were turning 'their attention inwardly instead of out towards work amongst the mass of the working women'. Thus, it was decided in the summer of 1930 that 'area conferences of miners' wives be held … for the purpose of discussing local problems'.[88] Indeed, such a conference took place in Shotts, an area where the living and working conditions were amongst the worst in Scotland.

Evidence of the conditions that people in Shotts had to endure can be found in the two surviving issues of *The Sprag*, a pit paper that was published in the area. The paper was started in April 1930 by a group of activists in the UMS and usually took the form of a four-page sheet.[89] Written by the miners themselves, it was mainly concerned with the hardships and frustrations which they had to endure in 1930. Their grievances

included the continuation of starvation wages, short-time working, widespread lay-offs, the introduction of machines into some pits and the new 'speed-up' methods that paid no attention to safety precautions.[90] Mention was also made of the fact that workers who were paid off, or on short-time work, were falling behind with rents in the tied houses belonging to the Company and were constantly under threat of eviction. Indeed, women in Shotts, as well as in many other parts of Lanarkshire, had great resentment towards mine owners not just because of their practice of reducing the wages of male workers, but because they had ownership of most of the housing in the area and duly exploited that fact.

The experience of one miner's wife (who chose to remain anonymous) living in Stane was included in the April issue of *The Sprag*. Most of her narrative dealt with her husband's dire working conditions and pay. She told how her husband was working a three-day week on a 'pittance of wages', but could qualify for 'broo' money if he worked a long shift on Sunday through to Monday. This involved starting at 10.30 on Sunday morning, working through the next twenty-four hours without overtime and finishing at 11.00a.m. on Monday. This was the only way to get round the law which, in 1930, declared that a man had to be idle for at least three out of six working days before being eligible for public assistance.[91]

It was reported that the woman was 'scathing' in her choice of language when talking about the managers and contended that they consciously discriminated in their choice of who should get a 'decent' company house, drawing the line at workers who had a record for outspokenness and militancy. It was also the case that the Shotts Iron Company always deducted the house rent from the pay packet before handing it over, irrespective of whether the pay was a full week's wages, for three days work, or even for one day in the week. This caused obvious financial problems for mining families but it was also a blow to miners' wives, as it undermined their position within the family as the person who was traditionally responsible for controlling the household budget.

The continuing decline of living and working conditions led to a strike at the Shotts coalfield in 1930. Its chief organisers were the Shotts District Committee, which was

part of the Lanarkshire County Union and the UMS. However, this particular strike highlighted the extent to which the involvement of women in local disputes often meant the difference between success and failure. Jimmy Stewart and Abe Moffat, both leading figures in the UMS, who were involved with the Shotts strike, would later note this. The chief reason for both men being there was to help organise demonstrations to the Public Assistance Office to press for financial relief for the women and children in the area, and show local resentment towards the Means Test. Moffat later recalled in his memoirs how, 'we were informed that the miners' families were receiving no relief from the local authorities, and never had previously, even in the great struggle of 1926'.[92]

Moffat and Stewart soon discovered that the sectarian divisions that existed amongst the miners of the community were threatening the success of the strike. Moffat later stated that, at the time, it had been suggested by some people that, even if Protestant and Catholic men were persuaded to participate in a demonstration, any Catholics involved would fall out from the procession as it passed the priest's house.[93] Therefore, it fell to the women of the area, Protestant and Catholic, to be the main force behind any protests to the local council. A united demonstration of 200 women from the Dykehead region of Shotts joined with women from the Stane area and led a march to the Council Chambers. On their way to the Council Chambers the women were joined by unemployed men and striking miners. It is unclear whether a shift in attitudes, or the sight of so many women fighting for reform, induced the local men to unite and join the procession but as Moffat argued at the time, 'if our womenfolk are prepared to demonstrate for relief there cannot be any excuse for miners refusing to demonstrate'.[94]

The united demonstration to the Council Chambers was successful in gaining a certain degree of reform. As the crowds gathered outside the building, six people including Moffat, Stewart and two women, met with officials. The Board of Health was persuaded to pay improved scales of public assistance money to dependants of the unemployed, and also to recognise the claims of families who were strikebound.[95] It was agreed that 10/- would be paid to wives and 3/- to every child involved. Moffat commented that it 'probably did not look like a lot of money, but it meant a great deal to

this section of Scottish miners, who had battled through the 1926 strike for seven months without any relief from the local authorities'.[96] It no doubt also meant a great deal to the women receiving the allowance, not least because it was their collective action which had contributed so much to the fight for its implementation.

The UMS guilds had featured prominently during the Shotts strike. For example, 'the sum of £22-7/7 had been collected by the Union in aid of the Shotts strikers, of which sum the Women's Guilds had collected £8-19/10. The money collected had been disbursed in the form of relief in kind in the Shotts area'.[97] Despite successes such as the one just noted, the UMS guilds in Lanarkshire were never as popular as the Labour Party women's sections or the Co-operative guilds and their membership fluctuated dramatically. The UMS boasted that its guilds were not 'like other women's guilds where they have a speaker and a cup of tea and go home … the UMS guilds are out to educate women'.[98] Indeed, Graves has contended that the gender divisions that characterised the Labour Party did not exist so obviously in the ILP or groups with Communist Party ties. Female activists in the Communist Party 'deliberately avoided any association with specifically women's issues for fear of differentiating themselves from their male comrades'.[99] Yet, the fact that the UMS guilds aligned themselves with traditional 'women's politics' like housing and child welfare, leads to the conclusion that they were the exception to the rule.

Despite embracing the welfare policies that were of traditional concern to many working-class women, however, the UMS guilds ultimately failed to gain the local support that was needed in order to survive. As John McArthur, Secretary of the Fife branches of the UMS, recollected many years later:

> In the UMS we tried to carry out a lot of the theories that we had been propagating. One was that we should have women interested in the miners' union and its activities … generally we did not entirely succeed, because we were in many cases merely duplicating the Co-operative Women's Guild of which most of the women were already members

> and it meant that we were hauling women out of their houses for another night of the week, or we were in competition with the Co-operative Women's Guild.[100]

Conclusion

Lanarkshire had an economy characterised by its lack of female participation, and yet as this chapter has shown, women were not any less hesitant in demonstrating to the authorities or proving their allegiance to political parties. Moreover, in the absence of a female section or guild, they campaigned on behalf of their families as informal, but nevertheless successful, groups within their own communities, as highlighted during the Miners' Strike of 1926.

The participation of women in strike action and demonstrations in Lanarkshire was not limited to the extreme circumstances of 1926. Women continued to join urban social movements and associations throughout the Depression. This was because many working-class women believed that the welfare of their children was part of the female sphere of interest, but one deserving of a public platform and, as the next chapter will argue, this became the central tenet of welfare politics in interwar Lanarkshire.

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CHAPTER SIX

WELFARE POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

The idea of 'welfare politics' became a highly contested issue in Lanarkshire during the Depression. Through public events like the Miners' Strikes of 1921 and 1926, as well as the growth of various political associations, women became far more prominent in their local communities. Lanarkshire was an area that prided itself on its masculine character and male dominated politics and yet, during the interwar years, its inhabitants began to show an increasing awareness of the problems confronting many ordinary women and duly placed more emphasis on the 'politics of the purse'.[1] Therefore, in keeping with the themes that were developed in the previous chapter, this section will consider three issues belonging to the canon of welfare politics that gained a public platform in Lanarkshire through the efforts of local, politically unorganised, women.

The issues that were contested were not unique to the Lanarkshire area, but the women involved approached the problems by using strategies and arguments that were suited to the types of communities to which they belonged. Thus, this chapter will begin by considering the issue of housing, a type of welfare politics that had its origins in the years before the First World War but which found its greatest supporters during the interwar period. The second theme to be considered will be the issue of child welfare, and the struggle to gain adequate food and clothing for the dependants of striking workers. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the welfare issue of education and how a new type of 'strike' was used in Lanarkshire to highlight the problems that were facing many parents in their quest to provide for the needs of their children. In examining these issues, it is the intention of this chapter to demonstrate how women's contributions to local politics and legislative reform have too often been overlooked. The Depression in Lanarkshire proved how, when the focus is placed on the actions of women within the family and local community, new definitions of political effectiveness emerge.

Housing

During the interwar period the 'domestic' question of housing became a central political issue in the mining and slum areas of Lanarkshire. As Richard Rodger has argued in relation to Scotland as a whole, housing standards had a particular impact on women and contributed to their increasing political awareness.[2] For most married women in Lanarkshire, 'housewifery' was their occupation and as such they were responsible for the maintenance of the family dwelling. Thus, the state of housing in Lanarkshire was of great importance to working-class women.

After the First World War, living and housing conditions in Lanarkshire were amongst the worst in Britain. For example, of the 6457 houses declared unfit for human habitation in Scotland in 1924, a quarter were in mining districts and almost a third of these were in Lanarkshire.[3] In the Burgh of Hamilton alone, by 1921, 71.4% of the population was living in accommodation of two rooms or less.[4] Evidence of the conditions families had to deal with can be found in the many letters that were sent to the Department of Health for Scotland during the period. The following extract comes from a letter that was written by a Mrs Isa McGill in 1938:

> I am writing to you as a last hope. We are in a very damp house and I have done everything I can to get a change to a dry one. My little son is always ill – he takes croup and he is never without a nasty cough – in fact he has had it for four years. I send him out to live with someone who has a dry house whenever I find someone who will look after him well, but it is not easy to pay my way. I have to take in sewing but I sometimes can't do very much for I have rheumatics also caused by the damp and sometimes it is very hard to hold the needle. The doctor says he could cure me if I was in a dry house.[5]

Ill health was a common side effect of bad housing, as can be seen in the following letter of complaint that was written by Mrs John Robb in 1932:

> I am only in a small room with one bed in it and I have four children in it and one in a sanatorium and can't get him out until I get a home and I can't get one anywhere and he is losing a lot of his school. My husband comes from his work in the morning and can't get to his bed until the children get out of his bed and it is breaking his health etc.[6]

The housing problem was recognised by local government officials in Lanarkshire but some felt that tenants were prone to exaggeration. A.L. Thomson, the Chief Sanitary Inspector for the Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw, reported how 'trifling defects are magnified to distortion; allegations of complete uninhabitability [sic] are lodged, and all sorts of ailments are blamed on the house'. Thomson did admit that overcrowding was a genuine problem as the people involved 'undergo such tortures of packing and handicap that it touches their appeals for relief with the eloquence of bitterness and revolt … the surprise is that they manage. Their explanation is that "they just have to"'.[7]

Overcrowding was the other factor that attracted most complaints from tenants in Lanarkshire. The following extract was written by a young woman, Anna M. Kay, to the Department of Health for Scotland with regards to the family home in Motherwell:

> Excuse me taking the liberty of writing to you but on receiving my insurance card I find enclosed a note from you explaining all the benefits of good health. I appreciate your point of view and thank you for the same.
>
> I should like to ask you how could I be healthy as I am a member of a mixed family of nine living in a two-apartment house. I have three brothers aged eight, eighteen

and twenty, three sisters aged thirteen, seventeen and twenty-two, my Mother and Father and I myself sixteen. We have no bath and have to cook, eat, sleep, wash, dress, all in one place. I may say many a day I cannot eat when I come into the house. The kitchen has a wall in front of the window and facing the room is a work. My parents have tried hard to get a Burgh house for the past six years, but it seems impossible – yet our next door neighbour could leave a two room and kitchen house and go to one of the Burgh three apartments with one child. Both Father and Mother have done everything they can to make us happy but how could we ever be healthy under the circumstances?[8]

The Department of Health was often in agreement with such complaints, especially as the 'two-roomed house with its single bedroom is not suitable for ordinary family life'. Indeed, in 1930 the Department of Health reprimanded the Housing Committee of the Burgh of Hamilton over the types of new houses it was building. Hamilton Burgh had proposed at that stage that 38.5% of houses at the new Glebe Site should be two apartments. The Department of Health disagreed, stating that 'the Department are not prepared to agree that more than 25% of the houses to be provided shall be of two apartments'.

In one communication to the Burgh, the Department of Health alluded to the findings of a recent report by the Departmental Committee on Sexual Offences against Children and Young Persons in Scotland 'which authoritatively focuses the perils attendant upon inadequate sleeping accommodation in houses'. The Department went on to argue that 'it is the overcrowding of the sexes and the inadequacy of sanitary conveniences that are the main obstacle to decency and reticence'. It was felt that husbands and wives should have separate rooms from children and that siblings of different sexes should sleep in unconnected rooms long before they reached the age of puberty. The Report concluded that, until such methods had been applied, 'there will

inevitably be sexual depravity and crime arising from bad housing, which no precautionary measures will prevent and from which no threat of punishment will deter'.[9] This was a concern to many mothers who were attempting to care for large families, in cramped conditions, between the wars. As Mrs Frank Porteous, a mother of three girls and two boys, from the mining village of Burnbank, complained:

> Both of my girls have come to womanhood. At night I have to put my hands over the boys' eyes in the Hurley bed till the girls step over them into their bed … is there not a law for the poor man? Have we to live like pigs all our lives? Two sanitary inspectors are sent out to see you – one keeps asking questions and the other keeps driving it into you that the factor is not responsible for you having a big family till they have you in a state of nerves that you have to sit down and cry. I am not blaming the factor but am I committing a crime in asking for a slum house. I am beginning to have the feeling I have and that I will be hanged for daring to ask for one.[10]

The few Burgh houses that were built during the Depression years were often not spacious enough to accommodate large families due to a severe lack of funds. Moreover, the tenants of the new Burgh houses had to meet strict criteria, and competition was intense owing to the limited number of houses that were actually built. For example, when eight new houses were completed at the Glenlee Site in Hamilton in June 1920, the Housing Committee received applications from 134 families.[11] It was decided that 'tenants should be drawn by lot' and that applicants should be divided according to the following categories, with people in the first group being given preference:

1. Married ex-servicemen with children and at work in Hamilton or neighbourhood.

2. Married ex-servicemen with no children and at work in Hamilton or neighbourhood.
3. Married men with children, no war service, but who have lost a son or sons in the War and who work in Hamilton or neighbourhood, and widows of sailors and soldiers belonging to the Burgh who were killed or died on service.
4. Married men, with children, no war service, who work in Hamilton or neighbourhood.[12]

As time went on it became apparent that, on the whole, it was 'skilled' or professional workers who were most likely to receive a Burgh house. For example, the seven heads of household granted a house in the Glenlee scheme in December 1922, consisted of a foreman patternmaker, a teacher, a train driver, a miners' agent, a patternmaker, a miner and a widow.[13] A probable reason for this was that Hamilton Burgh had decided in 1920 that new houses 'should be let on the express condition that tenants shall not appeal to the Council for relief from assessments on account of poverty'.[14] This meant that the unemployed and their families had little hope of gaining a burgh house in many parts of Lanarkshire.

Those who did receive new houses were watched closely by the local authorities, especially the lucky few who had been moved from the poorest types of housing and were not in skilled occupations. Traditional practices, such as sub-letting or taking in lodgers, a method many married women used for making extra money, had to be stopped. It was also agreed that houses must be inspected regularly and any 'delinquents' should be reported.[15] The value of women in roles such as housing inspectors began to be appreciated. In a sense, housing was being recognised as a 'women's issue' and one into which they had much insight. In 1935 the Department of Health wrote to the Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw's Clerk Department:

> It might be advisable for the local authority to consider the appointment of a Lady Inspector, whose duty it would be to supervise the tenants, and particularly the tenants from the unfit houses in the burgh that have been rehoused by the

local authority. It has been found in other large burghs that such supervision was necessary to provide for an enhanced standard of cleanliness and for an improvement in the general conditions under which the displaced families live. The appointment of a lady inspector in other areas has resulted in a general improvement and in a satisfactory reaction by the tenants to their new surroundings.[16]

As unemployment in the skilled sectors of the heavy industries began to increase, however, rent arrears amongst the tenants of the new burgh houses became a problem for the local authorities. In December 1926, the Housing of Working Classes Committee in Hamilton reported that 'large numbers of tenants in the Housing Schemes were in arrears, and that in Glenlee the sum of £439 was due'.[17] Indeed, throughout the Depression, cases of tenants being in rent arrears increased and the Ejection Courts had to deal with many prosecutions. For example, in March 1933 a woman from Viewfield appeared before Sheriff McDonald due to her being £26-10/- in arrears. She was in receipt of 21/- a week from a widow's pension and 3/- from a lodger. Out of this money she had to pay 8/- per week in rent and 'keep herself and four children'. It was decided that she could not be put on the street, but that her case should be continued for a month and that she must pay her current rent.[18]

It was against this background of inadequate housing, overcrowding and rising rents, that both men and women worked together to challenge the local authorities. As Robert Duncan has shown in his investigation of Walton Newbold, the Motherwell MP who was the first avowed Communist to win election to the House of Commons, by 1918 there was already a housing association, and tenants' movement activists were operating in the Burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw. Indeed, Newbold's success and political credibility were enhanced by mobilising his election campaign around unemployment, housing, rent and anti-eviction issues, particularly from the middle of 1921 onwards.[19] The popularity of Newbold and certain ILP militants, such as John Donnelly, James White and Hugh Higgins, coincided with the attempts by some tenants in north Lanarkshire to prevent rent increases occurring during the summer of 1920.[20]

The campaign was organised by male and female members of the tenants' movement, through the two ILP dominated housing associations. Although the campaign was unsuccessful in Motherwell, it still found widespread support in the adjoining slum housing districts of Craigneuk, Sunnyside and Berryhill.[21]

There were a number of other demonstrations by disgruntled tenants regarding rent increases throughout the interwar years in Lanarkshire, with various factors contributing to this agitation. A significant triumph on the 'home front' during the First World War had been the implementation of the Rent Restriction Act. This was brought into effect after the Glasgow Rent Strike of 1915. The strike was a protest against the evictions that were occurring during the War because of rent arrears. The groups that were primarily affected by these evictions were women, children and the elderly. It was left to the initiative of the tenants themselves to offer resistance to the increases demanded by factors in areas such as Govan and Partick.[22] As the work of Joseph Melling has shown, the Glasgow Rent Strike was identified essentially as a 'women's fight' since it was in tune with their personal experiences. It demonstrated the power and capability of working-class women to unite and organise a campaign of resistance on their own initiative, outside of the workplace.[23]

The Act could not be in place indefinitely, however, and the 'long-awaited rent rises came just at the moment the Scottish industrial economy slipped from boom conditions to the sharp and sustained depression of the 1920s and 1930s'.[24] Tensions amongst tenants' groups were also heightened by the outcome of the Housing and Town Planning (Scotland) Act of 1919. This Act was part of the Addison initiative to build 'homes fit for heroes' throughout Britain. However, it proved an abysmal failure as far as Scottish families were concerned. Of the 22,000 houses (a wholly inadequate number) under contract to be built in Scotland by 1921, only 2000 had actually been constructed by that date.[25] This agitation surrounding housing conditions played an important role in the radicalisation of Scottish politics. Indeed, Melling has gone as far as to argue that tenants' movements were a contributing factor to the emergence of Labour and to socialism in the west of Scotland.[26]

It was certainly the case in Lanarkshire that the tenants' and unemployed movements worked in tandem. Tenants' associations sent deputations to council meetings, with women usually being represented on these. The encouraging of women to be present at such public meetings was a significant change, as they had often been excluded in the past. In a sense, women were gaining recognition for the important part they played in this area of 'domestic' politics. For example, in advance of a meeting with the Hamilton Housing Committee, James Jackson, the secretary of the Tenants' Defence Association, wrote a letter stating that, 'in addition to Mr Hawke, Mr Hendry and himself, who had been invited to meet the Committee, the Association considered that Mrs Murdoch, Mrs Robertson and Mr F Hughes should also be present'.[27] In their correspondence and meetings with the local authorities, tenants' associations broached many subjects, including the issues of rent increases, unsatisfactory housing and also the types of Burgh houses that were being built. For instance, in 1923 the Burnbank Branch of the Tenants' Defence Association protested against 'the recent decision of the Council for single apartment houses'.[28]

It seems that women were rarely office holders on the tenants' associations, but they certainly made up a significant part of the membership. Women were a valuable addition to such movements, as the problems they faced were often used to 'shame' the local authorities into action. For example, in 1934 a Mr McArthur who represented the tenants of Forgewood Housing Scheme, which was situated near a mining 'bing', wrote to the Sanitary Inspector for Motherwell:

> I beg to draw your attention to the serious state of affairs existing at Forgewood scheme as a result of the smoke of the poisonous gases emitting from this bing. The people who live in the area, their lives are one of continued misery. Further, their health is slowly being undermined and their very food is being tainted. The courage of women is amazing, rising sickly and vomiting they strive to carry out the household duties but they will surely succumb to the inevitable. I would appeal to you, or the Housing

> Committee to try and alleviate the suffering of these people, say, by giving them houses in some of your other schemes. I would kindly request you to put this letter before your Housing Committee, if this letter is not sufficiently clear we are prepared to take a deputation to your first Housing Committee meeting.[29]

Women were more than capable of representing themselves, often bringing them into direct confrontation with members of the local authorities. In September 1929, Mrs Charles Brent and Mrs Mathieson, both of Hamilton, sent letters to the Department of Health asking that they be granted better accommodation for themselves and their families. Mrs Mathieson wrote in her letter that:

> I have been warned out of my house which is condemned. The local council have no house for me. I have paid rent and taxes for over twenty years. I am a widow with a son and daughters who are unable to rough it – John through war service, Agnes through accident when she was young.

Along with their letters of complaint, the women attended the Town Hall together to protest to the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk obviously did not enjoy the meeting, and was rather alarmed by the unladylike way Brent and Mathieson spoke to him. He reported to the Department of Health that 'only last week these persons called here and the situation was fully and sympathetically explained to them. They left in a torrent of bad language, threatening what the Department of Health would do to us'.[30]

Women also made headlines through their individual confrontations with local authority figures. 'Poinding', which involved the forced removal of furniture or household goods to pay for debts like rent arrears, became a common occurrence during the increased hardship of the 1930s. However, attempts by sheriff officers to remove furniture for poinding met with some resistance, particularly among women. For example, the case of Mrs Annie Healy was reported in the local press in February

1934. She was charged with a breach of the peace owing to her treatment of a sheriff officer who attempted to take her furniture. Her actions had involved snatching the sheriff officer's poinding schedule and refusing to return it. She would not let the poinding go ahead as she claimed the furniture did not belong to her. In court Baillie Harvie found the charge to be proven 'but under the circumstances he thought an admonition would be sufficient. He hoped that the accused had derived a lesson from the experience'.[31]

The most common form of resistance amongst tenants was at the neighbourhood level. Movements of the unemployed were prominent in mobilising demonstrations and organising support at street level to resist evictions of families who had fallen into rent arrears.[32] For example, in March 1933 four bailiffs were sent to Park Street in New Stevenson to carry out the eviction of James Smith, an ex-soldier and reservist, and his two young children. However, the bailiffs were thwarted from doing so owing to the demonstration outside the house by local residents and members of the NUWM and Communist Party. The eviction was postponed and it was reported in the press that 'the crowd were very orderly throughout and the sheriff officers had merely to take some verbal abuse'.[33]

A similar incident happened in Bellshill in September of the same year. When two families were evicted from properties in Bellside Terrace (locally known as 'The Barracks') and Glebe Street, due to arrears of rent, their neighbours immediately 'assisted them back into their "hovels" again'. In returning to their houses the evictees were arrested by the police and charged with being in illegal possession of the houses. Following the evictions, protest meetings were 'held twice daily and an effort made to stir up public indignation about the abominable housing conditions in Glebe Street and other places in the district'.[34]

Public demonstrations were a common method used for gaining publicity. In August 1933 'amazing scenes' were reported at Cadzow Street in Hamilton. A crowd of over 250 men and women descended on the Town Hall and demanded a personal interview with the Town Clerk. The families involved were residents of tenement properties in

Russell Park, Burnbank. Their demonstration was organised to protest against the living conditions in the tenements and the fact that there were only three lavatories to accommodate twenty-three families and they had the use of only one washhouse.[35] Through forums such as these, working-class wives were able to participate in the public world of local politics, to an extent rarely seen outside their appearance on picket lines during miners' strikes.

Protests often involved entire streets or communities working together, and included the participation of both men and women. Cases occurred of tenants making deals with each other with regards to the payment of rent. In such cases it was usually agreed that rents should be withheld entirely or that they would be paid at a reduced rate. This was to the outright frustration of the local authorities. For example, such a case occurred in February 1933 and involved the residents of Greenfield Road in Burnbank. A hearing chaired by Sheriff McDonald was told that 'these tenants, along with others in the property, had decided upon a concerted refusal to pay more than pre-war rent on account of the alleged insanitary condition of their houses'. The tenants were warned on numerous occasions that they must pay their rents or face eviction, but they continued to disobey the order. The solicitor for the factors involved, Mr David Baird, summarised the case by arguing that, 'this is the fifth calling of these cases and I think I am correct in saying that the orders issued by this Court have simply been trifled with by the people of the property'.[36] Unsurprisingly, cases such as these appeared before the local authorities with increasing regularity. At the Vacation Court on 22 September 1933, Sheriff McDonald presided over 128 ejection cases and was 'faced in practically every instance with stories of small incomes and large families on the defenders' side and of mounting arrears on the landlords''.[37]

As the inability of tenants to pay rent increased and more properties were classed as 'condemned', some resorted to quite drastic measures to get themselves and their families re-housed. The problem of the 'Hamilton Squatters' was one that was to plague the authorities in that burgh until the outbreak of the Second World War. Some people resorted to squatting as they genuinely had no other place to live but others did it as a way of protesting against the increases in rent that were occurring at the time.

The first reported cases of squatting occurred towards the end of 1931. Many of those involved at this stage were either young married couples or families with young children. For example, a couple named James and Evelyn Boyle (aged twenty-six and twenty-one respectively) were recorded as being 'forced to remove from a sub-let room in Guthrie Street owing to (the) Means Test'. They had no family and both were unemployed. Similarly, John and Jane Tierney (aged twenty-two and twenty-one) stated that they resorted to squatting at a residence in Union Street as, 'they were destitute and the door was open'. Patrick and Bridget Donnelly illegally moved their family of six children into a house in Barrack Street because they 'were ejected from a house in Blantyre through being in arrears with rent'. Thomas and Isabella Kidd took the same action as the former family. Mrs Kidd told the Housing Committee that she moved her six children into the property in Quarry Street because 'we were ordered out of our house in Morgan Street. We heard the building was condemned and had no place to go to'.[38]

The consequence of such actions was that the providers in these 'squatting' families were prosecuted. For example, in March 1933, nine men were sent to Barlinnie Prison after admitting that they and their families had entered into 'occupancy of houses of which they knew demolition orders had been issued by the local authority'.[39] Such convictions led to protests all over Lanarkshire. In June 1933, Hamilton Housing Committee received a deputation of squatters. The deputation brought a petition and asked that immediate provision should be made for the accommodation of those who were in occupation of condemned property in the Burgh. It was also demanded that instructions should be given that no further proceedings would be taken against offenders.[40] In the same month, Mr William Ross, who was part of a contingent of Scottish Hunger Marchers given an audience at the Ministry of Labour, highlighted the case of the Hamilton squatters. He said that:

> Because these people went back to the houses from which they were evicted, they were (again) evicted then prosecuted: one had paid a fine and thirteen had gone to jail. He asked that those in authority in Edinburgh should

take some action to stop any further persecution of these persons.[41]

Neighbours, or local supporters, often assisted evicted families or people living in condemned houses in their illegal possession of buildings. Moreover, they did not always move into empty houses that were condemned, but sometimes into unallocated new burgh houses. One such case gained much publicity in Blantyre in September 1933, when two new burgh houses in Logan Street were taken possession of by two different families .The first case involved John Baillie, his wife and one year old child, who were evicted from their sub-let room. When this happened they contacted the leaders of the Blantyre branch of the NUWM who 'decided to hold an indignation meeting to protest against the action of the householder who put the family out'. On the same night there was heavy rain, and so the NUWM and other local residents assisted in carrying the 'goods and chattels' of the family to the new housing scheme in question.

The proceedings were witnessed by close to 500 people. David Park, the treasurer of the NUWM, said in an interview that 'his party had taken this course to demonstrate to the County Council the pressing demand there is in Blantyre to accommodate those people who were sub-tenants in other people's homes in Lanarkshire'. In the same week another family consisting of Thomas Lippiatt, his wife and child, illegally took possession of a house in the same street. These two cases were seen as representing a new phase in the squatting problem in Hamilton as previously there had been 'considerable activity on the part of homeless people to take possession of condemned and derelict properties and transform these into temporary abodes'. The occupancy of scheme houses was a new approach.[42]

The adults from the Baillie and Lippiatt families were arrested due to their failure to vacate the houses when ordered to do so by the police. The men were taken to the County Buildings in Hamilton and the women were lodged in the local police offices, with their children being sent to live with grandparents. The authorities apparently took this action in the 'hope that a stop would be put to these on goings once and for all'.[43]

When the cases reached court the judgement was that both couples should be fined 10/- or spend five days in prison.[44] In summarising the case, Mr Frank Cassells, who was the solicitor for both couples, stated that 'they were not of the keenest intellect' and 'he was sure the accused regretted the trouble, but it seemed to be their method of impressing the Local Authority as to the local housing conditions. The women, of course, had simply been led by the men'.[45]

Exemplary arrests, such as the ones stated above, did not end the squatting problem in Hamilton and, in fact, the problem grew worse. Between the months of March and May 1932, twenty-five families in the Burgh of Hamilton were recorded as being squatters. By March 1935 the equivalent figure was seventy-eight and by October 1936 the number stood at ninety-three. At various times of the year the number could have been higher, as some families only stayed in the condemned houses for weeks or months at a time, while others remained for years or switched from one illegal property to another to try and avoid arrest. By 1935, Patrick and Bridget Donnelly, who were mentioned above, were still living illegally in condemned housing after a period of almost three years. They had stayed at Barrack Street for three months and then had moved onto High Patrick Street. In that time Bridget had also given birth to another child, meaning that they were raising seven children in a condemned property. In 1935, Thomas and Isabella Kidd were still living in a squat, having moved from one in Quarry Street to one in Leechlee Street. Over that period their family had increased in size from six to eight children.[46]

It also seems to have been the case that by 1935 more women, who were in the position of being the provider for their families, had taken to squatting in condemned properties. Listed as an appendix to this chapter (p.253) are the names and details of some women who were accused of squatting in the period between March 1935 and October 1936, along with the remarks made by the Housing Officers who investigated them. Moreover, by 1935 there were people living in the squatting areas who were from outside Lanarkshire. Mention was made of families who had travelled from the Fife coalfields,[47] and also of one family who had made the journey from Ireland.[48] Baillie

John Cassels referred to the serious nature of the squatting problem in Hamilton at a meeting of the Town Council, when he said:

> The whole of these people are on the Public Assistance roll and we simply cannot avoid taking action in the matter. We are not going to permit persons to come in from outside areas and have the audacity to ask for homes when we have people of our own for whom houses are required.[49]

One action that was taken in 1935 to try to stop squatting was to put in place a 4/- a week reduction on the allowances squatters received, as 'since they are paying no rent, they do not require or deserve the same amount of aliment as decent people who are'. Correspondence that was sent from the Town Clerk's office demonstrated the contempt in which the squatters were viewed by the authorities. In a letter of August 1935, the Town Clerk Depute, William Crawford, wrote to Duncan Graham MP, who campaigned on behalf of the squatters, that:

> I cannot agree that any squatter, no matter how desperate his circumstances may be, is entitled to any consideration what so ever. One might as well say that one would condone the action of a person who walks into a Grocer's shop and helps himself to food. I agree that it is senseless to imprison people, just as it is senseless to use corporal punishment in an endeavour to restrain the Glasgow gentlemen who go about with razors in their pockets but that is not my affair and so long as we are going to be hampered in our efforts, however modest, to deal with the terrible question of overcrowding and bad houses, by persons who deliberately break the law, then such persons must just take what comes to them.

> Having stated these purely private views on the subject, let me say that nothing that I will do officially will ever prejudice these people in getting accommodation, if such is available for them. I quite realise that they will ultimately become a charge on the Local Authority, although logically, they should all be cast into prison, I daresay.[50]

Despite the views expressed by those in authority, the squatters persisted in their possession of condemned houses and continued to campaign for better housing. In April 1937, a march was organised to Edinburgh by fifteen squatters from Burnbank and 'they were accompanied part of the way be several of their womenfolk'. The marchers were members of the Burnbank Squatters' Association that represented ninety-five families, comprising nearly 400 persons in all. In reaching Edinburgh, the marchers had a meeting with officials of the Department of Health. The Squatters' Association argued that Hamilton Town Council should be given the authority to recondition old houses that were at present empty in Burnbank, to which the squatters and their families could be transferred.[51] The march had an impact because, after officers of the Department of Health visited Burnbank, it was decided that provisions should be made for the squatters. This met with much dismay in some quarters, with a Mr Elliot contending in a speech to the House of Commons that 'the scandal of the Hamilton squatters could not be tolerated if the country was to hold up its head with any measure of decency at all'.[52]

Progress was slow, with the possession of houses by squatters persisting throughout 1938. Hamilton Town Council went as far as to remove floors, windows and grates from empty houses 'to stop people moving in'.[53] In reaction to this, the squatters' associations increased the number of deputations they sent to the Town Council. Nevertheless, the demands of the squatters were gradually met and houses were reconditioned for them to move into, signifying a victory over the local authorities.

Not all squatters, however, were dealt with in the same way, and when it was being decided who should be re-housed, single women were commonly discriminated against.

In January 1938, the Council decided to re-house squatters from George Street and Glasgow Road. A problem facing the Council was that there were more squatters' households than there were houses to move them into, the excess being three. Three women were singled out not to receive one of the reconditioned houses:

> Catherine Scott who lives alone and seems a suitable case for the poorhouse; Ellen Bell who has a child under ten and is apparently an undesirable character; and Mrs McGladdery whose household consists only of herself and another adult or person over ten years of age.[54]

The deputations and marches that were organised in Lanarkshire between the wars, as a response to poor housing conditions, rarely had women as their leaders or spokespeople. However, it does not then follow that the efforts the women made should be dismissed. They participated just as much as their husbands, with their numbers in demonstrations being equal to that of men. Women were also effective at organising at neighbourhood level, owing to their in-depth knowledge of the people who made up the local community. At this time, wives and mothers became more visible in the arena of local politics, with their ability to accompany the marchers to Edinburgh only being curtailed by their duties as mothers, not by any lack of enthusiasm. Indeed, it was their role as mothers that made the problem of poor housing in Lanarkshire of such pertinent concern to women.

Welfare Relief for the Dependants of Striking Workers

Another area of domestic politics that women became involved in was the issue of local authority provision of welfare relief to the dependants of striking workers. Traditionally, responsibility for the care of women and children, including the supply of adequate food and health care, was assumed to rest in the hands of a male provider. This view continued into the interwar period but it was no longer practicable in the way it had been before, owing to the high rate of unemployment and falling wages among men. Indeed, a far greater number of men than ever before could not provide financial security for their families. This posed many problems for the Government, as it was

impossible for it to make direct provision for women and children without admitting that the wages of male breadwinners, especially those drawing unemployment benefit, were insufficient. Moreover, the system of National Insurance that existed offered far less to women than it did to men. Part I of the National Insurance Act of 1911, with one exception, excluded dependant wives. The working man received unlimited general practitioner medical care and 10/- a week to maintain his family while he was sick. The wife of an insured man did not receive any medical care under the Act, unless she was expecting or had recently given birth to a baby.[55]

Some men in Lanarkshire did pay into Colliery schemes that covered their dependants as well as themselves. One such scheme was the Lanarkshire Medical Practitioners' Union (LMPU). It provided for the 'medical attendance and treatment (including the provision of drugs) of dependants and workers in public works etc in Lanarkshire'.[56] Moreover, the doctors who were part of the Colliery Scheme dealt with problems that were particular to women, such as cases of miscarriage.[57] However, when works were closed down or strikes occurred for prolonged periods of time, many men could no longer contribute to the schemes and the medical cover quickly lapsed. For example, in 1922 the LMPU noted in its Tenth Annual Report 'that the total income for the year amounted to £47,384-12/9, as against £52,411-14/6 for the previous year, a decrease of over £5000. This decrease can be explained by the coal strike and subsequent irregular employment and the corresponding reduction in contributions'.[58]

The LMPU was all too aware of the problems that faced many men in Lanarkshire in trying to provide for their families and was quite sympathetic in its outlook. For example, it was reported at the annual meeting of the union in 1930 that:

> It is difficult for medical men who have been in attendance on a family for years and have received contributions in good times to stop providing treatment now that the men through no fault of their own are not contributing. Further, it is impolitic in a miners' row to give attendance in one house and refuse to enter the house next door.[59]

As the Depression continued, however, it was felt that doctors could no longer be expected to carry out treatment and dispense drugs and appliances without any hope of payment. A report on the Collieries Medical Scheme found that 'it is unfortunately true that many join who are unwilling or unable to make regular contributions and the arrears all over appear to be substantial'. The number of patients on doctors' lists decreased dramatically during the period, as men could no longer afford to make contributions on behalf of their families.

Table 6.1 – Numbers of Patients on Doctors' Lists in the Lanarkshire Medical Practitioners' Union, 1926-1934

	Money received by Collieries Medical Service Association	Numbers on Doctors' Lists
1926	£19,938-8/-	51,276
1927	£48,241-7/2	49,858
1928	£36,841-18/1	48,034
1929	£31,749-10/2	35,782
1930	£29,661-1/2	31,915
1931	£26,153	28,706
1932	£22,601-11/7	24,505
1933	£21,887-6/1	23,123
1934	£22,499-7/9	23,778

Source: GGHB, Executive Committee Reports of the LMPU 1931-1935. HB 76/1/3

As well as being confronted with the problem of being unable to provide medical care for their children, parents also had to deal with the basic but critical issue of providing food and clothing for them. These problems were exacerbated by the numerous strikes that occurred in Lanarkshire during the 1920s and 1930s. By the time of the 1921 Miners' Strike, it had already become apparent that the unemployed could not be wholly maintained by insurance, and the strike itself introduced an issue that would dominate Lanarkshire's political scene in the interwar period: the issue of poor relief to the dependants of striking workers.

Lanarkshire was split into three wards (Lower, Middle and Upper), with the authority within each ward taking responsibility for the health and monitoring of its designated population. The Middle Ward was by far the largest administrative area as, by 1921, 74% of Lanarkshire's population lived in that ward, with 15.8% living in the Upper Ward and 10.2% in the Lower Ward.[60] The system of wards continued until the implementation of the 1929 Local Government (Scotland) Reform Act. In Lanarkshire, the Act produced six authorities and each controlled their own provision for infectious diseases, tuberculosis, child welfare and poor relief. A County Council and six burghs also continued to operate. The reforms meant that the functions of parish councils were transferred to the new County Council and the functions of the Poor Law were left with the Public Health Committee.[61]

Any changes in relation to child welfare and poor relief were of vital importance to married women. As Harrison has commented, 'the working-class housewife was a welfare system in herself' who was 'crucial to the family's well-being at a time of minimal state provision. She was the family's buffer against shifting fortune'.[62] Thus, any transfer of food or clothing expenses from the household budget to the State or local authority directly benefited women, especially at a time when incomes were decreasing dramatically. This meant that women had to make their concerns known to local welfare providers and ultimately 'battle' for the rights of their children.

As Chinn argued with regards to women of the urban poor, 'a bad mother was not one who might be stern, strict and sterile emotionally, but rather was one who neglected her children's bodily needs'.[63] It was through consideration for their children that women chose to challenge state welfare providers. This was in keeping with the trend amongst Scottish working-class women of subverting 'gender stereotypes' and 'the mantle of passivity' when they 'conflicted with the imperatives of social reality'.[64] Therefore, throughout the 1920s and 1930s in Lanarkshire, women continually participated in public mobilisations that challenged the current systems of poor relief and child welfare.

When the National Miners' Strike began in April 1921, the Board of Health for Scotland released a circular to all mining areas explaining its position. The circular explained that:

> Parish Councils have no legal authority to grant relief to able bodied persons or their dependants. It will be obvious, however, that the parish councils, as authorities responsible for relieving destitution, cannot allow women and children to suffer undue hardship through lack of food.

It was advised that those seeking relief because of strike action should first of all be referred to those administering any voluntary funds available for the relief of distress. If no such funds existed, or had been exhausted and 'absolute destitution' threatened 'to cause physical injury to applicants or their dependants', then parish councils could provide the relief they thought necessary.[65]

A source of relief that many mothers turned to were the Child Welfare Centres. The Child Welfare Centres had been created under the auspices of the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918. The Act also permitted the authorities to provide salaried midwives, health visitors, day nurseries and food supplements for needy infants and mothers.[66] In Scotland, these Child Welfare schemes were run by the Public Health Department but it was at the discretion of each local authority to choose the reforms they wished to enact.[67] In the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire, two new medical officers were appointed to devote their time exclusively to Maternity and Child Welfare work.[68]

The Child Welfare Centres, with the exception of Cambuslang, Blantyre and Shotts, were all held in hired premises, which meant that the scope of the work that was performed was often limited. For example, in Tannochside the service was provided from the local Miners Welfare Hall, in Larkhall from the Sons of Temperance Hall, and at Strathaven mothers and children had to seek welfare advice and information at the Road Surveyor's Office.[69]

Owing to there being an emphasis on 'active educational work', the services offered at Child Welfare Centres by no means met the demands of women's groups. Infant welfare services were strictly educational; health visitors and infant services were not permitted to offer medical treatment and confined themselves to instructing mothers in infant hygiene. Indeed, despite the deprivation that existed amongst women and children in Lanarkshire during and following the 1921 Miners' Strike, emphasis was still placed on educating mothers as a solution to all health and household problems. The Lanarkshire Health Authority was particularly supportive of this educational element to the Child and Maternal Welfare centres but found that 'it is in the curtailment of this work that the milk and meal lines have operated so adversely'.[70] This emphasis on education but not treatment became increasingly frustrating for many mothers.

Despite the Lanarkshire authorities emphasising the educational priorities of the Child Welfare Services, this did not prevent parents from flocking to them and demanding relief for their children. It was reported by the Medical Officer of Health for Lanarkshire that:

> The Child Welfare Centres became literally besieged by huge numbers of parents – both fathers and mothers – demanding food for their children. The routine work of the centres came completely to a standstill and the resources of the whole Public Health Department, were severely taxed to meet the critical situation which had arisen.[71]

The local authority was obliged to provide assistance to nursing and expectant mothers, and to children of pre-school age, if their circumstances were judged to be necessitous. When granted, this type of assistance consisted of 1 pint of milk daily and 1 ¾ lbs of oatmeal weekly.[72] In terms of financial assistance, in households situated in the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire where the number of adults residing in the house did

not exceed three, 11/- per week for each adult was granted and 5/6 per week for each child under fourteen years.

Some medical officers, however, were reprimanded for being too generous to miners' dependants. For instance, at a meeting of the Public Health Committee of Hamilton in May 1921, it was reported that, since the strike had began, '5671 children under five years of age had been provided with nourishment' as well as '160 expectant and nursing mothers'. This had cost the burgh £1851 per fortnight. During the meeting it was further reported that the Scottish Board of Health had been in communication with the committee as the 'scale of diet which had been prepared by the Medical Officer was considered by the Board too liberal' and, as a result, 'all the allowances had since been reduced'.[73]

The miners and their families were held with great suspicion from many quarters. An *Inspector's Report on Distress in the Scottish Coalfields* of 1928 stated that, 'my general impression from the reports is that apart from one or two localities the cry of distress among miners and their families in Scotland is much exaggerated'.[74] The Board of Health stood by these findings, despite evidence to the contrary being presented by other agencies. For example, a Family Endowment Society report of 1924 on maternal mortality, showed that the health of miners' wives was particularly poor relative to other occupational groups.[75] Furthermore, as the Depression continued into the 1930s, Scottish reports on incapacitating sickness from 1932 to 1939 revealed an abnormal incidence of acute and chronic sickness among mining families.[76] Nevertheless, the inspector reports commonly found the case to be that 'there is no distress visibly affecting the health of the people and that the newspaper pictures of fireless grates and starving men and women are in no sense typical of the general situation. Probably the main need at present is for boots and clothing'.[77]

Applications for assistance were so numerous that new premises had to be opened in addition to the permanent centres that already existed in the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire. As can be seen in the following table, the number of families who applied for, and were granted, assistance during the 1921 strike was substantial.

Table 6.2 – Requests for Assistance at Child Welfare Centres in the Middle Ward of Lanarkshire, April – December 1921

Month	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. Cases	9221	11,583	11,964	10,240	1415	2005	2139	2508	2519

Source: GGHB, Medical Officer of Health for Lanarkshire Annual Report, 1921. LK 13/1/26

It was felt by the Medical Officer of Health for Lanarkshire that the assistance, 'undoubtedly had the effect of allaying the discontent and unrest of people whose children might otherwise have starved, and of alleviating a situation which might, and probably would at some time, have become acutely critical in the mining areas'.[78] As Levitt has argued, parishes in mining areas throughout Scotland had to pay enough relief to prevent a breakdown in public order and they had to ensure that, as far as possible, 'needful sustentation' was being met.[79] This concept was used by the authorities to determine the amount of relief that was appropriate in the case of each applicant. The amount varied in accordance with the standard of living in each locality. To the Scottish Board of Health, 'needful sustentation' was a 'comparative term, linked not to some absolute concept of physical fitness but to the moral and economic propriety of allowing the non-productive, publicly dependant person state support'.[80]

In Lanarkshire's Upper Ward, however, the actions of the parish councils in relation to striking miners and their dependants did threaten to cause public disorder. When the stoppage commenced, the MOH for the Upper Ward asked the Public Health Commission to give him some indication as to how the applications for assistance should be dealt with where mothers, or children under five years of age, were 'unable to obtain food supplies sufficient to maintain health', and what the action taken was to be when that 'inability was due to the breadwinner of the family being unemployed'. The MOH was instructed to use his own discretion but, in cases where necessity was on account of 'the breadwinner being idle at the present moment, assistance should only be granted on condition that an obligation be given by the parties binding themselves to

repay the sum expended by the Committee when they resume work'. Indeed, despite the objections raised by the Lanarkshire Miners' County Union, the Committee would not overturn its decision. This outcome was different from the critical situation that arose in Dundee at the same time. In July 1921 unemployment benefit was refused to married women whose husbands were also in receipt of 'out of work' pay. As a result, rioting and looting occurred, with women playing a leading part in these disturbances. The eventual outcome was that the Council was forced to make relief available.[81]

The cost to the local authorities of providing relief to the dependants of striking miners was substantial. During 1920 the expenditure on additional nourishment, in Lanarkshire as a whole, had amounted to about £1000, but in the year 1921 the expenditure amounted to over £39,000. The Middle Ward, where most of the Lanarkshire population resided, accounted for £37,258 of that expenditure. In the Upper Ward, where the restrictions on providing assistance to striking miners and their families were imposed, the spending reached £608. As the number of necessitous cases continued to rise, the local authorities became increasingly worried that the educational principles of the Child Welfare Centres were being disregarded because of the interference of strike action amongst miners. As the Chief MOH lamented, 'there is no doubt that the purposes for which the centres were originally created under the Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes are being submerged through the present system of relief. The mothers are beginning to lose touch with the centres, and in many cases are only continuing to attend for what are essentially relief purposes'.[82]

The following year the local authorities were forced to be more restrictive in their expenditure. In 1922, it was agreed that assistance should no longer be given to mothers and children up to the age of five years, but should be restricted to mothers and children up to two years of age. Moreover, on 15 March the scale of income adopted for the demarcation between necessity and non-necessity was revised in view of the fall in the cost of living. The result of the revision was that the eligible income of 11/- per week was reduced to 9/- per week. This resulted in a considerable number of families being refused assistance. Thus, whereas in January 1922, 2944 families in the Middle Ward were granted assistance, by December of the same year the number had fallen to 695.[83]

These cuts not only attracted condemnation from the unemployed and their families but caused conflict amongst councillors themselves. For example, the Communist members of Dalziel Parish Council openly called the Chairman a 'baby starver' for allowing the cuts to go ahead.[84]

Not all parish councils were necessarily unsympathetic to the plight of strikers and their dependants, with some openly defying the law to assist them. This was demonstrated during a stoppage at Douglas in 1925. The owners of the Douglas West Colliery told the men working there that they would only be employed if they agreed to wage cuts and other alterations in working practices. The parish considered it to be a lock-out and began enrolling the miners and their families for relief.[85] The Board of Health became alarmed and immediately asked for the payments to be withdrawn. However, when it received allegations that children were undernourished, it reconsidered its decision and permitted the parish to continue the relief on a reduced scale.[86]

On the whole, parish councils were generally not as sympathetic as the one in Douglas. This meant that parents were continually brought into conflict with the authorities over child welfare issues. At a meeting of the Lanark County Council in March 1933, the police had to be called to eject a group of twelve people, including one woman, who kept interrupting the proceedings. The woman concerned, a Mrs McCallum, had been using the meeting as a platform for calling on the council to 'increase the allowances for children and also to grant 1 cwt of coal weekly to each household where unemployment existed'.[87]

School boards were also frequently targeted by angry parents. In Bellshill, Chief Constable Keith, who was monitoring Communist activity in the area, reported that on 9 January 1933, at a gathering of 300 people, a deputation had been appointed to approach the District School Management Committee. In meeting the Committee, the appointed parents were going to request that 'free boots, clothing and one hot meal each day should be supplied to school children'. When the Committee refused to meet with

the deputation, Keith noted how 'the Communists then advised parents to withhold their children from school until the demands were met'.[88]

The education authorities had been confronted with a similar problem in October 1926. At a meeting of the Lanarkshire Education Authority, it was reported that applications for boots and clothing for school children had been 'abnormal'.[89] Previous to the meeting, 7040 applications for boots and clothing had been received and only 196 cases were rewarded. The requests for relief involved 17,148 children, as each individual application usually covered numerous children in the same family. The issue of how much child welfare provision should be allowed divided the Education Authority. One member, the Rev. Alexander Andrew, felt that the 'Authority was in a dangerous position because of the fact that there existed a certain class of people who were out to get all they could at the expense of the other ratepayers'. On the other hand, a Mr Gallagher, 'appealed to the authority to exercise not only common sense but ordinary humanity'. The Rev. John R. Cantlay concurred with Mr Gallagher when he reported 'that within a fortnight or three weeks when the cold weather set in, the schools would be half empty not because of revolt but because there would be no boots for the children and the parents would refuse to send them to school in that case'. Indeed, parents in Blantyre had already threatened to withhold their children from school unless their demands for boots and clothing were met. Cases such as the one mentioned became part of the everyday workload of local authorities and the problem of ensuring that the 'needful sustentation' of the dependants of the unemployed was being met, stayed with the Lanarkshire authorities for the duration of the Depression.

The Newmains School 'Strike'

Housing conditions and welfare provision were just two issues of many that presented themselves to women during the Depression and as has been seen, numerous factors prompted women into seeking public recognition for the challenges that they and their families had to confront at that time. On some occasions, however, the issues that a community chose to unite on were far removed from the hunger marches and industrial disputes that usually characterised the period. An example of this was to be found in the village of Newmains in north Lanarkshire. From January 1929 until May

1930, a strike was held in the village. The strike had nothing to do with the local collieries in the area and the 'rebels' were not adults but children. For fifteen months nearly 150 children aged between twelve and fourteen years of age did not attend school and they did so with the consent and avid encouragement of their parents. Unsurprisingly, the strike generated a great deal of both local and national interest and presented many interesting insights into the community at the time.

The Coltness Iron Company's works dominated Newmains and had provided the impetus for the small village to grow into a town. Coal mining had become the mainstay of the company's activities after 1890, owing to the market preference for Spanish and Cumbrian ore. As a result, in its search for more coal reserves, the Company spread out from its Newmains headquarters to encompass the small communities of Cambusnethan, Morningside, Waterloo and Overtown. A cement works was also established in Newmains during this time of expansion.[90] By the time of the 1921 Census it was estimated that the population of Cambusnethan Parish, of which Newmains was part, had a population of 36,737.[91]

In common with most areas in Lanarkshire, the Newmains economy and its population suffered in the two decades that followed the First World War. For example, official returns showed that during the period 1924-1936, the number of jobs available in collieries in Cambusnethan fell by 1400.[92] Moreover, Wishaw, which was the nearest town to Newmains and a site of employment for many people from the village, was not faring any better. In an *Inspector's Report on Distress in the Scottish Coalfields* of December 1928 it was stated that, 'among the counties Lanarkshire is worst placed. Within that county the blackspots are Larkhall, Ferniegair, Burnbank, Quarter, Blantyre, Bellshill, Wishaw and Shotts'.[93] At the same time, the Parish was also becoming heavily dependant on relief from the Distress in Mining Areas (Scotland) Fund. Records show that from 13 December 1928 until 13 September 1929, the fund had spent the following amounts of money on the people of Cambusnethan Parish; £4000-16/6 on food, £10-5/- on clothes and £4-14/- on migration grants.[94]

Despite the poverty and hardship that confronted the people of Newmains, the issue they chose to focus on was the running of the local school and they ultimately resorted to the strike measures that would have traditionally been used during an industrial dispute. Conflict arose as a response to the process of centralisation and rationalisation that had been promoted by the Hadow Report of 1927, by which elementary schools were reorganised into age-segregated units and designated as infant, junior and senior schools. These measures were to affect schools throughout Britain and met with the disapproval of many parents.[95]

The chief grievance among parents was that local authorities often failed to consult them or to consider their needs prior to the implementation of reorganisation plans. Parents were against the removal of children from schools situated within the local community to centralised units and many feared the threat that plans posed to the health and safety of children, who would be forced to walk long distances to their new schools.[96] However, Newmains was one of the few villages that decided to take action.* The parents there, especially the mothers, fought the Lanarkshire Education Authority on the issues already mentioned and with regard to concerns more specific to the locality. Indeed, as it progressed, the school strike began to symbolise much more than a stand against a local school authority and as one protester phrased it, this was a strike against the 'professional classes' who were becoming the 'moochers on the industrial classes'.[97]

The *Wishaw Press* reported in January 1929 that the big event in educational circles was the 'opening of the palatial new secondary school in Park Street'. This school, which was named Beltanefoot Advanced Division School, had been opened in keeping with the Scottish Education Department's policy of centralisation. It was the intention of Lanarkshire Education Authority to transfer senior pupils from Newmains Public School and schools in Overtown and Cambusnethan to Beltanefoot School, which was a distance of about three miles from Newmains. The paper noted that:

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* Other strikes took place in Dyfed (1929), Edinburgh (1925) and Dumfries (1929).

> The Education Authority has ruffled a section of the ratepayers particularly in the Newmains area who forwarded to the Authority a largely signed petition of protest. The majority of the members of the Authority and likewise the educational experts … are satisfied that centralised methods of teaching these pupils is the most efficient and cheapest way of dealing with them, and protest, beyond showing the feelings of the parents, are not likely to carry much weight.[98]

This proved not to be the case and protests went far beyond the sending of petitions to the Education Authority.

When Beltanefoot opened in January 1929 after the New Year holidays, 240 pupils were absent, almost half the total on the school roll. At a meeting of parents in Coltness Mission Hall (Newmains) it had been 'resolved unanimously to resist the Authority to the utmost'.[99] A sure sign of this defiance was demonstrated when the parents, not only refused to send their children to Beltanefoot, but also encouraged their children to march to Newmains Public School and try to gain entry. On the morning of 7 January, the day that Newmains advanced division pupils were due to start at Beltanefoot, the children in question lined up with 'legitimate' scholars and marched into the school building. Within a few minutes they were out again, as the 'instruction to go to Beltanefoot was still in force'. This action had taken place with between sixty and seventy parents looking on.[100]

From the start of the protest the organisation of the parents was highly efficient. Men and women, some of whom had little experience in public affairs, were elected to sit on the strike committee (or as it was known, the Parents' Committee), raise funds, stage demonstrations and plan ways of avoiding attendance regulations without openly defying the law. The Committee had the support of a few local dignitaries, who acted as spokespeople on most occasions. These included the Rev. H. Russell Ferguson, Parish Councillor Fleming, and Mr Connor, a member of the Lanarkshire Education Authority

(LEA). However, due to the primary role of women being to care for children and look after their welfare, mothers made up the vast majority of the protesters. Most newspaper accounts of the strike made continual reference to the presence of women at demonstrations and how they made up a high proportion of members at public meetings. Moreover, the opinions of women were highly respected and were regularly referred to.

The grievances of the Newmains parents had much in common with those in other areas of Britain. Many of the parents' reasons for objecting to the transferral of their children to Beltanefoot were voiced in an early meeting of the Parents' Committee in March 1929. An important concern for parents in a village where unemployment and economic distress was so noticeable, and many children were deprived of adequate food and clothing, was the effect that walking to a school over three miles away would have on their health and general well-being. As it was noted at the meeting, 'here is a school on our very door-steps where parents may send their children at no extra expense to themselves or to the body of the ratepayers as a whole. And there off the beaten track lies Beltanefoot School'.[101]

The opening of Beltanefoot, and the enforced attendance of Newmains children at it, was viewed as an essentially bureaucratic measure that could be easily avoided by adapting the available space at the village school for the purpose. Parish Councillor Fleming boasted of the facilities to be found at Newmains Public School and highlighted the failings of Beltanefoot School:

> Beltanefoot, where now a larger number of pupils are being taught, not including Newmains children, has only fifteen fitted tubs in the laundry, while Newmains has twenty fitted tubs. In Newmains a large, bright, comparatively new school, eight rooms and a well-fitted cottage of three rooms for housewifery, are left standing empty. Practical workrooms are used only one forenoon per week for Newmains R.C. pupils. Is this economy? Why cause so

> much extreme expense to ratepayers and extra expense and hardship to parents, and engender so much ill-feeling when facilities are at the door?[102]

Much of the resentment that parents felt was aimed at the attack they saw as being launched on local values and traditions. During a time of such hardships, the school was a symbol of endurance and normality. The first school building in the village had been built by the Coltness Iron Company and the present one had opened to much fanfare in 1906.[103] As it was said at the time, 'the village of Newmains has traditions peculiarly its own and one of its proudest traditions is centred in the school. The people of Newmains have so much pride and loathe the idea of the senior boys and girls requiring to go to Beltanefoot to "finish off"'.[104] Similarly, the proposed move of Newmains children to Wishaw for schooling was viewed as an affront to family values and the traditional way of life in the village. As Councillor Fleming argued, 'they will miss their mid-day dinner with their father and the rest of the family, the works' meal hour being the same as the school one'.[105]

The children moving to Beltanefoot would also be a burden on many of the mothers, as they would have the extra work of 'preparing "pieces" and making two dinners'. If they were to remain at their current school, the children could attend wearing ordinary clothes, mended or otherwise. However, extra cost would be incurred by parents owing to their desire to make sure that their children looked well cared for and 'respectable'. Travelling to Beltanefoot, children would 'require extra clothes and boots' and all mothers 'like to see their children well dressed and shod when going a distance and will put forth an effort, sometimes beyond their means, to do this'. To fail to do this would ultimately bring 'shame' on some mothers. A final argument constantly put forward was that the cost of travel to Wishaw would be too much for most parents to afford, but due to their fears about the safety and health of their children, many would not want them to walk long distances. It was estimated that the cost of travelling to school by tram would be 10d per child per week.[106] This was a decisive hardship, especially when there was widespread unemployment and wages were low.

There was another less publicised and discussed reason that was often said to be a cause of the parents' protests, with the accusation being levelled at them by the LEA. Before it had been decided that Newmains advanced division pupils should travel to Beltanefoot, it had been proposed that the school be used by pupils from Wishaw Roman Catholic and Craigneuk Roman Catholic Schools.[107] These children were slightly younger than the children expected to go from Newmains. Father Theophilus Delbeke, a member of the Committee on Necessitous Children (which was part of the LEA), had taken up the case on behalf of the children concerned. He argued that, 'the parents were badly off and were unable to fortify the children adequately in food and clothing for distant travelling to school', an argument that was later used by Protestant parents.[108] In the case of Catholic children, the plans had been abandoned.

An investigation by the *Glasgow Herald* into the situation at Newmains, while appreciative of many of the reasons given by the parents for not sending their children to Beltanefoot, especially in relation to the problems it would cause in such deprived times, concluded that:

> There are other considerations … other reasons that are not positively avowed, but still are frankly enough acknowledged when the question is expressly put. The chief of these arises out of the faction spirit that unfortunately still lingers so persistently in some parts of Lanarkshire, the old Orange and Green antagonisms. The Protestant parents of Newmains have undoubtedly been stiffened in their hostility to the Education Authority's scheme by the view that they are having foisted upon them an arrangement which the Roman Catholics have resisted on behalf of their children.[109]

Sectarianism was undoubtedly a dimension that cast a shadow over the dispute. While the 'high-handed action of the Education Authority' was often complained about, in tandem with this went the accusation that, 'the Authority presented a serious

affront not only to the Protestant ratepayers of Newmains, but also to Protestant Scotland'.[110] Nevertheless, the parents maintained that they were fighting for equality in the decision making process of the LEA and for the rights of their children. This was despite one of their leaders, Mr Connor, urging that 'the time has not come yet when the priest is to dictate to the Protestant people what they are to do. I will be your Cromwell so far as this fight is concerned'. However, at the same meeting it was said by Councillor Fleming that 'this is not an "Orange squabble". There are only four Orangemen in the committee of eighteen, and for over 150 children, not ten per cent of the parents are Orangemen. It is a question of good education to the children, and fair play and consideration for parents and rate payers'.[111]

Whatever reasons the parents had for preventing their children from going to Beltanefoot, their opposition remained fierce. They were given numerous warnings by the LEA about what the penalty would be for non-attendance at school by their children.[112] For example, in April 1929, it was decided by the Cambusnethan School Management Committee to 'summon parents to appear before the Committee as defaulters in order that Attendance Orders would be pronounced against them as a necessary preliminary step prior to the Authority instituting Court proceedings'.[113] Despite warnings such as these, the defiance of the parents remained intact and their methods became more extreme.

An indication of the resolve of the parents was given when they established a 'strike' school in the church halls in May 1929.[114] This was one way of undermining the Authority, as it would weaken their argument that the children's education was being wilfully neglected. The work of educating the children was given to Rev. Ferguson, the Minister for Coltness Memorial Parish Church, the Rev. Maclean of Morningside and Mr Ephrain Connor of Motherwell. The school had an average daily attendance of 117 pupils. The daily routine involved the children, who would be accompanied by their mothers, trying to gain entry to their former school. When this failed they would proceed to the strike school and be counted. During the two or three hours they spent in school each day they received lessons in history, geography, arithmetic and the Bible, 'and some other subjects they would be getting in school'.[115] The school lasted until

September, when it was argued that its suspension would 'give the Authority an opportunity of proving their case in court if so desired'.[116]

While the strike school was in operation the Authority did bring action against the parents. The first set of attendance orders were administered in May 1929 and filed against seven parents.[117] This did not prompt the adults into sending their children to Beltanefoot. Mr Nelson, one of the parents with an attendance order placed against him, was reported as saying 'it may mean a fine or imprisonment, but no matter we will carry on. Should the case come before a sheriff, and if he decides against us, we will take it to a higher court. As to fines, we are not troubled too much about them'.[118] The prosecutions did reach Hamilton Sheriff Court but did not meet with the outcome that the Authority had expected. Sheriff Brown had to dismiss the case on a technicality. The LEA had acted illegally by allowing a Special Committee to issue the attendance orders on which the prosecutions were founded.[119]

This was a victory for the parents in every sense, as not only had they avoided prosecution for the time being but the decision had caused great embarrassment for the Authority. The LEA was derided in both the local and national press. The *Motherwell Times* wrote that, 'this country is confronted with the pitiable spectacle of an Authority unable to enforce its authority, and a group of parents determined to flout the authority of the Authority until they get the principle for which they are fighting established'.[120] Similarly, the *Glasgow Herald* concluded that, 'either the powers given under an Act of Parliament are real powers, or the work of a local body such as the Lanarkshire Education Authority become farcical and capable of being flouted by any self-constituted organisation that cares to rear its head'.[121]

The decision of the Sheriff, but also the fact that the Authority had attempted to prosecute a group of parents, created divisions amongst its membership. At one of the meetings of the LEA that followed the court case, its members were forced to discuss previous decisions that they had made regarding the centralisation policy. For example, at one point it had been proposed that children from Blackwood should be transferred to Lesmahagow under a centralisation scheme. In that case the local committee had

been consulted and their views upheld, with the status quo remaining. A Mr McQueen argued that this indicated something of the preferential treatment that the Authority was prepared to give other areas, while Newmains people were to be treated with the 'iron fist'. He felt that in the one case the Authority had said 'we must bow to local feeling' and in the other 'we are going to prosecute the community'. Moreover, he continued to argue that 'the law … said the Authority could do certain things to parents who refused to educate their children but was not intended to put a legal instrument in the hands of the faddists, so that they could force their fads upon a community against their will'.[122] Indeed, this sense of persecution remained not only with certain members of the Authority but also within the community itself.

It was after the sheriff's decision that militancy amongst the parents and children reached its peak. The children continued to present themselves at Newmains Public School every morning, accompanied by their mothers, but they became far more occupied with trying to gain access to the building. For example, on the morning of 10 September, a group of advanced division pupils, numbering about 200, swarmed around the girls' gate, and urged on by some of their mothers, pressed for admission. On this occasion it was reported that 'both the headmaster and his assistant were helpless. The youngsters rushed into the school and occupied their former classrooms'.[123] This became a regular occurrence. On 20 September, 153 advanced division pupils gained admission with the other pupils and, since no teacher had been provided for them, they staged what was effectively a 'sit-in'. It was said that 'the pupils brought with them the usual popular boys' and girls' papers, while some of the girls had sewing and knitting with them'.[124]

The most volatile stage of the strike occurred in the week commencing 23 September 1929. Scenes occurred that would have been more akin to an industrial dispute. The children who were of advanced division age were faced with a 'lock-out' at their former school: 'instead of the gates of learning being wide open to youthful feet, the school doors were closed to certain would-be scholars and teachers and janitors, assisted by the police were engaged in guarding the doors'. It had been decided that once all 'eligible' children were inside the doors had to be locked. In turn, the children

who had not been permitted entry remained in the playground and for the next hour or so, sang choruses of 'All Together' and 'Glory, Glory Hallelujah'. As they did this, the crowd of parents, who were mostly women, voiced their support for their children.

The *Motherwell Times* described the women involved as being 'decent, respectable looking folks' but denounced them somewhat, as it felt that 'the parents are at the root of the problem here, for undoubtedly there would be no "rebel" scholars were they not rebel parents'.[125] However, the newspaper did marvel at the shrewdness of the women, as they were aware of the 'power of the purse', in as much as they contributed to the purse of the Education Authority. Many mothers were heard shouting that they would not pay their education rates until the problem was settled to their satisfaction.

As the children demonstrated in the school playground during that week, they used methods and sang songs that would often have been used by their parents during a miners' strike. They accompanied songs like 'The more we are together' and 'Britons never shall be slaves', with the sound of tin-can 'music'. This was akin to the 'rough music' that was commonly adapted to industrial conflict by miners and their families. As was argued by E.P. Thompson in *Customs in Common*, such action constituted both a communally sanctioned assertion of the primacy of a collectivist village culture and the public punishment of those inhabitants who transgressed its norms.[126] In this case the school was part of the village culture and this form of 'rough music' was being used to undermine and ridicule the Authority.

In keeping with custom, the language used to discuss and understand the strike was often that which would have been used during an industrial dispute. Indeed, it was at this stage that the numbers involved in the strike increased and its influence spread to other schools and villages in the area. For example, on 26 September a 'sympathetic' strike occurred when the ordinary scholars refused to go to Newmains School when the 'rebel' pupils were not allowed to enter at the morning session. A crowd of several hundred assembled on the roadway and cheered as these new recruits to the strike marched through the principal streets of the village singing 'We are the Rebel Boys'.[127] The scope of the strike widened the next day. Pupils at the nearby Morningside School

came out on 'strike' to show their sympathy for the Newmains students. On that day, out of a roll of 270 pupils, only a few entered the school. Similarly, only a dozen pupils out of the 900 enrolled at Newmains School attended that day.[128]

Instead of attending school, the Newmains pupils and their parents marched to Morningside and, accompanied by pupils and parents from that village, they then proceeded to Cambusnethan. When the police prevented them from gaining access to Cambusnethan School, the crowd marched round by a side street to the home of a member of the Education Authority and stood outside and jeered and shouted. This was another common occurrence during strikes, with the homes of blacklegs and colliery owners often being a target. By early October 1929, either through genuine sympathy for the cause or due to the fears of some parents that they might be labelled as strike-breakers, over 1700 children were not attending school in the Cambusnethan Parish.[129]

Although the 'sympathetic' strike was largely over by Christmas, it was at this point that the parents of the strikers started to come under criticism from the national press. The *Glasgow Herald* decreed that 'the matter has gone far enough' and that 'whatever be the feeling roused in the area by sectarian resentments, every sensible parent will realise that either the Authority rules or it does not, and that there can be no half-way house on the matter'.[130] The LEA shared this opinion and resolved to take firmer action.

Parents were called before the Authority with increasing regularity and more attendance orders were served. It should be noted, however, that attendance orders were usually issued to fathers rather than mothers, owing to their being judged as the head of the family and responsible for all the people in it. Nevertheless, on numerous occasions women chose to appear on behalf of their husbands and to state the family's case. For example, a Mrs Sloan appeared before the board on 25 September and presented a lengthy case. She argued that it was inconvenient for her to send her son to Beltanefoot School. She had six boys attending school, one of which was at high school, and another two were 'strikers'. She added that her husband had been crippled during the war and the household was her responsibility. Mrs Sloan informed the Authority that

she would stand firm in her resolve and that she had 'decent, good boys' and she was not ashamed of them. When asked if she would send her boy to Beltanefoot if she received help in regard to tram fares and food, she replied 'no sir, there is room for them in Newmains Public School. I will stand firm like my husband stood firm for King and country .... It is not a question of religion with me, it is justice'.[131]

Another mother, Mrs Ellis, supplied the Authority with the same reasons as most other parents for not sending her daughter to Beltanefoot, mainly finance and the fact that Newmains School had better facilities than the school at Wishaw. Mrs Ellis argued that she was not preventing her child from receiving an education because she sent her to Newmains School every day but she was always denied entry; it was the Authority who was failing to educate her daughter. She concluded her case by telling the Authority that 'you can do as you like with me but she won't go to that school. Prosecute me or do as you like, there are more than me to come'.[132]

In December 1929, seven parents were charged at Hamilton Sheriff Court with having failed to comply with attendance orders. This case aroused a great deal of media interest, just as the previous case in May had done. The case also proved the extent to which the events of the last year had been judged by the community as being similar to that of any other strike. For example, the evidence supplied by the Rev. David McQueen, a member of the LEA who was questioned by the parents' solicitor Mr Burnett, gives some insight into their outlook:

> **Burnett**: What sort of people are the Newmains people?
>
> **McQueen**: They are certainly not the kind we deal with before defaulters' registers
>
> **Burnett**: Are they average working-class parents?
>
> **McQueen**: The district is rather an exceptional district with rather a good Scottish tradition with regard to their outlook and ideal and aspirations for their children.

The witness was then asked by counsel if the attitude taken up by the majority of the Authority was one of standing on their dignity:

> **McQueen**: Yes it was. The parents, while asking for the 'status quo ante' were willing to submit the matter to the Department [of Education]. All parties had been agreed on the advisability of submitting the question to the Department, but the Authority insisted on the Newmains children first going to Beltanefoot School … I myself had represented that in a normal strike of workmen they were not asked to return to new conditions pending a settlement, but to return to the 'status quo ante'.
>
> **Burnett**: And that was the idea behind the parents' proposals?
>
> **McQueen**: Yes. We are dealing with a working-class community who have an idea how strikes and trades disputes are organised and they themselves were acting upon that analogy in making this suggestion. I think that was in the back of their minds.[133]

The Sheriff's judgement was put on hold until the following January but this time it went against the strikers. Only one parent was found 'not guilty' of failing to educate his child while the other six were fined £1, with the alternative of facing five days' imprisonment. There was a slight demonstration at the close of the hearing. A number of women, among whom were the wives of the respondents, gathered round Mr Mair (Clerk and Director of Education of LEA) as he left the court and loudly expressed their disapproval at the result of the prosecutions. Several of them shouted that the fines would not be paid.[134] Despite these convictions, many parents continued not to send their children to Beltanefoot. At one Parents' Committee meeting a woman argued that 'if the whole lot go to Beltanefoot mine are not going. My man was in a worse place than jail and nothing was said about him and that is why I have to go to work. I am true yet, they have summoned me and I am going to stick to it'.[135]

Female supporters of the strike also continued to present the strike as a political concern. This was demonstrated at a Women's Unionist meeting held in Motherwell Lesser Town Hall. The speaker, Mrs Helen B. Shaw, referred in only an incidental way to educational questions in the course of her address and during question time 'women hecklers put up a barrage of questions relative to the speaker's attitude on the Newmains Strike'. One woman enquired how it was that while she was a Unionist, 'she still voted on the Education Authority with the Socialists?' The woman also asked why Mrs Shaw voted in favour of the 'prosecution of the parents of Newmains'. Shaw's reply was that she never voted 'with the Socialists or as a Socialist' but as a member of the Authority. She further added that, as a member of the Authority, she was entrusted with the education of the children and she felt that it was in the interests of the children to go to Beltanefoot. She had voted according to conscience. The heckler persisted with her line of questioning and commented that 'the mothers of Newmains do not think it is in the interests of the children that they should leave their own village to go to Beltanefoot. Surely the mothers know what is best for their children?' In addressing this Mrs Shaw was of the opinion that 'it is out of our hands now, and the Sheriff, as you know, has given a decision … this is a political meeting and the Newmains question is not a political one'.[136]

The strike did slowly reach its conclusion and as the Rev. McQueen remarked, he had served the first ten or twelve years of his ministry in an industrial community but he had never seen a strike where there was not a breakaway and, 'there will be people whose hearts respond to the call of their children and who will feel it is their duty to send their children to Beltanefoot'.[137] Indeed, at the end of March 1930, 101 pupils who had been on strike presented themselves for enrolment at Beltanefoot, although under protest. The only reason for their attendance was that the Scottish Education Department (SED) had promised the Parents' Committee that an inquiry, under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Rose, would be conducted into the dispute. The parents in turn agreed that they would hold to any decision that the SED reached. In the meantime, children from Newmains were provided with season tickets to enable them

to travel to Wishaw on the Lanarkshire Tramway Cars. Children from beyond Newmains were given bus season tickets.[138]

The inquiry that was held on 14 May 1930 in the Coltness Church Hall was attended by more than 300 of the parents involved. The speakers reiterated many of the arguments presented previously against the transfer of pupils to Beltanefoot. Mrs Sloan, who had been fined £1 during the court case in January, again testified. She insisted that she could not give her boy money to buy a mid-day meal in Wishaw and he did not have enough time to travel back to Newmains to eat. Mrs Sloan also insisted that she worked hard, as did everybody in Newmains. To this, Rose remarked that probably Mrs Sloan thought she had been punished not for any crime but for a political reason, to which she replied 'I think it was for poverty, Sir. I think it is a disgrace for any hard working, decent, honest parent to be taken to the Sheriff Court'.[139]

In July 1930 a decision was finally reached. Sir Arthur Rose criticised the attitude of the LEA and felt that in the earlier phases of the dispute, 'the situation might have been handled with a larger measure of sympathy and with more painstaking explanation'. He had also made note of how in a 'considerable number of cases … youngsters only had ten to fifteen minutes for their dinners and great stress was laid on the inadequacy of a "piece" and the impossibility, in the present difficult economic conditions, of affording the cost of a meal in Wishaw'.[140] The SED agreed with Rose's findings, and decided that the policy of keeping the Newmains school as an advanced division school should be reverted to, so far as the children of the first and second years were concerned. The provision for pupils of the third year of the advanced division should continue to be made at Beltanefoot Advanced Division School.[141] Therefore, after almost two years of resistance, the parents of Newmains had nearly triumphed against the Lanarkshire Education Authority.

Conclusion

The timing of the Newmains School dispute was particularly poignant. It occurred at a time when many men were unemployed or earning insufficient wages, and when women were struggling to keep their homes and families together. A part of a woman's

role as a mother was to provide her children with an adequate education, which was something the Newmains women understood. They regarded it as a domestic issue but, when the LEA tried to enforce changes that threatened the 'traditional' way of life in the community, it became a political issue. Thus, the parents resorted to methods that they would have used during an industrial struggle: picketing, demonstrating and striking. However, in this case their children did the 'striking' and proved that they had internalised many of the values of the adults in the village. Of course, as Sir Henry Keith (Chairman of the LEA) had argued at the time 'it is rather good fun for them [children] to be out of school with the goodwill of their parents but it is good fun which will have a terrible harvest of injury to them in after years'.[142]

Many children went without a full education for close to two years, so that their parents could take a 'stand' against those in authority. The importance of this strike was that, not only did it give the majority of the village something to unite in at a time when it was losing its industrial identity, but it was also a time that called for solidarity amongst women and men. Women were allowed to embrace their role as citizens with political concerns, as well as that of daughters and housewives. As was pointed out by Mr Connor at the victory meeting held by the parents, 'you were not rebels. You were the most law-abiding community in Scotland and you were all animated with the spirit that your action was in the interests of your children'.[143]

The areas of welfare politics that have been discussed in this chapter show how the extremities of the Depression in Lanarkshire forced women to become more politicised. The two decades before the Second World War became a time of notable activity among many working-class women, with most organising at street and neighbourhood level. In their roles as household managers women were aware of the need to turn traditional domestic questions, like child care and education, into central political concerns. This was noted by the Independent Labour Party in 1922,when it made the observation that 'we are on the threshold of tremendous developments. Politics are being rapidly domesticated'.[144] As has been argued by Melling, in considering the period prior to the Second World War it is necessary to acknowledge the part played by housing conditions and other social questions in the growth of political

consciousness.[145] Indeed, focusing on conflict purely in terms of industrial unrest, excludes from serious attention the many ordinary women who raised awareness of the issue of welfare politics during this period.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to provide a 'refocused' account of Lanarkshire's industrial communities during the interwar period, by bringing into view the many women who lived in the area at that time. The Lanarkshire area epitomised the living and working conditions being encountered by residents in heavily industrialised regions throughout Britain. Thus, through focusing on Lanarkshire by way of example, a much more complex picture of working-class women's experiences of the Depression has been presented. Indeed, unlike previous assessments of the period, this thesis has contended that traditional gender roles and power relations in Britain's industrial communities were challenged as a result of the extreme social and economic conditions of the interwar years.

Working-class women were not the quiescent, passive 'victims' that have been presented in existing studies of occupational communities. Such characterisations of women have arisen due to the habit amongst historians of negating the value of the private sphere. For example, both Macintyre and Campbell, in their studies of mining communities, placed great emphasis on the 'wage earning role of the husband and the domestic duties of the wife', with the latter role being viewed as being of lesser value.[1] As women tended not to be the main breadwinners, the conclusion was reached that they naturally lacked power and status within the family. However, this work has argued for a more refined understanding of the private sphere and the position of women within it. In common with Chinn and Bourke's studies of working-class communities in England and Ireland, it has been shown that an important way in which Lanarkshire women gained status in the home was by competently managing scarce resources.[2] During the Depression years of high male unemployment, married women, in their traditional roles as mothers and household managers, were still responsible for controlling the family finances as well as subsidising the family budget whenever possible. This often led to the situation in working-class families where wives were the new providers leading to a situation where power relations were irrevocably altered. Women became, not the dependants of men, but their equals.

Analysis of the impact of the Depression on the everyday lives of households in Lanarkshire provides evidence concerning assorted historical hypotheses. One of the most significant is that concerning the competition for resources within the family, particularly with regards to leisure. In this respect it has been shown that Lanarkshire had much in common with the heavy-industry dominated areas of England. In Lanarkshire, as in other areas where one-income families dominated, married men and women socialised separately. Moreover, in common with Davies' findings on Manchester and Salford, it has been shown that Lanarkshire women were less likely than men to have money available to spend on leisure.[3] Thus, women turned to churches, women's guilds and temperance movements for their recreation. This had the potential to bring wives into conflict with their husbands as most of these groups were involved in trying to control two of the main facets of male popular culture, that is drinking and gambling. Nevertheless, despite the issue of leisure being a potential area of conflict, it has been proposed that domestic and gender relations in Lanarkshire at this time were characterised at least as much by co-operation as by conflict. This contrasts with previous interpretations of the period, such as those put forward by Ayers, Lambertz and Hughes with regards to Liverpool and Clydeside, that have stressed domestic conflict.[4]

Co-operation was evident not only between spouses but also at neighbourhood level. Indeed, female survival networks were an essential part of community life in Lanarkshire. As male unemployment increased, women were faced with more responsibilities, in the sense that they had to maintain their families and households on ever decreasing budgets. They succeeded in meeting the needs of their families through using their own initiative but also by relying on the support of other women in their neighbourhoods. These female networks were not exclusive to Lanarkshire, and as has been discussed by McGuckin, Roberts and Ross, they were also part of everyday life in working-class areas of Glasgow, Lancaster and London.[5] Evidence such as this refutes the female 'victims' discourse that has tended to permeate studies of industrial communities during the Depression.

This thesis has also highlighted the gaps in the existing historiography with regards to women's experiences of paid employment in heavily industrialised regions. For example, traditional studies such as those of Arnot, Church and Supple, have only concentrated on the 'masculine' domains of work, meaning that the sectors that employed women gained no recognition.[6] Indeed, gender analysis has been much neglected in previous accounts of the public sphere during the Depression, a failing that this work has attempted to address. While it is true that women in Lanarkshire never participated in paid employment to the same degree as men, work still played an important part in the lives of many women. This concurs with Stephenson and Brown's assessment of women's work in Stirling and their rejection of the notion that working-class women only derived their identity from domestic life.[7]

The motives women had for entering employment varied according to circumstance. This was best demonstrated in the case of married women. For example, the number of married women who worked in Lanarkshire increased during the Depression, which is further proof of the role played by many wives and mothers in contributing to the family income at a time when their husbands were no longer able to do so. The work married women did was usually of a low status, but the small income accrued from it was enough to mean the difference between starvation and survival for many families.

Once in the workplace a woman did not necessarily adopt the mantle of the 'passive female worker'. While it is true that Lanarkshire women did not unionise to anywhere near the same extent as male workers, this trend was symptomatic of the situation in Britain as a whole, as has been validated by the research of Boston, McIvor and Tuckett.[8] Although women workers operated outside the parameters of trade unionism this study has provided evidence of the female workforce participating in instances of industrial protest and relating to each other as workers. These findings concur with the work of Gordon, Macdonald, Norris and Savage who have investigated the participation of female workers in industrial action in other areas of Britain during the early twentieth century.[9] However, Lanarkshire's

workforce differed from that in Dundee, Paisley and Lancashire in the sense that the women featured in this study were operating within an industrial economy that had no history of large-scale female employment. Whereas the Lanarkshire economy was based on steel, iron and coal, the economies of the above mentioned urban areas were heavily involved in textile production. Nevertheless, the female workforce in Lanarkshire still acted collectively and behaved in ways which were similar to the workers in the textile-based 'women's towns' of Britain during the interwar period.

While paid employment did play a part in forming the identities of many women, it cannot be denied that the majority of women still saw their place as being in the home. However, in accepting such a position, they demanded adequate provision and care for themselves and their children who remained in that domain. One option open to women who wished to have their grievances heard was to join a political party or organisation, such as the Labour Party, the United Mineworkers of Scotland, the National Unemployed Workers' Movement and the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild. These organisations appealed to women as they campaigned on issues that particularly affected them and their children, such as the Means Test, unemployment and housing conditions. Indeed, as Thane has argued, women in the Labour movement between the wars came to acknowledge the power and control that women could potentially wield within the home and so they sought to promote the value of the private sphere.[10] The fact that so many Lanarkshire women who were not engaged in waged employment joined such organisations and campaigned on their behalf refutes Macintyre's thesis that political mobilisation was linked to levels of economic participation.[11]

Women did not always join political movements in order to engage in 'welfare politics' and instead organised themselves outside formal political parameters. Lanarkshire women became involved in community 'neighbourhood' politics, especially those relating to housing, child welfare and education. They used any means at their disposal to make their demands clear, the most potent being public protest. Through these informal political campaigns, women mirrored and developed tactics more commonly used by trade unions and political organisations. Such

evidence vindicates the theory that the Depression politicised Lanarkshire women, and in turn highlights the gaps in the existing historiography relating to the gendered nature of the politicisation process during the interwar years.

The methodology employed in this thesis has also revealed much about the legacy of the 'Devil's decades' in the popular memory. Through the use of oral history, a complex picture of women's attitudes, motivations and experiences during the Depression has been presented. As Summerfield's investigation of British women's experiences of the Second World War found, a range of factors influenced how people constructed their memories of the period.[12] The majority of people alive today who have memories or personal experiences of the Depression were children or young adults at the time. In conversations with such people, it became clear that a lot of what respondents remembered was primarily based on the recollections of their parents. Many of the narratives emphasised great sacrifice on the part of parents, especially mothers, and highlighted the extent to which the family was dependent on her endeavours. For example, one woman who was born after the General Strike and was the daughter of a miner, vividly remembered her mother talking about the period:

> I'll tell you one thing my mother said, when there was a strike on, it probably would have been 1926, she says 'When it started I had a good Co book'*, meaning she had some dividend savings. But she said 'I had nothing when it ended'. And I'll tell you something else, the Russians gave the miners 2/6 a week and she said it was a Godsend. So that's a bit of history. That was her words, 'it was a Godsend'.[13]

Another women, born in 1921, told of one of the most significant things her mother associated with the day of her daughter's birth, and something she was often reminded of: 'the last day of the 1921 strike, that was the day I was born and they

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* The lady was referring to a Co-operative dividend book.

broke the last £5 note they had in the house the day I was born'.[14] That fact seemed to be of great relevance to her mother because she had always prided herself on being a good budgeter and fairly wealthy in comparison to her neighbours. Indeed, recollections of struggle and worry seem to have remained with many children of the Depression years.

These accounts are reminiscent of Alastair Thomson's findings when he interviewed veterans of the Anzac campaigns of the First World War. Thomson found that there was an interaction between personal accounts and the 'public legend' of the Anzacs.[15] The Depression has also been claimed as a 'public legend' with the most accepted discourse being one of people 'muddling through' and making sacrifices for the sake of their families and it was this version of history that was most frequently related in interviews, particularly by women. This focus on family concurs with Steedman's argument that women's life histories tend not to adopt the strong narrative characteristic of much male working-class autobiography, in part because women reflect more upon ambivalent relationships with family members and the wider community.[16]

The oral testimonies and conventional documentary sources utilised in this thesis prove that, like the period itself, the women who lived through the Depression were complex individuals and not the 'toiling, downtrodden women'[17] that previous accounts of industrial communities would have us believe. It has been argued that in Lanarkshire the economic crisis and high levels of male unemployment of the interwar years destabilised established gender norms, displacing the role of the male as 'breadwinner' and giving greater prominence to the role of women as managers of the household income and as public defenders of family living standards. As Breitenbach and Gordon have rightfully argued, 'whilst the prevailing ideology of womanhood was undoubtedly a restricting influence, it was one that was subverted, challenged, fought over and often contradicted by the reality of women's lives'.[18] Indeed, to adopt the parlance used by Summerfield in her oral history of the Second World War, there is a place within the historiography of the Depression for the

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APPENDIX

Examples of Women Squatters in the Burgh of Hamilton, March 1935 – October 1936

Name	Address	Particulars of Family	Period of Squatting	Remarks
Susan McDermott	5 Greenfield Road	1 son and 1 grandson	3 months (Mar '35)	Came from Dixon's Rows, Blantyre, to present place.
Margaret McBride	13 Greenfield Road	1 child (12 years)	4 months (Mar '35)	Occupied home in Greenfield New Rows prior to squatting at present address. Is separated from husband.
Annie Crosbie	182 Glasgow Road	5 children (15-3 years)	3 months (Mar '35)	Living apart from husband who is believed to be in America. Came from Blantyre to present address.
Mary Allan	206 Glasgow Road	5 children (14-3 years)	2 months (Mar '35)	Went from Blantyre to Glasgow where from she came to present address. Husband dead.
Catherine Scott	309 Glasgow Road	1 child	2 months (Mar '35)	Father killed in war. Came from sub-let in Farm Road to present address. Unmarried.
Janet Bulloch	14 Low Patrick Street	5 children (12-5 years)	61/2 years (Oct '36)	Husband died about a year ago. Squatted in Leechlee Street, then at Greenfield Road, where from she came to present place. Deceased husband had 1 conviction.
Margaret Banks	7 Greenfield Road	2 illegitimate children. (7mths.3 ½ years)	3 weeks (Oct '36)	Came from Beckford St. c/o Gray, (81)
Bridget Cullen	297 Glasgow Road	1 child (9 years)	1 ¼ yrs (Oct '36)	Separated from husband. Came from Church Street, Hamilton

Source: SLCA, Information in Regards to Squatters. BH4/PH/9

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3. SOHCA/LS/03, Transcript C:	Mrs M born in 1924, Cambusnethan, Lanarkshire.
4. SOHCA/LS/04, Transcript D:	Mr JC born in 1917, Whifflet, Lanarkshire.
	Mr AC born in 1932, Whifflet, Lanarkshire.
5. SOHCA/LS/05, Transcript E:	Mrs S born in 1921, High Blantyre, Lanarkshire
6. SOHCA/LS/06, Transcript F:	Mrs F born in 1925, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.
7. SOHCA/LS/07, Transcript G:	Mrs A born in 1920, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire.
	Mrs L born in 1927, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire.
	Mr M born in 1919, Airdrie, Lanarkshire.
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8. SOHCA/LS/08, Transcript H:	Mr Y born in 1927, Hamilton, Lanarkshire.
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9. SOHCA/LS/09, Transcript I:	Mr S born in 1919, Wishaw, Lanarkshire.
10. SOHCA/LS/10, Transcript J:	Ms B born in 1919, Hareshaw, Lanarkshire.
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