Inside the Homes of Mercy: Material Setting and Reform Experience in Institutions for 'Fallen' Women, 1838-1910

by

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Susan Woodall, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

Date: 14th June 2019

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Abstract

In the period between the founding of the Magdalen Hospital in 1758 and 1912, around 370 moral reform institutions for 'fallen' women were established across England, Scotland and Wales. Initiated by middle-class voluntary action, these institutions aimed to achieve the moral rehabilitation of their 'unchaste' working-class inmates through work and religious instruction and to ready them for economic self-sufficiency in respectable domestic service. In order to achieve that goal, institutions drew on an array of moral, material and disciplinary tools, constructing their reform environments to effect change.

This thesis analyses the relationship between purpose, material setting and reform experience in four case studies. It is the first to compare two examples of two types of institution: the 'lay' Cambridge Female Refuge and Lincoln Penitent Females' Home, and the Anglican Houses of Mercy at Ditchingham in Norfolk and Great Maplestead in Essex. Recovering institutional buildings, spaces and furnishings, it argues that in the specialist culture of reform institutions for 'fallen' women everyday spaces and objects reflected institutional moral purpose. Material setting was intricately bound up in ritual aspects of the moral reform process. Women's responses to institutionalisation varied: some resisted, left or ran away; others used it strategically for respite, shelter and an opportunity to change their life courses. By analysing their constructed material world this thesis takes us to a more nuanced reading of inmate agency and institutional experience and exposes the limits of institutional power.

Contents

Abbreviations and Terminology

CFR	Cambridge Female Refuge
CPA	Church Penitentiary Association
DIT	House of Mercy at Ditchingham, Norfolk, (Community of All Hallows)
LPFH	Lincoln Penitent Females' Home
MAP	House of Mercy at Great Maplestead, Essex

Record types

AR	Annual Report
LC	Ladies' Committee

Libraries and Archive Repositories

BL	British Library
BRO	Berkshire Record Office
CA	Cambridgeshire Archives
CUL	Cambridge University Library
ERO	Essex Record Office
LA	Lincolnshire Archives
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SRO	Suffolk Record Office

Anglican

To avoid potential confusion, I describe the penitentiaries as 'Anglican', whereas historians of religion might use the term 'Anglo-Catholic'.

‘Fallen’

Although potentially intrusive, I have used ‘scare quotes’ throughout to identify this term as a value judgement by contemporaries.

Inmate

The term originally meant a person sharing lodging space with others.[1] Women at the Cambridge Female Refuge and the Lincoln Penitent Females’ Home were referred to as ‘inmates’ and those at the two Anglican penitentiaries usually as ‘penitents’. The meaning of ‘penitent’ incorporates both contrition and the desire to atone.[2]

Penitentiary

The names of ‘first wave’ lay nineteenth-century female moral reform institutions might incorporate the term ‘penitentiary’ or ‘penitents’, ‘refuge’, ‘Magdalen or ‘asylum’. Complications arose with the establishment of Anglican penitentiaries. In moral reform contexts from the mid-1840s, the term ‘penitentiary’ could describe new Anglican sisterhood communities working to reform ‘penitents’, also known as Houses of Mercy.

Reformatory

The term given to statutory institutions for juveniles, established under the Act for the Better Care of Young Offenders of 1854, 17 & 18 Vict. c. 86. In the context of rescue work, the same generic term was also used by contemporaries to mean voluntary moral reform institutions for ‘fallen’ women and is used here in that sense.

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[1] “inmate, n. and adj.” <http://www.oed.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/Entry/96219?redirectedFrom=inmate [accessed 11 November, 2018].

[2] “penitent, adj. and n.” <http://www.oed.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/Entry/140141?redirectedFrom=penitent &> [accessed 11 November, 2018].

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Introduction

In 1864, the editor of *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* singled out the Albion Hill Home in Brighton for particular praise:

> There are few institutions of which we entertain so high an opinion, or of the completeness and efficiency of whose arrangements we are so well assured, as of the Brighton Home in which, as a general rule, we find that the number of inmates who turn out well is in exact proportion to the pains, care, and expense bestowed on them. Thus in the Brighton Home, where nothing has been left undone to promote the comfort and happiness of the inmates, and where the appliances in aid of reformation are of the most varied and judicious description, the success is of the most marked and encouraging character.[1]

Six years later, purity campaigner Ellice Hopkins moved to Brighton and became acquainted with the Albion Hill Home. In a manual for rescue workers she drew on its model material practices. Deploring the material austerity she had witnessed in other homes, Hopkins asked

> [...] cannot we spare a picture or two out of our own homes, a stray ornament here and there, which we shall never miss? [...] Let us part with the pretty things out of our own houses rather than that they should go without.[2]

Addressing her fellow rescue workers directly, she hinted at the underlying uncomfortable relationship between material austerity and moral judgement: 'is it that secretly we feel that these girls are too bad for anything better?'[3] Examining their consciences, rescue workers might have found this question difficult to answer. It tackled the assumptions and complexities behind respectable society's paradoxical construction of 'fallen' women, seduced,

[1] William Tuckniss, V (1864), pp.249-50.
[2] Ellice Hopkins, *Notes on Penitentiary Work* (London: Hatchards, 1879), pp.11-12.
[3] Ibid., p.12.

abandoned and reckless, whose status has been deftly characterised as that of 'culpable victim'.[4] The significance of the two accounts of exemplary reform practice at the Albion Hill Home lies in the realisation by contemporaries that material setting was an active force in 'successful' reform. From the establishment of the Magdalen Hospital in London in 1758 into the early twentieth century, exchanges driven by a similarly contradictory pathology of 'fallenness' attempted to define and redefine the optimum institutional environment in which to remedy it.[5]

This study contributes original research on four case study institutions new to the existing body of work on female moral reform settings. For the first time, it brings together two 'lay' institutions – the Cambridge Female Refuge (1838) and the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home (1846) – and two related Anglican penitentiaries, the House of Mercy at Ditchingham, Norfolk (1854), and the House of Mercy at Great Maplestead, Essex (1868).[6] Established in successive decades over thirty years, their evolution and expansion traces shifts of emphasis in the discourse of institutional rescue work over the period from 1838 to 1910. The designation of sisterhood reformatory institutions as 'Houses of Mercy' or penitentiaries was redolent of pre-Reformation

[4] Philippa Levine, 'Rough Usage: Prostitution, Law and the Social Historian' in *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570-1920 and its Interpretation* ed. by Adrian Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp.266- 92 (p.7). See also Catherine Lee *Policing Prostitution, 1856-1886: Deviance, Surveillance and Morality* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), pp.1-3.
[5] Angela Burdett-Coutts cites a rescue worker's refinement of this term which subtly shifts responsibility: 'Call them *knocked-down* women if you will, but not fallen'. *Woman's Mission: a Series of Congress Papers on the Philanthropic Work of Women by Eminent Writers arranged and edited by The Baroness Burdett-Coutts* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1893), p.157.
[6] Hereinafter, Maplestead.

monastic communities in which female religious and the penitent female objects of their charitable works lived together.[7]

This thesis argues that we cannot fully understand the variety of women's experiences of reform without contextualising them within the material setting in which they lived their institutional lives. Combining a narrative history of the genesis of these institutions with a cultural analysis of their purpose, it explores the gap between stated intention and everyday practice. In so doing, the thesis moves us from monochromatic accounts of institutional life in reform establishments for 'fallen' women as uniformly oppressive to a more balanced assessment of lived experience than has hitherto come through the secondary literature. Uniquely among existing studies of moral reform institutions, it focuses on material culture as a route to that experience. Inmates' responses to the constraints of their nvironment show how they inhabited institutional space. Women responded to the experience of institutionalisation differently, exercising their own agency by rejecting but also by accepting the rules of engagement.

In order to discuss the historiography of reform institutions for 'fallen' women, the Introduction is divided into two parts. Part I reviews the ways in which existing studies have construed the ideology and practice of female reform settings and shows how this research challenges those interpretations and moves the discussion beyond oppression narratives. Part II sets out the

[7] For the origins of female reformatories, see Sherrill Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums Since 1500: from Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

research questions, introduces the four case study institutions and evaluates the sources. It concludes with a brief summary of each chapter.

Part I Regulating sexuality

In 1860, *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* counted 48 female moral reform institutions across Great Britain and Ireland.[8] By 1912, a new directory listed 370 in England and Wales.[9] This dramatic increase is evidence of the scope and increasing specialisation of the institutional machinery which developed over the course of the nineteenth century to rehabilitate behaviours viewed as errant. In addition to statutory workhouses, prisons and asylums, by the early twentieth century most cities and major towns could count at least one female reformatory 'home'. Despite their ubiquity, female moral reform institutions have not been the main focus of scholarly interest, which has instead considered how social constructions of 'deviance' informed attempts at prostitution regulation and control, both charitable and statutory.[10] Jeffrey Weeks attributes the particular attention

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[8] June and July 1860.

[9] *The Classified List of Child-Saving Institutions Certified by the Government or connected with the Reformatory and Refuge Union or Christian Aid Society, to which are added complete Lists of Discharged prisoners' Aid Societies, Magdalen Institutions, and Inebriate Retreats*, 20th edn, (London: Reformatory and Refuge Union, 1912).

[10] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: an Introduction* trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981). See also Martha Vicinus, 'Sexuality and Power: A Review of Current Work in the History of Sexuality', *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982), 132-56, Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London: Longman,1989) and Philip Howell, 'Foucault, Sexuality, Geography' in *Space, Knowledge, Power: Foucault and Geography* ed. by Jeremy Crampton and Stuart Elden (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp.291-315. For an analysis of visual representations of 'fallenness', see Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988). For colonial regulation, see *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire* ed. by Philip Howell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the sanctity of the private home and the immorality of the public street, see Eric Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain Since 1700* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977), Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth-Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis, 1730-1830* ((London: Longman, 1999), Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*: *Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and *City of*

paid to policing sexual morality in the nineteenth century to the uncertainties arising from social and economic factors, such as the impact of industrialisation and urban development on family life and changing class relations. Fears around the morality of working-class women in work settings away from home were based on unsupported assumptions about working-class morality.[11] In relation to prostitution, 'moral campaigns' were preferred over serious attempts at structural reform.[12]

A cluster of studies from the 1990s drew attention to institutional 'solutions' to the problem of prostitution. Linda Mahood argues that not only were women policed and subjected to programmes of regulation and reform in institutions in both Edinburgh and Glasgow, but like prisons, these institutions were instruments of social control.[13] In mapping Foucault's discourse of oppression onto her discussion of life inside the two Scottish institutions, Mahood focuses on the disciplinary mechanisms through which the moral regulation of working-class women was carried out in the Scottish context, detailing the demanding daily routine of work and religious

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Dreadful Delight: *Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (London: Virago,1992). On the Contagious Diseases Acts, see Judith Walkowitz and Daniel Walkowitz, '"We are not beasts of the field": prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Feminist Studies*, 1 (1973), 73-106 and Catherine Lee, *Policing Prostitution, 1856-1886: Deviance, Surveillance and Morality* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013). See also Helen Ware, 'The Recruitment, Regulation and Role of Prostitution in Britain from the Middle of the Nineteenth Century to the Present Day', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1969, Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

[11] In their own communities, women's employers could be more forgiving in cases of a moral 'false step'. Rather than banishing them, some Manchester factory and mill owners allowed single mothers to return to work. See Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p.452.

[12] Ware, pp.58-9, p.81, p.88.

[13] Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990). Margaret DeLacy highlights the limitations of reading prisons solely as tools of social control. See *Prison Reform in Lancashire, 1700-1850: a Study in Local Administration* (Manchester: The Chetham Society, 1986), p.6.

instruction and the sanctions imposed by middle-class managers on those who resisted. She posits the importance of gender and class in the evolution and operation of prostitution reform and the complicity between state authorities and middle-class voluntary reformers in subjugating working-class women. Frances Finnegan widens the discussion by setting the work of the York Penitentiary Society's Refuge against the living and working conditions of prostitutes and women at risk of prostitution in the city.[14] The lives of some of the women entering the York Refuge had been such that the likelihood of 'successful' rehabilitation and re-entering society as respectable domestic servants was questionable.[15] Finnegan acknowledges the role of the York Refuge as a well-intentioned institution, which although only moderately successful, served an important pre-welfare function for many inmates.[16] In placing both Protestant and Catholic institutions in the changing political landscape of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland, Maria Luddy's reading acknowledges the temporary respite they could provide for women who were vulnerable for a range of reasons.[17] Paula Bartley uses gender and

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[14] Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution, a Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.164-211.
[15] Ibid., p.166.
[16] Ibid., pp.209-210. See also Leanne McCormick, 'Prostitutes, Fallen Women and Friendless Girls: Policing Female Sexual Morality in Northern Ireland, 1900–1945', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Ulster, 2004.
[17] Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 239. A more recent detailed study of the works of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland analyses the limited data available on Magdalen Asylum women and tracks changes to the institutional fabric over time. See Jacinta Prunty, *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland 1853-1973* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2017). For an overview of the development and work of Catholic congregations in the nineteenth-century, see also Susan O'Brien '*Terra Incognita*: the Nun in Nineteenth-Century England, *Past and Present* 121 (1988), 110-40 and Barbara Walsh, *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales 1800-1937: A Social History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002). For an analysis of how Catholic congregations forged their identities outside Ireland, see Carmen Mangion, *Contested Identities: Catholic Women Religious in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

class and to a lesser extent religion as her framework. She compares the purpose and practice of the Birmingham Magdalen Asylum, founded at some time during the first two decades of the nineteenth century with the Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home in the city, established by the local branch of the Ladies' Association for the Care of Girls in 1878.[18] Each institution was intended to remedy different degrees of 'fallenness'. The Magdalen took women who had 'fallen' and had earned their living at some point through prostitution, whereas the Mrs Rogers Home, founded around fifty years later, was for younger 'just fallen' women and those convicted of a first offence at Police Courts.[19] Bartley argues that rescue workers like those at the Mrs Rogers Home who brought women from the Police Courts were agents of social control and could be seen to have 'colluded with the state'. However, she also challenges that assessment, arguing that the Mrs Rogers Home was genuinely thought to be a better option for some younger women.[20] Bartley concludes that the 'system of reform was never questioned' by contemporaries; this study argues that it was the *need* for reform which was generally accepted, whereas the system of reform was the subject of both external criticism and internal enquiry by contemporaries.[21]

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[18] See Paula Bartley, 'Seeking and Saving: the Reform of Prostitutes and the Prevention of Prostitution in Birmingham, 1860-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wolverhampton, 1995), p.122.
[19] Ibid., p.162.
[20] Ibid., pp.163-64.
[21] Ibid., p.158. Bartley revisits these ideas in *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000), extending the scope of her study. Her analysis of later institutions for 'inebriates' and the mentally 'deficient' is particularly useful, but the distinction between earlier lay and sisterhood reform institutions is blurred. She is reliant on published institutional records and her assertions are not consistently supported by evidence.

Rethinking the institution: towards a more nuanced narrative

Despite the contradictory mix of intolerance and philanthropy underpinning the conception of these institutions, Bartley, Luddy and Finnegan acknowledge to an extent the potentially useful welfare function of female reform institutions. This acknowledgement opens up the possibility of a different lived experience of institutionalisation. Analyses which deconstruct both statutory and philanthropic institutions with a range of purposes as uniquely sites of oppression are limited in scope in several ways. Although Foucault's reading of the prison as a site of transformation and a 'machine for altering minds' continues to be a useful framework against which to assess the process of corrective institutions, it is not comprehensive.[22] Subsequent studies of the relationship between institutional space and power have explored questions Foucault did not address, such as the gap between theory and practice and how those on the receiving end experienced 'the exercise of power'.[23] The universal application of the 'total' template across a range of institutions did not take account of difference in purpose, how these institutions related to wider society nor how its poorest and most marginalised citizens experienced incarceration, multiple times in their life-cycle.[24] It excluded the possibility that those citizens might have been relieved to have

[22] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p.125.

[23] Steven Ruggles argued for going beyond studies of the ideology of reform institutions to consider 'what asylums actually did, rather than just what they said they were doing'. See 'Fallen Women: the Inmates of the Magdalen Society Asylum of Philadelphia, 1836-1908', *Journal of Social History*, 16 (1983), 65-82 (p.65). See also Margaret DeLacy, *Prison Reform*, p.11 and Richard Ireland, *A Want of Good Order and Discipline: Rules, Discretion and the Victorian Prison*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p.10.

[24] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, with a new introduction by William. B. Helmreich (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Aldane Transaction, 2007), p.12. For a critique, see Michael Ignatieff, 'Total Institutions and Working Classes: a Review Essay', *History Workshop Journal*, 15 (1983), 167-73 (p.169).

access to certain institutions in time of difficulty.[25] 'Social control' narratives tend to assume that any institution established by a higher social group for the purpose of rehabilitating a lower social group is necessarily to the detriment of the lower group.[26] In her work on Stafford Gaol and Asylum, Rebecca Wynter encountered a similar willingness to brand prisons and asylums uniformly 'as unwavering, sterile and mechanical systems into which browbeaten inmates were passively ensnared'.[27] The result is a monochromatic view of institutional purpose, practice and experience, with the top-down power relationship between authorities and inmates uniformly crushing. This perspective risks disregarding important factors which affected the experience of the recipients of 'social control' initiatives, such as their ability to decide for themselves how to respond to the moralising 'wares on display'.[28] Disciplinary expectations may have been set but they were not necessarily met. Evidence from all four institutions in this study shows that at times, discipline broke down completely.

The first wave studies of moral reformatories for women in Great Britain and Ireland made an important contribution by bringing these previously

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[25] Ignatieff, 'Total Institutions', p.173.
[26] DeLacy, p.7. See also Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in Working-Class History,1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.78-84.
[27] Rebecca Wynter, '"Diseased vessels and punished bodies": a study of material culture and control in Staffordshire County Gaol and Lunatic Asylum, c.1793-1866' (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Birmingham, 1997), p.3.
[28] Francis M.L.Thompson,'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *The Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), 189-208 (p.193). Gertrude Himmelfarb also urges crediting working-class people with the ability to act in their own interests. See *The De-moralization of Society: from Victorian Values to Modern Values* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p.30. Similarly, whilst those leading social control activities could be cynical and manipulative, others could be driven by 'a genuine, even a burning, passion for their cause'. See *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* ed.by A.P. Donajgrodzki (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p.15.

neglected institutions into the historiographical debate. Although this study challenges readings of institutional life which offer oppression as the sole experience, it also presents evidence of unsympathetic treatment and harsh judgment by institutional authorities. The reformatory project like other voluntary initiatives reflected the unequal division of power in unequal social relations. Although well-intentioned it constituted an organised intervention in the life courses of female citizens by their social superiors. Bound up in that redirection was the entitlement of social superiority, certainty about what the 'right path' should be, that it must be preferable to what went before and was as much for the women's 'own good' as it was for that of society.[29]

Whilst we are right to challenge the legitimacy of philanthropic intervention which targeted women for moral reform rather than men, if we are to get closer to the inmates' experience, we must historicise these institutions and evaluate them in the light of contemporary attitudes, however unacceptable from our present perspective. This study does not seek to justify these institutions, but rather to contribute to a growing number of revisionist voices seeking the middle ground between what, in their work on hospital and asylum visiting, Graham Mooney and Jonathan Reinarz identify as 'the glorification or demonization' of such institutions.[30] The extent to which we can speak of an 'institutional turn' in recent scholarship formed the basis of 'Rethinking the Institution in the Long Nineteenth Century', a conference

[29] Anna Davin notes the same assumption of rightness by medical and social work professionals in connection with working-class domestic practices. See *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996), p.153.
[30] *Medicine and the Workhouse* ed. by Jonathan Reinarz and Leonard Schwarz (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2013), pp.153-154.

held at Liverpool John Moore's University in July 2017. Institutional studies emerging over the past decade and cited in this thesis have done much to promote a more nuanced reading which moves us on from black and white to grey. The danger of adopting a single experiential template is that it risks overlooking the capacity of institutional 'subjects' to act on their own behalf. Despite attempts to shape their behaviour by shaping their environment, women exerted their own agency and found ways of inhabiting these institutions. They negotiated with institutional authorities and made strategic decisions about their own lives inside the institution and beyond it.[31]

Space, material culture and meaning

One of the ways we can achieve a more complicated reading of institutional life is by re-conceptualising institutional space and by repopulating individual spaces with the furnishings and everyday objects which surrounded the inmates. Daniel Miller reminds us that 'the human subject cannot be considered outside of the material world within which and through which it is constructed'.[32] That leads us to ask questions about the nature, meaning and specificity of the material world of reformatory settings in relation to the construction of their subjects. Lu Ann De Cunzo's detailed archaeological study of the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum analysed the relationship between transformational reform purpose and the Asylum's material

[31] For a similar plea for a more balanced reading of Irish Magdalenes, see Leanne McCormick,'Sinister Sisters? The Portrayal of Ireland's Magdalene Asylums in Popular Culture', *Cultural and Social History*, 2 (2015), 373-379.
[32] Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1987), p.86.

environment in reshaping its 'fallen' inhabitants.[33] The present study builds on her work in relation to four English institutions. Although space and material culture may be intentionally designed to shape particular groups in particular ways, inmates' responses to that intention could be unexpected and revealing.[34] In this study, material culture is understood at its broadest to mean 'the manifestations of culture through material productions'.[35] It is extended to include not only the everyday objects associated with home and work, but built spaces, reformatory sites and locations. Historians have been drawn to working with material culture because of what it reveals of the values, assumptions, beliefs and practices of the culture of production. Using material culture enables us to enter the 'text-free zones' which have traditionally been the preserve of archaeologists.[36] What distinguishes material culture as a source – the challenge of interpreting a different kind of evidence – is what also makes it potentially most valuable to historians.[37] It offers the opportunity to examine the relationship between objects and human agency, meaning and context and 'the physical facts of things'.[38] There is value in the quotidian. Everyday objects of the kind encountered in reformatory settings provide a route to the 'social imaginary'. Things are individualised by their users and associated with particular practices which

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[33] Lu Ann De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual: an Archaeology of Institutions: the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia, 1800-1850', *Historical Archaeology*, 29 (1995), 1-168.
[34] *Residential Institutions in Britain 1725-1970: Inmates and Environments* ed. by Jane Hamlett, Lesley Hoskins and Rebecca Preston (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), p.8.
[35] Karen Harvey cites Jules David Prown's useful definition of material culture on which I have drawn here. *History and Material Culture: a Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. by Karen Harvey, (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), p.6.
[36] Sarah Tarlow, *The Archaeology of Improvement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.4.
[37] Harvey, p.7, p.13. See also Frank Trentman 'Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices, and Politics', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 283-307.
[38] James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten* (New York: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1977), p.160.

have meaning in that culture.[39] The objects and practices associated with the specialist culture of reform institutions had meanings specific to that culture and which were understood by their inhabitants.

Material culture is closely bound up with the formation of identity. Engaging with it forces historians to consider how things, rather than language construct both meaning and identity.[40] Things are shared, forging human relationships.[41] Work on the material culture of working-class homes has highlighted the symbolic and emotional significance of particular furnishings, their association with gender, their mobility and the embodied nature of our encounters with them. Pauper inventories and family papers have revealed the range and quality of household possessions.[42]

The gendered nature of space and the power relations associated with it have informed a rethinking of the uses of institutional space. Specific meanings attach to the material environment of corrective and therapeutic institutions

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[39] Sara Pennell, 'Mundane Materiality, or, Should Small Things Still be Forgotten?' in *History and Material Culture: a Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* ed. By Karen Harvey, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp.173-191 (p.179).
[40] John Styles 'Why Material Culture?', a paper given at the Gerald Aylmer Seminar, 22 February 2013, Institute of Historical Research, London.
[41] Ewa Domanska, 'The Material Presence of the Past', *History and Theory*, 45 (2006), 337-348, p.340.
[42] Alistair Owens, 'People and Things on the Move: Domestic Material Culture, Poverty and Mobility in Victorian London', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 20 (2016), 804-27. For an analysis of the dynamics of masculinity, attachment and domestic space through working-class autobiography see Julie-Marie Strange 'Fathers at Home: Life Writing and Late-Victorian and Edwardian Plebeian Domestic Masculinities' in *Men at Home*, ed.by Rafaella Sarti *Gender & History* 27 (2015), 703-17. Joseph Harley, 'Material Lives of the Poor and Their Strategic Use of the Workhouse during the Final Decades of the English Old Poor Law' *Continuity and Change*, 30 (2015), 71-103. See also Lesley Hoskins, 'Stories of Work and Home in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Home Cultures*, 8 (2015), 151-70.

or inmates, patients and staff.[43] Attempts to create 'homely' environments in institutional settings for children were expressed in spatial and material terms.[44] As well as employing material culture as a means of shaping behaviour and identity, the treatment of space reinforced hierarchical or differential social relations. By providing accommodation for different institutional users – separating probationers from admitted women, women from matrons, committee members and visitors – the treatment of institutional space reinforced those separate identities and set territorial boundaries. The singular 'placeness' of female reform institutions resided in the moral status of its female population. Its perceived purpose as a site of sanctuary and protection was therefore largely constituted in opposition to the moral dangers which lay outside its bounds.[45] The boundaries around space act as filters through which to negotiate legitimate access. Particularly significant for our understanding of how inmates inhabited institutional space is Shirley

[43] Jane Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution: Inside Lunatic Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.4. For the link between material culture and 'moral treatment', in private asylums, see Barry Edginton, 'Moral Architecture: the Influence of the York Retreat on Asylum Design' *Health and Place*, 3 (1997), 91-99 (p.92). On the therapeutic 'rational ordering' of domestic furnishings in asylum space, see Mary Guyatt, 'A Semblance of Home: Mental Asylum Interiors, 1880-1914', in *Interior Design and Identity* ed.by Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 48-71 (p.49). For an analysis of how space and material culture were constructed in terms of gender, see Louise Hide, *Gender and Class in English Asylums, 1890-1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Chris Philo notes that communal spaces allowed patients to associate, while also facilitating surveillance in '"Enough to Drive one Mad": the Organisation of Space in Nineteenth-Century Lunatic Asylums' in Jennifer Wolch and Michael Dear, *The Power of Geography: How Territory Shapes Social Life* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989) 258-90 (p.282). On material culture as an embodied experience of power relations, see Eleanor Conlin Casella, *The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2007), p.3.

[44] Claudia Soares, 'A *Permanent* Environment of Brightness, Warmth, and "Homeliness"': Domesticity and Authority in a Victorian Children's Institution, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 23 (2018) 1–24 (pp.7-10).

[45] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity,1994), pp.168-69.

Ardener's assertion that space works in two directions; it 'defines the people in it' but those people can also define that space.[46]

Work on nineteenth-century taste and consumption has alerted us to the status objects could confer on their owners.[47] Moreover, decorative objects and furniture could raise the religious and moral tone of the domestic sphere.[48] Consumption in reform institutions was shaped by moral considerations and financial constraint. Institutions relied on the relative constant of laundry income to offset permanent fluctuation in donations and subscriptions from the public on which they depended. Extravagance and luxury were vices associated with brothels and 'dens', therefore objects and furnishings should reflect morally appropriate qualities.[49] Nevertheless, gifted objects and services introduced differentiation into the range and quality of institutional material culture. Spaces inhabited by institutional officers contained furnishings and objects of higher quality, many of which were donated or their own property. Objects associated with religious worship were the richest items inmates in all four institutions encountered. Among the most valuable religious objects recovered in this study is a jewel-encrusted chalice in the Gothic revival style. Possibly donated to the Community of All Hallows by

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[46] Shirley Ardener,'Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women' in *Women and Space*, ed. by Shirley Ardener, (Oxford; Providence RI: Berg, 1993), pp.1-30 (p.3).
[47] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002); *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century* ed. by Maxine Berg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, ed. by John Styles and Amanda Vickery (The Yale Center for British Art, The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006).
[48] Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: the British and their Possessions* (London: Yale, 2006).
[49] See Donna J. Seifert, 'Archaeology in Sin City, *Historical Archaeology*, 39 (2005), pp.1-3.

its first warden, William Scudamore, it symbolises the exceptional material and aesthetic quality of spaces and objects associated with religious practice which is itself an expression of their transcendence and associated with the experience of transformation.[50]

Religious context

Existing studies of moral reform institutions do not fully engage with the material culture of religious practice nor inmates' experience of religious observance. Whilst Frances Finnegan argues that poverty was an essential factor in the causes of prostitution, neither she nor Linda Mahood fully addresses women's experience of religion before and during institutional confinement.[51] Paula Bartley contrasts the punitive emphasis on sin at the early Birmingham Magdalen Asylum with the kinder ethos of the later Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, attributing the latter to the influence of Ellice Hopkins.[52] Shared religious conviction did not necessarily bring unity and middle-class women activists of different denominational allegiances did not interact.[53] The religious context is central to understanding the purpose, practice and material setting of nineteenth-century female reform institutions whether lay or penitentiary. Religious experience in the four case study

[50] For the sensory impact of religious practice and performance, see Joseph Webster, 'Objects of Transcendence: Scots Protestantism and an Anthropology of Things' in *Material Religion in Modern Britain: the Spirit of Things*, ed. by Timothy Willem Jones and Lucinda Matthews-Jones (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.17-36 (p.18).
[51] Finnegan posits a single institutional religious experience of 'fierce indoctrination'. See *Poverty and Prostitution*, p.174. Anne Summers identifies reasons why second wave feminism was reluctant to engage with religion and notes the risk of ignoring its importance in bringing women into the visible public sphere of much nineteenth-century social action. See *Female Lives, Moral States: Women, Religion and Public Life 1800-1930* (Newbury: Threshold, 2000), p.67.
[52] Paula Bartley,'Seeking and Saving', p.4
[53] Ibid., p.329.

institutions reflected wider changes over the period of study. The two lay foundations at Cambridge and Lincoln are examples of Anglican evangelical and inter-denominational social action across a range of activities among the 'deserving' poor.[54] Mid-century questioning of the doctrine of substitutionary atonement called for the Bible to be read critically. A new emphasis on interpretation rather than doctrine led to greater diversity in religious activity and a 'loosening' of conformity.[55] The burgeoning of religious tracts in the first half of the century and the development of moralising magazines for boys and girls in the second was reflected in the changing reading matter provided for institutional inmates over the period.[56] The impact of large-scale lay revivalist meetings held by American evangelists George Moody and Ira Sankey in the 1870s was felt in recommendations to use their hymns in reform institutions and reflected in the purchase of harmoniums for domestic use at Cambridge and Maplestead.[57]

Despite the emergence from mid-century of 'honest doubt', as the means of spiritual redemption and moral reformation, religious instruction and practice continued to be at the heart of institutional life throughout the period of this study.[58] Clergy committee men and lady volunteers saw their work with 'fallen' women as mission, saving them from the temptations of 'vice' in this life and perdition in the next. The possibility of spiritual salvation through

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[54] Gerald Parsons, *Religion in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) I: *Traditions*, pp.38-41.
[55] Gerald Parsons *Religion in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) II: *Controversies*, pp.5-8.
[56] Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, 2nd edn (Routledge: Abingdon, 2009), pp.43-57.
[57] CFR AR 1879, p.6; MAP sub-committee, 3 July 1876.
[58] Parsons, *Controversies*, p.6.

faith was open even to the 'lost'.[59] Where the experience of institutional religion is discussed in the existing literature on lay institutions, it is generally construed as oppressive.[60] Commentators and institutions were guilty of using scripture as a disciplinary tool and this study presents evidence of negative reactions to religion in all four institutions. However, it reveals other responses which round out our understanding of the religious experience in several new ways. It sets institutional religious practice in the context of the inmates' religious backgrounds and presents evidence that some derived comfort from the familiarity of certain hymns and texts.[61] Framing the religious experience as a qualitative one, the thesis considers inmate women's own spirituality before and during periods of institutionalisation.[62]

In this respect it heeds the call for further scholarship in the small body of existing work on early Anglican penitentiaries.[63] Valerie Bonham's narrative

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[59] Boyd Hilton examines the relationship between evangelical religion and philanthropy. In relation to temperance work, he notes a shift around the 1860s from the evangelical emphasis on 'moral suasion', construed as redemption through suffering, to 'prevention and prohibition', which placed moral reform before religious conversion. See *The Age of Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.270.

[60] Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, pp.174-75.

[61] Hugh McLeod draws on oral histories and biographies to demonstrate that church attendance was not the only indicator of working-class engagement with religion. *Piety and Poverty: Working-Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York 1870-1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996). See Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2009) pp.150-56. As a measure of working-class religious commitment, church attendance data are unrepresentative. Lower numbers of skilled and unskilled working-class people in church-going censuses do not take account of different attendance patterns, such as weekday or 'non-regular religious gatherings', which were under-recorded (p.156).

[62] Sue Morgan identifies the significance of Callum Brown's study in construing religion as not simply a quantitative but also a qualitative 'historical phenomenon'. *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940,* ed. by Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (London: Routledge, 2013), p.2.

[63] Joy Frith touches on the nature of inmates' spirituality, which, she argues, 'needs to be more carefully explored'. See '"Pseudonuns": Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity', (unpublished doctroral thesis, Queen's University, Canada, 2004), p.287. She shows how the Society of St Margaret at East Grinstead and the Community of All Hallows at Ditchingham defined their new sisterhood identities in relation to the nursing and penitentiary work they did. See also Lori Miller, 'Femininities, Masculinities,

account of the penitentiary run by the Community of St John the Baptist at Clewer near Windsor draws on correspondence with architect Henry Woodyer and provides useful insights into the rationale behind building alterations and extensions over time.[64] Designed by men to be inhabited by women, consultation between architects, committees, matrons and superiors was of particular importance in illuminating the rationale shaping all four institutional spaces. The two penitentiaries in this study were also by Woodyer and the influence of the House of Mercy at Clewer is discussed in Part II. Like lay institutions, the moral reform and religious reclamation of 'fallen' women was the founding mission of Anglican revival penitentiaries, carried out by sisterhood communities of devout women.[65] These communities therefore housed two all-female constituencies; committed to their own spiritual development, sisters mostly drawn from the middle-classes worked to reform and to strengthen the religious convictions of the women in their charge. Despite the social distinctions between them, parallels existed between the experience of sisters and penitents. Both groups found the religious life testing.[66] Both were outside accepted norms, 'penitents' for perceived moral aberrance and sisters for their rejection of domestic roles as

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National Identities: Anglican Religious Communities in Britain, 1845-1920', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Indiana, 2004).

[64] *A Joyous Service: the Clewer Sisters and their Work* (Windsor: Valerie Bonham and the Community of St. John the Baptist, 1989). Published for the community, Bonham's perspective is not completely objective.

[65] For an account of the establishment of male and female religious communities in this period, see Michael Hill, *The Religious Order: a Study of Virtuoso Religion and its Legitimation in the Nineteenth-Century Church of England* (London: Heinemann, 1973), Arthur M. Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion: Anglican Religious Communities 1845-1900* (London: SCM Press, 1958), Peter Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* rev. edn (London: SPCK,1964).

[66] See Susan Mumm, '"Not Worse than Other Girls": the Convent Based Rehabilitation of Fallen Women in Victorian Britain', *Journal of Social History,* 29 (1996), 527-46.

daughters, sisters, wives or mothers.[67] Because they were defying societal expectations, and reintroducing pre-Reformation religious practices, sisterhoods came under attack for a prolonged period after their establishment. Working in missions for the poor and nursing, the Anglican Community of All Saints Sisters of the Poor experienced similar struggles in the face of opposition. Superiors fought hard to defend and advance their work and the spiritual life of the Community.[68] Suspicion of 'papism' in these new sisterhood communities derived largely from fears of resurgent English Catholicism following the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829.[69] Accusations of keeping sisters against the will of their families and salacious intrigues associated with the confessional fuelled demand for the compulsory inspection of Anglican sisterhoods, whose privacy was construed as secrecy. A parliamentary Select Committee was set up in 1870 to investigate the legal

[67] For a discussion of the motivations of women entering sisterhoods, see Hill, *The Religious Order*, pp.279-80.
[68] Susan Mumm, *All Saints Sisters of the Poor: an Anglican Sisterhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press [Church of England Record Society], 2001).
[69] See Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle: the Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (Nashville, TE: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996) and Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant Versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982). Deaconesses nursed and carried out missionary and educational work in poor urban parishes, like Anglican sisters. However, deaconess institutions were usually for training purposes only and deaconesses were paid. Firmly protestant, deaconess sisterhoods for the most part eschewed vows and any suggestion of the conventual. See Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England from the Eighteenth Century to the Pr*esent (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1994), Henrietta Blackmore, T*he Beginning of Women's Ministry: the Revival of the Deaconess in the Nineteenth-century Church of England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), Carmen Mangion,'No Nurses like the Deaconesses'?: Protestant Deaconesses and the Medical Marketplace in Late Nineteenth-Century England', in *Deaconesses in Nursing Care: International Transfer of a Female Model of Life and Work in the 19th and 20th Century* ed. by Karen Nolte and Susanne Kreutzer (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 161-184, and Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart, *Coming Into the Light: the Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster,1840-1940* (Belfast*:* Institute of Irish Studies, the Queen's University of Belfast, 1994).

constitution of sisterhoods but stopped short of instigating formal inspection.[70]

The literature on the work of Catholic religious communities active in female reform includes Peter Hughes's study of Magdalen institutions run by the Good Shepherd sisters in England. Examining the reluctance of this Institute to accept laundry inspection under the legislation of 1907, Hughes raises uncomfortable questions about the collusive relationship between Catholic institutions and state authorities, and institutional legitimacy.[71] Legitimacy is central to the more recent body of work on Irish institutions, which followed the revelations of women's lives in Magdalen laundries into the late twentieth century. With a renewed emphasis on the domestic role of women in the home under the Irish Free State, the treatment of women deviating from that norm was increasingly repressive. The domestication of women in Ireland in the twentieth century was directly at odds with the English perception of single women's economic potential as legitimate wage earners outside the home and which had underpinned the purpose of the reformatory enterprise from the

[70] Susan Mumm, 'Making Space, Taking Space: Spatial Discomfort, Gender, and Victorian Religion' (Mount Saint Vincent University: 2006), p.4. See also the useful bibliography on the History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland website https://historyofwomenreligious.org/<http://anglicanhistory.org/academic> [accessed 22 June 2017]. See also Joy Frith's account of opposition to sisterhoods, '"Pseudonuns"', pp.69-75.

[71] 7.Edw.7 c.39 Factory and Workshop Act. See Peter Hughes 'Cleanliness and Godliness: a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Convent Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain', (unpublished doctoral thesis: Brunel University, 1985).On laundry legislation, see Rebecca Lea McCarthy, *Origins of the Magdalene Laundries: an Analytical History* (Jefferson, North Carolina; London: McFarland and Company, 2010), p. 181; on the legitimacy of laundry work for women, see p.182; James M. Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

outset.[72] Subsequent official enquiries have understandably coloured more recent work on Irish institutions.[73] In her study of the Good Shepherd institutions in Ireland, Frances Finnegan is candid from the outset that her approach is not objective and that she does not feel it 'a necessity, or a virtue, for historians to suspend their moral judgement'.[74]Although her commitment is laudable, the lack of context and the single perspective of institutionalised women as victims limit her analysis of their experience.[75]

Ritual: transformation and identity

The practice of faith is bound up in rites and rituals associated with spiritual transformation and renewal. The passage from baptism to confirmation to regular communion indicates spiritual progression, each rite understood as a transformative encounter. Ritual and transformation are analytical frameworks which have been identified with 'total' institutions. Spatial and material practices were designed to work together to order chaotic minds and correct warped morals.[76] Elements of that totality were translated into reformatory practice where material and spatial distinction, reform method

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[72] Frances Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland* (Piltown, Co. Kilkenny: Congrave Press, 2001), p.72. Finnegan argues that from their beginning, nineteenth-century 'English Protestant Homes' looked to women's lives beyond the institution in their emphasis on employment in domestic service. Ibid., p.37.
[73] McCarthy, *Origins of the Magdalene Laundries: an Analytical History* (Jefferson, North Carolina; London: McFarland and Company, 2010); see also 'Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Oral and Archival History', a project funded by the Irish Research Council and based at University College, Dublin <http://magdaleneoralhistory.com> and James M Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).
[74] *Do Penance*, p.xi.
[75] See the reviews of Finnegan's *Do Penance* by Moira Maguire, *Journal of Social History*, 39 (2005), 268-70 (p.270) and Maria Luddy, *The American Historical Review*, 110 (2005), p.557.
[76] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, with a new introduction by William B. Helmreich (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Aldane Transaction, 2007).

and reformatory setting were designed together to effect moral re-education.[77] At the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum, inmates passed through rites of passage which were articulated spatially and experienced as embodied practices of transformation.[78] Women moved through a series of transitional spaces from the street to the probationary ward, to full admission to reintegration into the outside world. Adopting prescribed institutional dress as part of this process has been understood as the erosion of identity and individuality. It was theorised by commentators in various ways as a practical necessity, a material preparation for domestic service, but also a symbolic marker of progress. Uniform dress could have negative connotations as a means of identifying inmates outside the institution without permission, but it is possible to read institutional uniform as signifying parity of status, something which binds wearers together in a shared past and present experience. Full house dress was perceived as a sign of belonging and could be dispensed in stages during probation. As the most challenging stage of institutionalisation, particular attention was paid to probation. This thesis contributes an in-depth comparative analysis of the spatial and material experience of probation as a significant transitional stage across the four case study settings.

[77] Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood and Sherene Baugher, 'Introduction and Historical Context for the Archaeology of Institutions of Reform Part I: Asylums', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 5, (2001), 3-17 (p.9).
[78] Lu Ann De Cunzo, Reform, Respite, Ritual: an Archaeology of Institutions: the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia, 1800-1850', *Historical Archaeology*, 29 (1995), 1-168. See also Hughes, 'Cleanliness', p.343.

The limits of transformation: resilience, agency and autonomy

Although work on contemporary constructions of prostitution addresses representations of 'fallen' women by others, there is much less in the secondary literature on how institutional inmates saw themselves. This is doubtless because their voices can be hard to hear. Dominant middle-class welfare and reform agencies demonstrated a supreme confidence in the rightness and superiority of their own culture over that of the working-class which they viewed as deficient.[79] Nevertheless, despite reforming interventions working-class culture was consistently distinct and robust. Respectability was important but differently understood.[80] Inmates' own sense of their place in the social order comes through the institutional record. Attendance at Sunday School, levels of literacy, family ties and personal possessions helped define their cultural identity and reinforce individual resilience during periods of institutionalisation.[81] Inmates and former inmates expressed opinions and made complaints about institutional management, suggesting that although temporarily withdrawn from it they did not see themselves as dislocated from society or deprived of rights.[82] Family ties were disrupted by intrusive scrutiny of correspondence, but not severed.

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[79] Anna Davin, *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1996), p.153. Gareth Stedman Jones notes the different perceptions of respectability of working-class Londoners from the 1870s to around 1900. See 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', *Journal of Social History* 4 (1974), 460-508 (p.475).
[80] Thompson notes that early nineteenth-century working-class leisure activities evolved and adapted. As a result of Methodist influence, aggressive sporting activities were replaced by more restrained pastimes such as pigeon-fancying. See *The Making*, p.451. Stedman Jones challenges the idea that working-class culture was overwhelmed by middle-class cultural impositions. See *Languages of Class: Studies in Working-Class History1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.78-9.
[81] On the influence and effects of self-improvement, see Thompson, *The Making*, p.782.
[82] David Englander observes the same engagement between paupers and workhouse authorities. See *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Britain: from Chadwick to Booth, 1834-1914*, (London: Longman, 1998), p.134.

Institutions frequently worked with inmates' families and friends. Contact with 'bad influences' was discouraged and could be blocked. Although often informed by prejudice, this judgment could be legitimate in cases of domestic or other abuse, as evidenced in this study.

Nor were institutional inmates deprived of the power to act on their own behalf and determine their own futures. Agency is a 'slippery' term which historians have not always defined or contextualised.[83] It has been read as premeditated (expressed as resistance); spontaneous (expressed as frustration); or associated with empowerment and individual autonomy.[84] Examples of all three expressions of agency are evidenced in this study. Equally, the decision to enter an institution is itself an act of self-determination. Despite suspicion of new workhouse institutions, the poor willingly made use of the provision and found their own ways of adapting to and coping with institutional life.[85] The agency of compliance with institutional authority – that is to say, the self-determined decision to comply – has been less widely acknowledged.[86] This study urges more differentiation in the interpretation of inmate agency which includes resistance as one of a range of strategic decisions. For some women staying the course and moving into respectable domestic service was highly desirable. In order to achieve

[83] See Megan Webber 'Troubling Agency: Agency and Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century London', *Historical Research*, 91 (2018), 116-36 (p117).
[84] Ibid., pp.118-20.
[85] See Margaret Crowther, *The Workhouse System1834-1929* (London: Methuen, 1983), p.66.
[86] Exceptionally, Catherine Lee argues that some women complied with the terms of compulsory registration, because it served their best interests as part of wider 'individual survival strategies'. See 'Prostitution and Victorian Society Revisited: the Contagious Diseases Acts in Kent', *Women's History Review*, 21 (2012), 301-16, (p.313) and *Policing Prostitution*.

that outcome, those women chose strategic co-operation. Similarly, attempts to use space to shape the behaviour or identity of its inhabitants can be overridden.[87] Throughout the period of this study, inmates of the two lay institutions found their own ways of inhabiting institutional space, appropriating it for their own purposes and imprinting their own identity upon it. Their reactions to their material environment help recover the 'wordless experience' of women inmates whose unmediated voice is rarely heard in the historical record.[88]

Women working with women

Studies of middle-class female philanthropists and their work with 'fallen' women have taken a critical stance. Female reform workers who set boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in institutions were also affirming their own moral superiority in a relationship which infantilised their inmate charges.[89] In reforming women who threatened the sanctity of home, lady philanthropists aimed to create moral 'reflections of themselves' in the reformed working-class 'objects' of their charitable work.[90] Reformed women needed employment and mistresses needed servants. It was therefore in the interests of middle-class women to train 'fallen' girls for service.[91] Recruiting lady volunteers was vital to the operation and success of the reform institutions themselves and for ensuring

[87] Shirley Ardener, 'Ground Rules', p.3, p.9 and Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).
[88] Henry Glassie, *Material Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p.44.
[89] Alana Barton, *Dangerous Sexualities: Two Centuries of Semi-Penal Institutionalisation for Women*, p.70.
[90] Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980), p.14.
[91] Ibid., p.149.

respectable service placements for those emerging 'reformed'.[92] There is a danger, however, in dismissing women's philanthropic work.[93] From a working-class background, prison visitor Sarah Martin is an important reminder that philanthropic action was not the unique preserve of assertive middle-class women. Martin built relationships with individual inmates which endured after their release.[94] The length of service of both men and women committee volunteers and staff at the case study institutions is evidence that they derived a sense of purpose from their engagement with social issues. Matron Mrs Elizabeth Tofts worked at Cambridge from 1838 to 1868 and ladies' committee secretary Mrs Mary Ann Owen from 1838 to 1857. Committee member Revd William Kaye served at Lincoln from 1857 until 1888 and Lavinia Crosse led at Ditchingham from 1854 to 1890. The personalities of individual wardens and superiors coloured the direction and spiritual life of penitentiaries. A key figure was the salaried resident matron. Over time, both lay institutions dismissed matrons for incompetence, drunkenness and lack of sympathy. Others were more efficient and understanding. If society was willing to locate the causes of prostitution within the individual, the 'treatment' for it in the institutional setting was necessarily individualised, especially during probation.[95] The confidential and intense nature of the work could forge relationships and resulted in correspondence back to matrons of all four case study institutions over

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[92] Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Tauris, 2007), p.102.
[93] Anne Summers, 'A Home from Home: Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century', in *Fit Work for Women*, ed. by Sandra Burman (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 33-63 (p.33).
[94] Helen Rogers, 'Kindness and Reciprocity: Liberated Prisoners and Christian Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History*, 47 (2014), 721-45.
[95] Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p. 92.

several years. The character and disposition of individual matrons therefore introduced a considerable element of chance into the quality of an inmate's experience of institutional life.

Emotional bonds between women inmates and staff inside and between family and friends outside the institutions could colour the quality of that experience. In the initial stage of developing this project, the emotional experience of institutional life was considered as a complementary framework for analysis alongside material setting. However, it became clear that the evidence available was limited and largely confined to the two lay institutions and might therefore present an unbalanced picture. Nevertheless, concepts in the history of emotions can be usefully applied to the lived experience of moral reform. In 'emotional regimes' power relations are used to impose a 'normative order for emotions'.[96] Suppressing their own authentic emotions and conforming to those expected by the 'normalising' reformatory culture was testing and at times painful. Throughout this thesis women's emotional states come through their different responses to the material, spatial and spiritual demands of institutional life.

Progression and afterlives: domestic service and material continuities

Institutionalisation represented an interruption of around two years in the life-cycles of young women mostly aged between sixteen and twenty. On its expiration, progression into respectable domestic service was understood as the next stage in that life-cycle. The usefulness of training working-class

[96] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: a Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.125.

women as domestic servants in order to prepare them for domestic management in their own future married life has been questioned. It overlooked the fact that most working-class women would be working after marriage and that their households would be negligible.[97] From the institutional perspective, employment in service was the most available and suitable option.[98] It offered the important practical and moral continuities of board and lodging and oversight.[99] In moral terms the very fact of living in a respectable household conferred respectability on the servants of that household.[100]

The existing secondary literature touches on women's institutional afterlives but does not fully explore or challenge assumed continuities between institutional life and domestic service. By tracing the private domestic service settings into which women were sent, this study takes forward our understanding of their afterlives beyond the institution. Experiences of domestic service were mixed for women whether previously institutionalised or not. Although service was undoubtedly miserable for some, it was more positive for others. Not all relationships between female employers and their servants were exploitative. In the same way that oppression was not the only

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[97] Elizabeth Langland, *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp.15-18. For a more detailed analysis of the impact of female management, see Alana Barton, 'A Woman's Place: Uncovering Maternalistic Forms of Governance in the Nineteenth-Century Reformatory', *Family and Community History*, 14 (2011), 89-104.
[98] For a discussion of the 'servant problem' see Siân Pooley 'Domestic Servants and Their Urban Employers: a Case Study of Lancaster, 1880–1914', *Economic History Review*, 62 (2009) 405-29.
[99] Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.72.
[100] Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.26.

experience of institutional life, marginality and 'monotonous drudgery' were not the only experiences of domestic service.[101] For some servants, a small attic bedroom was an improvement on shared beds at home.[102] Just as inmates did not necessarily see themselves as victims or villains, domestic servants did not necessarily identify with or accept stereotypes. In 1907, Kathlyn Oliver registered publicly her resentment of popular representations of servants as lesser beings.[103] Others had their own views about their employers and ridiculed them under their noses.[104] Although some women stayed in domestic service in their post-institutional lives, others moved on in different directions at home and abroad.[105]

Part II

This study evolved out of questions which were either not fully addressed or left unanswered in the existing literature on moral reform institutions. It began with curiosity about how far they resembled prisons or workhouses and why. How did purpose shape setting and how did setting shape experience? The next stage was to locate archival records which could provide the kinds of sources necessary to address those questions.

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[101] Delap, *Knowing*, p.4. See also Pooley 'Domestic Servants', pp.421-2.
[102] Theresa McBride, *The Domestic Revolution: the Modernisation of Household Service in England and France 1820-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p.68. See also Vicky Holmes, *In Bed with the Victorians: the Life-Cycle of Working-Class Marriage* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
[103] See her *Domestic Servants and Citizenship* (London: People's Suffrage Federation, 1911), cited in Delap, *Knowing*, p160.
[104] Ibid., p.163.
[105] On the shortage of domestic servants for emigration and fears of moral contagion, see Philip Harling, 'Assisted Emigration and the moral Dilemmas of the Mid-Victorian Imperial State', *The Historical Journa*l, 59 (2016), 1027-49 (p.1037). On the recruitment of matrons as moral escorts, see Rowan Strong, 'Globalising British Christianity in the Nineteenth Century: The Imperial Anglican Emigrant Chaplaincy 1846–c. 1910', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43 (2015), 1-32.

Identifying the case study institutions

Three main criteria were applied to the selection of case study institutions: first, the availability, scope, chronological range and variety of surviving records; second, that the material culture of the case study institutions should not have been previously studied in depth; third that the chosen institutions should be in broad geographical proximity to one another to increase the likelihood of shared institutional and philanthropic networks.[106] Searches of national archive databases established the scope of records surviving from English institutions to which access was practicable. This was a particular consideration with regard to the records of active religious communities, as in the case of the archive of the House of Mercy at Ditchingham which, until June 2018, resided with the Community of All Hallows. Details of the records surviving are given under each institution below, together with details of any secondary published work.

The focus on the material setting of reform demanded a particular type of institutional record. Alongside details of governance, staffing, rules and regulations pertaining to inmate admissions, length of stay and destination, most useful were records which could provide the following over time:

[106] In addition to the published studies of reform institutions for 'fallen' women in England, Scotland and Ireland discussed above, the Bath Female Home and Penitentiary is explored in Cynthia Hammond's partly creative study *Architects, Angels, Activists and the City of Bath, 1765-1965: Engaging with Women's Spatial Interventions in Buildings and Landscape* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). For a study of recue work in Winchester, see Alison Royall, 'From Penitent Woman to Unmarried Mother: the Evolution of Work with 'Fallen' Women in Winchester, 1860-1930', (unpublished master's dissertation, The Open University, 2015). The treatment of prostitutes in the County Refuge for the Destitute, Kirkdale, Lancashire, is addressed in Alana Barton, *Fragile Moralities and Dangerous Sexualities: Two Centuries of Semi-Penal Institutionalisation for Women* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). The Lancashire Refuge was semi-carceral, receiving women directly from prison.

1. discussion on the choice of location, site and design of any new building with rationale
2. details of alterations or enlargements to existing buildings and building maintenance
3. building plans or footprints, images of buildings, exterior, interior and gardens
4. records of fixtures and fittings acquired
5. physical remains of institutional buildings whether whole or fragmentary
6. tradesmen's bills and household accounts for food, clothing, household and laundry supplies and furnishings
7. daily work routine for inmates, leisure time and outings
8. details of religious education, religious space and material culture of religious observance
9. dietaries of inmates and staff, festive meals and treats
10. published letters from inmates
11. details or images of objects and artefacts owned, made or used by inmates
12. images of inmates

All twelve types of source are represented across the four case study institutions, but unevenly through archives rich in different ways. Some are represented all four institutions, such as admissions registers; some registers overlap across more than one institution across the whole period of the study; others such as women's case histories and institutional progress survive in

detail for Cambridge but for a much shorter period of time. Inevitably questions arise about the representativeness of partial records, but as in subaltern studies, this is perhaps a lesser consideration than the importance of exploiting whatever is available to recover otherwise invisible historical actors.[107] The period of study is defined by the scope of surviving unrestricted records. The earliest admission records date from 1838, the first year of operation at the Cambridge Refuge, whilst the latest for both Ditchingham and Lincoln end in 1904 and 1910 respectively. For all the case study institutions databases of inmate admissions and outcomes were compiled, enabling comparisons between institutions regarding length of stay, referral route, religious status on arrival and on leaving and destination on leaving. Details of the records consulted for each institution and how they were used are given below.

In order to contextualise the development of the four institutions chosen in national debates about prostitution regulation and reform, it was important to draw on as wide a range of sources as possible outside internal records. The confidential nature of reformatory work may explain the difficulty in locating references to it in private papers. Nevertheless, some family correspondence, published autobiography and memoirs have helped to individualise the experience of historical actors such as rescue workers, lady volunteers, former inmates and domestic servants. Contemporary social problem novels and plays gave voice to fictional 'fallen' women, shining a critical light on the

[107] Timothy J. Gilfoyle, 'Archaeologists in the Brothel: "Sin City", Historical Archaeology and Prostitution', *Historical Archaeology*, 39 (2005), 133-41, (p.139).

structural causes of their fall.[108] County histories and trade directories from different dates helped to situate the four institutions and their changing economic and social contexts over time. National and local newspapers acted as a barometer of national opinion regarding debates over prostitution and reform institutions. They reported opening ceremonies, provided evidence of ongoing local interest and support in published reports of annual meetings. Local newspapers and architectural periodicals such as *The Builder* reviewed new refuge and penitentiary buildings and described the layouts.

Organisations

The records of reform organisations provided insights into the construction of 'fallenness' and the best institutional models for reform. Increasingly professionalised over time, their publications provided evidence of the changing emphasis on the benefits of domesticity in institutional settings and the rationale for developing new short-term refuges from the 1870s.

The Church Penitentiary Association (CPA) was founded in 1852, 'to promote the establishment, and assist in the maintenance of Houses of Refuge and Penitentiaries for the reception and reformation of Fallen Women'.[109] The minutes record building and maintenance grants to individual penitentiaries and the approval of new foundations. Periodically, the Association issued special publications of interest to its constituency of members and *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England* is a particularly significant

[108] Among these were Wilkie Collins's *No Name* and *The New Magdalen*, and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *Ruth.*
[109] CPA Annual Report, 1853, p.11.

example.[110] Published in 1873, it includes the responses to a range of questions sent to sisterhood superiors on all aspects of Anglican penitentiary work. It includes their experiences of and recommendations for the location and site of penitentiaries, the most appropriate architectural design, room types, use of interior space the degree of surveillance necessary and how best to build it into the design. The correspondence of key figures in the CPA provides further evidence of this discourse through reports on the work of member institutions and of individuals within them.[111] All four case study institutions were at different times in correspondence with or became affiliated to the CPA. The Reformatory and Refuge Union was established in 1856. The Union's archive includes the records of the Female Mission to the Fallen. Restricted to internal readership, unpublished accounts of visits by Mission committee members are more candid. Reports on homes around London in the 1860s recommended action with varying degrees of urgency and are discussed in Chapter One.[112]

Periodicals and reform literature

Alongside debates within the CPA's records and published literature, *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* was a monthly magazine intended for missionaries and reformers working in a variety of contexts across the country for the rescue and reform of 'fallen' women.[113]

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[110] *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1873).
[111] For example, the Jackson papers at Lambeth Palace Archives, FP Jackson 59 (ff.1-42, 1857-1885), include correspondence and papers on the establishment and work of penitentiaries and refuges.
[112] The Reformatory and Refuge Union records form part of the Barnardo's archives in Plaistow, London.
[113] For a useful discussion of the context for the establishment of this journal and an analysis of the rhetoric of 'magdalenism' see Deborah Logan, 'An Outstretched Hand to the Fallen': The Magdalen's Friend and the Victorian reclamation movement', Part I, 'Much

Published from 1860 to 1864, and 'comprising a sort of *Reader's Digest* of reformist tracts', it provides a useful barometer of Christian reformatory opinion and represents a range of evangelising and critical articles on the best method of achieving lasting reform and conversion.[114] Among the eulogistic items are more practical articles, written for those managing or visiting institutions. The *Reformatory and Refuge Journal*, published from 1861 to 1899 and as *Seeking and Saving* from 1900, included occasional visit reports and provided detail of both material setting and practice.

The creation of the Anglican sisterhood penitentiaries opened up a new war of words. The critique of sisterhoods was vehement and wide-ranging, with attempts to discredit early foundations by accusations of cruelty and 'papist' ritualist practices.[115] By the 1860s, both sisterhood and lay reform institutions were the subject of scrutiny, even by those broadly supportive of their mission. Both were criticised for their forbidding buildings and the gloom of their interiors. Suggestions on to how to improve the reformatory environment were accompanied by architectural plans. Ellice Hopkins's *Work Among the Lost* is a semi-fictionalised and eulogistic narrative, published in aid of the Albion Hill Home in Brighton whose work it describes.[116] The illustrations it contains are threaded through the thesis

More Sinned Against Than Sinning', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 30 (1997), 368-87. Part II, 'Go and Sin No More', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 31 (1998), 125-41.

[114] Logan,'An outstretched hand', p.371.

[115] See René. Kollar, *A Foreign and Wicked Institution? The Campaign Against Convents in Victorian England* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2011) and Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant Versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns (*Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982).

[116] (London: Hatchards, 1874).

chapters and provide a point of comparison between Hopkins's ideals and case study practice.

Material Culture

To help interpret the meanings of religious objects recovered, I consulted ecclesiastical design and furniture catalogues to identify symbolic decorative motifs and their meaning. Household manuals for employers of servants and manuals for servants revealed expectations of domestic employment, including one exhortation to servants to donate to reform initiatives.[117] Special objects presented to or purchased for lay and penitentiary institutions reflect particular priorities in moral or spiritual reform. Examples include the acquisition of a harmonium in order to facilitate hymn-singing with the inmates at the Cambridge Refuge. The purchase was made by the matron, who raised the necessary funds among her friends. The records at Maplestead record the gift of a silver communion chalice and paten by two female donors, discussed under 'Fieldwork' below.

The final stage of reintegration is associated with the donning of a different uniform, the outfit for service, and with the presentation of material gifts in the form of money and a Bible. The selection of different types of object for donation to women inhabitants reveals perceptions of what was thought materially necessary and morally suitable. Databases of sites, buildings, rooms and objects compiled for all four case study institutions enabled

[117] See *A Few Words to Servants About the Church Penitentiary Association* (J.H.Parker, Oxford and London, [n.d.1854?], p.8.

comparisons between institutions and the identification of common elements, treatments, and justifications.

In comparing institutions with a similar method and purpose, there is likely to be a degree of uniformity in the material culture of reform. Key features were shared across institutions which borrowed elements of their disciplinary regime from carceral institutions. However, records also reflect changes over time in building designs, use and furnishing of interior spaces and attitudes towards inmates' own possessions and in so doing, offer up a richer understanding of the changing lived experience of reform.

Photographs

Images of moral reform institutions available online are mostly limited to exteriors. Those run by or in association with Anglican and Roman Catholic communities seem more strongly represented.[118] Photographs of urban lay homes are harder to locate; they were not necessarily widely photographed during their lifetimes and many buildings may have since gone. The site at Ditchingham is unique among the four in this study, surviving complete in the original buildings from 1854. New images record the penitentiary buildings, domestic and religious spaces and objects. Nineteenth- and early twentieth- century photographs from the Community's archive capture the transient presence of the penitents who inhabited these spaces, saw and used

[118] Peter Higginbotham's website includes some exterior and a few interior photographs, mostly of Anglican penitentiaries. See 'Magdalen Homes' < http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/MH> [accesssed 25 November 2018]. The sources for the website content are not identified, but much of it is derived from *The Classified List* published in 1912 and discussed in Chapter One. See also Finnegan, *Do Penance*, Prunty, *Our Lady of Charity* and the images of Clewer in Bonham, *A Place*, pp.137-160.

these objects over time. Whilst photographs act as 'objects of memory and social attachment', we should nevertheless interrogate them in the same way as any other historical source, being conscious of the viewers for whom they were intended.[119] Equally this study has aimed to go beyond using photographs simply to confirm conclusions evidenced in textual sources.[120] In the following chapters, in addition to written records, the former House of Mercy buildings themselves become the source. In June 2018, the sisters moved out of the original buildings and are now dispersed. For that reason, the images take on even greater significance.

Fieldwork: recovering objects, buildings and experiences

Over the period between 2013 and 2018, I undertook six residential visits to the former House of Mercy at Ditchingham. The Community of All Hallows allowed me to photograph institutional records, the interiors and exteriors of both principal penitentiary buildings, including spaces formerly occupied by penitents. The superior also collected a range of household objects in the Visitors' Room and held selected items for me to photograph.

[119] Jennifer Tucker and Tina Campt 'Photography and History: Entwined Practices' in *History and Theory* 48 (2009), 1-168 (pp.4-5).
[120] Peter Bourke, *Eyewitnessing: the Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), quoted in Jennifer Tucker and Tina Campt, 'Entwined Practices', p.4. See also Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Figure 0.1 Miscellaneous household objects assembled in the Community of All Hallows Visitors' Room, 2014.

Objects represent a different kind of historical source. Alongside the symbolic meaning of objects such as flat irons as tools of reform, the touch of generations of former inmates is inscribed on the objects themselves. Their physical presence comes through the signs of wear on the handle. Historians can achieve a deeper understanding of objects and their materiality through handling, a haptic experience which links us back to original makers and users.[121] Lastly, during visits to All Hallows, I participated in some of the daily Offices in both the upper room chapel and new chapel. I spent time with the Community's historian, Sister Violet, who remembered Third Order sisters (former penitents) in their distinctive brown habits. Penitents spent portions of the day in silence. During research trips, I ate in silence with

[121] Kate Smith and Leonie Hannan, 'Return and Repetition: Methods for Material Culture Studies', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 48 (2017), 47-59 (pp.49-50).

sisters in the dining-room pictured in Chapter Four and shared accommodation with visitors on retreat, preparing food and washing up together in a communal kitchen in silence. The experience was instructive; although uncomfortable at first, over time the silence gave space for thoughts to range freely and privately.

In connection with the House of Mercy at Maplestead, I followed up an inventory from 1958 which indicated two parish churches in Essex in receipt of furnishings and sacred artefacts from the House of Mercy chapel when the institution closed. Having contacted the parishes, I visited and photographed a chalice, probably presented as a gift in 1869, parts of the original chapel rood screen and the three rood screen figures. I also made a site visit to Maplestead and met the current owner of the former Warden's House which he allowed me to photograph.

Photographs of manuscript and printed archive material have been introduced in order to make as concrete as possible the traces of what remains of otherwise largely lost institutions.[122] Periodical, pamphlet and book covers announced their mission to both recipients and workers through religious iconography and scriptural quotations. Such inscriptions transformed the meaning of otherwise unremarkable items which became moral even religious objects. Most striking are records which bear the marks and signatures of women who passed through these institutions. Working with

[122] For a theoretical analysis of the making of archives and the how historians encounter different archival materials see Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

absence, it is even more important that we make visible what is present. Photographs of buildings, objects and institutional records themselves are incorporated and analysed here as evidence of the agency and of the embodied presence of those individuals who inhabited, handled, saw, read or wrote them. It is that connection with individuals which makes the matter of the surviving archive in whatever form uniquely dynamic.[123]

The choice of two examples of each type of institution allowed for internal comparison between the two lay institutions and between the two penitentiaries, and comparison across lay and penitentiary. In total, this research has involved transcribing and analysing the records of 2871 women in the four institutions. Complete for Lincoln from 1848 to 1910 and at Ditchingham from 1854 to 1904, the admissions registers proved equally but not consistently detailed over the period. The consistency breaks down in relation to women's post-institutional lives. Of the two penitentiaries, the women's afterlives are more strongly represented in the records at Maplestead from 1880 to1900, with no data at all on destinations beyond Ditchingham after 1864. The rich detail on service placements at Lincoln from 1870 to 1910 has made it possible to identify the range of women's employment on leaving and to trace some of the domestic settings and service roles to which they went. Although lay and penitentiary institutions were similar in purpose, the lived reform experience was very different. The urban lay homes were more firmly 'in the world'; the sounds and smells of daily life and work permeated their walls, making conversations and illicit meetings possible.

[123] Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look*, p.7.

The combination of rural isolation and a higher ratio of authority figures in sisterhoods was likely to have curtailed illicit activity. The rural setting nevertheless had its advantages in access to extensive gardens, fresh produce and clean air.

This study has identified areas of congruence and divergence between the theory of institutional purpose and the experience of practice in four case study institutions with across different, geographical, economic and physical settings. It does not claim to be comprehensive nor does it aim to suggest that these institutions define a norm, but rather that they shed light on particular aspects of the material reality of reform environments.

Figure 0.2 Geographical location of the case study institutions <www.haltehembrug.nl/13/map-of-england-with-counties-and-major-cities.html> [accessed 20 December 2014]

■ Lincoln Penitent Females' Home
● House of Mercy, Ditchingham, Norfolk
▲ Cambridge Female Refuge
◆ House of Mercy, Maplestead, Essex

Cambridge Female Refuge

Established in 1838 as a publicly-funded charitable institution, the Cambridge Female Refuge looked back to earlier nineteenth-century institutional reform models, such as the London Female Penitentiary with whom its managers were in regular contact. Institutional records survive in the form of committee minutes from 1838 to 1853, and from 1912-1949, although the later set of minutes are sketchy, giving only minimal detail on inmate admissions and management. Annual Reports from the intervening period survive in a complete run from 1839 to 1899, with one further from 1905. The early minutes are exceptionally rich for the years 1838 to 1853, providing detail on the inadequacy of the original premises from 1838, the rationale informing the search for an alternative site and the eventual purchase of a plot of land on which to erect purpose-built premises. Discussions with architect Ambrose Poynter relating to the appropriate location, building design, furnishing and equipping of its new premises are summarised. Accounts from 1842 from local builders, contractors and suppliers include a garden plan and details of planting. Improvements and extensions to the laundry are noted in the Annual Reports through the 1870s and 1880s, along with changes to the interior accommodation for inmates to provide greater privacy.[124]

[124] This institution formed the subject of my master's dissertation which aimed to evaluate the punitive nature of the reform regime but did not touch significantly on the material setting. See Susan Woodall, 'The origins and purpose of the Cambridge Female Refuge, 1838-1853' (unpublished master's dissertation, the Open University, 2012). Unless otherwise stated, all CFR references are to the managing committee minute books, R60/27/1 and 1838-1842, R60/27/2 1842-1853.

Lincoln and Lincolnshire Home for Penitent Females

Established in 1847 and operating until 1950, the Lincoln institution also began life in rented premises before moving to a new building funded by public donation. The records include the rare survival of a Matron's Report Book, which is particularly valuable to this research. Covering the period from 1901 to 1911, it provides detailed accounts of inmates' progress, behaviour and health, interspersed with notes of 'treats' for the girls and orders for household supplies and clothing. The main series minutes from 1863 to 1915 record the deliberations of the gentlemen's committee, responsible for overall management. Both the ladies' committee minutes and annual reports are extant in near complete runs from 1847 to 1917. Most significantly, the Admission and Progress Registers from 1870 to1910 give the names and addresses of inmates' first placements in domestic service, including their wages. These have been analysed in full to identify the types of placements found and to analyse the contrasting domestic settings to which three Lincoln women went.[125] Lastly, a local and regional history study of the Lincoln institution has been undertaken at Masters' level but is understood to focus principally on regional referral networks rather than material culture.[126]

[125] All LPFH references are to the committee's main series minutes, GH/2 1863-1915, unless otherwise stated.

[126] Sarah Hansen's MSt thesis argues that 'the Home may be understood as a response to changing social conditions in Lincoln, promoted by a particular fraction of the city's middle classes, and designed specifically to counter evils associated with industrialisation and urbanisation'. <https://cambridge.academia.edu/SarahHansen> [accessed 12 January 2013 and 3 May 2016] Title unknown (unpublished Master of Studies dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2008). Contact was made twice with the graduate student author but to date it has not been possible to consult this study. The dissertation is not listed in the Cambridge University Library thesis catalogue, the British Library Ethos or the IHR Thesis databases.

House of Mercy, Ditchingham, Norfolk

First established at Nunnery Farm, in the neighbouring village of Shipmeadow in 1854 as a sisterhood penitentiary for penitent 'fallen' girls and women from Norfolk and Suffolk, the House of Mercy moved to new premises in Ditchingham in Norfolk in 1859, purpose-built in the Gothic style of the Anglican revival. Whilst work with penitents was their founding purpose, a school for girls followed in 1862 near the House of Mercy, serving middle and upper middle class families, some of whom were based in the colonies.[127] In Ditchingham village, the sisters opened an orphanage soon after moving to the new House of Mercy building at Ditchingham and a hospital in 1873.[128] Embroidery was carried out at All Hallows from 1864 until 1969 and an Embroidery School founded in around 1890.[129] The House of Mercy records include the council minute book of the first years from 1854-1858 at Shipmeadow, along with the superior's own notebook which contains glimpses of her work with penitents and their progress. The Community's archives include the House of Mercy admissions records from 1854-1904 and annual reports in an almost complete run from1855 to 1935. The earliest records from 1854 contain the signatures or marks of penitents admitted, rare visible and tangible evidence of their presence in the institution in their own hand. Photographs taken in the 1970s of the early premises at Shipmeadow survive.

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[127] Frith has traced the parents' colonial postings through the 1881 census. See '"Pseudonuns"' p.341.
[128] Sister Violet CAH, *All Hallows: Ditchingham, the Story of an East Anglican Community* (Oxford: Becket Publications, 1983) p.24, p.26.
[129] Mary Schoesser, *The Watts Book of Embroidery: English Church Embroidery 1833–1953* (London: Watts and Co., 1998), p.100.

The House of Mercy at Ditchingham working with the Norfolk and Suffolk Penitentiary Association established a series of associated short-stay refuges in Norwich and Ipswich from 1873. The date of the establishment of the first refuge is significant as it coincides with contemporary discourse on the different purpose and material setting for these new short stay 'homes'. Admission details from one of these short homes in Norwich survive. Examined alongside admissions to the House of Mercy, they reveal the number of reform institutions through which women had already come and provide evidence of the cumulative time they had already spent in similar settings.[130] On the dispersal of the Community of All Hallows in June 2018, the Community's paper archives were deposited with the Norfolk Record Office.[131] The sacred vessels and laundry objects presented here remain with the dispersed Community.

House of Mercy at Maplestead, Essex

The evolution of the House of Mercy at Maplestead was entirely different. Established in the diocese of Rochester, a lengthy struggle to define the

[130] In her thesis '"Pseudonuns"' cited above, Joy Frith was principally concerned with how the All Hallows sisters forged their identity through work with penitents and its extension into a colonial setting in their school for indigenous children in Yale, British Columbia. Also given permission to consult the archives, in her comprehensive analysis Frith drew mainly on profession rolls, the first superior's diary, early publications clarifying the purpose and Anglican oversight of the sisterhood and appealing for support, and the community's magazine *East and West.* The present study exploits the records Frith did not use, namely admissions registers to Ditchingham and its associated refuges and annual reports. In addition to her thesis see also Frith's useful analysis of the All Hallows Community's finances in 'Accounting for Souls: Anglican Sisters and the Economies of Moral Reform in England' in *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe 1773-1931* ed. by Maarten Van Dijck and others (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2013), pp.185-204. In this chapter, she incorporated exterior photographs of the new wing opened for Third Order or Magdalen Sisters at Ditchingham in 1880 and the new chapel opened in 1895 discussed in Chapters Two and Five.

[131] They are currently uncatalogued under ACC 2018/37 and all DIT references here relate to this accession.

constitution of the sisterhood curtailed any expansion of charitable works on the same scale as at Ditchingham. A nurses' training initiative operated briefly from 1873 to 1874 and from 1880 to 1890 reformatory work with penitents was extended to include 'receiving delicate children' understood as 'a great means of grace to the penitents'.[132] Details of the children staying over that period do not appear to have survived, although the accounts record maintenance payments for children for a period of ten years. Other records include admissions registers from 1880-1899, which capture details of penitents' previous institutional experiences and their progression from baptism to confirmation to communion. Council Minutes from 1866 to 1910 summarise discussions and resolutions from biennial meetings of the principal governing body. Sub-committee minutes from 1868-1887 record the purchase of material for penitents' clothing alongside weekly household expenditure and building maintenance and repairs. A near complete set of Annual Reports survives from 1870 to 1956. Regrettably, as for Ditchingham, the building plans by Henry Woodyer do not appear to have survived, but a full account of the official opening in newspapers provides detailed descriptions of the room types and the Chapel interior.[133] Photographs of the exterior and some chapel interiors survive from around 1895. Situated around twenty miles from Colchester, a garrison town which came under the Contagious Diseases Prevention Act of 1864, the House of Mercy at Maplestead was one possible destination for women leaving the

[132] MAP combined AR for 1875, 1876, 1877, p.8.
[133] See *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 24 April 1868, p.9.

Lock Hospital opened in Colchester in the same year.[134] Most significant are the links which emerge between the two penitentiaries in this study. The House of Mercy at Maplestead owed its existence to Elizabeth Barter, a sister at Ditchingham. A fragile relationship was maintained between the two penitentiaries over the first twenty years of operation at Maplestead, during which time the sisterhood struggled to define its identity as a religious community. This difficulty was largely attributable to the lack of clarity in the Statutes on the division of responsibilities for spiritual leadership between the superintendent (superior) and the warden. The result was a high turnover of wardens and superintendents who lacked the energy and commitment of Lavinia Crosse and warden William Scudamore at Ditchingham. In 1875, four sisters from Ditchingham went to manage the Maplestead penitentiary until the end of 1876 when they too left. Their departure was due to disagreements between the sisters and Warden William La Barte on the extent of the authority each should exert over the other and over the penitents. The arrival of Revd Henry Cope as warden after La Barte's departure signalled the start of a calmer period, with the Community of the Saving Name formally established at Maplestead in December 1877.[135] Despite a period of relative stability from 1877 to 1891, the institution again struggled to find a long-term superior, and in the absence of other offers of help, a sister from Clewer took over as superior in 1892 and the Maplestead penitentiary came formally under the management of the Community of St John the Baptist.[136]

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[134] 27 and 28 Vict. Cap 85. See Jane Pearson and Maria Rayner, *Prostitution in Victorian Colchester: Controlling the Uncontrollable* (Hatfield: Essex Publications, 2018), p.175, p.178.
[135] MAP combined AR 1875, 1876, 1877, p. 8.
[136] All MAP references are to the council minutes, D/CAc 6/1 1866 -1910, unless otherwise indicated.

Lastly, in interpreting words attributed to institutional inmates across all four institutions, we need to be conscious that they may have been inflected by the power relationships in play.[137] Recovering inmates' voices however compromised is nevertheless at the heart of this research.

Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the existing corpus of institutional studies in a number of ways: it adds a comparative analysis of the lived reform experience in four new case studies. Setting their development in the context of changing discourses over the period of study, it traces changing practices and experiences in the evolution of the four institutions. The focus on material setting has enabled at least a partial reimagining of the detail of their exteriors and interiors, hitherto unexplored and intangible. The study has located everyday objects associated with inmates' work and exceptional artefacts associated with the religious practice of the two penitentiaries, which are presented and analysed for the first time.

This study complicates one-dimensional readings of institutional experience. Despite similarities in the use of space to classify and separate different groups, it finds more variety of experience in the four settings than might be expected. It contributes a new understanding of the religious life of all four locations, moving away from indoctrination towards a more mixed reading of reception and experience. In examining the material setting of former

[137] Julie-Marie Strange 'Reading Language as a Historical Source' in *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) pp.167-183 (p.172).

inmates' placements and subsequent employment, the research contributes new readings of the material continuities between institutions and the settings of domestic service. Lastly, although institutions drew on the disciplinary potential of space and time to impose a measure of control over inmates' activities, the gap between theory and practice was frequently exposed. Far from passive in their daily interactions with their environments, women could find ways of inhabiting and reinventing these spaces. Despite spatial and material attempts at unmaking and remaking, women could retain their sense of identity. By co-operating or not co-operating women made their own decisions.

Chapter structure

Chapter One contextualises the development of the four case studies in two new ways. Focusing on the relationship between mission, message and materiality, it first analyses examples of the printed matter of institutional recruitment in London and the relationship between material form and meaning in the iconography of guides and periodicals for rescue workers. Turning from material form to content, the chapter examines debates concerning the method and conduct of reform institutions aired in rescue literature and the national press. In response to critical reactions to their practice it shows how from around the 1860s, organisations and rescue publications made attempts to police institutions. Recommending improvements, in particular the moral and environmental benefits of 'homeliness', the chapter closes with an examination of how domesticity was

realised materially in the elaboration of designs for new cottage home penitentiaries, disseminated in rescue literature.

Chapter Two sets the establishment of the four case study institutions in their local and national contexts. It highlights the importance of women in the genesis and realisation of all four reform sites. Identifying common features and those unique to individual locations, the chapter assesses their reception in their localities and analyses the relationship between material form and moral meaning. The chapter argues that the 'plant' of reformatory spaces was not static; all four sites evolved and adapted in response to economic need and changing ideological emphasis over time. Lastly, the chapter shows that despite attempts to seal institutional sites against outside influences, inmates discovered they were porous.

Chapter Three analyses the four institutions as ritual sites designed to work change. Drawing on inmates' experiences, it examines the spatial, material and somatic dimensions of probation as the initial rite of passage. The chapter argues that each stage of incorporation was represented and experienced differently. Institutional treatment of probation was characterised by contradiction. Depersonalised material, spatial and temporal strategies designed to control the process of acculturation were offset by important work with individual probationers.

Chapter Four examines the relationship between material culture, meaning and identity in the reform setting. By analysing every-day and exceptional

objects associated with specific reformatory spaces, it shows how the institutional environment was constructed to remake its inhabitants. Differentiation in furnishings reified social relations operating between groups of space users. Household objects and tools reinforced desirable moral qualities and served a didactic purpose, refining skills which fashioned the identities of future domestic servants. Nevertheless, inmates found ways to overcome environmental constraints, appropriating and in some cases taking control of institutional spaces and objects for their own purposes.

Chapter Five explores the material experience of institutional religion. Examining the objects, texts and spaces associated with religious observance, it suggests that inmates' responses to religion ranged from anxious intensity to outright aversion. Between the two extremes, some derived comfort from reading the Bible together and from familiarity with particular hymns and texts. Nevertheless, relegated in parish church and penitentiary chapel spaces, inmates continued to be defined by their liminal and ambivalent moral status.

Chapter Six considers women's afterlives beyond the institution. It first briefly shows how those afterlives could be delayed through additional periods spent in new short-term 'refuges', opened in connection with Cambridge, Ditchingham and Maplestead from the 1870s. Once beyond the institutions, the chapter analyses employment placements and traces material continuities between institutional settings and domestic service destinations for a small group of former inmates at Lincoln. In the case of the two penitentiaries, the chapter charts the afterlives of women who left and

progressed beyond domestic service and of those who stayed or returned as Third Order sisters.

Chapter One Material Mission, Critique and Development

In 1885, Arthur Brinckman, Chaplain of St Agnes Hospital published *Notes on Rescue Work*, a detailed manual on the conduct of mission work with the 'fallen'. Based on his experience in the field, he identified renewed vigour in rescue work, but warned against the effects of amateurism:

> Lately there has been much interest awakened in the various efforts made for the promotion and preservation of purity, and for the rescue and reformation of those who have fallen. The consequence is, that numbers of persons have suddenly begun this grave and difficult work, only to make a mess of it.[1]

Brinckman's manual and its companion, *Hints on Rescue Work* by Arthur Maddison, represent the increasing professionalisation of moral reform work with women during the nineteenth century.[2] By the beginning of the twentieth century female moral reform institutions constituted a major branch of national voluntary action to address perceived sexual deviancy of mostly working-class women. In their activities, largely middle-class reform organisations demonstrated a 'taxonomic zeal' in identifying and classifying women according to increasingly subtle categories of perceived moral need.[3] New types of institutions developed to remedy new forms of moral deficiency and preventive work with younger women and children expanded. The proliferation of institutions necessitated specialist reference works in order to help rescue workers to make 'successful' rescues and appropriate institutional

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[1] *Notes on Rescue Work, a Manual of Hints to Those who Wish to Reclaim the Fallen* (London: G.J. Palmer, 1885), p.ix. Brinckman was also Chairman of the Church Mission to the Fallen.

[2] *Hints on Rescue Work, a Manual of Hints to Those who Wish to Reclaim the Fallen* by Arthur J.S. Maddison (London: Reformatory and Refuge Union). The preface is dated 1898.

[3] Jeffrey Weeks *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London: Longman, 1989), p.21.

referrals. The fact that Brinckman reissued his publication in 1894, now entitled simply *Rescue Work* and offered 'at a very cheap price, hoping to make the book more widely useful', suggests that nearly ten years later, there continued to be a demand for the detailed guidance it offered.[4]

Along with new rescue organisations came new periodicals through which to promote the 'saving' work. Eliciting financial support and recruiting rescue missionaries to the cause, periodicals became vehicles for exchanging ideas on the methodology of rescue work and the practice of moral reform institutions. Publications by individuals working independently contributed to the debate and shaped future developments. Creating space for the critical exchange of ideas, together these publications helped inform the practice of street-based missionary recruitment to 'homes', the conduct of institutions themselves and contributed to the professionalisation of both.

This chapter contextualises the contemporary discursive landscape against which the four case study institutions developed and operated in two new ways. First, by exploring the links between method and materiality, it offers a new understanding of the printed matter of street-based institutional recruitment from the perspectives of missionary distributers and women recipients, hitherto overlooked in the secondary literature on female reform institutions. The chapter argues that together with manuals and guides for rescue workers, the printed matter of rescue work exploited new material

[4] Label inserted into the preface of Arthur Brinckman's *Rescue Work*, the 1894 edition of *Notes on Rescue Work, a Manual of Hints to Those who Wish to Reclaim the Fallen* (London: G.J. Palmer, 1885).

forms and technologies to communicate its message. Second, moving from materiality to content, the chapter draws on press, periodical and reform literature to show how critiques drew attention to the inadequacies of the environments and management of some female reform institutions. Published and unpublished inspections visits and reports represented attempts at self-regulation and stimulated debate. Those resisting change were encouraged to embrace 'homeliness' as a positive reformatory force and one important way in which institutions would evolve over the century.

The secondary literature has provided valuable insights into the ways in which discursive constructions of prostitution as a problem led to the establishment of institutions to address it. Linda Mahood has noted the medicalised discourse which contributed to the creation of Scottish Magdalene institutions.[5] Pressure for state intervention intensified mid-century as a result of William Acton's publication of 1857 in which he used the inadequacy of institutions alone to reduce the scale of prostitution in order to assert the need for state regulation.[6] Medicalisation of the prostitute body as contaminant again informed statutory responses to prostitution under the

[5] Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1990), repr.as Routledge Library Editions: Women's History, xxv (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp.54-74.
[6] *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social & Sanitary Aspects, in London and other Larger Cities: with Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of its Attendant Evils* (London: J. Churchill, 1857). William Tait, *Magdalenism, an Inquiry into the Extent, Causes, and Consequences of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (1841), William Wardlaw , *Lectures on Female Prostitution: Its Nature, Extent, Effects, Guilt, Causes and Remedy* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose, 1842). Before Acton, magistrate Patrick Colquhoun contrasted the Magdalen Hospital's statistics for 'successfully' reformed inmates against the scale of prostitution in London to argue that it was too great a problem for reformatories alone and advancing instead the case for state policing. See *Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* 6th edn (London, 1830), pp. 626-27.

Contagious Diseases Acts legislation from 1864.[7] Although legislation in relation to the moral protection of children was passed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the regulation of morality in society continued to be largely the concern of the churches. Parochial visiting and wider social action mobilised nonconformist denominations, evangelical, Broad and High Church Anglicans alike.[8] Social action by other religious denominations reveals significant commitment to female moral reform institutions. Roman Catholic female religious communities were increasingly active, with diocesan work carried out in two Houses of Refuge for penitents in 1857 and in twenty-one by 1917.[9] The Protestant Deaconess Order established a Girls' Preventive Home on Clapham Common in 1892.[10] The Salvation Army opened a short-lived refuge in London as early as 1868, later followed by longer-term and permanent refuges.[11]

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[7] Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Daniel Walkowitz and Judith Walkowitz, '"We are not Beasts of the Field", Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Feminist Studies*, 1(1973), 73-106. Catherine Lee, 'Prostitution and Victorian Society Revisited: the Contagious Diseases Acts in Kent', *Women's History Review*, 21 (2012), 301-316 (p.313). See also *Policing Prostitution, 1856-1886* (Pickering & Chatto: London, 2013). For a discussion of opposing gendered constructions of military discipline and female moral intemperance, see Miles Ogborn 'Law and Discipline in Nineteenth Century English State Formation: the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 6 (1993), 28-55.

[8] *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. by Rowan Strong (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), III*: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion, 1829-c.1914*, p.14, p.24.

[9] Barbara Walsh, *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales 1800-1937: a Social History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), Appendix II, Table 9, p.175. See also Peter Hughes, 'Cleanliness and Godliness: a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Convent Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain' (unpublished doctoral thesis: Brunel University, 1985). See also Carmen Mangion, *Contested Identities: Catholic Women Religious in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

[10] *The Beginning of Women's Ministry: the Revival of the Deaconess in the Nineteenth-Century Church of England* ed. by Henrietta Blackmore (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), p. xxxviii.

[11] Madge Unsworth *Maiden Tribute,a Study in Voluntary Social Service* (London: Salvationist Publications and Supplies, 1949), p.4, p.9. Unsworth notes that this early project failed due to lack of funds, but from 1884 with the support of Bramwell Booth, the Salvation Army opened its first mission house for rescue work in Hanbury Street, Whitechapel. Gillian Ball defines the 'moral family' basis of the Salvationist approach to

Two studies explore the rhetoric of 'magdalenism' in the evangelical periodical *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* (known as *The Magdalen's Friend*) examined here. Through a combination of observations from mission work and fictional moral narratives, the articles, sermons and pleas for volunteer support constructed the 'fallen' woman as a soul on the edge of perdition and worthy of pity.[12] Much less well explored in the existing literature, however, is the richness of material in this publication regarding the practicalities of promulgating the rescue message and the insights it provides into institutional practice.[13]

Work on perceptions of deviance in juvenile girls has informed the discussion of domesticity in this chapter and its relevance to training 'fallen' women for economic self-sufficiency.[14] In later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century institutions for inebriate women, well-regulated domestic activities

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rescue work. See 'Practical Religion: a Study of the Salvation Army's Services for Women 1884-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Leicester University, 1987), p.71. See also Pamela Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[12] See Deborah Logan, '"An Outstretched Hand to the Fallen": *The Magdalen's Friend* and the Victorian Reclamation Movement', I, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 30 (1997), 368-387 and An Outstretched Hand to the Fallen" II: *The Magdalen's Friend* and the Victorian Reclamation Movement, Part II: "Go and Sin No More"', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 31 (1998), 125-141 (p.138) and Scott Rogers, 'Domestic Servants, Midnight Meetings and *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 39 (2011), 443-461.

[13] Brian Harrison has usefully examined standard techniques across voluntary moral reform groups initiating action and noted the importance of publicity. 'State Intervention and Moral Reform in Nineteenth-Century England' in *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* ed. by Patricia Hollis (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), pp.289-322 (p.292). Frances Finnegan touches on Maddison's instructions to street missionaries and midnight meetings in Ireland but does not discuss materiality. *Do Penance*, pp. 13-16.

[14] Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Alana Barton, *Fragile Moralities and Dangerous Sexualities: Two Centuries of Semi-Penal Institutionalisation for Women* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

contributed to rehabilitation.[15] The benefits of domesticity as a corrective moral and material force were particularly felt in new institutional formulae from around the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth. The secondary literature on institutional responses to juvenile delinquency provides valuable insights into the rationale for placing greater emphasis on domesticity and rural setting.[16] Paula Bartley has usefully drawn on the publications of purity campaigner Ellice Hopkins. Instrumental in creating Ladies' Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls, Hopkins advocated the combined benefits of domesticity in smaller-scale cottage homes for younger women and girls and the construct of the institutional family.[17] Less well understood is that the cottage plan was also recommended for older girls and women in Anglican penitentiaries. Examined here for the first time is the Anglican Penitentiary known as St Thomas's Home in Basingstoke, Hampshire, where the cottage plan was adopted, combining an innovative 'homeliness' with more established disciplinary devices in its material form.

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[15] Geoffrey Hunt, Jenny Mellor and Janet Turner, 'Wretched, Hatless and Miserably Clad: Women and the Inebriate Reformatories from 1900-1913', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 40 (1989), 244-70, (pp.259-60).
See also Barry Godfrey, Pamela Cox, Heather Shore and others, *Young Criminal Lives: Life Courses and Life Chances from 1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), especially on emotional attachment between children and carers, pp.94-95.
[16] Michelle Cale, 'Girls and the Perception of Sexual Danger in the Victorian Reformatory System', *History*, 78 (1993), 201-217; Teresa Ploszajska, 'Moral Landscapes and Manipulated Spaces: Gender, Class and Space in Victorian Reformatory Schools', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20 (1994), 413-429; Felix Driver, 'Discipline without Frontiers? Representations of the Mettray Reformatory Colony in Britain, 1840-1880', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 3 (1990), 272-293; Marianne Moore, 'Social Control or Protection of the Child? The Debates on the Industrial Schools Acts, 1857-1894', *Journal of Family History*, 33 (2008), 359-387; April M. Beisaw and James G. Gibb, *The Archaeology of Institutional life* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2009).
[17] See Paula Bartley, 'Seeking and Saving: the Reform of Prostitutes and the Prevention of Prostitution in Birmingham, 1860-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Wolverhampton University, 1995), p.165.

This chapter offers a new reading of primary source materials relating to the female reform movement in relation to two previously neglected themes: the materiality of rescue recruitment work 'on the ground' and changes in material form and institutional environment prompted by criticism from inside and outside reform circles. Accounts of visits reported in the press and specialist periodicals reveal the different ways in which reform institutions were represented. Keyword searches of historical newspaper databases using search terms such as 'refuge', 'penitentiary' and 'home of mercy' brought up critical accounts of institutional practice.[18] Conference papers presented at the anniversary meeting of the CPA in April 1873 show how the Association worked to provide practical guidance on the administration of rescue work.[19] The Reformatory and Refuge Union was principally concerned with statutory institutions for juveniles. Nevertheless, a survey of twenty-seven volumes of *The Reformatory and Refuge Journal* and *Seeking and Saving* between 1864 and 1910 identified important items relating to voluntary reform institutions for 'fallen' women, including St Thomas's Home, Basingstoke. Almost all the articles in a survey of the fifty-seven issues of *The Magdalen's Friend* published between April 1860 and December 1864 were relevant. Although short-lived, this specialist periodical was significant in multiple ways.

Two documents created in association with *The Magdalen's Friend* are examined in Part I. The first is a list of homes intended for distribution to

[18] For example, the online British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.
[19] *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England* (1873). Paula Bartley also refers to CPA records in relation to success rates for women leaving member institutions but does not specify her sources. See *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform 1860-1914*, p.59.

women on the streets, the second a religious tract entitled 'Woman, why weepest thou?' which depicts the choice facing the 'penitent' with a characteristic mix of sympathy and judgement. A third document, a 'liability ticket' devised by a representative of the CPA combined missionary referral to an institution with the option for the missionary to contribute to the upkeep of the woman referred. All three documents reveal the assumptions and attitudes informing mission work. All three show how rescue organisations exploited advances in printing techniques, maximising the impact of the printed image and word in order to communicate their message.

The establishment of inspection visits by some organisations represented attempts at internal regulation of institutional practice in response to critiques.[20] Alongside published accounts of visits, Part II of this chapter first examines an unpublished report by a lady visitor from the London Female Mission which reveals concerns about both inefficient staffing and disorganisation in an institution run by the Rescue Society. Articles in *The Magdalenes' Friend*, national and local newspapers argued the case for and against moral reform institutions and fed into wider debates about the optimum environment for female reform. By exchanging intelligence and experience from different types of institution with a reformatory purpose, domesticity emerged as a useful moral construct, expressed in material form

[20] As a result of greater attention to working conditions in factories and workshops towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a move to inspect the laundries of voluntary homes. This inspection was opposed in a paper read at the conference organised by the Reformatory and Rescue Union in York in June 1902. See *Inspection of Voluntary Homes for Young Women, a paper read at the York Conference, on June 4th, 1902, by Mr W.J.Taylor, Secretary of the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution* (London: Reformatory and Refuge Union, 1902).

in the development of the new 'cottage' penitentiary. The chapter closes with a brief analysis of St Thomas's Home Basingstoke as an example

Part I: Printed matter: mission, meaning and professionalisation

The importance of religion as the chief means of moral transformation was promoted by the advocates of female reform institutions. Faced with the challenge of eliciting support for a cause to which many would be unsympathetic, supporters of the proposal for the first institution of this kind in England, the Magdalen Hospital, founded in London in 1758, constructed both the prostitute and the 'victim of seduction' as deserving. Reflecting evangelical emphasis on the dangers of spiritual perdition but signalling the potential of both types of women for 'individual virtue', they represented the Magdalen Hospital as the institutional agent of redemption.[21]

Just as religious rhetoric was employed to move the hearts of potential donors, vivid language and iconography were employed to inspire rescue workers and to persuade the 'fallen' woman to seize the chance of salvation and enter an institution. Religious inspiration took different denominational forms. Evangelical emphasis on faith and 'submission to the discipline of the

[21] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680 to 1780* (London: Guilford Press, c.1998), pp.52-3. The establishment of the Lock Asylum in 1780 added a period of moral treatment for women patients leaving the Lock Hospital, founded in 1749. By graduating from the Lock Hospital to the Asylum, deserving women received a more enduring moral cure. See Asylum Committee 1787-1842, 18 April 1787, p.3, MS0022/2/1. Royal College of Surgeons. Linda Mahood notes a similar pairing of physical and moral cure in the development of Magdalene institutions alongside the Lock Hospitals in Glasgow and Edinburgh. See *The Magdalenes*, pp.125-6.

Church' offered up the possibility of redemption for the sinner.[22] In more moderate form, evangelical religion could encourage 'enthusiasm for the Cross', but at the extreme end, could place undue emphasis on sin from which there was no escape.[23] At the opposite pole, the Anglican revival linked to the Oxford Movement centred on recovering pre-Reformation liturgy, placing particular emphasis on the transformative power of the communion rite.[24] Alarm raised by low levels of church attendance revealed by the religious census of 1851 resulted in a different kind of reinvigoration in the form of Broad Churchmen in the second half of the century, who argued that the Anglican church had a 'moral mission to direct the nation's moral and spiritual life' precisely because of the diversity of its population.[25]

Voluntary organisations created to work in female moral reform reflected the variety of denominations.[26] Three significant organisations interested in reclaiming 'fallen' women came into existence in the 1850s. The CPA formed in 1852, grew out of the Anglican revival and supported the foundation of new Anglican penitentiaries. The evangelical Society for the Rescue of Young Women and Children (The Rescue Society) followed in 1853.

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[22]John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843-1945* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p.85.For fears over declining church attendance, see Keith D.M.Snell and Paul S.Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.25.
[23] Boyd Hilton, *The Age*, p.8, p.12.
[24] *Religion in Victorian Britain* ed. by Gerald Parsons, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) II: *Controversies*, pp.36-8.
[25] *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. by Rowan Strong (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), III*: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion, 1829-c.1914*, p.6.
[26] For example, the evangelical Society for the Suppression of Vice and Encouragement of Religion (1802) See Edward Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Social Purity Movements in Britain Since 1700* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 1977), p.41. Michael J.D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.159. Roberts notes the Associate Institution for Improving and Enforcing the Laws for the Protection of Women, founded in 1843 with a particular interest in prostitution 'management'. See p.161.

Established in 1857, the non-denominational Reformatory and Refuge Union principally supported the managers of statutory and non-statutory industrial schools and reformatories for juveniles, but also engaged in voluntary female moral reform institutions through a branch of its work, the Female Mission to the Fallen, instituted in 1858.[27] Although denominationally different and operating independently, all three organisations had connections to institutions in which to reclaim 'fallen' women and shared a common interest.[28]

The religious imperative comes through the printed matter of publications produced by rescue organisations. Developments in the technology of printing made the reproduction of images cheaper.[29] Images and emblems could capture the essence of the reform message in a memorable way.

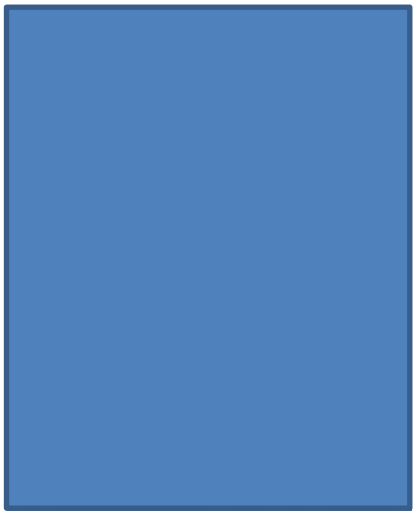

Figure 1.1 Shield of the Reformatory and Refuge Union, on the board binding of collected issues of *Seeking and Saving*, 1903-1906, CUL.

[27] Cox et al, *Young Criminal Lives*, pp.33-4.
[28] For example, The Female Mission to the Fallen referred women to all four institutions in this study. See Annual Reports for 1884, 1887 and 1889, A/FWA/C/D/069/002.
[29] See Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p.3.

Described as 'not specifically Anglican', the Reformatory and Refuge Union nevertheless chose an emblem which made its religious purpose clear.[30] Figure 1.3 shows the organisational shield, in gold on the front cover of this board-bound volume of numbers of its periodical *Seeking and Saving*. The emblem functions to unite workers and remind them of the collective strength of their joint endeavour. The religious grounding and unity of purpose in reformatory work as moral crusade was reinforced through the presence of a biblical quotation pressed into the paper object itself. [31]

The word on the street

With a growing number of institutions came the need for some means of informing women on the streets of their existence. In his essay of 1848, Revd John Armstrong the chief advocate of new sisterhood Anglican Penitentiaries, had challenged the passivity of institutions which simply waited for 'returning wanderers', and his call for 'a sort of missionary machinery' gathered momentum.[32] The principal means of contacting women on the streets was through personal intervention supported by printed matter. The records of the Female Mission to the Fallen provide an indication of the increase in rescue missionary activity over time. Established in London in 1858 it employed two missionaries in 1859 and thirteen by 1876.[33] In1856 the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution had been established as a result of

[30] Penelope M. Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The Church in Social Work: a Study of Moral Welfare Work Undertaken by the Church of England*, 2nd edn (Routledge: Oxford, 1998), p.20. See Roddy et al on the use of religiously-based emblems for a range of charities, *The Charity Market* p.76.
[31] 'That which was lost' is a reference to the biblical parable of the lost sheep in the New Testament, Luke 15:6. It recurs in numerous forms in the literature of rescue work and in the material culture of individual institutions.
[32] *Female Penitentiaries*, pp.374-5.
[33] Female Mission to the Fallen, printed appeal leaflet 1876, LMA, FWA/C/D69/1.

night-time missionary work by Lieutenant John Blackmore. In *The London by Moonlight Mission*, Blackmore recalls his acquisition of its first home, The London Female Dormitory and Industrial Institution at 9 Abbey Road, St John's Wood, for the emergency accommodation of women he wished 'to rescue from temporal and eternal ruin'.[34] Blackmore's mission fed into the elaboration of the larger evangelical Midnight Meeting Movement, which held its first meeting for prostitutes and the 'fallen' at midnight in St James's Hall in London on Thursday 9 February, 1860. Offered tea and coffee, women heard redemptive addresses led by Revd Baptist Noel and were exhorted to abandon their current way of life and enter a reform institution. At the end of the meeting, female missionary workers accompanied some women to homes. The first meeting was reported not only in the London newspapers, but also widely in the provincial press, suggesting high levels of interest. [35]

[34] *London by Moonlight Mission: Being an Account of Midnight Cruises on the Streets of London during the Last Thirteen Years by Lieut. John Blackmore, R.N. with a Brief Memoir of the Author*, (London: Robson and Avery, 1860), p. 18.
[35] For example, *Louth and North Lincolnshire Advertiser* 14April 1860, p.3, *Surrey Comet* 1860, 14 April, p. 3, *Luton Times and Advertiser* 14 April 1860 p. 3, *Bradford Observer* 12 April 1860 p.3, *Liverpool Mercury* 30 November 1860, p.10, *Aberdeen Journal* 28 March 1860, p.3; *Hereford Journal* 28 March 1860, p.6.

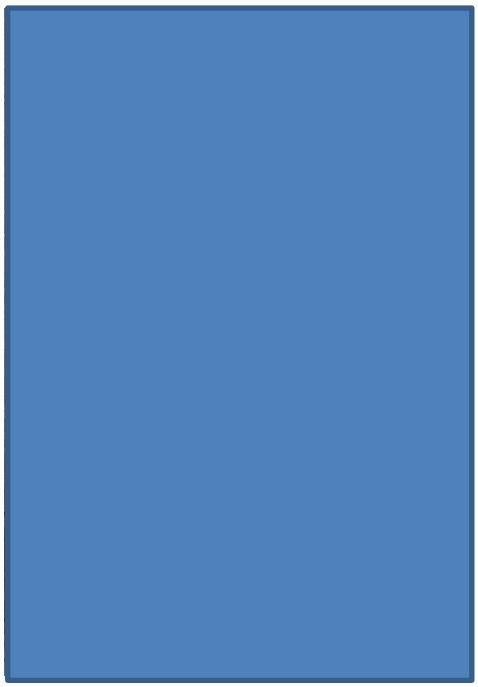

Figure 1.2 Cover of *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer*, September,1860, CUL.

Launched in April 1860 by evangelical Revd William Tuckniss, the first edition of monthly publication *The Magdalen's Friend* provided an account of the first Midnight Meeting. Scrutiny of the publication reveals the material methods used to encourage attendance. Care had clearly been given to the means of inviting the women they sought to attend. The invitation, printed in the form of a 'neat card, inclosed [sic] in an envelope was distributed among them at the casinos, cafes and in the streets'.[36] The use of an envelope ensured discretion; the recipient could read then retain the card in an anonymous wrapping. At the same time, an invitation card suggested a certain social distinction, as if being chosen as part of a favoured group to attend a social occasion.

[36] *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* (London: J.Nisbet & Co, 1860), pp.27-30.

The materiality of Tuckniss's publication itself is significant. Like the Reformatory and Refuge Union's periodical binding, the cover of *The Magdalen's Friend* at Figure 1.4 draws on biblical quotations. Its evangelical roots are apparent in the vivid use of iconography to depict the fate awaiting 'fallen' women. Demons, symbolically at the bottom of page, represent 'death' and 'despair', whilst the heavenly angels 'hope' and 'mercy' at the top are linked by a message of forgiveness, in bold type.[37] The largest font in bold type is reserved for the magazine's short title only, emphasising the perception of rescue work itself as the friend of 'fallen' women.[38]

Published monthly from April 1860 to December 1864 the intended readership of *The Magdalen's Friend* included middle-class men and women working on institutional or organisational committees as rescue missionaries and private individuals interested in supporting rescue work.[39] In his influential articles in the *Quarterly Review* of 1848, John Armstrong had argued that as well as 'missionary machinery', in order to encourage women to enter institutions 'some mode of distributing papers' should be found in which 'all necessary particulars regarding penitentiaries' would be included.[40] In the October 1860 number of *The Magdalen's Friend*, Tuckniss incorporated a list of metropolitan 'homes', printed on the inside of the

[37] New Testament, Luke, 5:20.
[38] On the use of bold fonts, see Roddy et al, *The Charity Market*, p.77.
[39] Deborah Logan suggests that the periodical failed due to financial difficulties and the death of William Tuckniss. See '"An Outstretched Hand to the Fallen" II, p.138. Tuckniss wrote to the committees at Ditchingham where his communication was noted in the Council Minutes on 7 July 1859 and Lincoln, noted in the Main Series Minute, 24 Aug 1863. Neither institution recorded their response.
[40] 'Female Penitentiaries', *The Quarterly Review*, pp.374-5.

publication's cover, giving the name, location, and officers' addresses for each institution. It could therefore be detached from the magazine and kept for reference, should the rescue volunteer want to make an application to an institution on behalf of a rescued woman.

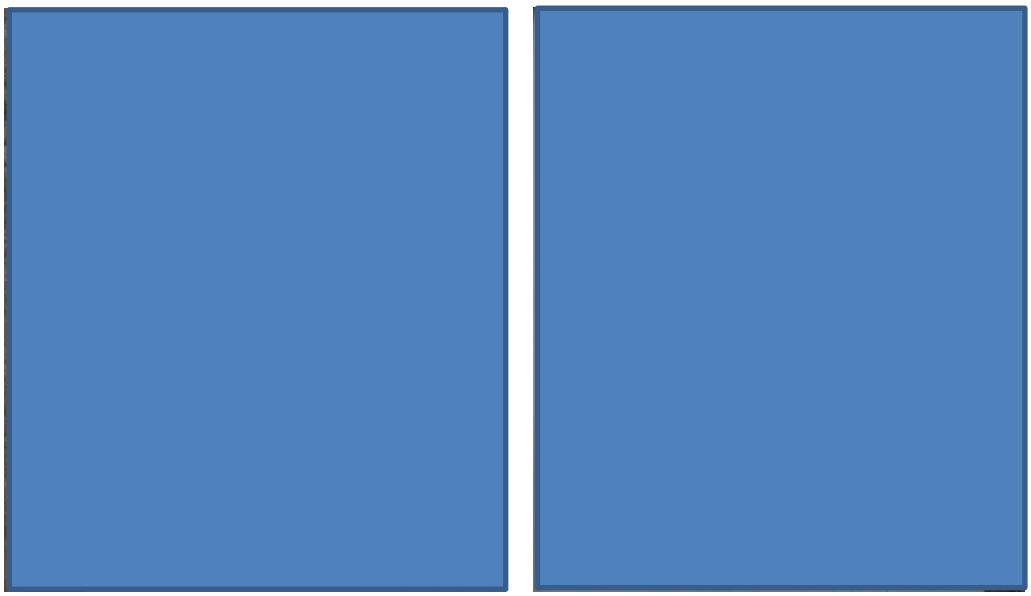

Figure 1.3 'A List of the Metropolitan Homes and Penitentiaries' inside the front cover of *The Magdalen's Friend*, October 1860 (London: J. Nisbet & Co), CUL.

In addition, Tuckniss subsequently published a 'Penitents' Guide' at Figure 1.6 as a separate document, available for rescue workers and organisations to buy cheaply at 'One halfpenny or 3s 6d a Hundred'.[41] Printed on one side only, when folded the list does nothing to betray its contents and ensures discretion. A practical document, it addresses the recipient as 'you' and sets out the location, size of home, age range of inmates, how and when to apply and whether free or paying.

[41] *The Monthly Address: Woman Why Weepest Thou*, published with the first issue of *The Magdalen's Friend*, April 1860, p.4.

Figure 1.4 'The Penitents' Guide to the London Homes, Penitentiaries, and Refuges', published by *The Magdalen's Friend,* CUL.

Descriptors in the 'Guide' specify the social class and degree of 'fallenness' attaching to the inmates of particular homes. Missionaries may have talked through this information with the recipient. If not, she would have had to be literate, acknowledge herself as a 'penitent', able to recognise herself and select the most appropriate home for her own status and age. This process of self-identification was potentially uncomfortable and humiliating. Descriptors identified the categories of 'fallen' woman each institution catered for, such as 'females of good character exposed to vice', 'the lowest class' and 'the higher or educated class of fallen females'. Classification was an essential tool in reformatory practice and employed in all four case study institutions. The recipient of this 'Penitent's Guide' was therefore already encountering an important aspect of the experience of institutionalisation. In sharing with prospective inmates those taxonomic descriptors normally

reserved for rescue workers, the 'Penitents' List' appears to prioritise practical need over protecting 'professional' knowledge.

Print played an important part in persuasion. Delivering unsolicited verbal homilies to women in the streets was not always successful or effective. In a range of urban missions, printed tracts as 'silent messengers' could be better received.[42] In material terms, the spoken word was fleeting whereas print anchored the message. Tuckniss produced a separate monthly tract with the first number of *The Magdalen's Friend* and pictured at Figure 1.7. Addressed directly to the 'fallen' woman in an urgent biblical rhetoric and ending with a prayer for the use of the recipient, it again situates her between heaven and hell, urging her to 'Come to Christ *now*'.

Figure 1.5 Back and front pages of *The Monthly Address: Woman Why Weepest Thou?* published with the first issue of *The Magdalen's Friend*, April 1860, CUL.

Like the 'Penitents' Guide' which was printed on one side, discretion also informed the way street missionary Lieutenant John Blackmore presented

[42] Aileen Fyfe, 'Commerce and Philanthropy: The Religious Tract Society and the Business of Publishing', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9 (2004), 164-88, p.170. On the reach of free religious tracts, see Anderson, *The Printed Image*, p.30.

tracts using envelopes, 'a form in which they are more readily accepted'.[43] The impact of tracts was unpredictable. Approaching a group of women in Haymarket, Blackmore's account of its reception suggests the instability of the female moral delinquent: 'a third tore up the tract, with a laugh of mockery, awful as the voice of the lost'.[44] Another interpretation might view her gesture as an expression of agency. The material fragility of paper-based attempts to redeem the 'lost' woman comes through an observation made by The Female Mission to the Fallen, associated with the Reformatory and Refuge Union. Handed out in the street:

> [...] sometimes the tract is taken, crumpled up, and thrust into a pocket and forgotten, until some grief or illness causes thought, and then it points to where a friend may be found.[45]

Initially treating the tract with disdain, when brought low the recipient would retrieve it, at which point it was thought that the enduring message captured on the page in print would get through.

A recruitment initiative from the other end of the denominational spectrum also required the 'fallen' woman to engage in the paper-based administration of her own rescue. Admiral Ryder of the CPA presented his proposal for the use of liability cards, adopted by the Association in May 1868. Distributed to women in the street, the rescue worker would complete the card and if willing, would use an agreed symbol to indicate the monetary value they were willing to ascribe to it. When a woman presented the card to a member institution in exchange for accommodation or fares to return home or to friends, the sum

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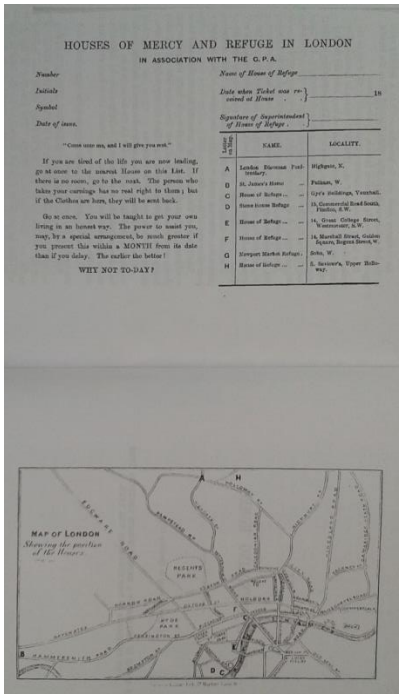
[43] Lieut. John Blackmore, R.N., *The London by Moonlight Mission* (London: Edward Robson, 1861), p.53.
[44] Ibid., p.95.
[45] *Sub-Committee Report*, 1867, p.8.

indicated by the symbol would then be redeemed by the institution from that rescue worker to cover the costs.[46] The example at Figure 1.8 below gives instructions to the woman receiving it. Sermonising here is kept to a minimum and the focus is on the practicalities of locating a 'home'. Most significantly, the card exploits printing technologies to combine instructions, a printed form, a list of London institutions and a street map with a key to their locations in a single document. It urges her to act straightaway and has an expiry date of one month.



HOUSES OF MERCY AND REFUGE IN LONDON

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE C. P. A.

Number

Initials

Symbol

Date of issue.

Name of House of Refuge _____

Date when Ticket was received at House ... } _____ 18

Signature of Superintendent of House of Refuge } _____

"Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

If you are tired of the life you are now leading, go at once to the nearest House on this List. If there is no room, go to the next. The person who takes your earnings has no real right to them; but if the Clothes are hers, they will be sent back.

Go at once. You will be taught to get your own living in an honest way. The power to assist you, may, by a special arrangement, be much greater if you present this within a MONTH from its date than if you delay. The earlier the better!

WHY NOT TO-DAY?

Letter used on Map	NAME.	LOCALITY.
A	London Diocesan Penitentiary	Highgate, N.
B	St. James's Home ...	Fulham, W.
C	House of Refuge ...	Gye's Buildings, Vauxhall.
D	Home Home Refuge ...	19, Commercial Road South, Pimlico, S.W.
E	House of Refuge ...	14, Great College Street, Westminster, S.W.
F	House of Refuge ...	14, Marshall Street, Golden Square, Regent Street, W.
G	Newport Market Refuge	Soho, W.
H	House of Refuge ...	5, Saxonora, Upper Holloway.

Figure 1.6 Liability Card with addresses and locations of Houses of Mercy and Refuge in London. From J. G. Talbot, Esq., M.P. 'On Liability Cards' issued by the CPA to Associates, *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England*, 1873, pp.132-136.

Reference manuals and directories for rescue workers were more robust and became increasingly substantial over time, reflecting the expansion in the number of institutions created to receive the rescued. In 1858, the

[46] Rear-Admiral A.P.Ryder, 'Rescue of Fallen Women: a Statement Containing a Proposal, the Adoption of Which May Increase the Facilities for Effecting the Rescue of Fallen Women, Submitted to the Council of the Church Penitentiary Association', May 1868 (London: Harrison & Sons, 1868), p.3.

Reformatory and Refuge Union had produced a Handbook detailing 'fifty Penitentiaries and Homes for Females'.[47] Thirty years later in February 1888, one of the case study institutions, the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home, was petitioned to provide information for an entry in a new Guide.

Figure 1.7 Invitation to the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home to submit information for entry in the 1888 *Guide to Homes Schools, Homes and Refuges for Women*, LA, GH/2/4, 1877-1887.

Published in the same year by the Charity Organisation Society, the *Guide to Schools, Homes and Refuges for Women* listed 209 female reform institutions across a range of denominations. Under the heading 'Penitentiaries' are 124 institutions, eighty-nine in the English regions and thirty-five in London. The signatories to a letter to the editor of *The Morning Post* included moral purity campaigner Ellice Hopkins.[48] Announcing the publication of their new guide, they noted that it arose out of the lack of a comprehensive list of 'orphanages, schools, girls' lodging homes boarding houses and industrial and rescue homes'. Moreover, they observed that the number of homes 'has very largely

[47] *Annual Report* of 1858, cited in Hall and Howes, *The Church, p.20.*
[48] 20 April 1888, p.3.

increased during the past few years', a possible reference to the impact on rescue work of Andrew Mearns's 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London', of 1883 and William Stead's 'The Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon' articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 1885. Arguing that 'discrimination in the choice of a home often makes all the difference between success and failure', the value of their new guide lay in its 'proper classification in the homes'. Figure 1.10 shows the front cover of the 1888 Guide. The use of capital letters, the wider spacing for 'GUIDE' and the tabulation draw attention to the essential contents. Secular and plain, the guide's cover is appropriately sober but also precious. Bound in blue cloth, the only expensive embellishment is reserved for the gold lettering, suggesting the value and significance of the work this guide will do.

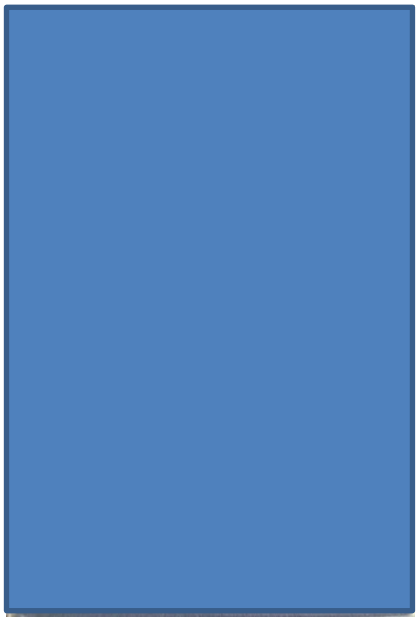


Figure 1.8 *Guide to Schools, Homes, and Refuges in England for Girls and Women*. Cloth bound. Charity Organisation Society (London: Longmans & Co., 1888).

Part II Critique, inspection and development

In their printed annual reports to subscribers, the committees of the four case study institutions also drew on religious rhetoric to frame the transformative effect of their work and to justify its continuance. 'Success' hinged on two criteria: first, whether women were sufficiently reformed to return to their families or friends, placed in service or other respectable work; second, evidence that their moral transformation would endure. Debates in the national press were drawing attention to prostitution as a problem and the effectiveness of moral reform institutions as the solution. Acknowledging the possibility of 'a certain roseate hue' in the figures claiming successful moral rehabilitation published by institutional committees in the early decades of the nineteenth century, John Armstrong concluded there was 'still left a very hopeful balance'.[49] Nevertheless, Armstrong argued that the lack of an integral chapel in existing institutions compromised their effectiveness. Despite regular religious observance, modelled on practice in the private middle-class setting, without a dedicated chapel, lay institutions were unable to cure the penitential 'patient' effectively.[50] Instead of 'an ill-supported half-starved, stunted Magdalen in every town', Armstrong argued that efforts should be concentrated on expanding the network of new 'Penitentiary Hospitals in which everything should give way to religious advancement'.[51] The physical presence of the chapel represented the distinctive aspiration of sisterhood penitentiaries: to effect a spiritual transformation which would endure beyond the institution. Armstrong highlighted what would be new in

[49] Armstrong, 'Female Penitentiaries', *The Quarterly Review*, September 1848, p.370.
[50] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes, Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.73-75.
[51] Armstrong, 'Female Penitentiaries', p.375.

‘penitentiaries of a different kind’ by unfavourable comparison with ‘the old [lay] penitentiaries, with their paid Matrons and hireling staff.’ A year later in 1849, he attacked the lack of commitment of ‘those well-intended “Ladies’ Committees,” who just so far dabble with the question as to gain knowledge of evil, without sufficiently throwing themselves into the cause to aid in lessening the evil they know…’[52] Instead he sought

> a class quite distinct from the race of housekeepers – quite above them in all respects. In short, we want a Religious Sisterhood, a little band of devoted gentlewomen, of self-sacrificing daughters of the Church, who, giving themselves, out of their warm love of souls, to this work of mercy, should be the constant guardians of the penitents. [53]

New urgency was injected into action against prostitution by vocal commentators bringing the issue to public attention in the 1850s. Writing to the editor of *The Morning Chronicle* early in 1850, Armstrong again urged the formation of more Anglican sisterhood penitentiaries and an editorial campaign was subsequently launched to draw public attention to prostitution as a problem and to penitentiaries as the solution.[54] Conversely, looking towards state regulation, William Acton argued that in the face of rising rates of prostitution, ‘penitentiaries and asylums …effect but little good and are at once expensive and useless’.[55]

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[52] *Essays on Church Penitentiaries*, John Armstrong, D.D. late Lord Bishop of Grahamstown, edited By Thomas Thellusson Carter, 1858, Essay II, pp.40-80, ‘The Church and her Female Penitents’, first published 1849 in *The Christian Remembrancer*, p.57.
[53] Ibid., p.58.
[54] Letter to the Editor, 4 February 1850, p.6; *The Morning Chronicle*, 11 September 1851, p.5 < http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.ukk> [accessed 27.5.2014]. See also 18 August p.4, 9 September p.5, 18 September p.5, 22 September p.5, 11 October p.5, 1 November p.4. In 1851, Armstrong founded the first Anglican penitentiary at Bussage (Wantage) with Revd Robert Suckling. Suckling’s brother William was the incumbent at Shipmeadow, the location of the first premises of the House of Mercy at Ditchingham.
[55] *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social & Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Larger Cities: with Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of its Attendant Evils* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), first published 1857, second edition 1869, ed. Peter Fryer, p.27.

At the same time that missionary activity and associated home recruitment were gathering momentum from the 1850s, unfavourable reports of practice in institutions to which the Midnight Meeting 'rescued' might be taken were also reaching the press. Among the Police Court reports and under the sub-heading 'The Doings at a Reformatory', in 1859 *The Morning Chronicle* recounted the case of three inmates of the Mission Home of Mercy Reformatory at Sutton, Surrey, who stole clothing belonging to the institution because the lay sisters refused to restore their own clothes to them when they asked to leave. The inmate witnesses took the opportunity to report their experiences of life in the institution, which for Hester Graham, included being 'locked up from Saturday night to Tuesday morning, without so much as a drop of water, because she did not get up in time. They were also so overworked that they could not stop'. In the opinion of the magistrate, the Mission 'had no right to detain their clothes' and that 'they would be perfectly justified in going away with the others'.[56] The lay sister making the prosecution on behalf of the Mission was required to recommend to the superintendent of the home that the institutional regulations be amended to ensure that women's clothing was made available to them on their request to leave. Similarly, suspicions surrounding 'papist' practices in the early Anglican penitentiaries periodically reasserted themselves and as late as 1911, the language of reporting could still be inflected with disapproval. Writing to the editor of the *Hampstead & Highgate Express* in January that year, the warden of the House of Mercy at Highgate challenged the reporter's

[56] *The Morning Chronicle*, 28 March 1859, p.8 http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk [accessed 18.5.14]

use of the phrase '"an escaped inmate", a phrase which seems to imply that women are kept under detention' and reminding him that the institution had 'no right to detain any woman, whether sent to us by magistrates or not, and that we should refuse to exercise such a power, even if we were given it by law'.[57]

Self-regulation

Unlike statutory institutions such as prisons, workhouses, schools and public asylums, reform institutions for fallen women were not accountable to the government, but to the private individuals who were their subscribers and donors. Whilst recent studies have shown that in practice, the management of many statutory institutions was largely localised and that inspectors were often slow to act, formal mechanisms for inspection were nevertheless in place.[58] Regular official visits and the reports resulting from them opened up individual institutions to public scrutiny and generated debate about the practice of the institution and the efficacy of the institutional formula itself. As independent charitable initiatives, reform institutions for 'fallen' women sat largely outside the statutory conversation.[59] Nevertheless, reformatory organisations did visit and report on institutions within their purview.

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[57] Revd T.A. Lacey, 7 January 1911, p.7.

[58] For a discussion of the difficulties facing prisoners attempting to take complaints to a higher authority, see Alyson Brown, *English Society and the Prison: Time, Culture and Politics in the Development of the Modern Prison, 1850-1920* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), p.74. Margaret DeLacy also notes the inertia of prison inspectors faced with poor discipline and the incapacity of an elderly governor and matron in *Prison Reform in Lancashire, 1700-1850: a Study in Local Administration* (Manchester: The Chetham Society, 1986), p.196.

[59] The exception was the Magdalen Hospital, established as a charity under 9.Geo III (1768). Laundries in charitable and convent institutions were eventually brought into statutory inspection under the Factory and Workshop Act, Edw. 7 c. 39 1907.

Representatives from The Female Mission to the Fallen visited homes around London to which their own missionaries had referred women.[60] At the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution's home at 5 Parson's Green, Fulham on 24th July 1860, it was the inadequacy of the premises which attracted the lady inspector's attention. After noting the 'kind Christian influence' observed in the Matron, the regularity of chaplain's visits and church attendance, the visitor found 'the great defect of the house is the utter absence of drainage'. As a result, it was 'necessary to make large holes in the garden to pour down the waste water &c'. Although plans were in hand to remedy the situation, conditions in the meantime were unpleasant and insanitary.[61] A visit on 9th July 1860 to the Rescue Society's home in Wandsworth suggested supervision of the inmates was lacking:

> It was called washing day, but there were only three girls at work; four or five were amusing themselves in the garden, professedly pulling up weeds which abounded in all directions; some were said to be out, and the rest were wandering about the house literally doing nothing, their hair untidy, no aprons on &c. The schoolroom was pointed out to me (where one of the girls was sitting on the table idle). I asked if no instruction was going on and the reply was "it's washing day" [...] When I did see the Matron (who was all the time in her own bedroom) I asked her what work they took in, & she said they had no time for such work for the girls were so fully occupied that they never had a spare moment. This was altogether opposed by what I had myself seen at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Having noted that the condition of the outbuildings was 'so dilapidated that they are entirely unused' the lady visitor closes her report by drawing attention to the gap between the Society's advertised and actual use of the

[60] The Female Mission was founded in 1853. See Hall and Howes, *The Church*, p.19. The decision to inspect homes receiving missionary referrals is recorded in the Female Mission Committee book, D239 J4/6/21, Barnardo's Archive.
[61] Female Mission Committee, D239 J4/6/21.

recently-acquired premises. Referring to the Society's annual report for the previous year, she noted

> a statement as to the removal to the present house, where, to use the words of the report 'surrounded by gardens, & with two small fields attached, the girls may be taught almost as in a farm house. Here they are taught to make butter as well as bread'. What I have said as to the condition of the out-buildings will be sufficient to show how far the object of this particular family home is carried out. [62]

This inspection report is significant in multiple respects. It shows how committees could misrepresent the state of their institutional premises to subscribers. As a manuscript report intended for members of the Mission committee, it is openly critical of the Society's premises. It exposes poor management which might be dealt with internally and never appear in published annual reports. Most significantly, it reveals the gap between stated intention and lived practice and the extent to which women's experience of daily life in an institution could be coloured not only by the dilapidation of their physical surroundings, but also by the attitude of key members of staff.

'A rallying point': *The Magdalen's Friend* and improving practice

The management problems encountered in this visitor's inspection would not have been unique to this home or to this organisation. In the first edition of his new periodical, William Tuckniss's opening editorial expressed concern over the efficacy of multiple charitable initiatives working in isolation. Noting that 'these are likely after a time to wear themselves out, unless sustained and encouraged by some centre of union', he saw the role of his periodical as 'a rallying point' for those interested in or engaged in rescue

[62] Female Mission Committee, D239 J4/6/21.

work.[63] Its full title *The Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer* encapsulates its function as a vehicle for passing on and exchanging intelligence on the practice of female reform institutions. In the fifty-seven monthly editions over the short lifetime of the publication, around forty articles relate to committee-run reform institutions and include accounts of visits or comments on annual reports received. In 1862 Tuckniss wrote the introductory essay to the fourth volume of Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, setting out the importance of turning statistical knowledge acquired from social investigation into practical forms of philanthropic and missionary action. Characterising the scale of 'work of mercy' done by homes, penitentiaries and industrial reformatories as infinitesimal, snatching 'solitary individual cases from impending destruction', he goes on to assert that religion offers 'the only true antidote and the only safe barrier to the existence or progress of crime'.[64] With experience of prostitution rescue work in his role as chaplain to the Rescue Society and his association with Mayhew's investigations, Tuckniss had credibility and authority. Able to compare reformatory regimes and environments across institutions, he circulated his findings and recommendations to a wider readership through his publication.[65] However, the reception of his publication in the local and national press was mixed, reflecting the division between those who regarded the 'fallen' woman as worthy or unworthy of redemption. The *Norwich*

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[63] *The Magdalen's Friend*, I (1860), p.1.
[64] 'Those That Will not Work' in *London Labour and the London Poor* (London: Griffin, Bone and Co, 1862), pp. xi-xii, <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924092592793#page/n23/mode/2up> [Accessed 26 May 2016].
[65] Scott Rogers, 'Domestic Servants, Midnight Meetings and the "Magdalen's Friend and Female Homes' Intelligencer"',*Victorian Literature and Culture*, 30 (2011), 443-46 (p.458, fn.2).

Mercury represented the latter wing, quoting the *Saturday Review*'s condemnation of the accounts of the Midnight Meetings.[66] Others praised the 'earnest advice to the fallen' and 'guidance to those who are disposed to extend a helping hand', offered in *The Magdalen's Friend*.[67] Despite its short life, the arrival of this publication had a considerable impact on two counts. First, it engaged with one of the most urgent social issues of the time; second, its evangelical emphasis on the possibility of redeeming a class of women was seen as partisanship by those who thought they were best 'lost', fuelling national debate.

Writing in 1860, Tuckniss acknowledged that the problem of prostitution had attracted considerable public attention: 'The press has teemed with allusions to the "great social evil," and the subject has been brought forward and ventilated in a variety of ways'.[68] He was also conscious of the effects of unfavourable publicity and the potential for bad practice to destabilise the female reformatory project, suggesting that there may be 'some standing ground for the criticisms thus levelled at the work'.[69] In financial difficulty three years later, Tuckniss noted that despite the contribution *The Magdalen's Friend* had made in promoting and evangelising for the value of rescue work, his appeals to institutions across the country for subscription support had been almost completely ignored. This he attributed to 'a wretched spirit of mutual rivalry and partisanship', which prevented institution A from subscribing to the same periodical as institution B. Another explanation for their silence may

[66] 10 October 1860, p.4.
[67] *The Brighton Gazette*, 21 June 1860, p.6.
[68] *The Magdalen's Friend*, I (April 1860), p.3.
[69] Ibid., IV (1863), p.259.

have been the honest criticism of Tuckniss's reports on individual institutions, made in the attempt to improve practice and garner national support.

Taking stock twenty years after the establishment of the first Anglican penitentiary on Armstrong's model, the Clewer House of Mercy, and after more than a century since the establishment of the Magdalen Hospital in London in 1758, in an article of 1863 Tuckniss suggested that reformers had yet to create the optimum institutional template which would help win over public opinion:

> Our objects, then, are so to discuss the existing penitentiary work as to discover, if practicable, from the statistical results put out annually by the several Homes of the metropolis and the provinces, THAT system of penitentiary treatment most favourable for general imitation, and, by consequence, best calculated to strengthen its hold on the public mind, and promote the more enlarged and rapid growth of the work.[70]

In the same year, a critical review of work at the Liverpool Female Penitentiary appeared in *The Magdalen's Friend*. Quoting from the institution's fifty-second annual report, the review associated the high number of reform 'failures' with the severity of the disciplinary regime and hinted at a possible new formula:

> out of an average of 65 residents throughout the year […] but 25 of these passed away with approbation…we ask in the kindest and most friendly spirit, can this arise from a discipline too much modelled after the sternness of a past generation, too little annealed by modern flexibility, gentleness, and domesticity? [71]

Domesticity in relation to nineteenth-century female reform institutions was not new.[72] It implied a set of desirable values associated with cordial but

[70] Ibid., p.258.
[71] Ibid., p.153.
[72] The campaign to establish the London Lock Asylum drew on the benefits of domesticity in reforming for Lock Hospital patients. See Siena *Venereal Disease*, p.183.

hierarchical family relationships in a shared and ordered space. In the institutional context, domesticity could serve to reinforce social relations and acceptable behaviours in the shared space of a community. The same message on the moral value of domesticity was heard in the voices of women experienced in rescue work. Involved through social and parochial networks, women played essential roles as lady volunteers in institutional settings and in street-based missionary work.[73] In published advice manuals on female reform work and through public lectures and published narratives of redemption, they shared that experience. The work of two commentators, Ellice Hopkins and her contemporary Felicia Skene is particularly worthy of examination and underexplored in terms of their significance in drawing attention to the conduct of female reform institutions. Both women had considerable knowledge of Anglican penitentiaries and were highly critical of existing lay homes and Anglican penitentiaries. Advocating less emphasis on sinfulness and more on the sacrality of home, both women urged that less rigid discipline was more consonant with divine love and the message of forgiveness.

[73] On the opportunities social action offered to and empowered religious women, see Timothy W. Jones, 'Social Motherhood and Spiritual Authority in a Secularizing Age: Moral Welfare Work in the Church of England', *Feminist Theology*, 23 (2015), 143-155. On single women's participation in social work as empowering and liberating, see Moira Martin, 'Single Women and Philanthropy: a Case Study of Women's Associational Life in Bristol, 1880-1914', *Women's History Review*, 17 (2007), 395-417.

Figure 1.9 Ellice Hopkins, from Rosa M. Barrett *Ellice Hopkins, A Memoir* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co Ltd, 1907), opposite frontispiece, CUL, 1908.7.4.[74]

Born in Cambridge in 1836, the daughter of William Hopkins, a university tutor and mathematician, Ellice Hopkins recalled that she began work with working-class women in the town at the age of nineteen, when 'with much fear and trembling' she invited respectable daughters of washerwomen into her own home 'to drink tea with me every Sunday afternoon'.[75] Hopkins initiated moral purity work, both preventive and remedial, among children, men and women. She established the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls for which she recruited in national tours over ten years from 1878.[76] Hopkins was the driving force behind a national campaign to powers to remove children to industrial schools under the Industrial Schools

[74] The image is from Rosa M. Barrett *Ellice Hopkins A Memoir* (London: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co Ltd, 1907), opposite the frontispiece.
[75] Barratt, *Ellice Hopkins*, p.8; Ellice Hopkins, *Work in Brighton* (London: Hatchards, 1878), pp.93-94.
[76] Sue Morgan '"Wild Oats or Acorns?" Social Purity, Sexual Politics and the Response of the Late-Victorian Church', *Journal of Religious History*, 31 (2007), 151- 68 (p.154).

Amendment Act of 1880 to include 'those lodging, living or residing with common or reputed prostitutes'.[77] She also campaigned to raise the age of sexual consent from thirteen to sixteen.[78] Hopkins produced over forty publications on moral hygiene and the value of Christian family life, along with manuals for rescue workers.[79] *Notes on Penitentiary Work* of 1870 which provided a detailed practical guide to penitentiary work and *Work Among the Lost* of 1874 are discussed here. The latter offers an illustrated account of the Albion Hill Home, which she came to know after moving to Brighton in 1866.[80]

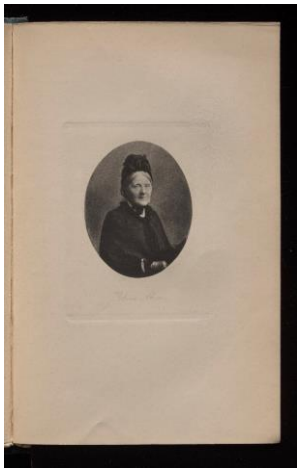
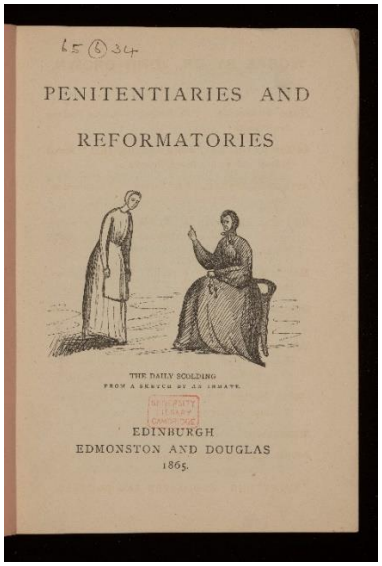


Figure 1.10 Felicia Skene, from Edith C. Rickards, *Felicia Skene of Oxford, a Memoir* (London: John Murray, 1902), opposite p.288, CUL, 456. d.90.95.[81]

[77] 43 & 44 Vict.Cap.46. Paula Bartley notes that this act came to be known as the Ellice Hopkins Act, *Prostitution*, p.84. Hopkins's pamphlet *A Plea for the Wider Action of the Church of England in the Prevention of the Degradation of Women* (London: Hatchards, 1879) had been particularly influential.
[78] Passed under The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 (48 & 49 Vict. Cap. 69).
[79] Sue Morgan, 'Faith, Sex and Purity: the Religio-Feminist Theory of Ellice Hopkins, *Women's History Review*, 9 (2000), 13-34 (p.16). Morgan complicates Walkowitz's negative assessment of Hopkins' work as 'conservatising', arguing instead that Hopkins repeatedly directed her energies into uncomfortable challenges to the male establishment', p.17. Nevertheless, some of her work and Felicia Skene's was eugenic in tone. See Oliver Lovesey, "The Poor Little Monstrosity": Ellice Hopkins' Rose Turquand Victorian Disability, and Nascent Eugenic Fiction', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 35 (2013), 275-96 and *Scenes from a Silent World or Prisons and their Inmates*, by Francis Scougal [Felicia Skene], William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London 1889.
[80] Sue Morgan, *A Passion for Purity: Ellice Hopkins and the Politics of Gender in the Late Victorian Church* (Bristol: Centre for Comparative Studies in Religion and Gender, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Bristol, c1999), p.48.
[81] Image from Edith C. Rickards, *Felicia Skene of Oxford: a Memoir* (London: John Murray, 1902), opposite p.288.

Felicia Skene settled in Oxford in 1849 where she became known principally for her involvement in nursing, rescue and prison-visiting work.[82] A prolific writer of fiction, travel and religious works, Skene's 1865 pamphlet *Penitentiaries and Reformatories* was highly critical of female penitentiaries and her novel *Hidden Depths*, published in 1866, attracted the attention of the national press through its damning portrayal of penitentiary life.[83] Both High Church Anglicans, Hopkins and Skene were linked by family ties to the university, clergy and social elite networks of Cambridge and Oxford and therefore able to engage with all three on their own terms. Both women travelled extensively in Britain and Europe and maintained active but independent roles in moral reform.


PENITENTIARIES AND
REFORMATORIES

THE DAILY SCOLDING
FROM A SKETCH BY AN INMATE.

EDINBURGH
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS
1865.

Figure 1.11 Title Page of Felicia Skene's pamphlet *Penitentiaries and Reformatories* (1865), CUL, 1865.6.34.

[82] For a full account of Skene's life and work, see Rickards, *Felicia Skene.* Skene taught at Revd Thomas Chamberlain's school run by sisters at St Thomas the Martyr, Oxford. She did not join the sisterhood but dressed in a similar way to the sisters. See *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction: 1855-1890*, ed. by Andrew Maunder, 6 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004), IV, p.viii.

[83] *Penitentiaries and Reformatories* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1865), *Hidden Depths* Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1866). The reformatories Skene examines were statutory juvenile institutions, in particular the boys' Industrial School at Feltham.

The lack of 'home feeling' was one of the searing criticisms of penitentiaries identified in *Penitentiaries and Reformatories*. Published anonymously, its author Felicia Skene objected to the 'cumbrous and needless machinery' of large penitentiaries.[84] Her most scathing criticisms were reserved for the petty rules, unremitting work routine, long periods of silence and 'rigorous confinement to the house'.[85] Entitled 'THE DAILY SCOLDING', the drawing at Figure 1.11 from the frontispiece of the first edition of *Penitentiaries and Reformatories* captures Skene's objections to the censorious moralising of penitentiaries. Apparently taken from a sketch by an inmate, it is significant on several counts. As a depiction of inmates' interactions with sisters by one who witnessed them, it seems authoritative. As a drawing, reproduced in printed form it captures in perpetuity the power relationship at play between the seated sister and the reverential inmate. The title ascribed to it may or may not have been the inmate's own. Nevertheless, the image alone is eloquent and the act of drawing it subversive and courageous. Its reproduction as an illustration for the reader makes visible an otherwise unseen exchange between inmate and sister and sets the tone for the text to follow. For Skene, the all-pervading 'severe over-legislation' of reform institutions was counterproductive and should be replaced by 'a large-hearted love' which took account of 'individual character' and 'previous circumstance'.[86] Attracting the attention of the national press, in 'An evening with the wicked' *The Pall Mall Gazette* praised the author and endorsed the

[84] *Penitentiaries and Reformatories*, p.5.
[85] Ibid., p.10.
[86] Ibid., p.5.

pamphlet's theme that the current 'system […] must as often be hardening as a reformatory'.[87]

Skene again drew attention to the poor practice of reform institutions in her novel *Hidden Depths*. Published anonymously 1866 this fictionalised narrative of redemption recounts the life of heroine Ernestine Courtenay, who 'saved' Annie Brook, a victim of 'seduction', only to discover later that her own brother was Annie's seducer. Hearing Annie's experience of a Refuge – running away after being punished for breaking the silence rule and escaping from the punishment room where she had been confined on bread and water – Ernestine goes on to establish her own home on gentler 'family' principles.[88] Sensational in its subject-matter and plotline, this critical representation of penitentiaries attracted the attention of *John Bull* in a lengthy article of April that year. Noting that the correspondents' own knowledge of penitentiaries was 'mainly that of hearsay', they contacted 'the executive […] of three of the largest and most influential of our Homes of Mercy, and made specific enquiry on several of the points in question'. From these enquiries, the authors were reassured that the 'alleged grievances[…] derive little of their high-colouring from existing facts'.[89] Despite this reassurance, Skene's biographer claimed that her critiques in both *Penitentiaries and Reformatories* and *Hidden Depths* were valid and based

[87] *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 January 1866, p.9.
[88] For her criticism of 'homes', see *Hidden Depths* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas), II 'The Refuge', pp.78-109. See also Caroline Ann Lucas, 'Different Habits: Representations of Anglican Sisterhoods in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Literature', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2000, p.102.
[89] 'Penitentiary Work', *John Bull*, 26 May 1866, p.349.

on institutions she knew.[90] Introducing the key areas of concern regarding institutional practice in moral reform, an anonymous contributor to *The Reformatory and Refuge Journal* chose to focus on 'the *failures* of such Homes, or rather the points in which they are deficient'. Warning against the application of petty restrictions, the writer suggests that '*principles* rather than minute rules' are likely to be more successful. [91] Travelling to France in 1870, Skene believed she had found the model template for penitentiaries in the Reformatory of St Michel in Paris, run by a closed order of Carmelite nuns. The lack of rules was particularly striking; penitents learned by example rather than punitive discipline. In addition to the greater degree of material comfort for the penitents, which included 'a *duvet* and feather bed', she observed that 'everything seeming to be done to make it appear like a true home to them, and not a mere place of discipline and confinement'.[92] For Skene, material comfort and minimal regulation combined to achieve a 'home' feeling.

Domesticity and the ideal 'Home'

The equation of comfort with the experience of sharing a private and authentic family home was not lost on commentators. A report on the Albion Hill Home for Female Penitents in Brighton, published in *The Magdalen's Friend* in 1864 attributed the Home's success to the combined effects of good

[90] Rickards, *Felicia Skene*, p.272. Having sent women to the House of Mercy at Ditchingham in 1854 and 1856, Skene resumed her personal referrals in the 1880s, recommending a further three women in 1881, 1886 and 1888, suggesting she may have moderated her views on penitentiaries over time or that she had either witnessed or heard good reports of the conditions at Ditchingham.
[91] 'Homes for Women', *Reformatory and Refuge Journal*, 1867-1869, 230-234 (p.230).
[92] The French Reformatory of St. Michel', *Good Words*, III, No.3, 1 Jan 1870, 65-73, (p.72).

management, careful classification and a less materially harsh environment in which 'nothing has been left undone to promote the comfort and happiness of the inmates'.[93] Established in purpose-built premises in 1855 and housing fifty-two inmates, Ellice Hopkins published her account of the work at Albion Hill anonymously in 1874 as *Work Among the Lost*. Hagiographic in tone, it contains sentimentalised stories of individual penitents saved by their encounter with the 'motherly' Superintendent, Mrs Vicars. In Albion Hill, Hopkins found a more homely institution whose simple, spiritual life modelled that to which inmates should aspire. The building was 'bright and pleasant to the eye' and on entry 'You are led through large bright airy rooms. The walls are hung with bright pictures and pretty illuminated texts; floods of sunshine stream in at the large windows.' [94] In other 'homes' she had visited Hopkins noted the 'unspeakably dreary institutional air. A blight seems to cling to the very walls'.[95] The significance of Hopkins's critique was the connection she made between the potentially demoralising and gratuitously punitive effect of the reform setting on those inhabiting it.[96] A similar 'missionary aestheticism' characterised Octavia Hill's work on improving working-class housing in which homeliness was an 'affect of space, not its determinant'.[97] Applying the same principle to institutional spaces, cheap decorative touches could create a feeling of homeliness. Particularly

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[93] *The Magdalen's Friend*, V (1864), 249-250.
[94] *Work Among the Lost* (London: Hatchards, 1874), p.51.
[95] *Notes on Penitentiary Work* (London: Hatchards, 1879), p.10.
[96] 'Drearily cold whitewash' was not exclusive to reformatories. In 1884, describing the new model buildings put up by the Peabody Trust, Octavia Hill criticised their 'dreary whitewash' and 'miserable monotony'. Octavia Hill, 'Colour, Space and Music for the People', *The Nineteenth Century*, May 1884, p.745.
[97] Anne Anderson and Elizabeth Darling, 'The Hill Sisters: Cultural Philanthropy and the Embellishment of Lives in Late Nineteenth-Century England' in *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950*, ed. by Elizabeth Darling and Louise Whitworth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) pp. 33-70 (p.40).

significant for this study is Hopkins's claim that 'Since this little book was published, numbers of penitentiaries have been remodelled after the pattern of the Albion Hill Home', including the Cambridge Refuge.[98]

The importance of Hopkins's spiritual mission informed her understanding of domesticity and her own role as 'spiritual mother'.[99] In her later publication, *Notes on Penitentiary Work*, published in 1879 and intended as a handbook for reformatory workers, Hopkins again made the connection between the need to make the good life more appealing and the way to achieve this was to 'keep carefully before us, a home ideal'.[100] Albion Hill was itself evidence of the increasing use of 'Home' in the naming of new female reform institutions from around mid-century. It is worth considering how the term 'home' was complicated in the context of residential institutions for 'fallen' women. As moral deviants, 'fallen' girls and women were cast as the enemies of home, that is to say, of respectable marriage and more broadly, household and the moral and religious values attached to family life. For reform workers, 'home' worked as a multivalent term which encompassed ideas of sanctuary and refuge, family and household.

In the same way that Hopkins had identified the effects of the 'homely' institutional interior on inmates' morale, debates on the optimum setting for the education of pauper and 'criminal' children had identified the connection

[98] *Work Among the Lost*, p.114.
[99] Jane Yeo, 'Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science, 1850-1950', *Women's History Review* 1 (1992), p.75, cited in Morgan, *A Passion* p.162.
[100] *Notes on Penitentiary Work*, p.8.

between the physical environment and behaviour.[101] Similar miasmic constructions of deviance were ascribed to juvenile delinquents and in a more generalised way to pauper children, who by their mere proximity to crime and vice were assumed to have developed the defective character of their criminal associates and were thus 'tainted' by pauperism.[102] As workers active in rescuing the 'fallen' began from around the 1850s to articulate and share their reform methodologies through organisations and publications, the most effective and economic institution for the education and moral re-education of pauper and delinquent children had been under discussion since the 1830s. Under the jurisdiction of a cluster of statutory bodies responsible for education, sanitation, Poor Law administration, prison and school inspection, concerns about the 'problem' of juvenile delinquency paralleled those relating to prostitution and shared similar causes and prescribed institutional remedies. The domestic family was the paradigm which had shaped the experimental agricultural reformatory established for boys at Mettray in France in 1839. There, domesticity was modelled materially in smaller-scale individual cottages and morally in the form of a family structure. Discipline and deference were reinforced through the constructed domestic hierarchy and boys could be grouped spatially according to age or other criteria and housed in separate cottages. When the Philanthropic Society's boys' reformatory moved from London to a rural setting at Redhill in Surrey in 1849, the new 'colony' was designed following the Mettray principle. Synthesising rural setting, smaller-scale 'cottage' building and the family

[101] Teresa Ploszajska, 'Moral Landscapes and Manipulated Spaces: Gender, Class and Space in Victorian Reformatory Schools', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20 (1994), 413-429 (p.413).
[102] Ibid., p.215.

model, environment, disciplinary method and purpose acted together to rehabilitate and 're-moralise' the juvenile inmates.[103] The dual charitable interests of the Reformatory and Refuge Union – institutions for juveniles and for fallen women – ensured the transmission and exchange of ideas around optimum institutional form across age groups through the organisation's own journal. Ellice Hopkins's activities in preventive and rescue work with under-age girls and boys may well have taken her to industrial school and reformatory settings, but the idea of applying the cottage plan design to female moral reformatories was first suggested to her by Mrs Fanny Vicars, superintendent of the Albion Hill Home. In 1873, an extract from her forthcoming book *Work Among the Lost* was incorporated into the CPA's report, *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England*, setting out the advantages of the cottage plan for penitentiaries. Also included was an article by the architect, Arthur Rowland Barker, giving the rationale for the design.[104] Despite the excellent domestic arrangements at the Albion Hill Home, it too was a large building whereas the cottage design offered 'more of the home element and less tendency to institutionalism'.[105] The preoccupation with classification in public discourses on prostitution is evident in Hopkins's representation of the cottage plan, which draws attention to 'its tender discriminative care for the individual in contradistinction to the

[103] Felix Driver, 'Discipline without Frontiers?' p.281. Pavilion-style workhouses followed a similar principle, providing separate blocks to protect children from the corrupting moral influence of 'lower' paupers. See Charlotte Newman, 'An Archaeology of Poverty: Architectural Innovation and Pauper Experience at Madeley Union Workhouse, Shropshire', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 47 (2013), 359-377 (p.361).
[104] Arthur Barker, 'Practical Suggestions as to the Selection of Site, Descriptions of Houses etc.' in *Penitentiary Work*, pp.33-41.
[105] 'Cottage Penitentiaries; or, What are the Best Conditions for Reformatory Work?' by the author of 'Work among the lost', *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England*, pp.45-50.

institutions, with its tendency to degenerate into machinery and routine'.[106] The building of multiple smaller cottages would ensure that at the two extremes, the less fallen 'victim of deceit or violence' would be protected from 'the vilest and most degraded of her sex'. Categories in between could be accommodated in institutional buildings in which regime and lived experience would be varied and more personal.[107] The use of spatial separation to cater for the needs of different inmate constituencies was also later identified in asylum design.[108] In viewing the cottage penitentiary as a 'hospital for sick souls', therefore, Hopkins married the twin therapeutic effects of spatial segregation and a less institutional atmosphere and appearance.[109]

Space, separation and surveillance

In 1874, a year after the publication of his paper in *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England,* Admiral Ryder, recommended that the new penitentiary established at Basingstoke should be built on the cottage plan. [110] An article in the *Reformatory and Refuge Journal* drew attention to the correspondence between the warden of St Thomas's Home, Basingstoke and the Chaplain of the House of Mercy at Horbury. The warden ended his discussion of the

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[106] *Work Among the Lost*, p.112.
[107] *Penitentiary Work*, p. 46.
[108] At Hellingley asylum, separate pavilions housed particular categories of patient alongside the main block for 840 patients. See Jeremy Taylor, 'The architect and the pauper asylum in late nineteenth-century England: G.T. Hine's 1901 review of asylum space and planning' in *Madness, Architecture and the Built Environment: Psychiatric Spaces in Historical* Context, ed. by Lesley Topp, James E. Moran and Jonathan Andrews (New York; London: Routledge, 2007), pp.263-284 (p.274).
[109] *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England*, p.47.
[110] Reginald Bigg-Wither, *History of the Foundation and of the Chief Incidents in the Gradual Establishment of St. Thomas' Home, Basingstoke* (Basingstoke: C. J. Jacob; London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., [1887], p.13.

merits of the cottage design of penitentiaries by acknowledging both moral and disciplinary power of the more intimate 'family' accommodation:

> they trust […] in a measure to the influence of the home-feeling, which introduction to a little family of 11-12 young women in a separate cottage is found to give the poor outcast from society, whose identity is often lost when she is merged into the economy of a great institution, but they trust mainly to religious teaching and careful control. [111]

The cottage scale allowed the individual to emerge in what was a smaller community. 'Home-feeling' exerted a positive influence to an extent, although 'religious teaching and careful control' continued to be the main stays of institutional method. St Thomas's Home was built on its final site in stages from 1875, and the three-dimensional plan at Figure 1.13 shows the Home as it was in 1887. Funds permitting, the cottage coloured red would house more penitents as necessary and complete the range.[112] Although none of the four case study institutions dates from the 1870s, the House of Mercy at Maplestead founded in 1868 consisted of multiple buildings linked by walkways which could have offered greater flexibility in classification.

[111] 'Penitentiary Work', *The Reformatory and Refuge Journal*, January to March, 1883, p.151.
[112] Ibid., plate facing title page.

Figure 1.12 Arthur Rowland Barker, Plan B for a Cottage Penitentiary, in Ellice Hopkins, *Work Among the Lost* (London: Hatchards,1874), Appendix, CUL.

Figure 1.13 Reginald Bigg-Wither *History of the Foundation and of the Chief Incidents in the Gradual Establishment of St. Thomas' Home, Basingstoke* (Basingstoke: C. J. Jacob; London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co, [1887]), plan opposite title page. BL, 8282.de.29.
Key: 1, 2, 3, 4 Penitents' Cottages, 5, 6 Laundries, 7 Corridor, 8 Kitchen, 9 Infirmary and Offices, 10 Management House, 11 Chapel, 12 Cottage for penitents 'to be built if necessary in the future', 13 Large Laundry Cottage.

Nevertheless, elements of the panopticon linger on in Barker's designs for the 'Lady Superior's' quarters: 'the position and look-out of the chief living room…commands more or less the entrances to each of the cottages, the laundry and the general recreation ground'.[113] Like classification, it was desirable to build the surveillance of inmate spaces into the fabric of cottage penitentiaries.

The discourse of institutional domesticity was rich in tropes of 'brightness', 'homeliness' and 'cheerfulness' and critics condemned their absence. However, these critical attacks on 'unhomely' institutions were launched from a shared position of censure and rooted in disdain. Whilst sentimentalising the 'lost child', the fallen woman was typically wild, prone to outbursts of temper, whose depth of corruption warranted and justified complex reform machinery. These pathologies lie behind the emphasis on 'homeliness' in the writings of both Hopkins and Skene and it is important to observe the limits of their sympathy. In her criticism of communal dormitory spaces, Ellice Hopkins chastised penitentiary managers for not providing 'a single curtain to secure a little privacy' when 'these girls are of course essentially indecent and immodest in their habits'.[114] Felicia Skene criticised the 'severe religious observance' of penitentiaries as 'nothing short of insanity' because it was expected of women used to 'the wildest indulgence, the grossest excess, the most lawless freedom'.[115]

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[113] Arthur Rowland Barker, *Penitentiary Work*, p.35.
[114] *Notes on Penitentiary Work*, p.16.
[115] *Penitentiaries and Reformatories*, p.9.

Conclusion

By attending to the materiality of rescue-related periodicals and reference works for rescue workers, this chapter has argued that the materiality of specialist reform literature was itself an influential force. Through the combined use of religious iconography and biblical references, printed onto the paper object, rescue organisations ensured the perceived sacred nature of their mission was constantly visible, tangible and present in material form.[116] *The Magdalen's Friend* linked missionary work with institutional recruitment, enclosing tracts couched in persuasive biblical rhetoric and printing a 'Penitents' Guide' which classified London institutions according to a social and moral hierarchy of 'fallenness'. Despite the apparent authority of the words and images they bore, as material objects, such tracts and recruitment literature were flimsy and vulnerable. Ways were found to disguise their contents in order to increase the chances of their being received and kept. Analysis of the materiality of specialist publications for rescue workers and printed inducements to reform in this chapter has shed new light on the meaning and experience of recruitment to 'homes' from both the giver's and the receiver's perspectives.

The inspection visit by the Female Mission to the Fallen represented an attempt at regulation and indicated the gap between stated institutional practice and lived experience, a theme which runs through this comparative study. As reform organisations came into being, intelligence on the practice

[116] *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. by Rowan Strong (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), III*: Partisan Anglicanism and its Global Expansion, 1829-c.1914*, p.13.

of existing and new female reform institutions was expounded through the national press and in specialist publications, such as *The Magdalen's Friend*. Although short-lived, this periodical served an important function in signalling the importance of good institutional practice in the interests of the 'rescue' mission as a whole. That it was snubbed by the institutions themselves says more about their fear of criticism than the value of the publication. As the next chapter will demonstrate, exchanges of intelligence between institutions did in fact take place on an individual level. Although new organisations had no formal statutory or executive powers, as 'critical friends' they were in a position to make recommendations for improvement, urge greater consistency of institutional method and promote best practice. A greater awareness of the negative effects of institutionalisation led to calls for a more 'homely' setting for the institutional 'family'. Bright homely interiors were encouraged along with the design of new cottage plan penitentiaries. Though achieving a more intimate and less institutional atmosphere, the provision of separate individual cottages also enabled more sophisticated inmate classification over time. Whilst the debate in the reform literature could be severely self-critical, it did not concern itself with whether such institutions should operate but how they could operate more effectively. The next chapter will explore how far discourses constructing the penitent 'fallen' woman shaped the evolution of institutional forms to redeem her in the four case study locations.

Chapter 2 'A Chaste and Pleasing Elevation': Making Moral Spaces

In order to be able to interpret the four case study institutions, it is important to understand the experiences which informed their genesis. This chapter argues that tracing their origins allows us to uncover how their founders came to understand the inter-connectedness of purpose, practice and premises in female reform settings. In order to begin their 'saving' work quickly, three out of the four case studies began life in rented properties which soon proved to be unsuitable. It was this early experimentation in inappropriate spaces which forced institutional committees to theorise the relationship between reform function and material setting and then to realise it in commissioning purpose-built spaces.

In addition to contextualising their development, this chapter will demonstrate that women leaders, ladies' committees and female staff made a significant contribution to the evolution of these new spaces. Inhabited by women inmates and resident women paid staff and overseen on a daily basis by women volunteers or sisters, all four institutions were highly feminised spaces. Although men's committees oversaw the legal, constitutional and financial aspects of management, their experience of these institutions as living and working spaces was limited. In the lay institutions, committees met weekly or monthly in dedicated meeting rooms on site, at one remove from activity in the workrooms and laundries.[1] As the two rural Houses of Mercy

[1] The Ditchingham council met in public rooms and vestries in Norwich and Ipswich and at Shipmeadow Rectory. The Council at Maplestead met most frequently in London usually in Great George Street, Westminster, with the Bishop of St Albans or other diocesan representative presiding. wardens, usually also the resident incumbent of the parish in

penitentiary were less accessible, council meetings were not held on site other than in exceptional circumstances. Male committees were therefore largely dependent on the experience and expertise of female staff and volunteers for insights into the practical daily workings of institutional space, particularly in the formative years.

Any consideration of the organisation and meaning of institutional space occupied by 'fallen' women needs to take into account discourses of taint and contagion attached to the person and presence of the prostitute body in the public street.[2] Acceptance within and belonging to the community of a particular zone requires behavioural conformity.[3] The visibility of 'public' women in public spaces was particularly freighted, characterised by multiple binaries of 'connection and separation, screening and displaying, moving and containing'.[4] By simply removing prostitute bodies from the public space and

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which the penitentiary was located, were more often present on site to offer spiritual guidance and to officiate at chapel services.

[2] On the conflation of physical and moral purity in relation to sanitarian discourse, see Alison Bashford, *Purity and Pollution: Gender, Embodiment and Victorian Medicine* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.xii. Simon Gunn has identified the link between space, identity and respectability. Citing Judith Walkowitz, he argues that class and gender were defined spatially across the East and West Ends of London. See 'The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of Space and Place', in *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City Since 1850* ed. by Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp.1-14 (p.5, p.7). See also *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination* ed. by Ben Campkin and Rosie Cox (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007).

[3] Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), II: *Living and Cooking*, p.18, p.23.Emphasis original.

[4] Jane Rendell, '"Bazaar Beauties" or "Pleasure is Our Pursuit": a Spatial Story of Exchange' in *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space* ed.by Iain Bordern, Joe Kerr, Jane Rendell and others (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), pp.104-121 (p.110). See also Nina Attwood, *The Prostitute's Body: Rewriting Prostitution in Victorian Britain* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011). Philip Corrigan suggests that individuals whose 'behaviour and moral beliefs are "out place"' are targets for regulation. See 'On Moral Regulation: Some Preliminary Remarks', *Sociological Review*, 29 (1981), 313-337, reprinted in *Moral Regulation and Governance in Canada: History, Context and Critical Issues*, ed. by Amanda.Glasbeek (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2006), pp. 57-73 (p.68) cited in Philip Howell, 'Afterword: Remapping the Terrain of Moral Regulation', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 42 (2013), 193-202 (p.194). See also Philip Howell,

screening them from public view, reform institutions were already perceived to be performing a useful function.

Although this thesis challenges the notion of inmates as 'docile bodies', it will argue that Foucault's reading of the ritual uses of space continues to be valid in the reformatory context. Working alongside institutional rules, the spaces of the female reformatories in this study were potentially powerful because they were expressly configured to train the bodies and shape the behaviour of their inhabitants.[5] Reformatory spaces were conceived to re-moralise errant working-class women, to train them and to 're-produce' them for respectable employment as domestic servants.[6] In reform settings, space was also manipulated to shape present and future social relations.[7] Areas ascribed to staff and middle-class volunteers were out of bounds in the same way as the private domestic spaces of a future employer's household would be.[8]

In the two penitentiaries in this study, the production of space was more complex. Whilst similarly producing working-class women ready for domestic service the new penitentiaries were also producing the gentlewoman

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Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and 'A Private Contagious Diseases Act: Prostitution and Public Space in Victorian Cambridge', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26 (2000), 376-402.

[5] See *Residential Institutions in Britain 1725-1970: Inmates and Environments*, ed. by Jane Hamlett, Lesley Hoskins and Rebecca Preston (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).

[6] *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950*, ed by Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p.4.

[7] Iain Bordern et al note Lefèbvre's suggestion that social relations can only exist 'in and through space', *The Unknown City*, p.5.

[8] Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p.54.

as religious sister. Defined in moral opposition to penitents, the purity of the unmarried sister was uniquely appropriate to the essential work of the penitentiary.[9] Women's relationships to the space they inhabited could be dynamic and reciprocal.[10] The sacred space of the penitentiary was for the sister what defined her. In turn, her identity as a religious sister within it defined and produced that space. In the same way, the reformatory space defined the inmate or penitent as a woman in transition, undergoing a process of moral rehabilitation. As later chapters will argue, some women accepted that process and worked with it. Others disrupted it, subverting and redefining institutional spaces for their own purposes.

Men and women contributed to the evolution of the four case studies in important but different ways. Men held the monopoly over professional fields relevant to philanthropic activity.[11] Committee members of all four institutions in this study included lawyers, bankers and doctors who brought expertise to fund-raising activity and managing building projects and property, as well as familiarity with other kinds of institution.[12] Nobility or gentry institutional figureheads or those in high office brought distinction

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[9] Joy Frith, '"Pseudonuns": Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University, Canada, 2004), p.231. Claire Midgley has shown how religious commitment in denominations outside the established church shaped the type and practice of reform activity, led by significant nineteenth-century women campaigners in a range of settings. See 'Women, Religion and Reform' in Morgan, Sue and Jacqueline de Vries, eds, *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), pp.138-158.

[10] Lynne Walker: 'Home and Away: the Feminist Remapping of Public and Private Space in Victorian London', in Iain Bordern et al *The Unknown City*, pp.297-310 (p.298).

[11] Frank Prochaska argues that philanthropic action was itself gendered, men providing 'the intelligence and direction' and women 'the unflagging industry that kept the institution together'. *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p.17.

[12] For example, Revd Edmund Larken at Lincoln was also Chaplain to the county asylum at Bracebridge in Lincoln.

and had access to parliamentary networks.[13] Assumptions around innate maternal sympathy qualified women for charitable action, especially with other women, children and work with a religious mission.[14] Usually from the middle classes, women played a crucial role overseeing the daily operation of the first experimental institutions.[15] With experience of running households of their own, these volunteers worked alongside salaried female staff. It was their experience of day-to-day work in unsuitable spaces which helped fashion environments to facilitate rather than hamper reform.[16]

In existing studies of institutions for 'fallen' women, less attention has been paid to the making of these specialist buildings and more particularly, to the influence of women in shaping reformatory spaces.[17] Feminist readings of

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[13] Sir John Coleridge, later Attorney General, was visitor at Ditchingham and an early member of the CPA, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5886> [accessed 1 July 2018]. The Bishops of St Albans, Rochester and Chelmsford were at different times the visitors at Maplestead and Council member Lewis Ashurst Majendie was MP for Canterbury, ERO, D/DMh F29, joining the CPA committee on 10 February 1868. See CPA Council Minutes, LPL MS 3681. William John Monson (Lord Monson of Burton) was Vice-President of the Lincoln Home and married to the daughter of Revd Edmund Larken, its Honorary Secretary., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi-org.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/35073> [accessed 15 June 2019]. Dr Edward Perowne, Master of Corpus Christi College, chaired the managing committee at Cambridge from 1871 to 1888, also serving as University Vice-Chancellor from 1879-1881 <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35482> [accessed 15 June 2019]

[14] See *Fit Work for Women* ed. by Sandra Burman ((London: Croom Helm, 1979) and Penelope Hall and Ismene Howes, *The Church in Social Work: a Study of Moral Welfare Work Undertaken by the Church of England*, 2nd edn (Routledge: Oxford, 1998).

[15] Simon Morgan notes the impossibility of rescue work without women volunteers, largely from the middle-classes. See *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Tauris, 2007), p.101. See also Susan O'Brien, 'Making Catholic Spaces, 1840-1900' in *The Church and the Arts* ed. by Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp.449-464.

[16] For a discussion of female philanthropy in relation to prostitution see Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[17] Darling and Whitworth, p.7. Linda Mahood notes that the Edinburgh Magdalene Asylum's premises on foundation in 1797 were in Canongate Street in the city but relocated to a rural location in Dalry in 1864. The site for the Glasgow Magdalene Asylum founded in 1815 was rural. See *The Magdalenes, Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.76, p.75, p.105. Frances Finnegan simply gives the location of the first

Anglican penitentiaries have argued their radical nature as symbols of female independence and defiance, but have engaged less with their influence on the making of penitentiary space itself.[18] As the first all-female communities of vowed women religious since the Reformation, Anglican sisterhoods were as innovative as they were controversial. Women leading the early communities challenged and rejected the conventional expectations associated with their class and their gender.[19] Both penitentiaries in this study were closely linked to the House of Mercy at Clewer and to the early female leaders associated with it.[20] At the head of a flagship penitentiary, the superiors at Clewer wielded considerable influence and at different crisis points took over management and leadership at Ditchingham and Maplestead, sometimes wresting greater financial autonomy from male authorities.[21] At Ditchingham, the first superior visited sisterhoods in England and Germany

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permanent premises for the York Refuge in Bishophill from 1843 and notes that the Refuge moved to Clifton in 1918, the Bishophill area having declined and the premises in bad repair. See *Poverty and Prostitution: a Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.169, p.193. Valerie Bonham gives a detailed account of negotiations with Henry Woodyer and of the finished new building at Clewer. See *A Place in Life* (Reading: Valerie Bonham, 1992), pp. 162-185.

[18] Martha Vicinus *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women* (London: Virago, 1985). See also Susan Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999). Lori Miller 'Femininities, Masculinities, National Identities: Anglican Religious Communities in Britain, 1845-1920' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Indiana, 2004).

[19] See Carmen Mangion,'Women and Female Institution-Building' in *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures*, ed.by Sue Morgan et al, pp.73-93, and Hope Campbell Barton Stone, '"Constraints on the Mother Foundresses": Contrasts in Anglican and Religious Headship in Victorian England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 1993). See also John S. Reed, *Glorious Battle: the Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (Nashville, TE: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996), pp.203-4.

[20] Valerie Bonham, *A Place*, p.29.

[21] Maria Luddy argues that sisters in Catholic convents enjoyed a degree of autonomy in financial management up until the 1860s, when clergy were given authority to take greater control. See'"Possessed of Fine Properties": Power, Authority and Funding of Convents in Ireland, 1780-1900'in *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe 1773-1931*, ed. by Maarten Van Dijck and others (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2013) pp. 227-246. See ibid., Joy Frith, 'Accounting for Souls: Anglican Sisters and the Economies of Moral Reform in England', pp.185-204, p.199 for tensions at Ditchingham from the 1860s which led the Council to be dissolved, with new Trustees elected and the financial management of the institution devolved entirely to the superior and sisters during the 1870s.

to experience the religious work of different communities in different built settings. Lastly, the foundation of the House of Mercy at Maplestead owed its existence entirely to a woman benefactor, a sister at Ditchingham.

The survival of records is haphazard, but the fact that the earliest minutes for Lincoln are those of the ladies' committee from 1847 could indicate their importance in initiating reform work in the city, discussed below. Drawing on evidence from institutional records allows us to trace the different stages of reformatory evolution and the experiential process through which their founders came to identify the relationship between material setting and effective practice. Committees represented the pitiable and perilous moral state of the 'fallen' as the rationale for establishing reformatories in the four locations. Initial work in inappropriate premises forced committees to isolate specific spatial configurations which would be more effective. Local newspapers tracked the momentum of new building campaigns and responses to opening ceremonies. Maps identify the significance and meaning of the sites located and ground plans from Cambridge and Lincoln indicate building footprints. Committee minutes note unwelcome incursions onto reformatory sites and inmates' responses to perimeter walls. Contemporary photographs reproduced here are particularly revealing because they capture what these now lost institutions looked like to their users and neighbours during the period of this study. Even fragments of surviving walls allow us to appreciate the extent to which moral, spiritual and reformatory values were realised and embodied in bricks and mortar.

Trial and error: the first foundations

The visible presence of 'prostitutes' was a significant factor in the genesis of the Cambridge Refuge project. With a recorded population of 20,917 in 1831, the presence of approximately 1700 leisured young men in the town during term time contributed to levels of prostitution and the visible presence of prostitutes on the streets within the University's jurisdiction.[22] The University was uniquely empowered to police its own boundaries for women suspected of 'immoral intentions' and used a former workhouse known as the Spinning House, to detain known and suspected prostitutes.[23] Rates of recidivism were high and the prison inspector's report of 1837 regretted the lack of any alternative institution in the town which might address 'the higher object in view, of permanent reformation'.[24] The prospect of a refuge institution as an alternative to the town gaol and the Spinning House was under discussion in the town by September 1837.[25] The establishment of such a refuge was in part attributable to the energy of Revd James Scholefield, Regius Professor of Greek. As an undergraduate, Scholefield came under the influence of the moderate evangelical Anglican, Charles Simeon.[26] Simeon's emphasis on

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[22] PP.1831(348). *Population. A Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain in the Years 1801, 1811, 1821, and 1831*, p.34. Philip Howell notes the privacy of brothels and receiving houses, in contrast to the offensiveness of the '"public" manifestation of prostitution' in Cambridge. See 'A Private Contagious Diseases Act: Prostitution and Public Space in Victorian Cambridge', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26 (2000), 376-402 (pp.379 -383).

[23] Arthur Engel, '"Immoral intentions": the University of Oxford and the Problem of Prostitution, 1827-1914', *Victorian Studies,* 23 (1979), 79-107 (p.100). See also Janet Oswald, 'The Spinning House Girls: Cambridge University's Distinctive Policing of Prostitution, 1823-1894', *Urban History*, 39 (2013), 453-470.

[24] PP. 1837-38 (134) *Third report,* p.173, cited in Susan Woodall, 'The Origins and Purpose of the Cambridge Female Refuge, 1838-1853' (unpublished MA dissertation, The Open University, 2012), p.15.

[25] Letter to the *Cambridge Chronicle*, 16 September 1837, p. 2.

[26] Scholefield was Simeon's curate at Trinity Church, Cambridge from October 1813. See E. C. Marchant, 'Scholefield, James (1789–1853)', *DNB*, rev.by Richard Smail, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) online edn, 2006 <www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24813>[accessed 9 March 2015].

Christian duty and his insistence on the power of redemption and salvation through faith were catalysts in the germination of the Refuge under Scholefield, which had at its core a missionary purpose to redeem the penitent 'fallen' and work for both their spiritual and their social salvation.[27] Situated in Barnwell, a poor parish to the east, outside the University's jurisdiction and known for its high concentration of brothels, the Cambridge Female Refuge began operation in October.[28] Its rented property at Dover Cottage was described as 'a moderate sized house in the East Road…detached and standing in a garden'.[29]

As the centre of mercantile activity, with its corn mills, commercial waterways and wharves, Lincoln was a growing and industrialising city which drew women in from the surrounding agricultural districts in search of work, mostly in domestic service.[30] From the early 1830s, newspaper reports reflected concerns over the number of prostitutes visibly present on the streets of Lincoln.[31] In October 1846, a letter from TALIB called upon 'men of wealth and influence' to found 'an Asylum into which the entire class of female delinquents, or at least, a large proportion of them, may be collected

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[27] *Religion in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press in association with The Open University, 1988), ed. by Gerald Parsons, II: *Controversies*, p.22. Boyd Hilton notes Simeon's emphasis on service to God 'in the world' rather than in retreat from it and his preference for '"religion in a cheerful dress"'. See *The Age of Atonement: the Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.12.
[28] CFR, R60 27/8.
[29] CFR AR, 1839, p.6. Dover Cottage has not survived, but auction details from 1861 note 'a well built [sic] brick and slate house known [...]containing 7 rooms, excellent cellar, and pantry, 2 detached washhouses and Garden Ground [...]'. CUL, *Estates of the late Mr. Charles Newman, Cambridge*, PSV.11.130.
[30] Francis Hill, *Victorian Lincoln* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.100, p.127.
[31] *Stamford Mercury*, 1 January 1830, p.3. A letter of 1835 in defence of street preaching gives as an example of its effectiveness 'the unhappy prostitute' who had been 'reclaimed from the error of her ways' *SM*, 17 July 1835, p.4

and reclaimed'.[32] It was the intervention of a woman, Mrs Anne Jane Carlile, which triggered the initiative for an institution in Lincoln. Principally known as a temperance campaigner, the *Stamford Mercury* noted that she had also 'founded a penitentiary for unfortunate females in Dublin'.[33] In December 1846 on a visit to the city, she endorsed 'the cause of the redemption of the degraded classes' garnering support for a female reform institution in Lincoln. However, after Carlile left,

> the ladies who were very warm and zealous […] since her departure have sunk down into perfect apathy again, and relinquished the affair as hopeless, because they cannot obtain the countenance and support of some great people.[34]

By highlighting the energy of the city's women volunteers in taking up the project and the indifference it met, prominent male citizens were moved to act. The following month a public meeting endorsed the undertaking to establish 'an institution for the temporary residence, moral reformation and religious instruction of unfortunate females'. The same meeting confirmed the central role of women in the running the institution, noting 'the internal arrangement and management of the home shall be confined to a committee of ladies'.[35] In contrast to the high number of Anglican clergy on the general committee at Cambridge, only seven out of the twenty-strong Lincoln committee were clergymen, representing Anglican and non-conformist

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[32] *Stamford Mercury* 16 October 1846, p.4.
[33] *Stamford Mercury*, 4 December 1846, p.3.Maria Luddy notes that in 1841, Ann Jane Carlile, who went on to found the Band of Hope in 1847, was also associated with temperance groups from 1830, including the Victoria Temperance Society in Belfast, described as 'a women's organisation'. See Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, p.203. In addition to her involvement in establishing the Dublin Female Penitentiary, Frederick Sherlock cites a tract which states that 'when in England Mrs Carlile founded a similar institution in Lincoln', See *Ann Jane Carlile: a Temperance Pioneer* (London: Frederick Sherlock, 1897), p.48.
[34] *Stamford Mercury*, 5 March 1847, p.4.
[35] *Lincolnshire Times*, 15 June 1847, p.7.

denominations. Despite an early attempt to claim ownership of the reformatory initiative by Anglican diocesan clergy, with the Freemason Lord Yarborough as Patron, the committee membership retained a denominational mix until 1906.[36] Like their Cambridge counterparts, the Lincoln committee rented their first premises, the location of which is not known. Ladies' committee minutes note that eight women were admitted in 1847. By 1848 this figure had risen to maximum capacity at sixteen and the ladies urged that 'No more girls be admitted until larger premises be provided, the Home being already too full'.[37] The managing committee then rented number 45 Steep Hill from 21 June 1848.[38] Close to the Castle Dykings, like that of the Cambridge Refuge, its situation was local to where 'fallen' women were working.

Figure 2.1 Lincoln Female Penitents' Home, temporary premises from June 1848 at 45 Steep Hill, Lincoln.

[36] *SM*, 18 June 1847, p.4, quoted in Hill, p.138. The transfer to the Anglican Church arose from irrecoverable debt and was confirmed at a public meeting on 30 October 1906. LPFH 2 May 1907.
[37] LPFH LC, 6 July 1848.
[38] LPFH AR, 1848, p.7. See Cynthia Jolly, 'Rescuing the Fallen', *Lincolnshire Life*, November 2005, pp.62-63.

The campaign to found a penitentiary for the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk initially followed a similar trajectory.[39] Lay female reform institutions for 'fallen' women had been established in the early decades of the nineteenth century in Ipswich and Norwich.[40] According to the *Ipswich Journal*, it was less the visibility of prostitutes than the report of the Registrar General on the number of illegitimate births and the perceived link to prostitution in Norfolk and Suffolk which caused concern. The article cited figures for these two counties as evidence that 'the Sin of Fornication is more common in these Counties than any other two in England'.[41]

The initiative to form a penitentiary was taken forward by a small group of clergy and presented to the public in a proposal largely compiled by Revd William Scudamore, incumbent of Ditchingham parish in Norfolk. Framed in terms of the necessity for a penitentiary to redeem the 'fallen' and doubling as an appeal for lady volunteers, the proposal set out the particular qualities necessary for the work. In characterising the prostitutes and 'fallen' women it would rescue, Scudamore drew on familiar discourses, constructing both as pitiable, but unstable to differing degrees and in need of constant oversight.[42] Unlike the two lay institutions which actively sought to locate their urban premises within reach of the women they aimed to recruit, the rural location

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[39] *Ipswich Journal*, 11 March 1854 p.1.
[40] A meeting to formalise plans for a Female Penitentiary was announced in the *Ipswich Journal* on16 April 1814, p.2. Five years later, a sermon in aid of the Ipswich Female Penitentiary established by Mrs Byles was advertised in 1819 in the *Bury and Ipswich Post*, 13 January 1819, p.2. A letter from 'Advena' to the editor of the *Norfolk Chronicle* announced the imminent opening of a House of Refuge and Reformation for Norwich, 24 March 1827, p.4.
[41] *Ipswich Journal*, 11 March 1854, p.1.
[42] *Proposal for the Establishment of a Female Penitentiary in Norfolk of Suffolk, in Connexion with the Church Penitentiary Association* (Norwich: Charles Muskett, 1853). See Frith, '"Pseudonuns", pp.190-196.

of the new penitentiary was seen as integral to the reforming process, offering a wholesome, spacious and isolated site away from temptation.

By the time of the public meeting held in the Norwich Assembly Rooms in March 1854, the parish of Revd Maurice Suckling at nearby Shipmeadow had already been identified as a promising situation. The meeting was attended by John Armstrong and references made to the statistical evidence of the urgent need for Anglican penitentiaries in his *Quarterly Review* articles.[43] Despite comparisons to the sisterhood penitentiaries at Clewer and Bussage, Scudamore had taken care to describe the proposed institution for Norfolk and Suffolk as a penitentiary, not a sisterhood. Given the objections of influential non-conformist and Quaker congregations across both counties, reassurances were offered against 'certain morbid apprehensions of Tractarianism'.[44] The meeting confirmed that work in the proposed penitentiary would be carried out 'by the agency of self-devoted women, under the guidance of the clergy of the Church of England'.[45] The necessity of an establishment 'on a permanent and durable basis' in the locality was unequivocal and the resolution passed that 'a suitable house and premises be purchased or built on a freehold site' with funds raised to that end.[46] In the interim, the council rented a farmhouse in nearby Shipmeadow village

[43] *Supplement to the Norfolk Chronicle*, 18 March 1854, p.2.The Bussage House of Mercy was founded by Revd Robert Suckling, John Armstrong (by then Bishop of Grahamstown, South Africa) and Mrs Grace Ann Poole who was its foundress and superior. On her death in 1900, it was taken over by the Wantage sisterhood. Gloucestershire Archives, <www3.gloucestershire.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=D1673&pos=3> [accessed 28 August 2015]
[44] Frith '"Pseudonuns"', p.194.
[45] The Hon and Revd C. Harris, *Supplement to the Norfolk Chronicle*, 18 March 1854, p.3.
[46] Ibid.

‘adapted to the purposes of the institution’.[47] Now known as Nunnery Farm, the penitentiary began work on 6 May 1854 and formally opened on 13 June with communion at Shipmeadow Church. [48]

Figure 2.2 Nunnery Farm, Shipmeadow, premises of the Ditchingham House of Mercy from 1854 to 1859, photographed by nuns visiting in 1978.

The limits of space

In the temporary premises acquired in Cambridge, Lincoln and Shipmeadow, reform work was fitted around existing spaces. In both Cambridge and Lincoln capacity was limited and both committees expressed frustration at having to turn applicants away. The most urgent deficiency identified and articulated through the first years of experience in all three locations was the impossibility of separating different groups of women within the premises. In Cambridge in June 1839, the surgeon reported that two of the four inmates sleeping in the first-floor dormitory were unwell. As excessive heat and lack of ventilation were exacerbating their condition, the ladies’ committee

[47] DIT Council Minutes, 27 September 1854, p.3.
[48] Ibid, p.5. Frith notes the favourable description of the rented premises in *The Penny Post* of September 7, 1855. See ‘“Pseudonuns”’, p.202.

suggested installing a 'ventilator in one of the upper rooms'.[49] In the meantime, with no separate sick room space, the only option was a makeshift arrangement for the two healthy inmates to sleep in the boardroom on the ground floor, 'the mattresses being brought down last thing at night and removed early in the morning'.[50] Separation was also necessary to isolate bad influences. On arrival, Mary Ann Beadsworth had tried to persuade other inmates to run away. The board noted 'if there was any separate probationary ward she should be admitted, but the danger of admitting her at once amongst the others would be very great'. Mary Ann was admitted temporarily, 'keeping her in a room apart by herself and suffering her to join the other inmates only at meal times and prayers'.[51] The managing committee and female volunteers were therefore learning the importance of spatial separation precisely because their current premises could not accommodate it.

Similarly, the Lincoln committee was battling against the constraints of its current premises which thwarted rather than enabled reformatory practice. The house on Steep Hill was

> by no means adequate to the wants and purposes of the Institution, on even its present limited scale. It does not afford sufficient accommodation for the inmates, who are crowded together, to their great discomfort and the danger of their health.[52]

Furthermore, the restricted site did not offer scope for commercial laundry and sewing work to support the institution. Having learnt from the limitations of the Steep Hill site, in their funding appeal the committee looked ahead to

[49] CFR 18 June 1839.
[50] CFR 18 June 1839.
[51] CFR 1 October 1839.
[52] LPFH AR, 1848, p.7.

a new building 'which shall be equal to its present wants and contemplated extension of its usefulness'.[53] In the meantime, the ladies' committee continued to report the pressure on space and to limit admissions.[54] Like their lay counterparts, the council at Shipmeadow was discovering the need for separate spaces to enable classification. At a public meeting in Ipswich in May 1855 'the want of accommodation for keeping the inmates apart from every fresh arrival' was cited as a significant disadvantage. The death of a penitent during 1855 raised further concerns about the unhealthy situation of Nunnery Farm.[55] The resolution was to build a new penitentiary in Shipmeadow parish 'on such a site as shall be approved by the medical officer'.[56]

In the two lay locations at Cambridge and Lincoln, the temporary premises had exposed the inadequacies of pre-existing spaces to meet the specialist needs of moral reform. Moreover, that the number of applicants had exceeded institutional capacity demonstrated the need not only for bigger but for permanent purpose-built premises. In Cambridge in April 1839 the committee investigated buying and extending Dover Cottage, but the price was too high and negotiations collapsed.[57] In April 1840, they secured a plot of land behind the newly built Christ Church on Newmarket Road.[58] The site was appropriate for two reasons: first, its immediate proximity to a church; second, like Dover

[53] Ibid., p.7.
[54] LPFH LC 6 July 1848.
[55] *All Hallows Ditchingham: the Story of an East Anglican Community*, Sr Violet CAH, also quoted in Frith, '"Pseudonuns"', p.211. No details are given of this incident or of the girl concerned.
[56] *Supplement to the Norfolk Chronicle*, 12 May 1855, p.3.
[57] CFR 12 November 1839.
[58] CFR 21 April 1840.

Cottage, it was situated in Barnwell outside the University's jurisdiction and in an area renowned for prostitution. Its location 'amid the haunts of vice' was an asset precisely because the Refuge would be accessible to the women for whom it was intended.[59]

The site for the new Lincoln and Lincolnshire Penitent Females' Home building was more complicated. To the north west of the city, between the asylum and the Union workhouse, on the north-western outskirts, its location within a colony of morally corrective institutions situated it physically and metaphorically in Foucault's notion of 'a heterotopia of deviation'.[60] The original medical meaning of heterotopia as 'the displacement of an organ in the body' is particularly appropriate.[61] With the asylum and castle prison to the east and the union workhouse to the north, the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home added a new population of individuals who in various ways were seen to disorder the proper functioning of the social body. The institutional buildings which housed them were symbolically excised into a 'moral archipelago'. With the prison and asylum on liminal extra parochial ground, the workhouse and penitents' home were each incorporated into a parish.[62]

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[59] CFR AR, 1841, p.7. Prunty notes the same concern for situating early Magdalen asylums in the poorer areas of Dublin where women could gain access to them. See *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland 1853-1973* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2017), p.107.
[60] 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), pp. 22–27 (p.24), cited in *Space, Place and Gendered Identities: Feminist History and the Spatial Turn* ed. by Kathryne Beebe and Angela Davis (Abingdon, Routledge: 2015), p.526. Carmen Mangion argues that as 'crisis heterotopias', Catholic sick rooms are sacred spaces of transition and struggle. See '"To Console, to Nurse, to Prepare for Eternity": the Catholic Sickroom in Late Nineteenth-Century England', *Women's History Review*, 21 (2012), 657-72 (p.659).
[61] *The Chambers Dictionary* (London: Chambers Harrap, 1993), p.785.
[62] The workhouse was in St Margaret at Eastgate and the Penitents' Home in St Martin's.

Figure 2.3 map of Lincoln by J.S. Padley's, 1851, showing the Penitent Females' Home (far left, grey) and the Union Workhouse directly to its north. Below and to the east in the extra parochial areas are the asylum and county prison, built on the Castle site. Courtesy of LA (Search Room reference copy).

Men and women shaping reformatory spaces

The previous chapter has shown how networks of knowledge exchange began to build up through the development of organisations and periodicals. This section shows how those associated with the case study institutions drew on their own experience and that of others in realising reformatory spaces. In three cases out of four, women played particularly important roles in using their own networks to promote and gather intelligence on the optimum shape and practice of reformatory spaces.

Having procured sites for their new buildings and identified broad principles for the organisation of space, the two lay committees had no government-approved blueprints to work from, as there were for prisons and

workhouses.[63] In order to inform themselves, the committee in Cambridge exploited their link to the London Female Penitentiary, where they referred applicants when Dover Cottage was full. In June 1840, Scholefield visited the site to gain intelligence on the working of the penitentiary's premises at 166 Pentonville Road. The trip proved uninformative, however; he found 'nothing in its arrangements particularly worthy of note – it was not built on purpose, but converted to its present use'.[64] Like the Refuge, the London Female Penitentiary was making do, moulding the practice of its reform regime around existing spaces.[65] By July 1840, the Cambridge committee had established a Building Fund and received unsolicited plans from the architect of Christ Church, Ambrose Poynter.[66] His submission prompted the committee to codify their specifications for the new Refuge building. In their stated requirements for premises 'for the permanent habitation of about 24 inmates – besides a probationary ward for five or six - & a sick ward for about the same number' they established the importance of spatial separation as the principle linking purpose, practice and premises.[67] The larger site could accommodate a washhouse and laundry big enough to serve the needs of the institution and to function commercially, earning income and training inmates

[63] See Allan Brodie, Jane Croom and James O. Davies, *English Prisons: an Architectural History* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2003) for an analysis of prison design and Kathryn Morrison, *The Workhouse: a Study of Poor Law Buildings in England* (Swindon: English Heritage at the National Monuments Record Centre, 1999) for a survey of workhouse designs.
[64] CFR 23 June 1840.
[65] In a more profitable exchange, in 1844 the matron from the London Female Penitentiary visited the Cambridge Refuge in its new purpose-built space and 'expressed her satisfaction & even surprise at its admirable condition - that she had heard much concerning it, but that if far surpassed the report', CFR, 10 September.
[66] *Cambridge Independent Press*, 11 July 1840, p.2, CFR 14 July 1840. Poynter was a founder member of the Institute of British Architects and its secretary at the time of his work on the Refuge. See L. Cust and S.Bradley, 'Poynter, Ambrose (1796-1886) architect' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2010), [accessed 2 June 2019].
[67] CFR 7 August 1840.

in laundry work. The orientation of the new building carried moral and religious significance, with 'the principal Front […] best placed facing the rear of Christ Church' as a visible symbol of salvation.[68] In Lincoln, local architect Pearson Bellamy was commissioned to design the new building and invited tenders for the building contract in February 1850.[69] Specifications for the Lincoln home have not survived. However, Figures 2.4 and 2.5 reveal a marked similarity in the building footprints at Cambridge and Lincoln.[70] Both consisted of a central block with two wings on either side of a central main entrance and measured around 90 feet (27.4 metres) across. Attached to the rear of each end of the main block, laundry and washhouse outbuildings ran along the inside of the perimeter wall. The Cambridge Refuge was smaller at seven bays wide and two storeys high. At nine bays wide and with three storeys, the Lincoln Home could accommodate the sleeping rooms in the main block, whilst at Cambridge, the day wards and sleeping rooms were housed in the two-storey wings projecting behind the main transverse block and invisible from the front.[71] Although the precise disposition of the rooms at Cambridge is difficult to confirm, the principle of separation was clear, with a probationers' day ward on the ground floor and probationers' dormitory immediately above it, and a separate sick ward on the first floor.

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[68] CFR 17 November 1840.

[69] *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 22 February 1850. The same paper reported in March 1850 that the lowest tender, from local firm Barnes and Birch, was accepted and confirmed at a public meeting in March. Pearson Bellamy also designed the Town Hall in Louth, Lincolnshire. See William White, *History Gazetteer and Directory of Lincolnshire and the City and Diocese of Lincoln* (Sheffield: R. Leader, 1856), p.247.

[70] The similarity may be coincidental and no evidence has been found to date to suggest a connection. However, the Cambridge Refuge was visited by representatives of charitable committees in other regions, proposing to establish their own institutions. The matron of the Bath penitentiary visited Cambridge in 1845 (CFR AR, 1845, p.6) and the founders of the Leicester Refuge also corresponded with the Cambridge committee in (CFR 17 November 1846).

[71] *City of Cambridge*, p. 314.

Whilst it is difficult to confirm which side of the building was inhabited by probationers, it is reasonable to assume that admitted women were more likely to work regularly in the wash-house and laundry and therefore were accommodated on that side of the block. The *Annual Report* of 1841 drew the attention of donors to the relationship between design and reform purpose in the new Refuge building and its beneficial effects**:**

> The two principal Wards and the Probationers' Ward have each their own Staircase and Airing Ground, so that, if necessary, the inmates of each may be entirely separated from the others. This arrangement will readily be perceived to be of the greatest advantage in allowing of a graduated classification of the inmates, and enabling the Committee to admit some cases without hesitation which otherwise they must either have rejected, or admitted at a measure of risk to the rest.[72]

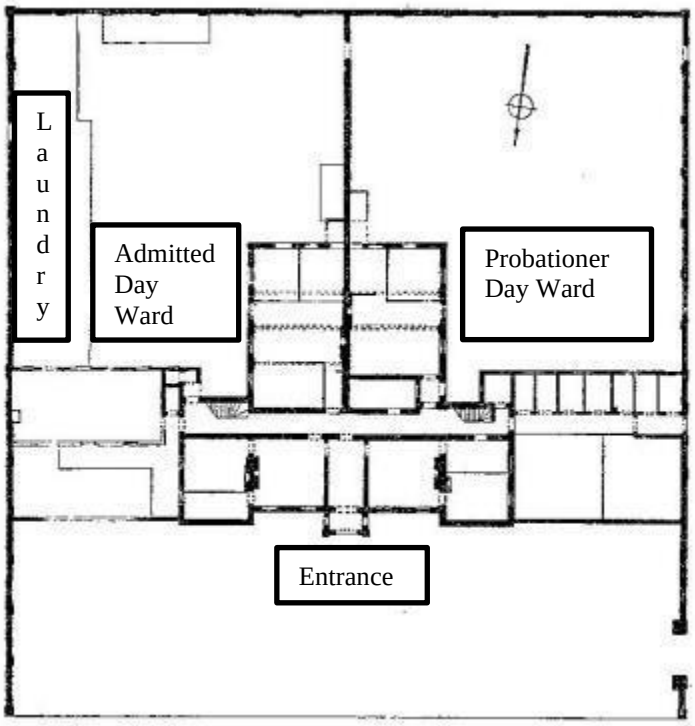

Figure 2.4 Plan of a former female refuge, Newmarket Road, Cambridge, Historic England Archive, AA106950. Room labels are my own. The plan shows internal partitions as they were in 1959, after the building had been divided into separate units.[73]

[72] CFR AR, 1841 pp.7-8.
[73] *Cambridge: a Survey and Inventory by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments* (London: HMSO, 1959), p. 314.

The principal drawback of the temporary premises in Lincoln had also been lack of space and the consequent unhealthy overcrowding. In the new building, inmates were provided with separate bedrooms, although these may have been cubicles. There are no references to distinct probationer sleeping spaces, but as women were separated in their individual sleeping rooms, further distinction may not have been thought necessary. However, the two upper storeys offered the potential for grouping probationers on one floor and fully admitted women on the other. In addition to the head matron, there was a laundry matron and at times an assistant matron at Lincoln resident on the premises. The higher staffing ratio may have meant that the different cohorts could be managed effectively without the need for the rigid spatial separation imposed by the architecture at Cambridge.

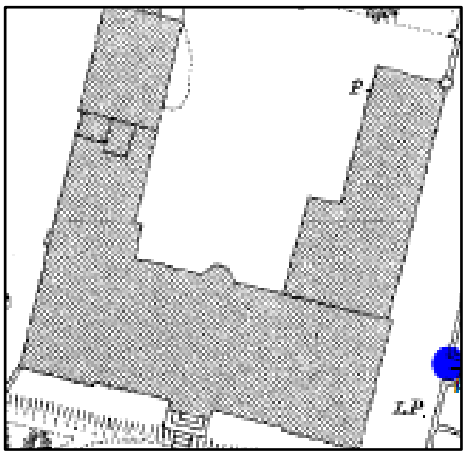

Figure 2.5 Ordnance Survey map 1881, showing the footprint of the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home. LA 6-TAX MAP/70/7/2.

The search for a permanent home for the penitentiary at Shipmeadow proved to be considerably more controversial. The new building had to accommodate different groups of temporary penitents and provide a permanent home for gentlewomen leading the devoted life of a sister in a religious community. In

selecting an appropriate site and architect for the new House of Mercy at Shipmeadow, the influence of the House of Mercy at Clewer was an important factor. Its architect was Henry Woodyer, who also designed the case study penitentiaries at Ditchingham and Maplestead and other locations.[74] Figure 2.6 shows buildings ranged along three sides of a quadrangle, connected by cloisters and covered ways. The first major phase of building at Clewer took place between 1855 and 1858 and overlapped with the elaboration of plans for the new building at Shipmeadow.[75]

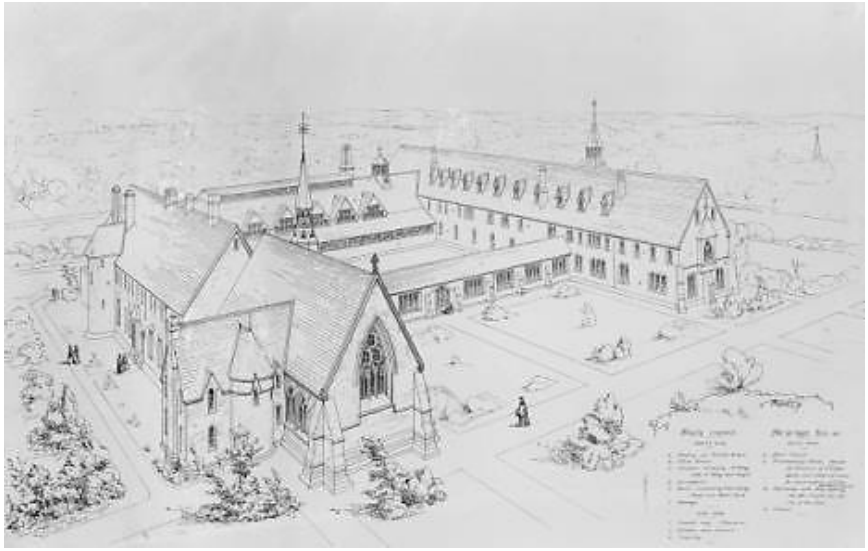

Figure 2.6 The House of Mercy, Clewer (engraving), English School, (19th century) Private Collection, Bridgeman Images.

The influence of female leaders in the early days of the penitentiary at Clewer was also brought to bear on the evolution of the penitentiary at Shipmeadow in significant ways. The first woman leader was Elizabeth Cozens, who three

[74] These included St Peter's Horbury, Yorkshire and Bovey Tracy, Devon. Woodyer was a pupil of Gothic revival architect and designer William Butterfield. See Anthony Quiney, 'Altogether a Capital Fellow and a Serious Fellow too: a Brief Account of the Life and Work of Henry Woodyer', *Architectural History*, 38 (1995), 192-219.
[75] John Elliott, John Pritchard and Steve Atkinson, *Henry Woodyer: a Gentleman Architect* (University of Reading: Department of Continuing Education, 2002), p.202.

years earlier in 1851, had succeeded Mariquita Tennant as temporary Superintendent at Clewer, then in private premises before Woodyer's convent was built. Cozens would therefore have been familiar with the spatial constraints of private houses for the practice of reform. She brought this knowledge and her most recent experience at the Stonehouse Refuge in Pimlico, to the critical first few months of operation at Nunnery Farm in Shipmeadow, from May 1854.[76] Committee minutes described Cozens as 'a lady of great experience' and noted her impending departure at a meeting in July that year.[77]

Figure 2.7 Lavinia Crosse, 'Foundress 1855'inscribed in pencil. Crosse is depicted against a backdrop of mountains and lakes, possibly bearing alms. Her distinctive dress identifies her as a religious sister.

Cozens's successor as first permanent Superintendent at Shipmeadow was Sarah Lavinia Crosse (known as Lavinia). From Norwich, the daughter of a

[76] Ibid, p.82 and pp.90-91.
[77] DIT Council Minutes, pp.5-6.

physician, Crosse had worked as a district visitor in the late 1840s in the poor parishes of the city.[78] Her diary from June 1854 documents her first days at Shipmeadow. Female networks again proved essential in the shaping of the new penitentiary space. In July, she 'walked in the garden and heard a great deal about Clewer' from a Miss Campbell, presumably one of her early lady assistants.[79] In September, she saw the House of Mercy at Bussage, Gloucestershire, visiting Mrs Poole, the Superintendent and benefactress, seeing her room, the chapel and subsequently touring the rest of the site.[80] On 26th September, she visited the House of Mercy at Clewer and was 'pleased with everything…went over the new buildings'. En route home through London she called at St Saviour's and 'saw the Lady Superior there – went to the Refuge and saw Mrs Terry'.[81] During September 1854 therefore, she inspected a total of four reformatory sites in contrasting settings, all of which would have been informative.

By May 1855, the council had identified a healthier site in Shipmeadow parish large enough for a new building to house up to thirty penitents, approached the CPA for support and begun discussions with Henry Woodyer.[82] A building fund appeal was drafted by William Scudamore and approved for circulation and in July tenders invited from builders.[83] Plans were received from Woodyer and advertised as on display in the schoolroom

[78] See Frith, '"Pseudonuns"' p.204.
[79] DIT Diary of Lavinia Crosse, 25 July.
[80] Ibid., 19 and 20 September 1854.
[81] Ibid., 29 September 1854. St Saviour's was the second home of the Society of the Holy Cross of the first Anglican sisterhood community first established at Park Village West in 1845 and in new premises in Osnaburgh Street from 1852. See Stone, 'Constraints', pp.108-9.
[82] DIT Council Minutes, 31 July 1855, p.13.
[83] Ibid., 9 May 1855, p.16, 31 July 1855, pp.17-18.

at Shipmeadow from 13th August.[84] By February 1856, having raised sufficient funding to start building, the suggestion was to follow Clewer and build in stages, beginning with the East and South wings containing the wash houses and laundry.[85] However, progress was interrupted after the revelation that a communion service on 31st December 1855 had confirmed the constitution of the sisterhood as the Community of All Hallows without the sanction of the council. Old fears of 'papist' Tractarian influences on the conduct of the penitentiary reasserted themselves, with the Bishop of Norwich withdrawing his support and the incumbent of Shipmeadow, the Revd Maurice Suckling, resigning in April 1856.[86] An editorial attack waged by the *Norfolk Chronicle* and picked up in the national press triggered defensive publications from both Scudamore and Crosse.[87] The disruption caused by the challenge to the sisterhood and Suckling's resignation forced the council to abandon plans to build in Shipmeadow parish and after more than a year's planning work, they were obliged to sell the land already acquired. However, by November 1856 the council had formally acknowledged and accepted the establishment of the Community of All Hallows sisterhood and by December had secured a site for the new building in the neighbouring village of Ditchingham.[88]

There is evidence that Crosse's determination to move the penitentiary and the sisterhood forward in the autumn of 1856 may have been fuelled by

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[84] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 11 August 1855, p.1.
[85] DIT Council Minutes, 12 February 1856.
[86] Ibid., 29 April 1856. See also Frith, p.212.
[87] *The House of Mercy at Shipmeadow, near Beccles by a Lady* [Crosse] (Oxford; London: J.H. and J. Parker, 1857); *An Account of the Penitentiary at Shipmeadow in a Letter to the Rev. James Davies, Vicar of Abbenshall, Gloucestershire, by the Chaplain* (London, Rivingtons, Waterloo Place; Norwich, Thomas Priest, 1857).
[88] DIT Council Minutes 29 November 1856, 13 December 1856.

further travels. In addition to her trip to Clewer via London in 1854, two sisters from Shipmeadow appear to have visited the Deaconess training institution at Kaiserswerth in Düsseldorf, which included a Magdalen and an orphanage. Elizabeth Ferard, later foundress of the first deaconess institution in London, was herself visiting Kaiserswerth at that time.[89] Her diary for 24th October records

> [...] spent owing to various causes much of the day in my own room in the afternoon in expectation of seeing some English ladies who had come to Kaiserswerth to visit the Institution but it was not till late in the afternoon that I saw them when I had a long conversation with them. They are English Sisters of Mercy from an Asylum recently established in Suffolk. I was much pleased with them. They spoke sensibly and calmly, are conscious to avoid extremes and hope that their asylum may at length develop itself into something resembling Kaiserswerth.[90]

At this decisive stage at the start of building work at Ditchingham, these sisters seem to have taken the opportunity to inspect the site at Kaiserswerth, to observe the Magdalen in operation and compare its spatial and spiritual practices with their own.[91] As superior, Crosse was likely to have led their visit.

In order to direct attention away from the sisterhood and its detractors, Scudamore restated the high spiritual and moral purpose of the Ditchingham

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[89] Henrietta Blackmore notes that Ferard was the first woman 'set apart' as a deaconess in the Church of England in a service conducted in July 1862. See Henrietta Blackmore, ed., *The Beginning of Women's Ministry: the Revival of the Deaconess in the Nineteenth-Century Church of England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Church of England Record Society, 2007), p.3.

[90] Ibid., p.25.

[91] It is difficult to establish who the sisters were. Lavinia Crosse and Adèle Taylor, later Crosse's successor and one of the three sisters formally admitted to the Community of All Hallows in the private service on 31December 1855, also visited convents in France and Belgium, so it is conceivable that they were in the party from Suffolk. During her visit to the Convent of the Visitation in Bruges, Crosse acquired a copy of their Rule which was combined with St. Augustine's at the Community of All Hallows. See Sister Violet C.A.H., *All Hallows Ditchingham: the Story of an East Anglian Community*, p.21-22.

institution as a penitentiary. He asserted the urgent need for its work in reclaiming penitent prostitutes not only to continue but to expand. In the *Annual Report* for 1857, he promoted the importance of spatial separation, noting that in the new penitentiary 'we shall have greater facilities for classification than we do at present'.[92] To encourage donations towards the completion of the second phase of building at Ditchingham, Scudamore echoed John Armstrong in stressing the special purpose and importance of the penitentiary chapel as a focal point for 'frequent opportunities of prayer, private and common'.[93] He added that penitents 'absolutely need…some place appropriate to prayer, a building, or at least an upper chamber, set apart for God'.[94] By 1864, the South and East wings were completed. Consisting of the chapel (Scudamore's 'upper chamber' on the first floor, not a separate building) and infirmary, the additional twelve bedrooms increased capacity to receive thirty penitents. Two dining-rooms and three sitting-rooms were added, providing separate eating and recreation spaces for sisters and penitents.[95] The new wings completed the cruciform shape of the block, so that the built form itself became symbolic and embodied its perceived sacred purpose.

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[92] DIT AR, 1857, p.9.
[93] William Scudamore, *An Address to the Friends and Benefactors of the Female Penitentiary or House of Mercy at Shipmeadow, near Beccles*, ((Norwich: Cundall, Miller and Leavens, 1858), p.6.
[94] Ibid., pp.6-7. Frith also notes his reference to the 'crowded and close chapel'. See 'Accounting', p.193.
[95] CPA AR, 1865, p.5.

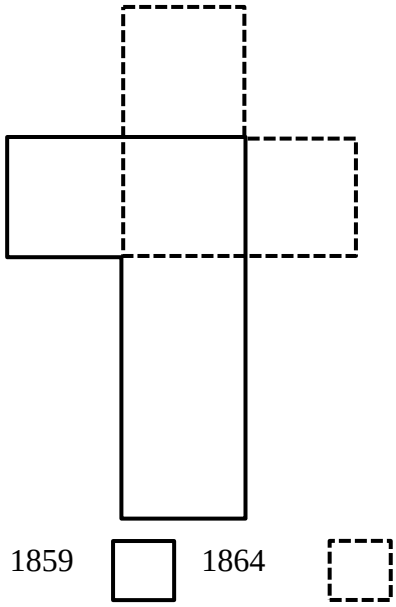

Figure 2.8 House of Mercy, Ditchingham
<https://www.all-hallows.org> [accessed 28 January 2013].

Unlike the three institutions discussed above, the penitentiary at Maplestead came into being entirely as the result of a substantial single legacy from a female benefactor. As a result, the penitentiary operated in purpose-built premises from the outset. The site was situated about seventeen miles from the military town of Colchester, where a new garrison was established from 1856.[96] The impact of the military encampment on rates of prostitution locally was noted in a letter of 1858 to the editor of the *Essex Standard*, which complained that drunkenness and immorality were at their worst and referred to the prostitutes 'who infest the purlieus of the camp'.[97] With new cavalry barracks constructed between 1862 and 1864 for about 2,500 men, rates of prostitution in the town caused Colchester to come under the provisions of

[96] Jane Pearson and Maria Rayner, *Prostitution in Victorian Colchester: Controlling the Uncontrollable* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2018), p.21.
[97] 30 June 1858, p.3.

the first Contagious Diseases Act in 1864.[98] A Lock Hospital followed between 1867 and 1868.[99] Attempts to establish a Refuge at Colchester had been mooted in the 1840s, but, met lukewarm support, partly because 'so few of the influential members of the Church of England are enrolled among the supporters of their institution'.[100] A Refuge was functioning in Colchester in 1863 at the time of a lecture given in the library of Colchester castle in 1863 by William Scudamore, by then warden of the House of Mercy at Ditchingham. His presence in the town promoting the work at Ditchingham is further evidence of the ways in which knowledge exchange operated across philanthropic networks.[101]

Opened in 1868, the penitentiary at Maplestead was funded by Elizabeth Barter, a sister at the penitentiary at Ditchingham.[102] Born in 1822 in Sarsden, Oxfordshire, the daughter of the Revd Charles Barter, on census day in 1851, Barter was visiting her friend, Mrs Mary Gee of Colne House, Earls Colne.[103] On 24th December 1864 Mrs Gee died, leaving the bulk of her considerable estate to Barter, including the site of the future penitentiary which she had wished to endow.[104] Although institutional records of the building stages do

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[98] 27 and 28 Vict. cap.85.; see A. P. Baggs, B. Board, P. Crummy and others 'Barracks', in *A History of the County of Essex: IX, the Borough of Colchester*, ed. by J. Cooper and C. R. Elrington (London, 1994), pp. 251-255. www.british-history.ac.uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol9/pp251-255 [accessed 18 January 2015].
[99] Ibid., pp.284-290 [accessed 18 January 2015].
[100] *Essex Standard* 4 March 1842, p.3.
[101] *Essex Standard* 18 September 1863, p.4.
[102] Frith notes that Barter was one of eight sisters professed between 1867 and 1871, '"Pseudonuns"', p. 249. Barter is likely to one of the earliest in this period; she briefly served as superior at Maplestead following the resignation of Mrs Kempe in July 1869 until October that year, when she returned to Ditchingham.
[103] Census 1851, HO/107/1784.
[104] The estate included property and stocks and shares. MAP D/P 630/25/3 Copy will of Mary Gee 29 November 1862. Published *Letter to Associates*, 4 March 1911, MAP D/EX/1675/1/12/13/23.

not appear to have survived, as an incipient sister at the House of Mercy at Ditchingham, it is highly likely that Barter would have used her experience of living and working with penitents in the recently-completed penitentiary buildings there to inform the design of her new foundation.

In April 1866 plans and building specifications went on display in Earls Colne and builders were invited to apply direct to Barter herself.[105] With oversight of builders' tenders, she appears to have managed the realisation of her project independently, choosing the architect of the Houses of Mercy at Clewer and Ditchingham, Henry Woodyer. Built in one phase at a cost of £10,000, by April 1868, the penitentiary was finished. Barter gave it over to the trustees, having also established an annual endowment of £250 for the incumbent's salary.[106] She then returned to Ditchingham having declined the offer to live as the first superior of her new penitentiary at Maplestead.[107] Financially independent, Barter did not need to appeal to the public to fund her initiative and face the possibility of opposition. It may have been there, but she did not have to confront it.

Informing the shape of both penitentiaries was the experience of early sisters and superiors who drew on each other's expertise. However, the range of work carried out on the penitentiary premises was notably different. Whilst the Ditchingham sisters went on to found other works locally in relatively quick succession, from August 1873 the penitentiary at Maplestead

[105] *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 6 April 1866, p.1.
[106] MAP, D/CAc 6/5, *A Refuge for Fallen Women*, p.1; published *Letter to Associates*, 4 March 1911, MAP, D/EX/1675/1/12/13/23.
[107] MAP AR, 1870, p.1.

experimented with 'adding a system of trained nurses to the work of the House'.[108] The scheme proved costly and short-lived, moving to Witham in 1874.[109] A second initiative from 1875 suggested providing a ward for 'crippled' or 'incurable' children, whose keep would be supported by their sponsors.[110] The rationale was framed in terms of the spiritual benefits for the women:

> the combination of a ward for crippled or incurable children with the penitentiary work would be for their mutual benefit. Work for helpless children has been found to be a great means of grace to penitents, in drawing out the better instincts of their womanhood; and the introduction of a new and contrasting element would be, at once, a relief to the oppressive monotony of exclusively penitentiary work.

Few details of the work with children are given, beyond that it ran from 1880 to around 1891.[111] Space in the form of a nursery or children's ward within the penitentiary complex must have been given over to this initiative.

Although men managed the fundraising and commissioning of new buildings in Cambridge, Lincoln and Ditchingham, women played significant and different roles, whether through reporting unsatisfactory conditions in inappropriate rented premises or by sharing intelligence on effective designs for new buildings. They contributed to the promotion, shaping and making of

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[108] By 1868, in Ditchingham village the sisters had taken charge of a 'School for 'poor children of both sexes' established an orphanage and a cottage hospital and opened a school for the training and Christian instruction of girls of the middle classes', (AR 1868, p.7). In 1884 they established schools and missions in Yale, British Columbia. See Sister Violet, p.37.

[109] MAP AR, 1874, p.5. It may be coincidental, but worth noting that the hospital founded by the Ditchingham sisters had opened in the village a month earlier in July 1873.

[110] Income from this source is recorded from 1881 to 1891.MAP Cashbook D/CAc6/4/1.

[111] MAP combined AR, 1875/6/7 p.8. The departure of the sisters of the Community of the Saving Name in July 1891was possibly the catalyst for ending work with children. MAP February 1892.

reformatory spaces, whilst Elizabeth Barter took charge of her project at Maplestead.

Chaste elevations: building style and moral meaning

Just as the disciplinary benefits of spatial separation were realised in architectural form and the configuration of interior space, architectural style reflected moral purpose and aspiration. The representation of buildings, their reception in their localities and the experience of their users all contribute to create meaning with respect to publicly-funded buildings in particular.[112] The look of the two lay institutions was equally important for different reasons. Donors would expect restraint in the use of decoration as both economic necessity and moral virtue. Conversely, an unattractive building would reflect badly on those donors and on the locality more generally. Architects of early pauper asylums were similarly challenged by the question of '*what asylum buildings might look like'*.[113] In 1844, the Metropolitan Commissioners for Lunacy were keen to avoid 'unsightly buildings', but limited funds and the low material expectations of prospective pauper patients were also considerations.[114] To an extent then, the 'pauper' identity of the building's inhabitants was reflected in the outward appearance of the asylum itself. By

[112] William Whyte, 'How Do Buildings Mean? Some Issues of Interpretation in the History of Architecture', *History and Theory*, 45 (2006), 153-177 (p.172).
[113] Jeremy Taylor, 'The Architect and the Pauper Asylum in Late Nineteenth-Century England' in *Madness, Architecture and the Built Environment: Psychiatric Spaces in Historical Context*, ed. by Leslie Topp, James Moran and Jonathan Andrews (New York: London; Routledge, 2007), pp.263-284 (p.278). The emphasis is original.
[114] Metropolitan Commissioners for Lunacy, *Report* to the Lord Chancellor, London (House of Lords xxvi.i), 1844, p.12, quoted in Jeremy Taylor, 'The Architect and the Pauper Asylum', p.279. Charlotte Newman argues that workhouse buildings reflected 'social ideologues' and that workhouse buildings evolved to to reflect ideological change. See 'To Punish or to Protect: The New Poor Law and the English Workhouse', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 18 (2014), 122-145 (pp.123-24).

specifying that 'the elevation should be suited to the object of the Institution – without expense or superfluous decoration', the Cambridge committee ensured that the look of their building reflected their moral aspiration for the restored modesty of its reformed inhabitants.[115] The two lay institutions drew their financial support from philanthropic private individuals, many of whom were resident in the locality. The few architectural flourishes were therefore reserved for outward-facing features, such as the portico visitors' entrances at Cambridge and Lincoln. In Lincoln, the decorative stone dressings and rounded windows at each end of the ground floor suggest higher status, perhaps indicating that these rooms were used by institutional officers and official visitors.[116] Although not commenting on the sober neo-classical style, the *Stamford Mercury* celebrated the overall 'salubrious site and apartments' at Lincoln.[117] The moral meaning of architectural restraint in these spaces designed to reform 'fallen' women was nowhere more clearly expressed than in the admiring description of the finished Refuge building at Cambridge as 'a chaste and pleasing elevation'.[118]

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[115] CFR 7 August 1840.
[116] Thomas A. Markus, *Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.95. On the links between social class and architectural style in philanthropic buildings of this period see Deborah E.B.Weiner , 'The Architecture of Victorian Philanthropy: the Settlement House as Manorial Residence', *Art History*,13 (1990), 212-227 .
[117] 27 June 1851, p.3.
[118] *Cambridge Chronicle*, 30 October 1841, p.4.

Figure 2.9 Cambridge Female Refuge behind Christ Church, Newmarket Road, c.1890, Cambridgeshire Collection, M.CHR. J9 29025.

Figure 2.10 Lincoln Penitent Females' Home. Photograph from the cover of the *Annual Report* for 1912, LA, GH/6.

The appearance of reformatory buildings mattered because it reflected their meaning and purpose to the outside world. The medieval turrets, symbolic pointed arches and lancet windows of Woodyer's Gothic revival style reveal

the influence of Pugin, and clearly identified the two Anglican penitentiaries as unequivocally sacred spaces, looking backwards in time.[119]

Figure 2.11 Visitors' entrance with turret housing spiral stairs to the upper room chapel, Ditchingham.

The architectural shape and style of the House of Mercy at Maplestead were different again. Opened ten years after the major building phases at Clewer and Ditchingham were completed, Maplestead was an architectural hybrid. Like Clewer, the buildings were ranged round a quadrangle and linked by

[119] Ian Richards notes that the effect of Butterfield's influence on Woodyer, who as a result was 'in the mainstream of Puginesque inspiration', *Abbeys of Europe* (Feltham: Paul Hamlyn, 1968) p.169. See also Peter Anson, *The Call of the Cloister* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1955), pp.304-5.

covered walkways, the secular, domestic style distinctly more muted than the Gothic Ditchingham.[120]

Figure 2.12 House of Mercy at Maplestead, Essex, photograph dated 1893, BRO, D/EX 1675/1/12/15/15. Reproduced by permission of BRO.

Visibility and reception

How far residents welcomed the visible physical presence of these institutions in their locality is debatable. Opening ceremonies put all four new buildings on display to donors. Offering a unique opportunity for the general public to see inside the 'Homes of Mercy', they attracted considerable interest but mixed reactions. At Cambridge, 'a succession of visitors of all ranks continued to pour in until 4 o'clock, from nearly all of whom were heard expressions of satisfaction at the very extensive, substantial and appropriate asylum'.[121] At Lincoln, the laying of the first stone was marked by a grand procession with full masonic honours which moved up through the city

[120] Superior's Letter, pp.1-2.
[121] *Cambridge Independent Press*, 16 October 1841.

accompanied by a brass band to the building site at the top of the town.[122] At Ditchingham, the opening ceremony procession went inside to visit the principal rooms with 'suitable psalms and appropriate prayers being chanted'.[123] The account of the opening at Maplestead took up nearly half a page in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* noting the clergy procession of seventy 'such a number as probably has seldom been seen in our county'. Special trains were laid on to cater for the high volume of visitors. While the invited guests lunched, 'a large number of other people […] many of them of the poorer classes were allowed to walk round the building and into the chapel'.[124]

In contrast to the privileged access provided by their opening ceremonies, the message of the walls surrounding these institutions spoke more of inaccessibility. By enclosing the entire site behind high walls, the buildings themselves did not intrude into public space.[125] Both the institution and its inhabitants were largely screened from public view. An agreement was reached with the incumbent of Christ Church to raise the churchyard wall abutting on the Cambridge Refuge Premises to twelve feet six inches to deter prying eyes and intruders. At the same time, there was a balance to be struck between privacy and secrecy. While the upper part of the iron gates was 'fixed and lined on the inside with sheet iron to exclude the view from the windows

[122] *Stamford Mercury*, 3 May 1850.
[123] *The Guardian*, 5 October 1859, p.850.
[124] 28 April 1868.
[125] Such a stark delineation between private and public living space might of itself have been a new experience for inmates coming from poor or slum dwellings, which were porous in multiple ways.See Emily Cumming, '"Home is Home be it Never so Homely": Reading Mid-Victorian Slum Interiors', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 18 (2013), 368-286 (pp.376-77).

of the opposite houses', the lower part was left 'to be open that foot-passengers may see the courtyard & Elevation of the Building'.[126]

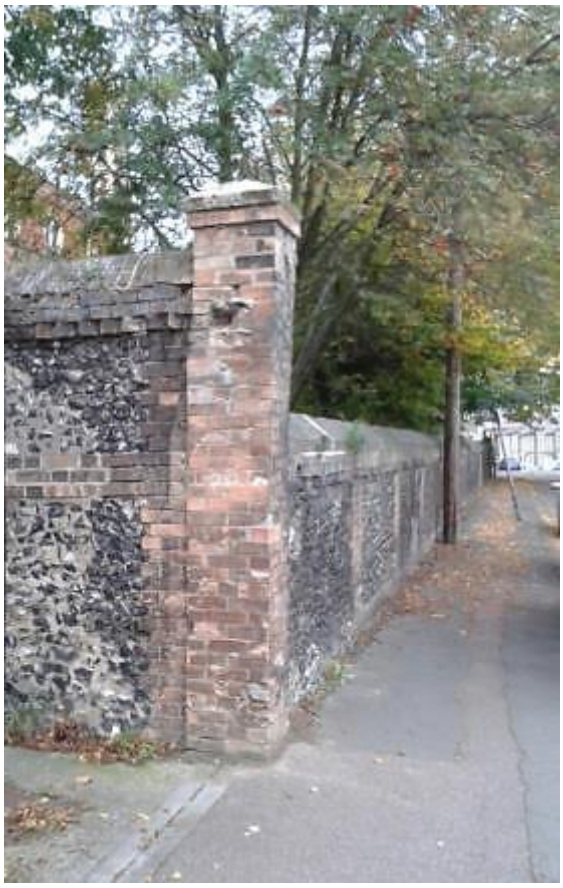

Figure 2.13 Churchyard wall abutting the Cambridge Female Refuge, twelve feet six inches high in contrast to the churchyard perimeter wall of nearer five feet.

Although in rural settings, both penitentiaries ensured the privacy of their sites. The site at Ditchingham was initially fenced in by 'a ditch & hedge with two rows of white thorn' and later by a brick boundary wall.[127] The penitentiary at Maplestead was similarly enclosed, with the highest part of the wall abutting the road running through the village.

[126] CFR 15 June 1841.
[127] DIT 15 January 1856.

Figure 2.14 Part of remaining boundary wall of the Maplestead House of Mercy, showing the higher wall fronting the village lane.

In the same way, walls marked out the reform landscape at Lincoln. Figure 2.15 shows the length of the site, measuring nearer 100 by 295 feet. The expense of building the west wall along the full depth of the site was considerable and necessitated separate fundraising.[128] Set well back from the road, by a garden and circular driveway, it took another four years for the front entrance to be made secure, with 'a substantial wall and handsome iron fencing and gates', again the report noting 'considerable expense has attended these very necessary proceedings'.[129]

[128] LPFH AR, 1852, p.6.
[129] LPFH AR, 1856, p.6.

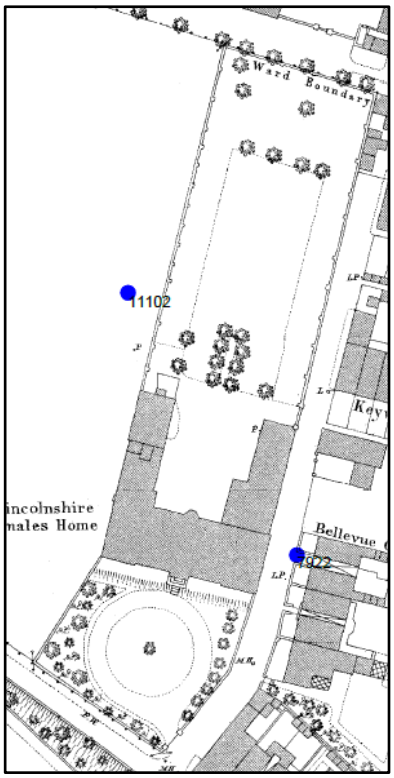

Figure 2.15 Ordnance Survey map 1881, showing the Lincoln Penitents' Female Home and the garden with west wall to the left. LA 6-TAX MAP/70/7/2

Implicit in the official rhetoric is the ideological interpretation of walls as a protective force which needed maintaining. As barriers, they kept inmates safe from the taint of outside influence.[130] Less often articulated in published institutional literature was that by ensuring their enclosure, walls served to deter inmates from running away.[131] The 'substantial' quality of the front wall is therefore represented as a virtue: walls were perceived as bastions against the vices of the world beyond them. Breaches from outside inwards occurred

[130] Helen Hills argues that early modern convent walls acted as a metaphor, expressing in material terms the impenetrability of the chaste nun's body. See 'The Housing of Institutional Architecture: Searching for a Domestic Holy in Post-Tridentine Italian Convents', in *Domestic Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 121-150 (p.122).
[131] See Rebecca Wynter on the justification for raising the wall at Stafford Asylum after an 'escape', '"Diseased Vessels and Punished Bodies": a Study of Material Culture and Control in Staffordshire County Gaol and Lunatic Asylum, c.1793-1866' (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Birmingham, 2007), p.213.

periodically at the more visible and accessible urban institutions, suggesting a more complex response to their presence in the locality. In August 1871 in Lincoln, children were 'found very troublesome in swinging on the gates' at the back of the site.[132] In May 1843, boys were reported to be 'clambering on the wall and washhouse' at Cambridge and in June windows were broken by idle boys throwing stones'.[133] These incidents might be interpreted as opportunities for mischief but also expressions of disdain for the inmates or for the institutions themselves.

Throughout this study, evidence is presented showing inmates' capacity to counteract spatial environments intended to define them and redefine those environments on their own terms.[134] In Lincoln, inmates took advantage of their proximity to the workhouse to neutralise the separation imposed by boundary walls. It was reported in 1858 that 'the inmates of the Female Penitents' Home were in the habit, when in their airing-ground, of shouting and using bad language to the inmates of the Union'.[135] Fifty years later, Ethel Pickering and another inmate defied the walls to take ownership of the garden space for their own purposes:

> having persauded [sic] the early girl to un-latch the door, after the workers had gone to bed, together with another girl came down stairs & let the two young men into the garden, they were together until about 11.15 p.m.[136]

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[132] LPFH, 7 August 1871.
[133] CFR 2 May and 20 June 1843.
[134] Shirley Ardener, 'Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women', in *Women and Space*: *Ground Rules and Social Maps* ed. by Shirley Ardener, rev.edn (Oxford: Berg, 1993), pp.1-30 (pp.2-3).
[135] *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 11 June 1858. Margaret De Lacy notes that tobacco was thrown over the wall to inmates in Kirkdale prison, Lancashire. See Prison Reform in Lancashire, 1700-1850: a Study in Local Administration (Manchester: The Chetham Society, 1986), p.195.
[136] LPFH Matron's Report Book, 21 July 1905.

Other uses of the garden space within the walls were sanctioned by the authorities and at Lincoln there were swings.[137] Flower beds were provided for inmates at Ditchingham and a recreation ground at Maplestead.[138]Annual excursions to the seaside or to the rural homes of benefactors provided a change of scene and activity for inmates of the two lay institutions. For Lincoln inmates, this could include playing cricket.[139] Holidays for penitentiary inmates were work-free days with picnics usually within the penitentiary site.[140]

Expanding and reinventing spaces: change over time

As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, all four reformatory sites and their associated spaces grew organically over time.[141] Certain spaces and structures within the sites had priority. Ensuring security, walls and gates enclosing institutional space were subject to repair and replacement. Essential to financial viability were the laundry zones incorporating washhouses, drying spaces, ironing and packing rooms. Where sites permitted, additional residential capacity was created where demand was evident. An appeal to

[137] LPFH Matron's Report Book, April 1905.
[138] DIT AR, 1887, p.7; MAP, Sub-Committee, 2 January 1892.
[139] LPFH Matron's Report Book, 29 July 1905; CFR AR, 1890 p.7.
[140] For an example, see MAP Memoranda, May 1884, D/CAc 6/5.
[141] Jacinta Prunty has shown how, over time, convent buildings were reconfigured to reflect the changing needs of sisters in an enclosed Order and modernising influences on the conduct of reformatory homes for adults and juveniles. See *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools*. See also Peter Hughes's thoughtful analysis of spatial relationships between different constituencies of inhabitant in 'Cleanliness and Godliness' a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Convent Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain' (unpublished doctoral thesis: Brunel University, 1985), p.317. See also Kate Jordan and Ayla Lepine, *Modern Architecture for Religious Communities, 1850-1970: Building the Kingdom* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

fund additional accommodation at Maplestead in 1894 notes local factors and the growth in rescue work later in the century:

> 45 cases having been rejected last year; – that this was not surprising, considering the continuous increase in the population of the Diocese; – the special interest that is now taken in Rescue work – the smallness of the Home at Maplestead accommodating only about 30 penitents, a number which may have been sufficient when it was built 25 years ago, but can hardly be expected to be so now.[142]

The same report enclosed the plan at Figure 2.16, showing that the new wing would house more women on the first floor. The larger number of women workers would in turn generate more income.

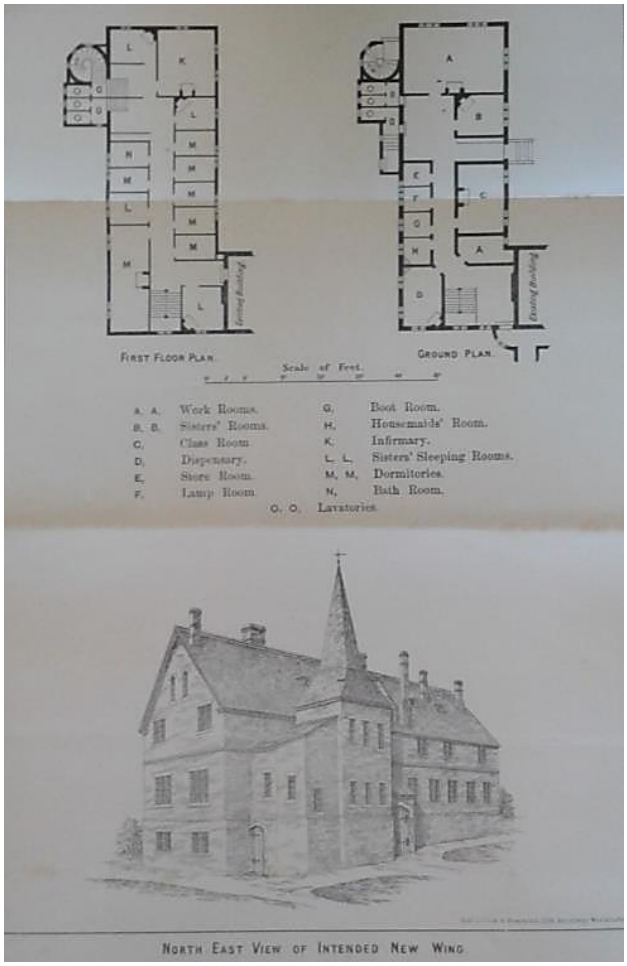

Figure 2.16 Plans for a two-storey extension at the House of Mercy at Maplestead, Annual Report, 1894, ERO D/CAc 6/6. Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office.

[142] MAP 1 February 1894.

Expansion at Ditchingham resulted in the spatial separation of different community groups. Sisters at Nunnery Farm in Shipmeadow and in the cruciform building at Ditchingham shared living, working and praying spaces with penitents. Each subsequent building project represented a fragmentation of that spatial unity. In 1876, work began on a new Community House for the sisters. Captured in the form of the postcard at Figure 2.17, the institution was sufficiently established and confident to represent the community and its work to the wider world by the time of the postmark, 12 September 1909.[143] As well as earning additional income through sales to supporters and to visitors as memorial keepsakes, postcards representing the exterior of institutional buildings advertised and promoted to the recipient the work carried out in the interior.[144]

Figure 2.17 Postcard, postmarked 12 September 1909, showing the new convent for the sisters at Ditchingham built around 1876. Own collection.

[143] DIT *East and West*,1886, p.3. The new Community House and Scudamore Memorial Wing were designed by architect Augustus Frere.
[144] Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange and Bertrand Taithe, *The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870-1912* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p.49, p.57.

The Scudamore Memorial Wing in memory of warden William Scudamore was added in 1887.[145] A separate building linked to the Community House by a corridor, it accommodated Third Order sisters, former penitents who entered the community for life. By 1887 therefore, penitents, sisters and Third Order sisters occupied three discrete spaces, each group identified by the space they inhabited.

The table in Appendix 1 summarises the principal changes to the four reformatory sites. It reveals that maintenance repairs and new building works often took months or years to complete. During these periods, the spaces of even purpose-built premises became inadequate and threatened to hamper reform work. Committees became adept at finding ingenious ways to reconfigure existing space to eke out the existing facilities and delay the cost of new building.

Conclusion: powerful spaces?

This chapter has traced the origins of the four case study institutions, foregrounding the contribution of women as space-makers and significant actors in the establishment of new all-female reform spaces. It has argued that influential individual women contributed to the establishment of the institutions in Lincoln, Ditchingham and Maplestead, from promoting the idea of a reform institution in a given locality to overseeing architect's plans and funding an entire building. Institutional leaders and officers undertook

[145] Frith suggests that the Scudamore Memorial Wing served to isolate the Third Order sisters. See '"Pseudonuns"', p. 326.

reciprocal fact-finding missions to compare space and practice, contributing to and expanding the knowledge base and reinforcing intelligence networks and informing the creation of their new spaces.

Common to the genesis of all four institutions in this study was concern about the number of 'fallen women' in the four localities, greeted with an amalgam of disdain mixed with a degree of sympathy. All four foundations shared a faith in the power of moral reform as a longer-term solution to prostitution. That conviction underpinned campaigns to establish institutional space in which to work what was perceived as beneficial change in their inhabitants. The chapter has demonstrated that the process of bringing these buildings into being was experiential as committees and staff learned by trial and error. Attempting reform in experimental unconducive settings enabled committees to identify those spaces which would facilitate reform. Appeals for new buildings were predicated upon the benefits of providing separate sanitary, preparatory and disciplinary spaces, now understood as practical and methodological necessities. The material form of all four institutions therefore embodied and expressed the importance of spatial separation as a reform principle and tool. To that extent, these were powerful spaces; to effect moral change the new premises *had* to be purpose-built. This chapter has also demonstrated that not only the shape, but the look of these institutions had moral and religious meaning. Enclosed behind 'protective' but porous walls, they were at one remove from their surroundings. The next chapter will introduce probationary inmates into the four reform spaces and examine how they experienced spatial separation in practice.

Chapter Three Entering the Reform Space: Trial, Ritual, and 'New Creatures'

Probation can be understood as both 'the testing of the character, conduct, or abilities of a person' and 'a proceeding designed to ascertain these' such as 'a period or state of trial'.[1] In the Annual Report for 1865, the committee of the Cambridge Female Refuge set out what they saw as the purpose, experience and effect of probation:

> The present test of sincerity on the part of applicants is as fairly balanced as it is consistent with prudence, and the young women who have been subject to the probation have expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with the arrangements. They generally say that they are 'very happy' 'quite content' &c. The ordeal is not by any means severe. The applicant remains on the probationers' ward for a week or fortnight, at the discretion of the Committee; after that time she joins the other inmates. During this fortnight she is never left alone - the Matron or Sub-Matron is always with her. She has every needful comfort provided for her. - Books to amuse her, a garden to walk in, she is well fed and comfortably clad, and in short, everything is done to make her happy and contented [...] But here are facts which indisputably prove how gradually and steadily the force of Truth wins its noiseless way to their hearts, after they have been received as inmates - so that physically and morally many of them become 'new creatures'.[2]

Representing probation as a sensible 'test of sincerity', the committee describes what appears to be a far from unpleasant experience. The use of the terms 'ordeal' and 'severe' and the length of this explanation suggests that for supporters and recruiters, some clarification and correction may have been thought necessary. The term 'ordeal' associates the experience of probation with trial. Set within a longer process of internalising Christian 'Truth',

[1] "probation, n." OED Online, December 2018, Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/Entry/151705?rskey=Tz5ydj&result=1> [accessed December 31, 2018].
[2] CFR AR, 1865, pp.6-7.

probation is conceived as the first stage of an institutional experience which is transformative.

The previous chapter argued that institutions aimed at moral reformation were understood as spaces to effect change. Having created discrete spaces for probationers in their new buildings, this chapter goes inside the case study institutions to examine how committees envisaged using these spaces and how women experienced them. The chapter will show that probation was characterised by both separation and marginality or 'limen' – the experience of existing in a threshold or pivotal state. It will argue that probation as a testing period involved close surveillance as part of a highly individualised period of assessment. Probation was extended either as a disciplinary measure or a judgement on the individual's readiness for the next stage.

Studies of institutions with a correctional purpose have drawn usefully on the embodied, ritualised practices associated with the inner transformation of their subjects. Foucault characterises prison as '"the space between two worlds" the place for the individual transformation that would restore to the state the subject it had lost'.[3] Historians of female reform have noted that institutional authorities used the probationary period to test an applicant's penitence. The founder of the Magdalen Hospital, Jonas Hanway, saw the penitent state as one which involved a constant state of self-discipline and self-watchfulness, facilitated by prayer, 'producing particular forms of

[3] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977) p.121, p.123.

subject'.[4] Paula Bartley and Linda Mahood draw attention to similar probation practices at Magdalene Asylums in Birmingham and Edinburgh, such as setting women apart from the community for a prescribed period, away from the main body of inmates and allowing communication only with staff.[5] Frances Finnegan records that at the York Penitentiary Society's Refuge, women underwent probation in selected private households from its establishment in 1845. When a new probationary ward was added to the Refuge in 1862, women could be accommodated on the premises and spent two to three weeks in the dedicated probationary space.[6] However, earlier analyses of these institutions through the prism of social control, poverty, class and gender were less concerned with the perceived transformational potential of these institutions and the ritual implications of probation as the initial stage in a process seen as transformational. Implicit in that process are ideas of casting off and taking on, experienced in corrective institutional settings both materially and bodily. Notions of cleansing were associated with expunging both the physical and moral corruption of the prostitute body.[7] Studies of prostitution regulation have analysed reactions to the compulsory medical examination of registered women under the Contagious Diseases

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[4] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), p.66, p.73.

[5] Mahood characterises this introductory period as one of monitoring and notes that in 1868, during the typical three-month period of probation at the Edinburgh Magdalene Asylum inmates were 'confined in their rooms', *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.78. Bartley notes that at the Birmingham Magdalene Asylum, probationers spent six weeks in a separate ward. *Prostitution Prevention and Reform in England 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.129.

[6] *Poverty and Prostitution: a Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.189-190.

[7] See Nina Attwood, *The Prostitute's Body: Rewriting Prostitution in Victorian Britain* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011); Alison Bashford, *Purity and Pollution: Gender, Embodiment and Victorian Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1998); Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation 1830-1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Acts and its significance in the repeal campaign.[8] Frances Finnegan states that applicants to the York Refuge were required to undergo medical examination, but does not fully consider the nature of this encounter or its implications.[9] Work on conventual institutions has necessarily addressed transformation as at the core of religious experience. Writing on the house of Mercy at Ditchingham, Joy Frith notes the use of separate space for probationers at Shipmeadow and the stated purpose of annexing new inmates.[10] As her study focuses on the ways in which the Ditchingham sisters forged their identity as Anglican sisters through their calling to penitentiary work, Frith draws parallels between the ritual elements of spiritual progress for sisters and for penitents. Similarly, Peter Hughes has framed his study of the Catholic Good Shepherd Magdalen around the transformational encounter between theology, ritual and space for both nuns and penitents. He has also challenged Goffman's conceptualisation of total institutions, arguing that the concept of 'forcing houses' does not take account of institutions to which admission was voluntary or at least required 'free consent to admission'.[11] Nor does it

[8] Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes, Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.126-27. See also Judith Walkowitz's discussion of the Ladies' National Association repeal campaign. Circulars intended for working women and addressed to the 'Women of Britain' detailed 'the horrors of the internal examination' and were distributed during the Colchester by-election in 1872. *Prostitution and Victorian Society*: *Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.144. Paul McHugh provides a useful account of the intensification of bodily scrutiny of registered women with each subsequent Act or amendment. *Prostitution and Victorian social reform* (London: Croom Helm,1980), especially pp.37-52.

[9] Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*: *a Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p.171.

[10] Joy Frith, '"Pseudonuns": Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University, Canada, 2004). Frith's focus is on the evolution of the sisterhood's identity. She draws more on fully evidence from Profession Rolls and did not examine the admission registers for 'penitents'.

[11] Peter Hughes, 'Cleanliness and Godliness: a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Convent Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain' (unpublished doctoral thesis: Brunel University, 1985), p.309.

recognise the importance of exchange in the relationship between 'penitents' and sisters in which 'The Magdalen Sisters render to the penitents prayers for their conversion. The penitents render their manual work in exchange for material and spiritual care'.[12] Lu Ann De Cunzo draws on Van Gennep's rites of passage in her analysis of the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum as a ritual institution.[13] Understanding the process of reform as 'sedimentary', her analysis explores the perspective of the women subjected to incremental, 'ritualised practices' of reform.[14] These were complex sites in which space, time and material encounters were symbolic. De Cunzo argues that what made the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum a ritual institution was precisely the intention to work a transformation on its subjects. The 'remaking' process was in part predicated on conformity to acceptable norms in 'aligning their consciousness to that of the group'.[15] Taking forward De Cunzo's framework, this chapter will contribute an in-depth study of the process and experience of probation across the four case study institutions. Drawing attention to inmates' own testimony, it will argue that in their responses to the spatial and material trials of probation, women asserted their own agency, either by refusing to cooperate, requesting to leave or opting to stay.

The records of all four case study institutions confirm a similar understanding of institutional purpose as a process combining work and moral realignment through religious instruction. Nevertheless, comparing evidence from

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[12] Ibid, p.335.
[13] De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual: an Archaeology of Institutions: The Magdalen Society of Philadelphia,1800-1850', *Historical Archaeology*, 29 (1995), 1-168 (pp.114-115).
[14] Eleanor Conlin Casella, *The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2007), p.75.
[15] De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual', p.127.

institutional records reveals variation in the treatment and experience of probation. This chapter will draw its evidence from internal committee minutes, admissions registers and correspondence, published annual reports and appeal pamphlets. As the previous chapter has shown, institutions were founded to recruit women in their immediate locations. Women entered the Cambridge Refuge from across Cambridgeshire and the Lincoln home across Lincolnshire. Ditchingham recruited across Norfolk and Suffolk and Maplestead across Essex and Hertfordshire. As referral networks became established and expanded over time, women could come from institutions much further afield. Admissions data for three out of four case studies survive in varying levels of detail. The Admission and Progress Registers for the Lincoln Home give date, name, age and place of origin for all inmates from 1847 but provide little information on referral routes. These are more fully documented for the Cambridge Refuge and the House of Mercy at Ditchingham. Details of the admission process itself have not been traced for Maplestead but given that the first sisters established there came from Ditchingham, it was likely to have followed the model at Ditchingham, discussed below. Although there is reference to an admissions register from 1868 to 1879, it does not appear to have survived.[16] The minutes of the Cambridge Female Refuge record the case histories of the 172 women interviewed between 1838 and 1853. These profiles are particularly rich in detail, tracing the life course of each applicant and the circumstances which led her to apply for admission. Records in each institution have been analysed

[16] An earlier register is referred to in inside the front cover of the MAP Rough Minute/Admission Book (D/CAc 6/5). The rough minutes are minimal.

to capture numbers of admitted applicants and where possible to track their progress through the probationary period.

In reading reformatories for 'fallen' women as ritual, transformational institutions, the nature and limits of that transformation need qualifying. As De Cunzo suggests, in addition to embracing the saving power of redemption through religious faith, moral realignment required conformity.[17] In practice therefore, the process of transformation represented a reorientation towards behavioural and moral norms consistent with middle-class conceptualisations of the respectable working class.

The organisation of this chapter reflects an applicant's symbolic progression from outside to inside the reformatory space, considering the experience of scrutiny through the key trials of probation. Paying particular attention to the practices associated with the first rite of passage, separation, the chapter will first examine how probation in the four case study institutions can be construed as a series of symbolic encounters. First, in institutions where this took place, the confessional admission interview, in which the applicant's past history was revealed and verified through subsequent enquiries; second, the medical examination, its conduct and implications; third the combined effects of time, spatial separation and surveillance during the probationary period. The chapter ends with an examination of symbolic 'taking on' rituals through which women adopted the formal markers of institutional belonging.

[17] De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual', p.11.

For both women and institutional staff, the probationary period served a useful purpose, giving women time to acclimatise and an early exit point. Whilst the evidence in this chapter endorses the findings in existing studies and raises uncomfortable questions about the uses of institutional authority, it also turns those questions round and examines them from the perspective of institutional managers. The probationary period tested women's resolve and gave staff time to assess their readiness and suitability for institutional reform. In some cases, authorities overrode probationers' own wishes to stay or to leave and made judgements which they felt to be in women's longer-term interests. Ethically questionable, such decisions were based on the experience of working with women who were often damaged and could be challenging. Lastly, the chapter will argue that at the very least, for some women, probation provided temporary respite from challenging circumstances and time to make their own decisions about whether or not to stay.

Rites of passage

The individual undergoing the first stage of change can be characterised as a 'passenger' or 'liminar', in the ambiguous threshold stage of in-between, 'neither here nor there'.[18] Liminality operated on two levels in female reform institutions. In relation to the exterior world, women in transition were in a state of 'non-existence', suspended from participation in the wider community.[19] As the previous chapter has argued, they were removed and

[18] Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (New York; London: Cornell University Press, 1974), p.232.
[19] Nigel Rapport and Joanna Ovening, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: the Key Concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p.262.

concealed from the society outside by confinement in a specialised institution for the duration of their 'remaking'.[20] In relation to the interior world of the institution, women passed through different spaces at different times according to their progress on probation and their seniority in the transformation process. Probationers were separately accommodated and at one remove, partially hidden from more senior inmates. Probation was the rite of passage most clearly identifiable as 'interstitial'.[21] Balanced between the old life and the new, the act of crossing the institutional threshold was symbolically charged. Reformatory inmates were effectively 'liminars' until the end of the institutional process, at which point theoretically they had achieved their changed moral and spiritual status and re-entered the world transformed, as set out below.

Separation from main group on probation
Limen/transition full admission into the main body of inhabitants, remaking over around two years
Reincorporation transformed, return to society

Table 3.1 Institutional rites of passage.

This reading of institutional life as a series of transformational rites of passage complicates our understanding of meaning, process and experience in the four case study institutions. Suzanne Campbell-Jones suggests that 'the Christian

[20] Recalling the monastic origins of penitentiary prisons, Ian O'Donnell argues that 'reclamation by reclusion' was the carceral purpose. The distinction between reclusion and seclusion is a useful one, the former suggesting a withdrawal from society, rather than a more distant and definitive exile from it. See *Prisoners, Solitude and Time (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.6.
[21] Bjørn Thomasssen, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p.8.

monastic order institutionalises liminality'. In Catholic orders 'the monk or nun is halfway to Heaven, not quite of this world yet not quite dead to the world either'.[22] Like women entering penitentiaries, novice sisters were also required to undergo a period of probation, which at Ditchingham was two years.[23] Rituals of initiation parallel those of penitentiary entrants; the old self is cast aside and 'new accoutrements taken on'.[24] Novice sisters were also 'penitent'.[25] Anglican sisterhood penitentiaries therefore housed two communities of women both undergoing spiritual transition but with one significant difference; women admitted as 'penitents' would normally progress to the third rite of passage and be reincorporated into the world, whereas sisters remained separated from the world, in a state of permanent transition as they attended to their lifelong spiritual development.

Changing states: crossing the threshold

The decision to enter a reform institution was either made independently by the individual concerned or by others on her behalf. Women living and working in their own communities learned about the existence and location of reformatories from each other.[26] Opening ceremonies announced the presence of new foundations to local residents. Appeals in local newspapers,

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[22] Suzanne Campbell-Jones, *In Habit: an Anthropological Study of Working Nuns* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), p.187.
[23] Sister Violet C.A.H., *All Hallows: Ditchingham the Story of an East Anglian Community*, (Oxford: Becket Publications, 1983), p.33.
[24] Campbell-Jones, *In Habit*, p.187.
[25] Hughes, 'Cleanliness', p.300.
[26] Simon P. Newman notes similar support networks operating among prostitutes in late eighteenth-century Philadelphia. Those needing medical care and unable to get to the Almshouse unaided were brought by 'their fellow prostitutes'. See *Embodied History: the Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 2003), p.35. Judith Walkowitz argues that prostitutes in Southampton and Plymouth streets lived together in 'clusters of three or four' and that these clusters created 'a supportive female subculture'. See *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p.200.

annual reports distributed to supporters and interested parties, special sermons and fund-raising events regularly reminded residents of the institutional presence and exhorted them to recommend likely 'cases' through their own philanthropic networks. De Cunzo argues that the relatively small number of admissions at the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum of around twenty per year suggests that many other women chose not to apply. Nevertheless, between 1807 and 1850, cumulative admissions amounted to almost 1000.[27] Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the equivalent figures for the four case study institutions. Calculating total admissions where registers survive for only part of the period is problematic. Annual reports can provide total admissions for the year, but some reports are missing. Where numbers are available they are included here, but totals can only be approximate. Nevertheless, they suggest that around 3620 women crossed the thresholds of the four institutions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Cambridge	Lincoln	Ditchingham	Maplestead
21 (1865)	29 (1870)	29 (1900)	46 (1896)

Table 3.2 Highest number of admissions to the four case study institutions in a single year.

Cambridge 1838-1905	Lincoln 1848-1906	Ditchingham 1854-1910	Maplestead 1868-1910
750	688	1067	1115

Table 3.3 Approximate total admissions to the four case study institutions over time.

[27] De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual', p.111.

The significance of the threshold at the House of Mercy at Ditchingham was expounded architecturally by a gothic archway, added shortly after the official opening in 1859 and symbolising the point of crossing over into a different landscape.[28]

Figure 3.1 House of Mercy, Ditchingham, entrance archway and Lodge, 1859. [29]

The specialised nature of female reformatory spaces whether lay or penitentiary meant careful regulation of access to the interior of the site. The Lodge housed a porter, an important functionary in policing the boundary with the outside world. At Maplestead, oversight of the front door was the role of the Portress and reserved for a senior or 'raised' penitent, on the point

[28] *The Guardian*, 5 October 1859, p.850. Referring to Goffman's work on asylums, Turner draws parallels between the symbolic rituals of entering the Benedictine Rule as a novice monk and those of the circumcision rites of the Ndembu tribe of north western Zambia, in which 'novices are "stripped" of their secular clothing when they are passed beneath a symbolic gateway'. See Victor Turner *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p.119.
[29] See *The Guardian* 5 October 1859, p.850

of going back into the world in domestic service.[30] The photograph at Figure 3.2 below shows the matron standing in the main entrance porch at Maplestead. The stone lintel around the arched door was inscribed 'Building an earthly home, looking for an everlasting habitation', a reminder of the transience of this life and the eternity of the next.

Figure 3.2 Entrance Porch to the House of Mercy at Maplestead, dated 1901 in pencil on back, D/EX1675/1/12/15/13. Reproduced by permission of BRO.

Access onto the premises could also be restricted in time, at Cambridge to 'Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday between the hours of 10 and 12 o'clock'.[31] From the outset, applicants therefore had to abide by the institution's

[30] MAP 29 January 1872. The importance and special requirements of this role were highlighted in the warden's official complaint against the sisters at Maplestead, Revd La Barte noted the 'unfitness' of an elderly lay sister (the lowest ranking sister) for the role of Portress,'by reason (unavoidable in her case) of her appearance and manner to strangers'. Suzanne Campbell-Jones notes that in the traditional Roman Catholic teaching order which formed the basis of her study in the 1970s, the role of Portress was taken by a lay sister, lower in rank and closer to the secular world than the more enclosed, spiritually immersed choir sisters. See *In Habit*, p.187. There were echoes of this inside/outside dichotomy in my own experience of research trips to the former House of Mercy at Ditchingham, up until June 2018, the Community of All Hallows. Visitors were greeted by an Associate who lived outside the convent and managed guest accommodation.
[31] CFR 19 February 1839.

timetable even before admission.[32] The authority to admit women resided with different committees and individuals. In Cambridge, application could be made to any member of the managing committee which met each week.[33] In Lincoln, two members of the ladies' committee were authorised to admit applicants provisionally, reporting to the gentlemen's committee. Despite stated application procedures, all four institutions in this study record cases of individual women knocking on the front door out of hours in a state of distress and being admitted. In Lincoln, Rebekah Hawkley who had been 'turned out of doors by an unnatural Father was allowed a temporary asylum in the Home'. Similarly, the ladies' committee resolved that Mary Parkinson 'be admitted because destitute.'[34] All four institutions could and did bend admission rules in cases of emergency and offered temporary and unconditional asylum for women in crisis.

By contrast, admission to the Anglican penitentiaries was a more individualised encounter and at both institutions, women were admitted by the superior.[35] The first admissions register at Ditchingham dates from 1854. Mostly in Lavinia Crosse's hand in faded ink, it confirms her close involvement with penitents as part of her own induction to reform work. an

[32] For differential treatment of admission times for workhouse applicants see Charlotte Newman, 'An Archaeology of Poverty: Architectural Innovation and Pauper Experience at Madeley Union Workhouse, Shropshire', *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 47 (2013), 359-377 (pp.363-364).
[33] CFR, p.4.
[34] LPFH LC 29 November 1849 and 28 August 1851 respectively. The Ditchingham admissions register records that Elizabeth Backler 'applied at the gate' on 19 October 1868.
[35] The superior's responsibility for admissions at Maplestead is set down in the Statutes drawn up in 1868, D/DMh Q10 Statute 21 p.9. Valerie Bonham notes that at the House of Mercy at Clewer, women were interviewed by the superior once they had been admitted, suggesting a two-stage process. A religious rite solemnised the penitent's commitment to the initial stage of the reforming process with a service of repentance See *A Place in Life* (Windsor: Valerie Bonham and the Community of St. John the Baptist, 1992), p.204.

New arrivals at the York Penitentiary Society's Refuge were required to make and sign a pledge to confirm their intention to reform, to stay for two years and to abide by the rules.[36] Similarly, women entering the House of Mercy at Ditchingham signed or marked the register to endorse their understanding of the 'Declaration of Penitents on Admission', consisting of three statements:

> I do sincerely purpose to forsake forever, my sinful course of life.
> I do sincerely purpose to be obedient to all placed over me in this House, especially to my spiritual Pastor.
> I do promise not to leave this House without giving a week's notice.

The first two undertakings are expressed as intentions. Only the third, which concerns leaving the institution, constitutes a commitment and also serves as a reminder that women could leave. Figure 3.3 below shows the first page of the declaration signed or marked by penitents on admission. Exceptionally rare, it provides documentary evidence of these women's transitory presence in the institution in their own hand.

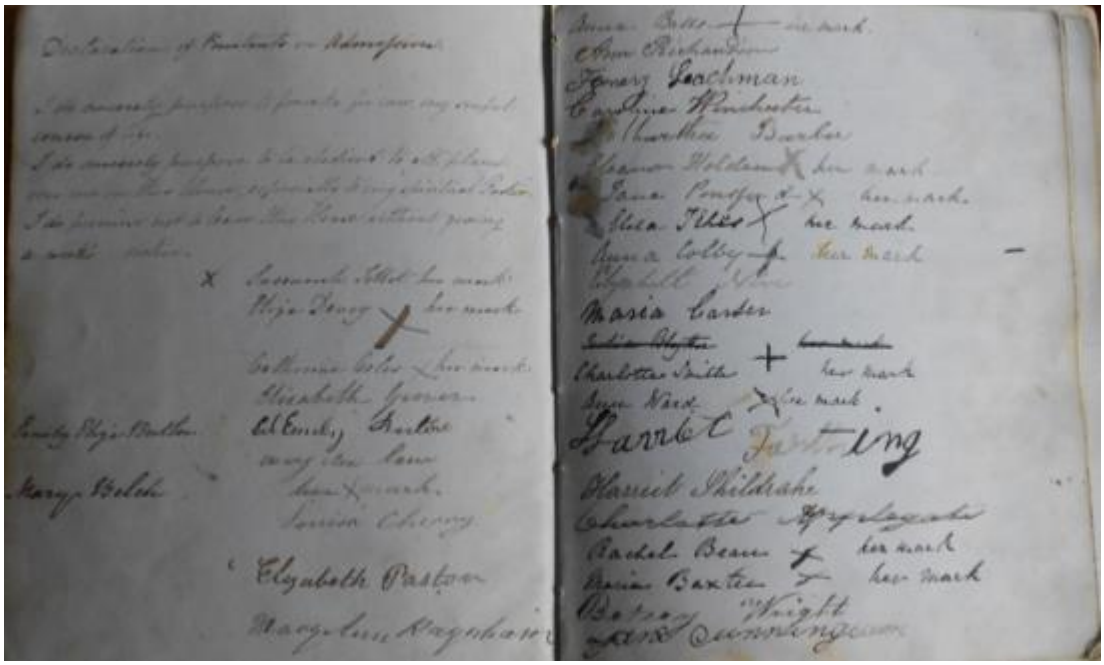

Figure 3.3 House of Mercy, Ditchingham: 'Declaration of Penitents on Admission' showing their signatures and marks.

[36] Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, p.207.

Although daunting, evidence suggests that for some women, the administration and scrutiny of institutional admission processes was not a new experience. The first ten years of admission records for Ditchingham reveal that 79.6% of women admitted had already spent time in at least one moral reform setting, typically another lay home or penitentiary. Other possibilities may be that women had become accustomed to moving between institutions and were to an extent acclimatised; for some institutionalisation may have been the best or the only option available. Admissions data providing the most consistent picture of inmates' previous institutions fall in different periods of around ten years across the four case studies. Nevertheless, they suggest that institutionalisation was not a new experience for a substantial proportion of inmates.

	Total interviewees recorded	Moral reform institution	Gaol	Union
Cambridge 1838-1847	103	61 (59.2%)	12 (11.6%)	23 (22.3%)
Lincoln 1880-1889	179	57 (31.8%)	10 (5.5%)	3 (1.6%)
Ditchingham 1857 to 1867	113	90 (79.6%)	Nil recorded	1
Maplestead 1880-1889	246	147 (59.7%)	Nil recorded	Nil recorded

Table 3.4 Previous institutional experience at the four case study institutions.

Trials of scrutiny: interviews

Previous institutional experience or the lack of it could also colour women's responses to the trials of scrutiny associated with admission. Some women

were accompanied to the Refuge by a friend or family member.[37] Applicants' case histories for the Cambridge Female Refuge contain glimpses of their own understanding of the purpose and process of the institution on arrival. Women revealed mixed impressions:

> Susan Hearn 19 October 1841 'know I shall be confined here – am willing to submit to the confinement & labour'.
>
> Maria Harvey Laxton 9 November 1841 'do not know the nature of this house – heard I must work & wear a dress – do not care about this if I am but happy in mind'
>
> Eliza Carr 25 October 1842 'am well aware of the nature of this house – it is to keep me from intercourse with wicked persons'.
>
> Emma Bennett 10 June 1846 'do not know anything of the nature of this House'.
>
> Elizabeth Gathercole 7 March 1846 'I was afraid of the Refuge but was much struck wth that rule which forbids reproaches in respect of past conduct – I am willing to wash or to do any work in my power & to conform to ye rules in all things'[38]

Others had heard adverse reports; Sarah Aimes applying in 1841 believed that 'the Inmates were very uncomfortable and used very ill'.[39] Similarly, there is evidence to suggest that by 1870 only three years after its opening, women registered under the Contagious Diseases Acts were reluctant to consider the House of Mercy at Maplestead. War Office correspondence regarding moral 'reclamation' for women in the Colchester Lock Hospital referred to '"The Retreat at Great Maplestead" (a penitentiary in the neighbourhood to which, however, the patients will not go)'.[40] Gauging applicants' awareness of

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[37] There is evidence of family members and friends bringing women for admission at both lay institutions, but none at the penitentiaries.
[38] CFR.
[39] CFR, 19 October 1841.
[40] PP 1871 (260), *Colchester Lock Hospital. Copy of Correspondence between the War Office and the Reverend Mr. Dacre, Late Chaplain of the Colchester Lock Hospital, Respecting the Efforts Required to be Made for the Reclamation of Women Confined in the Hospital under the Operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts*, p.3.

institutional purpose formed part of the assessment of her readiness for the experience. In his study of subjectivity in patient records at Bethlem Hospital, Akihito Suzuki has suggested that a mental patient's case history consisted of both 'mini-biography and pathography' from which the superintendent might trace the origins of a patient's mental disorder.[41] Similarly, in documenting the cause of a reformatory applicant's 'fall' and its physical consequences, a case history taken at interview represented a medico-moral pathography which traced her life course, but also sought evidence of medical contamination and moral awareness. Analysis of a case history reveals the framework of questions lying behind women's narratives at the Cambridge Refuge; dashes suggest points at which questions were asked or the interviewee was prompted for further information, including whether she was still 'in sin' and her current state of health.[42] The case history enabled institutional authorities to assess her eligibility for admission, her degree of 'fallenness' or corruption, the sincerity of penitence she manifested, her readiness to work and to reform and the likelihood of her succeeding in both.

> Maria Gunning for admission – 17 last April – parents in King Charles Court opposite St Giles' Church – my father shews strangers about the University – can read middlingly – first fell into sin – at Xmas last whilst living with Mrs Mason in Free School Lane – was permitted one evening to go to Church but instead of this I & my fellow servant went for a walk – got into idle company of both sexes & staid out till after 11 o'clock whereupon my mistress discharged me – next morning took lodgings at Barnwell & commenced a course of sin in which I have continued ever since – been in Union two months due to

[41] Akihito Suzuki, 'Framing Psychiatric Subjectivity: Doctor, Patient and Record-Keeping at Bethlem in the Nineteenth Century' in *Insanity, Institutions and Society, 1800-1914: a Social History of Madness in Comparative Perspective*, ed. by Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.115-136 (p.118).

[42] Jonathan Andrews has shown that asylum case notes captured the information needed for staff involved in their care and treatment and questions were framed to extract this information. See 'Case Notes, Case Histories, and the Patient's Experience of Insanity at Gartnavel Royal Asylum, Glasgow, in the Nineteenth Century', *Social History of Medicine*, 11 (1998), 265-281 (p.266).

> disease – first thought of leaving sinful ways Thursday last – have not committed sin for more than two months.

Maria's case history identifies key areas of institutional interest in the line of questioning. In addition to standard personal details, she answered on her family, previous employment and the circumstances which brought her to the Refuge. The reference to spending time in the Union 'due to disease' is an indication that she had received treatment for some form of venereal condition and would be relevant to the medical examination which formed part of admission, discussed below. How far this account is verbatim is problematic and pertains to all the case histories taken at Cambridge. Occasional shifts in linguistic sophistication may betray editorial intrusion by the minute-taker. The repetition of euphemistic phrases for recounting previous sexual activity may have been modelled in the questions. Women petitioners to the Foundling Hospital showed evidence of rhetorical 'schooling', but equally might not frame their requests from the perspective of victimhood, drawing instead on everyday language.[43] The uneven blend of everyday and formal registers in Maria's testimony, suggests she may have been schooled or schooled herself in the 'discourse of sin', in preparation for applying. Experience of encounters with authorities, such as Boards of Guardians, with former Refuge inmates or attendance at church might have provided her with snatches of the necessary rhetoric to meet the expectations

[43] Samantha Williams, 'A Good Character for Virtue, Sobriety, and Honesty: Unmarried Mothers' Petitions to the Foundling Hospital and the Rhetoric of Need in the Early Nineteenth Century' in *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920*, ed. by Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 86-101. Tanya Evans, *Unfortunate Objects: Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.126.

of the Refuge committee.[44] In part confessional, the admission exchange represented the beginning of excising the former life at the start of the first rite of passage, separation.[45] The matter-of-fact tone of the record belies the distressed state in which women could present. Relating their past sexual histories in public before a committee of male strangers was a further ordeal. Mary Taverner, applying in December 1841, broke down:

> 'have no wish to speak of my past life – hope & trust am not deceiving you or myself – it was my own folly – my father's words on his dying bed' – too much affected to say more.[46]

The contrasting sparsity of admission records at the two penitentiaries means that women's life experiences are much less easy to hear. This is not to say that a more searching conversation did not take place, but that records taken reflect only the information considered essential. An undated set of interview questions survives from Ditchingham and is reproduced at Figure 3.4 below.[47] Significant here are the basis on which the applicant was entering the penitentiary and the requirement for her signed consent. As the period of residence is defined by her readiness for service rather than in calendar years or months, the applicant was agreeing to enter into a contract the length of which would be determined by the institution.

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[44] The line of questioning at the Cambridge Refuge parallels that at the Founding Hospital in London. After 1836 the moral scrutiny of petitioners intensified. Mothers were interviewed by the Governors to establish circumstances of her pregnancy, the worthiness of her petition and the irreproachability of her character. See Caro Howell *The Foundling Museum: an Introduction* (The Foundling Museum: London, 2014), p.23.
[45] De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual', p.120.
[46] CFR, 28 December 1842.
[47] The hand is similar to that in the admissions register from 1905 and was possibly that of Mother Mary Rose, who succeeded Sister Lucy on her death in 1898. See Sister Violet, *All Hallows*, p.61.

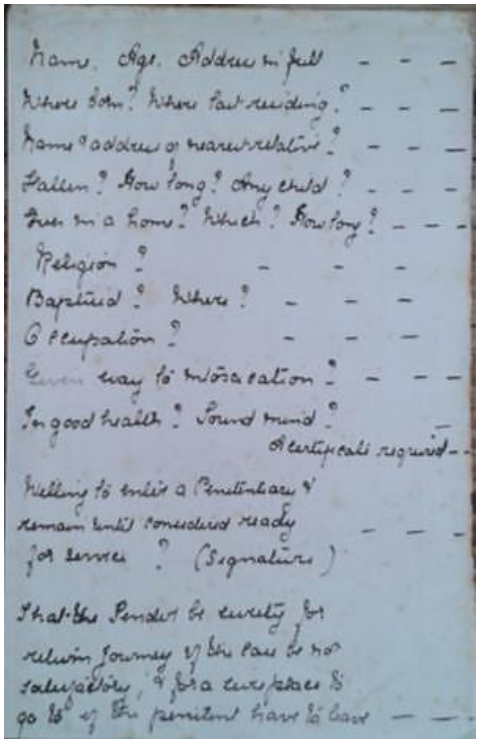

Figure 3.4 Admission questions, Ditchingham.

Somatic scrutiny

In addition to an interview which scrutinised her past and assessed her penitent state of mind, a woman applicant to the Cambridge Refuge was required to disclose information about her body. De Cunzo argues that in the context of transformative institutions, 'ritual constructs, dismembers, and repairs the body, creating a new, ritualised, social being'.[48] A female reformatory applicant's body was reparable to a point, but must be in a morally acceptable condition and physically capable of the laundry work involved in the process of 'repair'. The perceived causal link between women's reproductive organs and their psychological health meant that even for respectable women, 'pathology [defined] the norm of the female body'

[48] De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual', p.6.

and 'legitimated the medical supervision of women'.[49] Perceptions of the prostitute's body as corrupted complicated any medical examination. The physician's gaze was medical, moral and male.[50] Unlike the bodies of female patients attended by physicians in their private practice, the 'fallen' body was a public space.[51] As a source of infection, the prostitute's body lost the right to privacy under the Contagious Diseases legislation and was subject to regular internal examination.[52] Whether internal examination took place in the case study institutions is unknown. The term 'examination' was also used in the minutes to refer to close questioning. The medical examination might therefore have been an interview, but close looking might have been necessary if the physician had reason. Even assuming the examination was private its outcome would be made public to committee members. Women were also alone with a male medical authority in a vulnerable situation.[53]

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[49] Ornella Moscucci *The Science of Woman: Gynaecology and Gender in England, 1800-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.102.

[50] Julie-Marie Strange notes that as sexual knowledge was considered 'too shocking' for women, gynaecological medicine was the preserve of professional men. The relationship between inexpert patient and expert doctor was therefore unequal. See '"I Believe it to be a Case Depending on Menstruation": Madness and Menstrual Taboo in British Medical Practice, c. 1840-1930', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie (eds) *Menstruation: a Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.103-116 (p.104).

[51] Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p.136. See also Pamela Cox, 'Compulsion, Voluntarism, and Venereal Disease: Governing Sexual Health in England after the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Journal of British Studies,* 46 (2007), 91–115.

[52] In Scotland from 1866 women at the Glasgow Lock Hospital were required to undergo examination by speculum sometimes with male medical students observing. See Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes,* p.125. Regular examination for registered prostitutes was first enforced under the terms of the Contagious Diseases legislation from 1866. Julie-Marie Strange has noted that asylum patients were subject to internal examination, legitimised by the perceived connection between menstruation and hysteria, both mentally destabilizing 'conditions'. See '"I Believe", p.106.

[53] Alison Bashford argues that due to rising infection rates for puerperal fever in the 1860s, attention shifted from the female body to the poor hygiene practices of male *accoucheurs*. See *Purity and Pollution: Gender, Embodiment and Victorian Medicine* (Basingstoke: Macmillan,1998), p.64.

Elizabeth Gathercole's case history serves to illustrate that medical men were not always to be trusted:

> 'I was first led astray by a medical man in Cambridge being then 15 years of age… he seduced me from my home…I then resided in Coronation Street… He continued to visit me there for a month or so & then he left me…'[54]

The prospect of examination could trigger violent reactions. Susan Hunt 'refused examination by medical man. Was determined she would not either now or at any other time…' Susan's anxiety became apparent during interview when she was seized with a 'severe attack resembling epilepsy'.[55] However, in the fifteen years of admissions at Cambridge, only two women were recorded as having refused the medical examination. The majority would have had to accept it as a condition of admission.[56] For these two women, the ordeal of the examination or perhaps the knowledge of what it might reveal was too much. At all four institutions, evidence of venereal disease delayed admission and women were sent to a workhouse infirmary, lock or other hospital to be treated before admission. Similarly, if pregnant, she would be sent away to have her baby and could return once arrangements for the child's care were made. Committees could be more forgiving when women were unable to progress through probation as a result of a morally blameless condition. Elizabeth Twiddy was sent out of town as she required 'country air and it would be injurious to shut her up in the Institution'.[57] At Lincoln, Emma Sharpe was required to remain 'on probation another month,

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[54] This case history was recorded on a separate sheet tucked into the minute book, suggesting concerns over the possible implications.
[55] CFR, 14 December 1841.
[56] Catherine Lee argues that both refusing and accepting compulsory examination was an act of rational choice. See '*Prostitution and Victorian society* revisited: the Contagious Diseases Acts in Kent', *Women's History Review*, 21 (2012), 301-316 (pp.313-24).
[57] CFR Minutes I, 10 March 1840.

to see if there be any possibility of ultimate recovery of sight'.[58] Rather than medical examination on admission at Lincoln and both penitentiaries, medical certificates were required as evidence of an applicant's general state of health.[59] For the authorities, therefore, in addition to the moral scrutiny of interview and the verification of her case history, medical examination or certification during probation served an important *triage* function.

Time, space and surveillance

Integral to any reading of female reform institutions as ritual sites is the emphasis placed on classification. Separating new arrivals from admitted women was a central principle, partly to insulate the former from the potentially disruptive influence of the latter. Inmates at all four institutions were not allowed to speak about their past lives in order to prevent cross-contamination and possible recrimination. Probation acclimatised women to institutional routine, but also worked to slough off old behaviours associated with the 'wildness' of their past life. Keeping the new arrival apart also served to insulate admitted inmates against the freshness of her contact with the lives they had previously led. Surveying experience of probation as part of the practice of classification in its member institutions, the CPA received differing responses from anonymised penitentiaries:

> E. *Probationers* kept apart from the rest for three months at least, except at meals – a longer period if conduct is not quite satisfactory.
> L. All penitents should, as a rule, go through the time of probation, but it is better not to insist upon this at their admittance.[60]

[58] LPFH LC, 1 Sept 1852.
[59] MAP 1 February 1869, p.22.
[60] *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1873), p.10.

In a pamphlet aimed at recruiting more lady associates to penitentiary work, the warden clarified the purpose of probation at the Ditchingham House of Mercy:

> 'Nearly all have to be *broken in* to those habits of religion and of domestic order, in which the more advanced penitent finds at once comfort and security…without the strict discipline and clockwork routine of a penitentiary'.[61]

The equestrian analogy is redolent of tropes representing the deviant prostitute as a wild creature in need of taming. In identifying the penitentiary as 'not a place of refuge for the seduced but a retreat for open and habitual sinners', Scudamore correlates depth of sin with length of reform experience. Probation was therefore perceived as the initial stage in the process of 'retreat' and at Ditchingham was notionally three months. The precise duration of probation at Maplestead is unclear, described as simply 'according to circumstances'.[62]As that penitentiary was initially managed by sisters from Ditchingham, the duration was likely to have been the same.[63] The text of the Annual Report for 1870 notes that 'The newcomers are admitted among the Probationers, where they remain a longer or shorter time according to circumstances, & are then removed to other classes to make room for new arrivals'.[64] Some women therefore experienced separateness on probation in both spatial and temporal terms. The length of separation could be an ill-defined period in which they lost 'sovereignty over time'.[65]

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[61] William Scudamore, *An Account of the Penitentiary at Shipmeadow of the Penitentiary at Shipmeadow in a Letter to the Rev. James Davies, Vicar of Abbenshall, Gloucestershire, by the Chaplain* (London, Rivingtons, Waterloo Place; Norwich, Thomas Priest, 1857), pp.9-10. The emphasis is original. Also quoted in Frith, pp.293-94.
[62] MAP 21 July 1871.
[63] That was certainly the recommendation of Miss Dorothy Walker considered for the post of temporary superintendent in July 1880.MAP 4 Feb 1880.
[64] MAP 21 July 1871.
[65] O'Donnell, *Prisoners*, p.176.

The longer period of probation reflected John Armstrong's vision for penitentiaries. Likening them to hospitals 'in which everything should give way to religious advancement', the probationary period may reflect the greater attention and slower pace of a religious instruction whose ultimate aim was conversion.[66] By contrast, probation at Cambridge was two to three weeks and at Lincoln one month. The month-long probation at Lincoln may have been designed to accommodate the ladies' committee monthly meetings rather than based on any scientific judgement of the optimum length of probation. In practice, this committee met less frequently over holiday periods in the summer and at Christmas, so that the probationary 'month' could slip to six weeks.

Women could also remain on probation for medical reasons, such as Mary Ann Gibbons in Lincoln, who was 'far too ill to leave her room'.[67] However, prolonging probationary status also acted as a corrective and remedial step for admitted inmates who had transgressed or probationers not progressing as they should. The case of sixteen-year-old Mary Ann Hammond shows how long the corrective probationary period could be extended. Admitted to the Lincoln Home on 29 December 1864 from the House of Correction at Spilsby, she had 'been in prison five times, four times for creating disturbances in the streets and once for 'pilfering'.

> 26 Jan 1865 M.A.Hammond was confined to her room for having formed a plan to escape, and was therefore continued on probation.

[66] 'Female Penitentiaries', *The Quarterly Review*, September 1848, p.374.
[67] LFPH LC, 27 May 1869.

> 23 Feb 1865 M.A.Hammond was reprimanded for past unruly conduct and earnestly exhorted to amend; but as she would give no promise to that effect was continued on probation.
>
> 29 March 1865 M.A. Hammond requested her dismissal, but as her request was considered to be only temporary waywardness and her continuance in the House was known to be earnestly desired by those who sent her, she was retained on probation.
>
> 24 May 1865 Mary Ann Hammond had been sent home at the request of her mother.[68]

Mary Ann's case draws attention to the complex issues around the legitimacy of institutional authority. Her history before arriving at Lincoln suggests she was probably troublesome and troubled. Viewed from the managerial perspective, repeated attempts to keep her may have stemmed from a genuine sense that, given her history, the Lincoln institution offered the best chance of improving her life prospects. Although hard to justify in institutions to which admission was voluntary, in the light of their own experience, institutional managers may have felt a responsibility to attempt to keep a woman if they believed that to be in her long-term interests and even if that meant overriding her immediate wishes, particularly where readmission was not possible. Her mother's intervention at the end of the fourth month of probation was decisive and forced the committee to step back. Whilst family and friends did often act as an applicant's 'sponsor' or supporter for admission, they were also instrumental in reclaiming family members from institutions. Similarly, families defended their right of access. Cambridge inmate Ellen Goodjohn's mother complained to the committee when her letter

[68] LPFH LC, 23 February 1865.

to her daughter was returned undelivered. Ellen's surname had been misspelt in the institutional register and had therefore not been recognised.[69]

In his study of pauper asylums in Leicestershire, Peter Bartlett notes similar examples of family intervention and cites a complaint from a patient's family regarding his removal from a workhouse ward to a pauper asylum without reference to them or the relevant authorities.[70] As early as 1841, the first superintendent at Gloucester County Asylum entered into correspondence with relatives in order to achieve a fuller understanding of patients' disorders.[71] Suzuki has argued that family intervention in the context of asylums was complex, as physicians were at times forced to rely on relatives for accounts of the patient's condition, which might be misrepresented.[72] Approaching the Cambridge Refuge in person, Susan Fletcher's mother could not 'keep her in bounds'.[73] Other families discouraged their daughters from applying. Probationer Sarah Brashier 'seems to have had much to struggle with at home whilst making up her mind to turn from her sinful courses – being taunted and laughed at for her expressions of repentance'.[74]

Separate isolation promoted penitential reflection and provided space for adjustment. During this stage the inmate was made relatively comfortable

[69] CFR 5 January 1857.
[70] Peter Bartlett, 'The Asylum, the Workhouse and the Voice of the Insane Poor in Nineteenth-Century England', *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 21 (1998), 421-32 (p.431).
[71] Leonard Smith '"Your Very Thankful Inmate": Discovering the Patients of an Early County Lunatic Asylum', *Social History of Medicine*, 21 (2008), 237-252 (p.240).
[72] Akihito Suzuki, 'Framing Psychiatric Subjectivity', p.116.
[73] CFR 28 June 1842.
[74] CFR 21 May 1844.

and visited by 'those concerned with the improvement of morals'.[75] As a period of self-examination, new entrants were protected from the perceived corrupting influence of admitted inmates. At Shipmeadow, penitents spent the three-month probationary period in a converted laundry outbuilding, known as the Refuge. Although detached from the main building and separated from the rest of the community, some integration was allowed and depended on the individual case. Women could also be demoted from the main penitentiary building and moved back into the Refuge as a corrective measure. In 1857, the warden recorded that 'In two cases, penitents have been sent back to the Refuge…for a second term of probation'.[76] As the probation term at Ditchingham was three months and assuming this second term was for the full period, these women would have spent six months waiting to pass the trial into full admission. In this instance, though not punitive disciplinary isolation, the move back to the Refuge was symbolic in ritual terms, relegating the 'transformand' back to the junior institutional space. As a representation of her reversal in progress, relegation meant a rite of re-passage, a return to separate isolation designed to encourage further 'reflection' in order to qualify again for full admission.

[75] O'Donnell, *Prisoners*, p.147.
[76] William Scudamore, *An Account*, p.10.

Figure 3.5 Photograph of the probationers' 'Refuge' in a converted former laundry at Nunnery Farm Shipmeadow, taken by Ditchingham nuns visiting in [1978], by which time the building had fallen into disrepair.

There is evidence that individuals were also kept in solitary isolation following a breach of the rules, whether probationers or not. Admitted to Lincoln in August 1872 and having run away in May 1873, Lydia Widdeson began again with a month's probation, 'as she showed signs of sorrow and begged for forgiveness & had already been kept alone for ten days'.[77] Lydia subsequently stayed for a further year, leaving in November 1874 to go to her brother.[78] Similarly,

> Isabella Stuart a probationer having been put under restraint since the evening of Tuesday the 10th for refractory conduct was brought before the Committee and pleaded in excuse that the bad names applied to her by the other inmates had provoked her temper...A further trial was granted at her own request with permission to take her work into the sick room.[79]

[77] LPFH LC, 8 May 1873.
[78] LPFH LC, 25 November 1874.
[79] LPFH LC, 12 Feb 1857.

The records do not specify what kind of restraint, but almost certainly spatial isolation in her own room. Isabella appears to have asked for a second chance and was rewarded for doing that by being able to take her sewing into the freer space of the sick room.

The reference in 1870 to 'a Probationary Class…where the new comers are gathered before admission into the general society of the House' suggests spatial separation at Maplestead.[80] By the next annual report, the warden distinguishes three classes of penitents, with those on 'initiary probation' the lowest class. Probation worked to test sincerity; progression to the next class provided a 'process of successive sifting', which 'gives encouragement to those who are in earnest and tends to the weeding out of imposters'.[81] Appealing for funds for an extension twenty years later, more space would allow even better classification, grouping penitents appropriately in the space so that 'there will be no risk of putting the square girl into the round hole'.[82] When a woman arrived at the door of Maplestead 'unaccompanied' in December 1870, she was taken in but isolated from the rest of the inmates, as well as from other probationers:

> we thought it well to test her sincerity by keeping her for a while apart from the rest, but finding her docile & gentle admitted her among the probationers & then to one of the other classes.[83]

One reason for this cautious solitary treatment might be precisely because the woman had applied independently, without recommendation from a trusted sponsor. Conversely, those entering the Ditchingham House of Mercy with

[80] MAP 1 February 1870.
[81] MAP combined AR, 1875/6/7, p.3.
[82] MAP AR, 1894, p.5.
[83] MAP 21 July 1871.

previous experience of at least one penitentiary might have been partially prepared for that setting. Readiness might not necessarily have meant willingness however, and women referred from other institutions might have greeted the prospect of another period of confinement with mixed feelings. In all four institutions, therefore, women experienced probation as institutional life at one remove. Common to all was some form of spatial separation for the probationer group.

Paradoxically, the separation intended to prepare probationers gradually for integration into the main group could itself unsettle them. The new building of 1841 in Cambridge made provision for a separate ground floor ward for Refuge probationers, with dormitory space above. As admissions were made at uneven intervals, with several consecutive weeks or months passing without admissions, any single new arrival could find herself housed on her own in the probationary ward. Therefore, what was intended as a space for separate reflection in practice was experienced more negatively as solitary isolation. Elizabeth Nicholls admitted on 23rd August 1843 asked to be dismissed as she 'could not bear the solitary confinement'.[84] Women were at their most unstable during the probationary period and evidence from three institutions suggests that close monitoring of probationers was considered a priority. At Ditchingham, Lavinia Crosse noted the challenges of working individually with probationer Sarah, who was initially resistant but brought to repent by the effect of tearful praying in the chapel with Crosse.[85]

[84] CFR 26 September 1843.
[85] Frith notes that Crosse provides the only perspective on this transformative encounter. See '"Pseudonuns"', p.300.

Readiness was a factor in the decision to extend time on probation. The ladies' committee at Cambridge routinely visited probationers. Their report of 17 February 1846 reveals the kind of assessment made of a woman's readiness to join the main group:

> found M. Osbourne relieved from pain – she appears an interesting person – open and & candid in her statements & seemingly desirous of reforming her character – gives however no particular evidence of conviction of sin or sense of danger arising from it – expressed a wish that her sister would forsake it –

A range of influences could affect a probationer's state of mind. Negative contact with other inmates could trigger a request to leave. Emma Clayton left the Lincoln Home half way through probation, 'having had some words with one of the Girls'.[86] Isolation from family was another factor. Mary Ashberry asked to leave after one week at Cambridge as she was missing her mother and her child.[87] Some were also revealed to be emotionally fragile under the stress of separation on probation. At interview on 31 March 1846 Rebecca Flack stated 'have had a child at 7 months born dead in Linton Union' and on 7 April, was recorded as having 'left the house an hour after her admission [on probation] – after crying and wandering about the passage'.[88] Not all newly-arrived women found probation difficult. In 1849 the ladies at Cambridge noted that 'the probationers are going on satisfactorily. They have learnt some hymns very cheerfully'.[89]

The admission records for Cambridge track individual admissions from interview through probation to admission from 1838 to 1853 and for a shorter

[86] LPFH LC, 29 November 1849.
[87] CFR 17 February 1846.
[88] CFR 7 April 1846.
[89] CFR 11 December 1849.

period at Maplestead. Table 3.6 below shows the progress to full admission for probationers at both institutions. It reveals that twenty-four applicants to Cambridge fell away between applying and entering probation. The higher completion rate at Maplestead may be a factor of the longer probation at the penitentiary.

	Total applicants	Total applicants entering on probation	Total completing probation and fully admitted
CFR 1838-1853	172	148/172 (86%)	106/148 (71.6%)
MAP 1880-1890	171	171	165/171 (96.4%)

Table 3.5 Cambridge Female Refuge applicants: progress from interview to probation.

Attrition rates during the probationary period are less easy to track at Lincoln. The ladies' committee distinguished between admission on probation and full admission between 1852 and 1869 haphazardly. However, lengths of probation are recorded more consistently for 135 of the 361 women admitted between 1870 and 1892. They confirm that the majority stayed for the standard four weeks, although stays of six and eight weeks together account for a further 17.7% of women.

3 weeks	4 weeks	5 weeks	6 weeks	7 weeks	8 weeks	9 weeks	10 weeks	12 weeks
2	98	5	14	3	10	1	1	1
1.4%	72.5%	3.7%	10.3%	2.2%	7.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%

Table 3.6 Probationary periods for 361 women admitted to Lincoln Penitent Females' Home, 1870-1892.

As noted above, unlike the lay institutions, the two penitentiaries favoured the longer probation of three months. Whilst Ditchingham records did not record probation, length of probation is given for 173 of the 246 women admitted between 1880 and 1889 at Maplestead. Table 3.7 below shows the largest proportion of 31% stayed two to three months, with 23.6% staying three to four months. In addition, 35.2% experienced an extended probation of between four and nine months, almost double the 17.7% at Lincoln. In terms of duration then, probation was a much shorter transitional experience at lay than at the penitentiary institutions.

Up to 1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9
3	13	54	41	18	20	9	9	5
1.7%	7.5%	31.0%	23.6%	10.4%	11.5%	5.2%	5.2%	2.8%

Table 3.7 Maplestead length of probation in months for admitted women 1880-1889.

Rituals of taking off and taking on: clothing, hair-cutting and naming

As part of the initiation into the reformatory environment, probationers were required to exchange the clothes they came in with for uniform institutional dress. Suspending individual identity, uniform dress was a material means of producing the transitional identity of the institutional subject. Donning the house dress was both a psychological and a physiological experience. Usually second-hand, it enclosed and imprinted itself on the new probationer's skin, as it had the previous wearer. Institutional dress served as a symbolic wrapping, a shared marker of the transitional status of women who had cast off their past and exchanged it for another, temporary state of being. This ritual process of exchange is freighted with meaning which historians have

deconstructed differently. In asylums 'expectations of correct attire were connected to ideas about the proper conduct of the body'.[90] Rebecca Wynter suggests that at Staffordshire gaol, uniform represented powerlessness.[91] Uniform prison dress reduced the individual's sense of self through 'embodied punishment'.[92] Vivienne Richmond suggests that residential institutions fully understood and exploited the psychological meaning of uniform.[93]

In the case study institutions, the semiotic use of uniform dress could work to suggest both its stigmatic and honorific meanings, drawing attention either to an inmate's exemplary conduct or aberrant behaviour. Withholding uniform and at the same time extending probation drew attention to a probationer's unreadiness or unworthiness to join the community. Exchange of clothing represented the discarding of the past life and was therefore aligned more positively with transformation; wearing the 'house dress' symbolised the start of a new life-cycle stage and was managed and experienced differently in each institution. Inmates wore their own clothes at Lincoln for the first ten years of operation.[94] The decision to move to house dress in 1857 related to

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[90] Nicole Baur and Joseph Melling, 'Dressing and Addressing the Mental Patient: the Uses of Clothing in the Admission, Care and Employment of Residents in English Provincial Mental Hospitals, c.1860-1960', *Textile History*, 45 (2014), 145-170 (p.153).
[91] Rebecca Wynter, 'Diseased Vessels and Punished Bodies', (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Birmingham, 2007), p.101.See also Michelle Cale on the ritual aspects of industrial school initiation, 'Girls and the Perception of Sexual Danger in the Victorian Reformatory System', *History*, 78 (1993), 201-17 (pp.208-09).
[92] Julie Ash, *Dress Behind Bars: Prison Clothing as Criminality* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2010), p.6. Paul Fussell notes that the reintroduction of striped uniforms for prisoners in North Carolina in 1994 met with public approval. *Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), p.121.
[93] Vivienne Richmond, *Clothing the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.291-2.
[94] At Lincoln inmates attended church outside the premises and wore lilac print dresses for Sundays and straw bonnets. LPFH LC, 1 March 1849.

improving management. The committee invited the matron of the Nottingham Refuge to visit and advise the ladies at Lincoln. Her suggestion to provide uniform dresses was 'so that one cause of frequent dispute might be avoided'.[95] Beyond this single usage of the term, inmates' clothing is referred to as 'dress' rather than 'uniform' in all four institutions. At Cambridge, probationers spent the first week in their own clothes. During their first and most challenging week of institutionalisation therefore, new arrivals remained materially connected to the life they had just left. After two years of working with applicants, the Cambridge committee was more familiar with the range of reactions to probation and from October 1841, the probationary period was fine-tuned in temporal and material terms: 'probationers should wear their own clothes during the first week and if the matron's report were satisfactory, they should then be permitted to wear the house dress'.[96] In practice, this permission translated into an additional week wearing the house dress before joining main group. The probationary period thus stretched from a week to a fortnight, with progress at each stage tracked in the minutes. In all four institutions, adopting institutional dress at the end of probation was construed as an achievement and the passport to joining the community. In ritual terms then, it signalled progress and belonging.[97] Equally, the incremental issue of house dress could work to reward partial progress. Mary Bowler was admitted at Cambridge on 28th February 1843, allowed to wear the cap only on 7th March, graduating to the 'house dress' on 14th March. The

[95] LPFH LC, 23 September 1857.
[96] CFR 26 October 1841. At Cambridge, inmates wore blue check aprons and white caps, with bonnets for outdoor wear. CFR 27 July 1844.
[97] Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Non-Uniforms: Communicating through Clothing* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p.69.

perception was that the prize of institutional dress mitigated the additional week on probation.

Writing of the early days at Shipmeadow, the first warden, at Ditchingham set out the incentive value of clothing as an indication of rank and progression for probationers:

> The dress worn in the Refuge differs from that worn in the House. It serves to remind its wearers of their probationary state, and contributes to make them consider their removal to the House as a privilege to be desired and sought.[98]

As the Refuge was detached from the main community building, change in dress meant both spatial and moral progression, an outward sign of readiness for inclusion into the main body of the penitentiary. Dress also had particular significance in the sisterhoods. Novice sisters' own spiritual progress to profession was marked by a celebratory formal Clothing ceremony.[99] The distinctive type of dress worn by penitentiary sisters aroused suspicion on two counts. First it smacked of the 'habit' associated with Catholic Orders and drawing accusations of 'papist' practices. Second, it did not meet sartorial expectations for middle-class women and therefore represented the sisters' challenge to accepted norms in material terms.[100] The photograph at Figure 3.6 shows the indoor dress at Ditchingham, which was probably black. As a *carte de visite*, it proclaims publicly the institutional status of the superior and her senior sister. Holding hands, the image suggests the bond of unity and

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[98] Scudamore, *An Account*, p.10. Rules from 1854 suggested that sisters' dress was also modest: 'plain and uniform, not too unlike that usually worn, of materials suited to the season and without unnecessary ornament'. Also quoted in Frith, p.227.
[99] Susan Mumm cites one novice who felt 'promoted' on being clothed. See 'Lady Guerrillas of Philanthropy: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 1992), p.53.
[100] Sister Violet, *All Hallows: Ditchingham*, p.12.

experience between the two leaders, portrayed in the habit which defines their vocation and also their unconventionality.

Figure 3.6 *Carte de Visite* for Lavinia Crosse, superior (left) and Adèle Taylor, her successor (right). No date, but before Crosse's death in 1890.[101]

The sisters' parted hair is just visible under the white coif band but is otherwise modestly covered by the veil. An inmate's hair received particular attention because it too was an outward indicator of inner modesty. In her analysis of the representation and meaning of women's hair in Victorian literature, Elisabeth Gitter contrasts the symbolic 'brown, neatly-combed hair of the virtuous governesses and industrious wives' with 'the tangled, disorderly hair of the sexually and emotionally volatile women'.[102] Just as the prostitute's body was a site of impurity, her unkempt hair was a symbol of

[101] Ibid., p.60.
[102] Elisabeth Gitter,'The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America,* 99 (1984), 936-954 (p.941).

moral intemperance. Tamed hair therefore represented moral order. In the context of ritual transformation, Raymond Firth argues that loss of hair includes an element of 'destruction of personality'.[103] In the context of a ritual institution, this loss prepares the initiate for the inscribing of the 'knowledge and wisdom of the group'.[104] Evidence of practice in relation to hair-cutting in the four case study institutions is elusive. At Cambridge, interview case histories suggest that applicants had heard that hair was cut at the London Female Penitentiary in Pentonville Road, founded in 1807. In 1840, Cambridge applicant Mary Ann Arminger expressed her willingness to enter the London institution 'though my hair should be cut off'.[105] At Lincoln, no reference to cutting hair has been found to date. This may be because inmates' hair was not cut or that the cutting was not recorded in the minutes. Managers at both lay institutions may have stopped short of close cropping or shaving hair (as opposed to cutting) because of its carceral connotations.[106] Head-shaving at the Edinburgh Magdalene Asylum between 1833 and 1835 acted as a deterrent to absconding. This disciplinary advantage was celebrated in the Annual Report of 1835; by the time the hair had grown, the inmate was 'habituated to her situation'.[107] Writing in 1841, medical commentator

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[103] Raymond Firth, *Symbols Public and Private* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p.291.
[104] Turner, *Dramas,* p.103.
[105] CFR 13 May 1840. The earliest published rules of the London Female Penitentiary dating from 1809 do not specify the treatment of inmates' hair, but this may not be conclusive. As an appeal document, it focused on the benevolence of the institutional encounter. Details of policy on head-shaving, with its criminal associations would therefore be out of place.
[106] For a discussion of the humiliation and control function of head-shaving in early nineteenth-century penal colonies, see Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.86.
[107] *The Magdalenes,* p.80. Linda Mahood suggests that head-shaving was practised at the Dublin Lock Hospital – a different kind of institution – and the Magdalene Hospital in London but does not provide evidence of this practice.

William Tait condemned head-shaving at the Edinburgh Magdalene precisely because of its inappropriateness: 'the practice, in every point of view, is unjustifiable. [the probationer] is put on a level with the inmates of bridewell and bedlam...it is fortunate that this abominable practice [...] is now set aside'.[108] In practice, managing committees were likely to defer to institutional medical officers or surgeons where shaving was necessary on medical grounds. It is nevertheless possible that in some cases, committees might have conflated medical with disciplinary justification. It is clear that hair-cropping was carried out in later institutions. An editorial of 1863 in *The Magdalen's Friend* welcomed the formal removal of the rule regarding hair-cropping at the Warwickshire Female Penitentiary in Leamington, although suggesting that this 'penal' practice had already ceased: 'The purgation from their Minute-book of the penal regulation [though inoperative] of cropping off the hair was a wise and considerate measure. Begin not by despoiling those whom you would enrich […]'.[109] The convict-like appearance of women with shaved heads, albeit covered by caps, would be hard to justify in any Christian institution purportedly based on the redeeming power of love and the practice was unlikely to be well-received by donors or potential employers. All four case study institutions prepared women for domestic service and learning to cover their hair appropriately with a cap was part of the preparation for employment. Of the two Anglican penitentiaries, we have no information on the wearing of hair at Ditchingham.[110] The rules for

[108] *Magdalenism: an Enquiry into the Extent, Causes and Consequences of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: P. Rickard, 1842), p.343.
[109] IV, p.111.
[110] Frith suggests hair was cut short at Ditchingham, but there is no reference to hair in the source she cites. See '"Pseudonuns"', p.294.

penitents at Maplestead however note that 'they shall make no sort of change in their dress or in the way of wearing their hair, without permission from the Superior'.[111] Although penitents lost the freedom to change their hair without approval, the suggestion is that change could be possible. More importantly, they did not lose their hair.

The final stage in the taking-off of the old identity was through naming practices. At Cambridge and Lincoln, inmates kept their own names. In the minutes for both institutions, they are referred to by different combinations of initial, forename and surname, but never by forename only.[112] In the lay institutions, the use of surnames in the record reinforced the distance between bearers of authority and those subjugated to it. Whether surnames were used in practice in conversation between the matron, ladies' committee and lady visitors is debatable. As their work was particularly focused on reassurance and persuasion during the probationary period, it is possible that ladies would have addressed inmates by their first names. Their shared gender as well as the social, moral and domestic superiority of the lady visitors in respect to inmates would legitimise this usage. In the context of total institutions, Erving Goffman has described the loss of inmates' full names as 'a great curtailment of the self'.[113] There is evidence of attempts to depersonalise inmates completely. At Lincoln, the matron suggested addressing inmates by number

[111] MAP Council Minutes D/CAc/6/1, p.28.
[112] At the Magdalen Hospital, petitioners were known by number rather than name. A new name was allocated to them on admission, the rationale at both stages being to protect their identity. See Stanley Nash, 'Prostitution and Charity: the Magdalen Hospital, a Case Study', *Journal of Social History*, 17 (1984), 617-628 (p.623).
[113] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (London: Aldane Transaction, 2007), p.18.

rather than name, but no resolution to adopt her recommendation is recorded. Again, the uncomfortable similarity to a punitive prison practice might have been thought inappropriate.[114]

Although not reducing the inmate to a purely numerical identity, the allocation of new names extended the transformand's remove from her past life a stage further.[115] As Susan Mumm has shown, naming practices in penitentiaries also applied to sisters, who did not use their surnames in the community, thereby also casting off that element of their name which identified and linked them to their former lives in the world.[116] At Ditchingham, the warden stated that as many penitents had the same Christian name 'some contrivance is necessary to prevent confusion'. All new entrants were therefore required to drop their given names on admission at which point they took on a 'present name' (see Figure 3.7 below). The naming ritual therefore took on particular significance and meaning as a temporary institutional label associated with their transitional identity. Penitents could return to using their given names before leaving 'if their progress [had] been such to justify their admission to Holy Communion'.[117] The privilege of regaining their former names during institutionalisation was therefore contingent upon their spiritual progress. For the warden it was 'an incitement to press forward'.[118] In the institutional records, references to individual penitents are by temporary 'present name' at Ditchingham. At Maplestead,

[114] LPFH 7 December 1863.
[115] A 'transformand' is a person undergoing transformation.
[116] See *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers; Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), p.106.
[117] Scudamore, *An Account*, p.10.
[118] Ibid., also cited in Frith, '"Pseudonuns"', p.309.

women's 'house' name could be their own middle name or a new name.[119] Whether penitents had a say on the choice of name is not clear. The imposition of different forenames for domestic servants marked out a similar boundary and one which women at both penitentiaries were likely to encounter in their post-institutional lives.[120]

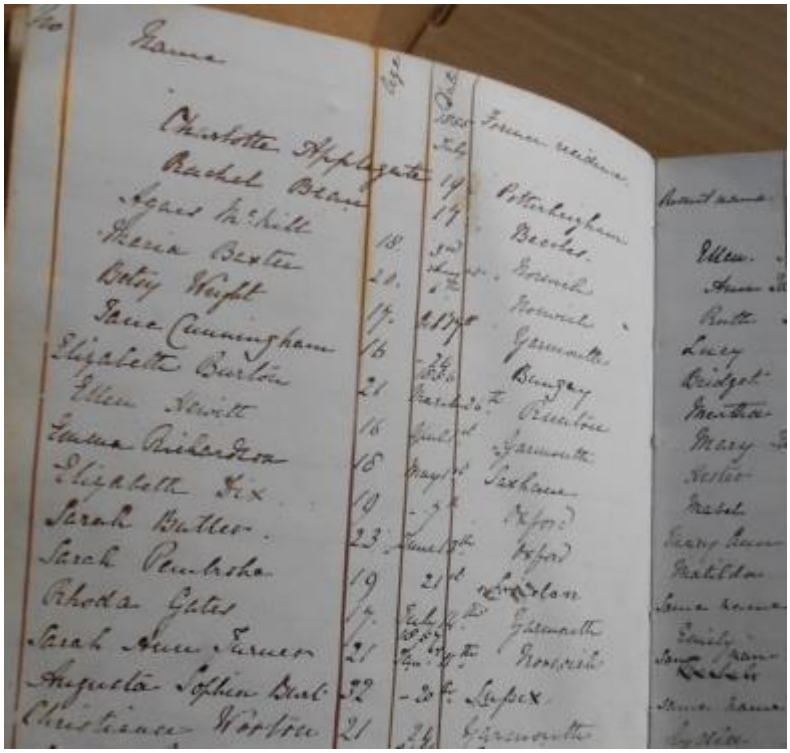

Figure 3.7 Ditchingham House of Mercy: admissions register showing penitents' given names and the 'present' name for use while in the penitentiary.

Table 3.8 below summarises the ritual practices associated with probation as the first rite of passage – separation. It reveals the greater number of changes associated with taking off and taking on during probation in the penitentiaries.

[119] DIT Mother Lavinia's diary; MAP 1 February 1869.
[120] Lucy Delap records that domestic employees' names were still being changed by the mid-twentieth century. See *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.49.

Lay institutions	Penitentiaries
Separation from admitted women Keep own clothing Keep own name Religious instruction/preparation Exchange own clothes for house dress, symbol of readiness to move into main group of inhabitants	Separation from admitted women Take on probationer's dress Take on 'current' or 'house' name Religious instruction/preparation Exchange probationer's dress for house dress, symbol of readiness to move into main group of inhabitants

Table 3.8 Separation: taking off and taking on during probation.

Conclusion

Defining probation at Maplestead as 'initiary', the warden recognised the ritual nature of the first stage of institutionalisation. This chapter has shown that the probationary period was designed to act on a distinct group in a particular way. Authorities used space and time during the probationary period in ways they perceived as consonant with the discipline of remaking. Ritual meanings of casting off and taking on attached to changes of dress and naming practices, distancing the probationer from her former self and drawing attention to her transitional state at different stages of the probationary experience. As a period of acclimatisation and testing, probation demanded resilience on the part of the inmate. This chapter has presented evidence of the range of inmates' individual physical and emotional responses to the trials of scrutiny. It has also revealed important subtleties which complicate readings of the probationary period as simply the first stage of an institutional process intent only on control and subjection. Authorities in the case study institutions exercised discretion in individual cases. Scrutiny and surveillance on probation were not simply disciplinary devices, but to do with encouraging and monitoring individual progress. Ladies' committees and

matrons made genuine attempts to assess women's readiness for longer-term institutionalisation. Just as probation identified those unlikely to stay the course to institutional workers, probation offered women the right of refusal early on in institutional experience. This trial period also involved a degree of negotiation with individuals. Whilst extending probation prolonged the institutional experience, for some inmates those decisions may have been based on professional experience; overriding a probationer's wishes in the short term may have been perceived as in her interests in the long term. Therefore, although she had the right to leave, asserting that right took determination. Such decisions therefore raise fundamental questions about the meaning of 'voluntary', institutional legitimacy and the limits of institutional authority which will be considered in the thesis Conclusion.

Women who progressed through probation faced at least a year of institutional routine. The next chapter will go inside the institutional interior and examine the link between institutional purpose, materiality and meaning in the reform process. It will suggest that despite material attempts to create a moral environment, women found ways of shaping their own experience.

Chapter Four Inside the 'Homes of Mercy': Moral Materiality

Chapter Three argued that separate space was essential to the subjective experience of probation. This chapter moves further into the institutional interior to examine how other spaces were configured, decorated, furnished and why. In the specialist context of female reform institutions purpose, materiality and meaning were inextricably linked.[1] As hybrid sites combining industrial and domestic activities under one roof, the configuration of different spaces and the tools and everyday objects within them worked together to create a didactic material world. This chapter will argue that both spaces and objects were implicated in the rehabilitation process, preparing inmates for employment as respectable servants. By repopulating institutional spaces with some of the objects that surrounded them in their everyday lives, it will contribute new insights into the inmates' material world. In reform settings, women responded to spaces and objects differently, finding strategies for both resistance and coping.[2] Some challenged authority or expressed their frustration, but others cooperated and found ways of getting through. Both responses reveal inmates' capacity for independent decision-making and action. Together they take us beyond rebellion as the sole response to institutionalisation to a more complicated reading of institutional experience which sees agency as attributing autonomy to the individual.[3]

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[1] Christopher Tilley notes the importance of the social and cultural contexts in which an object moves in reading the significance of that object. 'Interpreting Material Culture' in *The Meanings of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*, ed. by Ian Hodder, (Abingdon: Harper Collins, 1991), pp.185- 194 (p.189). See also Bernard L. Herman, *The Stolen House* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), p.5.

[2] Elinor Conlin Casella, *An Archaeology of Institutional Confinement*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2007), pp.79-81.

[3] See Megan Webber, Troubling Agency: Agency and Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century London', *Historical Research*, 91 (2018) 116-36, (p.119).

Objects reflect the social and cultural values of the society which produces them.[4] In order to understand their meaning and significance in that society, historians need to examine the social contexts in which they circulated.[5] Part of a network of human interactions, objects tell us about everyday life across time and place in specific cultures.[6] Objects operate in a culturally-specific relationship in which they define and are defined by the culture which created them.[7]As demonstrated in the previous chapter, spatial and material practices worked together in the four case studies to shape the experience of probation. In the same way, the constructed material environment in a range of residential institutions can define or reinforce social relations and influence behaviour.[8] In institutional cultures, spaces and objects shaped institutional subjects in particular ways. Rebecca Wynter argues that every element of the material setting in the Staffordshire prison and asylum exerted a controlling influence 'constructed by the design of the "things" that encircled the inmate'.[9] Institutional subjects therefore had little control over or choice in the constitution of a material world designed by others. Work on the

[4] Manuel Charpy, 'How Things Shape Us: Material Culture and Identity in the Industrial Age' in *Writing Material Culture History* ed. by Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp.199-221 (p.199). See also *History and Material Culture: a Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. by Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).
[5] Leonie Hannan and Sarah Longair, *History through Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp.19-20. *Gender and Material Culture in Britain Since 1600*, ed. by Hannah Greig, Jane Hamlett and Leonie Hannah (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[6] Harvey, *History and Material Culture*, p.13.
[7] Greig et al, *Gender and Material Culture*, p.10.
[8] *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn* ed. by Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p.8. On the relationships between gender, space and identity and the construction of material environment in a range of settings see Jane Hamlett, Lesley Hoskins and Rebecca Preston, (eds), *Residential Institutions in Britain 1725-1970: Inmates and Environments* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).
[9] Rebecca Wynter,'"Diseased Vessels and Punished Bodies": a Study of Material Culture and Control in Staffordshire County Gaol and Lunatic Asylum, c.1793-1866' (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of Birmingham, 2007), p.3.

construction of domesticity in asylums has shown how room configurations and furnishings set behavioural expectations in therapeutic settings.[10] In contexts of confinement and material deprivation, certain spaces and objects draw attention to themselves. The 'emotional charge' of particular work spaces and objects or the quality and quantity of food triggered a range of responses.[11] Where we do have inhabitants' own words, their responses to their material environment are eloquent.[12]

The interiors of reform institutions for 'fallen' women have received relatively little scholarly attention.[13] This chapter therefore builds on existing

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[10]Andrew Scull,'The Domestication of Madness', *Medical History*, 27 (1983), 233-248. See also Barry Edginton, 'Moral Architecture: the Influence of the York Retreat on Asylum Design', *Health and Place*, 3 (1997), 91-99, Mary Guyatt, 'A Semblance of Home: Mental Asylum Interiors, 1880-1914' in *Interior Design and Identity*, ed. by Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), pp.48-71, Louise Hide, *Gender and Class in English Asylums, 1890-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014) and 'From Asylum to Mental Hospital: Gender, Space and the Patient Experience in London County Council Asylums 1890-1910' in Hamlett et al, *Residential Institutions*, pp.51-64. On the importance of domesticity in lodgings for post-institutional patients in the early twentieth century see Stephen Soanes,'"The Father and Mother of the Place": Identity and Belonging in the English Cottage Home for Convalescing Psychiatric Patients, 1910-1939', in *Residential Institutions*, pp.109-139. For an archaeological study of asylum design in the colonial context, see Susan Piddock,'John Conolly's " Ideal" Asylum and Provisions for the Insane in Nineteenth-Century South Australia and Tasmania', in *The Archaeology of Institutional Life*, ed. by April M. Beisaw and James G. Gibb (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), pp.187-205.

[11] On affective responses, see John Styles, 'Objects of Emotion: The London Foundling Hospital Tokens, 1741-60 in *Writing Material Culture History* ed. by Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 165-172. For acts of refusal, see David Green 'Pauper Protests: Power and Resistance in Early Nineteenth-Century London Workhouses', *Social History*, 31 (2006), 137-159.

[12] Mary C. Beaudry, Lauren J. Cook, and Stephen A. Mrozowski, 'Artifacts and Active Voices: Material Culture as Social Discourse' in *The Archaeology of Inequality*, ed. by Randall H. McGuire and Robert Paynter (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp.150-191 (p.165).

[13] Linda Mahood situates her discussion of daily life in Scottish Magdalen institutions within a wider discourse of oppressive regulation in *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990). See thesis Introduction for an assessment of Paula Bartley's comparison between the material settings of female reform and female preventive homes in *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000). Frances Finnegan provides some detail of the spaces of Good Shepherd Magdalen asylums in Ireland in *Do Penance or Perish* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), but focuses mainly on the evolution and operation of the asylums. Valerie Bonham provides useful detail of the interior and furnishings at Clewer. See *A Place in Life: The Clewer House of Mercy 1849-83* (Windsor: Valerie Bonham and the Community of St John the Baptist, 1992), p.180-81.

studies of materiality in a range of institutional environments and contributes new insights into the everyday material world of moral reformatory spaces for women. More particularly, it sheds new light on the material differences between lay and penitentiary institutions. Although both were founded on religious principles, the distinctive materiality of the penitentiaries becomes clear. The use of texts and religious iconography to embellish everyday objects and furnishings vividly represented, expressed and embodied the sisters' spiritual aspirations for themselves and for the 'penitents'. Studies of the material culture of American institutions undertaken by historical archaeologists offer important analyses of material recovered from a range of now lost institutions with different reform purposes.[14] Excavations of two residential spaces occupied by working prostitutes and former prostitutes provide evidence of the contrast between their material practices. Timothy Gilfoyle has revealed the luxurious material culture of brothels, while Lu Ann De Cunzo found out of date ceramics, possibly donated, and a mixture of 'unmatched plates', alongside higher quality tableware at the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum.[15] Recovering the material culture of the dispossessed is not straightforward; just as the built spaces of female reform institutions rarely survive, evidence of what was inside them is even more elusive. Absence is 'the norm' and poses methodological challenges in realising lost institutional interiors and interpreting associated objects.[16]

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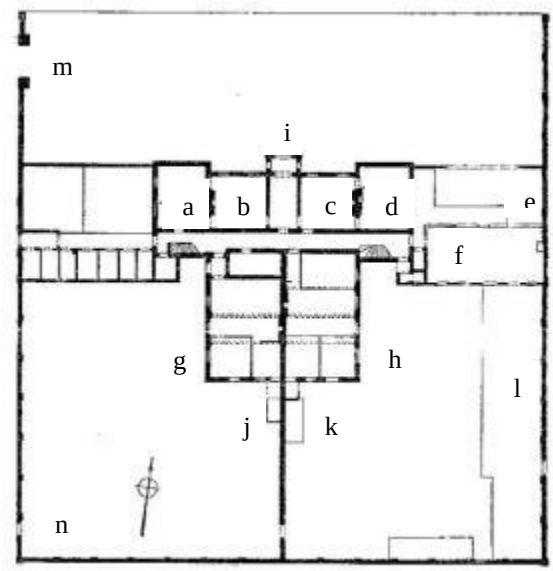
[14] Eleanor Conlin Casella, *The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2007).
[15] Timothy J. Gilfoyle 'Archaeologists in the Brothel: "Sin City", Historical Archaeology and Prostitution' *Historical Archaeology* 39 (2005), 133-141; De Cunzo 'On Reforming the "Fallen" and Beyond: Transforming Continuity at the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia, 1845-1916', *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 5 (2001), 19-43, (p.29).
[16] Glenn Adamson,'The Case of the Missing Footstool: Reading the Absent Object' in *History and Material Culture*, pp.192-207, (p.192).

The records for the case study institutions are rich in different ways and together help to build a picture of distinctive material worlds. Suppliers' and contractors' bills survive for the Cambridge Refuge from the early 1840s and offer detail of everyday objects bought to furnish and equip the new building, summarised in Appendix 3. For both lay institutions, accounts of annual household expenditure are printed in Annual Reports and monthly accounts from tradesmen suggest the kinds of foodstuffs and household goods purchased regularly. Boards of Guardians' records can be compared with institutional diets as far as we know them. Gauging women's material expectations is challenging, as detail on the households from which they entered is sparse. The greatest detail of family background is given at Maplestead where fathers' occupations are listed consistently. The biggest category was labourer, followed by soldier and sailors, tradesmen such as greengrocers and artisans employed in boot-making and coach-building. Also including five foremen in various settings and three policemen, the range suggests women came from mostly lower but some upper working-class households. Although details of women's responses to their material environment often come through the record as disciplinary infractions, they also reveal women's ingenuity in getting round material privations or exploiting poor management.

Figure 4.1 approximates the identification and distribution of room spaces at the Cambridge Refuge, based on the ground floor footprint and description of

the first floor published in 1959.[17] By this stage, the Refuge building had been in council ownership for twenty years and partitions in some of the first-floor spaces reflect its later use as residential accommodation. In some cases, it is possible to deduce the locations of high status or group spaces on the basis of features such as fireplaces, room size and proximity to the main entrance. While there is no reference to a visitors' room in the lay institutions, it is likely that there was at least some waiting space provided for women's family members and other visitors in addition to the board room.

Ground floor



a board room: windows to garden and entrance gate
b waiting/visitors' room
c matron's sitting-room'[?] overlooks garden, laundry and washhouse kitchen.
d kitchen
e ironing room/bathroom extension, 1908
f washhouse
g probationers' day ward (away from laundry)
h admitted women's day ward
i front entrance portico
j probationers' privy
k admitted women's privy
l laundry and washhouse
m visitors' entrance
n garden gate

[17] *City of Cambridge: a Survey and Inventory by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments* (HMSO, London: 1959), vol. 1, pp.313-314.

First floor

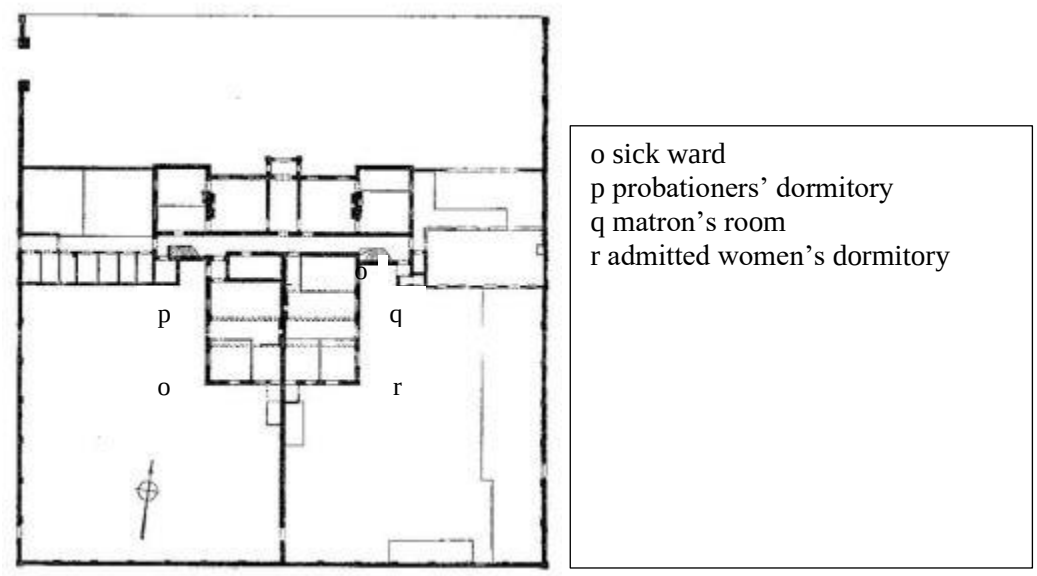


Figure 4.1 Approximation of room distribution in the new building at the Cambridge Female Refuge (1841), based on Figure 2.4.

This chapter also contributes a new photographic record of the most significant surviving source, the Ditchingham building itself and some of the objects associated with its life as a penitentiary. Although the uses of some spaces have changed and furnishings updated, the shapes of the rooms, their doors, windows and fireplaces are intact. Everyday laundry objects also survive. My photographs capture the spaces exactly as I found them and as the sisters of the Community of All Hallows used them up until June 2018.[18] The objects and spaces at Ditchingham analysed here are self-selecting; they are rare survivals from a single institution and cannot therefore be taken as representative of penitentiaries in general. However, it is reasonable to

[18] Joy Frith photographed the exterior of the present day All Hallows, but does not represent any interiors or objects, as materiality was not her primary focus. See 'Accounting for Souls: Anglican Sisters and the Economies of Moral Reform' in *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe 1773-1931*, ed. by Maarten Van Dijck and others (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2013), 185-204.

assume a degree of material commonality and meaning across institutions with the same purpose and the same architect.

Chapter One examined the benefits of domesticity as promoted by Ellice Hopkins. This chapter analyses engravings from the Albion Hill Home, presented as a model in *Work Among the Lost* and compares the configurations of machinery, furniture and furnishings they represent with recorded material practice in the case study institutions. Part I of this chapter begins with a brief outline of the precarious financial basis on which the four case study institutions operated, then surveys high status spaces to show how power relations were reflected and embodied in material terms. Part II considers the meaning of spaces and objects encountered by inmates and what their responses to them tell us about their reform experience. This section will suggest that in relation to inmates' spaces, how institutions chose to spend their money was significant. Although frugality was a virtue, the gratuitous decoration of inmates' spaces by an artist supporter at Cambridge suggests that such embellishments were not morally unacceptable *per se*. Lastly, the chapter asks whether over time, we can detect a shift towards a less austere material environment in the case study institutions.

Part I

Material values

This section addresses the implications of the limited financial resources institutions had at their disposal. It argues that monetary restraint was itself morally didactic, modelling thrift and 'making do' as virtues inmates could

take into their lives beyond the institution. Financial rewards incentivised and encouraged habits of saving. More broadly, the material world of the institutional setting promoted moral values in a variety of ways.

Any analysis of the material culture of charitable institutions needs to acknowledge the precarious financial footings on which these foundations were set. The two penitentiaries received occasional grants towards building work from the CPA.[19] Choir sisters contributed fifty guineas annually at Ditchingham and lady visitors at Maplestead paid between twenty and twenty-five pounds per year.[20] Although a generous legacy funded the building of the penitentiary at Maplestead and supported the incumbent's salary, like their lay counterparts both sisterhoods depended on income from donations and subscriptions from private individuals. Ensuring a regular and reliable income was a constant anxiety in all four settings.[21] Both Lincoln and Cambridge employed an agent to collect subscriptions.[22] The proliferation of charities from mid-century brought both increasing and competing calls on the generosity of potential donors, forcing charities to greater innovation in their fundraising.[23] The perception of their cause as urgent but 'delicate'

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[19] An initial £75 funding for the Shipmeadow premises was given in 1854, CPA AR 1854, p.6. MAP joined in 1878 and received £30 towards extending the laundry in 1881, CPA Council Minutes, LPL, MS 3681.

[20] Susan Mumm cites the revised Statutes at Ditchingham from 1898. See *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), p.81. MAP 13 July 1891.

[21] Frith suggests that donations amounted to over seventy-five percent of the income of the penitentiary at Ditchingham but does not show how she arrives at that figure. See 'Accounting for Souls', p.190. Sarah Flew notes the vulnerability of charities relying on voluntary giving. See *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England, 1856-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.58.

[22] LPFH 18 January 1875, CFR 19 November 1850.

[23] Susan Ash notes the increasingly 'crowded charity market' from mid-century. See *Funding Philanthropy: Dr Barnardo's Metaphors, Narratives and Spectacle* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), p.15. See also Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange and

meant a more muted approach to marketing, relying largely on the persuasive power of biblical rhetoric in annual reports and charity sermons to garner financial support. Towards the end of the period of this study, a new initiative was the fund-raising 'drawing-room meeting' attended by the warden of Maplestead in 1910.[24] The unpredictability and inconsistency of private voluntary support carried high risk and could reflect wider economic trends. All four institutions experienced a falling-off in subscriptions during the 1880s, possibly as a result of the agricultural depression and drop in wheat prices, hitting the East of England particularly hard during the 1880s.[25]

However, in the reformatory setting, financial constraints could also be turned to moral advantage. Deborah Cohen notes that evangelical households spurning luxury and worldliness re-cast privation as a virtue.[26] By mid-century, self-denial had shifted to a perception of suffering as 'a state to be mitigated'.[27] One way to achieve mitigation was by acquiring material goods which enhanced the moral tenor of the household. By ascribing moral value to material possessions, objects, especially those bearing Biblical texts or aphorisms, exerted a moral influence over the inhabitants of the household.[28]

Bertrand Taithe, *The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870-1912* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp.10-11.

[24] MAP AR, 1910, p.4.

[25] CFR AR, 1881, p.6; LPFH AR, 1887, p.6; DIT AR, 1886, p.7; MAP AR, 1889, p.3. See also Trevor May, *An Economic and Social History of Britain 1760-1990*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 1995), p.124 and Martin Daunton, *Wealth and Welfare: an Economic and Social History of Britain 1851-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.33.

[26] Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: the British and their Possessions* (London: Yale, 2006), p.6; Jane Garnett and Alana Harris, 'Faith in the Home: Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London', *Material Religion*, 7 (2011), 299-302.

[27] Cohen, *Household Gods*, p.12.

[28] *Ibid*., p.x. Archaeological study of working-class fling privies in London recovered fragments of 'decorative moralizing china with instructional inscriptions'. See Alistair Owens and others, 'Fragments of the Modern City: Material Culture and the Rhythms of Everyday Life in Victorian London', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 15 (2010), 212-225 (p.216).

Morally improving objects could therefore shape moral people. Everyday objects in reform institutions could perform similar semiotic and symbolic functions. They embodied emblematic values appropriate to re-forming 'fallen' working-class women in the simplicity of their material form. 'Good and plain' chairs were modest rather than ostentatious, important values to promote among women assumed to be inherently vulnerable to the temptations of 'finery'.[29] The power of objects lay in their cumulative effect on the subjective consciousness. Surrounding inmates and in the specific culture of reform spaces, they were signifiers of social and moral values to be assimilated.[30] The same values offered a pretext for providing the cheapest items; the constraints of the voluntary basis on which the two lay and two sisterhoods were constituted were therefore both ideologically convenient and expedient; reinforcing the moral value of prudence and plainness sat well in settings where funds were low.

Reform institutions stressed the moral and religious value of money 'honestly' earned, thereby focusing penitents' aspirations on both the spiritual and the material world.[31] The method here was incentive. Middle-class 'work-discipline anxieties' informed strategies to train working-class people to live within their means.[32] Financial rewards at key moments in women's

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[29] See Eric Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977). For an analysis of visual representations of 'fallenness', see Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).
[30] Daniel J. Huppatz, 'Roland Barthes: *Mythologies*', *Design and Culture*, 3 (2011), 85-100 (p.88).
[31] Jennie Batchelor '"Industry in Distress": Reconfiguring Femininity and Labor in the Magdalen House', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 28 (2004), 1-20 (p.14-15).
[32] Michael J.D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.195-196.

institutional lives encouraged good behaviour and acknowledged length of employment later in domestic service. Incentives linked to co-operation and functioning as a disciplinary tool were not unique to moral reformatories**.** In what Meg Gomersall identifies as 'benign oversight', the British and National Schools offered rewards and encouragements, typically books, money or clothes, to former pupils for 'continuing good behaviour' in domestic service.[33] The introduction of financial incentives to increase productivity in laundry and sewing work at the Glasgow Magdalene Asylum in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[34] Reward systems were first introduced early at Cambridge (1841) and Ditchingham (1856), but not until 1872 at Lincoln, possibly as an incentive to settle and motivate women during a period of poor management, 'indiscipline' and high staff turnover in 1870 and 1871. Rewards marked successful completion of a year in service, with the lay institutions giving one guinea and the sisterhoods one pound. The Cambridge Refuge also awarded ten shillings to those who stayed in service for two years and gratuities of around one guinea on marriage. By the time of an inspection visit in 1910, the Refuge also operated a mark system worth two pennies a week.[35]

Women were also encouraged to deposit their rewards in savings banks and at both lay institutions, deposits were made on their behalf. Boyd Hilton notes

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[33] Gomersall notes that girls might also be rewarded with 'moral money' on getting married provided 'her prospective husband was of a "good character"'See *Working-Class Girls in Nineteenth-Century England: Life, Work, Schooling* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p.65.
[34] Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes*, p.88-9. See also Louise Hide, *Gender and Class in English Asylums, 1890-1814.* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.92.
[35] Reformatory and Refuge Union, Inspection of Homes Association Minute Book, D239 J4/6/55.

the influence of Revd Thomas Chalmers in relation to establishing savings banks for working-class people, arguing that for Chalmers, the purpose was less to do with encouraging them to become 'petty capitalists' and more to do with providing a cushion against the effects of economic slumps and underemployment.[36] An example from Cambridge suggests that the committee adapted their policy to suit individual circumstances and to provide a similar financial cushion. Reversing their usual policy, Susan Palmer was given £1 after her year in service, but as she was about to go into hospital and would be earning very little 'it was agreed that the whole sum should be given and not a portion put into the savings bank'.[37] At Lincoln, the institution deposited £2 per year in the savings bank for long-term inmate Martha Wilkinson. Considered unsuitable for private domestic service, these savings were effectively the wages she had earned as a general servant in the Home.[38]

Authority: the materiality of status

Limited financial resources meant economies in institutional 'start-up' costs and ongoing household expenses. Women's daily encounters with material culture therefore involved moving in functional, plainly-furnished spaces populated with work-related utensils, tools and household objects. In the context of Anglican sisterhood penitentiaries, frugality had spiritual meaning. At Ditchingham, the warden set down the rule of poverty, urging the sisters 'to practise a conscientious, careful, economy in the use of all worldly things

[36] Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.375.
[37] CFR, 2 August 1842.
[38] LPFH LC, 31 August 1865.

– in housekeeping, in dress, in rejecting unnecessary comforts, in correcting the habits of others'.[39] The spiritual obligation to material simplicity for both sisters and penitents might seem to suggest more commonality in their material environment than existed between staff and inhabitants in lay institutions, but in practice, material distinctions were played out in several ways. The discourse of fund-raising at Ditchingham framed the 'material needs of the sisterhood' in terms of the 'assumed needs of the penitents', suggesting that meeting sisters' own needs was essential to enabling the effective work of the penitentiary.[40] In this way, material disparities could be justified. Community rooms were provided for different ranks of sisters at Ditchingham, the superior also having her own sitting room. The need to attract volunteer lady associates may have informed the provision of more domestic and familiar spaces such as sitting rooms, described in the account of the opening ceremony in *John Bull*.[41]

Although male committees designed institutional buildings which women would inhabit, they nevertheless reserved meeting space for themselves. The board or committee room was for the use of committee members who assembled on the premises for weekly or monthly meetings. Although members of ladies' committees and matrons attended for particular items of business or special meetings, this room was primarily intended for use by men. In her study of the Bethlem Hospital, Jane Hamlett notes that a

[39] DIT, Rules for Sisters.
[40] Joy Frith, '"Pseudonuns"': Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University, Canada, 2004), p.262.
[41] 22 October 1864. Felicia Skene criticised the 'luxurious' provision of sitting-rooms for lady workers and sisters. See 'Penitentiaries and Reformatories', *Odds and Ends,* no.6 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1865), p.6.

photograph of the interior of the hospital board room was thought sufficiently important to 'feature prominently in Bethlem's early twentieth-century photograph album'.[42] As the institutional power base, its representation in the album is a statement of institutional pride. It marks the institution's satisfaction at its longevity and recognition of its own cultural significance. Similar pride is expressed on the opening of the council room in the new headquarters of the Reformatory and Refuge Union at 117 Victoria Street, London in 1905, published in the organisation's monthly periodical *Seeking and Saving*.

Figure 4.2 Council room, Reformatory and Refuge Union office at Victoria House, Victoria Street, London SW1, 1907, CUL, L232:3. c.79.[43]

The space is purposeful, with plain but functional furnishings appropriate to the charitable status of the organisation. Furniture and fittings were donated, including the clock, gas mantles and cane-backed chairs.[44] As the principal

[42] Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution: Material Life in Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.48.
[43] *Seeking & Saving*, XV1, facing p.319.
[44] Ibid., p.320.

area of its work related to juvenile reformatories, industrial schools and female moral reform institutions, the introduction of flowers on every surface domesticates the space. As the publication's readership would have comprised member institutions, current supporters and most importantly, potential new supporters, this domestication sets up positive images of the Homes associated with the organisation in the viewer's mind.

Of the four case studies, the most detailed records of a board room are provided by suppliers' bills for the equipping and furnishing of the new building at Cambridge, opened in 1841. The relative quality of these furnishings in relation to those in the rest of the building marked out the high status of the board room. The furniture included a library table 6ft long and 4ft wide, offered by the supplier at a reduced price as his contribution to the 'excellent institution'.[45] On 'stout, reeded legs with three drawers on each side with good tumbler locks', the table demonstrates concerns over the safety and confidentiality of committee records and was later supplemented by an iron safety chest for deeds.[46] The board room fireplace was distinguished by the use of more expensive stone jambs and stone chimneypiece.[47] Four committee members bought the remaining board room furniture privately between them.[48] Again privately, the ladies' committee provided the carpet, in contrast to their gift of lower grade oilcloth for the hall floor.[49]

[45] CFR 29 September 1841.
[46] CFR 21 November 1843.
[47] CFR 7 August 1841.
[48] CFR, 21 September 1841.
[49] CFR 9 November 1841.

Other items purchased included a mahogany hat stand and a mahogany Chairman's chair, the added comfort of upholstery distinguishing his rank and authority in contrast to the six mahogany chairs intended for other committee members.[50] Analysing Samuel Butler's 1864 painting *Family Prayers*, Deborah Cohen notes the material plainness of the evangelical dining-room in which his family sits and draws attention to the clock as 'the most commanding object in the room'.[51] Mounted on its bracket in the centre of the Cambridge board room chimney-piece was an eight-day chiming clock by London makers Brockbank and Atkins, specially bought for the room in August 1844. The clock was a practical essential for committee members, but also a reminder of the moral value of punctuality and regularity to those in earshot.[52] In her work on Anglican and Non-Conformist clergymen's studies, Jane Hamlett suggests that the material culture of these spaces was 'constructed to create an impression of important male work'.[53] The reformatory board room served a similar purpose in representing and reflecting in material terms the status and moral authority of the clergymen at its helm. In the same way that the vicarage study functioned as the 'professional enclave' of the incumbent, these board rooms acted as spaces for professional clergy and lay people involved in largely amateur voluntary action in a variety of institutional endeavours. The simplicity and formality of the furnishings were a function of the constraints on funding, but also

[50] CFR 4 October 1842 and Joshua Wentworth's bill in CFR R60/27/7 (a).
[51] Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods,* p.10.
[52] A clock was also acquired for the penitentiary at Maplestead. MAP 30 March 1889.
[53] See Jane Hamlett, 'Materialising Gender: Identity and Middle-Class Domestic Interiors, 1850-1910' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2005), p.179.

served to underline the gravity and sensitivity of institutional purpose.[54] A single spot of colour was provided by the 'sober-coloured crimson baize door to the board room – thought necessary to prevent the committee from being overheard'.[55] Arrangements at Lincoln were similar, in that there was a committee room on the premises, probably on the ground floor, but beyond periodic references to cleaning the walls and ceiling, no detail survives of the furnishings.[56]

Furnishings and furniture associated with the two penitentiaries reinforced spiritual vocation and reflected the practical needs of penitentiary work. The superior's davenport desk is freighted with contradictory meanings and captures discordances in reform rhetoric. The iconographic reference to the saving parable of the lost sheep in the front panel carving in Figure 4.3 would be understood by and act upon both penitents and sisters encountering this desk in any interview with the superior. [57] On the other hand, concealed lockable drawers in the image on the right in Figure 4.4 suggest fear of theft.[58]

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[54] Ibid, p.188, p.199.
[55] CFR 18 January 1842.
[56] LPFH 5 June 1871.
[57] This parable of redemption is told in the New Testament, in the Gospels of St. Matthew (18: 12-14) and St. Luke (15:3-7).
[58] Susan Mumm notes that thefts from penitentiaries did take place. See, *Stolen Daughters*, p.105.

Figure 4.3 Front view of Lavinia Crosse's desk, House of Mercy, Ditchingham.

Figure 4.4 Poppyhead designs for Litany desks from *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, (left, CUL, A.32.3) and side view of Lavinia Crosse's desk showing drawers concealed by a removable panel (right).

Figure 4.4 sets the desk alongside an illustration of a poppy head design along the side panel of a litany desk from *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*. Published by the Cambridge Camden Society (later the Ecclesiological Society), as a guide

to church furnishings and ornament according to Tractarian principles, it recommends that 'where expert carving cannot be had, the plain poppy head ought to be chosen'.[59] The poppy heads on Crosse's desk are intricately carved and detailed, suggesting they were executed by a skilled craftsman. As an individual desk it symbolised the singular authority and responsibility of the female head of a sisterhood penitentiary. Embodying the purpose of the penitentiary, its materiality is not simply moral but specifically Christian.[60]

Just as meeting places for penitentiary councils were provided away from the Ditchingham site, visitors to it were housed in their own zone and like probationer penitents, kept at one remove from the institutional core. Situated to the left of the front door, the visitors' room runs transversely along the end of the wing. The large windows look out onto open ground in the opposite direction from the sisters' and penitents' quarters, directing the visitor's gaze away from the inner community. Though plain, the room has a domestic feel, largely created by the stone fireplace. In familiar domestic proportions with a generous mantelpiece for decorative objects, the impression created is of a secular drawing- or sitting-room. Figure 4.5 shows the contrast between the fireplaces in this room and the dining-room, used by the sisters and penitents.

[59] *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, I, 1847, Pl. XVII. The designs in this volume are all by William Butterfield, one of whose pupils was Henry Woodyer, architect of the penitentiaries at Ditchingham and Maplestead.
[60] By contrast, the davenport desks advertised in a trade catalogue of 1881 are strikingly plain. See *The Furniture Trade Catalogue, Containing Designs for Every Description of Modern Furniture* (London: Wyman and Sons, 1881).

Figure 4.5 Ditchingham. Fireplaces in the dining room (above) and visitors' room (below).

The fireplace in the dining-room is larger and reminiscent of grander collegiate or monastic refectory spaces. The only decoration is emblematic, the carved *fleur de lis* or lily, symbolising purity and associated with the Virgin Mary in a more subtle and cautious representation than a figure or statue. Mounted on the chimney breast a wooden panel bears the community's motto, *semper orantes, semper laborantes*, 'always praying, always working', the two phrases separated by a cross. The more secular material expectations of domestic space were therefore realised for the visitors' room; as every space occupied by penitents and sisters was seen as a spiritual workplace, that purpose was embodied in the materiality of those environments.

Unlike penitentiary sisters who felt called to their work, matrons in both penitentiary and lay institutions were salaried lay people, charged with the demanding task of residential superintendence. A measure of comfort was therefore accorded to them partly because it was expedient. Subtle decorative differentiation signalled the staff quarters of workhouses. At Bedminster Union in Somerset, whilst both inmates'and master's staircases had 'stick' metal balusters, the master's bannister rail was wooden, ending in a modestly decorated newel post. Although the embellishment is restrained to reflect the fact that the master's status was only marginally above that of the inmates, that higher rank is nevertheless embodied and reinforced in the institutional fabric.[61]

[61] Kathryn A.Morrison, *The Workhouse: a Study of Poor Law Buildings in England* (Swindon: English Heritage at the National Monuments Record Centre, 1999), p.83.

Figure 4.6 Inmates' and Master's staircases at Bedminster Union, Somerset. English Heritage Archive, BB95/09796.[62]

Distinctions between matrons' and women's quarters served the same purpose in reform institutions. Privileged spatial and material provision signalled their status and role as 'ritual officers or experts' and at the same time, allowed domestic and personal possessions into the impersonal institutional space.[63] In the early years in rented property at 45 Steep Hill, the matron of the Lincoln Home '[allowed] the Institution the use of her furniture, the Committee paying for the removal of it'.[64] Twenty years later in the new building, a Kidderminster carpet was ordered for the matron's Parlour, suggesting that she had both a day room and a bedroom.[65] Nevertheless

[62] Ibid., Figure 87.
[63] Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: the Key Concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p.262.
[64] LPFH LC, 22 July 1847.
[65] LPFH 30 August 1866. In *The Housewife's Treasury of Household Information* [1879?], Isabella Beeton describes Kidderminster as 'well-suited' of commoner fabric [than Axminster or Turkey carpets], usually employed in bedroom and for similar purposes in middle-class houses'<https://archive.org/stream/gri_33125012088023/gri_33125012088023_djvu.txt>

notions of appropriateness also attached to private possessions staff brought with them. The new assistant matron arriving at Cambridge in 1844 proposed to bring furniture too large for her room. She was allowed to keep 'her feather bed, ½ dozen chairs, a table & washstand, which, should the Committee think proper, might be brought with her'.[66] The agreement finally made suggests that further negotiation took place, as the institution paid for the removal of her furniture in a similar arrangement to that at Lincoln. At the Maplestead penitentiary, the foundress and temporary superintendent Elizabeth Barter also brought her own higher quality furniture, consisting of '1 Mahogany French Bedstead, 1 Mahogany chest of drawers, 1 Mahogany washstand, 1 Mahogany towelhorse – 3 tables'.[67]

Seniority and role were also expressed materially in distinctive forms of dress. At the Ditchingham penitentiary, associates were paying lady assistants from middle- and upper-middle class families. Even for these lay women visitors, dress mattered because it carried moral meaning. As they assisted in work with 'penitents' associates were expected to set a sartorial example by dressing plainly. One acceptable adornment was their badge pictured in Figure 4.7 below. The pointed oval *vessica pisces* shape probably originated from mediaeval seals and was particularly associated with women.[68] Light in weight and probably of a tin alloy, the texts chosen for the front of the badge

[Accessed 25/09/2018], p.222.
[66] CFR 24 September 1844.
[67] MAP 31 July 1876
[68] Early examples include the seal of Queen Matilda, 1100-1118. Her seal may have monastic origins and derive from that of her sister-in-law, Cecilia, who was abbess of Caen. See Paul D.A. Harvey and Andrew McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London: The British Library and the Public Record Office, 1996), p. 48.

are significant. The quotation in capitals POPULUS TUUS POPULUS MEUS 'where thou shalt dwell, I also shall dwell' is taken from the Old Testament.[69] It relates to Ruth's loyalty and devotion to her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. Accompanying Naomi back to her own tribe, Ruth joins that tribe and gleans in their fields, choosing to leave the security of her own tribe out of duty.[70] The second inscription AFFLIGI CUM POPULO DEI from the New Testament, meaning 'afflicted with the people of God' refers to Moses's choice to suffer in faith with the people of God and turn away from worldly pleasures.[71] The relevance of both quotations to the vocation of associates, their relationships with their own families and their engagement with penitentiary work is clear. On the reverse side, the badge reads 'Associate of All Hallows Ditchingham, 1868'. The ring at the top suggests it was worn on a chain or pin. The badge represented the distinct identity of associates and their membership of a discrete community group. Although the text might be less clear at a distance and the Latin inaccessible to penitents, the purpose of the badge was emblematic as well as didactic. The cross and sheaves of barley on the front provided a more easily readable iconographic reference to Ruth's story.

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[69] Ruth 1:16.
[70] See Aliza Shenhar,'Ruth', *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions*, edited by Haya Bar-Itzhak and Raphael Patai (London: Routledge, 2013). <http://libezproxy.open.ac.uk/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/sharpejft/ruth/0?institutionId=292> [accessed 2 June 2018].
[71] Letter to the Hebrews, 11: 24. W.R.F. Browning, 'Moses', *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
Katharine Doob Sakenfield, *Ruth* (Louisville, KY.: John Knox Press, 1999), pp. 11-12.

Figure 4.7 Associates' badge, Ditchingham.

Part II Materiality and moral improvement

This section first examines the objects and spaces associated with work. It argues that as didactic objects through which inmates acquired skills for domestic service to enable them to earn an 'honest' living, such objects and spaces could be construed as agents of change. The section ends with an examination of dining spaces and will suggest that the improving element of shared meals lay in the positive moral influence of domesticity and the construction of the institutional family. It will also show that behavioural expectations at communal meal-times tested powers of self-control.

Objects associated with work were intrinsically improving. They were the instruments of productive activity which trained inmates for self-sufficiency in respectable employment. Appendix 4 shows that the working day for the four institutions was from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. although at Cambridge laundry

work ended at 7 p.m. For most women, the largest portion of the day would be spent in the laundry or at sewing, although some cleaning and cooking would also be expected. In terms of the expectations of domestic service, by the early twentieth century, fifteen to eighteen hours was typical for the average servant. The difference of course was that domestic service was paid.[72]

Laundry spaces: 'stir and zest'

Appealing in the All Hallows Community Magazine for some 'quiet games for their week-day recreations', the writer, explains that the probationers and girls not strong enough for laundry work need occupying as they 'miss the stir and zest which are pervading elements in the Laundry class'.[73] Despite the euphemistic construction placed on such exacting work, the observation captures the different energy of laundry work and the spaces in which it was done. The laundering process required bodily engagement and physical strength. It also brought women into contact with a range of tools and machines for different tasks, particularly in drying and ironing. Laundering was not a pleasant task; the 'Terms of Washing' for Cambridge at Figure 4.13 includes all items of underwear as well as baby's diapers. The process involved contact with abrasive soaps and bleaching products. Manoeuvring in a relatively confined space, it carried risks associated with lifting washing

[72] Theresa McBride *The Domestic Revolution: the Modernisation of Household Service in England and France 1820-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p.55.
[73] *East and West*,1889, pp.11-12. The writer was possibly the editor, Anna H. Drury, an Associate.

out of copper boiling tanks and wringing it multiple times through heavy manually-operated mangles.[74]

Whilst objects associated with laundry were aesthetically unremarkable, their significance as evidence of everyday tasks should not be underestimated. Sara Pennell argues that such everyday tools take us into the 'social imaginary' and to the way in which their users 'shaped' and 'owned' everyday practices.[75] In the context of repetitive work activities, women's bodies were themselves tools in the institutional process of laundering and performed the tasks associated with that process. Familiar with both the tools and the tasks, women's bodies knew their environment and experienced it as 'a series of expectations and anticipations'.[76] In an attempt to get closer to those tasks as women performed them, the focus here will be on objects women used and the spaces in which they used them.

The washhouse, laundry, kitchen and day wards were the principal interior spaces in which women moved and spent the largest proportion of their time. Productivity in laundry work was financially essential. Joy Frith notes the tension between the goal of spiritual and moral transformation in penitentiaries and their dependence on the labour of their charges. She argues

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[74] Pamela Malcolmson suggests that between pre-wash soaking and hanging out to dry, the wet laundry was lifted between containers and wrung out on average, 'no less than six times'. See *English Laundresses: a Social History, 1850-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, c1986), pp.30-32.
[75] Sara Pennell,'Mundane Materiality, or, Should Small Things still be Forgotten?' in Karen Harvey, *History and Material Culture*, pp.173-191 (p.179).
[76] Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology, the Key Concepts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p.39. See also Frank Trentman on the idea of the 'habit-body' which draws on 'bodily memory' in using tools to perform tasks in 'Materiality in the Future of History: Things, Practices, and Politics', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 283-307 (pp.289-90).

that by opting to extend the laundry at Ditchingham in 1865 rather than take in more penitents, the sisterhood prioritised financial concerns over spiritual ones and 'sold out to the pressures of philanthropic work'.[77] That laundry income helped to support the life of the whole penitentiary takes us into the uncomfortable truth that at times both lay and penitentiary institutions did rely on the income generated by inmates and therefore that the hard physical labour of laundry work was compulsory for those physically able to do it. The committee at Cambridge spelt out the calculation: the average upkeep of an 'inmate' was twenty-four pounds maximum, of which 'about £8 per head as the proceeds of the remunerative work done on the premises'.[78]At the Good Shepherd Magdalen, Hammersmith, Peter Hughes demonstrates that as spaces essential to institutional survival, laundries were subject to constant reconfiguration and expansion, made in the light of experience.[79] Across the period of this study, all four case study institutions altered and extended their laundry premises over time in order to process more laundry and generate more income, installing new apparatus such as drying closets.[80] The inspection of charitable laundries was made mandatory under the Factory and Workshop Act of 1907.[81] There is evidence to suggest that the laundry at

[77] Frith, '"Pseudonuns"', p.278.
[78] CFR AR 1870, p.3.
[79] Peter Hughes, 'Cleanliness and Godliness' a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Convent Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain' (unpublished doctoral thesis: Brunel University, 1985), p.119.
[80] At Cambridge a new drying apparatus bought by a subscriber (CFR AR, 1870 p.4). In Lincoln Bradford's patent washing machine was acquired for the laundry (LPFH 6 Nov 1886).
[81] 7.Edw.7 c.39. Moritz Kaiser argued that with twenty-six Peers and two MPs as members, the CPA wielded considerable power to influence the wording and extent of legislation for the inspection of charitable laundries from 1895 in 'Anglican Magdalen Laundries and the British State, 1850-1914', a paper given at the Social History Society Conference at the University of Lincoln, 12 June 2019.

Maplestead may have caused the inspector some concern. In July 1907 he had already visited and the committee reported that 'some alterations may be necessary to meet the views of the Inspector'.[82] A laundry extension the following year included 'the excellent system of drying by means of horses shut up in hot dry chambers promises to add much to the comfort of the workers in the Laundry & it is hoped the efficiency of the work'.[83] That the lady inspector Miss Tracey visited Maplestead three times during 1909, suggests that further adjustments may have been necessary.[84]

Figure 4.8 The Wash House at the Albion Hill Home, Brighton. Ellice Hopkins, *Work Among the Lost* (London: Hatchards, 1874), opposite p.45. CUL.

[82] MAP 17 July 1907.
[83] MAP 24 July 1908
[84] MAP 5 February 1909. Miss Tracey visited Lincoln in August 1909 (Matron's Report Book) and Ditchingham,in 1911 (AR, p.8).

Earlier attempts to improve the working environment in penitentiary laundries had been identified by Ellice Hopkins. Writing in 1870, she condemned an Anglican sisterhood where

> the wash tubs were ranged around the laundry where every girl washed, not with a bright human face opposite her, but with nothing to look at but a patch of dirty wall, like cattle in a stall.[85]

The moral intention of facing the wall was to turn inmates' thoughts inwards and to discourage eye contact with others. It appeared to Hopkins as gratuitously punitive. By contrast, at the Albion Hill Home in Brighton, a probationer is not held back and 'at once goes to the wash-tub. She finds herself face to face with other girls, splashing and clattering and pounding going on all round her'. The impression in the engraving above is of a well-equipped industrial space, with a high ceiling and apparently well-ventilated and lit. The women are overseen by the matron who does not wear a cap. Despite the physicality of laundry work the women's movements are restrained and orderly, suggesting that eye contact did not necessarily result in disciplinary chaos.

[85] Opposite p.55.

Figure 4.9 Sinks in the original laundry at Ditchingham.

Two sinks mounted on brick piers illustrate how wash tubs may have been set up originally in the laundry at Ditchingham in Figure 4.9. Ranged against the external wall possibly for drainage and plumbing purposes, the extensive clear glass allows for better light penetration inside and a clear sightline into the room for observation from outside. Because of the economic importance accorded to laundry work, all four institutions employed at least one laundry matron or assistant at some point over the period. Even with supervision, the nature of the work meant that the laundry environment was harder to control. After a turnover of five laundry assistants or matrons at Lincoln, between January 1868 and November 1869, the ladies' committee protested that laundry work was not serving its didactic purpose: 'they considered the Inmates less prepared for situations now than they were three months ago'.[86]

[86] LPFH LC,16 April 1870.

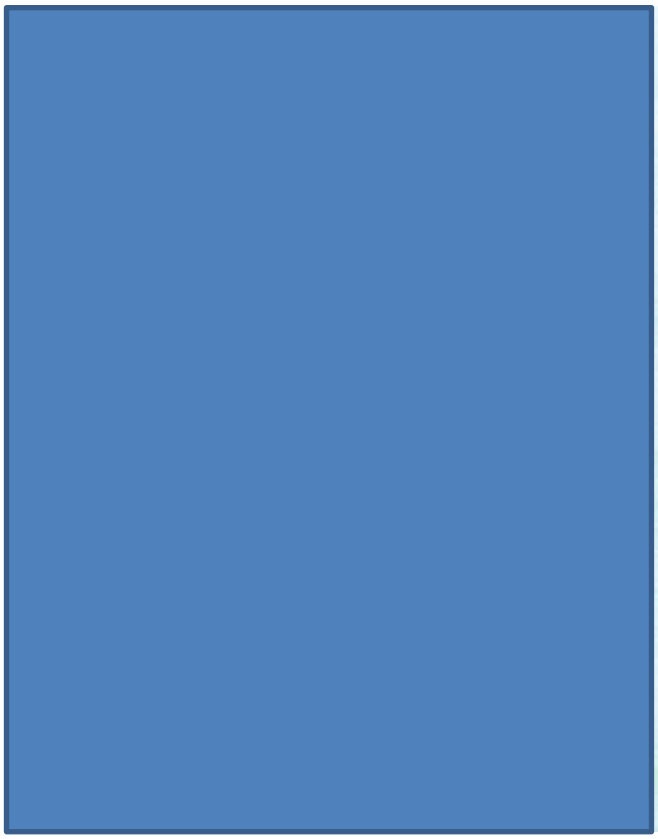

Figure 4.10 LPFH laundry extension plans,1914. Lincoln City/Planning Files Early/ID No 5328 Register 5283.

Although again partly dictated by water supply, the arrangement of the new wash house planned for Lincoln at Figure 4.10 suggests a combination of management strategies with some tubs ranged against walls and others set opposite each other.

As the institutional zone in which women could win disciplinary power struggles with staff, the laundry was one space over which they felt a sense of ownership. Although corridors linked laundry blocks to the main institutional building, they ran back to a depth of around thirty feet at the two lay institutions. Consisting of washhouse, drying-room, ironing room and packing room, there were several spaces within the laundry blocks in which

women could meet after hours and out of earshot.[87] In 1845 in Cambridge, Mary Ann Taverner had 'introduced her brother into the laundry when the matron was out'. Over a period of several weeks, she had also had her hair dressed in the laundry by another inmate, using lard stolen from the kitchen.[88] Mary Ann not only exploited lax surveillance to take possession of the laundry, but repurposed it. Instead of the space acting upon her, she acted upon the space, expressing and imposing her unreformed identity as its user. Through this act of self-fashioning, Mary Ann was de-institutionalising her hair style and reasserting her individuality before on the same occasion, going out into the town to meet a gentleman friend.[89] Similarly, distance from the main block meant the laundry became a space for confrontation: 'S. Baker having quarrelled with Croxton on Thursday night went into the Laundry on Friday between 8 & 9 and struck her violently over the eye'.[90]

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[87] Laundry spaces were also exploited in other institutional sites. Vivienne Richmond notes that 'At Millbank Penitentiary, the laundry was also a site of subversive reclamation. In 1827, the male and female inmates sent messages to each other in laundry bundle in a form of introduction agency. See Richmond, Vivienne, 'No finery': the Dress of the Poor in Nineteenth-Century England (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London Goldsmith's College, 2005), pp.268-69.

[88] For a discussion of the meaning of small acts of individual agency relating to appearance in a therapeutic setting, see Jane Hamlett, and Lesley Hoskins, 'Comfort in Small Things: Clothing, Control and Agency in County Lunatic Asylums in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 18 (2013), 93-114 (pp.16-18).

[89] CFR 4 November 1845.

[90] CFR 24 February 1846.

The role of tools relating to laundry and ironing work was to provide women with skills they would need in domestic service.

Figure 4.11 Goffering tongs, Ditchingham.

The goffering tongs at Figure 4.11 were used to create a rufflette effect on the edgings of cuffs and bonnets by making 'half twists' along the length with the heated pincer ends. A skilled laundry-maid could do this work quickly, although the turning action put a strain on the wrist.[91] The tape on the handles probably made them more comfortable to use and protected against burning. As the edges of Third Order sisters' caps were goffered, it is possible that penitents did this finishing for them. Nevertheless, goffering was a specialist laundering skill and women may have derived a sense of satisfaction in mastering it.

Figure 4.12 Flat irons, Ditchingham.

[91] Pamela Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p.166.

The smoothed handles of two flat irons from the ironing room at Ditchingham show signs of wear, reminding us that they were passed from hand to hand over time. Gauging the temperature of these irons correctly as they heated on the stove required practice and experience; 'polishing' starched garments with a succession of hot irons was a skill.[92] The laundry list for the Cambridge Female Refuge shows the range of bedlinen and family clothing inmates would have washed, ironed and finished. As well as items of underwear such as shifts and diapers, it includes frilled items which would have required goffering.

THE

TERMS OF WASHING

AT

THE FEMALE REFUGE,

VICTORIA STREET, CAMBRIDGE.

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Day Shifts each	0	2	Table Cloth 3*d.* to 6*d.*		
Girl's do.	0	1	Tray Cloth	0	1½
Plain Shirts	0	3	Breakfast do.	0	2
Shirts with frills or plaited bosoms	0	3½	Table napkins, per dozen	0	9
Boy's do.	0	2	Sheets, per pair	0	4
Gowns from 4*d.* to 9*d.*			Small do. or servants	0	3
Petticoats 2*d.* to 3*d.*			Pillow Cases, per pair	0	1
Girl's Frocks 2*d.* to 3*d.*			Counterpane	1	0
Night Gowns 2*d.* to 3*d.*			Marseilles Quilt	1	6
Girl's do.	0	1	Towels, per dozen	0	6
Night Caps 1*d.* to 1½*d.*			Kitchen Cloths, per dozen	0	6
Night Jackets	0	1½	Round Towels, each	0	1
Pockets	0	1	Toilet Covers 1½*d.* to 3*d.*		
Handkerchiefs	0	0½	Flannel Coats	0	2
Stockings, per pair	0	1	Flannel Waistcoats	0	1½
Socks, do	0	0¾	Stays	0	4
Children's do. do	0	0½	Dressing Gowns	0	9
Neckerchiefs, each	0	1	Children's stays	0	2
Waistcoats	0	3	Baby's long frocks	0	4
Boy's do.	0	1½	short do.	0	2
Trowsers 4*d.* to 6*d.*			Diapers, per doz.	0	9
			Baby Clothes, per dozen	0	9

Figure 4.13 Terms of Washing, *Annual Report*, Cambridge 1842, R/60/27/12.

[92] Pamela Malcolmson, *English Laundresses*, p.33. Younger servants were ill-prepared for finer skills such as goffering. See Alison Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants* (Penguin: London: 2007), p.92.

Although intended to prepare women for respectable domestic service and conformity to moral 'norms' outside the institution, laundry tools could become the means of self-expression inside. The plain and cheaper fabrics of women's institutional dress compared unfavourably with the quality and feel of laundry customers' clothes which acted as a catalyst to agency. At Lincoln in 1909 'a customer's silk blouse was very badly torn on purpose'.[93] Whether accidental or simply borne out of frustration, the action was construed in moral terms as deliberately destructive. Conversely, women who worked well and co-operatively were congratulated. In Cambridge in 1842, Hannah Stittle was brought before the committee:

> – Matron reported her great usefulness in the washhouse & laundry & her willingness to teach the other inmates…Stittle was brought in and spoken kindly to by the Chairman – encouraged to go on in usefulness.[94]

Work rooms

Despite the later period of chaos in the laundry at Lincoln, the ladies' committee could also praise women's sewing as in 1849 when the needlework 'was pronounced to be exceedingly well done'.[95] In contrast to laundry spaces, the workroom environment was a quieter, more obviously domestic space. In framing her description of the work room at the Albion Hill Home in Brighton, pictured at Figure 4.14, Ellice Hopkins drew on the moral benefits of its domestic qualities: 'The walls are hung with bright pictures and pretty illuminated texts; floods of sunshine stream in at the large windows'.[96] The fireplace is adorned with ornaments, the walls hung with 'homely'

[93] LPFH Matron's Report Book, July 1909.
[94] CFR 4 January 1842. Hannah went on to be the House Servant in August that year.
[95] LPFH LC, 29 June 1849.
[96] Hopkins, *Work Among the Lost*, p.51.

pictures, with a caged bird at the window. The text above the fireplace – 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more' – was familiar in rescue literature and incorporated into the front cover of *The Magdalen's Friend*. [97]

Figure 4.14 The Work-Room from Ellice Hopkins's *Work Among the Lost*, opposite p.54.CUL.

The large square work table dominates the space. Seating women round a single table was companionable, but also convenient for surveillance. The sewing machine at the back boasted modernity and suggested that women were acquiring a range of state-of-the-art sewing skills. As a respectable and appropriate feminine domestic task, needlework and the objects and spaces associated with it were inherently moral. As an activity which included mending, plain needlework also trained for habits of thrift.

[97] Gospel According to St John, 8:11. See Thad Logan on the significance of ornaments in defining 'home' in *The Victorian Parlour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

At Lincoln, wallpaper in the committee room and matron's study rather than cheaper paint marked the status of the space users.[98] Its presence in the inmates' work room signals a domestic rather than an industrial space.[99] In Cambridge, local master painter Frederick Leach undertook routine repainting the Refuge in 1868. Free of charge, he incorporated decorative embellishments in the work room in colour.[100] Leach specialised in stencil work and his firm decorated the Cambridge Union workhouse, including the elderly women's day room. Represented in the photograph below, the decoration adds a homely dimension. The appearance of the room, the matron and the inmates may have been carefully prepared for the occasion.

Figure 4.15 Aged Women's Day Room, Cambridge Union Workhouse, Mill Road. Frederick Leach's stencil work runs round the dado rail. No date but c.1880. Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge Central Library, C44.47.

[98] LPFH LC, 3 June 1872.
[99] LPFH, 19 April 1877.
[100] Leach's cashbook records purchasing colours as well as whitening for this job, colour for the inside of the 'Refuge house', Museum of Cambridge, Frederick Leach Cashbook 1857-1868, p.168. Leach worked under the guidance of leading Gothic revival and Arts and Crafts designers and architects such as William Morris, George Bodley and Charles Kempe at All Saints' Church, Jesus College and Queens' College. See <http://davidparrhouse.org>.

Stencil work by Leach's pupil and employee David Parr survives intact in Parr's Cambridge house, which he began decorating in 1887. An example is given in Figure 4.16. Multi-coloured, it is particularly rich and stencils in the Refuge may have been in a single, cheaper colour. As Parr was Leach's artistic descendent, it may nevertheless indicate the kinds of designs Leach employed at the Refuge.

Figure 4.16 Stencil work by David Parr, by permission of the David Parr House, Cambridge.

Critically, Leach's ornamentation was executed in rooms used by women inhabitants, a 'homely' and gratuitously decorative feature which provided visual interest and relieved these otherwise plain communal spaces. Having recorded their thanks, the committee noted the aesthetic and emotional effects of his work: 'the walls of the dormitories and workroom have been painted and prettily ornamented, so that they now present an air of cheerfulness and comfort'.[101] The committee's approval of this embellishment suggests there may have been no moral objection to decoration. In other words, the routine plainness may have been more a factor of cost than a moral priority.

Dining rooms

Work rooms or day rooms could double as dining rooms, as was the case in Cambridge. Tables were expensive items, so when inmate numbers increased

[101] CFR AR 1868, p.6.

in the new premises at Cambridge, the matron requested a second table for the day ward 'in two parts to be joined together at pleasure by hooks and eyes underneath'. The table was versatile and economical, providing two separate tables or one large one as necessary.[102] The committee purchased '6 deal forms, each to be placed either side of the table and one at each end', an arrangement easy to oversee.[103] The superior at Maplestead adopted a similarly economical strategy, asking that 'the large table lately bought be cut in half lengthways'.[104] In 1901, the matron at Lincoln ensured she and her assistants ate 'at the same time and in the same room with the girls only at another table', rather than separately as had previously been the case.[105] An article in John Bull describing the completion of the south and east wings at Ditchingham in 1864 refers to 'a refectory and separate dining-room for the Sisters'.[106] The image at Figure 4.17 below is the dining room used by sisters. The scale of the room, its location directly below the chapel and the grand fireplace with *fleur de lys* carving suggests that this was the sisters' original refectory, with the dining room for penitents elsewhere.

[102] CFR 7 December 1841. Julie-Marie Strange notes the same 'multi-purpose' use of tables and similar versatile designs in working-class households in 'Fatherhood, Furniture and the Inter-Personal Dynamics of Working-Class Homes, c. 1870–1914', *Urban History*, 40 (2013), 271-86 (p.275).
[103] CFR 20 September 1841.
[104] MAP Sub-Committee 13 November 1876
[105] LPFH Matron's Report Book, 12 September.
[106] 22 October 1864.

Figure 4.17 Photograph of the dining room at Ditchingham as it was in June 2018.

The original layout may have been different, as there is a reference to the decorated 'long table' at Christmas in 1930.[107] Long tables were customary in workhouse and school settings with 'shared benches and basic foodstuffs doled out *en masse'*.[108] The shape of table, seating and serving arrangements enabled surveillance but also ensured right behaviour at 'family' meal times.

Details of Ditchingham tableware are scant. Records from the first years at Nunnery Farm in Shipmeadow simply note the purchase of cutlery for six table settings, including large and small spoons and forks, gravy spoons, teaspoons and sugar tongs, but no knives. It is possible that this omission reflects concerns about safety or that the diet rendered knives unnecessary.[109] Provision of knives was less generous at Cambridge, with only twelve as

[107] DIT AR, 1930, p.4.
[108] Jane Hamlett, *At Home*, p.46.
[109] DIT Shipmeadow Council, 7 February 1854.

against two dozen spoons, suggesting that meals may have consisted mainly of soups and stews and other food items which had already been cut up such as bread. Appendix 3 lists items at Cambridge from tradesmen's bills for equipment and furnishings for the new premises from 1841 and includes drabware, white plates, cups and saucers and half pint mugs.[110] One account specifies twelve coloured bowls, ordered by the secretary of the ladies' committee, possibly at her own expense.[111] Whether coloured meant patterned is impossible to verify, but the separate special order suggests higher quality. Excavations at the Philadelphia Magdalene Asylum indicate that institutional ceramics consisted of both plain and more decorative items used respectively by women and staff. In the same way that women were presented with high quality fabrics for laundering, special tablewares reflected the material hierarchy they could expect to encounter in domestic service and rehearsed those material distinctions.[112]

Kitchens

Preparing food for large numbers of women in lay institutional kitchens involved physical energy as well as skill. At Lincoln, duties in the kitchen and in housework were undertaken by women on a fortnightly rotation.[113] Following concerns in 1858 about the management of the kitchen space, it was inspected weekly by two ladies who reported it was 'very unsatisfactory

[110] Account from Barrett, R60/27/7 (a).
[111] CFR R60/27/7(a) 29 September 1841.
[112] De Cunzo, p. 29. The Bishop of London's Visiting Committee noted in 1899 that 'prison discipline' prevailed at the London Diocesan Penitentiary in Highgate. The prison-like environment was reflected in the drinking vessels and the 'Committee were glad to notice that prison Gallipots were being supplanted by enamelled mugs but Gallipots largely prevail after being in use for 16 years or more'. FP Creighton 15 1899, Lambeth Palace Library.
[113] LPFH LC, 12 May 1856.

with respect to cleanliness; and complaints were made to the visitors by the women regarding the manner of preparing the meals'.[114] Like laundries, kitchens as noisy spaces were less easy to control. Again in 1870 lack of discipline resulted in general 'insubordination' at Lincoln. As a result, 'cooking was very deficient – great irregularity in the meals'.[115] Inmates also complained about food preparation by other inmates. In Cambridge, Susan Tolliday was brought before the committee to explain her behaviour:

> Matron put me in the kitchen because of my temper – I took in the supper – the disturbance began at nine – I shoved a form back – M. Stevens had been quarrelling first with Christian – they talked to me about my dirty hands.[116]

Women working a long day would be hungry and badly prepared, insufficient food would be likely cause for complaint. Dissatisfaction with food and its unhygienic preparation provoked women to air their grievances collectively. Susan's reaction in pushing away the form reveals an understandable volatility. Similarly, by complaining, prisoners hoped to draw the attention of the authorities to the problem. In the prison setting, the challenge was getting those concerns beyond the prison warder.[117] At Cambridge and Lincoln, the complaints were passed on to the managing committees and in both cases the relevant matrons were called to account.[118] Whether the food improved as a result is not recorded, but neither are further complaints. That of course is not necessarily an indication that none were made.

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[114] LPFH LC, 25 February 1858.
[115] LPFH LC, 16 April 1870.
[116] CFR 22 January 1848.
[117] Alyson Brown *English Society and the Prison: Time, Culture and Politics in the Development of the Modern Prison, 1850-1920* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p.73.
[118] In both institutions, poor cooking was one among several indicators of poor management and inadequate staffing. At Cambridge an assistant matron was appointed the month after this incident and at Lincoln, matron Mrs Orfeur was dismissed. CFR 1 February 1848, LPFH 16 April 1870.

Establishing exactly what foodstuffs were provided for inmates is more challenging. Although there were dietaries at the two lay institutions, details have not been located in minutes or annual reports. Publication might have brought criticism either of insufficient and monotonous provision or accusations of indulgence.[119] The Cambridge committee researched dietaries at other institutions.[120] Possibly as a result, in January 1842 they recommended 'that once a week Rice as a wholesome nutritious vegetable be substituted for flour puddings'.[121] In the early years of the Lincoln Home the same diet was offered to women in the two rented houses, but no details of the foodstuffs are given.[122] The ladies' committee consulted the matron on revising the dietary, following her month's training in a 'large Penitentiary in Manchester'.[123] However, foodstuffs served can be gauged from surviving household accounts and by comparison with other institutions. In Cambridge the house surgeon Josiah Hammond approved the suggested dietary. Also surgeon to the Borough Gaol and later at Addenbrooke's hospital, he would have been familiar with those dietaries.[124] Whilst quantities are difficult to gauge, testimonies from Refuge inhabitant Ann Goode suggest that workhouse portions were meagre. Her step-father pressed her to go back into the Union, but she was reluctant because previously she 'did not get sufficient food'.[125] Valerie Johnston shows the similarities between workhouse

[119] Ian Miller notes that published dietaries were not necessarily followed, particularly as dietary quantity was associated with discipline and could be adjusted punitively. See 'Feeding in the Workhouse: the Institutional and Ideological Functions of Food in Britain, ca. 1834-1870', *Journal of British Studies,* 52 (2013), 1–23 (p.8).
[120] CFR 7 December 1841.
[121] CFR 18 January 1842.
[122] LPFH 4 November 1848.
[123] LPFH 29 July 1870.
[124] CFR 6 November 1838.
[125] CFR 19 July 1842.

dietaries of the 1860s and the foodstuffs consumed by working people. Both diets included cheese, butcher's meat, potatoes, butter and suet, milk and tea. In 1866, the dietary for women at the Lincoln workhouse consisted of bread, porridge, meat, potatoes, pea soup and suet pudding.[126] In his study of old Poor Law pauper inventories in Dorset, Joseph Harley found that tea-making paraphernalia recurred frequently among the possession of labouring households.[127] Cambridge Refuge applicant Mary Turner was in debt and at her interview stated 'would like to part with my things – writing desk – tea caddy'.[128] As relatively expensive items, tea and sugar were offered less often at a workhouse than in a working-class home.[129] Tea and sugar were both supplied to the Cambridge Refuge, but perhaps used sparingly. When it was found that Susan Palmer had been supplied with 'her accustomed tea & sugar in the Hospital' it was noted that 'it be not the rule in future to extend the same indulgence in similar cases'.[130] The same moral censure applied when in 1840 the ladies' committee offered the women 'a tea party with fruit as an encouragement for their industry & good conduct'. Though well-intentioned, the managing committee saw the tea party as incompatible with institutional purpose to provide 'the most suitable & effectual training for the trials &

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[126] 1866 [3660] Dietaries for the inmates of workhouses. Report to the President of the Poor Law Board of Dr Edward Smith, F.R.S., medical officer of the Poor Law Board, and Poor Law inspector, p.138 (Lincoln), quoted in Valerie Johnston, Diet in Workhouses and Prisons, 1835-*1895* (New York: Garland, 1985), p.235. See 'Material Lives of the Poor and their Strategic Use of the Workhouse During the Final Decades of the English Old Poor Law' in *Continuity and Change* 30, 71-103, pp.84-85.
[127] See 'Material Lives of the Poor and their Strategic Use of the Workhouse During the Final Decades of the English Old Poor Law' in *Continuity and Change* 30, 71-103 (pp.84-85).
[128] CFR 13 December 1842.Mary Turner's possessions suggest she was from an upper working-class home.
[129] *Diet in Workhouses and Prisons, 1835-1895* (New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 237-238. See Also Anna Davin, 'Loaves and Fishes: Food in Poor Households in Late Nineteenth-Century London', *History Workshop Journal*, 41 (1996)167-92.
[130] CFR 11 December 1838.

hardships which the young women may be expected to have afterwards to put up with in service'. Fruit, tea and sugar raised expectations. To support their argument, the committee drew on evidence from former inmate, Mary Webb, who 'in a conversation with two of the Gentlemen, declared in a complaining way that she had been more comfortable in the Refuge than she was in service'.[131] In the absence of dietaries, the broad accounting categories in Table 4.1 identify the types of foodstuffs regularly ordered from suppliers for three institutions.

CFR[132] 1838-1859	Bread and flour	[Butter and bacon 1842 only]	Tea, sugar, cheese, butter, flour	Ale	Meat, vegetables
LPFH [133]	Miller		Grocer		Potatoes, Butcher
MAP [134]	Baker, Miller	Milk	Grocery	Ale and wine	Butcher

Table 4.1 Foodstuff staples supplied across three case study institutions.

The Lincoln committee shared a grocer with the Board of Guardians and although there is little detail of foodstuffs supplied to the Penitents' Home, his tender to the workhouse identifies scotch oatmeal, cheese, sugar, rice, peas, salt, pepper, tea, coffee, vinegar, treacle and sago. It seems reasonable to suggest that similar foodstuffs would have been offered to the Home

[131] CFR 11 August 1840. Anne McCants has argued the importance of 'station-appropriate consumption' which informed decisions on appropriate food consumption over the history of the Amsterdam orphanage. See 'Meeting Needs and Suppressing Desires: Consumer Choice Models and Historical Data', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 26 (1995), 191-207 (p.200). On middle-class ridicule of servants 'dressing above their station', see John Styles, 'Involuntary Consumers? Servants and their Clothes in Eighteenth-Century England', *Textile History*, 33 (2002), 9-21 (p.10).
[132] CFR Cashbook.
[133] LPFH AR, 1857, p. 20. The Lincoln home also kept chickens (2 November 1874).
[134] MAP Cashbook.

inmates, given the common interest in economy.[135] Women at Cambridge took the opportunity express their dissatisfaction at the quality of the food. After being dismissed, Rebecca Kelly wrote to the managing committee to complain that

> she and the rest of the inmates were treated very improperly in regard to their meals - often having to eat a hard dumpling for their dinner with cold water - cabbages containing caterpillars - & being deprived of beer.[136]

These complaints from current and former inmates are significant because they demonstrate a sense of entitlement, suggesting that women continued to view themselves as participants in society while inmates and once beyond the confines of the institution.[137] Similarly, dietaries at the two penitentiaries were not published, although recommendations were made.[138] Diet for the sisters was also controlled.[139] The domestic matrons at both penitentiaries would have overseen management of the kitchen and cooking, assisted by penitents, lay sisters and Third Order sisters.[140] There is evidence that women criticised food provision here too. Rules from 1869 at Maplestead stated that 'penitents' shall not eat or drink, except at their regular meals – nor make any dissatisfied remarks about the Food given them'.[141] Nevertheless in September 1883, Alice Holmes's grandmother took her away 'as the girl complained of food in the Home'. The warden shortly afterwards had a letter

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[135] Lincoln Board of Guardians' Minutes 1862-1866 from June 1863 PL/10/102/8.
[136] CFR 22 February 1847. Beer features in the accounts for Cambridge from 1841 to 1859, sometimes ordered monthly, suggesting it may have been intended for inmates and perhaps withheld in disciplinary cases. CFR Cashbook.
[137] David Englander notes the same social and political participation in complaints from workhouse inmates to the Poor Law Commission. See *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Britain: from Chadwick to Booth, 1834-1914* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p.134.
[138] See *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England*, p.18.
[139] Susan Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), pp.68-9.
[140] William Scudamore, *An Account of the Penitentiary at Shipmeadow* (1857), p.11
[141] MAP, p.26.

from her parish clergyman 'asking for the dietary, to meet injurious reports as to food which the girl was spreading in the parish'.[142] There is no record as to whether he received a response. The implication of 'injurious' is that, as a former penitent, Alice was deliberately misrepresenting the institution and threatening its reputation. There is no acknowledgement that her 'reports' might have been injurious because they were true.

Despite the imperative to keep food costs down, in 1870 the Cambridge committee argued that paring expenditure down to the minimum was a false economy:

> The Committee cannot always devote their energies to cutting down expenses to a Work-house level. The rescue of even one of these unhappy women is worth more than a few pounds, and it is perhaps, humanly speaking, the question of a few pounds which makes all the difference between an imperfect work followed by a return to sin, and a thorough reformation followed by a good and useful life. [143]

In drawing a material baseline below which they were not prepared to go, the Cambridge committee was foreshadowing Ellice Hopkins's observation ten years later on the moral value of homeliness. Punitively austere reform environments expressed disdain for their inhabitants, who were 'too bad for anything better'.[144] For Hopkins, domestic was moral. Homeliness encouraged good conduct and modelled an orderly institutional family. There is evidence to suggest that although cost and moral suitability continued to shape women's material worlds, institutions made small concessions to material comfort and variety over time. At Ditchingham in 1886, the council rather obsequiously acknowledged the importance of gifts in kind and

[142] MAP Admissions Register, September 1883.
[143] CFR AR, 1870, pp.3-4.
[144] *Notes on Penitentiary Work* (London: Hatchards, 1879), p.12.

apportioned 'some blame to ourselves for not having hitherto pleaded for help of this sort'.[145] Gifts of food particularly around Christmas provided some variety and enrichment of women's diets in all four institutions. In 1892, '24 rugs for girls' rooms' at Lincoln were donated.[146] The wider range of donations may in part be attributable to networks between local Ladies' Association and needlework guilds, which brought together women who made and donated items for girls and women across a range of charitable institutions.[147] Accommodating a new arrival at Lincoln in 1907, the matron noted 'I have now fitted up an unused girl's room for her – it requires a looking glass & Jug & Basin then it will be complete.[148] Domestic touches such as ornaments, rugs and looking glasses could also be construed as didactic. Washing paraphernalia and mirrors drew attention to the importance of cleanliness and a neat appearance, rugs to the innate moral value of domestic objects as homely. Nevertheless, such small additions could greatly improve an inmate's material world and lift her spirits.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that in female reform institutions, the material environment was itself an active force in the reform process. Across the four institutions, decisions which shaped that environment were made on behalf of inmates in the light of reformatory goals. Within the specialist culture of

[145] DIT AR, 1886, p.9.
[146] LPFH 24 November.
[147] Cambridgeshire Needlework Guild donated clothing to the Refuge AR 1894, p.7.as did the Lincolnshire Needlework Guild, LPFH Matron's Report Book, October 1902.In 1891, the Suffolk Needlework Guild donated clothing to the Lodge of the Good Shepherd Refuge run by Ditchingham sisters. DIT LGS AR, p.6.
[148] LPFH Matron's Report Book, April 1907.

reform institutions, everyday objects became moral objects. Objects and spaces were implicated in the process of moral transformation and worked together in particular ways to encourage desirable moral qualities and behaviours. Women used the tools which defined them as institutional subjects, but also provided them with the skills for domestic service beyond the institution. Spaces and objects could also act upon their users and became instruments through which women expressed individual agency, subverted institutional purpose and asserted their own identities. Inmates' had their own material expectations and were not afraid to assert their rights to adequate provision.

Constraints on cost meant that exceptional, selective expenditure on particular objects and furnishings was confined to particular spaces. In the lay institutions, differential treatment of spaces associated with institutional officers reinforced and defined power relations. In the penitentiaries, material differentiation reflected the spiritual rank and social class of sisters and associates and distinguished penitents from sisters. Objects embodied meanings consonant with the spiritual life of a sisterhood community and the moral work of a penitentiary. The next chapter will consider the material culture of religion as a route to understanding women's religious experience in the four institutions.

Chapter Five 'Lo, There was I Born!': Experiencing Religion

On leaving the Cambridge Refuge, Elizabeth Minister wrote back to the matron:

> I often think of one sentence in Mrs Owens prayers, it was – 'Grant Lord that they may point to this house & say – Lo, there was I born!'[...] After being in the Sunday School 13 or 14 years, first as a Scholar and then as a Teacher [...] I knew no more of religion than a baby just born when I first came into the Refuge - indeed I have often been annoyed at people making (as I used to say) such a fuss about it - but after I came to be shut out from all society but those I lived with, I began by the grace of God to think seriously I trust about that which I had so lately scorned [...] [1]

We need to be cautious about taking such fervent expressions of faith at face value. Elizabeth may have sought institutional approval, but we should not dismiss the possibility that her experience of institutional religion was meaningful. In female reform institutions religion was understood as the essential element in the attempt to effect lasting moral change. This chapter will analyse the spatial and material practices of religion in the four institutions in this study. Drawing on the spaces and objects associated with religious worship and inmates' responses to them, the chapter seeks to illuminate and complicate our understanding of how women inhabiting these institutions experienced religion.

The religious imperative at the heart of institutional purpose meant that the spaces, objects and furnishings necessary for religious observance were accorded special status. Unlike the secular everyday domestic and industrial

[1] CFR 31 March 1846. Mrs Mary Owen was the secretary of the Ladies' Committee at Cambridge from 1838 to 1856.

objects inmates encountered, those associated with religious practice were not merely different but exceptional. In his definition of religion, Emile Durkheim identified 'sacredness' as the universal characteristic of all religions. Within that category, sacred things are those which are 'set apart and forbidden'. For Durkheim the Church was a 'moral community' and religion 'an eminently collective thing'.[2] In all four case study institutions religion was practised and experienced in isolation and in community. In the two Anglican Houses of Mercy in particular, Tractarian interest in pre-Reformation sacred art and the renewed theological emphasis on the transformational power of the sacraments saw its most astonishing material expression in the decorative chapels and vessels associated with the rite of holy communion.[3] The two penitentiaries had their own on-site chapels for the use of sisters, penitents and clergy. By contrast, every Sunday, inmates at Cambridge and Lincoln moved out of the private institutional site into the public arena of a local parish church. The settings in which inmates attended religious services therefore differed in important ways, but commonalities emerge in the treatment of space in both private and public sacred buildings. Seating arrangements separated inmates from the rest of the assembly, rendering them only partially visible and signalling their liminal and mysterious status as at once part of and separate from the community or congregation.[4]

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[2] *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans by Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen & Unwin 1915), p.47.

[3] The ritual at the centre of the communion service is the taking of bread and wine, seen in the Anglican Church as representing the body and blood of Christ.

[4] In relation to early modern Italian convents, Helen Hills notes a similar prurient interest in the presence of nuns' chaste bodies. Relegated to upper clerestory levels and partially screened by grilles, they participated by listening and seeing and by being audible, but their bodily presence was obscured. 'The housing of institutional architecture: searching for a domestic holy in post-Tridentine Italian convents', in *Domestic Institutional Interiors in*

In addition to religious observance in designated sacred buildings, prayers and weekday services brought religious worship into the secular work rooms and dining rooms in all four institutions. Formal acts of domestic religious observance were led by visiting clergy acting as chaplains, with lady volunteers in lay institutions taking prayers and conducting day and evening classes in religious instruction and Bible study. Although working towards the same objective of reforming women through religious instruction and observance, the lay and sisterhood reformatories were 'religious' institutions in entirely different ways. The single purpose of lay homes at Cambridge and Lincoln was that of 'reclaiming' inmates from prostitution or the risk of prostitution; all activity associated with religious and practical training was therefore centred on the inmates. By contrast, the founding purpose of the two Houses of Mercy was two-fold; alongside the moral reclamation of penitents as their outward-looking work in the world, these were communities of vowed women serving God and engaged on their own inward-looking spiritual development, which was intricately bound up in their testing work with penitents. The difficulty in recruiting sisters in the early years at Ditchingham reflected the demands of vocation. Women were reluctant to commit themselves wholly to the religious life and to take on a new identity as female religious.[5] Over and above work with penitents, the rigour of daily religious observance comes through correspondence between the family members of Anna Mayor, a sister temporarily in charge at Maplestead during 1870. The letter notes that according to Anna: 'they rise at 5 in the morning & have 6

Early Modern Europe ed. by Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.121-150 (pp.123-25).

[5] Joy Frith, ' "Pseudonuns": Anglican Sisterhoods and the Politics of Victorian Identity' unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University (Canada), 2004, p.246.

services to attend in the course of the day I believe at the hours of 7, 9, 12, 3, 6 & 8'.[6] In managing both strands of their work, like penitents, sisters needed spiritual guidance and encouragement from the superior and the warden in order to stay the course.[7] The wardens in the early Anglican penitentiaries had considerable influence over the shaping of religious rule and practice. At Ditchingham, William Scudamore looked to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer to stipulate those aspects of ritual and the objects associated with them which were acceptable.[8]

Despite the religious inspiration of both lay and Anglican penitentiary institutions, the experience of institutional religion remains largely unexplored.[9] Paula Bartley argues that inmates at the Birmingham Magdalene Asylum were obliged to conform to middle-class expectations of religious orthodoxy. The right to attend church or to be confirmed had to be earned and depended on the acceptance of appropriate cultural and religious but also 'gendered mores'.[10] Others have construed institutional religious practice as

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[6] Undated MS letter from Charlotte Mayor (wife of Robert Bickersteth Mayor, Rector of Frating, Essex) to Katherine Anne Mayor, Trinity College Library, Cambridge, Mayor B18/6. The number and timing of Offices at Ditchingham was similar.

[7] DIT. A letter dated 28th August [no year] from Lavinia Crosse at Ditchingham to an unnamed sister who left without notice expresses both exasperation and concern. The letter is a typed transcription.

[8] See Nigel Yates *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain 1830-1910 (*Oxford: Oxford University Press,1999), p.121. At Clewer, Mariquita Tennant drew up the rule of life with Revd Thomas Thellusson Carter, later warden. See Valerie Bonham *A Place in Life: the Clewer House of Mercy, 1849-1883* (Valerie Bonham and the Community of St John the Baptist, 1992), p.55.

[9] Jacinta Prunty does examine chapel spaces in *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2017).

[10] Paula Bartley, 'Seeking and Saving: the Reform of Prostitutes and the Prevention of Prostitution in Birmingham, 1860-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Wolverhampton University, 1995), pp.139-140.

a means of dwelling on inmates' sinfulness.[11] Both readings are valid but limited. Familiarity with Christian teaching and regular attendance at church were understood by middle-class reform workers as signifiers of respectability, but also as necessary to sustain the religious faith which would guide women beyond the institution. The recognition of sinfulness was understood as a necessary precursor to the penitent state from which redemption followed. Contemporaries were aware that undue emphasis on sinfulness or simply on religion could be overwhelming. Arthur Brinckman, chaplain at St Agnes Hospital, run by the sisters of All Saints Margaret Street, warned against preaching to women just rescued from the street: 'Put no texts or religious pictures about the walls anywhere. *On no account whatever do this*. You are, so far, just preaching by kindness and practical proofs of help'.[12]

Studies of working-class religious life are particularly useful in assessing how inmates may have received institutional religion. Multiple influences fed into working-class understandings of religion. Formal or informal denominational allegiance, popular religious practices and folklore traditions could merge in

[11] Frances Finnegan suggests that inmates at the York Penitentiary were 'daily subjected to fierce indoctrination and constantly filled with a morbid sense of their own shame and guilt' without reference to religious texts. See *Poverty and Prostitution*, p.174. Similarly, there is little discussion of religious practice in the Good Shepherd Magdalen Asylums in Finnegan's *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Linda Mahood notes the orthodoxy and influence of particular Scottish evangelical denominations in shaping regulatory and institutional responses to prostitution. She endorses Finnegan's reading of inmates' religious experience. See *The Magdalenes*, p.60 and p.83. For a fuller account of the experience of religion in the Good Shepherd institution in Hammersmith, see Peter Hughes, 'Cleanliness and Godliness: a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain', unpublished doctoral Thesis, Brunel University, 1985 and Jacinta Prunty, *The Monasteries*.
[12] *Notes on Rescue Work, a Manual of Hints to Those Who Wish to Reclaim the Fallen*, (London: G.J. Palmer, 1885), p. 61.

working-class households.[13] Biographical studies and oral histories have indicated the multiple ways in which working-class families experienced religion and identified themselves as 'religious' or not. Church attendance is not the only criterion against which adherence to religious beliefs should be measured. Families who did not attend church nevertheless acknowledged the distinctness of Sunday through changes in family routine and special domestic and cultural practices.[14] Drawing on religious instruction and observance as a moralising and beneficent force was not unique to female reform settings. Religion underpinned the disciplinary and therapeutic method of a range of other public and private institutions as part of the 'salvation economy'.[15] Work on the religious life of prisons, workhouses and asylums has usefully argued for greater attention to the influence of significant faith-driven individuals, whose approach and practice in voluntary work with inmates was transformative in ways which went beyond nurturing religious sentiments.[16] The role of chapel services in fostering religious feeling in boarding school pupils has suggested a range of responses from

[13] Sarah C. Williams argues for acknowledging a variety of 'religious idioms' and for historians to pay more attention to working-class experiences of religion. See 'Is There a Bible in the House? Gender, Religion and Family Culture' in *Women, Gender and Religious Culture in Britain, 1800-1940,* ed. by Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), pp.11-31 (p.24).
[14] For personal testimonies of religious experience across social classes, see Hugh McLeod, *Piety and Poverty: Working-Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996) and Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).Work on university settlements in London has highlighted tensions and commonalities between the religious experience of upper-middle-class founders and working-class residents. See Alana Harris, 'Building the Docklands Settlement: Gender, Gentility and the Gentry in East London, 1894-1939', *Material Religion*, 9 (2013), 60- 85.
[15] Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p.36.
[16] Helen Rogers, 'Kindness and Reciprocity: Liberated Prisoners and Christian Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History*, 47 (2014), 721-745.

feigned devotion and subversion to spiritual exhilaration, prompted by the beauty of the chapel setting itself.[17]

Domestic and institutional religious practice relied on the interaction between participants and significant ritual objects. These objects communicated ideas and embodied meaning. They became agents of transformational experience.[18] The importance of beauty as intrinsic to spiritual experience is explored in secondary literature on the material culture of nineteenth-century religious practice drawn from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Opposition to Anglican sisterhoods coalesced around the presence of specific 'papist' objects on the altar. The agency of certain material objects as conduits of Catholic theology seemed to contemporaries to undermine and threaten the theology of the established church.[19] Agency in the religious context can also be understood as instrumentality, the divine agency thought to be working through and on individuals.[20] The four institutions in this study attempted to create a religious environment which would enable that divine agency. Across

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[17] Jane Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution: Material Life in Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 66-67. Hamlett notes that staff and patients of public asylums were expected to attend chapel services and staff fined if they did not. See *At Home*, p.23.

[18] See Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: the British and their Possessions* (London: Yale, 2006). See also *Material Religion in Modern Britain: the Spirit of Things* ed. by Timothy Willem Jones and Lucinda Matthews-Jones (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). On the psychological dimensions of religious experience, see Gordon Lynch, 'Object Theory' in *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, ed. by David Morgan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) pp. 40-54. See work on the gendering of religious objects in Roger Ivar Lohmann and Susan Starr Sered, 'Introduction: Objects, Gender and Religion' *Material Religion*, 3 (2007), pp.4-13.

[19] See Dominic Janes, *Victorian Reformation: The Fight over Idolatry in the Church of England, 1840-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), René Kollar, 'Flowers, Pictures and Crosses' in *A Foreign and Wicked Institution? The Campaign Against Convents in Victorian England* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2011), pp.126-146 and Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant Versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England: Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982).

[20] Megan Clare Webber, 'Troubling Agency: Agency and Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century London', *Historical Research*, 91 (2018), 116-136 (p.120).

all four, inmates' experiences of religion were more varied and complex than has hitherto been acknowledged, ranging from devotion to acts of outright rejection. Case histories indicate that religious instruction produced unhealthily self-critical responses in vulnerable and suggestible women. Some found consolation in religious texts and in the collegial dimension of religious experience. Others exploited opportunities to subvert or avoid religious observance. Such opportunities arose in both lay institutions; despite the stated regularity of religious worship and instruction, lack of staff and lapses in provision at times resulted in a less intense religious routine than suggested in institutional literature.

Familiarity or lack of it could colour the experience of religious instruction and worship. To date there has been little systematic analysis of the religious status of inmates entering Anglican penitentiaries.[21] In order to set the impact of institutional religion in the context of inmates' previous experience, this chapter will analyse inmates' familiarity with religion, their religious status on arrival and their spiritual 'progress' during institutionalisation. Such scrutiny reveals that the lived experience of religious practice for inmates was not one-dimensional. In the two lay institutions, records of inmates' religious status were initially sketchy, but became more detailed over time. Annual reports began to note inmate baptisms and confirmations during

[21] Peter Hughes analyses admissions to the Catholic Good Shepherd Refuge in Hammersmith. See 'Cleanliness', pp.109-111 and Appendix 2, Table 2.5, p.451. Frith comments on general levels of baptism and confirmation but does not analyse these against admissions figures. See '"Pseudonuns"', p.298.She pays close attention to the creation of the Third Order for 'raised penitents' at Ditchingham and her useful analysis is taken up here in the final chapter. Susan Mumm discusses the spiritual progress of novice sisters at East Grinstead. See *All Saints Sisters of the Poor: an Anglican Sisterhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press [Church of England Record Society], 2001).

institutionalisation from around 1874 in Cambridge and 1877 in Lincoln. As evidence of spiritual success, these confirmations validated institutional purpose and provided a secure basis from which to appeal for funds. The records of the two penitentiaries reveal a greater attention to the spiritual status of women on admission and on leaving. Less complete for Ditchingham, the records for Maplestead track the spiritual progress of each inmate through baptism, confirmation and first communion. Evidence shows that engagement with religious texts was a disturbing process for some inmates. For others, this engagement appears to have been more positive and a source of encouragement, sometimes as a result of the intervention of a particular institutional officer. The individual cases cited here should not be used to extrapolate collective experience. However, the value of these individual accounts is precisely because they suggest the variety rather than the homogeneity of women's religious experiences.

In addition to photographs, institutional records and reform literature, this chapter introduces autobiographical material recalling the experiences of a former inmate at a penitentiary she locates at Bramshot.[22] The author, Mabel Lewis (writing as Emma Smith), was born in January 1894 and provides rare insights into the experience of daily life during her periodic institutionalisation from around 1906 to 1917.[23] She also spent around three months at Ditchingham from early 1919 in order to test her vocation as a

[22] Possibly Bramshott, Hampshire, although no penitentiary in or near that location has been identified to date.
[23] Emma Smith, *A Cornish Waif's Story: an Autobiography* (Truro: Truran, 2010), repr. 2013. The memoir was originally published by Odhams Press in 1954 (p.vii).

Third Order sister, but subsequently left and was married in 1920.[24] Her autobiographical narrative in the first person is one of the few unmediated accounts we have from the perspective of a former penitent. Written retrospectively as an adult memoir for publication it may be less guarded or coloured by nostalgia. However, the level of detail in her recollections provides compelling evidence of their authenticity. This chapter also draws on notes made by the warden at the House of Mercy at Maplestead in 1876 to document his complaint regarding the spatial relegation of penitents in the chapel space. Reformatory workers debated both the moral advantages and 'challenges' of policing communal dormitories and promoted dormitory cubicles as quasi sacred spaces conducive to penitence. Recommendations following the CPA's 1873 survey of member institutions on the best way to configure dormitory spaces are assessed here against changing practice in sleeping arrangements at the four case study homes. Lastly, an inventory of chapel contents and furnishings was made in 1958, on the closure of the House of Mercy at Maplestead. The inventory identified local parish churches to which some sacred objects had been moved.[25] Contact with these parishes and subsequent fieldwork led to the discovery of the silver gilt chalice and wooden rood screen with figures, still in use in two Essex churches and discussed below. Photographs of the interior of the Ditchingham penitentiary and of sacred items from both penitentiaries are presented here for the first time. In focusing on the religious life of the four institutions, this chapter will shed new light on sacred spaces and objects and the ways in which they

[24] Ibid., pp.152-153.
[25] ERO, D/P/ 221/6/8 1958.

shaped institutional religious practice. It will argue that inmates encountered and responded to institutional religious experience in complex and varied ways.

'A baby just born': previous religious experience

In Lincoln in 1877, the committee noted the desire 'voluntarily expressed by three of the inmates to be confirmed'.[26] Apparently the first such record of inmates' religious progress, it suggests a new move towards documenting inmates' religious commitment. The admissions registers from 1848 to 1910 do not record religious status. This omission could have been deliberate, not because applicants' religious status was considered unimportant, but because such identification might have undermined the non-denominational spirit of the constitution, which as later records reveal, was highly cherished.[27] By contrast, interest in recording religious upbringing was apparent from the outset at Cambridge. The structure of the case histories taken from 1838 to 1853 indicates that inmates were asked directly about previous Sunday school attendance. The particular interest in Sunday schools may well have derived from the Chairman's early experience of ministering in the Sunday school in Jesus Lane, providing a reminder of the impact of individual life experience in shaping how these institutions functioned.[28] The Refuge was also founded at a peak time of growth in the Sunday school movement and included two

[26] LPFH 2 April 1877.
[27] The loss of the non-denominational basis of the Lincoln Home was contested by committee members when in 1906 as a result of serious debt, it was taken over and re-launched as an Anglican Diocesan Home. See Burton & Scorer, Lincoln, Solicitors, Title Deeds and Clients' Bundles, LA BS/35.
[28] Harriet Scholefield, *Memoir of the late James Scholefield M.A. by his Widow, with Notices of his Literary Character by W. Selwyn* (London: Seeley, Jackson and Halliday, 1855), p.10.

former Sunday school teachers among its inmates.[29] The Cambridge records note Sunday school attendance for forty-four applicants (26%) and past church attendance for twenty-three (13%). After 1853, the only surviving data is in admissions figures and outcomes given in annual reports. It may be no coincidence that the committee began recording inmates' religious progress from 1874, in order to direct attention away from lower numbers of applicants during the early 1870s and instead provide evidence of institutional importance and legitimacy in terms of recruitment to Christianity. The two penitentiaries noted applicants' religious status on admission from the outset and these are given in Table 5.1 below.

	Baptised	Confirmed	Communicant
DIT 1854-1910 1067 admissions	43.7% Yes 3.5% No 28.2% Nil recorded	12.5% Yes 2.0% No 47.8% Nil recorded	8.0% Yes 91.9% Nil recorded
MAP 1880-1899 465 admissions	84.3% Yes 6.0 % No 9.2% Nil recorded	32.9% Yes 69.4% No 14.8% Nil recorded	Nil recorded

Table 5.1 Inmates' religious status on admission to the two Houses of Mercy.

The figures are significant in three ways: first, the percentage 'Baptised' at Maplestead is particularly high. This may be because applicants had been baptised in previous institutions or felt that admitting to coming from a non-religious household might count against them. At Maplestead, the

[29] Mary Russell admitted 17 September 1844, Ann Dickens admitted 26 October 1847. Sunday School attendance in Britain stood at 1,500,000 in 1833 and rose to 2,600,000 by 1851. See Keith D.M.Snell and Paul S.Ell *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.277. Thomas Laqueuer shows how historians have framed the creation of Sunday school as another reforming institution, imposed on working-class children by their social superiors, whereas many Sunday school founders were working-class as were most of the teachers. See *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working-Class Culture 1780-1850* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp.187-189.

denominational allegiance of applicants' parents was also noted for the 465 admissions between 1880 and 1899, set out in Table 5.2 below.

Church	Chapel (unspecified)	Wesleyan, Baptist, Methodist	Catholic	Other (Xian, 'infidel')	Nil recorded
333 71.6%	45 9.6%	19 4.0%	12 2.5%	2 0.4%	54 11.6%

Table 5.2 Denominational allegiances of applicants to Maplestead penitentiary. Where different denominations are recorded for father and mother, the father's has been counted.

The high proportion of applicants claiming a 'church' background and the fact that some applicants could also specify denominational allegiance suggests a level of religious awareness in their families or communities. Whilst denomination is noted, how far applicants and their families were active church attenders, considered themselves 'Christian' or broadly 'religious' is harder to discern.[30]

The traumatic events of many applicants' past lives were also likely to affect their own individual relationship towards religion and those in crisis might find the notion of God 'too painful or irrelevant'.[31] The case histories recorded at Cambridge provide the richest insights into inmates' relationships with religion in their lives before the Refuge. Their accounts are inflected with Biblical rhetoric. Eliza Battel felt unworthy of attending church: 'can read well but have not a Bible – hope I have prayed – never attended a place

[30] Hugh McLeod cites the example of an interviewee who regarded his parents as 'one hundred per cent Christians, but not church-goers'. See *Piety and Poverty*, p. 41.
[31] Gordon Lynch citing Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God: a Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1979), in 'Object Theory', p.45.

of worship through a feeling of shame'.[32] Elizabeth Nicholls attributed her 'fall' to declining church attendance on entering service:

> Lived chiefly at Sedgeford Norfolk […] made a serious profession of religion when there & was a member of the Wesleyan Society. Lived in service at Mr Skinner's[…]fell into sin when I left Mr Skinner - fell gradually & trace my fall to neglect of prayer and other means of grace[…][33]

Familiarity with religion could be reassuring. Mary Stevens stated that her application followed a visit to church: 'was going past Mr Battiscombe's chapel and heard them singing a hymn – the tune I have often heard at home – I went in and sat down'.[34] That over a quarter of applicants to the Cambridge Refuge had at some point attended Sunday school suggests they were familiar with Biblical texts.[35] For others, unfamiliarity could serve as reproach and intensive reading of religious texts could produce adverse reactions. A well-meant gift of 'Short Prayers in Scriptural Language' from lady volunteer Mrs Webb to inmate Ann Goode may have inadvertently exacerbated her fragile state of mind.[36] Already spiritually anxious, Ann was reported as 'Learning the Sermon on the Mount - often in tears – laments lack of religious instruction in youth – knew Jesus Christ by name but not as a Saviour – and feels comfort in thinking of her Saviour'.[37] Ann's reaction combined guilt at

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[32] CFR 17 March 1840.
[33] CFR 28 August 1843.
[34] CFR 11 January 1842. Revd Henry Battiscombe, a former Fellow of King's College,, founded this Baptist Chapel in East Road, (later the Zion Baptist Church) in 1838. Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Cambridge*, (London: HMSO, 1959, 2nd impression 1988), Part II, p.301.
[35] Thomas Laqueuer argues that Sunday Schools supplemented weekday schooling by teaching reading in order that children could first read then memorise texts. Timothy Larsen notes that even in schools which were not linked to church organisations, the Bible was the book from which children learned to read. See *A People of One Book: the Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.2.
[36] CFR 15 November 1842.
[37] CFR 13 December 1842.

her previous lack of religious awareness with reassurance deriving from her current engagement with a specific text.

Common to Cambridge, Lincoln and Maplestead is the recording of confirmations during institutionalisation. As suggested above, this may have been an expedient diversion in times of low recruitment, highlighting inmates' spiritual progress as evidence of institutional effectiveness. It could also reassure the philanthropic public that the role of religion in reform activity continued to be robust. Confirmation allows the individual to participate in communion.[38] The fact that 50% of penitents were confirmed during their institutionalisation at Maplestead speaks to the central importance of sacramental theology in Anglican revival penitentiaries. A ritual understood as renewing and transformative, the regularity of communion and its power to sustain were seen as essential in helping inmates to keep to the 'right path' in their lives beyond the institution. The rite was considered so important at Maplestead that inmates previously confirmed but whose status as communicants was unclear were 'restored' to communion while in the penitentiary. The fact that three inmates at Lincoln requested confirmation voluntarily is recorded with a sense of institutional pride.[39] It suggests freedom of choice and a genuine wish to make a religious commitment. On the other hand, such commitments may reveal the

[38] Those already confirmed may not necessarily have participated in communion. In 1858, communion was only offered four times a year in parts of rural Lincolnshire. Even then, poor parishoners saw themselves as unworthy to take it, leaving it for their more virtuous social 'betters'. See James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp.271-72.
[39] In 1905, new white gloves were bought for confirmation candidates at Lincoln, suggesting a special occasion. LPFH Matron's Report Book, October 1905.

cumulative effects of obligatory religious instruction, observance and 'encouragement' over the period of institutionalisation, at the end of which there was effectively *no* choice.

Sacred spaces: dormitories, discipline and the limits of the penitential cubicle

Candidates would be presented for confirmation in the sacred spaces of institutional chapels and parish churches examined below. Domestic spaces too could become sacred in the reform context. Originating from monastic models, individual convent cells were 'for praying in solitude and silence'.[40] Small and sparsely furnished, they encouraged inward reflection.[41] In transformational settings therefore, the combination of isolation and silence could be particularly productive, inviting penitential self-examination, the pre-requisite for change.[42] The disciplinary advantages of individual rooms or cubicles were exploited in a range of institutional contexts.[43] Periods of silence punctuated the day at both penitentiaries in group and individual settings.[44] Understood as conducive to reflection, silence was also a

[40] Silvia Evangelisti, 'Monastic Poverty and Material Culture in Early Modern Italian Convents', *The Historical Journal*, 47 (2004), 1-20 (p.5).
[41] Suzanne Campbell- Jones notes that cells in the 'old-style convent' of a catholic teaching congregation were 'five feet by nine feet, one small window set high in the wall' *In Habit: an Anthropological Study of Working Nuns* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), p.181, p.183.
[42] Individual rooms at the Philadelphia Magdalen Asylum were intended as 'cloister cells, the site of contemplation and communion with God'. See Lu Ann De Cunzo 'Reform, Respite, Ritual, an Archaeology of Institutions: The Magdalen Society of Philadelphia, 1800-1850', *Historical Archaeology*, 29 (1995), 1-168 (p.46).
[43] For the punitive use of the 'refractory' isolation cell in workhouses and asylums and inmates' responses to it see Kathryn Morrison, *The Workhouse: a Study of Poor Law buildings in England* (Swindon: English Heritage, 1999), p.84 and Rebecca Wynter, '"Diseased Vessels and Punished Bodies": a Study of Material Culture and Control in Staffordshire County Gaol and Lunatic Asylum, c. 1793-1866', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2007), p.201.
[44] At Maplestead silence was imposed in the dormitories for half an hour morning and afternoon. MAP 21 July 1871.

disciplinary device to check 'improper conversation'.[45] However, the penitential power of the individual cubicle was compromised by lack of daytime access. Despite the wooden partitions to check 'immorality', cubicles also proved to be porous.

The term 'dormitory' meant the sleeping space for inmates in both lay and penitentiary settings. In female reform institutions, they might be configured as separate rooms, separate cubicles or communal open dormitories.

Grouping women perceived as morally corrupt together in a communal dormitory presented a particular disciplinary challenge and one not unique to moral reform institutions. Similar concerns were apparent in girls' reformatories. In open dormitories girls were at least visible, but these spaces required effective surveillance strategies nonetheless.[46] As a result of these spatial, moral and material dilemmas, all four case study institutions adjusted and rethought the configuration of sleeping spaces over time. In presenting survey responses from member institutions, the CPA demonstrated that aligning morality and materiality was most problematic in the treatment of penitentiary dormitories. The challenge was to find the most effective spatial formula for surveillance.[47] In the most sexually charged spaces in the

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[45] Scudamore, *An Account of the Penitentiary at Shipmeadow* (London, 1857), p.12. Felicia Skene criticised these silence times' with a sympathy rooted in pathology as 'a species of moral torture (for it is nothing else to such beings)'. *Penitentiaries and Reformatories*, p.10

[46] Michelle Cale,'Girls and the Perception of Sexual Danger in the Victorian Reformatory System', *History*, 78 (1993), 201-217 (pp.210-211).

[47] Chris Philo notes the move away from individual rooms for asylum patients to communal wards as the most efficient use of staff to achieve maximum surveillance. Patients were grouped together in communal day and sleeping wards with staff 'circulating' at the periphery. Separate rooms became punitive spaces. See '"Enough to Drive One Mad": the Organization of Space in 19th-Century Lunatic Asylums' in Jennifer Wolch and Michael Dear, eds, *The Power of Geography: How Territory Shapes Social Life* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 258-290 (p.271, p. 282).

penitentiary it was assumed that staff needed to be constantly vigilant and were encouraged by one survey respondent to 'supervise as much as possible. No trust'.[48] Emma Smith remembers the communal dormitory at Bramshot as containing 'about eighteen beds' and noted the 'little peephole in the wall'.[49] The purpose of such surveillance was to check conversations and bed-sharing.[50] Women did seek each other out for company, consolation or simply to keep warm. Those who had experience of lodging-houses and small working-class homes were likely to have been accustomed to sharing beds with other family members and sharing rooms with non-family members. Such practice was not seen as immoral, but simply borne out of necessity.[51]

Rules governing sleeping arrangements in all four case study institutions reveal a common interest in keeping women apart. At Cambridge where dormitories were shared until 1887, 'each female [was] to sleep in a separate bed'. Although the records do not specify exactly which rooms were used by penitents at Ditchingham, it is likely that penitents' rooms in the cruciform building block were located on the first and second floors, with sisters' rooms

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[48] *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England: Papers Prepared for Discussion at the Anniversary Meeting of the Church Penitentiary Association, on S. Mark's Day, 1873, at the Request of the Council* (London: Church Penitentiary Association, 1873), pp.5-7.
[49] *A Cornish*, pp.108-9.
[50] CFR Rule VII, pp.31-32, MAP p.26. Concern regarding sleeping arrangements in all-female religious institutions was not unique to the nineteenth-century penitentiary context. Sherrill Cohen notes that in convent-based female refuges in sixteenth-century Tuscany, similar concerns were expressed about the 'dangers' of bed-sharing. See *The Evolution of Women's Asylums since 1500: from Refuges for Ex-Prostitutes to Shelters for Battered Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.92. On middle-class fears over the moral effects of overcrowded working-class housing, see Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), p.66.
[51] Vicky Holmes argues that these sharing practices were simply a product of over-crowded working-class accommodation and not considered morally questionable by the inhabitants. See 'Accommodating the Lodger: the Domestic Arrangements of Lodgers in Working-Class Dwellings in a Victorian Provincial Town', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 19 (2014), 314-331 (p.322-24).

strategically placed. Figure 5.1 shows the dormitory spaces in this building at Ditchingham.

Figure 5.1 Dormitory spaces at Ditchingham (1859-1864). Left: interior of an individual second-floor room. Right: second floor eaves corridor with rooms leading off to the left. The photographs were taken at some point before refurbishment in 2000.

At Maplestead, the dormitories appear to have been divided into individual cubicles from the outset. Despite the rule stating that penitents 'shall not enter into the bed-room of another or go to their own during the day without permission', inmates found ways of communicating and moving between them. On finding 'that the inmates are able to climb from one to another', action was taken.[52] Early in January 1876 it was suggested that the ironmonger 'should provide galvanised iron netting to secure each cubicle', but in April the superior identified an unspecified 'difficulty' and the work

[52] MAP 12 October1875.

was not done.[53] In 1892, the minutes note that 'the woodwork of the cubicles had been removed', suggesting that a communal dormitory was easier to police.[54] There is evidence that Ellice Hopkins's recommendations for the treatment of dormitory space first made in 1870 and given at Figure 5.2 were taken up in plans for a new wing at Maplestead at Figure 5.3.

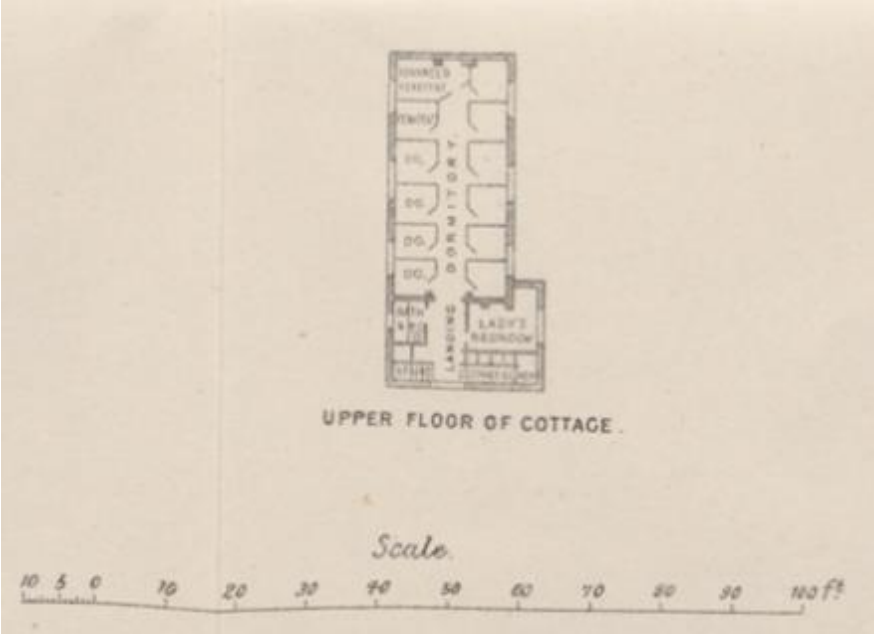

Figure.5.2 Dormitory Plan C from the Appendix of Ellice Hopkins's, *Work Among the Lost* (London: Hatchards, 1874), reproduced in the 1873 CPA's publication *Penitentiary Work* between pages 36 and 37.

[53] Ibid., 3 January1876 and 8 April1876.
[54] MAP 3 April 1892. Hamlett notes that the same decision to revert to open dormitories was made at Charterhouse public school. The intention here was that the dormitories would be self-policing and that the presence of a senior boy would ensure discipline. In the penitentiary setting, the proximity of the sisters' room might have achieved the same ends. See *At Home*, p.76.

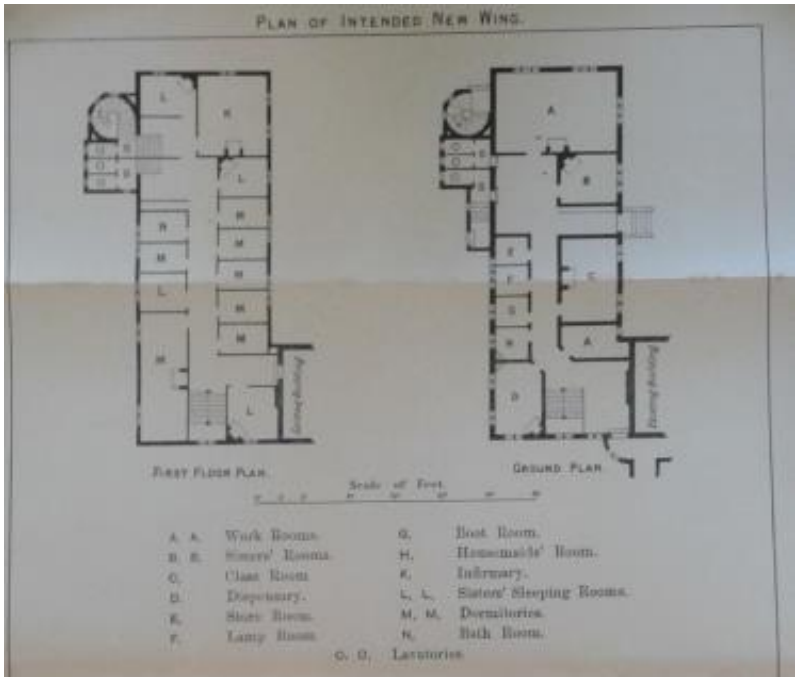

Figure 5.3 Plans for a new wing, Maplestead, *Annual Report*, 1894

Providing both individual rooms and a larger space with a fireplace at letter M offered greater flexibility to accommodate and separate different cohorts of inmates. To ensure discipline, the sisters slept in the strategically placed rooms at letter L, as indicated on Hopkins's plan.[55] By contrast, the minutes at Lincoln describe individual sleeping spaces for girls as 'rooms' rather than cubicles. Whether these were separated by brick walls or partitions is difficult to establish, but each had a lockable door. The anticipated disciplinary effect had mixed results. When Elizabeth Dunne 'got out clandestinely' her 'excuse' was that she 'did not like to be locked in her Bed Room at night.[56] Again inmates found ways of overcoming the imposed separation. At Lincoln, Georgina Brown was 'reproved…for leaving her bedroom and getting into

[55] MAP 20 January 1894. The fact that these plans were drawn up by Mr Law, 'father of one of the Clewer ladies and expressing the wants of the Superior', suggests that the new spatial treatments were based on consultation with experienced sisters at Clewer.
[56] LPFH LC 23 April 1871.

another girl's bed contrary to rules and for bolting her door and refusing to open it at the Matron's request'.[57] This incident is significant for two reasons. First, it demonstrates that inmates sought each other's company for friendship and comfort. Such attachments may have altered their experience of institutional life for the better. Second, it suggests that the bolt was on the inmate's side and that she therefore had control over who was admitted. Over time the institution took back control and by 1905 the bolts were on the outside of bedroom doors.[58]

As well as the means to deter 'immoral' behaviour, cubicles provided an opportunity to develop inmates' understanding of the connection between privacy and propriety, assumed to be lacking.[59] Reform literature presented the advantages of separate sleeping spaces for inmates. On a visit to the London Diocesan Penitentiary in Highgate in 1858 the lady reporter to the *Englishwoman's Journal* suggested that inmates 'regard the privacy and sense of possession there enjoyed as one of their greatest privileges'. There are claims here too of the civilising and re-moralising influence of cubicles which 'are found greatly to develop a sense of self-respect in the girls'.[60] New attention to oversight of communal dormitories in Cambridge is first apparent

[57] LPFH LC 28 January 1858
[58] LPFH Matron's Report Book, July 1905. Jane Hamlett notes that at the boys' public school, Charterhouse, boys' cubicles had catches on the inside but could only be opened from the outside by the headmaster. With control over access on the inside, boys could invite others in, *At Home*, pp.76-77.
[59] Mary Douglas, 'The Idea of a Home: a Kind of Space', *Social Research*, 58 (1991), 287-307 (p.305) and Hamlett, *At Home*, p.7.
[60] *The Englishwoman's Journal*, (1858), 13-27 (p.16). See Tom Crook, 'Power, Privacy and Pleasure: Liberalism and the Modern Cubicle', *Cultural Studies*, 21 (2007), 549-569 on the Victorian discourse of public lavatory, bathing and changing cubicles as promoting their occupants 'innate capacity to civilise themselves' (p.556). He notes that nevertheless, cubicles in public lavatories were policed by an attendant, whose diagonally-placed office overlooked the cubicles and acted as a form of panopticon (p.562).

in 1871, with the introduction of an improved arrangement [...] by which each sleeping-room is placed under the immediate care of an assistant'.[61] The space was clearly still problematic and in 1887 the decision was made to create 'separate bedrooms'.[62] These offered contingent moral and spiritual benefits: 'it may yet be hoped that, if the cubicle system conduces in any degree to self-respect, it will directly promote the spiritual welfare of the inmates'.

As well as a personal space, the cubicle was a place for reflection, offering 'the advantage of being alone for a portion of the day […] to read the Bible in peace and to think over what they have been taught'.[63] How far individual sleeping spaces were experienced as penitential is open to question. Inmates in all four institutions were fully occupied during the day and only had access to their rooms or cubicles from around 9 or 10 p.m. at the end of a long working day. They were not usually permitted to return during the day unless for exceptional reasons. The scope for penitent self-examination was therefore severely limited in time.[64] Cubicles were complex spaces. Their function was partly rehabilitative, instilling proper moral and social behaviour by reinforcing the correlation between privacy, self-respect and modesty. Whilst the 'homes' at Cambridge and Maplestead began with open

[61] CFR AR, 1871, p.4.
[62] Finnegan notes that tensions between the Gentlemen's and Ladies' committees at the York Refuge meant that although the Ladies advised 'individual sleeping rooms' in 1874, their suggestion was not acted upon until 1889. *Poverty and Prostitution*, p.191.
[63] CFR AR, 1887, pp.7-8. Hamlett notes that the potential for religious reflection offered by cubicle sleeping spaces was emphasised more forcefully in Catholic boarding schools and notes that at the Oratory School, curtains between beds served as screens. See *At Home*, p.76.
[64] Ian O'Donnell argues that the separate system at Pentonville Prison drew on a skewed model of the monastic day, in which communal activities such as eating, working and attending multiple daily offices meant that in practice, there was little time during the day for lengthy periods of penitential cellular solitude. See *Prisoners, Solitude and Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.53.

dormitories, by 1894, all four institutions accommodated inmates in separate rooms or cubicles. Evidence confirms that women chose how they inhabited these spaces and overcame imposed physical barriers to seek each other's company. As disciplinary offences, these are the incidents which come through the record. What is much less clear is how far inmates used cubicles and individual rooms for religious reflection. As individual spaces in what was largely a communal institutional life, some inmates in both lay and penitentiary institutions may have welcomed and protected their privacy.

Sacred spaces and objects: sensing the spirit

In the same way that institutions promoted the spiritual and moral benefits of individual sleeping cubicles, the benefits of group attendance in a dedicated religious space were expounded in reform literature and reports to subscribers to all four institutions. Whether individual or collective, religious practice is an embodied performative experience. It requires the body to stand, sit and kneel, speak, sing, listen and be silent. All five senses are appealed to and engaged in the active performance of religion. Objects and spaces associated with religious practice are more than merely symbolic. As material expressions of the spiritual, they have transformative potential and perform an active part in affirming belief.[65] Access to consecrated church and chapel spaces for collective and individual devotions was therefore essential in moral reform settings. John Armstrong expressed the central role of the penitentiary chapel 'as a perpetual sanctuary'. Equating makeshift arrangements with irregularity of observance, he disparaged the use of the institutional board

[65] Willem Jones and Matthews-Jones, *Material Religion*, p.3.

room or dining room as 'a temporary house of prayer' in which it was acceptable 'to shove off the plates and tablecloths and once a week to wheel in a locomotive reading desk and pulpit from a corner, where they have become encrusted with week-day dust'.[66] Despite having weekly access to Christ Church on Sundays, in order to solemnise the Chaplain's weekday services conducted on the Refuge premises, the Cambridge committee invested in precisely the kind of 'locomotive' Armstrong abhorred. Described as a minister's reading desk 'on a raised platform with a seat & bookstand & sconces & running upon casters', this mobile ecclesiastical lectern was intended to transform the secular board room or day room into a religious space.[67] The importance of a separate space dedicated to religious worship was promoted in other institutional contexts. The prison chapel constituted 'the outward manifestation' of the expectation to repent and reform'.[68] In workhouses, dining rooms doubled as makeshift chapels, but from mid-century onwards, more religious-minded Boards of Guardians raised funds for detached chapels to be built on the workhouse site. Their argument was that not only would religious worship promote the righteous life but merely introducing inmates into these separate and distinctively sacred spaces, 'would bring about reformation of character'.[69] The chapel's material presence served as a permanent reminder of the potential for salvation for both communities of women inhabitants. The distinctive architecture inside and out identified it as a building apart from the domestic and residential

[66] 'Female Penitentiaries', *The Quarterly Review* (1848), 359-376 (p.370).
[67] CFR 20 May.
[68] Philip Priestley *Victorian Prison Lives: English Prison Biography 1830-1914* (London; New York: Methuen, 1985), p.99.
[69] Kathryn Morrison, *The Workhouse: Study of Poor Law Buildings in England* (Swindon: English Heritage, 1999), p.99.

blocks within the penitentiary complex. By embellishing the fabric of the sacred space, sisters expressed religious devotion through their own creativity.

Figure 5.4 East wall of the upper room chapel, Ditchingham.

The second superior at Ditchingham, Adèle Taylor, was a gifted designer who painted the east wall of the upper room chapel at Figure 5.4 at some point before her death in 1896.[70] Although we have no coloured image of the chapel interior at Maplestead, the minutes record a triple lancet east window behind the altar with windows on the north and south either side of it. By the

[70] She also assisted the warden's wife, Albina Scudamore, in the painting of the roof in Ditchingham Parish Church. See Sr Violet, CAH, *All Hallows Ditchingham*, p.15. For an For an example of an early modern nun-painter, see 'From Court to Cloister and Back Again: Margherita Gonzaga, Caterina d' Medici and Lucrina Fetti at the convent of Sant'Orsola in Matua is Molly Bourne's work on nun-painter Lucrina Fetti' in Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti, eds, *Domestic Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.153-179. Adèle Taylor also established the Embroidery Room at Ditchingham in around 1864 which functioned until 1969, producing textiles for the penitentiary chapels and commercial commissions for ecclesiastical textiles. Embroidery work was therefore both devotional and professional. See Mary Schoesser, *The Watts Book of Embroidery* p.100. For developments in secular professional embroidery, see Maria Quirk 'Stitching Professionalism: Female-run Embroidery Agencies and the Provision of Artistic Work for Women, 1870-1900', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 21 (2016), pp.184-204.

renowned London stained glass maker W.A.Powell and an expensive embellishment, the windows were donated by the first superior, Mrs Lucy Kempe, as an act of devotion.[71] The rich colour of the stained glass in penitentiary chapels and the two parish churches attended by inmates at the Cambridge and Lincoln would have made an immediate visual impact in contrast to the generally whitewashed walls of their work spaces.[72] At Maplestead, the reintroduction of a rood screen surmounted by carved wooden figures reclaimed pre-Reformation practice and situates Woodyer's chapel firmly in the Gothic revival.[73]

Figure 5.5 Carved wooden figures from the rood screen of the penitentiary chapel at Maplestead. See their original setting in Figure 5.8 below.[74]

[71] MAP 22 July 1868. Mrs Kempe's order is recorded in the business records of Powell & Sons in the archives of the Victoria & Albert Museum.
[72] Gerald Parsons notes that the return of 'representational stained glass' was one of several features of pre-reformation churches whose re-introduction was advocated by the Cambridge Ecclesiological Society, formed in 1841. See *Religion in Victorian Britain*, II: *Controversies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p.32.
[73] Ian Richards, *Abbeys of Europe* (Feltham: Paul Hamlyn, 1968), p.164.
[74] In the centre is the crucified Christ with the Virgin Mary to the left and St John the Evangelist to the right. The figures and parts of the original rood screen from the chapel at Maplestead are now in St Barnabas Church, Alphamstone, Essex.

The screen serves to mark out the chancel, the most sacred part of the chapel where the bread and wine for communion are prepared. Anglicans believe that the bread and wine taken during communion provides a direct connection to the death and resurrection of Christ and is renewing. As the vessels containing the wine, chalices were among the richest objects in both penitentiaries. Ayla Lepine has noted the emphasis placed on sacramentality by John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, two founding members of the Tractarian Cambridge Camden Society. Getting to the heart of what a sacred object is and does, Neale and Webb expressed this quality of sacramentality as the juncture between form and meaning, 'the idea that by the outward and visible form, is signified something inward and spiritual'.[75] For Tractarians, the beauty of the outward form should reflect and embody the beauty of the 'inward and spiritual'. This sacred aesthetic comes through designs for furniture and metalwork by several architects of the Gothic revival in *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, produced by the Ecclesiological Society (formerly the Cambridge Camden Society). William Butterfield, Henry Woodyer's architectural mentor, provided the drawings of communion chalices at Figure 5.6.[76] At Figure 5.7 are two chalices from Maplestead and Ditchingham. Made by Hubert Vogeno in Aachen, Germany, the silver-gilt chalice from

[75] Ayla Lepine, 'At the Threshold', p.5. The renewed interest in the power of religious objects fuelled the controversy over the revival of practices associated with ritualism. James Bentley suggests that John Neale's emphasis on '"sacramentality" in church architecture was fundamental and intended 'so that every aspect of a properly designed place of worship would speak of "the Blessed Sacraments of the Church"'. See *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.14. See David Morgan on the importance of mediating the sacred through 'material and sensory forms' and the role of emotional transference in the relationship between religious adherent and the sacred object. *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p.43.
[76] *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica* (London: John Van Voorst, 1851). The 1847 edition included designs by Woodyer. See Anthony Quiney, 'Altogether a Capital Fellow and a Good One Too: a brief Account of the Life and Work of Henry Woodyer, 1816-1896', Architectural History, 38 (1995), 192-219 (p.197).

Maplestead depicts scenes from the life of Christ in four silver medallions around the foot.[77] The chalice from Ditchingham contains several elements from Butterfield's designs in *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, enriched by the addition of semi-precious gems, sometimes taken from jewellery pieces as a devotional act, perhaps done in remembrance.[78] Made by the prestigious Birmingham firm John Hardman and Co, the worn hallmarks make precise dating difficult, but it is possible that the chalice was presented by the first warden of Ditchingham, William Scudamore, on completion of the upper room chapel in 1864.[79] That both chalice makers were renowned in their own countries points to the quality and status of these two objects, and to the particularity of their meaning and significance as liturgical vessels associated with communion and used by communicants.

[77] The Council minutes of 29 January 1877 record the donation of a chalice by Miss Knollys. Although the source is not scholarly, there is evidence that the Knollys family had connections in Aachen. It is possible that this is the chalice she gave. See article in <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Knowles,_1._Baronet> [accessed 14 December 2018]

[78] Dominic Janes cites John Shelton Reed's example of Edward Pusey. On the death of his daughter in 1844, her jewels and those of other family members were incorporated into a set of ecclesiastical plate for the Cambridge Camden Society. See *Victorian Reformation: The Fight over Idolatry in the Church of England, 1840-1860* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.30.

[79] I am grateful to Tessa Murdoch, Curator of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for confirming the maker. The museum also holds a chalice made for the House of Mercy at Clewer by the same firm and another example by Vogeno. The memorial to William Scudamore in St Mary's Church Ditchingham depicts a very similar jewelled chalice.

Figure 5.6 William Butterfield's chalice designs from *Instrumenta Ecclesiastica*, Vol.II, April 1856, Altar Plate, Second Series Plates 31 and 32.CUL, A.32.3.

How far and how frequently that use was shared among all communicants of both communities is difficult to assess. Given the value of these items, they may have been reserved for high feast days such as Easter and Christmas. As the most solemn and significant rite of induction, penitents' first communion might have warranted the use of special vessels. Whether or not these particular chalices were used in confirmation services for penitents at Ditchingham and Maplestead is difficult to establish. As Candy Brown has argued, 'belief is highly dependent on the sensory experiences that enable people to make meaning out of faith'.[80] We can only speculate as to inmates' responses to the visual richness of the sacred spaces associated with both lay and penitentiary settings. Their familiarity with and experience of religious ritual varied. We should not assume that the particular richness of penitentiary

[80] See Candy G. Brown, 'Touch and American Religions', *Religion Compass*, 3 (2009), 770-783 (p.772).

religion was either familiar or comforting; it could just as easily have been alienating and remote.

Figure 5.7 Two communion chalices from the Houses of Mercy at Ditchingham (left) and Maplestead (right), height 22 cm.

The impact of the combined sensual and spiritual experience of worship would also depend on inmates' proximity to the altar at the centre of activity. Warden William La Barte's complaint at Maplestead related to differences of opinion over ownership of the chapel space and in particular penitents' location within in. It reveals that whilst church and chapel attendance were essential for spiritual development, the inmates' bodily presence in shared

sacred space was problematic.[81] The dispute arose when, after a period of temporary management, sisters from the House of Mercy at Ditchingham took over the penitentiary work at Maplestead in April 1875.[82]

Figure 5.8 Chapel interior with rood screen and mounted figures Maplestead penitentiary. Historic England Archive, BB 017083. Photograph by Gordon Barnes, 1971.

Unlike their chapel at Ditchingham, the Maplestead chapel consisted simply of a nave and had no side aisles (see Figure 5.8 above). As a result, sisters and penitents had to share space in the body of the chapel. La Barte summarised the Ditchingham sisters' attitude as follows:

> To have Penitents where they are in our Chapel, in front of the Sisters – between them and the Altar this they thought most objectionable. I pointed out to them however, that there were no side aisles or other portions of the Chapel partitioned off (according to their Ditchingham use) to which the poor Penitents could be relegated. The concession however in our case that our Penitents should be where they are, was

[81] David Morgan suggests the symbolic importance of the bodily experience of religion. Through bodily movements such as sitting, standing and kneeling, the body is not simply demonstrating belief, but 'hosting' it. See *Religion and Material Culture*, p.59.
[82] MAP, 7 April 1875.

> made simply because (I am happy to say) no other arrangement was possible in our Chapel.[83]

The level of spatial democracy at Maplestead was incompatible with the Ditchingham sisters' conception of their relationship with penitents. The spatial reward of seating penitents not only in the same chapel space as the sisters but closer to the altar than the sisters themselves constituted a spiritual promotion which penitents had not earned. In their own chapel space at Ditchingham, the sisters visiting Maplestead would have been used to sitting opposite each other in choir stalls at the centre of the chapel, with an uninterrupted view of the altar. Enclosed by partially open screens and double doors, the choir sisters were completely self-contained in the chapel space. Penitents would be seated outside the choir enclosure in the two side aisles.

Figure 5.9 Upper room chapel Ditchingham, showing original doors into the choir. Undated.

[83] Peter Hughes notes that penitents and sisters were seated in different areas of the churches attached to the Good Shepherd Refuges in Liverpool and Finchley. See 'Cleanliness', pp.357- 361.

The demarcation between sisters' and penitents' spaces was again made clear in the new larger chapel designed by Augustus Frere and finished at Ditchingham in 1895.[84] In correspondence between the superior Mary Rose and the warden dating from some point after her inauguration in 1898, she expressed the sisters' opposition to allowing Third Order sisters (former penitents) to sit in the choir stalls with choir sisters and to come out of the chapel with them through the choir. The grounds for this objection were that 'the Third Order is not an integral part of the Community'.[85] As Third Order sisters were excluded from the choir pews the only alternative was to sit in one of the side aisles. This request to oust the Third Order sisters suggests that even as consecrated penitents, they had still not earned spiritual parity with the rest of the community. Their identity continued to be defined by their past lives which situated them both literally and metaphorically within inferior and liminal space, half embraced into the sacred space and half excluded. Penitents were therefore less likely to have a full view of proceedings and were presumably also relegated to one of the side aisles where they could also be under surveillance through the choir screens pictured in Figure 5.10 below.

[84] Peter F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion* (London: SPCK, 1964), p.330.
[85] DIT. Frith notes similar relegation in the funeral procession for Adèle Taylor in 1896. Third Order sisters walked behind associates and in front of children from the orphanage and penitents. See '"Pseudonuns"', p.327.

Figure 5.10 Above: penitents' interrupted view of choir stalls and altar table through screens on the south aisle. Below: choir sisters' pews and altar view. New chapel at Ditchingham from 1895.

At Maplestead too, despite the warden's appeal in 1875 to protect the visibility and inclusion of penitents in the chapel space, plans were drawn up in 1911 to enlarge the chapel there and create a (separate) oratory for the penitents.[86] At the church of the Good Shepherd Refuge, Peter Hughes has identified similar attention to spatial separation. The three constituent group

[86] MAP *Letter to Associates* 1911, ERO D/EX1675/1/12/15/22.

identities of prison inmates, penitents and sisters were screened from one another but visible to the officiants through the panopticon treatment of three distinct aisles, radiating outwards in a fan shape from the altar hub. Though worshipping together, each section of the community was largely invisible to the other. Over and above this architectural device for observing inmate groups was the 'theopticon', the divine scrutiny to which, Hughes argues, all were subject through the 'imminent presence of God' in the mass.[87] Paradoxically, viewed from this perspective, divine surveillance was a universal experience, transcending earthly concerns with hierarchical separation and setting sisters and penitents on a par.[88]

Whereas visibility ensured discipline among penitents in the private chapels of the Houses of Mercy, invisibility from the rest of the congregation was more likely to be conducive to good behaviour in the public settings of parish churches. Inmates at Cambridge and Lincoln attended a local parish church every Sunday and occasionally during the week.[89] The committee at the Cambridge Refuge went to great lengths to maximise inmates' privacy and to limit the disciplinary challenges of moving them out of institutional premises. Having created a private door straight from the Refuge through the churchyard wall, inmates had only to walk a few paces to a specially created private door at the far eastern corner of Christ Church. Once inside, the

[87] Peter Hughes, 'Cleanliness', p.359. See also Kate Jordan, 'Function Follows Form', *Art and Christianity*, 68 (2011), 5-7.
[88] John Sheldon Reed notes that spatial segregation by gender broke up families attending services in the controversial ritualist church of St Albans Holborn in 1863. The purpose of the separation was to divert attention away from earthly families to focus on God 'the Father of us all'. See *Glorious Battle*, p.193.
[89] CFR 23 November 1841, LPFH LC 25 June 1851.

inmates sat in a private pew commissioned by the committee and curtained off from the congregation. In contrast to the plainness of the refuge interior, the heavy fluted red damask curtains enclosing the pew were luxurious to the touch and visually rich. The exceptional expenditure was justified because the fabric symbolised in material terms the spiritual richness of the religious life, towards which the institution's founders were directing its inmates.[90] The pew effectively isolated and hid inmates from the gaze of the male congregation in particular, locating them in a mysterious indeterminate space, both present and absent.[91]

At about two miles' walk north of the city, Lincoln inmates attended the parish church of Burton every Sunday 'when the weather permits'.[92] By the 1880s, they had moved to St Mary's, a new church in Riseholme, about a mile north. There is no indication of where the inmates sat in the church space. If no screening was possible, integrated into the congregation, they may have had a very different experience of church attendance. Attempts may have been made to seat the inmates at the back and they may have left before the congregation.[93] Begun in 1850 in a restrained decorated style, the stained

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[90] The deep division between evangelical and 'High' Anglican attitudes to the revival of liturgical and material practices from the early church is vividly illustrated by a heated local debate in Cambridge. The founder of the Cambridge Refuge, evangelical Anglican James Scholefield and John Mason Neale and the Camden Society entered into a pamphlet war over the installation of a stone altar in the town's Round Church. See Simon Goldhill, *The Buried Life of Things: How Objects Made History in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.50.

[91] CFR 4 January 1842. On the comparable link between invisibility and prurient interest in the early modern nun's body, see Helen Hills 'The housing of institutional architecture: searching for a domestic holy in post-Tridentine Italian convents', in Sandra Cavallo and Silvia Evangelisti, *Domestic Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 121-150, (p.14).

[92] LPFH LC 25 June 1851.

[93] A seating plan from South Carlton in rural Lincolnshire shows the correlation between social rank and pew occupation with 'a special sitting reserved for "servant maids". See Obelkevich, p.109.

glass inside would have made an immediate impression on the senses of the three Lincoln inmates confirmed here in 1877, probably in a private service.[94]

Figure 5.11 Interior of St Mary's Church, Riseholme, Lincoln, as it is today. <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3984842> [accessed 11May 2017], taken by Jennifer Hannan.

Religious texts and the purpose of literacy

Religious instruction was usually the responsibility of lady volunteers, sisters, chaplains and wardens. There is evidence that the approach adopted by individuals could be particularly influential. In her study of evangelical prison visitor Sarah Martin in Great Yarmouth, Helen Rogers has challenged the prevailing historiographical scepticism over 'purported grateful prisoner testimony'. The emphasis on Foucauldian readings of prisons as sites of

[94] Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p.343. For discussion of Riseholme architect Samuel Sanders Teulon's sacred and secular gothic revival work, see M. Saunders, "Teulon, S.S." *Grove Art Online*, Oxford University Press <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/art/T084014> [accessed 11 May 2017]. Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1868 gives the incumbent as Revd William Kaye, Archdeacon and member of the committee at Lincoln from 1857 until 1888.

repressive control leaves little room for the possibility of meaningful and reciprocal encounters with philanthropists and reformers.[95] The case of Sarah Martin is particularly relevant because it demonstrates that discipline and kindness could coexist within a rehabilitative programme in which religious instruction played a significant part. As Rogers suggests, Martin's own working-class origin was a contributing factor in her ability to forge a bond with the prisoners. Her religious message and the services she held in the prison were important to some, but her practical help with improving literacy skills to equip prisoners for life after release was instrumental in effecting real change in their future lives. Particular individuals working with inmates over the period of this study achieved a similar degree of mutual regard. At the lay institutions in Cambridge and Lincoln, members of the ladies' committee and other lady volunteers, missionaries and Bible readers were responsible for religious and literacy education classes with inmates on weekday evenings. Whether working with inmates individually or in small groups, it is in inmates' responses to the tasks set that we get a sense of personal engagement with each other and in this case, with middle-class lady volunteers. In January 1843, the ladies at Cambridge reported 'All the Inmates had selected & learnt by heart texts appropriate to their own state of feeling – Their kindness towards each other & desire to assist each other is very striking & pleasing'. There is a suggestion here of mutual co-operation, shared purpose and even collegiality in the course of doing this Scripture-based activity. Most interesting is the explicit link between text and 'state of feeling' in the purpose

[95] Helen Rogers, 'Kindness and Reciprocity: Liberated Prisoners and Christian Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History*, 47 (2014), 721-745 (p.722).

of this task. Assiduousness on the part of inmates might stem from a desire to please, perhaps choosing texts likely to meet with approval, regardless of their true state of mind. However, the freedom of individual choice attached to this task suggests that inmates were not always required to learn texts selected and imposed on them by others.

The importance of reading the message contained in religious texts drove provision of literacy tuition at the two lay institutions. Offered by ladies' committees, reading and writing classes were held regularly at both lay institutions, with slates and other writing materials bought periodically.[96] At the Houses of Mercy, literacy levels were not recorded at Ditchingham, but between 1880 and 1899, 97.2% of women entering Maplestead stated some level of literacy, with the minimum ability given as 'read a very little'. Writing earlier in 1871, the warden at Maplestead Revd Edgar Corrie noted the diversity of inmates' literacy skills and religious knowledge: 'some of the penitents are utterly ignorant, not only of reading but of the veriest elements of Religious teaching – while others can read with fluency, & display a considerable acquaintance with scripture'.[97] The purpose of learning Biblical texts and hymns by heart was in order to anchor their messages in inmates' minds and to aid those less able to read.[98] Teaching reading took religious instruction a stage further because it enabled inmates to consult religious texts

[96] CFR 22 October 1839 notes inmates' progress in reading writing and on 29 October 1839 the Ladies requested slates for teaching writing. At Lincoln the minutes of 4 January 1849 note alternating weekly reading and writing classes and a donation of slates on 23 September 1857.
[97] MAP 21 July 1871.
[98] Helen Rogers notes a similar emphasis on 'imbibing biblical truths' as a route to reclamation in Sarah Martin's work. See 'The Way to Jerusalem: Reading, Writing and Reform in an Early Victorian Gaol', *Past and Present*, 205 (2009), p.73.

privately and also improved their overall levels of literacy. Libraries were provided for inmates in all four institutions and in keeping with practice in other institutions, matrons and other officers vetted reading matter before it was made available to inmates.[99] As well as Bibles and Prayer Books bought with grants from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, reading material provided included evangelical tracts and texts such as John Angell James' *The Anxious Enquirer After Salvation*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Pocket Prayer Book* by Rebecca Wilkinson were presented to the Cambridge institution as gifts for the inmates' library.[100] First published by the Philanthropic Society in 1800 and in its eleventh edition by 1838, the *Pocket Prayer* was a daily service book for families, providing hymns, readings and prayers for morning and evening worship over a period of six weeks. Pictured below, Wilkinson's prayer book was probably thought particularly suitable for reformatory inmates because it provided a ready-made daily timetable for religious observance, which would reinforce the need for daily engagement.[101]

[99] Rebecca Wynter notes that reading matter in Stafford Gaol was not confined to religious books and included periodicals such as *The Spectator*, and books on a range of subjects such as science and history. 'Diseased Vessels' p.130, fn.215.
[100] CFR 7 December 1841.
[101] Wilkinson was associated with Hannah More and the evangelical Clapham Sect and active in philanthropic work with children. See G.H.Spinney, 'Cheap Repository Tracts: Hazard and Marshall Edition',*The Library*, 4 (1939), 295-340 (pp. 299-300).

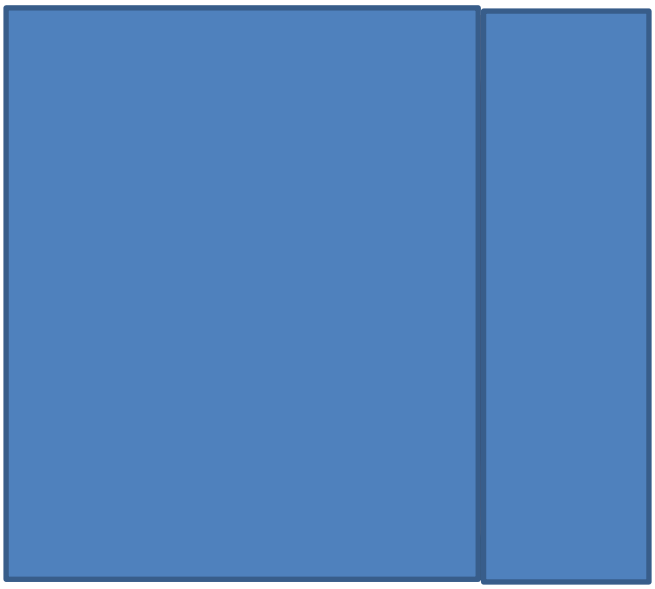

Figure 5.12 Rebecca Wilkinson's *Pocket Prayer Book*, 11th edition, London, 1838, 13.5 cm x 9 cm. CUL.

Over time, the range of reading matter broadened to allow a more secular and recreational element. Twelve copies of T*he Girls' Own Paper* were donated to the Lincoln home in1892. Published by the Religious Tract Society and intended for working-class as well as middle-class girls, the paper promoted ideals of middle-class domesticity and presented morally improving stories. [102] Religiously-themed activities and games were also acceptable.[103] The same relaxation is evident in an appeal made at Ditchingham in 1889: 'Oh! for a good Noah's Ark, and some Scripture puzzles for Sunday use'.[104]

[102] See Kristine Moruzzi and Michelle Smith, '"Learning What ...Real Work Means": Ambivalent Attitudes towards Employment in the *Girls' Own Paper*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 43 (2010), 429-445 (pp.435-46).
[103] LPFH Matron's Report Book, February 1902, January 1903, May 1909. See Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman *Victorian Women's Magazines: an Anthology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p.1 and p.59 for the link between different female readerships and identity in magazines like *The Gentlewoman*.
[104] *East and West*, p.12.

Gauging how inmates received the content of reading matter is challenging. Writing on books for children in Board Schools, Anna Davin notes that although it is possible to identify those they were given to read, it is impossible to know 'how much they believed or remembered or internalised'. She makes the important distinction between intention and reception, arguing that the recipients 'are actors and not objects'.[105] Although pre-selected reading matter was intended to reinforce religious teachings, the internality of reading permits the reader total and private freedom of interpretation beyond the boundaries of prescription and surveillance. In terms of their own reading, therefore, inmates could make a strategic choice to accept religious messages publicly but reject them privately.[106] Evidence from Maplestead suggests that engagement with religious texts was not always welcome. When questioned about rumours that Bibles were being burned at the penitentiary, the warden answered that only 'mutilated' copies had been destroyed. These mutilations must have been particularly serious to warrant burning, particularly in an institution in which material economy was a necessity. The incident raises the possibility that penitents expressed their responses to religious teaching by defacing and damaging the material text itself.[107]

As well as moving out of workspaces for church services, evening prayers brought together inmates and staff in the everyday work room and ward spaces of the lay institutions. Two prayers devised in Lincoln around 1856 and given in Appendix 5 show how each text was framed for the distinct

[105] Anna Davin, '"Mind That You Do as you Are Told": Reading Books for Board School Girls, 1870-1902', *Feminist Review*, 3 (1979), 89-98 (p.90).
[106] Jane Hamlett cites J.A.Mangan's suggestion that in the same way, public school boys attending Chapel 'were able to acquire a mask of Christianity', *At Home*, p.66.
[107] MAP 26 July 1875.

constituencies of lady volunteers and inmates. Probably said at the start of monthly meetings, the ladies' prayer indicates how volunteers saw the nature of their mission 'to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wandering, and to raise the fallen'. The ladies articulate the qualities they aspire to for themselves in this work with inmates, including 'a tender compassion for their souls […] a spirit of gentleness, meekness & patience'. The prayer for the inmates may have been said at daily prayers. The text begins similarly with an introduction, although this is extended to locate the 'lost' among the poor, weary and heavy-laden. The prayer clarifies that inmates need to learn 'that they are sinners', that 'thou art their Redeemer and Saviour', and that 'having had much forgiveness' they should follow the divine example of 'purity, holiness and patience'. Lastly, it ends with a plea to 'receive the prayers which we offer to Thee, in behalf of our fellow sinners in this House of Mercy'. As 'fellow sinners' saying this prayer together provided inmates with a rare experience of parity with their moral and social 'superiors' who were found equally wanting. Two contrasting examples from Cambridge serve to show the variety of response to in-house prayers. In 1841, the minutes note that Sarah Aimes and Susan Hearn, probationers recently fully admitted were 'much struck on being admitted to family worship the first evening with the singing & reading'.[108] Two experienced inmates were less impressionable: in August 1845 'at the time of Matron's reading the Bible…Foreman & Hart winked at each other across the table'.[109] By subverting the solemnity which

[108] CFR 26 October 1841.
[109] CFR 26 August 1845. At this point Hart was six months and Foreman one year into their term of institutionalisation.

should accompany the reading, these two inmates demonstrated their ability to distance themselves from the pervasive religiosity.

The transformative power of religious instruction depended on its regularity. At times of low staffing or low staff morale, in the lay homes religious observance could fall away. The intensity of religiosity therefore varied considerably. At Lincoln, the lack of availability of ladies' committee members over the summer meant less regular religious instruction. In September 1847, reports reached the Cambridge committee 'respecting the Inmates leaving the Church before the sermon, and the Matron not sitting in the Refuge Pew with them'.[110] Lack of surveillance allowed inmates a rare degree of choice in respect of religious observance and their response to this unaccustomed freedom was revealing. Opportunities to evade religious instruction and practice were fewer at the two penitentiaries, where daily life was religious life and the ratio of sisters and lady associates to penitents was higher.

Baptised	Confirmed	On leaving baptised	On leaving confirmed	On leaving communion	On leaving Nil recorded
84.3% Yes 6.0 % No 9.2% Nil recorded	32.9% Yes 69.4% No 14.8% Nil recorded	7.3%	42.5%	40.8% 10.5% restored to communion	53.9%

Table 5.3 Penitents' religious status at Maplestead on admission and on leaving, 1880-1899.

[110] CFR 28 October 1847.

Table 5.3 brings together and compares the religious status of 465 women on admission and after institutionalisation at Maplestead. The proportion of 'nil recorded' on leaving is high as it also reflects those penitents who left before confirmation. Confirmation usually took place at the end of the probationary period, with communion sometimes simultaneous or several months later. The table shows that of the 69.4% unconfirmed entrants who stayed the course, 42.5% were confirmed. Like inmates at the lay institutions, penitents may have experienced the ritual purely as an act of obedience or as unavoidable. For others it may have been spiritually significant.[111] How effective institutional attempts to secure a lasting conversion through religious instruction, daily prayers and progress to confirmation is difficult to establish. Joy Frith suggests that the measure of successful conversion in penitents was the discovery of 'the power of God in their lives'.[112] Testimony from former inmates writing back from domestic service suggests a mixed experience of that power. Some expressed pride in their continued adherence, others fear of losing their religious convictions. These examples will be examined in the final chapter.

Conclusion

As a phenomenological encounter, the religious life of reformatory inmates deserves more attention. In all four case study institutions, spiritual direction, instruction and practice were perceived to be essential for the enduring rehabilitation of their inmates. This chapter has argued that inmates'

[111] See Peter Hughes, 'Cleanliness', pp.110 -111 on the possibility of coercion and the significance of baptism in the Good Shepherd Refuge in Hammersmith. Hughes notes that penitents' sponsors for baptism were usually sisters. See pp.349-350.
[112] Joy Frith, '"Pseudonuns"', p.299.

encounters with religion before and during confinement were diverse and complex. The institutional religious experience was shaped in multiple material ways. A range of sacred spaces were provided to steer that experience. Inmates inhabited individual sleeping rooms or cubicles, viewed as conducive to solitary reflection, but which also served moral and disciplinary functions. Their work spaces were commandeered to bring in makeshift weekday forms of worship. Inmates moved out into richly decorated chapels and churches for Sunday and weekday services in which outwardly precious communion vessels manifested inner sacrality. Yet inmates used these spaces in their own ways, subverting the isolation imposed by individual rooms and absenting themselves from services. In this respect, inmates in urban institutions were at an advantage; the in-house chapels at the penitentiaries prevented movement beyond the site. Even as consecrated Third Order sisters, former penitents continue to be defined by their past lives and relegated symbolically in the chapel spaces.

The regularity of religious practice was also markedly different in the lay and penitentiary homes. In the latter, the sisters' religious obligations were themselves disciplinary and set the constant rhythm of penitentiary life. Although penitents did not attend the daily offices, bells calling sisters to prayer were a reminder of the core of penitentiary life. By contrast despite the stated frequency of religious observance and instruction in the lay institutions, in practice the intensity of the religious encounter over time was far from consistent. The fact that a proportion of inmates had some familiarity with religious texts and practice might have mitigated or exacerbated the intensity

of religious instruction for individual inmates. Similarly, records of inmates' spiritual progress to confirmation, used as evidence of institutional success, could stem from genuine individual religious commitment. Lastly, evidence in this chapter has suggested that a degree of fellowship through shared religious experience was possible between inmates and staff. Those ties continued to be significant in inmates' institutional afterlives and are examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 ‘Short’ Homes, Institutional Life-Cycles and ‘After-lives’

At the Ditchingham penitentiary, an ‘Office for the Dismissal of a Penitent’ marked the end of an inmate’s moral transformation and her going forth ‘into the world’. Just as she was at the start of her penitentiary experience, the penitent leaving was poised on another threshold. This study has traced her path through an institutional experience in three progressive stages. First, considered to be in need of moral instruction, she removed herself (or was removed) from her own world in the public space and entered the private interior of a reformatory. Separated in space on arrival, she underwent a probationary period of acclimatisation to the daily routines and obligations of institutional life. Second, fully integrated, she spent around two transitional years in a setting configured and equipped to instil values consistent with a morally respectable life. The final stage – ‘reaggregation’ – tried her readiness for ‘the way wherein she ought to go’.[1] It also tested the effectiveness of the reform process she had undergone.

Writing to subscribers in 1907, the council of the penitentiary at Maplestead were keen to draw attention to the interest taken in the progress of former penitents beyond the institution: ‘Correspondence is maintained as far as possible with those who have left the Home, and the knowledge of the girls’ after-lives has been more than usually satisfactory’.[2] The term ‘after-lives’ suggests that not only did the authorities view time in their penitentiary as a stage in the life-cycles of those women it contained, but that that stage was of

[1] DIT, ‘Office for the Dismissal of a Penitent’.
[2] MAP AR, 1907, p.6.

such significance that their subsequent lives were defined in relation to it. Implicit is the idea that their afterlives will be different.

By 1907, the House of Mercy at Maplestead was approaching its fortieth year of operation and over the period of its existence, the scale and specialisation of the institutional apparatus of female moral reform had expanded beyond recognition. Legislative changes relating to prostitution regulation and the intensification of purity campaigns in the last decades of the nineteenth century fuelled the creation of new types of homes. Although continuing to address themselves solely to the moral reclamation of 'fallen' women, from the 1870s the four case study institutions reflected the renewed moral energy by extending their reach, adding at least one urban 'short' rescue home or refuge as an adjunct to the mother 'long' institution.

This chapter first examines the impact of these new institutional forms in delaying the afterlives of women passing through the case study institutions from around the 1870s. It shows how the material setting of 'short' homes worked as an additional stage of environmental and disciplinary acclimatisation before the 'long' homes. Once beyond the institution, by exploring their return 'to the world', the chapter argues that material continuities characterised the afterlives of former inmates in domestic service. Through individual case histories, it will make a new contribution to the literature by tracing women's material afterlives in domestic service, examining the households to which they went and the spaces in which they lived and worked.

Women leaving reformatory institutions experienced a range of afterlives. The majority were directed into domestic service as the most available form of employment for single women. The preference for domestic service for working-class women was not exclusive to the middle-class founders of moral reformatories for 'fallen' women.[3] Working-class people themselves preferred service to less respectable factory work for their daughters.[4] Not only did service provide board and lodging, but the respectable domestic home environment itself exerted a morally beneficial influence.[5] Those former inmates who obtained good domestic service situations or who graduated to other forms of employment provide some evidence of the 'transformative' impact of institutional intervention in their lives, and the possibility it offered for regaining respectable employment within the limited opportunities for working-class women.

Other ritual, material and moral continuities characterised inmates' eventual transition from institutional regime to domestic service. Lower status servants in larger households were often relegated to liminal spaces in their living quarters and work areas, on the edge of inclusion. The power relationship between employer and servant could mean new names and the obligation to wear uniform, both imposed signifiers of status and identity which paralleled

[3] Girls leaving Poor Law institutions were also directed to domestic service and comparable importance attached to their maintaining respectability on leaving the institution. See Nicola Sheldon, '"Something in the Place of Home": Children in Institutional Care 1850-1918' in *Childhood and Child Labour in Industrial England: Diversity and Agency, 1750-1914* ed. by Nigel Goose and Katrina Honeyman (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.255- 276 (p.270).
[4] Siân Pooley, 'Domestic Servants and their Urban Employers: a Case Study of Lancaster, 1880-1914', *Economic History Review*, 6 (2009), 405-429 (p.418).
[5] See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, rev edn (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), pp.180-192.

institutional experience and persisted into the early twentieth century.[6] This chapter will argue that despite these practices, domestic service could provide a useful starting-point as a 'bridging occupation' while former inmates saved for their futures.[7] Similarly moving across occupations could bring upward social mobility.[8] The philanthropic networks through which institutions placed women in service ensured a degree of moral monitoring between institution and employer.[9] That some women kept in touch with institutions after leaving suggests this link meant something to them. In cases of bad service placements or loss of work, having access to influential authority figures once outside the institution could prove useful.

The afterlives of inmates are beginning to emerge in the historiography of a range of institutions.[10] Digital sources have begun to weave together prisoners' lives during and after incarceration and to trace the journeys of transported convicts through confinement in penal colonies to rebuilding their

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[6] Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.49.
[7] Theresa McBride *The Domestic Revolution: the Modernisation of Household Service in England and France 1820-1920* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), pp.83-4.
[8] Delap, *Knowing*, p.46.
[9] Delap notes encouragement in advice literature to check the quality of servants' work and their tidiness. Ibid., pp.68-9.
[10] For an interview-based study of the challenges facing men and women who were formerly incarcerated in Industrial Schools run by Religious Congregations in Ireland in the twentieth century, see Sinead Pembroke, 'Exploring the post-release experience of former Irish Industrial School "inmates"', *Irish Studies Review* 25 (2017), 454-471. On the afterlives of pauper asylum patients, David Wright argues that discharging patients was as much a practical process as a medical one and depended on matters such as availability of beds and the willingness of family to receive them. See 'The Discharge of Pauper Lunatics from County Asylums in Mid-Victorian England: the Case of Buckinghamshire, 1853-1872'in *Insanity, Institutions and Society, 1800-1914*, ed. by Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.93-112. Anna Shepherd challenges Elaine Showalter's suggestion that more women than men were admitted to asylums. Women stayed longer probably because options outside the asylum were more limited, especially if separated from family. See *Institutionalizing the Insane in Nineteenth-Century England*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014). See also Michelle Cale, '"Saved from a Life of Vice and Crime": Reformatory and Industrial Schools for Girls, c.1854-c.1901' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1993), pp.268-290.

lives in colonial settlements.[11] For some women leaving long stay institutions, the process of training for domestic service was itself therapeutic.[12] Discussion of the post-institutional lives of female moral reformatory inmates has shown that at the Magdalene in Edinburgh from the mid-nineteenth century, the orientation of inmates' future employment depended on their previous work experience.[13] Both Paula Bartley and Frances Finnegan found evidence of women moving to service jobs in other institutions and this chapter notes a similar case at Ditchingham.[14] The 'ignorance' of domestic tasks of girls admitted to the York Refuge and at the Glasgow Magdalene Asylum was met with managerial disapproval.[15] Susan Mumm argues that in recognition of the fact that women admitted had already been in domestic service, penitentiaries attempted to train women beyond the most menial tasks for more specialised domestic roles, but found that this training did not enhance their employability.[16] Daniel and Judith Walkowitz note the irony of

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[11] The Digital Panopticon project provides access to the Old Bailey records of convicts in Britain and Australia including convict lives after prison <www.digitalpanopticon.org> Similarly, the research network Our Criminal Past provides links to the histories of prisons and workhouse inmates <www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/ourcriminalpast >and blogspots <https://waywardwomen.wordpress.com>, particularly the life story of Julia Rigby <https://waywardwomen.wordpress.com/2018/10/29/the-journey-of-julia-rigby>

[12] See Pamela Dale on the therapeutic benefits of training for domestic service for women leaving institutions created under the Deficiency Acts of 1913 and 1927 in 'Training For Work: Domestic Service as a Route Out of Long Stay Institutions Before 1959', *Women's History Review*, 13 (2004), 387-405. For a study of the life courses of juvenile reformatory inmates, see Barry Godfrey, Pamela Cox, Heather Shore, and Zoe Alker *Young Criminal Lives: Life Courses and Life Chances from 1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). See also Claudia Soares, 'Leaving the Victorian Children's Institution: Aftercare, Friendship and Support', *History Workshop Journal*, 87 (2019), 94-117.

[13] Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.87.

[14] See Paula Bartley, *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.63 and Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution: a Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.205. Finnegan notes the greater emphasis on placing women in work by English institutions. See *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland* (Piltown, Co. Kilkenny: Congrave Press, 2001), p.71.

[15] See Finnegan *Poverty and Prostitution*, p.202 and Mahood, *The Magdalenes*, p.79.

[16] Susan Mumm, *Stolen Daughters, Virgin Mothers: Anglican Sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), p.108.

‘making high-grade domestic servants out of low-grade ones’, but suggest that domestic servants may have used rescue homes instrumentally to improve their domestic skills, gain institutional approval and achieve placement at a higher level.[17] More recently, Jacinta Prunty has noted that at the Magdalen Asylums of Our Lady of Charity in Dublin, the main offering to penitents leaving was the option to return when in need of a place to stay. Beyond that, there was no ‘follow-up service’. The monastic emphasis was inward- rather than outward-looking and structures were not in place to find penitents situations in domestic service.[18] This chapter will show that for those leaving the four case study institutions, placement in domestic service was not necessarily a sentence. Women made decisions to quit their situations or to use them as a stepping-stone. Some moved on into other employment or went home. For the few who opted to stay permanently in one of the Houses of Mercy, their afterlives *were* the institution.

The development of new ‘short’ homes was significant because it delayed the start of women’s afterlives but also because it required them to adapt to multiple different material environments. The smaller more domestic scale of refuges comes through auction sale records for St Saviour’s Refuge in Ipswich, a second short-stay refuge home run by Ditchingham from 1893 and through a photograph of the rescue home opened in connection with the Cambridge Female Refuge, still inhabited. Unique among the four case study

[17] Judith Walkowitz and Daniel Walkowitz, ‘“We are not Beasts of the Field”: Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts’, *Feminist Studies*, 1 (1973), 73-106 (p.84).
[18] Jacinta Prunty, *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2017), p.213.

institutions are the admissions records for the Cottage Home Refuge which opened in 1873, at Heigham, Norwich, one of several initiated or run by the Ditchingham sisters. The admissions register to the Cottage Home from 1873 to 1887 gives the destinations of 360 inmates and enables us to track their progress from the refuge to the penitentiary and to understand the relationship between the two.

In terms of service destinations beyond the long home, only the records at Lincoln and Maplestead give full details, overlapping for the period 1880-1899. The Lincoln home notes only 'service' and occasionally salary up to 1870. Thereafter, details of placements are given more fully though not consistently to 1910. Maplestead records give the name of the house or county of the service placement between 1880 and 1884, but then simply 'service' from 1885 to 1899, except where service is in another institution. For the Cambridge Refuge, the only surviving source of data on inmates' afterlives is the summaries in annual reports. Exterior and interior images have been traced of the private employers' homes to which women were sent for service. These images indicate the range and size of households they experienced. Although extracts from former inmates' letters, especially those published in annual reports, need to be interpreted with caution, they give some indication of how effectively the practical, material and religious training of institutionalisation had prepared women for their afterlives in domestic service. Tracing former inmates beyond institutions dispersed across location and time also presents methodological challenges, particularly in relation to nominal record linkage. Women known to magistrates for drunken or

disorderly behaviour in one area would adopt aliases to avoid recognition in another.[19] Surnames were sometimes misspelt in the register and places of birth were not always accurate, as women may have simply given the earliest place they remembered and orphans may only have known previous institutions. For these reasons, the census-based survey of inmates' post-institutional afterlives at the end of the chapter is small scale, but nevertheless contributes new insights into the impact of institutionalisation on women's life courses. Inevitably there are gaps between decennial census returns and these spaces have to be interpreted carefully, sometimes speculatively. The chapter again draws on the autobiography of Mabel Lewis, writing as Emma Smith.[20] Later briefly associated with Ditchingham, her recollections of penitentiary life and domestic service in a vicarage in the early twentieth century provide rare insights into the experiences discussed in this chapter from the perspective of a former inmate.

Part I of this chapter briefly contextualises the acquisition of new 'short' rescue homes associated with the case study institutions, analysing the impact of this potential additional term of institutionalisation in delaying inmates' afterlives. Part II moves out of the institutions to trace the afterlives of women leaving the four case studies, examining institutional assessments of their prospects. Through a small-scale census-based survey of seven former

[19] See Bronwyn Morrison, 'Ordering Disorderly Women: Female Drunkenness in England c. 1870-1920', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Keele, 2005, p.112. Megan Webber notes the difficulty of tracking former inmates using aliases such as John Smith 'Honest and Useful? The Post-Institutional Lives of Refuge for the Destitute Beneficiaries', *Journal of Social History*, 4 (2015), 933-955 (p.939) and Siân Pooley, 'Domestic Servants and Their Urban Employers: a Case Study of Lancaster 1880-1914', *Economic History Review*, 62 (2009), 405-429 (p.408).
[20] Emma Smith, *A Cornish Waif's Story: an Autobiography* (Redruth, Truran: 2010)

inmates' post-institutional afterlives in service and beyond, the chapter traces material and spatial continuities between their workplaces and the institutions from which they came. It argues that former inmates took control of their own destinies on leaving and used institutional ties strategically. The chapter closes with an analysis of the cyclical institutional life courses of those women in the two Houses of Mercy who returned permanently or who chose not to leave.

Part I Afterlives delayed

New institutional forms: 'short' refuge homes

Chapter One drew attention to the additional categories of institutions, including short-stay homes, listed in the directory published in 1888, reflecting increased activity in rescue work with 'fallen' women and a new emphasis on preventive and protective institutions for younger 'unfallen' girls. In the four case study locations, preventive and rescue homes were established by groups of philanthropic individuals and new agencies, such as that founded by the Cambridge Association for the Care of Girls at Surrey Cottage, Coronation Street in 1884.[21] In addition to the first wave of moral reformatories like the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home, established in major towns and cities in the first half of the nineteenth century, different types of refuge opened in smaller towns in Lincolnshire from the 1870s for women and girls, such as the Home for Friendless Women at Grimsby (1877), and St Mary's Diocesan Home at Stamford (1893). The Diocesan Home at Freiston,

[21] Christina Paulson-Ellis, *The Cambridge Association for the Care of Girls: Social Work with Girls and Young Women in Cambridge 1883-1954* (Christina Paulson-Ellis, 2007), p.24.

Boston, known as the Lincoln Diocesan Home for Fallen Women, opened in 1888, was run by sisters from St Peter's House of Mercy at Horbury.[22] In Norfolk, the Norwich Mission Shelter opened in Dereham Road in 1901 and in Essex, the Colchester Female Refuge opened in Gladstone Road in 1885.[23]

The ubiquitous catch-all term 'home' embraced such a multiplicity of institutional forms, that by 1885 Arthur Brinckman felt it necessary to classify and define seven distinct categories of institution for 'fallen' women, setting out the relationship between categories and attaching an average period of stay to each one. This chapter concerns itself with two of his definitions:

> II Home. An Institution for the reception of penitent women, where they remain under training for a period of not less than six months
>
> III Refuge. A house of probation (generally connected with a Home), where the girls are retained for periods of less than six months, pending their admission to a Home or their disposal otherwise [24]

The aim of this later form of 'refuge' was therefore distinctly different from that of the Cambridge Female Refuge, established in 1838. The purpose of refuges established in the later decades of the nineteenth century was to offer short-term 'rescue' and acclimatise women to institutional life before transferring them to a linked longer-term 'Home' as deemed necessary. As urban institutions, refuges also served a practical purpose. Missionaries needed somewhere safe to house women they had 'rescued' immediately. Convinced of the need for and effectiveness of this preparatory institution,

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[22] *Lincoln Diocesan Home: an Appeal to the Churchmen and Churchwomen of the Diocese of Lincoln.* Lincoln Central Library, BRN 398300, L362.
[23] Unless otherwise stated all foundation dates are taken from *The Classified List of Child-Saving Institutions* (Reformatory and Refuge Union: London, 1912).
[24] *Notes*, p.12

Brinckman suggested every long-stay institution should have its own refuge.[25]

All four case studies developed their own 'short' homes and a chronology of foundation dates for this new branch of their work from the 1870s is given in Appendix 6. All four received women referred from their own refuges or from those with which they had a connection. Refuges established by the case study institutions were in poorer urban areas where women were living and working. That location enabled missionaries and sisters to approach women in the street and bring them on foot. Depending on the case, a woman might stay for a period of weeks or months before being transferred to the 'mother' long home or another, according to her circumstances.

New institutional environments: 'ordinary dwelling-houses'

Anonymity and modesty were the essential material attributes of refuges. Writing in 1886, the Secretary of the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution, Edward Thomas, recalled that taking 'a poor outcast young woman' to a reformatory the following day, 'the appearance of the place induced her to shrink from entering it'.[26] In order not to deter women, refuge and rescue home premises should be 'ordinary dwelling-houses'. The Cambridge Female Mission, an undergraduate initiative, began work in 1854 to rescue the fallen and the 'unfallen' in the town.[27] Administered by the Female Refuge committee, their annual report of 1859 stressed the beneficial

[25] *Notes*, p.61.
[26] E.W.Thomas, *Twenty-Five Years' Labour Among the Friendless and Fallen* (London: Shaw & Co, 1886), 2nd edn, p.71.
[27] CFM AR, 1861, p.4.

effect of this connection with the Mission on recruitment: 'it is a singular fact that, while this Report mentions *seven* cases of admission into the Refuge during the year, every one of them was brought in through the labours of the Mission's indefatigable Agent'.[28] In 1878, instead of mission work which brought some women directly to the Refuge, the emphasis shifted to establishing separate Mission premises as a transitional, preparatory space. The appointment of the first female agent by the Cambridge Female Mission was the catalyst. Precisely because she was a woman, it became possible to consider combining residential accommodation for the agent and the women she brought in from the streets. In the same year, the committee rented a house at 15 Church Street a few yards from the Refuge.[29] By 1881, the committee had also bought the property at 16 Church Street and rented it to the Cambridge Female Mission'.[30] This terraced house met Edward Thomas's recommendation for the ordinariness of a rescue home. A few yards from the Refuge site, it is architecturally indistinguishable from the private houses on either side. Most importantly in terms of the experience of newly-rescued women, its appearance belied any institutional connection. Reporting in 1879, the Refuge committee noted its purpose as a temporary home:

> '...this accommodation is provided for the immediate reception of any young woman desirous of giving up her evil course, and the advantage of a comfortable home is offered, until the Committee can decide in the case of each applicant, on the course to be adopted'.[31]

That the house was 'much enlarged and improved' in1884 suggests the need to increase capacity.[32] Although radically adapted to suit its current purpose

[28] CFR AR, 1859, p.8.
[29] CFR AR, 1879, p.7.
[30] CFR AR, 1881, p.7.
[31] CFR AR, 1879, p.7.
[32] CFR AR, 1884, p.8.

as a dentist's surgery, Victorian houses of this design in Cambridge consist typically of two separate reception rooms, kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor, two corresponding bedrooms above them on the first floor, with a smaller back bedroom over the kitchen. Assuming one reception room served as a dining-cum-work room, the other might hold two beds for new arrivals. If one bedroom was given over to the agent, the remaining two might have accommodated a further two to four inmates. Whilst it might at times have felt crowded, the most domestic characteristic of this short-term accommodation was the intimacy of its scale and the homeliness of its form. In selecting houses suitable for rescue work, the less intimidating appearance of these transitional spaces was perceived as not simply an asset but a necessity.

Figure 6.1 Former Rescue Home of the Cambridge Female Mission at 16 Christchurch Street, Cambridge, acquired for the Mission by the committee of the Female Refuge around 1879.

Although having the outward appearance of private family houses, refuges affiliated to the penitentiaries were industrialised and 'institutionalised' behind the façade. As the usual period of stay was at least several weeks, adaptations were necessary to enable the income-generating laundry work and the religious life of the institution to be carried out. At Greyfriars Lodge in Norwich, the committee requested 'trestles and boards for ironing [...] Tubs, mangles and wringing machine are also needed for the laundry [...] and a long table for meals which is indispensable'.[33]

St Saviour's Lodge was a refuge at 34 Foundation Street, Ipswich, managed by Ditchingham from 1893 to 1910. Put up for auction two years after this 'short' home ceased functioning, auction sale particulars from April 1912 show how this large family house had been adapted for penitentiary use. With a side entrance from the street into the garden, women could be admitted discreetly. Brick-built extensions consisted of a separate washhouse with copper and pump and a building accommodating the laundry and chapel. On the south side of the garden were a 'classroom' or day room and a privy. Spatial arrangements to separate staff from inmates and inmates from inmates replicated those at Ditchingham. Three of the six bedrooms on the first floor and three of the five on the second floor had been divided into cubicles.[34] At the time of opening, the house was advertised to supporters as accommodating fifteen inmates.[35] By ensuring the operation of the laundry

[33] DIT Greyfriars Minutes, 15 May 1885. This rescue home was managed by the Ladies' Association for the Care of Girls in association with Ditchingham.
[34] Cubicles were also installed at Greyfriars Refuge in Norwich. *East and West* [All Saints], 1887), p.8.
[35] *East and West* 1893, p.233.

and the creation of separate chapel and classroom spaces, St Saviour's was modelled on the spatial, material and religious practices of Ditchingham.[36] As a preparatory institution, it therefore served its purpose well, replicating penitentiary life in miniature.

The Refuge at Stratford, working in connection with the House of Mercy at Maplestead, moved several times after its foundation in 1883. By 1901 it had moved to new premises and having briefly considered opening another refuge in London during its closure, the council at Maplestead felt that it had 'been doing such good work in feeding the House of Mercy with suitable cases that the need for another Refuge is no longer urgent'.[37] By 1909, the Stratford Refuge had moved again, this time to 15 Disraeli Road, Forest Gate. Consisting of four storeys including a lower ground floor, the house still stands.[38] Brick-built, semi-detached and identical to its immediate neighbour, the nature of this house was indiscernible from the front. However, like other urban refuges, laundry extensions and the activity associated with them would have signalled its different function to contemporary residents of Disraeli Road.

The advantages of 'short' refuges for the 'long homes' were set out for supporters. The Ditchingham Annual Report of 1873 notes the purpose of the new refuge at Heigham to which applicants will 'be first sent [...] that their sincerity may be in some degree tested, before they are subjected to the higher

[36] Sale particulars of 34 Foundation Street, Ipswich, 18 April 1912, SRO, HE 402/1/1912/29.
[37] 1901 AR p.9
[38] ERO, D/CAc12/18 catalogue entry description.

discipline of the House of Mercy'.[39] The annual report the following year noted the positive effect on new inmates of this preparatory experience:

> 'those who now enter the House after this preliminary training are far better prepared to profit by their residence in it than they otherwise would have been, coming, as they often would, directly from bad home influences or but just beginning to escape from the enslaving habits of sin'.[40]

For Maplestead, refuges would 'serve as feeders' bolstering recruitment to the penitentiary. They would 'materially improve its penitentiary character' by introducing new inmates better prepared for the experience of the 'long' home and therefore less disruptive to its practice on admission.[41] The Cambridge Mission literature stressed the advantage of being able to accommodate rescued women immediately and by-passing the longer admission process of the Cambridge Refuge.[42]

Temporal elasticity

Chart 6.1 below illustrates three trends. First the proportion of women admitted to the Ditchingham penitentiary in the 1850s and 1860s who had previously spent time in a different reformatory institution. Second, the shift from the 1870s towards direct recruitment to the House of Mercy at Ditchingham from its own 'feeder' refuges in Norwich and Ipswich.

[39] DIT AR, 1873 p.5.
[40] MAP AR, 1874, p.4.
[41] MAP AR, 1878, p.5.
[42] Cambridge Female Mission AR, 1885.

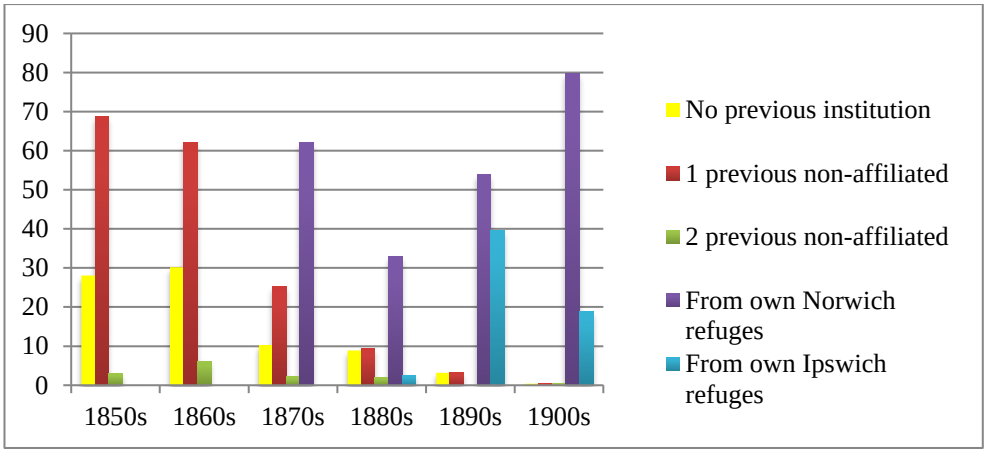

Chart 6.1 Percentage of total admissions from affiliated and non-affiliated institutions to the House of Mercy at Ditchingham per decade from 1850 to 1910.

Third, it reveals the reduction over time in the number of women entering Ditchingham with no previous institutional experience. As the number of long- and short-term homes grew over time the likelihood that women would experience more than one period of institutionalisation increased.

The analysis in Table 6.1 shows that at the Heigham Refuge in Norwich, the largest proportion of women stayed for up to one month and between one and two months.

Up to 1 month	1-2 months	2-3 months	3-4 months	4-5 months	5-6 months
166 (46.4%)	124 (34.7%)	40 (11.2%)	17 (4.7%)	4 (1.1%)	6 (1.6%)

Table 6.1 Length of stay at the Refuge at Heigham, Norwich recorded for 357 women between 1873 and 1887.

As Chapter Three showed, even before the creation of short homes a significant proportion of inmates in all four case studies had already experienced at least one period of institutionalisation in a moral reform

setting. Women could therefore experience multiple institutional environments over varying periods of time. They may have coped with these encounters and delays to the start of their afterlives differently. Some may have felt unable to challenge authorities and felt the loss of control over their own destinies. Others insisted on leaving or simply ran away. For those who became acclimatised to institutional life and were able to adapt to different environments and regimes, staying within institutional networks over a period of years may have been preferable to other options. At Lincoln 11.2% of inmates referred on to other institutions were described as 'orphans', with 21% at Maplestead. These women and others without family, friends or other home, may have relied on the security repeated institutionalisation provided.

Conduct and prospects

Referrals 'in-house' between the new affiliated short refuge to the parent 'long' home would have resulted in a different experience for the women concerned. Consistency between disciplinary method and religious practice may have meant the transition from refuge to penitentiary was smoother. Staff and sisters working at the new rescue homes were familiar with the disciplinary regime at the corresponding 'long' home penitentiaries at Ditchingham and Maplestead. They were therefore well placed to evaluate an individual's chances of adapting to that regime successfully and could adjust the length of the short home trial period at the refuge accordingly.

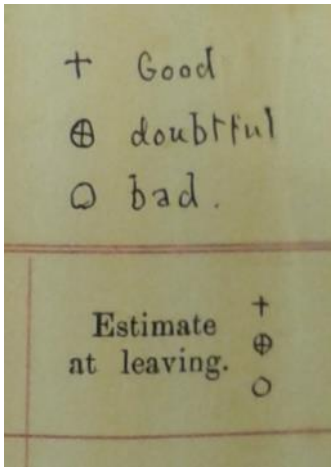

Figure 6.2 Symbols and key from the admission register to the refuge at Heigham, Norwich, managed by Ditchingham.

Symbols providing a shorthand summary of inmates' future prospects on leaving were officially inscribed in the record. The symbol for 'good' resembles a Christian cross, 'doubtful' a cross inside a circle and 'bad' a circle lacking a cross. As these indicators appear in the surviving records of later institutions – at the Heigham Refuge operated by Ditchingham from 1873 (Figure 6.2) and in the admissions register at Maplestead from 1880 (Figure 6.3) – they bear witness to the increasingly taxonomic approach to inmate classification emerging in the later decades of the nineteenth century and one which was shared across the two penitentiaries.[43] Analysis of the symbols ascribed to women leaving the Heigham Refuge suggests that it was serving a useful 'filter' function for the authorities at the Ditchingham penitentiary. Estimates of inmates' prospects on leaving are recorded for 355 of the 360 women admitted between 1872 and 1887. Of those 355, 226 were 'good',

[43] Jeffrey Weeks characterised the development of new sub-categories of moral deficiency as 'labelling zeal'. See *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), p.20-21. Paula Bartley refers to use of descriptors such as 'favourable, unfavourable and doubtful' in CPA records covering the period 1860 to 1873, but unfortunately does not specify which records. *Prostitution Prevention*, pp.58-9.

seventy-six 'doubtful' and fifty-three 'bad'. That the majority of women referred to other homes, whether Ditchingham, Maplestead or elsewhere were rated 'good' could be seen as evidence that time in the refuge was effective in beginning the re-making process. It was also successful in its secondary function as a 'feeder' institution for Ditchingham. Chart 6.2 below giving the destinations of Heigham inmates shows how significant this function was. Also significant is the small percentage of women described as 'imbecile', a term which, along with 'deficient' or 'half-witted', began to occur in institutional records for Lincoln from 1885 and Maplestead from 1894. Women labelled in this way and considered unable to hold down jobs in service were usually returned to their families or the workhouse. In the later part of the period, new institutional forms developed to cater for specific symptoms of female 'abnormality'.[44]

[44] Bartley examines the spurious 'scientific' link readily made between aberrant or 'abnormal' female sexual behaviour and mental deficiency which was used to legitimise institutionalisation. She cites evidence from the 1908 Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded that a high proportion of 'feeble-minded' women were thought to be in rescue homes. See *Prostitution, Prevention,* p.126. Finnegan notes the increased attention to mental capacity in prostitution rescue work in York from the late nineteenth century and plans to establish a home for 'feeble-minded prostitutes' for the county in 1894. See *Poverty and Prostitution*, pp.202-203. See Heidi Rimke and Alan Hunt, 'From Sinners to Degenerates: the Medicalization of Morality in the Nineteenth Century', *History of the Human Sciences*, 15 (2002), 59-88, and Lucy Bland on the links between the regulation of female and male sexuality and the emergence of eugenics in *Banishing the Beast, Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001), pp.226-249.

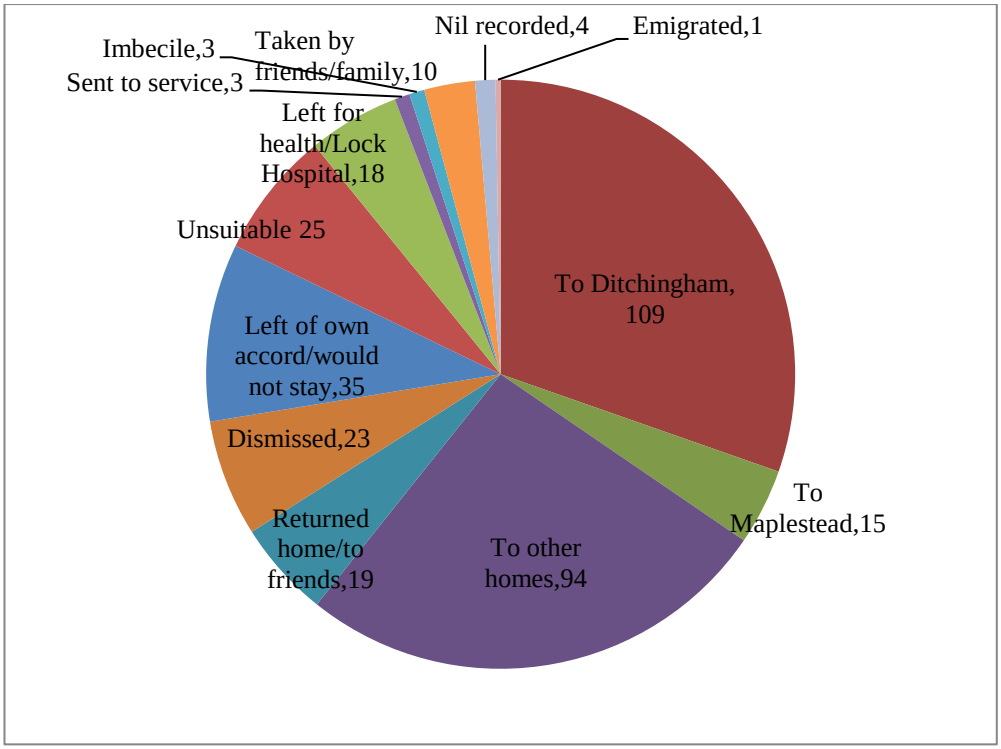

Chart 6.2 Destinations of the 360 women admitted to the Norwich Refuge 1873-1887.

Comments on inmates' progress at Lincoln were more expansive and considered. A random snapshot taken from the admissions register includes comments such as

> conduct very good - wishful to learn - gave evidence of change of Heart
> idle and untruthful
> good orderly clean & active brought to Hope she found Jesus
> gossiping & very untruthful but much improved before leaving
> occasionally low but in general she was obliging and industrious
> respectful in manner but idle
> neither industrious nor truthful
> left to pursue her old course of sin
> giddy in temper, troublesome to manage but good working girl
> rebellious to authority, but could be very industrious [45]

Although drawing on familiar tropes, they demonstrate that it was possible for institutional staff to perceive character 'failings' and acknowledge

[45] LPFH Admission and Progress Register, 1870-1881.

strengths within the same individual. The assessment of matrons Mrs Lee and Mrs Calvert confirm that they paid attention to an inmate's progress from probation to leaving and assessed the prospects for her afterlife based on knowledge of her as an individual over the whole period of institutionalisation.

Part II Afterlives begun

Leaving: domestic service

At Maplestead, the admissions register at Figure 6.3 captures the prospects for two women's afterlives in the same symbols at Figure 6.2 above. Alice Robinson (top) who left of her own accord after one year in 1895 and for whom no religious progress is recorded is 'doubtful', whereas Emily Sullivan who completed two years, was confirmed and a communicant, was sent to service.

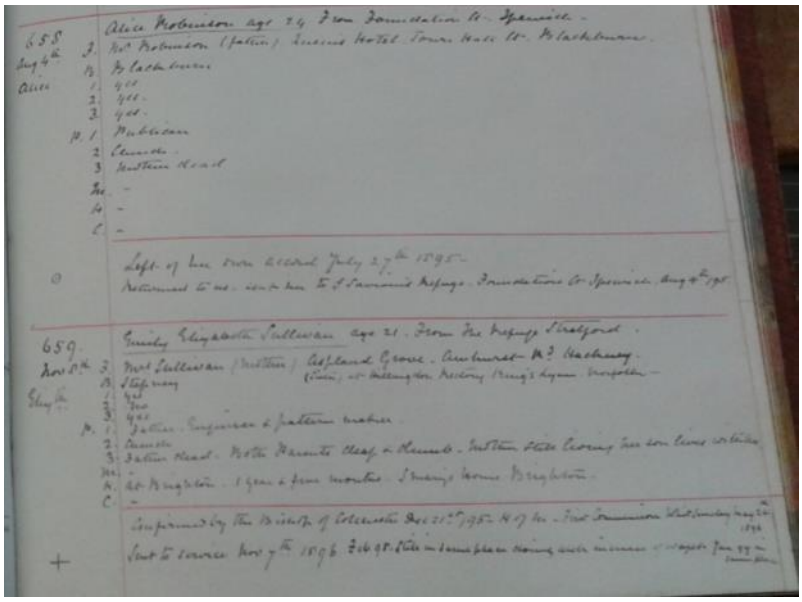

Figure 6.3 Extract from the Admissions register for Maplestead showing progress symbols, ERO D/CAc/6/5. Reproduced by courtesy of Essex Record Office.

On their eventual 'reaggregation' or rejoining the world, former inmates were steered to placements in domestic service situations where their progress could continue to be monitored. Essential to both the purpose and the legitimacy of female reform institutions were both the 'saving' moral and religious instruction inmates received and their practical training and redirection into respectable employment. The success or failure of the whole reformatory project was largely perceived in terms of this single measure, although marriage and returning home to friends and family 'reformed' were also presented discursively as evidence of moral transformation and institutional efficacy. Despite the relative buoyancy of the market for domestic servants, the route from reform to employment in service was nevertheless problematic. Many inmates had already worked in service and for some service had been the site of the original 'seduction' which had brought them to the institution.[46] Specific requirements in terms of suitability attached to situations for former reformatory inmates. Despite periodic monetary rewards from some institutions, women did not always stay in the service placements found for them and so were again 'cast out' of what institutions perceived to be the protection of their own networks. Emigration offered distance from those networks and from the past and may have been preferable for some women. In 1891, one woman from Maplestead left for service in Canada and between 1892 and 1910 two Lincoln women went to the United States, two to Canada and two to South Africa.[47]

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[46] For around 40% of Cambridge Refuge applicants the cause of their 'fall' is recorded as 'seduction' in domestic service.

[47] For a discussion of desirable criteria for female colonial servants see '"The Right Sort of Woman": Female Emigrators and Emigration to the British Empire, 1890-1910', *Women's History Review*, 3 (1994), 385-409. See also Elaine Farrell, '"The Salvation of Them': Emigration to North America from the Nineteenth-Century Irish Women's Convict Prison',

Reform literature offered guidelines to address the suitability of placements. Arthur Brinckman's recommendation of the ideal employment situation was highly specific. Perhaps in a tacit admission that 'seduction' by a male in domestic service was often the cause of a former inmate's original 'fall', he suggested an all-female household, 'with a kind, motherly widow, with a sensible good daughter of nearly thirty, where there is not over hard work, where there is kindness shown, and supervision existing without being felt'.[48] Institutions exploited the vehicle of their annual reports to request help from supporters in placing inmates in situations. In 1853 the Cambridge committee reminded supporters that 'the importance of [...] securing respectable situations of service for the young women [...] can scarcely be overrated and it is therefore strongly impressed upon the friends of the Institution'.[49] At Lincoln in 1863 a similar plea went out regarding the difficulties in finding 'suitable situations for the Inmates'.[50] To improve their chances of success, the committee at Lincoln also made use of the Servants' Register Office, in 1867 and 1870 and placed occasional newspaper advertisements.[51] In 1872, the committee at Cambridge went further with appeals to donors to 'help forward this work by taking into their service young women who have been trained in the Refuge'.[52] With this request, the committee was appealing to

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Women's History Review, 25 (2016), 619-637 and Lisa Chilton, *Agents of Empire: British Female Migration to Canada and Australia, 1860-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

[48] Brinckman *Notes*, p.104.

[49] CFR AR, 1853, p.5.

[50] LPFH AR, 1863, p.5.

[51] LPFH LC. Pamela Horn argues that moral suspicion attached to the use of registries in the nineteenth century in *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (London: Sutton Publishing, 1990), revd. edn 2004, p.47. However, Pooley notes the change of tone between 1861 and 1888 in Isabella Beeton's *Household Management*' with the later edition much more favourable towards the largely female-run and morally sound registries. See 'Domestic Servants', p.419.

[52] CFR AR, 1872, p.6.

supporters to take the products of their philanthropy into their own homes. The report of the CPA on its survey of members in 1873 highlighted the difficulties in finding appropriate households. Penitentiaries noted the 'great care' necessary 'in selecting the families with whom a Penitent can be trusted in service. These are very few in number. We generally obtain situations for ours privately through friends and associates'.[53] Such personal recommendation from institutional friends and subscribers was considered the safest route. Even within that group, the range of appropriate households willing to receive former inmates was limited. Despite often prolonged periods of institutional reformation, employers may have regarded bringing once morally 'abandoned' women into their homes as a risk. The strategy employed by all four institutions was to draw on inmates' own testimony to demonstrate their effectiveness in transforming inmates into morally reliable and efficient servants. By the 1890s, the Lincoln committee was artfully exploiting the persuasive power of testimony from employers. 'Mrs. P writing from P. House, says, "Have you a nice girl you can recommend in A.Y's place? A.Y. is to be promoted to third laundry maid"'. The same report of 1892 includes an extract from A.Y.'s letter to the matron: 'A.Y. herself writes, "I wanted to write and tell you my good news, dear Miss Lyon. On the 29th I am to be confirmed...'[54] By including testimony of her continuing religious devotion once outside the Home, the committee hoped that potential employers would be impressed by A.Y.'s reformed moral state and persuaded

[53] *Penitentiary Work in the Church of England: Papers prepared for Discussion at the Anniversary Meeting of the Church Penitentiary Association, on S. Mark's Day, 1873, at the Request of the Council* (London: Church Penitentiary Association, 1873), p.13.
[54] LPFH AR,1892, p.4.

to take a former inmate. The mistress of former Cambridge inmate Sarah bore witness to the permanence of transformation:

> I have every reason to be pleased and satisfied with Sarah […] if she continues as she has begun, she will really be doing a work of good, and may be the means of removing the impression which so many ladies have, that it is impossible for a girl to go right after having fallen so low.[55]

The same CPA report contains the favourable impression left on an employer by her servant's knowledge of the Bible. This former Cambridge Refuge inmate 'certainly sets both our servants an example in the quickness with which she finds the daily lessons in her Bible at morning and evening prayer'.[56] How far this quickness would be appreciated by the other servants in the household is debatable and this former inmate's life may have been made more difficult as a result. Joy Frith has argued persuasively that the habits of religious devotion women acquired at a penitentiary could potentially betray their institutional past to other servants and compromise their situation. Paradoxically therefore, former inmates in service may have had to learn to conceal not only their previous 'sin', but also 'their subsequent redemption'.[57] Nevertheless, the authorities at the two penitentiaries employed similar tactics to try to secure service places for former penitents. At Maplestead, a lady employer wrote that her nurse 'is a faithful girl...and is honest, truthful, loving, which is all good for the children'.[58] Again at Maplestead, 'Ladies' help was needed 'to obtain places in Service for the Penitents and to render any assistance in their power to the Lady Superior in watching over and befriending those who have left the Home for service or

[55] CFR AR, 1873, p.8.
[56] CFR AR, 1873 p.8.
[57] '"Pseudonuns"', pp. 312-313.
[58] MAP AR, 1878 p.10.

otherwise'. Although beneath the 'watching over' lay an element of surveillance, such contact was not purely disciplinary. The request was for help in the 'friendly supervision of penitents out in service, whereby every encouragement is given them to perseverance'.[59] As a source of advice this contact was understood to help inmates keep their places, but also assumed that inmates wanted to keep them.[60]

Service placements: material and moral continuities

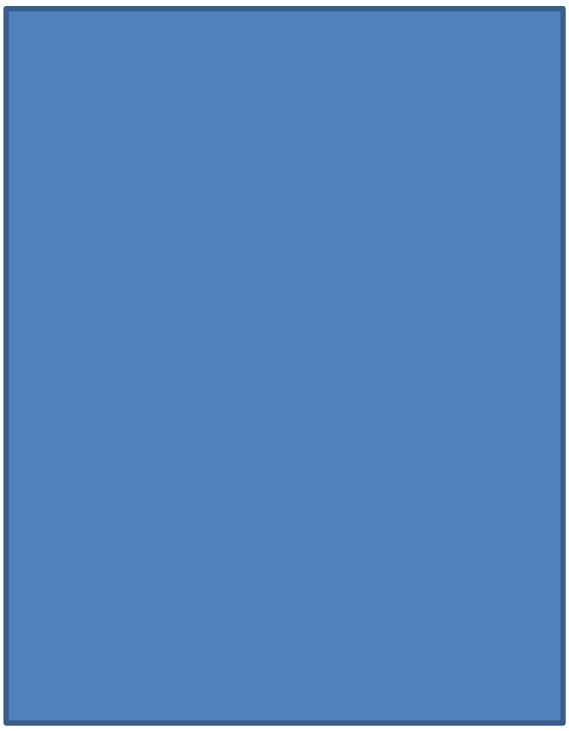

Figure 6.4 Service outfit from Ellice Hopkins' *Work Among the Lost*, 1874, opposite p.71, CUL.

The engraving above purports to represent the outfit given to women leaving the Albion Hill Home in Brighton for domestic service. Ellice Hopkins

[59] MAP AR, 1878, p.4.
[60] Megan Webber argues that the governors of the Refuge for the Destitute were uncompromising in their view of reformation and intolerant of lapses from it. As a result, they were not inclined to maintain potentially helpful contacts with former beneficiaries. See 'Post-institutional Lives' p.949.

viewed the homely atmosphere and material practices of this institution as exemplary. On the table are depicted the Bible and Prayer Book presented to her on leaving to guide her in her 'afterlife'. She carries a shawl and at her feet are a hat box tied with fabric and a servant's box containing her possessions and secured with twine. The outfit appears to be of high quality and newly made. In the case study institutions, quality and quantity could vary. At Greyfriars, one of the Ditchingham Refuges in Norwich, a lady donor provided grey calico 'to be made up by the penitents'. As the next reference is to buying 'boots for the girls when necessary', it seems safe to assume that the calico was for inmates own dresses.[61]

At Cambridge, fabric for outfits was bought new.[62] In the same way that inmates might receive institutional dress in instalments as a reward for good progress during the weeks of probation, her outfit on leaving might be more or less complete. As early as 1849, the ladies' committee at Lincoln suggested that 'if a girl leave her situation for improper conduct the clothes provided by the Home be returned to the Institution'.[63] The outfit provided for domestic service in 1849 at Lincoln consisted of

4 chemises [underclothes]
2 F. Petticoats [flannel]
1 Pair of Stays
2 Top Petticoats
4 Pairs of Stockings
1 Pr strong shoes
4 Caps
6 Aprons
5 Gowns
4 Pt Hands [pocket handkerchiefs]
3 Neck Hands [neckerchiefs]

[61] Greyfriars minutes, 28 May 1885.
[62] CFR Cashbook. Clothing or outfitting expenses are recorded from 1841 to 1857.
[63] LPFH 6 October.

By 1878 at Lincoln the committee were operating a system in which moral progress was measured in material terms:

> for some time past the amount and quality of the outfit provided for the Inmates on leaving for service has been made to depend on the number of marks given for diligence and good Conduct. The plan has been found to work well and the sum of £13.18.15 has been expended in this way.

The full outfit was doubtless presented as an incentive and a reward at the end of a taxing reform process, but as an outward expression of an inmate's moral worth on returning to society, the partial outfit was a moral rebuke made material. Attaching a monetary value to moral progress the 1878 scheme suggests that moral discrimination offered the advantage of economy.[64] The differential between quality and completeness of leaving outfits did not appear to be a factor in a later attempt to reclaim payment from women going into service:

> The outfit given to them includes nearly everything that they are likely to want for the first 6 months, so that with care little would be needed for that time -. It has therefore been decided that for the future, half the wages received the first quarter and also half of the second quarter shall be paid by the girls to the Home.

Presented to the inmates as an opportunity to 'to shew [their] gratitude to this Institution by helping it in this way', the self-justification ends with a reminder that women will receive £1 from the Home at the end of the first year in service.[65] The supportive principle introduced at Lincoln in 1872 by which former inmates received periodic payments as an encouragement to remain in service was therefore fatally compromised by charging them

[64] LPFH 26 August 1878.
[65] LPFH 3 December 1888. In a period of financial crisis following the reconstitution the Lincoln Home in 1906 as a Diocesan institution, the Ladies suggested a similar scheme of diverting the first month's wages from the employer to the Home. LPFH 12 December 1907.

retrospectively for the cost of their outfit, a scheme which eroded their wages on starting service. Outfits do at least appear to have been made new, however, with the matron placing orders for unbleached calico print and serge for dresses and linen for aprons in 1903.[66] Just as over-familiarity with the Bible might draw unwanted attention to a former inmate in service, Arthur Maddison of the Reformatory and Refuge Union was advising institutions to ensure 'reasonable variety' in the outfits provided to avoid her being 'marked as an Institution girl'.[67] Emma Smith recalls her self-consciousness when in service and wearing the 'severe black clothing' provided by her former penitentiary for Sunday church, which seemed to mark her out as 'a Home girl'.[68]

An overview of the number of inmates placed in service at the end of their full term is given below. The registers at Ditchingham do not record destinations.

CFR	1838-1853 1880-1898 Annual Reports (excluding 1882 and 1884 when no figures are given)	25/52 (48.0%) 130/232 (56%)
LPFH	1870-1910	198/597 (33%)
MAP	1880-1899	186/465 (40%)

Table 6.2 Proportions of inmates going into service, 1838-1910.

[66] LPFH Matron's Report Book, 1 May and 3 October.
[67] Arthur J.S. Maddison, *Hints on Rescue Work* (London: Reformatory and Refuge Union [1898?]), p.167.
[68] Emma Smith, *A Cornish Waif's Story*, p.133.

The figures for women going into service from Cambridge are taken from annual reports. Whilst the fiftieth anniversary annual report was proud to announce 583 admissions from 1838 to 1888, there was no comparable statement of numbers placed in service over the same period. The figures from periodic annual reports at Cambridge should be treated with caution; the proportion of 56% is considerably higher than figures from the other two institutions. Frances Finnegan records that despite 'training' in laundry at the York Refuge, only 142 of the 412 (34.4%) women applying went into domestic service and the proportions at Lincoln and Maplestead are comparable with her findings.[69] Table 6.3 below sets out the different domestic service roles to which women were sent from Lincoln and Maplestead. At Maplestead, the roles were only recorded for six years, but nevertheless show that after unspecified placements, those in laundry work were the most numerous.

	General servant	Laundry-maid	Kitchen-maid	Scullery-maid	Unspecified
LPFH 1870-1910	61 (30.8%)	92 (46.4%)	11 (5.5%)	5 (2.5%)	24 (12.1%)
MAP 1880-1886	10 (16.6%)	13 (21.6%)	8 (13.3%)	-	23 (38.3%)

Table 6.3 Service roles of former inmates from Lincoln and Maplestead, 1870-1910.

[69] *Poverty and Prostitution*, p. 204. By contrast, the number of women going into service at the Good Shepherd sisters' Cork Asylum between 1848 and 1871 was only 5%. See *Do Penance*, p.167.

Higher ranking service roles were least well represented in both institutions, each sending just two women to placements as cook, one as parlour-maid, one as housemaid and one as nursemaid. Just under half of former Lincoln inmates over the period were employed as laundry maids. Those households large enough to require laundry maids included more modest rectories and vicarages needing a single laundry maid to large country houses employing up to five laundry maids. Placements could be local in Lincoln or Lincolnshire or as far as Devon and Ireland. The next largest group was in the general servant category, the more modest households of artisans and tradespeople, with employment in kitchen-related roles for which inmates were less well-prepared, significantly smaller. The role of general or 'maid of all work' was the most taxing form of domestic service.[70] Given the urgency of finding service placements for former inmates, institutions might have been tempted to accept lower wages for inmates as an incentive to prospective employers. Comparison with Clara Collett's findings in her report *Money Wages of Domestic Servant*s suggests this may not have been the case. Collett analysed returns made by 2,067 employers of domestic servants between 1894 and 1898, finding that average wages in England (excluding London) were higher for older servants and higher in proportion to the number of servants in the household. [71] The closest period to Collett's survey for which

[70] Moira Donald uses an account of a typical day's work in the 1830s to argue that the 'maid of all work' was the most taxing type of domestic service. See 'Tranquil Havens? Critiquing the idea of home as the middle-class sanctuary', in *Domestic Space*, ed. by Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.103-120 (p.111). Susan Mumm notes that at the Community of All Saints Sisters of the Poor 'absolutely refused' to send former penitents to 'maid-of-all-work posts'. See *Stolen Daughters*, p.109.

[71] Report of the Board of Trade, Labour Department, PP. XCII, Cmd.9346 (1899). Leonore Davidoff cites this source in *Worlds Between*, p.22.

we have service wages for former inmates at Lincoln is from 1900 to 1910. All bar one of the women going into service as general servants and laundry maids over that period were in the younger age range of sixteen to twenty. Drawing on a very small sample of thirteen general and thirty laundry maids, Table 6.4 suggests that wages earned by women of between twenty and twenty-five leaving the Lincoln home for general service fell in the middle of Collett's average wage. Considering the younger age group of the Lincoln women, wages look slightly higher for those going into households with laundry maids of different seniority and particularly for 'single-handed' laundry maids. We cannot draw any firm conclusion from this small sample, but it suggests that wages of former inmates at Lincoln were not noticeably lower than the average for England.

Source	16-20 years average wage	21-25 years average wage	25-30 years average wage
Collett (England)	£7.7 to £12 general	£14.6 general £16.9 laundry	£15.9 general £23.6 laundry
LPFH (13)	£10.9 general		
LPFH (10)	£12.7 laundry unspecified		
LPFH (16)	£16.1 laundrymaids, ranked		
LPFH (4)	£20 'single-handed' laundry		

Table 6.4 Comparison between average wages of former Lincoln inmates in general and laundry service 1900-1910 and national figures from Clementine Collett's report *Money Wages of Domestic Servant*s, 1899.

How far institutions attempted to steer inmates into particular service roles is unclear. Given the difficulty in finding placements, selection may have been the ideal but not always possible. The Matron's Report Book at Lincoln

allows a rare insight into the way such decisions were made. Considering the possibility of sending Betsy Mellors as laundry maid in the Ladies' Association home at St John's House, Oxford in December 1910, the matron Mary Taylor used another former inmate's experience there to make her judgement:

> If Annie Blower is happy & comfortable & not over worked I think it might be a good thing to send Betsy Mellors. She is very steady & works well in the laundry under supervision but will never be fitted for a gentleman's house'.[72]

Whilst Betsy Mellors was considered better suited to institutional laundry work, others were sent out to households of different sizes and configurations. In ritual terms, the reformatory site partitioned 'other' women from respectable citizens. Where possible, in middle-class domestic settings family and servant quarters were separated spatially, reflecting the 'otherness' of working-class servants and the spaces they inhabited.[73] Such scruples underlay the petty material discriminations experienced by Jessie Stephen, recalling her life as a general servant in the first decade of the twentieth century. Although there were two bathrooms in the house, the female servants were not permitted to use the bath and instead 'had to go to the washhouse and have our bath in the copper'.[74] Relegation to the washhouse was humiliating, but at least offered the freedom and informality of distance from the family. Former inmates also found themselves employed in grander households. Some inmates from the York Refuge were placed in service at

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[72] St John's House Oxford was run by All Saints Sisters of the Poor from 1879. <http://allsaintssistersofthepoor.org.uk/history.asp>
[73] Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations: Domestic Interiors and Middle-Class Families in England, 1850-1910* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp.54-55.
[74] Michelle Higgs, *Servants' Stories: Life Below Stairs in Their Own Words1800-1950* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword History, 2015), p.92.

country houses as laundry maids.[75] Similar employment routes into country houses were found by the committees at Cambridge and Lincoln. Both drew attention to their links with high status houses as evidence of institutional effectiveness. At Cambridge, the committee noted the successful placement of a former inmate in a 'large household of servants'.[76]

Figure 6.5 Croome Court, Worcestershire. Photograph by Mike Peel <https://mikepeel.net > CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48107956>

The grandeur and scale of the Earl of Leicester's estate at Croome Court, Worcestershire, must have made an impression on Alice Johnson, sent from Lincoln as third laundry maid in March 1891. At that time, the household consisted of twenty-five servants, five of whom were laundry maids.[77] Not quite detached yet not quite adjoining, the laundry building sat low, dwarfed by ranges on either side. Built over a well and therefore part outhouse, the Croome laundry sits in an indefinable space between integration and

[75] Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, p.205.
[76] CFR AR1896, p.6.
[77] 1891 Census WORRG12_2332_2335-0466.

exclusion. For laundry maids like Alice, working in laundry spaces on the architectural fringes would have been familiar. The size of the households would also have necessitated investment in industrial laundry equipment, similar to the institutional laundry from which she had come.[78] In terms of acculturation to her first service job, the familiarity of laundry work might have helped but could equally have felt like a continuation of institutional life. Depending on her experience at the Lincoln Home, this may or may not have been a comforting familiarity.

Figure 6.6 Laundry at Croome Court, Worcestershire, now demolished. Photograph by courtesy of the Croome Estate Trust.[79]

Although the largest proportion of former Lincoln inmates went into work as laundry maids in larger households and country houses, those in the 'general'

[78] Pamela A. Sambrook gives the example of the Bagot family's new laundry at Blithfield Hall, Staffordshire built in 1860 which was equipped and laid out similarly to institutional laundries. Equipment included six washing trays positioned under windows, two boilers or coppers, and a first-floor drying closet heated by an iron stove below. *The Country House Servant* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p.155.
[79] I am indebted to Croome Court Archivist, Jill Tovey, for this image and for the information regarding the location of the laundry.

category were likely to have worked in more modest settings. In August 1888, Jane Dubbard was sent from the Lincoln home as kitchen maid in the newly-built St Paul's Rectory at Westgate, Lincoln. On the death of the previous incumbent in 1887, the Revd Arthur Henry Cooper succeeded.[80] The new church he came to in St Paul in the Bail had been completed in around 1880.[81] Plans for a new vicarage were also drafted and are given in Figure 6.7 below.[82]

Figure 6.7 Architect's drawings of new vicarage for St Paul in the Bail, Lincoln, front (East) and side (South) elevations, May 1888. LA Par/9/16.

Builders' accounts on completion in May 1888 itemise materials used, door furnishings and decorative features such as cornices and plaster mouldings.[83]

[80] Revd Nathaniel Sumner. *England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915* <https://Ancestry.co.uk > [accessed 28 August 2018].
[81] LA PAR/9/1 1875-1881 minutes.
[82] LA, Lincoln St Paul in the Bail, PAR/9/16.
[83] LA, Lincoln St Paul in the Bail, PAR/6/1, May 1881.

The only bedrooms without mouldings were one on the first floor over the scullery and another in the attic. When kitchen maid Jane Dubbard arrived here from the Lincoln home in August 1888, as the youngest and lowest ranking servant she was likely to have slept in the attic, the other room probably reserved for the cook, who appears in the 1891 census.

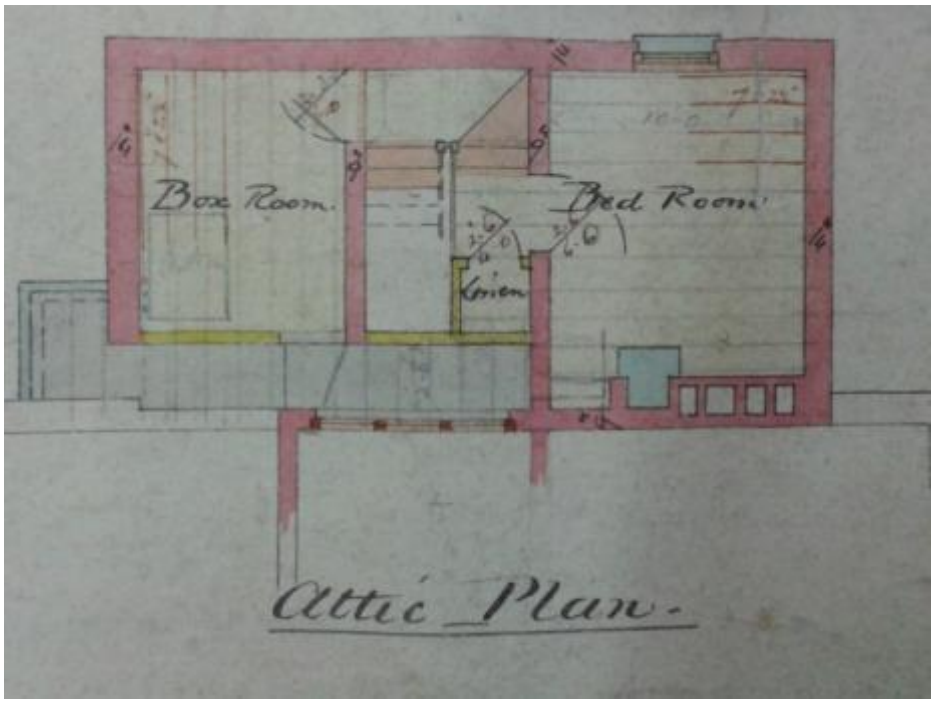

Figure 6.8 Plan of attic bedroom at the new vicarage for St Paul's, Lincoln, May 1888. LA Par/9/16.

The attic plan at Figure 6.8 notes in ink the thickness of the walls coloured pink, but additional pencil markings suggest the room might have been 10 feet wide. The window and fireplace provided light and warmth, assuming Jane was allowed coal. At the top of the house, the room removed her from the family's space and although providing her with privacy, also isolated her. At twenty-one, Jane may have been more resilient to loneliness, but by 1891 she had moved on.

Annie Heckman went to a different family setting. After being referred to the Lincoln home from the Rescue Society in London, she was admitted in December,1892. Her conduct described as 'fairly good', at fifteen she was sent to service with Mr and Mrs Cridge, who ran the kennels at Reepham, Lincolnshire.[84]

Figure 6.9 Photograph of Mr Charlie Cridge, aged 93, taken at home at the Kennels, Reepham, Lincolnshire in 1978, LA MLL 1423.

Figure 6.9 shows their son Charlie Cridge, seated in front of the kitchen range, with an easy chair to the right and framed pictures on the walls. Allowing for some changes in décor, this homely room would have been familiar to Annie, who would have known Charlie as a boy of ten years old when she arrived as general servant in May 1895. In 1891, the household consisted of Samuel and

[84] LPFH, Admission and Progress Register, p.107.The kennels boarded the hounds for the Burton Hunt and were built in 1848. <http://www.reephamheritage.org/new-page-1>

Mary Cridge, their four children and one servant, Annie's predecessor. In smaller households, the hierarchical relationship between mistress and servant was likely to be much less pronounced. Given the size of the Cridge household and the number of children, it is likely that Annie would have shared the domestic tasks with her mistress.[85] Similarly, there may have been less scope for clear division between space occupied by the family and by Annie. By 1901 the family had expanded to six children but still employed only one servant, but by this point Annie too had moved on.[86]

The propensity for inmates to leave the placements found for them is borne out in all four institutions. Such 'failures' were often attributed to inmates' own weaknesses. The committee at Cambridge regretted that 'a frequent disappointment is that the girls do not stay long in their earlier situations. Few earn the reward of £1 [for a year's service]. They get restless, and give notice on very slight pretexts'.[87]Ada Wilson was sent to the Lincoln Home in November 1903 to be 'trained' because she could not hold down a job in service 'on account of her temper'. Such moral judgments suggest that women continued to be defined by character failings even once outside the institution. A similar disapproving tone is apparent in the discourse around the 'servant problem' and the construction of the working-class servant as in need of moral surveillance. Advice manuals suggested the importance of

[85] Siân Pooley argues that in the late nineteenth century, as the majority of servants worked in households consisting of only one or two female servants, there was little 'job differentiation' between servants or servants and employer. See 'Domestic Servants' p.406. Regarding friendships between servants and their employers' families, see Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Friendship and Domestic Service: the Letters of Eliza Oldham, General Maid (c.1820–1892)', *Women's History Review,* 24 (2015), 429-449.
[86] Both Jane Dubbard and Annie Heckman disappear from the Census at this point.
[87] CFR AR 1896, p.6.

improving periodical reading matter for servants such as *Hearth and Home*.[88] To maintain authority, mistresses used strategies which were effectively extensions of the institutional experience of 'remaking'. Among these, Judy Giles notes the imposition of 'servant' names, expecting silence unless directly addressed and demanding constant attention.[89] Leonore Davidoff argues that the middle-class logic behind preparing female reformatory inmates for domestic service when many had come from it was flawed. Assumed to provide preparation for married life, institutional training did not equip inmates for managing a meagre and fluctuating household budget. The effects of loneliness in domestic service in contrast to the companionship of street life were never considered.[90] In service in a vicarage where husband and wife were at war, Emma Smith felt homesick for the penitentiary. After running away to her grandfather's home, she applied to the matron of the refuge from where she had gone to service. The matron found her another place at a lower wage of £8, letting her know that 'after your behaviour you cannot choose the kind of place you'd like'.[91]

Former inmates' experience suggests that for some the reality of domestic service could be intolerable. In Lincoln, the missionary from Nottingham attended the committee in person

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[88] Margaret Beetham, 'Domestic Servants as Poachers of Print: Reading, Authority and Resistance in Late Victorian Britain' in *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800*, ed. by Lucy Delap, Ben Griffin and Abigail Wills (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.185 -203 (p.189).
[89] Judy Giles,'Authority, Dependence and Power in Domestic Service', in *The Politics*, 204-220 (p.211).
[90] Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.32, p.62.
[91] *A Cornish Waif's Story*, p.136. Smith's afterlife included a period as a postulant sister at Ditchingham in 1919. See p.152.

> to plead for the admission of a girl who had spent two years in the Nottingham Refuge and had thence been placed in service at Christmas. She had been unable to bear the strictness of her mistress and had run away to her grandmother's.[92]

A former Cambridge inmate wrote: 'I am very unhappy but I try to cheer up as much as I can, I have a lot of work to do. I never sit down except when I have meals'.[93]

The Matron's Report Book from Lincoln reveals how she dealt with an unsuitable placement; 'Ethel Mann has got a very unfortunate place, her mistress has been asked to allow her to leave at the end of the month when I hope to find her a more suitable one'. Whether she was notified of the situation through Ladies' Committee networks or by Ethel herself, she intervened.[94] Other experiences were more positive; Rebecca Coupland wrote to the matron at Lincoln passing on 'her thanks to the Committee for their kindness to her, stating also she was in a comfortable place and doing well'.[95] Whilst Rebecca may have been keen to maintain good relations with the Refuge, there was no advantage in suggesting she was comfortable if she was not. Inmates could and did hold down jobs in domestic service once outside the institution, suggesting that experience of confinement alone was the cause of 'bad' behaviour. While in the Lincoln Home between March 1904 and February 1905, Florence Sarah Fenwick exhibited the 'most violent temper, would not obey'.[96] The census of 1901 shows that before her

[92] LPFH 27 February 1873.
[93] CFR AR, 1889, p.8.
[94] LPFH Matron's Report Book, 1 March 1910.
[95] LPFH 25 January 1866.
[96] LPFH admission register.

admission, Florence was in service at 13 years old in Lincoln Road, New England, Peterborough. By the 1911 census she was married and living in an apartment of two rooms. Her husband was described as 'an assistant part-maker in a pianoforte shop' and Florence's occupation recorded as 'assisting in coffee shop' in Holloway, London. Similarly, former inmates could move out of service and advance in their lives. Having started life in service as a laundry maid at Croome Court in 1891, by 1901, Alice Johnson's occupation had changed to sick nurse in a private household in Godalming. By 1911, she had progressed to greater responsibility as matron of the Sanatorium at Charterhouse public school.[97]

Alice Portway's story is remarkable in a different way. In 1881 Alice was in service to baker George Wackrill at 47 Duke Street Chelmsford.[98] At some point between 1881 and her admission to Maplestead on 7 March 1883 at fifteen years old, she had a daughter. We can only guess the circumstances, but her status as an unmarried mother is likely to have been the cause of her admission.[99] Her daughter is noted in the admissions register as in the care of Alice's parents, Thomas and Ann Portway.[100] On leaving Maplestead in July

[97] <https://Ancestry.co.uk > [accessed 28 August 2018], Census 1901 RG13/606, p.1; Census 1911 RG14/186, p.2. I am grateful to Mrs Catherine Smith, archivist at Charterhouse School, for confirming details of Alice's employment. For more on progression from domestic service to nursing, see Sue Hawkins, 'From Maid to Matron': Nursing as a Route to Social Advancement in Nineteenth-Century England', *Women's History Review*, 19 (2010), 125-143.

[98] <https://Ancestry.co.uk > [accessed 28 August 2018] Her surname is wrongly transcribed in Ancestry as Postway, Census 1881 RG11/1762, p.2.

[99] It is possible that the incumbent of Great Waltham, Revd James Peers Tweed referred her, as he did Rosina Cutts from Little Waltham three years earlier.

[100] By 1891 Alice's daughter aged eight is listed in Alice's parents' household as their granddaughter, and recorded as Annie Portway, <https://Ancestry.co.uk > [accessed 28 August 2018], Census 1891 RG12/1388, p.26. Ellen Ross notes this was common practice in the case of illegitimate children. See *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.63.

1884 Alice was placed in service with a Dr Blick at Mareham le Fen, in Lincolnshire. The admission register notes news received at Maplestead from Alice: 'Doing well same place 1885, 1886. Changed her place 1888. Wrote to say she was doing well.' By 1891, Alice was working in Brentwood as cook and servant to a journalist, Henry Howard and in 1892 married William Johnson, an agricultural labourer, also from Bounds Green, Great Waltham where they settled.[101] They had four children by 1901.[102]All of Alice's family members continued to live in Bounds Green in a community of farm labourers. How far they considered Alice's time in Maplestead was necessary or helpful is hard to gauge. Her parents took in her child which made it possible for her to spend time in the institution, go to a service placement found by the institution where she stayed for two years and from there to move on and eventually return home respectably married. The fact that Alice kept in touch with the authorities at Maplestead could suggest some measure of attachment to the institution or a sense of pride in reporting her continued progress. There were practical reasons why former inmates maintained links after leaving; institutions provided a place to live when employers went on holiday or when between service jobs. It was in the interests of their former institutions to provide a moral and spiritual safety net at 'vulnerable' times and all four received former inmates at these times.[103] Women returning for what was described as a 'holiday' would presumably be expected to work for their keep. Nevertheless, the option to return was useful for some women.

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[101] <https://Ancestry.co.uk > [accessed 28 August 2018]. Census 1891 RG12/1381, p.20
[102] Ibid., Census 1901 RG13/1673, p.12.
[103] Similar concerns regarding the welfare of servants 'out of place' informed the establishment of contact networks and eventually lodgings for respectable working girls, such as those founded by the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants. See Theresa McBride, *The Domestic Revolution*, p.77.

Not leaving

Whilst most institutional inmates aspired to move out of institutional settings as soon as possible, both communities at Ditchingham and Maplestead created Orders for penitents opting for the devoted life and permanent residence. At Maplestead, the warden was required to obtain the permission of the council to retain any penitents beyond two years. In presenting the case for creating a penitent Order, the warden drew attention to the motivations of women wishing to be considered:

> A certain number of those who had passed through their course were, either drawn by religious feeling, or dreading their own weakness, anxious to be allowed to continue in the Home, either as 'consecrated penitents' or as 'Magdalens', the latter being really the fruits of a religious vocation. Having pointed out the great use that such a class might be in the general work and tone as well as the discipline of the House....[104]

Construing their desire to remain in the home as emanating partly from spiritual commitment and partly their own failings, he draws attention to the penitents' fears of their own moral frailty once back in the world. How far we should give credence to any interpretation mediated by an officer of the institution is debatable, especially as he suggests that creating such an order was to the institution's advantage. It nevertheless raises the question of what did motivate the small number of penitents who opted to remain. The motivation of the council at Maplestead becomes clear in 1907, when there were six Magdalens in the community. During a period of low recruitment, the council agreed to allow Magdalens to take the place of matron and therefore save the institution the cost of her salary.[105] It was the practical and

[104] MAP 28 July 1886.
[105] MAP 1 Feb 1907.

economic utility of worker penitents raised to the Magdalen Order as much as their religious vocation which mattered.

One former Maplestead penitent opted for the Third Order life but not at Maplestead. Sarah Ann Davies's life course over a period of ten years traces her 'fall', her two periods of institutionalisation, her return to the world and her withdrawal from it. Born in London her admission record states that Sarah Ann's father 'would have nothing to do with her' and she went to St Agnes's Orphanage in Chiswick from the age of around fourteen, spending ten years there as laundress before leaving 'of her own accord'.[106] At some point thereafter she spent a year at St Mary's Home in Brighton before being admitted to the House of Mercy at Maplestead on 28 February 1880 at twenty-seven years old. [107] Restored to communion in 1881 at Maplestead, she left on 11th November 1881 to go to St Katharine's Home Fulham, as laundress.[108] She maintained contact with Maplestead, returning in September 1882 for three weeks holiday – 'with a very good character'. On 23 December 1883 Sarah married a sailor, Edmund Bunce, at St Mary Magdalene's Paddington and they lived in difficult conditions at 99 Cirencester Street, Paddington.[109] 'Between the railway and the canal' it was situated in a network of densely-populated streets of small terraced houses. 'Clarendon Street (later Crescent), with 17 persons to a house, and the parallel Woodchester Street, with 16.4 persons, were the most overcrowded in 1894-5, when Cirencester Street and

[106] MAP D/CAc/6/5.
[107] St Mary's Home was run by the Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Ovingdean and Buxted.
[108] Possibly St Katharine's at Normand House, Fulham, intended for 'female prisoners convicted of a first theft', *Cities of Refuge*, p.31.
[109] England and Wales Civil Registration Marriage Index 1837-1915, 1883, Vol.1a,p.261.

Waverley Road were also among the eleven worst in the parish'.[110] As the optimum outcome for former inmates and evidence of successful moral reorientation, the Maplestead admission register notes Sarah Ann's marriage and her 'living respectably' as matters of pride and captures news of and subsequent contacts with Sarah Ann in note form:

> Heard of in 1884 as married comfortably
> Living respectably June 85, wrote to S.Sup & sent marriage lines - helped a girl in temptation
> Doing well Xmas 87
> Husband died about Xmas
> She returned to the Home as laundress May 88
> Received the Bishop's Blessing July 30th 88
> Left for service July 89
> Received as 3rd Order Sister at St Katharine's Fulham & doing well Xmas 90

These brief notes map a relationship with penitentiary life that became cyclical. Perhaps Sarah Ann felt a sense of vocation; perhaps as a widow her decision was a more practical one or a combination of both. Joining the Third Order could be said to be a progressive step in spiritual terms, but one which seemed forever compromised by the penitent's former life. Like lay sisters, Magdalen or Third Order sisters performed domestic tasks for higher ranking members of the community. Frith has suggested that Third Order sisters at Ditchingham occupied 'a liminal space between penitent and sister'.[111] She has usefully traced the progression into the community of eight Third Order sisters, noting that six stayed for over fifty years.[112] Tracking the life course

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[110] 'Paddington: Westbourne Green', in *A History of the County of Middlesex: IX, Hampstead, Paddington*, ed. by C.R. Elrington (London, 1989), pp.198-204. British History Online http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol9/pp198-204 [accessed 12 January 2019].
[111] Joy Frith, '"Pseudonuns"', p.317.Known as the Order of Repentance, Frith notes a revealing reference to them in the community's magazine by warden George Congreve in 1887 as 'these grown-up children of ours'. See '"Pseudonuns"'p.326.
[112] Ibid, pp.317-318.

of penitent Jemima Porter through census records from 1881, Frith follows her admission as a novice Third Order sister in 1897 to her final designation as Sister Jemima Faith.[113] In 1881 Jemima was recorded as a 'serving sister', then as laundress in 1891 and in 1911, like the sisters, her relationship to the House of Mercy is described as 'member of the community'. However, under occupation, she is described as 'worker', rather than 'sister of Mercy', distinguishing her from the penitents who were designated 'inmates' and their occupation as 'domestic servant'. The census therefore captures that liminal status as half in the community of sisters and half in that of the penitents, a status she was prepared to accept as permanent. Using the admission registers, it becomes possible to track her institutional life further back in time. The register for the Refuge at Heigham Norwich records show that Jemima ('J.P.') was admitted at the age of nineteen on 19th January 1874 and transferred to the House of Mercy on 2nd February. Her 'estimate at leaving' was 'good', and she was noted as 'doing very well. Laundress at Ditchingham'. The Ditchingham register adds that her home was near Colchester and the 1861 census provides more detail of her pre-institutional life. Her father was an agricultural labourer, she had one brother and the family of four lived at Boxted near Colchester.[114] By 1871, the only other family member listed with Jemima is her mother, a laundress. Jemima's circumstances between 1871 and 1874 must have been such that she came to the attention of the sisters and town missionaries in Norwich. That encounter changed her life course permanently. In the community's archives at Ditchingham, in addition to the

[113] 'Faith' was the suffix appended to the names of Third Order sisters at Ditchingham who also took back their baptismal names on entering the Order. Frith, p.320.
[114] <https://Ancestry.co.uk > [accessed 28 August 2018] Census 1861, HO/RG9/1230/54, p.9.

superiors' visiting cards, there is one of Jemima. The fact that she had herself photographed in the dress of the Third Order sisters suggests that she wanted to capture her own image in this identity and to proclaim it. Although opportunities for visiting in person were limited, such images were enclosed in letters as keepsakes and would have ensured that Jemima's life as a sister was memorialised for her friends and family.

Figure 6.10 Former penitents as Third Order Sisters, Ditchingham. No date.

In contrast to Jemima's posed studio portrait, this informal snapshot of six Third Order sisters at Ditchingham huddled together in bright sunlight was perhaps taken by another sister. Faded and measuring around seven centimetres square, in its close grouping it captures the companionship of a group of women with shared past and present life experience.

Conclusion

This chapter began by exploring the implication of the term 'afterlives'. The creation of short-term refuges added another period of institutionalisation delaying the start of those afterlives, particularly at the two penitentiaries. Their physical form reflected their 'initiary' purpose. As 'ordinary dwelling-

houses', the smaller domestic scale of short homes was intended to reassure women brought from the street, but nevertheless represented another institutional environment to which women had to adapt. Short homes also served to bolster recruitment to the long homes. Stalling their progression back into the space of the outside world through successive layers of institutionalisation, inmates could find themselves in temporal suspension with their afterlives on hold.

Women's future prospects were evaluated through a series of coded symbols. For institutional authorities, repeated referrals constituted an admission of institutional failure and provided a convenient means of passing on the 'problem' cases. The larger number of institutions also multiplied referral options. Once finally launched into their afterlives beyond the institutional walls, some former inmates found similarly relentless work routines in domestic settings which were far from homely. Others were more fortunate in their employers. Those who went to placements which demanded laundry skills were at least familiar with the work involved and accustomed to their relegation within the household to spaces on the edge of the built fabric. The afterlives envisaged for reformatory inmates by institutional authorities were limited to domestic service, which was considered preferable to the freedoms associated with factory work. Their experiences in service differed but moral continuities such as the element of surveillance, the constant occupation, curtailed freedom of movement and moral modelling of the Christian family would have been perceived as the natural extension of the reformatory environment.

For those who remained permanently at the penitentiaries acting as ‘serving sisters’, they were elevated above the penitent community, but located below the lay sisters, the lowest rank of sister. Whether Third Order or Magdalene Order, both designations articulated the perpetual ‘otherness’ of the former penitent, ‘raised’ but always inferior. Given the life courses which led single women to this point, the decision to stay may have been pragmatic and in some circumstances, even desirable. Despite its low status, the Third Order offered the protection of a community, familiarity and companionship.

Conclusion

The four institutions in this study had their own afterlives beyond 1910. The Cambridge Female Refuge closed officially on 20 June 1939. On the outbreak of war, it was taken over by military authorities until 1946.[1] The Borough Council then used it to house families, buying the property in 1949.[2] The Refuge building was demolished at some point after 1959 to make way for major redevelopment. The Lincoln Penitent Females' Home became registered under the Home Office in 1936 and as the Lincoln Girls' Home, took in girls from the juvenile courts.[3] The last institutional records date from 1950 when the institution closed. The building became the offices of the East Midlands Gas Board until some point during 1970s, when the Gas Board relocated and the site was cleared for new housing.[4]

Work with women and girls continued at Maplestead as St Mary's Home under the auspices of the Diocesan Moral Welfare Association and the Diocesan Committee for Family Care until 1958, when the decision was made to dispose of the contents, demolish the building and sell the land. The proceeds went to local moral welfare initiatives.[5] Only the penitentiary at Ditchingham survives in its entirety. By the 1950s the former penitentiary had become St Michael's House, a training home registered under the Home Office. A Community Home from 1965, it later became a conference and

[1] CFR R60/27/16 18 June 1939.
[2] CFR R60/27/15 11 February 1949.
[3] LPFH AR 1937, p.4.
[4] Information from John Herridge, Lincolnshire Archives, 29 April 2013.
[5] MAP, D/CAc 12/3/4.

retreat centre for the Community of All Hallows. The community dispersed formally in June 2018.[6] Continuities in charitable work are still traceable to the sites at Ditchingham and Cambridge. The Scudamore Memorial built for Third Order sisters now provides living accommodation for the homeless charity Emmäus. The new convent built for the sisters in 1876 is the Emmäus show room for the Norwich area. On the site of the Cambridge Female Refuge is Stanton House, a sheltered housing complex, partly bounded by the original Refuge wall. At the start of their lives, the institutions in this study were innovative on two counts. Established as the result of voluntary action in mitigation of the 'social evil', they were new all-female residential institutions which sought to reclaim 'fallen' women and restore them to respectability for employment in domestic service. The Anglican sisterhood penitentiaries were doubly innovative. Challenging conventional social expectations for the life courses of middle-class women and choosing the devoted life, they met with opposition and suspicion on multiple grounds as a result.

By placing the materiality of female moral reform settings at its centre, this thesis has taken the scholarship of reform institutions for 'fallen' women in a new direction. Existing studies of prostitution regulation and reform have focused more on the purpose of these institutions as instruments of social control.[7] Extending Lu Ann de Cunzo's ritual interpretation of institutional

[6] Sister Violet C.A.H.'*All Hallows Ditchingham: the Story of an East Anglican Community* (Oxford: Beckett Publications, 1983), p.57.
[7] Linda Mahood, *The Magdalenes: Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1990), Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution, a Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Paula Bartley, *Prostitution, Prevention and Reform in England 1860-1914* (London: Routledge, 2000),

practice, this study links form, function and meaning in a three-dimensional reading of lived experience. It has argued that the material environment of the four case study institutions was conceived as an active force in constituting the reformed inmate.[8]

The tension between sentiment and pathology in the discursive construction of the unmarried unchaste working-class woman informed the creation of the environment which would reform her.[9] Although morally threatening, the 'fallen' woman was not criminal. As admission was technically voluntary, these institutions operated on different terms from carceral settings. Nevertheless, as spaces concerned with moral rehabilitation, all four case study institutions employed environmental strategies to reshape behaviour.[10] To that extent, they were powerful spaces. At the same time, the institutional environment needed to inculcate and reflect the material and spiritual virtues of the respectable domestic home, a morally improving space in itself and part of inmates' training for domestic service. The setting therefore needed to be both corrective and didactic.

Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London: Longman,1989), Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*: *Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[8] Lu Ann De Cunzo, 'Reform, Respite, Ritual: an Archaeology of Institutions; the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia, 1800-1850', *Historical Archaeology*, 29 (1995), 1-168 and *Interior Design and Identity* ed. by Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[9] Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*.

[10] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977), Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, with a new introduction by William. B. Helmreich (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Aldane Transaction, 2007).

Even before entering institutions, the print culture of street-based mission work introduced women to the rhetoric of salvation. Technological developments in the late 1820s led to cheaper methods of reproducing images.[11] Sarah Roddy *et al* have shown how charities harnessed new printing technologies to attract support for a range of 'deserving' groups, including 'fallen' women.[12]. By reproducing and analysing the images and emblems embodied in the materiality of their publications this study contributes to that scholarship by showing how rescue organisations expressed the perceived sacred nature of their work in graphic form. Unity of purpose and spiritual strength come through the Reformatory and Refuge Union's carefully composed emblem, inciting its workers 'to seek and to save that which was lost' and emblazoned on the covers of its periodical *Seeking and Saving*. Conversely, the power of word and image in tracts and leaflets contrasted with their material fragility as paper objects, placed into women's hands.

Although sharing common purpose, 'lay' and Anglican penitentiary institutions developed very different material forms in which to carry out their reclamation work. The intimidating appearance, austere material environment and taxing routine of existing homes both lay and penitentiary were criticised publicly and in reform circles. More homely 'cottage' institutions first developed in settings for juveniles were suggested for female reform spaces. As Paula Bartley has suggested, institutions run by Ladies' Associations reflected Ellice Hopkins's ideas on the moral benefits of the 'home' setting.

[11] Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture 1790-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp.2-3.
[12] Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange and Bertrand Taithe, *The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870-1912* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p.76.

Separate cottages offered the methodological and disciplinary advantage of greater classification while modelling moral and didactic value of the home by housing inmates in 'family' units.[13] Images presented in this study bring that theory to life by showing how Hopkins's cottage plan was realised in built form. Most significant were the gaps between stated and actual practice exemplified in the inspection report on the Rescue Society's Home in Wandsworth, where the matron had retreated to her room leaving the inmates unattended. Working alongside institutional rules, environments shaped to rehabilitate their inmates could only enable that rehabilitation if effectively managed.

In all four settings, women played essential roles as space makers, users and managers. Respectable religiously-sound women familiar with running domestic households were vital to the day-to-day operation of institutional sites. Women volunteers and paid staff contributed their experiences of working in unsuitable premises to shape new building plans. The penitentiary at Maplestead owed its existence to two women. Women founders visited other institutions to gather intelligence or brought their own experience to the creation of purpose-built premises. Architectural style reflected institutional meaning, purpose and aspiration.

The ritual nature of institutional space was signalled by insulating perimeter walls. Marking the interstices between public and private space, they

[13] Paula Bartley, 'Seeking and Saving: the Reform of Prostitutes and the Prevention of Prostitution in Birmingham, 1860-1914' (unpublished PhD thesis, Wolverhampton University, 1995), p.169.

‘protected’ inmates inside and residents outside from contact with each other. Visible but detached and set back, these institutions were mysterious, partly present in and partly absent from the landscape. Although engineered through bricks and mortar, separation was not invincible. Institutional boundaries were porous. In urban locations especially, voices carried, connecting inmates at Lincoln with those of the neighbouring workhouse. Inmates found illicit ways of bringing friends inside the institutional walls. The rural settings of the penitentiaries ensured the quiet privacy necessary for the sisters but shaped a more insular experience for inmates.

Internal space was similarly configured to separate and protect probationers from potentially polluting and mutually disruptive contact with admitted inmates. As an inward-looking period of self-examination, probationary space was concerned with the production of penitence. [14] Moral and medical examination by committee members and physicians scrutinised a probationer’s commitment and resilience. Her transitional, liminal state was marked by rituals associated with the symbolic discarding of the old life. [15] She took on institutional dress either at the start or the end of probation. Practice varied, inmates wearing their own clothes throughout the period of institutionalisation at Lincoln for the first ten years of operation. At the lay institutions, she kept her forename, but at the penitentiaries took a temporary name. In social control readings of the ritual associated with carceral settings, these practices have been read as stigmatic, a humiliating and punitive

[14] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London’s Geographies 1680 to 1780* (London: Guilford Press, c.1998), pp.52-3.
[15] De Cunzo, ‘Reform, Respite, Ritual’, p.6.

undermining of identity, diminishing the individual's sense of self and worth in order to break down resistance to disciplinary regime. Certainly, clothing and naming practices in reform institutions reminded the inmate of where she was and why. As Julie Ash has argued, prison uniform dress was a form of embodied punishment.[16] In institutions for juvenile offenders, uniform eroded individuality.[17] Nevertheless, this study has introduced the possibility that institutional dress could create a sense a of parity and unity through shared past and present experience. For some it might even have meant belonging.[18] Comparing practice in the case studies has suggested a wider variation in the treatment of uniform dress than has been identified to date. It has also revealed inmates' ingenuity. Despite attempts to institutionalise her appearance, Mary Ann Taverner dressed her hair in her own style.

At three to four weeks in the lay institutions, probation was a considerably longer experience in the two penitentiaries, averaging three months or more. Extending or repeating probation was a disciplinary device used in three institutions but was not always punitive. It could reflect an informed judgement of an individual's readiness based on observation and experience. At a pivotal moment in their life-cycles, evidence from Cambridge and Lincoln has shown how anxious and unpredictable probationers could be. Separated from other inmates, close surveillance by volunteers could be disciplinary but also advisory and companionable. Probation did not only

[16] Julie Ash, *Dress Behind Bars: Prison Clothing as Criminality* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2010), p.6.
[17] Michelle Cale, 'Girls and the Perception of Sexual Danger in the Victorian Reformatory System', *History*, 78 (1993), 201-17 (pp.208-09).
[18] Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Non-Uniforms: Communicating through Clothing* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), p.69.

serve the assessment needs of institutional authorities; probationers used this trial period to make their own decisions about whether to leave or stay.

In the specialist context of a moral reformatory, not only the spaces but the things in them took on moral meanings. Objects and furnishings associated with domestic tasks promoted domesticity as a moralising concept in itself. Tidiness, thrift and efficiency were the everyday obligations of the orderly home. Furnishings in work and dining spaces were configured to promote productivity and community, at the same time facilitating discipline. Paper rather than distemper might cover the walls of living and work spaces in which domestic inmate work took place or where staff and institutional officers spent time. As new discourses emerged around the moral value of homeliness, there is evidence that committees understood the link between environment and affect. Although institutional materiality had to align with and set material expectations for domestic service, authorities were increasingly tolerant of small comforts at no cost, suggesting that material austerity for its own sake was not necessarily an immutable reform principle.

Objects and spaces associated with religious practice in the four settings represented a different material realm. Brought into view here for the first time in Chapter Five, richly embellished sacred spaces and vessels were distinctively other. Both embodied meanings beyond their function and material form, associated with their transformational potential as material intermediaries for bringing individuals into the divine presence. Sacred spaces were experienced in different ways by different users. The sisters'

religious obligations took priority in chapel space at Maplestead and Ditchingham, relegating penitents within it. In Cambridge, inmates were separated from the congregation at Christ Church and concealed in their own pew. Dormitory cubicles were understood in their original function as primarily spaces for religious reflection, but also offered disciplinary advantages. Privacy also had moral worth, encouraging modesty and decency. Religious progress was considered a priority because religious faith would keep women on the 'right path' beyond the institution. The two prayers at Lincoln were intended to sustain Ladies and inmates. Identifying both as sinners in the eyes of God, they suggest a degree of spiritual parity. Inmates' familiarity with religion before institutionalisation came through the record and coloured their experience in different ways. Some derived comfort from institutional religious instruction and worship and may even have been 'reborn'. Others expressed anxiety, indifference or antipathy. Left unattended for a period in 1847, inmates at Cambridge took themselves off before the sermon and at Maplestead Bibles were mutilated. Periods of reflective silence throughout the day in the penitentiaries suggest attempts to create a more immersive penitential experience. Unpoliced and private, silence may in practice have been a liberating one. In presenting evidence of the variety of inmates' responses to the material and spiritual dimensions of religious practice, Chapter Five makes an important contribution by moving us away from assumptions around institutional religion, complicating our understanding of the ways in which it was performed and how inmates received it. From a range of working-class backgrounds, inmates demonstrated differing degrees of familiarity with religion, reflecting practice

in their own lives. Records of three case study institutions document women's religious experience on admission, using orthodox measures of religious adherence. Women could identify their religious denomination, baptismal and communicant status and level of church and Sunday School experience. Accounts of nineteenth-century secularisation have relied largely on measures of orthodox religious practice such as church attendance to gauge depth of religious commitment.[19] In response, studies of working-class religion have argued that spiritual experiences associated with popular religion, folklore and superstition also had meaning and value in their own right.[20] This study is aligned with those revisionist voices in the secularisation debate which embrace the possibility of meaningful religious experience within but also beyond orthodoxy. Women inmates for whom no religious affiliation was recorded may nevertheless have had a sense of their own spirituality from popular religion. Women viewed institutional religion from different perspectives and engaged with it on their own terms.

The use of the term 'after-lives' in a report to donors reveals the extent to which the authorities at Maplestead understood that her penitentiary experience would define a former inmate's subsequent life course. In practice, the afterlives of some inmates could be deferred by additional shorter periods of institutionalisation in ancillary urban short-stay 'refuges'. Effectively separate probationary institutions, their establishment in connection with the Cambridge Refuge and the two penitentiaries suggests the impact of national

[19] Jeremy Morris, 'The Strange Death of Christian Britain: Another Look at the Secularization Debate', *The Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), 963-976.
[20] Sarah C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark c.1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.6-7.

expansion in street-based rescue work from around the 1870s and renewed vigour in purity campaigns from the mid-1880s. In the same period, more sophisticated inmate classification and record-keeping began to come through entries in new custom-printed admission registers. Records at Lincoln and Maplestead captured her spiritual and moral progress and speculated on her prospects beyond the institution. Just as women entering reformatory spaces took on institutional dress, on leaving they wore an outfit for domestic service which symbolised their readiness to re-join the world. The higher number of women going into service as laundry maids suggests that bar some periods of institutional dysfunction, their laundry training at Lincoln was effective. Analysis has indicated that at the higher levels in particular, former Lincoln inmates earned wages on a par with or slightly above the national average. In addition to documenting different experiences of domestic service, this study has broken new ground by tracing spatial and material continuities between the institutional and domestic service settings encountered by former inmates at Lincoln. Women went to a wide variety of settings, sometimes moving away from service into different forms of employment. The four institutions served an important practical function in providing safe accommodation for former inmates between service jobs. For some, the two penitentiaries became their permanent home.

This study has sought a more nuanced reading of institutional experience. Through the analysis of the material settings of four institutions and women's responses to them, it moves beyond monochromatic readings of female reform institutions as blunt instruments of social control and their inmates as

docile bodies.[21] It is important nevertheless to acknowledge the important ways in which the case study institutions did align with the social control thesis. First, the reformatory project was based on a sexual double standard which ostracised women engaging in sexual relations outside marriage, but not men. Second, institutions were created in response to the perceived threat posed by working-class women whose sexual behaviour did not conform to respectable norms set by middle-class moral reformers. Moreover, that situation could not be tolerated and working-class women were therefore 'encouraged' to conform. Second, training their inmates for domestic service and respectable financial autonomy was a project partly in the interests of the middle-class reformers themselves. Lastly, the power relations operating between rescue workers and the women they rescued fatally undermines the voluntary basis on which women entered these institutions. From a contemporary perspective therefore, any claims to institutional legitimacy can be challenged on multiple grounds. However, in order to understand these institutions as their founders did it is necessary to assess them on their own terms. In addition to the threat that 'fallen' women posed to respectable society on moral and sanitary grounds, contemporary religious discourses located her as poised on the edge of heaven or hell. It was the responsibility of a Christian society to save her from perdition and reflects the importance accorded by founders to the power of redemption through religious rebirth. For contemporaries, the legitimacy of the institutional mission resided in the

[21] Francis M.L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *The Economic History Review*, 34 (1981), 189-208 (p.193).

individual and collective benefits of its combined religious and social mission.

As sites concerned with change, the four case studies also shared ritual and 'technological' features with carceral institutions. This study has nevertheless shown how practice and lived experience in the four reform settings in this study were more variable than single uniform templates for both would suggest. Although material and spatial practices were designed to work change on their inhabitants and power relations existed to impose those practices, their effectiveness depended on the co-operation of individuals. This relationship of exchange is the distinguishing and essential element in any 'transforming' institution where entry is voluntary (or semi-voluntary). To take that idea further, in an institution which offers some form of rehabilitation, there is an unspoken contract in operation between the charitable intention of the provider and the willingness of the recipient.[22] The importance of this relationship with individual inmates comes through the record in several ways. First, material and spatial practices associated with probation were certainly intended to isolate probationers as a group, but also enabled workers to get to know the individual. Scrutiny was not merely controlling but to do with monitoring her first response to the institutional setting. Surveillance on probation at the start of institutional life and maintaining contact after it could equally be seen as building a supportive relationship. Evidence presented here has shown that staff in Lincoln and

[22] Cleanliness and Godliness: a Sociological Study of the Good Shepherd Convent Refuges for the Social Reformation and Christian Conversion of Prostitutes and Convicted Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain' (unpublished PhD thesis: Brunel University, 1985), pp.334-335.

Cambridge made exceptions and exercised discretion in individual cases. Even when women broke rules, they came up before committee for possible disciplinary sanctions but also to be heard. Similarly, assessments of women's progress during institutionalisation at Lincoln were based on knowledge of that individual and do give credit for progress.

Second, it is important to interrogate the notion of transformation and to establish its limits. Institutionalisation involved withdrawing into the interior of a site designed to influence. The impact of the material environment was partly accumulative, a process of accretion through material and moral influences. How profound a 'transformation' took place depended in part on efficient management. In all four case study settings, exploring the space between what 'institutions said they were doing and what they were actually doing' has proved fruitful ground.[23] Claims to the transformational power of regular church attendance rang hollow at Cambridge where left unattended, inmates went back to the Refuge before the sermon and where the chaplain's weekly services on the premises also fell away. Paradoxically, relegating penitents at Ditchingham to the margins of chapel space compromised their sense of involvement in services, distancing them from spiritual connection. Dormitory cubicles did not always promote solitary penitential reflection as women found ways to overcome partitions and seek each other out for company. At the individual level, there is an argument that for those outside social structures rituals may have little or no impact. For them the immersive

[23] Steven Ruggles 'Fallen Women: the Inmates of the Philadelphia Magdalen Society, 1836-1908', *Journal of Social History*, 16 (1983), 65-82 (p.66).

experience of any ritual institution intent on transformation may simply be irrelevant.[24] That is not to absolve the society that fashioned these institutions but suggests that for some individuals the reform experience may have had little profound meaning or effect. Different levels of willingness, resistance or simply resilience would also mean some inmates internalising the experience more profoundly and others shrugging it off more easily.

Third, women asserted themselves in a variety of ways. Far from merely 'docile bodes' inmates could and did challenge aspects of management. They complained, fought or simply got round the rules. Expressions of agency included rebellion as one of a range of strategies to force change or negotiation. It is these responses to institutionalisation which reveal the limits of its power. Again, material culture takes us to the diversity of those responses and to how women were thinking and feeling. Dissatisfaction and frustration could be expressed in material terms. At the Cambridge Female Refuge, Rebecca Brand 'admitted putting a pocket handkerchief of the House down the watercloset last Saturday before she ran away and that it was out of spite to the House'.[25] Another strategy was to lighten the institutional experience through the power of small things. When Mary Ann Taverner dressed her hair with lard stolen from the kitchen she not only challenged institutional power but exposed its limits. Her act of self-expression speaks to the resilience of identity and imperviousness to subjectivity. On the other hand, co-operation was also a form of agency. For some, compliance may have been a counsel of despair rather than an active choice. For others,

[24] De Cunzo,'Reform, Respite, Ritual, p.124.
[25] CFR 2 October 1849.

institutionalisation provided shelter and time to think as part of a survival strategy at that point in their life course.

That 33% at Lincoln and 40% of women at Maplestead got through and went on to domestic service confirms that for at least a third, institutionalisation did offer them a different option which might have improved their future life prospects. Conversely, those figures also confirm that institutional reform was either inappropriate or intolerable for the majority who entered and left both institutions before the expected term. As institutions matured and established networks expanded, committees became familiar with the complex circumstances in which some women came to them and became more expert in referring women in these categories elsewhere. In many cases, elsewhere was another 'specialist' institution. Repeated periods of institutionalisation are hard to justify unless the individuals concerned were otherwise without friends, family or their own home. In these situations, reform settings may have been a better option and one on which women relied. In the same way, maintaining a link with the institution could serve women's own interests.

Sitting somewhere between 'humanitarian melioration and social control', the ideological foundations of all four institutions were rooted in contradiction.[26] Sentimentalising and disapproving of the women they felt duty-bound to bring back from the abyss, their founders created moral environments which

[26] Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull, eds, *Social Control and the State* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.169.

modelled elements of domesticity combined with discipline. With its focus on materiality, this thesis has given substance to four reform institutions, three of which have since disappeared from the landscape. From the matrons' feather beds to Mary Turner's tea caddy, things animate and individualise these institutions. Despite similarity of purpose, attention to their materiality reveals the heterogeneity of institutions readily assumed to be homogenous. At once industrial, domestic and religious, these were complex environments which provoked complex responses. Those responses have drawn attention to the distinctive contribution that reading institutional life through the prism of material culture can bring. In all four case studies, the voices of individual inmates and staff have come through the record, providing evidence of the varieties of individual and collective experience. Things can take us to the lives of their historical users and to the cultures in which they were used and understood. Images of institutional exteriors, interiors and contents in this thesis have brought them from absence to presence. Interpreting these sources has involved 'thinking with the eyes', in order to read the meanings of spaces, objects and iconography.[27] The very look and shape of these institutions reveal the discourses behind their creation. Photographs of spaces and objects have brought colour into the institutional experience. Most poignant and compelling are those items which connect us to the inmates. Protective strips of fabric wound round the handles of the goffering tongs from Ditchingham remind us of the bodily presence of generations of women who used them and taught each other to use them. These everyday tools are a reminder of the

[27] Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.7.

ways in which laundry work was physically demanding but also skilled. Their link to the original setting in which they were used and to the women who used them complicates our understanding of these objects and of their value. In the absence of the unmediated voices of inmates themselves, unremarkable cheap flat irons become priceless repositories of meaning and experience.

Appendix 1 Summary of principal building changes in the four case studies.

Date	Cambridge	Lincoln	Ditchingham	Maplestead
1844	Reconfigured existing laundry space			
1870	Laundry extension, work completed 1872			
1873		Extension to drying cupboard		
1874			Wall to be raised (finished 1875)	
1876			New convent (Community House) for sisters	
1877		Wall to be raised, finished August		
1880			Laundry expanded	
1881			Scudamore Memorial building for Third Order (former penitents)	Addition to laundry
1892				New recreation ground for penitents
1893			Building work begun on new chapel	New drying closet in laundry; dormitory cubicles refitted
1894-5			1894-5 Chapel dedication	1894-5 new wing to include packing room and more accommodation.
1898				New wing completed
1904				Enlarging washhouse
1907				[1907 Factory Act] Enlarging laundry, building new drying-room
1908	New packing room extension	[1914] new two-storey washhouse extension		Laundry extension finished

Appendix 2 Total length of stay in months at Lincoln Penitent Females' Home and House of Mercy, Maplestead, 1880 to 1899.

	Up to 6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36	36+
LPFH 286 usable records	104 36.3%	44 15.3%	50 17.4%	34 11.8%	36 12.5%	14 4.8%	4 1.3%
MAP 442 usable records	124 28%	61 13.8%	54 12.2%	121 27.3%	60 13.5%	16 3.6%	7 1.5%

Appendix 3 Furnishings and equipment by room for the Cambridge Female Refuge new building of 1841, transcribed with original spellings.

All from suppliers' bills CRO R60/27/7(a) 21 December 1841 to 12 October 1842 unless otherwise stated.

Board Room
Chairman's chair
hat stand
library table with drawers
a mahogany hat and umbrella stand with brass branches, zinc pan, French polished

iron safety chest 'One was brought in before the Board strongly recommended by Mr Finch price £211s 0d Agreed that it be purchased & be painted with the words Cambridge Refuge on its face'[28]

Hall
rail and pegs: 'ordered to be put up for bonnets'[29]

Kitchen
Platerack for scullery
meat rail and hooks
12 knives &c
2 doz spoons
1 kettle
1 iron fender
1 shovel
1 set [fire] irons
1 range @30s
1 dustpan
2 saucepans
24 white plates
Drab basons
half pint mugs
six pint stone jugs
cups and saucers
basons
1 gill inside milk pot [30]
1 gill inside pot
brown jug
brown bowl
Drab jugs
fireproof trays
ditto white baker's
Qual[ity] black pan
12 co'd bowls [coloured, ordered by Mrs Owen]

[28] CFR 21/11/1843.
[29] CFR 20/9/1841.
[30] 1 gill equates to 5 fluid ounces or 142.7 millilitres.

Day ward/dining space
12 good plain substantial Windsor chairs with two elbow ditto to match
Settles 'ordered that six of the same size with the present be made by Harison'
Forms: 'agreed to have 12 chairs as proposed & also 6 deal forms, each to be placed either side of the table and one at each end'

Matron's Room [?]
Armchair: a mahogany armchair stuffed entirely with horse hair covered in palm hair seating and French polished
Servant's Bedroom
feather bed and pillow 'the Ladies had requested the Matron to purchase a featherbed & pillow for the servant at a cost of £1 13s 0d'
Dormitory
Bedsteads: 'be first put up in order to proportion their size, shape and to the spaces to be filled up'
6 mattrasses
6 bolsters
washing stands: 'agreed that there be 2 - each to contain 2 basins and fixed on wooden brackets one at each end of dormitory'
handbowls
6 chambers

Bathroom
Hip bath[31]

Laundry and washhouse
wash troughs
wood gullies under lined with marine metal
Copper lid and linen stick
1 6/6" Patent Mangle
3 pulleys and staples and fixing in laundry
9 clothes posts
large clothes horse
ironing board
weighing machine
clothes pegs and flaskets [baskets on wheels to carry clean washing to the line] [32]

Upper Store Room
medicine chest: shelves to be put up in Upper Store Room for dispensary

2 looking glass

[31] 28 September 1839.
[32] <http://www.urbandictionary>[accessed 21 April 2018]

Appendix 4 Daily timetables at the four case study institutions.

	Rise	**Breakfast**	**Morning**	**Midday meal**	**Recreation**	**Afternoon**	**Evening meal**	**After meal**	**Bed**
CFR [1]	6.00 summer 7.00 winter		Worship				Worship before meal	19.00 laundry work ends [2]	22.00
LPFH [3]	6.00	7.00							
DIT [4]	6.00 summer (6.30 winter) private devotion in chapel	Breakfast (silence), religious instruction	Work in kitchen/ laundry/ needlework 12.00 Chapel service about 10 minutes	12.30 Dinner (silence) read to while eating	One hour 'in the garden when the weather permits'	15.00-17.00 needlework, lessons 17.30 Tea, two hours recreation/ needlework/ reading	Slight supper (silence)	Bible study	21.00 prayers then dormitories 22.00 'Candles out'
MAP [5]		'time allowed for meals, is twenty minutes'							

[1] CFR Minutes Rule VI, p.31.
[2] AR 1899 p.7
[3] LC 27 Feb 1856.
[4] The silence restriction did not apply on Sundays or holidays. William Scudamore, *An Account of the Penitentiary at Shipmeadow* (London, Rivingtons, Waterloo Place; Norwich, Thomas Priest, 1857), pp.11-13.
[5] MAP 1 February 1869.

Appendix 5 Two prayers from the Lincoln Penitent Females' Home, undated. Handwritten and inverted at the back of the first ladies' committee minutes from 1847 to 1868, GH3/1.

Prayer for the Ladies

O Lord God and heavenly Father, who has called us to thyself by thy son Jesus Christ, and hast taught us to follow His example, we humbly beseech thee to bless us in our endeavours to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wandering, and to raise the fallen. Fill us with a tender compassion for their souls; give us we pray thee a spirit of gentleness, meekness & patience, that we may never despair of their recovery or grow weary in our labours of love: and may we so advance ourselves by thy Grace in the knowledge & love of Thee and of Thy Son Jesus Christ, that both by word and example, by kindness & forbearance, we may be effectual instruments in Thy hands for their conversion, and hereafter, receive with them that crown of righteousness, which Thou has promised to them that love Thee…

Prayer for the Inmates

O blessed Lord Jesus, who didst come into the world to seek & to save that which was lost – who dost graciously invite the weary & heavy laden to come to Thee that they may find rest unto their souls – who didst never turn away the poor, when they cried unto Thee & refusedst not to be called the friend of Sinners – we beseech Thee to receive the prayers which we offer to Thee, in behalf of our fellow sinners in this House of Mercy, whom we currently desire to lead unto Thee; teach them to feel that they are sinners and that thou art their Redeemer & Saviour: having had much forgiveness, may they love Thee much & shew forth their love of Thee by following Thy example in purity,

holiness & patience: strengthen them continually with Thy Holy Spirit that they may be Thine for ever, and when this life of trial is ended, may be made heirs together with us of Thy glorious Kingdom.

Appendix 6 Chronology of 'short' rescue homes founded by three case study institutions.

	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s
CFR (1838)			16 Church Street, Cambridge 1881	
DIT (1854)	Cottage Home Refuge, Carnarvon Road, Heigham, Norwich 1873, becoming the Rescue Hospital from 1889	Greyfriars Lodge, King Street, Norwich, 1887 (in association with the Ladies Association for the Care of Girls) Lodge of the Good Shepherd, Ipswich 1888	Greyfriars Lodge work moved to 1892 St Augustine's, Pitt Street, Norwich St Saviour's Lodge, Ipswich, 1893	
MAP (1868)		Stratford Refuge, Linden House, Stratford Green, from 1884 Witham Refuge, 1887 (Bridge House)		Stratford Refuge, moved to 15 Disraeli Road, Forest Gate (by 1909)

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