

Chapter One:

Introduction

On the 15th June 1940, Sir Walter Monckton, the then head of the wartime Press and Censorship Bureau, wrote to the Director of the Ministry of Information's (MOI) film division, Sir Kenneth Clark, stating "However widely we distribute our [government] material, it cannot compete with [the impact] of newspaper articles".¹ Another official from the Ministry of Health (MOH), Sir Thomas Fife Clarke, wrote about evacuation on the 7th May 1941 that,

Throughout the war we have had the consistent support from the press. Indeed, had it not been for the steady and even enthusiastic co-operation of the press, we could not have done anything like as much as has been done.²

These letters demonstrated how important the press was deemed to be in British society during the Second World War, in the dissemination of news and ideas, and in its support of government led initiatives, such as evacuation. There is, however, rather surprisingly, no detailed in-depth study of the British press during the Second World War, and the important role it played in British society. This thesis is designed to explore the popular press in the Second World War, and in particular the most widely read of the popular newspapers, the *Daily Express*. In doing so, this thesis will investigate the ways in which the *Daily Express*

¹ TNA INF 1-256, Letter from Sir Walter Monckton to Sir Kenneth Clark, 15th June 1940. Sir Kenneth Clark was made Director of Home Publicity at the MOI at the end of 1940. By 1941, due to his exasperation with ministry bureaucracy, Clark resigned. See David Piper, 'Clark, Kenneth Mackenzie' in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30934>, accessed September 2015.

² TNA, Sir Thomas Fife Clarke, 'Evacuation' in HLG 108/3, 'Ministry of Home Security Evacuation Policy: Relations with Censor', 7th May 1941.

adapted to wartime conditions and the ways it represented particular themes and images during those years, most particularly the image of the family in wartime.

The work conducted in this thesis is based upon the Leverhulme ‘British Press in the Second World War’ group project, which was created to provide the first full, critical study of the development and role of the British press in the Second World War. It set out to integrate the history of the wartime press into the wider social, cultural and political context of wartime Britain. As part of this, it undertook a comprehensive content analysis of selected wartime newspapers and explored the development of newspaper content and style during this period.

Literature on the Second World War press appears primarily in general histories of the press. These have tended to discuss the wartime press in relation to circulation, the number of papers, their political allegiances, and government censorship.³ There is a gap, therefore, in the historiography of the press during the Second World War, which this thesis seeks to redress in part. The war was a time of social and economic upheaval, and historians such as Arthur Marwick have argued it was a time of great social change.⁴ It is important, therefore, to understand and expand our knowledge of the role of the British press in wartime, and to what extent it facilitated social change.

Individual newspapers have fared better in historical literature on the press. Memoirs such as Hugh Cudlipp’s history of the *Daily Mirror*, and histories of individual publications such as David Ayerst’s account of *The Guardian* as well as the six volume history of *The*

³ For discussions on press circulations see James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, (2nd ed. 1990) pp. 136-160; R. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), pp. 173-213. Kevin Williams, *Get me a Murder a Day: A History of Mass Communication in Britain*, (2nd ed.) (London: Hodder Education, 2009), pp. 123-143.

⁴ Arthur Marwick, ‘Total War and Social Change: Myths and Misunderstandings’, in *Social History Society Newsletter*, Vol. IX, (Spring, 1984), pp. 4-5.

Times, adding to our understanding of how the press functioned in the 20th century.⁵ Work which comments on the history of the *Daily Express*, such as A.J. P Taylor's 1972 biography of Lord Beaverbrook and the autobiography of the *Express*'s longest standing editor, Arthur Christiansen, have provided some understanding of the history and inner workings of the *Daily Express*. However, there is still no sustained scholarly history of the *Express* in comparison to *The History of The Times* or the *Manchester Guardian*.⁶ A full discussion of the historiography of press history will be included later in this thesis, in the literature review in chapter two.

This thesis will attempt, therefore, to fill a gap in current historical literature on the British press by providing the first in-depth analysis on the *Daily Express* in wartime. This study of the *Express* focusses on the idea of the 'family newspaper'. This was a term used by popular newspapers in the first part of the twentieth-century and subsequently by historians, but one whose meaning and significance, has not been explored in detail. Therefore as well as investigating the history of the *Daily Express* during the 1930s and 1940s, its construction and its content, this thesis analyses how the 'family' was represented in the paper in wartime, in particular through the examination of three wartime issues: the 1939 Evacuation Scheme, the release in 1942 of the Beveridge Report and Commercial Display Advertising in the *Express* between 1939 and 1945. Although the *Daily Express* never explicitly defined itself as a 'family newspaper' during the 1930s and 1940s, this thesis aims to see the extent to which it can be defined as a family newspaper, and to what extent representations of family in the newspaper were affected by social change or a sense of continuity in wartime. This

⁵ Hugh Cudlipp, *Publish and be Damned! The Astonishing Story of the Daily Mirror*, (London: A. Dakers, 1954); David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper*, (London: Collins, 1971); The Times Group Ltd, *History of The Times, Vol 1-6*, (London: The Times, 1935-1993).

⁶ The Times Group Ltd, *History of The Times, Vol 1-6*, (London: The Times, 1935-1993). David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper*, (London: Collins, 1971).

thesis consists of eight chapters, covering a variety of issues to do with the *Daily Express* during the Second World War.

Chapter two outlines the literature on a range of work related to this thesis, including scholarship on press history during the nineteenth and twentieth-century, work on British society during the Second World War, literature on the family in the twentieth-century and specifically the Second World War, as well as work on the media and newspapers and how they have represented the family during the twentieth-century. It focuses on some of the key gaps in the literature and outlines areas for research in this thesis. Particular attention will be drawn to current literature on the *Daily Express*, the principal case study in this thesis, family life in wartime, its principal theme, and the role of the media in representing the family in wartime.

Chapter three discusses the methods used in this thesis and in particular, the use of selective content analysis as a tool for understanding the representation of family in the wartime *Daily Express*. It will outline the strengths and weaknesses of using quantitative and qualitative forms of analysis when using newspapers as a primary source, and summarise how the methodology for the Leverhulme group project on the British press in the Second World was adapted for my own in-depth analysis of the *Express* as a family newspaper.

Chapter four covers the history of the *Daily Express* in the first half of the twentieth-century, up to 1939, and will focus on its development as a newspaper in terms of staff, ownership, circulation, readership and content. It will also discuss the historiography of the term ‘family newspaper’, its use by contemporary newspapers and historians, and to what extent the *Express*’s content can allow us to understand the paper as a ‘family newspaper’ prior to the start of war in 1939.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the history of the *Daily Express* between 1939 and 1945. It discusses the relationship of the newspaper to the government and its readership in wartime. It also outlines how the *Express* changed in appearance from the inter-war period, and to what extent it retained the features of a ‘family newspaper’ in wartime. It uses data gathered from the Leverhulme group project and a more in-depth content analysis of specific wartime content to understand how the *Express* adapted to wartime circumstances.

In order to fully understand how the *Daily Express* represented the family to its readers in wartime, it is important to analyse particular forms of content. This thesis uses three case studies to ascertain how the family was represented in the paper. Chapter six is the first of these case studies and investigates the *Express*'s coverage of the 1939 Evacuation Scheme. This chapter addresses the ways in which the family was represented in the evacuation coverage and the extent to which these representations developed between September and December 1939. It will explain why the Evacuation Scheme was thought necessary by the government and the numbers of people involved in the preliminary evacuations, as well discussing how the government interacted with the press on this issue. The analysis focusses primarily on how images of family life were represented and used in the paper's discussion of the scheme, especially as the principal paradox of the Evacuation Scheme was that it disrupted normal family life while simultaneously attempting to create new families to replace it. This chapter will ultimately ascertain to what extent the newspaper drew on a sense of familial continuity or change in its representation of family life in evacuation coverage.

Chapter seven discusses the *Express*'s coverage of the Beveridge Report by focusing on the representation of family in the newspaper's coverage of its release in December 1942, the February 1943 Parliamentary debate on the Report and the two weeks prior to the 1945 General Election.

Chapter eight analyses an important piece of *Daily Express* wartime content, the commercial display advert, and its representation of the family. It examines recurring themes therein relating to wartime family life such as marriage, childhood and gender roles, and discusses the extent to which advertisements presented a particular image of family life to *Express* readers by tracking how these themes developed across the war. The analysis draws on content analysis of advertisements in the *Daily Express* between 1939-1945 and is based on a sample of seven constructed weeks, taken from the Leverhulme group project.⁷

Chapter nine concludes this thesis, tying together the different ideas and issues which have been raised throughout. It argues that the idea of a ‘family newspaper’ was important to the *Daily Express*, even though it did not use it on its mast head, or to promote itself with advertisers. However, a popular paper had to appeal to the ‘family’ in the broadest sense if it was to appeal to the widest possible audience.

The war clearly affected the appearance, content and inner workings of popular newspapers in Britain. This thesis aims to develop a greater understanding of the wartime press and how it adapted to wartime circumstances. More precisely, it focuses on how these wartime circumstances affected the content and appearance of popular newspapers in wartime, specifically the *Daily Express*. It aims to provide a detailed account of important aspects of the *Daily Express* between 1900 and 1945, providing information on its circulation, readership, content and to what extent it could be classed as a family newspaper. This, in turn, leads to issues touching on class, gender and, more particularly the family unit and whether the representations of the family in the wartime *Daily Express* owed more to wartime social change or to longer term, more established ideas about the family.

⁷ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 1, p. 70.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

Introduction:

This chapter investigates the representation of family in the *Daily Express* during the Second World War. It analyses literature on the history of the *Daily Express* and the family during the conflict. It is divided into six sections: section one focuses on literature on the press and *Daily Express* in first half of twentieth-century. Section two concentrates on aspects of the historical work on British society during the war. Section three reviews work on the family during the twentieth-century and section four, literature on the family and the Second World War. Section five addresses the historiography of the media and its representation of the family during the war and section six, work on the family and newspapers during the Second World War. The conclusion focuses on some of the key gaps in the literature and outlines the key areas for research in this thesis. Particular attention will be drawn to current literature on the *Daily Express*, the principal case study in this thesis, family life in wartime, its principal theme, and the role of the media in representing the family in wartime.

[i] The Press and *Daily Express*: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century

This section examines work on the press in Britain, and more specifically the press during the Second World War. It explores how historians have treated the newspaper as a historical source and how this has affected the way in which newspapers have been discussed. It also assesses developments in the way historians have approached the study of press and media history, and then proceeds to identify areas where more research is needed.

Writing on the history of the press has been framed within a number of key assumptions or frameworks, many of which have proven very influential.⁸ The ‘liberal’ interpretation of press history dominated studies of newspapers throughout the twentieth-century.⁹ This interpretation depicted the history of the press as a struggle against the state; key breakthroughs in this struggle included the ending of press licensing in 1694, Fox’s Libel Act of 1792 and the repeal of press taxation, the ‘taxes on knowledge’, from 1853-1861.¹⁰ Many historians have argued that by the mid-nineteenth-century, economic controls were repealed in the press, and it became largely free of state controls. The process of increased political democratisation in Britain during the nineteenth-century went hand in hand with the growing freedom of the press and mass media. It allowed the press to become a “major force” in the increasingly public nature of politics during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹¹

Newspapers increasingly became “representative institutions” of public opinion, critically scrutinising government action, acting as a voice of the people.¹² James Curran has noted the complexities and interpretations of the liberal theory and its development of the narrative of press history.¹³ Historians such as Ian Christie, Arthur Aspinall and Stephen Koss have argued that the press became independent in the mid nineteenth-century, not only from

⁸ Tom O’Malley, ‘History, Historians and the Writing of Print and Newspaper History in the UK c.1945-1962’, pp. 289-310, in *Media History*, Volume 18, Issue 3-4, (Routledge: 2012), p. 290. This has also been discussed in detail by James Curran in, ‘Media and the Making of British Society, c.1700–2000’, in *Media History*, Volume 8, Issue 2, (Routledge: 2002). pp. 135-154.

⁹ Historians who discuss the liberal theory of the press include Frederick Seaton Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England 1476–1776* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1965); James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, 2 Vols.* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981 and 1984); Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Croom Helm, 1987); Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France 1620–1800* (London: Routledge, 1996); Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695–1855* (Harlow: Longman, 2000). Historians who attempt to critique the liberal theory include James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, (2nd ed.) pp. 246-261; James Curran, ‘Media and the Making of British Society’ pp.136-138; Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2004), pp. 48-75; Tom O’Malley, ‘History, Historians and the Writing of Print and Newspaper History’, p. 290.

¹⁰ James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, (2nd ed.) (London: Routledge, 1990) p7; T.O’Malley, ‘The Regulation of the Press’, in M.Conboy and J.Steel, eds, *The Routledge Companion to Media History* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp. 228-238

¹¹ Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press*, p47. James Curran, ‘Media and Society’, p136.

¹² James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, (2nd ed.), pp. 246-247. James Curran, ‘Media and the Making of British Society’, p. 136.

¹³ James Curran, ‘Media and Making of British Society’, pp. 136-138.

government but also from party and social interest, which enabled it to become the voice of the people, holding government to account.¹⁴ Koss, however, has asserted that freedom of the press from party political influence did not occur fully until after the Second World War.¹⁵ Other historians, such as Asa Briggs and John Brewer have argued that the press was primarily the vehicle of different social groups, such as the Chartist movement, which pressed for an extension of the franchise.¹⁶ Brian Harrison, Jeremy Black and Aled Jones, have viewed the press as a forum for debate.¹⁷ It enabled society to “commune with itself in the context of continuity and gradual social change”.¹⁸ Curran has noted, however, that common to all three interpretations, the press was a vital component of a flourishing democracy in Britain in the nineteenth-century.¹⁹

The liberal interpretation has nevertheless been critiqued by Curran and other historians, who argue that its formulation of press history is too narrow.²⁰ Research often focused too much on individual people, institutions and texts. Research, such as *The History of The Times*, Hugh Cudlipp’s history of the *Daily Mirror* and David Ayerst’s study of *The Guardian* focused primarily on the political impact of newspapers, rather than on the cultural

¹⁴ I.R. Christie, *Myth and Reality in Late Eighteenth Century Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1970); Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c. 1780–1850* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1977); Richard Boston, ‘W.T. Stead and Democracy by Journalism’, in Joel H. Wiener, ed., *Papers for the Millions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, Volume 2: The Twentieth Century, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), pp. 615-656.

¹⁶ Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement: 1783-1867 (2nd ed.)* (London: Longman, 1979); John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State 1688-1783*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). See also, Aled G. Jones ‘Chartist Journalism and Print Culture in Britain: 1830-1855’, pp.1-24, in *Papers for the People: A Study of the Chartist Press*, (ed.) Joan Allen and Owen. R. Ashton, (London: Merlin Press, 2005).

¹⁷ Brian Harrison, ‘Press and Pressure Group in Modern Britain’, in Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, (eds.), *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982); Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1987); Aled Jones, ‘Local Journalism in Victorian Political Culture’, in (eds.) David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture: Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change* (London: Fontana, 1998); Jeremy Black, *The English Press 1621–1861* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001).

¹⁸ Curran, ‘Media and Making of British Society’, p. 136.

¹⁹ Curran, ‘Media and Making of British Society’, pp. 136-137.

²⁰ Tom, O’Malley, ‘History, Historians and the Writing of Print and Newspaper History in the UK’, p. 291. Also see James Curran, ‘The Rise of the Westminster School.’ pp.13-40, in (ed.) Andrew Calbrese and Colin Sparks, *Toward a Political Economy of Culture: Capitalism and Communication in the Twenty-first Century*. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004) p. 33.

and social impact of the press.²¹ Prior to the 1950s, and the pioneering work of Richard Altick, print and press historians had not systematically addressed the role of print in the world of reading in society.²² Research continued to focus primarily on the political role of the press during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²³ During the late 1960s and 1970s, a developing interest in social history allowed historians to begin criticising traditional approaches to history of the media and newspapers.²⁴ This placed the study of history, and the press into a more theoretically informed style of history.²⁵ Raymond Williams in particular was keen to relate the history of the press and broadcasting to the inequalities and social pressures in British society²⁶

Work by historians such as Elizabeth Eisenstein and James Curran has encouraged historians to address the underlying social and economic forces which shaped the press. Boyce, Curran and Wingate have also highlighted the importance of research on the perception of the press in society, newspaper audiences and the attitudes and beliefs of people who worked in the industry.²⁷ They argued that the ownership of capital, systems of

²¹ The Times Group Ltd, *History of The Times, Vol 1-6*, (London: The Times, 1935-1993). Hugh Cudlipp, *Publish and be Damned! The Astonishing Story of the Daily Mirror*, (London: A. Dakers, 1954); David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper*, (London: Collins, 1971). Also see Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left*, (London: Pluto, 1997).

²² Richard Altick, 'English Publishing and the Mass Audience in 1852' in *Studies in Bibliography* 6 (1954), pp.4-25. Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900*, (London and Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1957).

²³ See Colin Seymour-Ure, *The Press, Politics and the Public: An Essay on the Role of the National Press in the British Political System*, (London: Methuen, 1968); Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c. 1780-1850* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1977); Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, 2 Vols.* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1981, 1984).

²⁴ Leslie Howsam, 'What is the Historiography of Books? Recent Studies in Authorship, Publishing, and Reading in Modern Britain and North America', in *The Historical Journal*, Volume 51, Issue 4 (2008), pp.1089-1101. Matt Rubery, 'Victorian Print Culture, Journalism and the Novel', in *Literature Compass*, Volume 7, Issue 4 (2010), pp.290-300. T O'Malley, 'History, Historians, and the Writing of Print and Newspaper History', in *Media History*, Volume 18, Issue 3-4, (Routledge: 2012), p. 290.

²⁵ Tom O'Malley, 'Media History and Media Studies', p. 164. Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*. (London: Abacus, 1998).

²⁶ See for example Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965).

²⁷ Boyce, Curran and Wingate, (eds.), *Newspaper History: From the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (London: Constable, 1978), pp.13-14. For further reading on these topics see Mark Abrams, *Education, Social Class and Readership of Newspapers and Magazines*, (London: 1968)G.A. Cranfield, *The Press and Society: From Caxton to Northcliffe*, (London: 1978). (eds.) Peter Catterall, Colin Seymour-Ure and Adrian Smith, *Northcliffe's Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

production, the division of labour and the “institutionalisation of social knowledge” were as influential as individual newspapermen in shaping the history of the British press.²⁸

Elizabeth Eisenstein, however, focused on the printing press itself as an agent of change throughout history. She argued that the printing press not only impacted on the development of physical communication in early modern Europe, but it influenced cultural identity by fixing and securing traditions in print.²⁹

The interest in social and cultural history helped stimulate interpretations of the role of the media and press in society, utilising a range of interpretative frameworks which James Curran has described as ‘narratives’ of media history, feeding into and broadening beyond the traditional liberal approach. Curran argued that there emerged a populist approach to press history which identified a “cumulative change in the content and management of the media”. During the twentieth-century, the press allowed the general population to access “life enhancing entertainment” that had previously been denied them by a “paternalistic elite”.³⁰ Media and newspapers were more responsive to the preferences of the people, generating greater pleasure and contentment from its audiences. As a result of providing a greater variety of content to the public, newspapers became more accessible, and newspaper appearance and tone changed, with the inclusion of more articles on sport, entertainment and human interest.³¹ Historians such as A.C.H. Smith and D.L. LeMahieu argued that the inclusion of

²⁸ (eds.) Boyce, Curran and Wingate, *Newspaper History*, pp. 13-14.

²⁹ Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1979), pp.115-116. See also, Elizabeth Eisenstein, *Print Culture and Enlightenment Thought*, (Chapel Hill: Hanes Foundation, 1986) and Lucien Febvre and Henri Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*, (London: N.L.B, 1976); Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain 1914–1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) and Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, (New Haven: Yale University press, 2010).

³⁰ Curran, ‘Media and the Making of British Society’, pp. 141-143.

³¹ Curran, ‘Media and the Making of British Society’, pp. 141-142.

human interest stories in newspapers showed that the lives of ordinary people mattered for the very first time.³²

In addition, the feminist approach to press history expanded historical research even further. Work by Cynthia White and Janet Todd investigated the social and cultural impact of printed items for women during the nineteenth and twentieth-century, such as magazines, women's fiction and women's sections in newspapers.³³ They and others argued that the women's press in the nineteenth-century often portrayed a narrow view of women's role in society. Nineteenth and twentieth-century popular women's journalism presented the central concerns of women as winning and keeping a man, home making, motherhood and personal appearance.³⁴ Although historians have subsequently debated the extent to which media representations of women reflected the reality of their role in society, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, feminist press historians argued that women's print culture was heavily influenced by traditional gender values.³⁵ The work of Adrian Bingham has since challenged this view of women's representation in 20th century newspapers. He has argued that newspapers in the inter-war period presented diverse images of women and their different roles in society.

³² A.C.H. Smith, *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change 1935–1965* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), pp. 11-24; D.L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 55. See also Joel H. Wiener, 'The Americanization of the British Press, 1830–1914', in (eds.) M. Harris and T. O'Malley, *Studies in Newspapers and Periodical History: 1994 annual* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), p. 62.

³³ Cynthia L. White, *Women's Magazines, 1693–1968* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970); Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angelica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660–1800* (London: Verso, 1989); Dianne Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Kathryn Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture* (London: Routledge, 1989); Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992).

³⁴ Curran, 'Media and the Making of British Society', p. 141.

³⁵ Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women*, (London: Viking, 1997). For further discussion of women's print culture see Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazine's and the Cult of Femininity*, (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983); Gillian Murphy, 'Media Influence on the Socialization of Teenage Girls', in (eds.) James Curran, Anthony Smith, Paulin Wingate, *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century* (London: Methuen, 1987); D. Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939*, (London: Pandora, 1989).

Gender roles were the subject of intense debate between the wars, and newspaper content reflected this as its content was adapted to appeal to wider sections of the public.³⁶

These approaches tended to present the history of the press as a source of progress. Curran, however, challenged these approaches on the grounds that the press often interprets the world in ways which favour dominant classes in society.³⁷ The radical narrative emphasises the role of the media in ‘reversing or containing the advance of the people’, highlighting the central role that capitalism plays in the production, reception and manipulation of the media.³⁸

The extent to which any of these approaches apply to the popular press in during the Second World War has not however, to date, been investigated in great detail. It is important, therefore, to understand the theories which have been applied to the history of the press and the media, in order to ascertain the extent to which they are applicable to this thesis. Aspects of all these narratives have impacted upon this work, with my study exploring our understanding of the liberal narrative of press history and the economic and political factors which affected newspapers in wartime, such as censorship, advertising revenue and paper rationing. It will investigate how these impacted on newspapers’ appearance and content. The feminist narrative is also relevant to this study as it points to the importance of exploring more fully the role of gender and family in the press during the Second World War, and the extent to which newspapers and their representations of family were influenced by traditional gender values. Understanding aspects of the radical narrative is also pertinent, as it allows us to explore dominant social narratives of domesticity and family in wartime society, and the

³⁶ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 246.

³⁷ Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, (2nd ed.), pp. 10-22, p. 247.

³⁸ James Curran, ‘Media and the Making of British Society’, p. 147. John Steele, ‘The Radical Narrative: Political Thought and Praxis’, pp.222-237, in *Media History*, Vol 15. Issue 2, (Routledge: 2009), p. 222.

role of capitalism and advertising in influencing and representing these narratives in the press.

In addition, there is a gap in the historiography of the press during the Second World War, which this thesis seeks to redress. A detailed study of the role of the press in British society is an important aspect of press history which needs to be expanded. The war was a time of social and economic upheaval, and historians such as Arthur Marwick have argued it was a time of great social change.³⁹ It is important, therefore, to understand and expand our current knowledge about the role of the British press in wartime, and to what extent it facilitated social change.

General histories of the press have tended to discuss the wartime press in relation to circulation, the number of papers sold, their political allegiances during the war and government censorship.⁴⁰ Historians who do briefly discuss the wartime press, such as A.C.H. Smith, argue it followed a populist narrative, developing newspaper content and appearance for a wider, classless audience.⁴¹ Scholarship has, however, focused more readily on individual newspapers, discussing briefly their role and history in wartime. For example, research on the *Daily Express* has focused primarily on histories of individuals who were affiliated with the paper, such as Tom Driberg, Arthur Christiansen and Lord Beaverbrook.⁴² Robert Allen's, *Voice of Britain: The Inside Story of the Daily Express*, has also attempted to

³⁹ Arthur Marwick, 'Total War and Social Change: Myths and Misunderstandings', in *Social History Society Newsletter*, Vol. IX (Spring: 1984), pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰ For discussions on press circulations see James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, (2nd ed. 1990) pp. 136-160. R. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), pp. 173-213. Kevin Williams, *Get me a Murder a Day: A History of Mass Communication in Britain*, (2nd ed.) (London: Hodder Education, 2009), pp. 123-143. Discussions of press censorship, the wartime press and politics are included in texts such as Stephen Koss, *Rise and Fall of the Political Press*, pp. 593-632. John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945*, pp. 402-407; Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus*, and Laura Beers, *Your Britain: Media and the Making of the Labour Party*, (New York: Harvard University Press, 2010) pp. 165-186.

⁴¹ A.C.H. Smith, *Paper Voices*, p52. See also James Curran, 'Media and British Society', p. 142.

⁴² Tom Driberg, *Beaverbrook: A Study in Power and Frustration*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956); Arthur Christiansen, *Headlines All My Life*, (London: Heinemann, 1961); A.J.P Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972); Tom Driberg, *Ruling Passions*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977); Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Beaverbrook: A Life*, (London: Hutchinson, 1992).

outline the history of the *Express* in some detail.⁴³ It focuses on a brief history of major events at the newspaper, its political affiliations and its coverage of historical events in the 20th century, yet provides few details about how the paper adapted to wartime circumstances. This is an aspect of *Express* history which needs greater investigation. Despite the core foundation of work on the *Daily Express*, there is still no sustained history of the *Express* which compares to *The History of The Times* or the *Manchester Guardian*.⁴⁴ There is much to learn about the nature of the press in wartime Britain, and in particular about popular papers such as the *Daily Express*. This thesis addresses these issues by focusing on the *Daily Express* in wartime.

[ii] Second World War and British Society

This section concentrates on aspects of the historical work on British society during the war. It discusses the war and social and cultural change in British society, with particular reference to national unity, class, work, entertainment and their links to family life. It also discusses the historiography of wartime social policy.

The argument that the Second World War accelerated social change in Britain has been debated by historians since 1945. In 1950, Richard Titmuss argued that large scale movements of people in wartime society, as was the case with evacuation, forced different classes to come into regular contact with one another for the first time. This exposed social problems to wider sections of society than had been the case previously, which in turn stimulated public support for new social policies and promoted a more egalitarian post-war

⁴³ Robert Allen, *Voice of Britain: The Inside Story of the Daily Express*, (Cambridge: P. Stephens, 1983).

⁴⁴ The Times, *History of The Times, Vol 1-6*, (London: The Times, 1935-1993). David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper*, (London: Collins, 1971).

society.⁴⁵ Similarly, in 1984 John Stevenson noted the effects of war on the growth of mass communications and how this helped change the status of women and children in society.⁴⁶ Arthur Marwick, however, in 1984 criticised Titmuss for oversimplifying the relationship between wartime solidarity and social reform in post-war British society.⁴⁷ Rather than focusing on the impact of war time social policies on social reform, he argued that “unguided forces”, such as wartime bombing and the expansion of the labour market affected social change. These changes challenged pre-existing ideas about class and gender in British society, leading to a “social and economic revolution” both during and after the war.⁴⁸

The idea that war time society underwent a dramatic shift towards greater social solidarity was challenged in the 1960s and 1970s. Angus Calder and Henry Pelling have argued that viewing the war and disruptions to society, such as evacuation and bombing, from the perspective of greater national unity and social revolution is deeply misleading and does not account for divisions in class, gender and race in wartime society.⁴⁹ Paul Addison in *The Road to 1945* concurred, arguing that the war only resulted in “very modest changes to society itself”.⁵⁰ Historians continued to find the war and social change thesis an inappropriate way of viewing detailed wartime social development throughout the 1970s and 1980s.⁵¹ For example Penny Summerfield argued that despite the inclusion of women in the

⁴⁵ Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, (London: Longmans, 1950) p. 508. See also Richard Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 2nd ed. 1963).

⁴⁶ John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945*, (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 17.

⁴⁷ Arthur Marwick, ‘Total War and Social Change: Myths and Misunderstandings’, in *Social History Society Newsletter*, Vol. IX (Spring: 1984), pp.4-5. Also see Arthur Marwick, *War and Social Change in the 20th Century: A Comparative Study of Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States*, (London: Macmillan, 1974).

⁴⁸ Arthur Marwick, ‘Great Britain: Society in Flux’, in (eds.) A.J.P. Taylor and J.M. Roberts, *History of the Twentieth Century*, Vol. XIV, (London: Purnell, 1979), p. 191

⁴⁹ Angus Calder, *The People’s War? Britain 1939-1945*, (New York: Pimlico, 1969), pp.17-19. Henry Pelling, *Britain and The Second World War*, (London: 1970), p. 92.

⁵⁰ Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945*, (London: 1977) p. 14, pp. 18-19.

⁵¹ John Macnicol, *The Movement of Family Allowances, 1918-1945: A Study in Social Policy Development*, (London: 1980). Jose Harris, *William Beveridge*, (Oxford: 1977); Harold L. Smith, ‘The Problems of Equal Pay for Equal Work in Great Britain during World War II’, in *Journal of Modern History*, Volume LIII, (December 1981) pp. 652-672; Jose Harris, ‘Political Values and the Debate on State Welfare’, (ed.) in Harold. L Smith

wartime labour market, war did not change the fundamental division of economic and social roles between men and women.⁵² Ultimately, the reality of wartime culture was mediated through individual experiences, not through a sense of a unified national culture.⁵³ Many cultural activities, such as sport, cinema and music, were viewed as a continuation of pre-war experiences.⁵⁴ For example, Norman Baker has argued that the cultural ethos of “participation over spectatorship”, in sports such as football, did not undergo any great change during wartime, and were valued for their “routine and familiarity”.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the image of a more united wartime culture and society in Britain was promoted by the media as a “cornerstone of wartime government policy”, all forms of media were encouraged to depict national unity in wartime, whether it was a reality or not.⁵⁶

Twentieth Century Literature on Family

Early research on the history of the family in Britain had often concentrated on the history of individual families, providing factual information about them and their role in society.⁵⁷

War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War, (Manchester: Manchester University press, 1986).

⁵² Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, (London: 1984), pp. 15-20.

⁵³ Jose Harris, ‘War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War’, in *Contemporary British History*, Vol. I (1992) pp. 32-33. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp. 518-536. See also Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (eds.), *British Cultural Memory and the Second World War*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 15-19.

⁵⁴ Robert Mackay, ‘Safe and Sound: New Music in Wartime Britain’, pp.179-208, in *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (eds.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p179. See also James Chapman, ‘British Cinema and the People’s War’, pp.33-61, in *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (eds.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 57-59.

⁵⁵ Norman Baker, ‘A More Even Playing Field? Sport During and After the War’, pp.125-155, in *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (eds.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 126, p. 155.

⁵⁶ P.Fussell, *Wartime Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War*, (Oxford: 1989) pp. 180-195. John Baxendale, ‘You and I – All of Us Ordinary People: Renegotiating Britishness in Wartime’, pp. 295-322, in *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (eds.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 322. See also Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?*, p. 107.

⁵⁷ John Wynn, *The History of the Gwydir Family*, (Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 1927); Hugh Archbald Wiltshire, *A Family History 1688-1837: the Wyndhams of Somerset, Sussex and Wiltshire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950); Joseph and Frances Gies, *A Medieval Family: The Pastons of Fifteenth Century England*, (London: Harper Collins, 1998).

Work also focused on the study of family genealogy, providing methodological advice for historical research on individual family histories.⁵⁸ Additionally work which had concentrated on the history of the family as a socially constructed unit often investigated changing patterns in family size and economic impacts on the family unit over a *broad period* of history.⁵⁹ For example, Michael Young argued that the way society viewed the family unit changed drastically in the nineteenth-century. Families ceased to be a primary economic unit, diversifying in size and expanding their role in society, as an environment for educational and social betterment.⁶⁰

The greatest change in the historiography of the family in the twentieth-century came in the 1980s and 1990s, with research on the effects of larger social forces on the family unit. New research, it was argued, demonstrated how the family was influenced by social, economic and political changes in society.⁶¹ As a result, research into the history of the family became more interdisciplinary, drawing on ideas from psychology and the social sciences. Topics such as the rise of the companionate marriage, parenthood, sexual intimacy, sexuality, fertility and the use of contraception, illustrated how the nature of family life developed over the course of the twentieth-century.⁶² For example, Kate Fisher argued that

⁵⁸ (eds.) Don Steel and Lawrence Taylor, *Family History in Focus*, (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1984); John Rowlands, *Welsh Family History: a Guide to Research*, (Association of Family Histories in Wales: 1993); Iain Swinnerton, *Basic Approach to Keeping your Family Records*, (London: 1999).

⁵⁹ Lawrence Stone, *Family and Fortune: Studies in Aristocratic Finance in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, (London: Penguin, 1977); Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914*, (London: Macmillan, 1980); Lawrence Stone, *Broken Live: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660-1857*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); (eds.) David Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli, *The History of the European Family. Vol.1. Family Life in Early Modern Times, 1500-1789*, (London: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁶⁰ Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *The Symmetrical Family: A Study of Work and Leisure in the London Region*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1973) p. 75.

⁶¹ For further reading on changes for women in 20th Century society see (ed.) Louis A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work and Family*, (London: Routledge, 1989); Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and The State in the Post-War Years*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

⁶² Robert F. Winch, *The Modern Family*, (London: Holt, Reinhart & Winston, 1983); Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Angus McLaren, *Twentieth Century Sexuality*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999); Hera Cook, *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex, And Contraception 1800-1975*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, 'Love and Authority in Mid-Twentieth Century Marriages: Sharing

the increased use of contraception in the twentieth-century reduced the size of families in Britain and impacted upon family social life by “radically shifting marital relations, individual’s expectations of the future, hopes for their lives, and desires for their families”.⁶³

This interdisciplinary research also built upon an already existing body of literature on gender roles and the family from the 1980s and 1990s.⁶⁴ These allowed historians to investigate the individual roles of different family members, discuss the makeup of the family unit and note how these roles changed during the twentieth-century. For example, Leonore Davidoff argued that the twentieth-century nuclear family was made up of parents and children, with children allowing individual members of the family to take on new roles in society as fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters.⁶⁵ The role of women in the family home has led historians to study a variety of topics about gendered experiences in the family, including domesticity, women’s health and their economic power in the family unit.⁶⁶ For example, Judy Giles has argued that the parlour and the family suburb were the “physical spaces in which women experienced the effects of modernisation” and change in the twentieth-century.⁶⁷ Although some historians, such as Leslie Johnson, have challenged the extent to

and Caring’, pp. 132-153 in (eds.) Lucy Delap, Ben Griffin and Abigail Wills, *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2009), p. 133. Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher, ‘We Weren’t the sort that wanted intimacy every night: Birth Control and Abstinence in England c1930-1960’, in *History of the Family*, Volume 15, Issue 2 (2010) pp. 139-160.

⁶³ Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) p2.

⁶⁴ Margery Spring Rice, *Working Class Wives: Their Health and Conditions*, (London: Virago, 1981); Sarah Whatmore, *Farming Women: Gender, Work, and Family Enterprise*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Helen Jones, *Health and Society in 20th Century Britain*, (London: Longman, 1994); Linda Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class, and Family: Britain, 1850-1940*, (London, UCL Press, 1995); Lesley Brody, *Gender, Emotion, and the Family*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁶⁵ Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle, Janet Fink and Katherine Holden, *The Family Story: Blood Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960*, (London and New York: Longman Publishers, 1999) pp. 90-92.

⁶⁶ C. Langhamer ‘The Meanings of Home in Post-War Britain’, pp. 341-362, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 40, Issue 2 (2005); A. Bingham, ‘An Era of Domesticity?’ Histories of Women and Gender in Inter-War Britain’, pp.225-233, in *Cultural and Social History*, Vol. 1, No.2 (2004); Angela Davis, *Modern Motherhood Women and Family in England, c.1945-2000*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

⁶⁷ Judy Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb – Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford, 2004) p. 11. A. Bingham, ‘An Era of Domesticity?’ (2004), p. 233. (eds.) M. Andrews and M. Talbot, *All the World and Her Husband – Women in Twentieth-Century Consumer Culture* (London, 2000), pp. 46-64; Deborah S Ryan, ‘“All the World and Her Husband”: the *Daily Mail* Ideal Home Exhibition 1908-39’, in (eds.) Andrews and Talbot, *All the World and Her Husband*, pp. 10-22.

which women in the twentieth-century were defined solely by their role in the home, other historians such as Selina Todd argue that despite the reality of workplace responsibilities, women were viewed by society as key figures in family life.⁶⁸ Women were ultimately tied to the home and domesticity, fulfilling an emotional, domestic and economic centre for the family unit.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, men's gender role in the family was often defined by historians as an economic one, taking on the role of primary bread winner for the household.⁷⁰ John Gillis argued in 1995 that the twentieth-century saw a decline in the Victorian model of men as active fathers, thanks to their continued absence in two world wars, the medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth and the rise of ideas about 'scientific' motherhood. With women's 'natural position' still depicted as being in the home, male roles became ever more marginalised in the family, especially with respect to children, as could be seen in the tendency of divorce courts to assign custody of children to the mother.⁷¹ This idea has been reiterated by Ralph LaRossa who concluded that despite the *image* projected in films, magazine and newspapers of the involved father, a father's actual participation with his children was minimal during the first half of the twentieth-century.⁷²

There is little research on the role of children in twentieth-century family life. When the role of children is mentioned, however, work primarily focuses on two topics: youth culture and the economic power of younger family members. Discussion of youth culture has

⁶⁸ Lesley Johnson, "'As Housewives We Are Worms'" Women, Modernity, and the Home Question', in (ed.) Morag Shiach, *Feminism and Cultural Studies* (Oxford, 1999), p.489. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p286.

⁶⁹ S. Alexander, 'Becoming a Woman in London in the 1920s and 1930s', in *Becoming a Woman: Essays in 19th and 20th Century Feminist History*, (London: Virago, 1994), pp. 39-41. Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 5.

⁷⁰ E. Hobsbawn, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1964), p. 104. Sonya Rose, *Which People's War?*, pp.151-197. Angela Davis, *Modern Motherhood: Women and Family in England 1945-2000*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 140-165.

⁷¹ John R. Gillis, 'Bringing up Father: British Paternal Identities, 1700 to the Present, in *Masculinities*, Volume 3, Issue 3 (1995) pp. 1-27.

⁷² Ralph LaRossa, 'Fatherhood and Social Change' in (eds.) Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, *Men's Lives*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995, 3rd edition) pp. 448-460. Also see *The Modernisation of Fatherhood: A Social and Political History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

focused on the lives of children and young adults outside of the family and home.⁷³ Selina Todd has argued that youth culture was a distinct aspect of working class family life from the 1930s onwards, with young adults being allowed to focus on leisure pursuits outside the family home. Children and young adults were no longer valued *just* for their economic productivity in the family unit, as they had been in the nineteenth-century.⁷⁴

Stephanie Ward has, however, pointed to the important economic role played by teenagers and young adults living at home in the inter-war period. At the height of the depression, children could in theory provide economic support for their parents who were out of work. This in turn impacted on the construction of the working class family unit and the gender and social roles assigned to family members during the inter-war period.⁷⁵ The earning capacity of children could, and did, influence the level of social security for which a family was eligible, as this was based on total household income, rather than just parental income. Children providing for their parents also threatened to undermine the conventionally understood gender and social roles of parents in inter-war society, particularly the image of men as the family's primary bread winner.⁷⁶

Carol Smart and Bren Neale argued in 1999 that the nuclear family, as a recognisable and homogenous unit, was in decline by the end of the twentieth-century.⁷⁷ Other work since the 1980s has, however, demonstrated that the structure and composition of family life diversified during the twentieth-century, making it harder for historians to identify a stable and permanent form of family life which persisted across the period. Rather than seeing the

⁷³ D. Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyles of Young Wage Earners in Inter-War Britain*, (Ilford: Woburn Press, 1994). C. Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in in England, 1920-1960*, (Manchester: Manchester University press, 2000); David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970: From Ivory Tower to Global Movement - a New History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁷⁴ Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England 1918-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 5.

⁷⁵ Stephanie Ward, 'Welsh Family and The Means Test' in (ed.) H.V. Bowen, *New History of Wales*, (2012), p. 47.

⁷⁶ Stephanie Ward, 'The Means Test and the Unemployed in South Wales and the North-East of England, 1931-1939', in *Labour History Review*, Issue 73, No.1, (April 2008); Ward, *Unemployment and the State in Britain: The Means Test and Protest in 1930s South Wales and North-East England*, (Cardiff: 2013), p. 201.

⁷⁷ Carol Smart and Bren Neale, *Family Fragments?*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) p. 165.

family as solely an economic unit, historians have studied a variety of social issues which have affected the family in the twentieth-century, such as the companionate marriage, sexuality, parenthood, contraception and childhood.

The reality of family life changed during this period, however, with shifts in internal gender roles and individual expectations of family life altering, particularly during the inter-war period. Many people still occupied traditional gender roles within the family unit, as social expectations of what a family should be did not change as much as some historians have led us to believe. For example, despite some women's move into the labour market, society still expected them to be the emotional, moral and economic centre of family life. Cultural expectations of family life did not change radically until the latter part of the twentieth-century.

Family and The Second World War

This section will look at the historical work on the family and the Second World War. It examines work on the changing position of women during this period and on male and female gender roles in the family unit.

Given the extreme disruption experienced by the family unit from 1939-1945, family life is surprisingly absent, as a topic, from histories of wartime British society.⁷⁸ When discussions of the family in wartime do appear, they are often part of a wider body of research on British society and national identity, or in an examination of gendered expectations associated with male and female behaviour.⁷⁹ As with historical research on the

⁷⁸ Calder, *The People's War*, pp. 48-53.

⁷⁹ Norman Longmate, *How we lived then: A History of Everyday Life during the Second World War*, (London: Hutchinson, 1971); David Morgan and Mary Evans, *The Battle for Britain: Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 1993); Paul Addison, *Now the War is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-51*, (London: Pimlico, 1995); Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951*, (Oxford:

British twentieth-century family, historical studies of the family in the Second World War have placed greater emphasis on examining individual roles in the family.⁸⁰

For example, historians such as Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska have argued that for women, remaining in the family home as a housewife was seen by wartime contemporaries as a powerful position in society.⁸¹ Jane Lewis has also maintained that ‘family’ stood as a euphemism in wartime society, for female members of the family, performing the unpaid work of caring for young and old, as well as husbands – a clear division in gender labour.⁸² This role was vital, however, to the economic and social stability of the family in wartime.

Geoffrey Field has argued that opinions about the family and women’s role in the wartime home were underscored by attitudes to ‘goodtime girls’ – women who used the freedom of wartime to have fun and eschew social responsibility.⁸³ More generally there is disagreement about the extent to which women were emancipated from the home by the changing circumstances of war. Arthur Marwick considered that the Second World War was a period of immense change for women in the home, as their presence in the wartime labour market diversified their roles in society.⁸⁴ Others such as Penny Summerfield argued that

Oxford University Press, 1998); Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?*; (ed.) Jane Lewis, *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940*, (Oxford: Basil and Blackwell, 1986); Martin Pugh, *Women and The Women’s Movement in Britain 1914-1959*, (Hong Kong: Macmillan Press, 1992); (ed.) June Purvis, *Women’s History: Britain, 1850-1945: An Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 1998).

⁸⁰ (ed.) Jane Lewis, *Labour and Love*, (1986); Martin Pugh, *Women and The Women’s Movement in Britain 1914-1959*, (Hong Kong: Macmillan Press, 1992); (ed.) June Purvis, *Women’s History: Britain, 1850-1945: An Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 1998).

⁸¹ Norman Longmate, *How We Lived Then*, p55; David Morgan and Mary Evans, *The Battle for Britain: Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*, p92; Paul Addison, *Now the War is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-51*, (London: Pimlico, 1995); Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 100.

⁸² Jane Lewis, ‘Gender, the Family and Women’s Agency in the Building of ‘Welfare States: The British Case,’ *Social History*, Vol. 19, Issue 1 (1994) p. 38.

⁸³ Geoffrey Field, ‘Perspectives on the Working-Class Family in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945’, in *International Labour and Working-Class History*, Volume 38, (Autumn 1990) pp. 3-28; Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?*, p. 80.

⁸⁴ Arthur Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century*, p. 137.

women's war-time work outside the home did not however emancipate women completely from society's expectation of them as mothers and wives in the home.⁸⁵

There is also debate about the role of men in the family. The sociologist Brian Jackson has noted that wartime family and kinship patterns, in particular among the working classes, tended to be determined by where mothers and daughters lived rather than husbands or son-in-laws.⁸⁶ This was primarily because of men's extended absence from the home between 1939-1945. As a result of this prolonged absence, men were not viewed by society as having the same relationship with family as women. A.H. Halsey has argued, however, that the increase in the number of marriages and a trend towards smaller families leading up to the war changed some men's attitudes to their spouses and the home. He argued that 'to a degree, there was a domestication of men – a greater involvement of husbands in the housework, home improvement and shopping'.⁸⁷ An approach by some historians, which to some extent challenges this, has argued that women sought to change the power dynamic in their marriage only on marginal points and that society tended to see the male as the chief breadwinner and head of the household.⁸⁸ Additionally Sonya Rose argued that, although men held economic power in the family, they were not seen by wartime society as the 'moral' centre of family life as were women. Traditional attitudes to the double standards about male

⁸⁵ Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict*, (London: Croom Helm, 1984). Harold L. Smith, 'The effect of the war on the status of women' in (ed.) H.L. Smith, *War and Social Change: British Society in The Second World War*, (Manchester, 1986) p. 211; G. Braybon and P. Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars*, (London: Pandora, 1987); Penny Summerfield, 'Women, War and Social Change: Women in Britain in World War II' pp. 95-118 in (ed.) Arthur Marwick, *Total War and Social Change*, (London 1988); P. Schweitzer, L. Hilton and J. Moss (eds.) *What did you do in the War Mum?* (London, 1985) p. 30; Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995) pp. 115-116; Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

⁸⁶ Brian Jackson, *Working Class Community: Some General Notions Raised by a Series of Studies in Northern England*, (Routledge and K.Paul, 1968).

⁸⁷ (ed.) A.H. Halsey, *Trends in British Society Since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988) p. 58.

⁸⁸ Kate Fisher states that many working class women in particular did not require help with domestic chores as they felt that men would not do them properly. For more ideas surrounding power dynamics within marriages see Kate Fisher, *Birth Control: Sex and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960*, pp. 202-206, Szreter and Fisher, 'Sexuality, Love and Marriage in England, 1918-1960 and Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970) p. 83.

and female sexuality were also in play. Single men's sexual behaviour, particularly in the British forces, was not criticised by the media or government, whereas the 'good time girl' label given to some single women who made the most of their new found income and freedoms, received widespread publicity. In fact many single soldiers were provided with contraception when posted for overseas duties.⁸⁹

Historical research about the role of children in wartime society has often been based around discussions of social policy, and the extent to which wartime disruptions, such as bombing and evacuation, affected the health and education of children. In 1950, Richard Titmuss argued that the evacuation scheme was designed to protect children from the dangers of wartime bombing.⁹⁰ The subsequent movement of working class children from inner city homes forced middle class society to recognise the contrasting lifestyles of children from different classes. This led to a string of improvements in social welfare which affected children in society, such as the 1944 Education Act, the creation of the School Medical Service and the post-war Welfare State.⁹¹

John Macnicol has noted, however, that evacuation did disrupt family ties, inducing emotional problems in many children and "forcing them to stand on their own two feet, in a strange and often hostile environment".⁹² The evacuation scheme also revealed deep seated divisions of class in British wartime society, with Arthur Marwick arguing that although evacuation roused a new sense of social concern amongst some in society, it did not totally

⁸⁹ Sonya Rose, "The Sex Question" in Anglo-American Relations in the Second World War', *International History Review*, Volume 20, (December, 1998) pp. 884-903.

⁹⁰ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p. 25.

⁹¹ Macnicol, *The Effect of Evacuation*, p. 5. John Welshman, 'Evacuation and Social Policy During the Second World War: Myth and Reality' pp. 28-53, in *Twentieth Century British History*, Volume. 9, Issue.1 (1998), pp. 48-52.

⁹² Macnicol, *The Effect of Evacuation*, pp. 5-6.

dispel the middle class distaste for “feckless and dirty” working class children.⁹³ Although historical research on evacuation, social security and the war’s effect on child health have revealed the deep seated divisions that existed in wartime British society, it has also demonstrated the importance of children to the wartime family unit. Schemes, such as evacuation and subsequent changes to social policy in the post-war period, were designed to protect children from the consequences of wartime and therefore strove to defend the institution of family. By researching individual members of the family in wartime, historians have, albeit fleetingly, recognised the importance of the family unit in wartime British society.

David Morgan and Mary Evans have also argued that the good health of families was of paramount importance to the war effort, with the government issuing advice throughout the conflict on topics such as family diet, childcare, the home and its upkeep, in an attempt to keep the family unit healthy and stable.⁹⁴ This image of a healthy family and home was a symbol used by the government to promote wartime morale, demonstrating to individuals how they should behave in wartime.⁹⁵ E.A. McCarty has nevertheless argued that the constant bombardment of information from official sources, driving home ideas about what the ideal wartime family should be like, made its realisation even more elusive in reality.⁹⁶ Ross McKibbin has also noted how the war increased pressures on individuals in the family unit, especially women, who were encouraged to occupy multiple wartime roles, both in the home and in the work force.⁹⁷

⁹³ Arthur Marwick, ‘People’s War and Top People’s Peace? British Society and the Second World War, in (eds.) Alan Sked and Chris Cook, *Crisis and Controversy: Essays in Honour of A.J.P. Taylor*, (Macmillan, London: 1976) p. 159; Raynes Minns, *Bombers and Mash: The Domestic Front 1939-1945*, (Virago: London 1980, p. 18.

⁹⁴ David Morgan and Mary Evans, *The Battle for Britain: Citizenship and Ideology in the Second World War*, (London: Routledge, 1993) p. 71.

⁹⁵ J. Obelkevich and P. Catterall, *Understanding Post War British Society*, (London 1994), p144.

⁹⁶ E.A. McCarty, *Attitudes to Women and Domesticity in England, 1939-1955*, Oxford Thesis D Phil completed 1994), p. 166.

⁹⁷ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp. 82-90.

Nonetheless, McKibbin has pointed out that in spite of these pressures, close family bonds continued throughout the war. Many newly married couples chose to live with their extended family. Despite the fractures in family life caused by wartime conscription, evacuation and bombing, a strengthening of family bonds at home occurred in British society. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and neighbours now took on more important roles in the family unit as child carers, cleaners and centres of emotional, social and financial support for family members.⁹⁸ J.M. Winter has argued that this led to a 'revival' in family life and values, both during and after the war. A rise, both in marriages and births from 1939-1945, indicated the importance of family life to wartime society.⁹⁹

So, although many more women were introduced into the labour market as part of the war effort, historians have shown that their role in the home was considered vital to family stability. Men retained an important economic role in wartime family life, despite the prolonged absences of many from home. They were not, however, considered to be the moral and social centre of family life as were women. Children were also of vital importance to the emotional stability of the family in wartime, which schemes such as evacuation, were designed to protect children for the future. However, there is still a need for detailed work on the family unit as a whole in wartime as, to date, historians have preferred to concentrate in detail on the changing individual gender roles rather than the family as a whole.

⁹⁸ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 171.

⁹⁹ J.M. Winter, 'The Demographic Consequences of the War', pp. 151-176, in (ed.) *Harold L. Smith War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) p. 176.

Family, The Media and The Second World War

This section will review the literature on representations of the family in the media during the twentieth-century and more specifically, the Second World War. It will outline how media, such as radio and cinema, presented the image of the family to the public.

Feminist historians have argued that for much of the twentieth-century, the media played a key role in prioritising conventional ideas of motherhood and family.¹⁰⁰ For instance, the content of women's novels and magazines was heavily influenced by traditional gender values, encouraging women to occupy roles as wives and mothers.¹⁰¹ Cinema also provided few depictions of socially and financially independent women who existed outside the confines of the family. If they were represented in film, they were often vilified and presented as social outcasts to the audience.¹⁰² Jenny Hartley has noted that the Second World War made the home and its place in society more visible to the public through film and other forms of media.¹⁰³ Katherine Holden has argued, however, that the image of the united family, so prevalent in war time media, failed to show the fragmentation, and often the destruction, which many family units experienced thanks to military conscription, the mobilisation of the workforce and war casualties, both at home and abroad.¹⁰⁴ In addition Kevin Williams has pointed out that although the documentary film movement was keen to show the harsh realities of poverty and 'transcend the class divide' in wartime Britain, the films have since been interpreted by historians as portraying a stereotypical view of poor

¹⁰⁰ Curran, 'Media and the Making of British Society', p. 139.

¹⁰¹ Marjorie Ferguson, *Forever Feminine* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983); Gillian Murphy, 'Media Influence on the Socialization of Teenage Girls', in James Curran et al, *Impacts and Influences* (London: Methuen, 1987); Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain 1914-1950*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

¹⁰² Marcia Landy, *British Genres: Cinema and Society, 1930-1960*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p485. Janet Thumim, *Celluloid Sisters* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), p. 210.

¹⁰³ Jenny Hartley, *Millions Like Us: British Women's Fiction of the Second World War*, (London: Virago Press, 1997) p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ Katherine Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy 1830-1960*, (eds.) Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle and Janet Fink, (London: Longman, 1999), p. 217.

families as seen from a middle-class perspective. Film makers rarely engaged with the social realities of family life in wartime.¹⁰⁵

Others, such as Christine Geraghty have argued, however, that films, both during and after the war, attempted to show more realistic representations of family life in the twentieth-century such as women trapped in unfulfilled and unhappy marriages.¹⁰⁶ This is echoed by James Chapman who has pointed out that films which were produced later on in the conflict, such as *Millions Like Us* [1943] and *Brief Encounter* [1945], illustrated the complex and often unglamorous nature of family relationships, such as poverty and infidelity, whether in the traditional context of the home or the ‘new family’ of the factory floor.¹⁰⁷ Aldgate and Richards have argued that these films reflected complex changes in society over the course of the war and put on screen popular concerns about society; cinema was not, however, a ‘standard bearer’ for reform.¹⁰⁸ Williams has also argued that wartime cinema did, at times, tackle topics which would not have been possible in the 1930s. For instance, *Love on the Dole* [1941] portrayed a broader representation of family life in Britain than had been the norm in the cinema of the 1920s and 1930s, highlighting the effects of mass unemployment on the family unit.¹⁰⁹

When broadcasting is considered, Michael Bailey has argued that prior to the war, the BBC adopted a gendered discourse, portraying the home as a woman’s responsibility. The implication was that by making the home a pleasant and attractive place live in, women were fostering the physical wellbeing of the family, the rearing and ‘moral education’ of children

¹⁰⁵ Kevin Williams, *Get Me a Murder a Day!* p. 109.

¹⁰⁶ Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 55.

¹⁰⁷ James Chapman, *The British at War: Cinema, State and Propaganda 1939-1945*, (London: I.B Tauris Publishers, 1998), pp. 212-215, pp.217-218.

¹⁰⁸ Alan Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in World War II*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994) p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Kevin Williams, *Get Me a Murder a Day!* p. 134.

and were ‘keeping the husband out of the pub’.¹¹⁰ The very act of listening to the radio was often portrayed through an image of the family clustered around its set listening to the latest news and entertainments, thereby underpinning the idea of a united conventional family unit.¹¹¹ There is much compelling evidence to suggest that the BBC were keen to perpetuate that ideal.¹¹² For example, the early wartime programme, *The Kitchen Front* which gave advice on food rationing and preparation and home economy, was initially named *For Housewives*, illustrating the extent to which the BBC was engaged in consolidating and affirming gender roles.¹¹³ Other shows broadcast by the BBC, such as *Children’s Hour*, *At Home Today* and the *Radio Doctor* were designed around the family, providing entertainment and advice on multiple topics for individual members of the family unit in wartime.

There was awareness at the BBC, however, that the unusual set of circumstances generated by war created social dysfunction. For example, broadcasts by entertainers such as Vera Lynn, who read out messages from soldiers to their families at home, were a reminder about the importance of family life, despite the breaking up of the family unit. Also, the Friday morning programme *Health Magazine*, which dispensed advice about diet, the problems experienced by foster parents and the psychological difficulties stemming from broken families, illustrated that the BBC was aware of the subtle changes in society and the family brought about by war.¹¹⁴ In addition, other campaigns, such as the 1943 educational broadcasts about venereal disease, illustrated how the radio could play a vital role in

¹¹⁰ Michael Bailey, ‘The Angel in the Ether: Early Radio and the Constitution of the Household’, pp. 52-65, in *Narrating Media History*, (ed.) Michael Bailey, London: Routledge, 2009) p. 54.

¹¹¹ An image of the ‘family’ as it appeared in Radio Times 15 April 1948 is included in Simon Frith, ‘The Pleasures of the Hearth – the making of BBC Light Entertainment’ pp. 24-44 in S. Frith, *Music For Pleasure*, (Cambridge, Polity, 1988), p. 37.

¹¹² J. Seaton, ‘Broadcasting and the Blitz’, in (eds.) J Curran and J. Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, p. 163. See also Susan Briggs, *Those Radio Times*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson) pp. 100-105.

¹¹³ Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and Wartime BBC, 1939-45*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 70-107.

¹¹⁴ Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War*, p. 89. See also Sian Nicholas, ‘The People’s Radio: The BBC and its audience 1939-1945’, in *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (ed.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (London: Liverpool University Press, 1999) pp. 62-92.

challenging moral taboos, and by all accounts these were received favourably by a public.¹¹⁵

Ultimately it's clear that the BBC's chief success was in broadcasting to a national community of listeners characterised by their diverse lives, interests and attitudes.¹¹⁶

The study of family life and the media in wartime has therefore often concentrated on the representation of individual gender roles, rather than the family as a whole. In addition, some historians have argued that wartime film played a key role in prioritising conventional ideas of motherhood and family, encouraging women to maintain their role in the home. Film often failed to show the destruction and fragmentation which many families experienced in wartime. Other historians have argued that there was awareness in radio of the strains on and fractures in family life. While film and radio have been studied to some extent with an eye to the representation of the family, or the gendered roles within it during the war, there has been little work on representations of the family in the press between 1939 and 1945.

Family and Newspapers

This section looks at both general histories of the press and writing on the family with a view to considering how the family's relationship with the press has been understood. It also discusses work which focuses on issues relating to the family and the press.

Early histories of the press in society focused primarily on politics, with any mention of the family being reserved for discussions of those ones who owned individual newspapers.¹¹⁷ Considerations of the family were often implied in discussions of more wide ranging socio-economic topics which affected the press, such as class, morality and religion.

¹¹⁵ See also Adrian Bingham 'The British Popular Press and Venereal Disease During the Second World War, in *The Historical Journal*, Volume 48, Issue 4, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1055-1076.

¹¹⁶ Nicholas, 'The People's Radio', p. 92.

¹¹⁷ See for example Ivon Asquith, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1780-1855' pp. 98-116, in *Newspaper History from the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (eds.) George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate, (London: Constable, 1978) p. 105.

For example, Raymond Williams discussed literacy rates in marriages in Victorian Britain, alluding to the percentage of individual members of a family who might have engaged with a particular paper.¹¹⁸ He offered no discussion, however, of how newspapers viewed these individuals or the family as a unit. More recently some writers have offered a brief discussion of the decay of traditional liberal family values in the press and society in the latter half of the twentieth-century. The conclusions are drawn, however, from a consideration of the influence of mass media as a whole, rather than primarily just newspapers.¹¹⁹

There is more discussion of the relationship between press and family in work on society and the family. It is difficult however, to access the representation of ‘the family’ as a unit in newspapers because many studies of the family have focused on representations of individual members and their gender, rather than the unit as a whole. Works which engage with the history of female gender roles in the twentieth-century often argue that the press encouraged social conformity and the place of women as being in the home.¹²⁰ Historians such as Deirdre Beddoe concluded that the press during the twentieth-century encouraged women to embrace the role of housewife and mother and to eschew other role models.¹²¹ Adrian Bingham’s work on gender and sexuality in the inter-war press identified the importance of the press in everyday life during this period, concluding that newspapers did not have clear and coherent gender ‘policies’.¹²² For example, they did not all consistently support domesticity or condemn the ‘flapper’. Certain papers had a particular political

¹¹⁸ Raymond Williams, ‘The Press and Popular Culture: A Historical Perspective’, in (eds.) George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate, *Newspaper History from the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (London: Constable, 1978) p. 42. Also see James Curran, ‘The Press as an Agency of Social Control; an Historical Perspective’, in (eds.) George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate, *Newspaper History from the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 69-72.

¹¹⁹ Analysis of the media’s influence and opinions about the family and the home see James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility*, (5th edition) p. 266 and Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: from Gutenberg to the Internet*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2005) p. 221.

¹²⁰ Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998) p. 51, pp. 71-72.

¹²¹ Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women Between the Wars, 1918-1939*, (London: Pandora, 1989) p. 9.

¹²² Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 256. Also see Adrian Bingham, ‘Newspaper Problem Pages and British Sexual Cultures since 1918, in *Media History*, Volume 18, Issue 1 (2012), pp. 51-63.

allegiance, but each paper had a ‘multiplicity of different voices and images’ which portrayed a variety of divergent perspectives on gender.¹²³ The press embraced a wide variety of material on family and gender in its pages; it continued however to defend particular versions of family morality, such as women as wives and mothers, in order to appeal to all areas of the British public. Bingham’s work also discusses the term ‘family newspaper’ and how particular newspapers, such as the *Daily Express*, used this to define the image of their paper - “family publications suitable for all”.¹²⁴ It does not however, since its focus is primarily on representations of gender, discuss the terminology concerning the family in detail. For example, there is little discussion of how the inter-war press defined the family as a unit. There is also little investigation of the complexity of this term and how newspapers used the image of the family to shape the content of its newspaper.

Work on the wartime press and family has continued to concentrate on the representation of gender, rather than looking at the family unit as a whole. Sonya Rose has shown the difficulties the press and other media had in representing the complexity of both male and female gender roles during the Second World War. She concludes that there was deep anxiety in society that the ‘gender order’ would be transformed by the conditions of the war and the need for mass mobilisation. The need to present the realities of wartime volunteering and conscription in the press often clashed with the desire to preserve already culturally prescribed roles. Many newspaper articles and advertisements were designed to instil patriotic commitment while at the same time reassuring both genders that regardless of what occurred during the war, women’s femininity would remain, and that femininity was compatible with wartime service.¹²⁵ By extolling the virtues of women who engaged in

¹²³ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, pp. 15-17.

¹²⁴ Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p. 263.

¹²⁵ Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?* p. 128.

particular kinds of war work, such as nursing, newspapers were encouraging both heroic and caring sentiments which did not interfere with already established gender roles.¹²⁶

David Clampin's work has analysed and challenged the traditional representation of masculinity in press advertising on the Home Front during the war years. Men in families were not represented as just a 'man in uniform', a 'culturally idealised form of masculine character' but something much more multifaceted.¹²⁷ His analysis of representations of masculinity in the advertisements which appeared in *Picture Post* showed that they included a variety of different male roles in the family unit. Men not only played an economic role in family life, but were seen to be at ease in both the domestic setting and work. They had an emotional role to play in raising their children and engaging with their spouse.¹²⁸ This indicated a desire by advertisers to represent the importance of a man's family role, not in direct contrast to his work away from home, but as two parts of his role in society, which was ideally, balanced.

Some historians have therefore argued that the press sustained traditional gender norms for men and women during the war, ultimately encouraging women to remain in the home as wives and mothers. Others, however, have shown the representation of men and women in families were more complex, ultimately depending on the newspaper under investigation. This thesis sets out to make a further contribution to this area of study by looking in detail at the range of representations of the family in the *Daily Express* during the war.

¹²⁶ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995) p. 183. See also Penny Stains, *Nurses at War: Women on the Frontline, 1939-1945* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000).

¹²⁷ M. Donaldson (1993), "What is Hegemonic Masculinity?" pp. 643-657, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 22 No. 5. p. 648.

¹²⁸ David Clampin, 'With Her Apron Tied Around His Waist: Being a Man in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945', pp. 36-49. For more ideas concerning masculinity and domesticity see M. Francis (2002), "The Domestication of the Male? Recent research on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Masculinity", in *The Historical Journal*, Volume 45, Issue 3, (2002), pp. 637-652.

Conclusion:

This chapter has outlined work on a number of topics relating to the press, British society, the Second World War and representations of family in media. It has highlighted a number of areas which need further study and which this thesis seeks to redress.

There is insufficient research on the press in the Second World War and in particular on the *Daily Express* newspaper and its content during the twentieth-century as a whole.

Adrian Bingham has argued that the *Express*, defined itself as a ‘family newspaper’ during the twentieth-century, producing content that was appropriate for all members of the family. Research on the family and newspapers during the twentieth-century has, however, primarily focused on individual gender roles in the family, rather than the family unit as a whole. This has left us with little understanding about what newspapers such as the *Express*, understood by the term ‘family newspaper’, in terms of content and appearance.

This thesis, therefore, provides the first in-depth investigation of the *Daily Express*’s content and readership in the Second World War. It explores what was meant by a ‘family newspaper’ by examining the *Express*’s history and the way it represented the family in key areas, namely its coverage of evacuation, of the Beveridge Report and in its display advertising. It addresses the question of how a popular newspaper dealt with the pressures of war and, in particular, how it represented the family during these difficult years.

Chapter Three:

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodologies used in this thesis, outlining both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. It is divided into three sections. Section one discusses content analysis and its use in the analysis of newspapers and the press. Section two outlines in brief the Leverhulme group project, its methodologies and data. Section three discusses the methods and sources used for this thesis.

Content Analysis

Content analysis has been defined as a key research technique for the systematic analysis of the content of the media.¹ It allows historians to identify and categorise the salient and manifest features of large numbers of texts.² Content analysis takes quantitative and qualitative form, both of which aim to assist in understanding the significance and purpose of a text. The data gathered assists in drawing conclusions about the way texts organise and communicate ideas, and how these texts change and develop over time.³

Writers such as Kimberley Neuendorf have argued that content analysis allows historians to become more objective when analysing source material. By basing research around more scientific procedures, such as data gathering and the testing of hypotheses, the historian's conclusions are deemed to be more rigorous and reliable.⁴ Based on observable evidence and statistical data, content analysis can help inhibit historians from becoming

¹ B. Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, (New York: Hafner Press, 1952) p. 147; Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1969) p. 12.

² K. Robbins, F. Webster and M. Pickering, 'Propaganda, Information and Social Control', in (ed.) J. Hawthorne, *Propaganda, Persuasion and Polemic*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1987), p. 88.

³ (eds.) David Deacon, Michael Pickering, Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, *Research Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 116.

⁴ Kimberly A. Nuendorf, *The Content Analysis Handbook*, (California: Sage Publications Inc. 2002) p. 10.

emotionally involved in their source material and basing their conclusions on anecdotal evidence. Conclusions are instead founded on data from a block of texts, rather than assumptions generated by surveying a handful of different sources.⁵

Quantitative Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis is a way of classifying data in order to explain what is being observed. If historians have used correct sampling techniques to create a valid data set, conclusions about those contents can be, validly, generalised.⁶ Researchers can develop different categories they wish to track within the text, allowing them to trace which phenomena and themes are recurrent in the chosen ‘sample’ or ‘population’. This allows the researcher to develop a picture of the frequency of particular phenomena, and therefore of their relative importance or otherwise.

Content analysis describes the ‘universe’ as the entire body of texts from a particular period, published or unpublished, which might theoretically be drawn upon. The ‘population’ refers to what is actually available for the researcher to collect. In the case of a study of the press in the Second World War, this technically counts as almost every newspaper held in national and regional archives.⁷ As it is not possible to access this many newspapers in one project, a sample of newspapers must be studied.

This method has both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of quantitative analysis include its ability to allow for a detailed study of the source under investigation. For example, it can be used to develop understanding of the physical development of a newspaper over the

⁵ (eds.) Deacon et al, *Research Communications*, p. 115.

⁶ Klaus Krippendorf, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, (California: Sage Publications, 2004) pp. 5-6, pp. 87-88.

⁷ Daniel Riffe et al., *Analyzing Media Messages* (2nd edn), New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), pp. 107-109.

course of the war: the number of pages printed: its change in size, and the number and types of stories printed. Systematic collection of information, according to carefully constructed protocols, helps to minimise bias in the process.⁸ This method of research should ideally be replicable for any other future research. As a result, quantitative analysis results from different time periods or texts can be compared, thereby allowing historians to develop a greater understanding of symbols and themes used in different texts in mass culture.⁹ In the Leverhulme project for example, the construction of a shared coding schedule and coding sheet allowed the team to code multiple newspapers at the same time, providing it with comparative data concerning the development of these particular newspapers during the Second World War. Qualitative content analysis ultimately provides researchers with statistical data with which to develop their research, allowing them to see the ‘bigger picture’ of a text’s development over time, before engaging with in-depth analysis of particular aspects of the source.¹⁰

The weaknesses of quantitative analysis include the limited scope of its results, as it only provides numerical data on the questions being asked by the researcher. As a result, the method does not deal with other complex and varied processes of meaning within the source. It ignores any latent content and the data prevents researchers from drawing more nuanced conclusions.¹¹ Researchers must also be careful when constructing their selected sample or ‘population’, as data can be open to criticism if the researcher favours a particular message or theme, only choosing texts which corroborate pre-conceived ideas.¹² For example, when

⁸ Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, p. 17.

⁹ D.J. Kruger, ‘Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Community Research’, in *The Community Psychologist*, Volume 36, pp. 18-19. See also, G. Gerbner, ‘Towards Cultural Indicators: The Analysis of Mass Mediated Public Message Systems’, in (eds.) G. Gerbner, O. Holsti K.Krippendorff, W. Paisley and P. Stone, *The Analysis of Communication Content: Developments in Scientific Theories and Computer Techniques*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1969), p. 78.

¹⁰ (eds.) Deacon et al, *Research Communications*, pp. 115-117.

¹¹ (eds.) Deacon et al, *Research Communications*, p. 114, p. 117, p. 47.

¹² Konrad H. Jarausch and Kenneth A. Hardy, *Quantitative Methods for Historians: A Guide to Research, Data and Statistics*, (London: University of North Carolina Press), p. 63.

studying newspapers, data may be skewed by researchers who favour a particular day or month. A population is also often defined by the availability of the source under investigation, if a researcher becomes constrained, by time, money or availability, a smaller sample may become viable. Precise conclusions drawn from a smaller sample may be viewed as too narrow however, and not useful for the construction of broader conclusions.¹³ Also if more than one researcher is collecting data, researchers must be certain of consistency amongst the group when assigning codes to particular categories in the text.¹⁴ Used on its own, quantitative analysis data loses much of its richness and value as a method of examining sources.¹⁵ Quantitative methods must therefore be accompanied by qualitative analysis in order to help develop a fuller understanding of the source.¹⁶

Qualitative Content Analysis

The aim of qualitative analysis is to produce a detailed description of the sample and of individual texts under investigation. There are many forms of qualitative analysis, including in-depth interviews, the analysis of documents and “unstructured observations”.¹⁷

Techniques include drawing on different forms of textual analysis, including semiotics and linguistics.¹⁸ The style is more ‘open-ended’ in its analysis, allowing for the deployment of many different forms of interpretation of the meaning and context of any given source.¹⁹

Semiotics focuses on the study of signs and symbols and their cultural and social uses,

¹³ Nuendorf, *Content Analysis Handbook*, p. 83.

¹⁴ (eds.) Deacon et al, *Research Communications*, p. 128.

¹⁵ Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, pp.10-11.

¹⁶ (eds.) Williams et al, *Research Methods*, p. 47.

¹⁷ Nicholas W. Jankowski and Fred Wester, ‘The Qualitative Tradition in Social Science Inquiry: Contributions to Mass Communication Research’, pp. 44-74, in (eds.) Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Nicholas W. Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 59.

¹⁸ Teun A. Van Dijk, ‘The interdisciplinary study of news as discourse’, pp.108-120, in (eds.) Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Nicholas W. Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 110.

¹⁹ For further explanations of the types of qualitative analysis, see Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, pp.16-17.

allowing historians to examine images, gestures, rituals, ceremonies and public spectacle, in order to understand their cultural meaning.²⁰ Linguistic analysis is helpful in illuminating different facets of the structure of media texts and how these contribute to the formulation of social conceptions, values and identities.²¹ A more open ended approach, and the one adopted in this thesis, is to read texts paying close attention to the use of language, imagery, symbols and argument in order to build up a deeper sense of the meaning embedded within them.

In the case of newspapers, qualitative analysis allows the context of individual articles to be investigated. For example, who wrote it? Is this article politically motivated and if so, to what purpose? What readership was it intended for? It also enables the researcher to account for statistical anomalies in the data. For example, if a newspaper has a higher percentage of articles relating to a particular topic, is this due to an interest in this topic or does a particular newspaper have fewer stories overall, thereby making the small number of stories on this topic appear more important?

An advantage of qualitative analysis is that it allows fine distinctions to be drawn within individual texts. Generalised classifications generated by sampling can be expanded and ambiguities recognised. This provides depth and detail to the overall understanding of a text. By creating a more open-ended style of analysis, new avenues of investigation can arise. Qualitative analysis can therefore be used in conjunction with quantitative analysis to generate a wider and more in-depth analysis of a given source.

However, there are several disadvantages to the qualitative method. In attempting greater depth of analysis, fewer individual sources can be studied. The depth of analysis often

²⁰ Roland Barthes, 'Introduction', pp. 1-3, in *Communications 4*, (1964), p. 1. See also Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2nd ed. 1984) p. 95. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (London: Paladin, 2nd ed. 1973). See also, Peter Larsen, 'Textual Analysis of Fictional Media Content', pp. 121-134, in (ed.) Roland Barthes, *Rhetoric of the Image*, (1984) p49; Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Nicholas W. Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 124.

²¹ (eds.) Deacon et al, *Research Communications*, p. 146.

makes qualitative methods more time consuming than quantitative data collection. Therefore unless time, staff and budget allows, a smaller sample size is often deemed necessary. This makes it more difficult to make generalised statements about trends which occur over an extended period of time. Also, the many ways of reading a source cannot be easily standardised thereby limiting the volume of texts which a single researcher can analyse consistently and to a 'uniform standard'.²² This in turn can cause difficulty when working in groups, as it is crucial that sources are analysed in a uniform manner.

The Group Project

The Leverhulme group project was created to provide the first full critical study of the development and role of the British press in the Second World War. It set out to integrate the history of the wartime press into the wider social, cultural and political context of wartime Britain. As part of this, it undertook a comprehensive content analysis of selected wartime newspapers and explored the development of newspaper content and style during this period. Attempting to conduct a full content analysis of the total output of the British press during the Second World War was too large a task for the project, constrained as it was by time and money. It was therefore necessary to create a sampling methodology which would enable the project to collect a data set, relevant both to the project's overall aims and for individual work. A detailed breakdown of the project's methodology can be found in Appendix A Figure 1.²³

²² Neuendorf, *Content Analysis Handbook*, p. 88.

²³ See Volume II, Appendix A Figure 1, pp. 1-5.

This Thesis:

The group methodology influenced the methods used to define the research for this thesis. The content analysis, and the coding system developed from it, also played an important role in the collection and analysis of data used in this thesis. The focus of the research was an investigation of the wartime content of the *Daily Express*; it analysed how the *Express* represented the image of the family in the newspaper, using three case studies. This section outlines the methodological choices behind the study of particular topics and sources in this thesis. It discusses the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the *Daily Express* and also discusses documents in archives, newspaper readership reports and Mass Observation.

Daily Express Case Studies:

Analysing the wartime content of every edition of the *Daily Express* for its representation of family was deemed impractical. Therefore, case studies were chosen for analysis which focused on topics which related to the family in wartime. There were many themes relevant to the family in the paper which could have been analysed, such as family health, education, social security, wartime government initiatives and MOI propaganda campaigns. This thesis looked at the *Daily Express's* portrayal of family through three case studies: the Evacuation scheme organised by the government during 1939, the Beveridge Report of 1942 and display advertising in the *Daily Express* from 1939-1945. The Evacuation Scheme and the Beveridge Report were wartime events which affected the family, both physically and financially. Evacuation physically separated many families in Britain, forcing them to relocate away from the cities through fear of wartime bombing campaigns.²⁴ How did the *Express* represent an

²⁴ John MacNicol, 'The Evacuation of Schoolchildren', in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, pp. 3-31, (ed.) Harold L. Smith, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) p. 5.

event which broke families apart? Did it recognise the strain evacuation placed on family life?

The Beveridge Report and its recommendations for social security were designed to impact on family finances, therefore the paper's coverage of the topic provided an opportunity to consider how it represented the family in relation to this central domestic issue. The data generated by the Leverhulme group project and the work of historians such as David Clampin have indicated how important display advertising was to wartime newspapers.²⁵ An analysis of display adverts and their representation of family were crucial to an understanding of how the representation of family manifested itself through *all* aspects of the *Express's* content.

Sample Selection

The sample of newspapers chosen for each case study was based heavily on historiographical information about key events and important dates in the history of these events. For the Evacuation Scheme case study, nine weeks of *Daily Express* content were studied throughout 1939; three weeks from 1st-22nd September; three weeks from 23rd October – 11th November; and three weeks from 1st-22nd December. The weeks analysed showed how the *Express* covered the start of the Evacuation Scheme; the 'problems of the scheme' and the return of mothers and children to the cities throughout October and November; and how the scheme was covered over the Christmas period. Qualitative research prior to the quantitative coding of the newspapers noted the *Express's* discussion of evacuation was only mentioned sporadically after December 1939. The highest concentration of articles about evacuation was found between September and December 1939. By analysing several weeks across the latter

²⁵ David Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II: Cultural Identity and the Blitz Spirit*, (2014).

half of 1939, a data set was created that mapped the development of the *Express*'s initial evacuation coverage; noting how its representation of the family changed and developed during this period.

A smaller sample of four weeks was chosen for the analysis of the *Express*'s Beveridge Report coverage, focusing on the Report's release in December 1942 and the subsequent debate in Parliament about its content in February 1943. Analysis of several weeks of newspaper content around the following dates was crucial, as discussion of Beveridge in the *Express* was at its highest during these periods. The first week of content analysis was taken from the 2nd -7th December 1942; the second from the 15th -21st February 1943; the final two weeks were taken from 18th June – 2nd July 1945, two weeks prior to the 1945 General Election. Qualitative analysis of other newspapers, such as the *Daily Mirror*, indicated an analysis of the General Election and its discussion of Beveridge would be necessary.²⁶ Many of the issues surrounding social security and the Report were part of the political discourse during this election.

As discussed previously, display advertising was an important aspect of *Daily Express* content, appearing in every edition of the newspaper during the war.²⁷ Analysing content from every copy of the *Express* during wartime, to understand its representation of family life, was not feasible however. A sample of *Daily Express* newspapers was created using the group project method of a 'constructed week'.²⁸ One constructed week was created for each

²⁶ Reader's Letters, 'Labour and Liberal', *Daily Mirror*, 22nd June 1945, p. 2. Reader's Letters, 'Labour and Liberal', *Daily Mirror*, 23rd June, 1945, p. 2. Anon, 'Beveridge: Stop Wasting the Worker's Lives', *Daily Mirror*, 28th June 1945, p. 3. Anon, 'Beveridge Crowd', *Daily Mirror*, 27th June 1945, p. 8. Anon, 'New Deal for the Land Planned', *Daily Mirror*, 2nd July 1945, p. 3.

²⁷ The only day during the war the *Express* did not include advertising at all was the 7th June 1944, the day after D-day.

²⁸ A constructed week is a sample of dates from a six month period, a different date from each month for each day of the week. Constructed week sampling is more efficient than simple random sampling or consecutive day sampling. For more information see Joe Bob Hester and Elizabeth Dougall, 'The Efficiency of Constructed Week Sampling for Content Analysis of Online News', in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* Vol. 84 Issue 4, (December 2007), pp. 811-824

year of the war, in total seven weeks of newspapers were used to analyse *Express* commercial advertising content from 1939-1945.²⁹ This allowed the data to map the development of *Express* commercial advertising and its representation of family throughout the conflict.

Coding Categories

For each case study's analysis, a coding system was required to quantify how the image of family life was represented in *Daily Express* content. A pilot scheme was developed prior to each case study's coding, to refine the categories being used. A constructed week of newspaper dates within the sample was chosen and was qualitatively analysed to determine what issues relating to the family were discussed in the *Express*. From this a series of themes, or coding categories emerged. For example, in the *Express's* coverage of the Evacuation Scheme, the analysis revealed the newspaper discussed multiple aspects of family life in its coverage of the scheme, including family health, education, family finances and the roles of mothers and children. The analysis also revealed that display advertising contained many forms of family life which could be categorised, such as marriage, housewives, family and the war effort, and the role of fathers.³⁰

Having established the categories for analysis, a constructed week from each case study was studied using them. Where these categories were found to be imprecise, revisions were made. In general, however, this was not the case, and the categories developed in the initial analysis were the ones used in the final coding.

²⁹ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 1, p. 70 for full set of dates for the six constructed weeks of commercial advertising in the *Daily Express*.

³⁰ A full breakdown of the coding categories settled on after the pilot in each case study, and how they are defined, can be found in Volume II Appendix E Figure 4 p. 52 and Appendix G Figure 4, p. 73.

Each of the themes, or categories, was then applied to the whole sample so as to determine the extent to which they appeared. For example, a category such as family health might have appeared predominantly as the primary focus of articles in the *Express*. However, it might have been a secondary focus in other articles, or was barely mentioned – a tertiary focus.

The material was categorised in this way to see how representations of the family were manifest in the *Express's* wartime coverage. It was also crucial to understand to what extent representations of family life permeated *Express* stories, whether these were the primary focus of *Express* content or more deeply embedded in newspaper articles. This provided a data set which analysed how representations of family life developed over the course of each case study. It also allowed for further qualitative analysis, which engaged with imagery and language used in particular articles and advertisements.

Data:

The coding categories also allowed this thesis to see how much space was taken up by stories about the Evacuation Scheme, the Beveridge Report and display advertising in the *Daily Express* samples. Statistical data gathered for the Evacuation, Beveridge and Advertising chapters were measured as follows.

The percentage space of news stories about Beveridge in the *Express* sample was taken as a percentage of total space for all news stories, in one edition of the newspaper. The total percentage space of display adverts, in any given issue in the *Express* sample, was taken as a percentage of total newspaper space. The evacuation chapter data evolved, however, after initial coding had begun. The statistical data of the total percentage of evacuation stories, as a percentage of all news stories in the *Express* sample, was discovered to be

statistically negligible, and difficult to analyse. The total percentage space given to evacuation stories in the *Express* sample was therefore taken, as a percentage of total home news stories. The percentage space given to individual articles on specific pages was measured on a case by case basis.

Other Sources:

Archival Research:

Archival research is a key tool, if not *the* key tool, for historians.³¹ In order to understand the wider social impact of the press during the war, this research sought to place the press more firmly in the context of British society during the Second World War. Archival research was used to this end.³² The extensive number of sources available, many of which were collected as part of the Leverhulme project, necessitated careful thought about which ones to analyse.

An important theme within this research was the attitude of the government towards the family during wartime. The government's social outlook was reflected in its policies towards the public, therefore, the archives of the Cabinet and the Ministry of Health (MOH), Education (MOE) and Information (MOI) became valuable sources. The Ministry of Information in particular controlled much of the information which was released into the public domain and was therefore relevant to understanding the extent to which the *Express* made use of this material. Documents revealed how the case studies of Evacuation and the Beveridge Report were dealt with by the government, providing a framework within which to discuss the *Daily Express's* ideas and approaches.

³¹ Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History*, (London: Granta Books, 1997), pp. 103-128.

³² For a full list of the archives used in this project see the Bibliography, pp. 253-267.

In order to fully understand the position of the *Daily Express* within the framework of wartime press and society, it was crucial to grasp the inner workings of the newspaper itself. Unfortunately, there is no single archive for the *Express*, such as those which exist for *The Guardian* and *The Times*, which could provide a researcher with material on the sales figures of the paper, its corporate records, perhaps correspondence and diaries belonging to staff members.³³ It was possible, however, to access financial and circulation figures of the paper from both the *Royal Commission of the Press* and the Audit Bureau of Circulation.³⁴ The private papers of Lord Beaverbrook, held at the House of Lords archive, also provided detailed documentation on the financial structure of the newspaper, its transportation and printing networks and full lists of its staff history from 1939-1945. The private correspondence of Lord Beaverbrook also provided an understanding of his mind-set.

As newspapers were designed for public consumption, it was crucial to understand whether the *Express* reflected public opinion when dealing with the topics of Evacuation and Beveridge. The Mass Observation archive was crucial for gathering qualitative data illustrating public opinion on Evacuation, the Beveridge Report and display advertising. It was not possible to access all Mass Observation sources due to the sheer size of the archive. Therefore, my conclusions are based on a sample extracted from the relevant parts of the archive. Initial reviews of the Leverhulme group coding data from 1939 and 1940 indicated the importance of advertising in the *Daily Express*. Over 28% of the overall space given to content was allocated to advertising in the *Daily Express*.³⁵ This data demonstrated the importance placed on advertising by the press and The History of Advertising Trust archive provided the research with valuable context about the British advertising industry.

³³ Published private memoirs of staff members for the *Daily Express* were accessed elsewhere. They include Tom Driberg, *Beaverbrook: A Study in Power and Frustration*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956); Arthur Christiansen, *Headlines All My Life*, (London: Heinemann, 1961); Tom Driberg, *Ruling Passions*, (London: Cape, 1977).

³⁴ *Royal Commission of The Press, 1947-1949*, (HMSO: 1949).

³⁵ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 1, p 25.

Readership Reports: Methodological Problems

A key aspect of this research on the *Daily Express* in wartime is the study of how the paper invoked readership in its pages, but also how the readership interacted with the newspaper.³⁶ There are a number of methodological problems, however, related to studying the nature of newspaper readership during the first half of the twentieth-century.

In addition to the newspapers themselves, the main source of information on readership in the first half of the twentieth-century was readership surveys. Sources such as the *London Press Exchange* (1935), *The IPA Survey of Press Readership* (1939, 1947), *The Kimble Readership Survey* (1943), *The Hulton Readership Survey* (1947), *Mass Observation Readership Survey* (1942, 1948) and the *Royal Commission on the Press* (1947-1949) were created for a variety of reasons.³⁷ For example, *The Hulton Survey* was created to “establish the readership of every major periodical published in the UK”, primarily for the use of newspaper proprietors and advertisers.³⁸ It enabled editors, journalists and advertisers to create newspaper content which might initially appeal to a chosen demographic, and eventually expand to include new readers. The data in the *Royal Commission of the Press* was designed, on the other hand, to inquire into the control, management and ownership of the newspaper and periodical press.³⁹

While many of these surveys dealt with the issue of newspaper readership, they all did so in different ways. James Curran has noted that during the 1930s readership surveys were in their infancy, resulting in haphazard and inconsistent methodologies and results across

³⁶ Wahl- Jorgensen ‘Letters to the Editor as a Forum for Public Deliberation. Modes of Publicity and Democratic debate’, pp. 303-320, in *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Volume 18 Issue 3, p. 306.

³⁷ J. London Press Exchange, *A Statistical Survey of Press Advertising in 1936*, (LPE Ltd, 1937); Mass Observation, *The Press and its Readers*, (Faber and Faber, 1948). *The Royal Commission on the Press, 1947-1949*, (London HMSO, 1949).

³⁸ W. Hobson, *The Hulton Readership Survey*, (London: 1947) p. 6.

³⁹ *The Royal Commission on the Press, 1947-1949*, (London HMSO, 1949), pp. 3-4.

different surveys.⁴⁰ Some surveys classified readers by their interaction with the newspaper, noting what they saw and which pages primarily appealed to them. Others merely provided the reader with statistical data about newspaper readers, such as age, sex and regional location.⁴¹

As some of these surveys, such as the *Readership of Newspapers and Periodicals in Great Britain* Survey (1936), the *IPA Readership Surveys* and the *Atwood Survey* (1947), were driven by the needs of the newspaper and advertising industries, their data is limited in what they chose to focus on. Although knowledge of the age, sex and class of a reader is important and necessary, it relegates our understanding of the reader to that of a ‘consumer’. The industry sponsored surveys of these years tell us little about the response of readers to the texts they appear to engage with.

Surveys, such as the *Mass Observation Readership Surveys* from 1942 and 1948, also did not provide readership data on a national scale. Information was only gathered from several cities across the country, such as Bolton, Cardiff and London, representing only a small percentage of national readership habits.⁴² The data was also heavily based upon qualitative analysis and the researchers’ general observations of people reading newspapers, noting how people interacted with newspapers on one particular day, rather than their general habits over a period of time.

The different methodological approach of these surveys does not mean we should dismiss the data presented. It does make it harder to compare and contrast data from different surveys across different time periods, however, as their methodologies are incompatible. Information garnered from these surveys together does nevertheless allow historians to

⁴⁰ Curran, *Power without Responsibility*, p. 65.

⁴¹ (eds.) Shafquat Towheed and W.R. Owens, *The History of Reading: Volume 1 International Perspectives, c.1500-1990*, (London: Palgrave 2011), pp. 2-3.

⁴² Mass Observation, File 1339, ‘Report on *Daily Express* Readership’, July 1942, p. 1.

understand how newspapers fitted into the lives of particular groups of readers, helping build up a detailed social and cultural picture of the lives of newspaper readers. Given the weaknesses in the data of readership surveys, further use was made of the Mass Observation published and unpublished wartime diaries. They provided information on the context of reading newspapers, noting where people read, why they brought newspapers and whether they were critical or supportive of its content. Locating information on the reader of a particular newspaper can be difficult however, depending on the diary in question.

Home Intelligence Reports also helped understanding of the changing dynamic of people's relationship with newspapers.⁴³ These Reports highlighted the experiences of readers in different counties, acknowledging the changing content of newspapers from region to region. The fact that newspapers had different morning and evening editions, as well as regional printing, affects how a reader would interact with a newspaper – further complicating the idea of a homogenous and generalised UK newspaper reader. These sources suggested that the meaning of the word 'reader' should be broadened, not just to include demographic information on the readers themselves, but how they interact and used a newspaper on a daily basis.

This thesis has revealed the complexity of dealing with newspapers as a source, and the need for greater care and attention when analysing qualitative and quantitative data from newspapers. In order to understand the *Daily Express*'s content in wartime, and its representation of family, it is important to use as wide a range of sources as possible in order to understand and contextualise the data gathered from the *Express*.

⁴³ (eds.) Paul Addison and Jeremy A. Crang, *Listening to Britain: Home Intelligence Reports from Britain's Finest Hour – May to September 1940*, (London: The Bodley Head 2010).

Chapter Four:

The Daily Express 1900-c.1939: The Evolution of a ‘Family Newspaper’

This chapter focuses on the *Daily Express*'s development as a newspaper from 1900-1939. It discusses how the newspaper manifested itself as a family newspaper prior to the start of war in 1939. Section one will discuss the historiography of the *Express* and the term ‘family newspaper’. Section two outlines the newspaper’s origins, how it was constructed, its production, and its staff during the 1920s and 1930s. It will also analyse how far the newspaper defined itself as a family newspaper during the first half of the twentieth-century. Section three outlines *Daily Express* content during the 1930s and the extent to which this content meant that it can be understood as a family newspaper. It will also discuss the readership of the *Express* during this period.

Section 1: What is a ‘Family Newspaper’?

The term ‘family newspaper’ has been used by some historians to describe the content of particular newspapers and the readership its content was aimed at – the family.¹ Adrian Bingham, for instance, has pointed out that the *Daily Express* would not include particular content in its newspaper, particularly of a sexual and gratuitous nature, as it regarded itself as a ‘family newspaper’.² This general term therefore provides a framework within which it is possible to interpret how the *Daily Express* was structured as a newspaper, what content was deemed suitable for family viewing, what content was not included and how the newspaper was consequently constructed. Bingham used this term to explore the *Express*'s attitude towards sex and gender in twentieth-century society. There is a need however, for an

¹ Paul Thomas Murphy has described the Northern Star as a “Full Featured Family Newspaper”. See also Paul Thomas Murphy, *Studies in Victorian Life and Literature*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994) p. 29.

² Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p. 53.

investigation of the meaning of the term ‘family newspaper’. Was the *Express* a family newspaper because it adhered to a particular set of ‘family values’ or because it simply provided content for all the family?

The term ‘family newspaper’ was used by some newspapers during the first half of the twentieth-century to describe their content to advertisers. For example, *Mitchell’s Newspaper Press Directory* for 1939 described the *Daily Mirror* as “essentially a family newspaper with recognised feminine influence”.³ It also described the *Sunday Express’s* content as a “clean family newspaper which contains news of interest to all members of the household”.⁴ The Directory had not always described the *Mirror* as a family newspaper however. For example, the 1918 and 1925 Directories described the *Mirror* as “essentially a home paper”, meaning it was read in a domestic context.⁵ The term ‘family newspaper’ therefore existed during the inter-war period as a way of succinctly describing a newspaper’s target readership to advertisers and other editors, allowing them to create appropriate content for a particular newspaper. While the precise term ‘family newspaper’ was only used to describe the content of particular newspapers, the home and family were clearly key organising concepts for newspapers during this period. As we can see from Appendix C Figure 1, the way that newspapers advertised themselves during the first half of the twentieth-century often focused on the idea of the household and the family.⁶ For example, in 1939 the *News Chronicle* defined its national popularity by noting the newspaper was “read in over 11% of all the *homes* in Britain”.⁷ The *Daily Herald* also advertised its national impact by noting “over 2,000,000 families plan their shopping with the help of the *Daily Herald*”.⁸ This way of describing the newspaper’s readership indicates the importance of the idea of the

³ *The Newspaper Press Directory 94th Annual Issue*, (C. Mitchell and Co. Ltd, 1939) p. 69.

⁴ *The Newspaper Press Directory* 1939, p. 71.

⁵ *The Newspaper Press Directory 80th Annual Issue*, (C. Mitchell and Co. Ltd., 1925) p. 81.

⁶ See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 1, p. 34.

⁷ *Newspaper Press Directory* 1939, p. 317.

⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory* 1939, p. 314.

family in contextualising how advertisers, readers and newspaper proprietor's viewed a newspaper and the content it included in its pages.

As will be discussed later in the thesis [See Chapter 7] different newspapers interpreted the idea of family and its influence on newspaper content in different ways. Some contemporaries, such as Q.D. Leavis, commented disparagingly that during the 1920s and 1930s, the national press was not suitable for family reading as it concentrated on the “glorification of food, drink, clothes and material comforts”. St John Ervine complained in 1933, that newspapers such as the *Express* concentrated too much on “articles from, and about women and sex, without any appearance of embarrassment, editors will print powerful articles by young ladies not long enlarged from school”.⁹ Some historians, such as Deirdre Beddoe, have argued that despite the variety of newspaper content aimed at different genders, content still encouraged readers to identify with traditional gender roles, the content of the newspapers was therefore not very different in tone to newspapers prior to the First World War.¹⁰ Adrian Bingham has argued that this point has been exaggerated. However, it does not give readers credit for individual thought and the capacity to reject, if they wished, the views put forward in the papers. Had this been true, newspapers would have been “monolithic and propagandist publications” which would have been “unappealing and unpopular”.¹¹

The term ‘family newspaper’ was therefore used to describe a newspaper which contained a variety of content for all members of the family. A newspaper therefore did not necessarily have to be formally defined, by the company that produced it, as a ‘family newspaper’ to be seen as a family friendly newspaper. This image of the family, as a target

⁹ Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965) p. 178; St John Ervine, *The Future of the Press*, (London: World's Press News, 1933), p. 15

¹⁰ Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women between the Wars, 1918-1939*, (London: Pandora, 1989) p. 9.

¹¹ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, pp. 245-247.

readership, influenced the content that was included in popular newspapers during the inter-war period. The press used the idea of families and households as a way of contextualising its content. The content that was included in different newspapers demonstrated, however, that there were subtle differences in how different newspapers saw the family during the inter-war and wartime period.

Section 2: History of the *Daily Express*

[i] Creation and Development:

The *Daily Express* was launched on 24th April 1900 by Arthur Pearson.¹² It was originally eight pages long, cost a half-penny and was a broadsheet.¹³ Pearson stated that his newspaper would be neither “An organ of a political party nor the instrument of any social clique. Its editorial policy will be that of an honest cabinet minister”.¹⁴

Pearson, and later Beaverbrook, wanted the *Daily Express* to be a reputable and trustworthy source of daily political and social news, while at the same time appealing to a broad section of the British public. The *Express* was initially created to compete in the national newspaper market with the “electrifying” *Daily Mail*.¹⁵ Launched in 1896 as a national daily broadsheet, the *Daily Mail* was one of a wave of newspapers practising ‘New Journalism’. This was characterised by a series of innovations in typography, layout, content and the commercialisation of newspapers in the nineteenth-century, which as Mathew Arnold

¹² R.Allen, *Voice of Britain: The Inside Story of the Daily Express*, (Cambridge: P. Stephens, 1983) p. 11, pp. 15-16.

¹³ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, pp.15-16. Also see Political and Economic Planning, *Report on the British Press*, (April 1938) p. 116.

¹⁴ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 15.

¹⁵ Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie, *Beaverbrook: A Life*, (London: Hutchinson, 1992), p. 102.

argued in his work “Up to Easter”, gave ‘New Journalism’ “novelty, variety, sensation: it’s one great fault is that it is feather-brained”.¹⁶

Richard Allen has argued, however, that from the start, the *Daily Express* occupied the middle ground in Fleet Street, it didn’t have the reputation of a political heavyweight, such as *The Times* or *Daily Telegraph*, nor was it a part of the sensationalist press. Its early reputation for sentiment and flag waving did little to change Allen’s opinion that the newspaper was initially “sober and innocuous, nothing that set the world alight”.¹⁷ The newspaper’s first editions contained columns of newsprint, small headlines and very few images. It is clear therefore, that initially the *Daily Express* was not conceived as a ‘family newspaper’. Its content focused primarily on politics rather than on feature articles, photography, cartoons and serialised fiction.

To improve the newspaper’s reputation, style, presentation and circulation, Pearson poached seasoned journalists, such as Ralph Blumenfeld, News Editor of the *Daily Mail*, to work for the *Express*. Arriving in 1902, Blumenfeld took over as editor and began to revolutionise the newspaper’s appearance by encouraging Pearson to include news on the front page, rather than advertising, strictly an American newspaper practise during this period.¹⁸ Blumenfeld was instrumental in developing the *Express* into a newspaper which appealed to all members of the household, helping it seek out new markets and larger circulations. In particular, he wanted to include content more suitable for the *Express*’s female readers, arguing that women “number at least half, if not more, of the readers of a

¹⁶ Peter Blake, *George Augustus Sala and the Nineteenth Century Periodical Press: The Personal Style of a Public Writer*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), p. 10. Matthew Arnold’s description of ‘New Journalism’ was aimed at the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1887, but then was later applied to newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* in the twentieth century. See Mathew Arnold, ‘Up to Easter’, in *The Nineteenth Century No. CXXXIII*. (May 1887) pp. 629–643.

¹⁷ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, pp. 20-25.

national daily newspaper”.¹⁹ Lord Beaverbrook noted in 1963 that Blumenfeld had “laid the foundations of the whole structure and the entire character of the *Express* – he saved it from extinction”.²⁰

Nonetheless, despite its growing popularity, the *Express* struggled financially throughout Pearson’s tenure. From 1900-1908, the majority of *Express* shares were controlled by Pearson. Due to his failing health, however, by 1908, the newspaper had become a public company, making its stock more widely available on the stock exchange. Blumenfeld was made General Manager of the newspaper, as well as editor, and a large share of the company was sold to George Lawson Johnston, the owner of Bovril.²¹ By 1910, Max Aitken, later, Lord Beaverbrook, became interested in purchasing the newspaper.²² Although he had invested in newspapers and magazines in his native Canada, Beaverbrook’s offer to Blumenfeld of £25,000 to support the *Express* in 1911 was the start of over 50 years of involvement with the newspaper and the British press.²³

Anne Chisholm and Michael Davie have argued that Beaverbrook’s financial intervention in 1910 was primarily politically motivated. Party political influence in newspapers was a key feature of Edwardian party politics, with the Conservative Party partially financing several newspapers and the Liberals financing the *Westminster Gazette*.²⁴ Despite Pearson’s desire that the *Express* should have no allegiance to a particular party, its content and opinions about Empire were strongly influenced by conservative values and Conservative politicians. As Conservative politicians such as Bonar Law were unable to

¹⁹ R.D. Blumenfeld, *The Press in My Time*, (London: Rich and Cowan, 1933), p. 94.

²⁰ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK G/12/10, Letter and Newspaper Clipping, *Sunday Express*, 10th November 1963. Also see Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, p. 100.

²¹ Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, p. 100.

²² Max Aitken was awarded the title of Lord Beaverbrook in 1911.

²³ Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, p. 84. Beaverbrook had previously invested in newspapers and magazines in Canada, such as *Chatham World and Canadian Century*. See Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, p. 99.

²⁴ Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, p. 105. Also see Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press: 20th Century*, p. 15.

finance the newspaper directly, Beaverbrook's investment retained a Conservative party influence over the newspaper, albeit indirectly. Beaverbrook bought the *Daily Express* outright on 2nd December 1916, by purchasing controlling shares in the newspaper for £17,500.²⁵ By 1918 he had taken personal responsibility for the everyday running of the *Express*, at the cost of over £300,000 per year.²⁶ Beaverbrook oversaw the organisation of the *Daily Express* until his death in 1964.²⁷ In 1920, Lord Beaverbrook affirmed his belief that the *Daily Express* was a reputable newspaper, and that the newspaper

May not always attain [Pearson's] aim, for no body of men, being fallible out of human nature can always reach the ideal. But the effort is sincere. Quietness and confidence are the real signs and sources of strength. It will be independent, in the sense that it will pay no attention to any political caucus.²⁸

Simultaneously, Beaverbrook revealed a characteristic, for which the newspaper would become famous in Fleet Street and with its readers, its outspoken obstinacy and belief in voicing its own opinions, "sticking to its policy in good or bad weather".²⁹

[ii] Daily Express: Construction, Circulation and Profits

A.J.P Taylor has argued that Beaverbrook had "ultimate control" over content of his newspaper. He held a controlling share of the *Express's* 25,000 shares and used his newspapers to further his own beliefs, regularly checking in with editors on the day's stories,

²⁵ Tom Driberg, *Beaverbrook: A Study in Power and Frustration*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956), p. 140.

²⁶ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 34.

²⁷ Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook*, p. 135.

²⁸ Beaverbrook Archive, House of Lords, BBK G/12/9, 'Lord Beaverbrook on the *Daily Express*: What Makes a Great Newspaper', ND, pp. 2-4.

²⁹ BBK G/12/9, 'Lord Beaverbrook on the *Daily Express*, pp. 2-4.

editorial lines and commenting on particular articles.³⁰ The construction of the *Daily Express*'s content was not, however, the responsibility of one man. The newspaper was physically constructed via a complex network of departments which included journalists, editors, sub editors, circulation managers, financial auditors, photographers and printers.

In 1963 Arthur Christiansen, editor of the *Express* from 1933-1957, described how work on producing an everyday issue of the *Express* in London had often begun every day at 12 noon, when a conference of departmental heads met in the editor's office. Each department took part in "lively discussion" about the day's headlines and stories, making suggestions about content and how to improve on yesterday's edition.³¹ Another conference often took place in the afternoon to discuss the next day's edition in more detail. This involved finalising the exact number of articles, which photographs would accompany them, and editing the style of particular articles to fit the tone of that particular newspaper.³² Once articles had been chosen, copies would arrive in the compositor's room by pneumatic tube from the sub-editors. The articles were cut up and distributed amongst the compositors and then set into type. Night editors then oversaw the construction and printing of the edition, using proofs of the desired style and appearance of the page from the afternoon editor's meeting. Printing began anywhere between 6.30pm and 11pm, and continued until between 3 and 4am.³³

From 1900-1926, the *Daily Express* was produced from its London offices on St Bride's and Fleet Street and distributed nationally by specially organised trains and trucks. In 1927 and 1928 however, offices on Great Ancoats Street, Manchester, and Albion Street,

³⁰ Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p376. See also, Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 48, p. 117.

³¹ Christiansen, *Headlines*, pp. 113-114.

³² Christiansen, *Headlines*, pp. 114-120.

³³ St Bride's Library, National Press Association, File Box 3, 23rd November 1938, NPA Council Agreements.

Glasgow, were opened to help with the increased circulation of the newspaper.³⁴ In 1938, the PEP Report on the British press noted that much of the British newsprint production industry in the 1920s and 1930s was located primarily in North Kent and Merseyside, in order to be near its principal markets of London and Manchester.³⁵ *Express* newspapers however, had three mills in East Anglia and Essex and others located in towns such as Middleton, Delamere, Kilbarchan and Airdrie.³⁶ Beaverbrook continued to purchase new buildings across the UK for stock and printing throughout the 1930s as the *Express*'s profitability continued to grow.³⁷

Along with its profits and circulation, the size of the newspaper also began to expand during the 1930s. By October 1937, the *Daily Express*'s London edition was a daily average of 23.3 pages long.³⁸ The *Express* distributed Welsh and Irish editions of the newspaper from its London and Manchester offices, which were the first to be printed and shipped each day.³⁹ These editions of the *Express* were constructed slightly differently however from the London editions, and contained news pages and stories relevant to the local area. Richard Allen has argued that different editions of the *Express* became separate entities of the British press, especially tailored for local tastes. As a result of this capacity to produce Welsh, Northern and Scottish editions, circulation of the *Express* began to rise even further during the 1930s.⁴⁰

³⁴ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/28, Letter from L.A. Plummer to Lord Beaverbrook, 21st January 1944.

³⁵ PEP 1938, p. 5.

³⁶ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/28, Memos from L.N. Stirrett to L.A. Plummer 19th January, 25th January, 31st January, 1944.

³⁷ The fear of bombing in wartime also encouraged *Express* editors to distribute stocks of paper in numerous mills and factories. Wider distribution meant the loss of large amounts of stock through air raids was less likely. Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/28, Memo 'Details of Property Purchased', 2nd February 1944. See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 2, p. 34.

³⁸ PEP 1938, p. 130.

³⁹ PEP 1938, p. 130.

⁴⁰ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 45. Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/28, 'Memo: 20th December 1933', pp. 4-8.

[iii] Gathering the News.

The *Express* relied on a number of channels for information and news material. Organisations such as the Newspaper Proprietor's Association (NPA) and the Newspaper Society (NS) were the main "organs of co-operation in the newspaper industry", allowing contact between different newspapers and their executives, and cooperation over hours, wages and working conditions for their employees.⁴¹ The most important organisations were the news agencies such as the Press Association [PA], who provided newspapers such as the *Express* with access to provincial news content. Others, such as Reuters, The Exchange Telegraph Company and Central News, provided newspapers with international news content.⁴² The national dailies and the provincial press paid a yearly sum to these agencies for access to their services. For example, in 1936, the seven London dailies, including the *Daily Express*, paid £475 each a year to the PA for news and information. As part of this contract, the PA agreed to regular meetings with the NPA to discuss the distribution of news and to foster good relations between the two organisations.⁴³ Information from these sources arrived in the London offices, via printers, telephone and telegraph connections.⁴⁴

The *Express* also relied on a relationship with government ministries to access political content for the newspaper. The first Downing Street press officer, George Steward, was appointed in 1931 in order to channel information from the Prime Minister Ramsey McDonald to Parliamentary journalists, known collectively as 'The Lobby'.⁴⁵ By the mid-1930s government ministries, such as the Air Ministry, the Ministry of Health, the Colonial

⁴¹ PEP 1938, p. 108.

⁴² LMA Archive, *Press Association 1: Minutes of Committee of Management Feb 1936-May 1939*, 'Minutes: 8th December 1936. Existing contract between PA and Telegraph Association, 1906, 1922'; PEP 1938, pp. 109-110. Donald Read, *The Power of News: The History of Reuters*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) p. 45.

⁴³ St Bride's Library, NPA File Box 4, 'Minutes: 6th October 1936'.

⁴⁴ PEP 1938, p. 162.

⁴⁵ Michael Cockerall, Peter Hennessy and David Walker, *Sources Close to the Prime Minister: Inside the Hidden World of the News Manipulators*, (London: Macmillan London Ltd, 1985) p. 37.

Office, the Post Office and the Home Office had assigned press officers to the Lobby.⁴⁶ This cultivated a more formal relationship between the press and government, allowing journalists access to the “government information machine” and the most up-to-date political content for readers.⁴⁷

As PEP argued in 1938, the government had a “certain duty to pursue a forward public relations policy” as journalists would otherwise find it difficult to obtain vital information for the public.⁴⁸ It also noted, however, that while departments were willing to give information to the press, they were distrustful of “irresponsible or unqualified reporters who came looking for information”, often assuming they were “up to no good”.⁴⁹ James Margach, who was a Lobby correspondent, has argued that during the 1930s, the relationship between government and press was often contentious and argumentative, primarily because journalists insisted on their “independence and the freedom of the press”.⁵⁰

[iv] Daily Express Staff

Individual journalists were key to shaping the content of the *Daily Express* during the inter-war years. A wave of new journalistic talent began to work for the newspaper during this period, influencing both its voice and appearance. For example, in 1924 Arthur B. Baxter joined the *Express* and began to take on much of Blumenfeld’s role as editor. This marked Blumenfeld’s transition from the seat of editorial power to the position of ‘editor-in-chief’, a primarily advisory, yet powerless, role.⁵¹ Instead, men such as Beverly Baxter and E.J.

⁴⁶ Post Office Archive, Box 24-61, ‘List of Registered Newspapers’, 25th February 1937; (eds.) Cockerall et al, *Sources Close to the Prime Minister*, p. 37.

⁴⁷ (eds.) Cockerall et al, *Sources Close to the Prime Minister*, p37.

⁴⁸ PEP, 1938, p. 196. (eds.) Cockerall et al, *Sources Close to the Prime Minister*, p. 38.

⁴⁹ PEP, 1938, p. 200.

⁵⁰ Margach, *The Abuse of Power*, p. 21.

⁵¹ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 34.

Robertson, both of whom became well known journalists and lead writers, began to adapt their language and vocabulary in articles, cultivating a more personal and chatty style for the readers. This helped change the newspaper from a “stuffy and tedious journal”, into an exciting and popular newspaper.⁵²

Economic pressures in the 1920s encouraged newspapers to seek ever larger circulations, because “for the press barons, profits mattered more than politics”.⁵³ Beaverbrook took the view that the *Express’s* content should not *appear* to be affiliated with any one political party. He hired journalists with a range of political views, going so far as to argue in 1939 that the “freedom of individual writers has always been sustained at the *Express*”.⁵⁴ Marianne Hicks has argued that despite the *Express’s* firm conservative stance on particular issues, its editorial stance was quite flexible, with editorial lines often constructed on the day in consultation with particular correspondents.⁵⁵ The people who worked for the *Express* therefore had an important influence on the newspaper’s development during the 1920s and 1930s.

A key figure in the development of the *Daily Express* in this period was Arthur Christiansen, who held the position of editor-in-chief for 24 years from 1933-1957. Originally at the *Sunday Express*, Christiansen moved to the *Daily Express* in 1930, working first for the Manchester edition and finally moving to the London offices as editor in 1933.⁵⁶ His arrival led to a considerable number of new appointments of journalists, many of whom became well-known names at the *Express*, and some of which came as a result of “poaching”

⁵² Allen *Voice of Britain*, p. 34.

⁵³ Curran, ‘The Era of the Press Baron’, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁴ Beaverbrook Archives, House of Lords, BBK G/12/38 ‘The Policy and the Purpose of the *Daily Express*’, Pamphlet January 1934, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Marianne Hicks, ‘NO WAR THIS YEAR’: Selkirk Panton and the Editorial Policy of the *Daily Express* 1938-1939’, pp.167-183, in *Media History*, Volume 14, Issue 2, (2008), p. 170.

⁵⁶ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 45. Christiansen, *Headlines*, pp.74-78.

them from other publications”.⁵⁷ For example in 1933 alone, Charles Sutton of the *Daily Mail* was installed as Foreign Editor, J.B. Wilson from the Manchester office of the *Express* became News Editor, C.V.R. Thompson began a 20 year career as New York Correspondent and Guy Eden from the *News Chronicle* became a political correspondent, alongside a “clutch of young reporters from the Press Association”, who were brought in for their short-hand skills.⁵⁸

Beaverbrook noted in 1943 that Christiansen’s arrival at the newspaper had brought a “new concept of news to journalism”, printing not only the “momentous news, but also the ‘little bits’ that fascinated ordinary people as much as the big news enthralled them”.⁵⁹ Not only did Christiansen rejuvenate the content of the newspaper, he also revitalized the appearance and style of the *Express* by “using type with a new dramatic effect which changed completely the old make up idea of both news pages and feature pages. He raised the newspaper to a pitch of liveliness which was the despair of his competitors”.⁶⁰

[v] The Daily Express: A Family Newspaper?

In *Mitchell’s Newspaper Directory* for 1918, the *Daily Express*’s content was described as “all the latest telegraph pages of the day and sporting, finance and ladies’ pages are special features”, a self-description which reappeared in the 1925 and 1939 Directories.⁶¹ It was not specifically defined as a family newspaper, unlike the *Sunday Express*. The *Sunday Express*, was established in 1918, and was described in both 1925 and 1939 as ‘essentially a clean family newspaper’. This difference may have been because of the established tradition of

⁵⁷ Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 107.

⁵⁸ Christiansen, *Headlines*, pp. 107-108.

⁵⁹ Beaverbrook Files, House of Lords, BBK G/12/10 Beaverbrook Memo to Christiansen, 3rd February 1943.

⁶⁰ BBK G/12/10 Beaverbrook Memo to Christensen, 3rd February 1943.

⁶¹ *The Newspaper Press Directory, 73rd Annual Issue*, (C. Mitchell and Co. Ltd, 1918) p79. Also see, *The Newspaper Press Directory*, 1925, p. 81.

mass circulation Sunday papers, purchased on the one day of the week when all the family were likely to be at home and have time for reading.⁶²

Naturally, Mitchell's definition of the *Express* did not mean that ideas of the family and home were not important to the *Daily Express* and the way it framed its content. The *Express* was keen to expand its market during the inter-war period, making its content more appealing to a wider range of readers, thereby entering more family homes. After the First World War, the newspaper became more visually exciting, including imagery in advertising, cartoon strips and picture pages. It not only contained news articles and daily comment pieces, but also serialised features. Some were designed to be educational,⁶³ others were designed to entertain with serialised fiction or short stories.⁶⁴ John Tulloch has argued that a key aspect of the history and development of newspapers in Britain during the interwar period was the process of "magazineization", in which publishers increasingly catered to a range of different audiences, either by creating separate sections within a publication or by creating a new associated publication.⁶⁵ For example, as with many popular newspapers during this period, the *Express* began to recognise the importance of the female reader, helping to expand its national appeal.⁶⁶ From 1920 onwards, the newspaper began to include regularly a women's feature page containing a variety of articles and regular features discussing, fashion, horoscopes, help for housewives and mothers, also articles on women's changing social and political position.⁶⁷

⁶² *Newspaper Press Directory*, 1925, p. 83. *Newspaper Press Directory* 1939, p. 71.

⁶³ Anon, 'Smith into Superman', *Daily Express*, 1st December 1936, p. 8.

⁶⁴ Cornell Woolrich, 'The Night Reveals', 27th May 1936, p. 4. Rose Marie Hodgson, 'What Happened to Valerie?' 1st March 1939, p. 4. Val Gielgud, 'Misadventures', 11th November 1937, p. 8.

⁶⁵ John Tulloch, 'The Eternal Recurrence of New Journalism', in (eds) C.Sparks and J.Tulloch, *Tabloid Tales: Global debates over media standards* (New York, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000) pp.131 -146.

⁶⁶ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 86.

⁶⁷ See Bingham, 'Content Analysis of Women's Pages' in *Gender, Modernity*, pp.249-251. Also see Anon, 'New Habits', *Daily Express*, 3rd May 1923, p. 6. Anon, 'Privilege', *Daily Express*, 30th May 1928, p. 1, p. 23. H.V. Morten, *Daily Express*, 'Voting Rights', 31st May 1929, p. 9.

The desire for the *Express* to expand its circulation and readership, and thereby became a vital part of the everyday lives of increasingly more families, continued into the 1930s. According to Arthur Christiansen, the guiding principal of the newspaper during his tenure as editor was whether the *Express* appealed to ordinary people and families “in the back streets of Derby or on the Rhyl Promenade”.⁶⁸ The *Express* was therefore a family newspaper because it wanted to provide content for every member of the family and to reach as many households as possible. Beaverbrook stated in 1933 that,

For the *Daily Express*, we are seeking to enter every home and to be read by every household in the United Kingdom. The *Daily Express* aspires to be the first national newspaper serving the entire British public.⁶⁹

Lord Beaverbrook’s idea of the family and household also clearly influenced his attitude to newspaper content. In the late 1930s he argued that the *Daily Express* was,

A clean paper. The policy of a newspaper depends not only on what it prints, but on what it does not print. Its most vital decision may be on something that does not appear. A secret of national importance; a doubtful piece of news; a scandalous or improper piece of evidence from the courts.⁷⁰

To an extent, therefore, the *Express*’s content was framed by the proprietor’s opinion about the moral appropriateness of content for the household; content was not intended to shock or offend its readers. This did not mean that the *Express* did not include controversial or

⁶⁸ Christiansen, *Headlines*, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁹ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK G/12/38 ‘Why I Want another 600,000 Readers for the *Daily Express*’, November 1933 p. 1.

⁷⁰ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK G/12/9, ‘Lord Beaverbrook on the *Daily Express*: What Makes a Great Newspaper’, pp. 1-2.

sensationalist stories in its inter-war content, stories that often highlighted the threats posed to the family.⁷¹ Content such as coverage of murder trials, divorce cases and legal action, was included, as it “gripped the public imagination” and therefore helped to sell more copies.⁷²

Ultimately, the *Express* was a ‘family newspaper’ because it not only appealed to each member of the family unit, but also saw itself as a crucial member of the household. Its content was visually exciting, with the use of large headlines and pictures, yet it attempted to be sober and educational at the same time. By the end of the 1930s, the *Express* had become a “domestic parent figure” to its readers, allowing them to understand and engage with the newspaper’s ideas and opinions.⁷³ The *Express* ultimately wanted readers to “turn to us automatically with their confidences, their grievances, their triumphs, or the wrongs that are done to them which they want to get put right”.⁷⁴

The *Express*’s role was not solely providing everyday news and entertainment for the family however. The newspaper was also a powerful mouthpiece for the political and personal beliefs of its proprietor, Lord Beaverbrook. James Curran has argued that historians often portrayed the press barons of the inter-war and post-war period as “journalist-politicians”.⁷⁵ Men such as Beaverbrook and Rothermere built “vast empires” and their newspapers became mere “engines of propaganda, manipulated in order to further their political ambitions”.⁷⁶ As a result, journalists were often dictated to in terms of newspaper

⁷¹ Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 115.

⁷² Anon, ‘Edith Thompson’, *Daily Express*, 7th December 1922, p. 1. Also see Lucy Bland. *Modern Women on Trial: Sexual Transgression in the Age of the Flapper*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) p. 69.

⁷³ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 44.

⁷⁴ Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 162.

⁷⁵ Curran, ‘The Era of the Press Barons’, pp. 46-64, p. 52.

⁷⁶ Curran, ‘The Era of the Press Barons’, p. 47.

and editorial policy.⁷⁷ Indeed, one of the most common criticisms levelled at Christiansen was that, as editor of the *Express*, he acted as “Beaver’s lackey in political matters”.⁷⁸

The *Daily Express*’s coverage of key political events was, to a great extent, influenced by Beaverbrook’s political affiliations and his desire to cultivate political power. For example, the newspaper’s coverage of the 1926 General Strike⁷⁹ and the 1930 Campaign for Empire Free Trade⁸⁰ reflected Beaverbrook’s political attachment to Conservative policies, free trade and the Empire. The newspaper’s defence of Empire Free Trade and the British Empire was personified by the Red Crusader image, placed on the front cover of every edition of the newspaper from February 1930 onwards.⁸¹ It also inserted pamphlets into particular editions of the newspaper during the 1930s, outlining its support for the Empire as the underlying policy of the newspaper.⁸² The journalist Tom Driberg later argued that newspapers were Beaverbrook’s “weapon in the battle for power” and that by purchasing the *Express*,

⁷⁷ Marianne Hicks, ‘NO WAR THIS YEAR’, p. 168.

⁷⁸ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p66. Also see Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 161.

⁷⁹ The *Sunday Express* likened the 1926 General Strike to “mob rule”, encouraging its readers to exercise their “political genius” and help restore sanity to the UK. Beaverbrook’s belief that the freedom of the press was being challenged by the Strike led him to second several *Express* workers to other newspapers, including the *British Gazette* (Churchill’s official News Sheet). *Express* managers were happy to defend Beaverbrook’s position, stating that it was a “labour of love” to assist in keeping the *Daily Express* running during the Strike. See Anon, ‘Today’, in *Sunday Express*, 8th May 1926, p. 1. Also see Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 43. Tom Driberg, *Beaverbrook: A Study*, pp.196-197. See letters to Beaverbrook in the aftermath of the Strike: BBK H/45, Beaverbrook Files, House of Lords, including Letter from Max A. Wright to Lord Beaverbrook, 20th May 1926, Sidney Strube to Lord Beaverbrook, 24th May 1926 and L.M. McBride to Lord Beaverbrook, 20th May 1926.

⁸⁰ The Empire Crusade was a political movement created by Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere in July 1929, pressing for the British Empire to become an independent trade bloc. Candidates stood during the Paddington South and Westminster St George’s by-elections during 1930 and 1931, directly challenging Labour and Conservative government candidates. By running a campaign which presented candidates for by-elections to the public, Beaverbrook was deliberately challenging the party political system. Chisholm and Davie have argued, however, that as much as Beaverbrook’s Crusade was about “economic doctrines and imperial ideology”, it was also one man’s “test of the power of the popular press”. See Chisholm and Davie, *Beaverbrook: A Life*, p. 275.

⁸¹ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 55.

⁸² Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK G/12/38. ‘Why I want another 600,000 readers for the *Daily Express*’ (1933) ‘The Policy of the *Daily Express* can be Summed up Thus’ (January 1934), ‘The Policy and Purpose of the *Daily Express*’ (1934).

He hoped that newspaper ownership would win him political power by enabling him to impose his views on political leaders, and he was prepared to lose a good deal of money in the process: in the event, he amassed an even greater fortune than before, but gained no real power at all.⁸³

James Curran has stated, however, that although Beaverbrook used the *Express's* content as a mouthpiece for his political views, to say it was designed simply for this purpose is too simplistic.⁸⁴ By solely emphasising the influence of Beaverbrook's politics on the newspaper, the subtlety and complexity of the *Express's* content is lost. The *Express's* principal belief was in the newspaper's role as a public institution, serving the public, as Beaverbrook asserted in 1934, with "honest and sound policies".⁸⁵ Beaverbrook viewed it as an "independent newspaper – pursuing the course of patriotism, sanity and reason", a crucial part of the fourth estate which held the government to account.⁸⁶ The *Express* included content designed to further Beaverbrook's political ideas, as well as articles and features designed to appeal to a wide range of the British public. Ultimately, however, the *Express* was very much Beaverbrook's paper in appearance, content and political outlook.

⁸³ Driberg, *Beaverbrook: A Study*, pp. 140-141.

⁸⁴ Curran, 'The Era of the Press Baron', pp.52-54.

⁸⁵ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK G/12/38 'Why I Want another 600,000 Readers for the *Daily Express*' (1934).

⁸⁶ Beaverbrook Archive, House of Lords, BBK G/12/9, 'Lord Beaverbrook on the *Daily Express*: What Makes a Great Newspaper', p. 4.

Section 3a: A ‘Family Newspaper’ and its Content

[i] How did the *Express* present Itself as a Family Newspaper?

This section will outline the content of the *Daily Express* during the 1930s and discuss the ways in which the paper can be understood as a family newspaper. It also analyses how the family was represented in the *Express*. The analysis is based on a selective content analysis of a week of *Daily Express* issues, from the 25th-30th October 1937, in order to provide an indicative sense of the content of the paper in the 1930s. This same week was used in the 1938 PEP report to analyse newspaper content and readership.⁸⁷

The 1930s was a turning point in the character of popular national newspapers, such as the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail* and *News Chronicle*. Rather than focusing primarily on political and general news content, these newspapers began to include content which would help, entertain or inform the reader. More feature articles were included, as well as sports, celebrity news, and gossip columns.⁸⁸ All these newspapers were ‘family newspapers’ to some extent, as they used the idea of the family household to tailor their content and thereby appeal to a wide range of the population.

The 1938 PEP review of the *Express* from the 25th-30th October 1937 showed that each edition contained on average 23 pages, and a mixture of general news, picture and written features, opinion columns, cartoon strips and classified and display advertising.⁸⁹ The *Express* also had specific pages for foreign news, gardening, women’s features and serialised fiction, depending on the day in question.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ PEP 1938, pp. 113-130.

⁸⁸ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 38.

⁸⁹ PEP 1938, p. 130.

⁹⁰ PEP 1938, p. 126.

Advertising was a key component of the *Daily Express*'s content. Over half the revenue of popular newspapers during this period was derived from advertisers and so it is unsurprising that commercial advertising was featured on every page of the *Express*.⁹¹ Approximately 40% of the week's space was given over to display advertising and 3% to classified adverts. Display advertisements were often placed around the edges of the page of the *Express*, filling anywhere between 20%-50% of the page. Full page advertisements also featured, however, on page three of the *Express*.⁹²

The front covers of the *Express* were a mixture of attention grabbing headlines, pictures, and advertisements, as well as a mixture of home and foreign news articles. As we can see from Appendix C Figure 4, the *Express*'s front cover stories on 25th October discussed a range of different topics.⁹³ Articles such as 'Japanese Shoot British Soldier', 'Belgium's Premier to Resign', 'Mystery Death: Doctor Assists Police', 'The Girl Who Has Beaten All the Men', and 'Liner Riddle Women Unable to Land', covered themes such as foreign military encounters, personal economics, European politics, crime and legal news and celebrity achievement.⁹⁴ On Friday 29th October, the front cover was equally as diverse in the topics it covered; light-hearted and entertaining articles, such as 'Florence Desmond Out of Royal Variety Show' and 'Baby Princess Enjoys October Sunshine', were placed next to more serious articles such as 'Last Talk to Doomed Battalion' and 'Nazi jail Jew for 10 Years'.⁹⁵ Large photographs were included on the front cover of each copy of the *Express*, in an attempt to grab the reader's attention and make the front cover more visually appealing.

⁹¹ PEP 1938, p. 188.

⁹² See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 3, p. 35

⁹³ See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 4, p. 45.

⁹⁴ Anon, 'Japanese Shoot British Soldier', *Daily Express* Correspondent, 'Belgium's premier to Resign', *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, 'Mystery Death: Doctor Assists Police', Jean Batten, 'The Girl Who has Beaten All the Men', *Daily Express* Correspondent, 'Liner Riddle Woman Unable to Land: Money Law Difficulty', *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 1.

⁹⁵ *Daily Express* Theatre Reporter, 'Florence Desmond Out of Royal Variety Show', Anon, 'Baby Princess Enjoys October Sunshine', R.H. Knickbocker *Daily Express* Special Correspondent, 'Last Talk to Doomed Battalion', Reuters, 'Nazis Jail Jew for 10 Years', *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 1.

Photographs appeared to take up 20% of space on the front cover of each edition, accompanying both serious and more light-hearted articles.⁹⁶

Over the course of the week reviewed, over 20% of the total content space was devoted to general news items. Roughly 14% of this was devoted to home news, and 8% was foreign news. General news items were scattered throughout each edition, appearing on pages which also contained feature articles and regular columns.⁹⁷ For example, on the 26th October 1937, several home news articles such as ‘Children Attend Funeral in Abbey’ and ‘Ex-Bookmaker Admits Being Warned Off’, were placed on the same page as the regular entertainment column ‘What’s On’, and William Hickey’s mixed feature article, discussing topics as diverse as racing at Newmarket, the Marylebone by-elections and the Post Office.⁹⁸

Another 20% of home news was devoted to financial and economic stories, with articles such as ‘TUC Discuss Dole Drive’, ‘Farmers Give 2,000 Women More Pay’, ‘Please Mr Morrison’ and ‘Egg Control Planned’, discussing ideas about wages, agriculture and labour disputes.⁹⁹ Another 20% was dedicated to crime and legal news, providing readers with stories about divorce,¹⁰⁰ murder¹⁰¹, and theft and physical violence.¹⁰² The language used in these legal and crime stories was not, however, sensationalist, often providing the

⁹⁶ See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 5 p.36. Space given to individual articles on specific pages was measured individually.

⁹⁷ *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘2,000 Londonderry Guests Jam Traffic’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 13. Anon ‘Poison Tablets Lost’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 13, *Daily Express* Correspondent, ‘Mrs. Self Sails with Mr. Lambton’s Peke’, *Daily Express*, 29th October 1936, p. 11.

⁹⁸ Anon, ‘Children Attend Funeral in Abbey’, Anon ‘Ex-Bookmaker Admits Being Warned Off’, Anon, ‘What’s On’, William Hickey, ‘These names Make News: Can’t Blame Me Tomorrow’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 6.

⁹⁹ Anon, ‘TUC Discuss Dole Drive’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 2. *Daily Express* Agricultural Reporter, ‘Farmers Give 2,000 Women More Pay’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 11. *Daily Express* Agricultural Reporter, ‘Please Mr Morrison’, *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 11. *Daily Express* Agricultural Reporter, ‘Egg Control Planned’, *Daily Express*, 28th October 1937, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Girl thought she was Married’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 13. Anon, ‘Bedroom Door Brought into Divorce Court’ *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 11.

¹⁰¹ Anon, ‘School Girl Acquitted of Murder Charge’, *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 11.

¹⁰² Anon, ‘Not there reply to theft charges’ *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 9. Anon, ‘Tried to Bluff Pools Firm’, *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 11. ‘2 Men Beaten Up in Cells by Prison Warders’, *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 11. Anon, ‘Kiss Against Will Charge’, *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 9. *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Yard Hunt for 4 Financiers’, *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 13.

reader with a discussion of court proceedings and information on the defendants, as opposed to details about the crime itself.

Christiansen's declaration that he didn't include too much 'politics' in the *Daily Express*, as he was 'too busy' creating a newspaper, is born out in this review of *Express* content.¹⁰³ Political or Parliamentary discussions only appeared intermittently in the *Express* throughout the week, taking up approximately 10% of total newspaper space.¹⁰⁴ Political news included in *Express* articles came primarily from abroad.¹⁰⁵ Foreign news articles were spread intermittently throughout different pages in the *Daily Express*, 40% of foreign news articles were however located on the 'foreign news' page, on page 2 of the *Express*.¹⁰⁶ As with home news, the *Express's* foreign news articles covered a variety of topics, although they did not focus completely on human interest stories such as the 25th October article 'Refugees saved after 4 days at Sea'.¹⁰⁷ Foreign news subjects in the *Express* focused primarily on more serious themes; articles such as 'Japan Conquers at Shanghai' and 'Maisy Will Not Budge' focused on topics such as military engagements, financial, and political news.¹⁰⁸

Home and foreign news were only one element of *Daily Express* content, however.

There was a variety of content available to the reader, both visual and written. For example,

¹⁰³ Christiansen, *Headlines*, pp.2-3.

¹⁰⁴ *Daily Express* Political Correspondent, 'Britain Starts A New Industry Making Carbide', *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵ *Daily Express* Correspondent, 'Belgium's premier to Resign', *Daily Express*, 1937, p. 1. *Daily Express* Correspondent, 'Pasha Must not Change His Will', *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 9. Anon, 'Premier with 11 Children Re-Elected', *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 11. *Daily Express* Correspondent, 'Van Zeeland Goes to fight Libels', *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 2. Anon, 'Mr Bingham (U.S. Ambassador) Says the Same', *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 5. *Daily Express* Diplomatic Correspondent, 'Spain: Powers Move On', *Daily Express*, 27th October 1937, p. 2. Grank Gervasi, 'Duce's Declaration: War in Europe is Not Near', *Daily Express*, 28th October 1937, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 6, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Anon, 'Refugees Saved After 4 Days at Sea', *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 2

¹⁰⁸ O.D. Gallagher *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, 'Japan Conquers at Shanghai', *Daily Express*, 27th October 1937, p. 2. *Daily Express* Diplomatic Correspondent, 'Maisy Will Not Budge', *Daily Express*, 30th October 1937, p. 2.

over 15% of the *Express*'s total content that week was devoted to pictures, from cartoons and photographs, to images in advertising.¹⁰⁹

There were a large number of pages, specifically designed for particular types of content. For example, each edition of the *Express* contained sports pages, a leader page containing cartoons, feature articles, letters and editorial opinion and a women's page.¹¹⁰ The leader page and women's page in particular were of great importance to the make-up of the *Express*, as content such as letters, crossword puzzles, feature articles on make-up, fashion, and housewifery, attempted to actively engage with newspaper readers.¹¹¹ For example, throughout the week in October 1937 under review, the women's page contained a series of articles about the housewife Mrs Becker and her daily routine. Features such as "Mrs Becker: She Runs her Home to a Plan", "Dress Making at Mrs Becker's" and "Mrs Becker Upsets the Apple Cart", gave out general advice to housewives about cleaning, cooking and child care.¹¹² This content recognised the economic power of the housewife and the importance of providing content for female readers. Adrian Bingham has argued that women's pages throughout the popular press gave female readers a voice, a place they could come to for advice, entertainment and discussion, creating a "Female network that allowed readers to supplement their own friendship group".¹¹³

Children's content was often included on women's pages in the sample, with cartoons such as *Rupert Bear* and the "Junior Column" appearing every day alongside the horoscope and fashion articles. The "Junior Column", written by the contributor 'Pat', discussed domestic, educational and entertainment topics that children might find engaging. For

¹⁰⁹ PEP 1938, p. 127.

¹¹⁰ For example see Volume II, Appendix C Figure 7, p. 37.

¹¹¹ R.D. Blumenfeld, *Press in My Time*, p. 94.

¹¹² Anon, 'Mrs Becker: She Runs her Home to a Plan', *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 14. Anon, 'Dress Making at Mrs Becker's', *Daily Express*, 27th October 1937, p. 14. Anon, 'Mrs Becker Upsets the Apple Cart', *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 14.

¹¹³ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 87.

example, the column on 26th October discussed a Sussex school's new archery tournament and asked children if they knew how to make fudge.¹¹⁴ Another column on 27th October discussed the latest toys being advertised on television, while another on 28th October described how children could design and make their own puppet show.¹¹⁵ Other items for children included the 'fiction page', which included short stories such as the "Monkey and the Birds of Gold" by Bruce Blunt.¹¹⁶ These pieces of content were designed to entertain and engage young children, alongside the content the paper provided for adults.

Content specifically aimed at men, such as the sports pages, gardening segments and financial news were also an important aspect of the *Express* sample.¹¹⁷ Approximately 1/3rd of the week's content was devoted to sports news, with an average of three pages per edition devoted to sports items.¹¹⁸ City News, the *Express*'s daily financial page, also received one page in each edition of the newspaper. This page was perceived to be aimed at men, as it discussed economic issues of the day and personal finances, a male dominated arena in society. The *Express* also included segments which addressed the role of men as fathers. "Parents Club", which discussed both men and women's role in the family home, appeared in the newspaper on the 28th and 29th October 1937, offering advice about child care.¹¹⁹ This segment offered readers the chance to engage directly with the newspaper and other readers, asking for and offering advice to other parents in British society. This demonstrated that the *Express* provided content for all members of the family, attempting to engage with its readership and thereby improve its content.

¹¹⁴ Pat, 'Daily Column For Children', *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 15.

¹¹⁵ Pat, 'Television Rifle is Latest Toy', *Daily Express*, 27th October 1937, p. 15,

¹¹⁶ Bruce Blunt, 'The Monkey and the Birds of Gold pt. 1 and 2', *Daily Express*, 26th October 1937, p. 10 and 27th October 1937, p. 18.

¹¹⁷ Anon, 'Alphabet for Apple Growers', *Daily Express*, 30th October 1937, p. 13. Anon, 'Diary of a Gardeners Boy', *Daily Express*, 30th October 1937, p. 13.

¹¹⁸ PEP 1938, p. 128.

¹¹⁹ Anon, 'This is How a Man Looks To', *Daily Express*, 28th October 1937, p. 15. Parents Club Doctor 'Readers Pass on a Few Ideas', *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 13.

The leader page also gave *Daily Express* readers a voice, a page where they could actively engage in a dialogue with the newspaper and its content through the publication of letters. Appendix C Figure 7 demonstrates the typical content of a *Daily Express* leader page from 1937.¹²⁰ 10% of the page was typically given to the opinion column on the left of the page and 20% to the daily political cartoon, which always appeared at the top of the page. Regular columns and features, such as Beachcomber's 'By The Way' took up 40% of the page, with the main feature article placed in the middle of the page. Readers' letters were placed at the foot of the page and typically took up at least 10% of space, depending on the number of letters included. Display advertising on the leader page was kept to a minimum and theatre listings and classified adverts were placed on the left hand side of the page. Content on this page was designed to educate the reader, discuss ideas, entertain and to air the opinions of readers whose letters were selected for publication.

The *Express* engaged with its readers using human interest content, designed to humanise news stories and feature articles. Like other popular newspapers of the period, the *Express* wanted to connect with its readers.¹²¹ Articles such as "Family of 9 Eat in 3 Shifts", "Mrs Baker Runs her Home to a Plan" and "She Gets Her Goat Today" presented the problems and achievements of ordinary people, using emotive language, which encouraged *Express* readers to engage and sympathise with the subject.¹²² For example, the front page news story on 25th October heralded the success of Jean Batten and her record breaking flight from Australia.¹²³ The article, purported to be written by Batten, opened with a personalised address to the reader: "Please let me sit here pretty close to you so that I can hear you ask me questions. And put me on a hard chair. My ears are still singing, and if I sit in that armchair I

¹²⁰ See Volume II, Appendix C, Figure 7, p. 37.

¹²¹ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, pp. 86-87.

¹²² *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, "Family of 9 Eat in 3 Shifts: Room Too Small", *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 11. Anon, 'Mrs Becker: She Runs her Home to a Plan', *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 14. Ulyss Rogers, 'He Gets His Goat Today', *Daily Express*, 29th October 1937, p. 5.

¹²³ See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 4, p. 35.

shall just go off to sleep”.¹²⁴ This main article was also accompanied by a more obvious human interest piece about Jean Batten’s private life: “Marriage? Not Yet says Jean!”¹²⁵

The *Daily Express*’s content was a mixture of items, designed to give readers news, entertainment, discussion and editorial opinion. It used pictures, large headlines and commercial advertising to make the newspaper visually exciting. With designated pages for different types of content, the inter-war *Express* appealed to a wide variety of readers in its drive to build and sustain a mass audience.

Section 3b: The *Daily Express* and Readership in the 1930s:

This section discusses the readership of the *Daily Express* during the 1930s by analysing pre-war readership surveys. As outlined in the methodology in Chapter Three, each survey concentrated on different aspects of newspaper readership and used different methodologies.¹²⁶ For example, the London Press Exchange Survey from 1934 noted *how* people read newspapers in the mid-1930s. The ISBA and IPA surveys from 1936 and 1939 focused on the demographics of newspaper readership, such as the sex, age and region of the readers. Direct comparison of the data from these surveys is therefore difficult. The surveys do reveal information however about *Daily Express* readership during this period and to what extent the newspaper’s content was read by members of families.

The idea of the family was a key organising concept in the acquisition and analysis of survey data. Reading a newspaper was seen as a normal element of family life. For example, the 1938 PEP report noted that in 1934, 100 UK households consumed on average 95

¹²⁴ Jean Batten, ‘The Girl Who has Beaten all the Men’, *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Anon, ‘Marriage? Not Yet says Jean!’ *Daily Express*, 25th October 1937, p. 1.

¹²⁶ See Chapter 3, p. 48-51.

morning and 57.5 evening newspapers a day.¹²⁷ As we can see from Appendix C Figure 8, the *Daily Express* was one of the most popular national newspapers during this period, with circulation rising steadily throughout the 1930s, increasing by over 800,000 copies in six years.¹²⁸

[i] Class:

Appendix C Table 9¹²⁹ shows a sample of the *Daily Express* readership's sex, age and class, taken from two pre-war readership surveys.¹³⁰ The ISBA [1935] and IPA [1939] surveys indicated the *Express* was read by a proportion of all classes in Britain. The ISBA survey showed, however, that by 1935, 64% of the *Express*'s national circulation was from lower middle class [C] households. Only 10.5% of readers were working class [D], 26.4% middle class [B], 16.8% upper middle class [A/B] and 12.3% upper class [A]. The 1939 IPA readership survey also showed the importance of the *Express*'s middle class readers, with 26.5% of the readership sample coming from that class. This did not mean however that the newspaper did not appeal to upper class readers. For example, the 1939 IPA survey sample

¹²⁷ PEP 1938, p. 230.

¹²⁸ PEP, p. 236.

¹²⁹ See Volume II, Appendix C Table 9, p. 38.

¹³⁰ These 3 surveys were the *A Survey of Reader Interest in the National Morning and London Evening Press (1934)* (Pub. London Press Exchange), *The Readership of Newspapers and Periodicals in Great Britain, (1935)* (Pub. ISBA: The Incorporated Society of British Advertisers Ltd.) and the *IPA Readership Survey (1939)*. The London Press Exchange Survey focused on how people read newspapers. In the survey, people were shown each page of a newspaper in turn on the day after it was published, and asked which of them they remembered having seen, partly read or completely read. See Report on the British Press, Political and Economic Planning, (April 1938), pp. 247-253. The ISBA survey concentrated on the demographics of *Daily Express* readership. The percentages in Volume II, Appendix C Table 8, p. 38 apply to the *Express*'s total UK circulation in 1935 of 1,711,452 copies. For example 10,738 copies are bought by readers from category A – a total of 0.63% of the national circulation. The percentages taken from the 1939 IPA survey are based on a sample of national newspaper readers. In total, 40,043 people were interviewed for the survey, and 8309 were *Express* readers. The percentages for class, sex and age group are therefore a percentage of those 8309 readers.

noted that 15% of *Telegraph* readers and over 21% of *The Times* readership purchased the *Daily Express* as a second newspaper.¹³¹

The 1938 PEP report also noted that the circulation of most popular newspapers was accounted for by the purchases of lower income groups; the domination of this class of readers over the *Express* was therefore not unusual during this period.¹³² The highest proportion of readers in the sample came from the middle class, at 26.5%. However, the proportion of upper class readers was only 3% lower, at 23.3%. This indicates that the *Daily Express* had content which appealed equally to different classes in Britain at this time.

[ii] Age and Sex:

The IPA survey showed that by 1939, a wide variety of age groups purchased and read the *Express*. 22.5% of the *Express*'s sample readers were from the 25-44 age range, showing that a large proportion of *Daily Express* readers were young to middle age adults. However, 20.8% of readers were between 45 and 65, demonstrating that the *Express* had a slightly higher proportion of older readers in the sample. The newspaper also had a higher percentage of male than female readers, by a margin of 4.5%.¹³³ The 1938 PEP report argued, however, that for many of the national morning and London evening newspaper, more men read newspaper readers than women.¹³⁴ While men predominated in the readership of the 'class' newspapers, such as the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, a higher percentage of women than men read pictorials and news magazines, such as *Picture Post* and *Sunday Pictorial*. The appeal of 'popular' newspapers, such as the *Daily Express*, lay in their ability to include content which appealed to newspaper readers of both sexes.

¹³¹ HATS Archive, 'Duplication of Readership Table' in *IPA Readership Survey* (1939), pp. 71-72.

¹³² PEP 1938, p. 270.

¹³³ See Volume II, Appendix D Table 9, p. 38.

¹³⁴ PEP 1938, p. 228.

[iii] Regions:

The *Daily Express* could truly be considered a ‘national newspaper’ during the 1930s as its circulation was distributed relatively evenly throughout different regions of the UK.¹³⁵ The highest proportion of *Express* readers in the 1935 ISBA survey was in East Anglia, with 24.7% of sample newspaper readers in East Anglia reading the *Express*. Other popular areas included London/South East, and Scotland, with 20.7% and 20.2% of sample newspaper readers in these areas buying the *Express* respectively. The newspaper was also read throughout other regions of the UK, with over 1/5th of households from the survey reading the *Express* in the North and South West, and the Midlands.

Larger numbers of *Express* copies were sold in Scotland however. This was because the *Express* was the only national newspaper to print Scottish versions in Scotland. The printing of regional editions of the *Express* increased its popularity throughout the UK, as it allowed readers to read about national and local issues simultaneously, without buying two different newspapers.¹³⁶ For example, South Wales had its own regional issue of the *Express*, with 17.9% of newspaper readers in the region’s sample buying the *Express* in 1935.¹³⁷ By 1939, this had risen to 24%, indicating its increasing popularity in the region throughout the latter half of the 1930s.

The popularity of the *Express* in London and the South East was not unusual for the period. The 1938 PEP report estimated that in Greater London, over 80% of the adult population saw a morning newspaper and about half saw an evening newspaper. The high consumption of national newspapers in the London and South East areas was due in part to the tendency of Londoners to consume more than one newspaper a day. The number of

¹³⁵ PEP 1938, p. 240.

¹³⁶ This did not stop people from buying two separate newspapers however.

¹³⁷ See Volume II, Appendix C Table 10, p. 38.

newspapers sold in this region was influenced by the fact that, according to PEP, 800,000 persons in the region lived outside family homes and so had to purchase their own newspaper rather than depend on reading a copy from another member of the household.¹³⁸

These readership surveys demonstrate that the family household was an organising concept in the collection and analysis of data on newspaper readership. It allowed newspapers, such as the *Daily Express*, to understand how many households read their newspaper, and who was reading its content. It allowed newspapers to understand the reach of their newspaper in different regions throughout the UK. The *Daily Express* clearly appealed to a large cross section of the British public during the 1930s, its readership was spread relatively evenly amongst all age groups, classes and regions. The highest percentages of readers were, however, from middle and lower middle class income groups, and mainly living in Scotland, London, and the East and South East of England. In order to understand the extent of the *Express*'s appeal, however, it is important to understand *how* people interacted with this newspaper prior to the war.

[iv] How Did People Read the *Express* in the 1930s?

The London Press Exchange Reader's Interest Survey from 1935 focused primarily on how readers interacted with particular newspapers during 1934.¹³⁹ There was little information in the survey about where or when people read the *Daily Express* and other national daily newspapers. Instead the survey concentrates on the extent to which people read and interacted with particular content in the newspaper.

¹³⁸ PEP 1938, p. 238.

¹³⁹ HATS Archive, London Press Exchange, *A Survey of Reader Interest in the National Morning and London Evening Press 1934*, (London: London Press Exchange: 1935).

The survey analysed what content and pages people interacted with in particular issues of the *Daily Express* during 1934.¹⁴⁰ It showed that the *Express* contained a variety of different content including general home news, women's pages, cartoons, opinion pages, reader's letters, gossip columns, sports and legal pages. A large percentage of the *Express*'s sample readership appeared to be heavily interested in general news stories, particularly home news. For example, over 92% of readers engaged with the general news page, on 24th July 1934, which contained a variety of home news stories about union disputes, actresses in London, sports news, and accidents.¹⁴¹

The most widely read pages in the *Express* were the front and back pages from 25th April and 24th July 1934, which contained a variety of home and foreign news stories. Over 98% of the survey sample read at least one section of content on each page.¹⁴² For example, the principal front page news story on 25th April 1934, 'Japan Against the World', was seen by over 83% of the readers in the sample. Over 88% of readers also read pages 2 and 3 of the *Express* on July 17th and April 25th. These pages mostly contained general home news and cartoons, and more men than women read these 2 pages. Over 87% of men in the sample read the crime and finance stories in full on page 2, compared to only 78% of women.¹⁴³

What the survey primarily revealed was that readers would often pick and choose the content they engaged with in the *Express*, favouring particular items depending on their interests. For example, 83% of the sample's female readers engaged with the 'Women's

¹⁴⁰ The dates include 9th March, 27th March, 13th April, 25th April, 17th July and 24th July 1934.

¹⁴¹ Anon, 'Railway Unions Call up their Delegates', *Daily Express* Special Representative, 'Prince Hunts Europe for Golden Haired Actress: She Hides in London', Anon, 'Black Moment for England in the Test', Anon, 'Three Killed in Accident', *Daily Express*, 24th July 1934, p. 8.

¹⁴² See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 11, p. 39.

¹⁴³ HATS Archive, *A Survey of Reader Interest*, (1935), pp. 1-4.

Page', which contained the horoscope, children's comic cartoons, columns about household advice and main features about makeup.¹⁴⁴

Out of the 83% of women who read the women's page, over 61% read the main article giving advice about makeup; not all women engaged with the content in the same way however. 32% of women read the feature completely, 17% partially engaged with the content, and 12% only glanced at it. This demonstrated that people engaged with the *Express* by picking and choosing what content they wanted to read, rather than systematically reading each page from start to finish. The fact that the *Express* catered for different tastes and that readers could dip in and out of pages and stories made it accessible to different members of the family, and not just men.

Express readers were not only interested in news stories and feature articles however. Letters to the editor were a popular piece of content for readers. 61% of the survey's sample read letters to the editor – with 42% reading them in full and only 3% glancing at them briefly. 69% also read the gossip page on 9th March, and 92% engaged with the leader page on the 17th July 1934. However, few people engaged with the leader page's feature article, 'I Was the Wife', with only 29% of women compared to 36% of men reading the content in full.¹⁴⁵ Even fewer women engaged with the leader page's opinion column, only 17% of the survey's sample choosing to glance at the column.¹⁴⁶

The survey indicated that women who read the *Express* preferred to read general news stories, the women and children's page, the fictional story page and the gossip columns. The sample indicates that women read the *Daily Express* primarily for entertainment and social purposes, rather than information on foreign, financial and legal news. Men, however,

¹⁴⁴ HATS Archive, *A Survey of Reader Interest*, (1935), pp. 10-11. See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 12, p. 39.

¹⁴⁵ Anon, 'I Was the Wife', *Daily Express*, 9th March 1934, p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ HATS Archive, *A Survey of Reader Interest*, (1935), pp. 19-20.

primarily engaged with the opinion column and feature articles, as well as general news stories, and the sports and legal pages. This is not to say that men did not read the women's, fiction, or gossip pages, merely choosing to glance at these elements of the *Express*, rather than fully engaging with the content.

Conclusion

By 1939, the *Daily Express* was seen as a visually exciting newspaper with the largest national daily circulation of any popular newspaper in Britain. Although not defined as a family newspaper by *Mitchell's Newspaper Directory*, it behaved as a family newspaper by providing content for every member of the family. It included in its newspaper a variety of content designed to educate, inform, entertain and discuss. Initially created in 1900 as a broadsheet to compete with the *Daily Mail*, another family newspaper, the *Express's* content focused primarily on political and military affairs and the Empire.¹⁴⁷ Under the ownership of Lord Beaverbrook the newspaper developed into a popular paper filled with a variety of content, designed to compete in an expanding market. Although other newspaper proprietors, such as Northcliffe and Pearson, had developed a new kind of popular newspaper prior to the First World War, during the 1920s and 1930s Beaverbrook used the *Express* to capture the optimism and aspirational mood of the inter-war period. True, Beaverbrook's political beliefs were espoused in the content of the *Express*, in opinion columns, feature articles and cartoons, but not to the exclusion of all other content or ideas.

The newspaper had to appeal to a wide variety of readers throughout the country in order to maintain its circulation. Content was designed for different sexes, age groups and classes, with different sections earmarked for different readers, such as the sports page,

¹⁴⁷ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 17.

women's page and children's features. The *Express* provided articles for every member of the family, presenting much of its content in a domestic context and environment. Men, women and children were shown to be actively engaged in the family home, with articles often addressing men as financial bread winners and women as care givers and housewives. However, this heavily gendered construction of the newspaper affected how readers interacted with the *Express*. Readers did not read the newspaper from cover to cover, instead they could pick and choose what content they wished to engage with. This enhanced the appeal of the inter-war *Express* as it was a newspaper designed to appeal to as many people as possible.

By 1939 the *Daily Express* occupied one of the most prominent positions on Fleet Street. A newspaper which had grown from a financially struggling broadsheet in 1900, to the largest selling popular newspaper in the UK in 1939.

Chapter Five:

The *Daily Express*: A Wartime ‘Family Newspaper’ 1939-1945

This chapter outlines the history of the *Daily Express* during the Second World War, noting the newspaper’s relationship with government and its readership. It also analyses the content of the *Express* from 1939-1945, how the newspaper changed in appearance from the inter-war period and to what extent it retained the features of a ‘family newspaper’ during wartime. Section 1 will address the history of the *Daily Express* in wartime, outlining the practical changes to the newspaper and its appearance. Section 2 will analyse the changes in *Daily Express* content during this period, using data from the Leverhulme Group Project and a more in depth qualitative analysis of specific content.

Section 1: History of the Wartime *Daily Express*

[i] Wartime Staff and Production

The smooth running of the press was viewed as a priority by the government in wartime; newspapers not only reported information to the public but provided them with a semblance of normality, helping to “preserve a healthy and sound [public] morale”.¹ The removal of newspaper staff for the war effort was deemed detrimental to the smooth running of the war. It was hoped in March 1939 that editorial staff would therefore be placed in the schedule of reserved occupations when war broke out.²

¹ St Bride’s Library, NPA File Box 29, ‘Letter to Sir Samuel Hoare from Bernard Alton (Home Office to the Secretary of the Newspaper Proprietors Association), 23rd September 1938.

² St Bride’s Library, NPA File Box 29, Minutes Secretary of State for Home Affairs and the Committee of Newspaper Proprietors Association, 29th March 1939. *The Newspaper Press Directory and Advertiser’s Guide*, (C. Mitchell and Co. 1945), p. 53.

A small proportion of the staff at the *Daily Express* remained in their positions as writers and editors for the newspaper, including Arthur Christiansen, who remained as editor-in-chief throughout the war.³ Documents which accounted for wartime staff at the *Express* reveal, however, that the newspaper was hit quite hard by the war as many of its editorial and non-editorial staff were described as ‘on service’, or conscripted into the army.⁴ Although Beaverbrook withdrew from the day-to-day running of the *Express* in 1940 to become Minister of Aircraft production, the ethos of the newspaper as ‘family friendly’ remained the same.⁵ Beaverbrook noted that despite his absence, throughout the war, staff at the *Express* continued to “carry out your [Beaverbrook’s] ideals”⁶ and how they successfully “enhanced the reputation of journalism”.⁷ However, Beaverbrook continued to send memos with suggestions for content to the *Express*. This meant that as long as the top people at the newspaper, such as Beaverbrook and Christiansen, remained the same, the *Express*’s content was unlikely to change dramatically from pre-war editions. Although the loss of some journalists to war service affected aspects of the newspaper, such as the language and writing style of individual articles, the same senior staff oversaw the continuity of the *Express*’s content in wartime.⁸

The appearance of the *Express* did not dramatically change between 1939 and 1942. The greatest change affecting newspapers was caused by the impact of paper rationing in 1941 on the newspaper’s size and circulation.⁹ The wartime supply of newsprint was cut by a

³ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/28, Memo ‘Editorial Staff with 10 Years’ Service’, 1st May 1944.

⁴ ‘Editorial Staff with 10 Years’ Service’, 1st May 1944.

⁵ Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 190.

⁶ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK D/344, Letter from Beaverbrook to Duff Cooper 11th April 1941.

⁷ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/111, Letter from Christiansen to Beaverbrook, 21st January 1942. These statements about journalists carrying out Beaverbrook’s wishes at the newspaper may however be viewed as flattery for the most part. BBK H/117, Letter from Beaverbrook to E. Robertson, 22nd December 1944.

⁸ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/110 Correspondence Beaverbrook and William Barkley. BBK H/111, Correspondence Beaverbrook and Christiansen. BBK H/117 Correspondence Beaverbrook and E. Robertson, 1941.

⁹ Sir Walter Layton, *Newsprint: A Problem for Democracy*, (London: Donoghue Pub, 1946), pp. 8-10.

third from 1939 to 1945, from 1.2 million of all available newsprint tonnage, to 450,000 tons a year.¹⁰ This led to a reduction in the *Express's* newsprint allowance which forced the newspaper to economise and to reduce wastage. For example, in 1939 over £31,000 was spent on wasted paper, 1% of the *Express's* yearly budget; by 1945 the *Express* had reduced this expenditure to only £7,100, 0.1% of the yearly budget.¹¹ Nonetheless, by 1947 the newspaper industry still only consumed 30% of pre-war levels of newsprint, indicating the great impact the war had on the press.¹²

The amount of newsprint distributed to particular newspapers in wartime was dependent on the paper's pre-war circulation figures but how newspapers used their supply of newsprint was up to them.¹³ Management therefore had to decide whether to reduce the size of the newspaper, as the *Express* did, or reduce circulation, as the *Manchester Guardian* did.¹⁴ At the outbreak of war in September 1939, the *Express* immediately reduced its pages from twenty four to twelve. It then fluctuated between six and eight pages for eighteen months. By December 1941 however, paper rationing had reduced the *Express* to four pages. Apart from occasional exceptions, the newspaper remained this size for the remainder of the war.¹⁵

This reduction in newspaper size also impacted on the amount of content included on an individual page in the *Express*. For example, as we can see from Appendix D Figure 1, the number of columns included on one page in pre-war editions of the *Express* was eight.¹⁶ By

¹⁰ TNA, HO 251/99, 'Royal Commission of the Press: Import and Consumption of Newsprint Statement by the Newsprint Supply Company', 14th July 1947, p. 2.

¹¹ TNA HO 251/325, 'The *London Express Newspaper* Ltd: Director's Report and Statement of Accounts June 30th 1945', in *Royal Commission of the Press, (1947-1949)*, pp. 4-5.

¹² TNA, HO 251/99, 'Royal Commission of the Press: Import and Consumption of Newsprint Statement by the Newsprint Supply Company', 14th July 1947, pp.1-4.

¹³ Layton, *Newsprint*, p. 12.

¹⁴ John Rylands Library, 145/11/1-86, 'Memo: Newsprint Reduction January 1942', in Editorial memoranda on the layout of the *Manchester Guardian*, 1934-42.

¹⁵ Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 189.

¹⁶ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 1, p. 40.

1942 however, the number had reduced to seven. This demonstrated that the *Express* was forced to remove some content from its newspaper as a result of paper rationing.

The removal of content therefore impacted upon the *Express*'s relationship with advertisers and the revenue the newspaper generated. In order to generate enough revenue to keep newspapers profitable, the press increased the price of advertising space.¹⁷ This passed on the burden of reduced supplies directly to the readers, who now paid "pre-war prices" for newspapers greatly reduced in size, and advertisers who "more or less cheerfully submitted to significantly increased charges for the limited amount of space available".¹⁸ Overall however, the *Express*'s advertising revenue dramatically reduced during wartime, dropping from £1,900,555 in 1939 [48% of the *Express*'s total revenue] to £333, 107 in 1945 [only 11.9% of the *Express*'s total revenue].¹⁹

ii] Profits and Circulation

As we can see from Appendix D Figure 2, during the war the *Express*'s circulation was pegged at around 2,500,000 copies sold. It fluctuated between 2,582,879 in 1939 and 2,676,655 in 1943, a small increase of 93,776 copies over 4 years.²⁰ The stabilisation of the *Express*'s wartime circulation can be attributed to the press's voluntary decision to limit the size of newspapers in 1939, the implementation of paper rationing in 1941 and the newspaper circulation cap imposed by the government as a result of paper rationing.²¹ Walter Layton argued that the relative output of the British press dropped by 80% during the Second World

¹⁷ See Volume II. Appendix D Figure 1, p. 40.

¹⁸ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/28. Quote taken from article included in Beaverbrook Papers. Anon, *The Economist*, 'The Business World: The Newspaper Industry', p. 649.

¹⁹ TNA HO 251/325, 'The *London Express Newspaper* Ltd: Director's Report and Statement of Accounts June 30th 1945', in *Royal Commission of the Press*, (1947-1949), pp. 4-5.

²⁰ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 2, p. 40.

²¹ Layton, *Newsprint*, p. 8.

War, meaning that the national circulation of many newspapers was greatly altered.²² The amount of paper each newspaper received was cut by a further 10% in 1942, reducing the *Express's* supply to 450,000 tons a year. As many newspapers, including the *Express*, had already reduced their papers to four pages, some newspapers were forced to reduce their circulation. This accounts for the drop in *Express* circulation from 2,614,383 in January 1942 to 2,531,003 in January 1943 – a reduction of 83,380 copies sold. By 1948 however, the *Express* had steadily increased its circulation once more, with 3,842,410 sold per day, despite continuing restrictions on paper.²³

iii] Press Censorship and News Acquisition:

As of September 1939, the press had to adapt the way it acquired and presented news, as newspapers became subject to state censorship. Censorship of the wartime press was a sensitive issue, as any official control of newspaper content was seen as a threat to press freedom. In the 1930s writers such as Henry Wickham Steed, Anthony Barker and Michael Rush noted that press freedom was vital for the dissemination of news.²⁴ Prior to the outbreak of war, the Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare stated that the press would be a vital tool in wartime society and the government would “prefer co-operation to dictation: it will help to retain the public confidence in un-doctored news”.²⁵ This idea was reiterated at the outbreak of war by the *Express*, stating that “public opinion rules: censorship may interfere with it but it can be exercised to the benefit of the nation”.²⁶ Kevin Williams has argued, however, that

²² Layton, *Newsprint*, pp. 9-10.

²³ ABC UK National Newspaper Circulation Figures. Also see W. Hobson, ‘The Hulton Readership Survey 1947’, (London: Hulton Press), p. 48.

²⁴ Henry Wickham Steed, *The Press* (London: Penguin Books, 1938); Anthony Barker and Michael Rush, *The Member of Parliament and His Information, by Political and Economic Planning and the Study of Parliament Group*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1937), p. 120.

²⁵ Anon, ‘Press is Essential in War’, *Daily Express*, 3rd May, 1939, p. 4.

²⁶ Opinion, ‘It Triumphs in the End’, *Daily Express*, 16th September, 1939, p. 4.

co-operation between press and government during wartime was not difficult, as the newspaper proprietors and editors often came from the same social background as government ministers: “they shared the same attitudes and would cooperate readily in the proper prosecution of the war”.²⁷ It was therefore expected that newspapers would engage, to an extent, in ‘self-censorship’, making the official interference of the state less likely.²⁸

The establishment of the MOI in September 1939 created a government department designed to control the flow of information to the public and press.²⁹ The remit of the censors was primarily to enact ‘Defence Regulation 3’, introduced in August 1939, which required censors to stop the publication of information which might “help the enemy defeat and destroy our own troops”.³⁰ At the same time, however, the government was not expected to “meddle in the expression of opinion.”³¹ Newspapers submitted to this form of pre-publication censorship voluntarily, provided that the government would not suppress facts in the press, other than those which were of value to the enemy.³² Final say over censored information lay with the service departments, who were consulted on an individual basis regarding particular pieces of information and this was a source of conflict between the press and the MOI between 1939 and 1941.³³

The former editor of the *Daily Herald* Francis Williams, stated in his 1946 book *Press, Parliament and the People*, that certain ministers in the MOI, in the early days of the war, wanted to control what was “best for the public” and withheld information from the

²⁷ Kevin Williams, *Get Me a Murder a Day: A History of Media And Communication in Britain* (London: Hodder Education, 2009) p126. See also John Hilvert, *Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and Propaganda in World War II*, (Lawrence: University of Queensland Press, 1984).

²⁸ Williams, *Murder a Day*, p. 126. Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in WWII*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979) p. 35.

²⁹ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 41

³⁰ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 36

³¹ Cedric Larson, ‘The British Ministry of Information’ in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 5, Issue 3 (Autumn, 1941), p. 416

³² *The Newspaper Press Directory and Advertisers Guide*, (C. Mitchell and Co. 1945), pp. 52-53.

³³ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 43.

press and public on the grounds of state security.³⁴ The press was therefore often contemptuous of the government's need to censor press articles, claiming they were not providing the newspapers with detailed and useful information.³⁵ As a result, editors often ignored the censors ruling, threatening the voluntary system of censorship which had existed since the start of the war.³⁶ It was noted that newspapers often preferred to receive information from the Ministry of Home Security, rather than the MOI, as it was not considered sufficiently efficient.³⁷ Criticism of the government during the first days of the war was as a result of its mishandling of the dissemination of news and its relationship with the press.³⁸

As a result of this mistrust between the MOI and the press, on 3rd October 1939, Neville Chamberlain created the Independent Press and Censorship Bureau, with the civil servant Sir Walter Monckton as its head, to conduct pre-censorship of press news separately to the MOI.³⁹ Phillip Taylor has argued, however, that the independent bureau was doomed to failure in the long term as the service departments continued to dominate the censorship process, creating yet more anger from the press over a lack of official, useful and accurate information for their newspapers.⁴⁰

The bureau of censorship was once again absorbed by the MOI in April 1940 after the resignation of the head of the MOI John Reith. Taylor has nevertheless argued that although

³⁴ Francis Williams, *Press, Parliament and the People*, (London: Heinemann, 1946), p. 9.

³⁵ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 43.

³⁶ Phillip M. Taylor, 'Censorship in Britain in the Second World War: An Overview', pp.157-176, in (eds.) A.C. Duke and C.A. Tanse, *Too Mighty to be Free: Censorship and the Press in Britain and the Netherlands*, (Zutphen: De Walburg Press 1987), p. 163.

³⁷ TNA INF 186/1210, Memo, *Method of Distributing Official Material to the Press*, 1st May 1940.

³⁸ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 43.

³⁹ Taylor, 'Censorship in Britain', p. 163.

⁴⁰ Taylor, 'Censorship in Britain', p. 163.

the MOI was to remain the “centre of organisation squabbling” until the arrival of Brendan Bracken in 1941, after June 1940 censorship functions began to normalise.⁴¹

The system of censorship in Britain during the Second World War was, however, complex. As a result of the war, newspapers were unable to acquire news from abroad through the usual independent means. Newspapers therefore relied more heavily on both news agencies and government sources for war news, both at home and abroad. For example, the Newspaper Publishers Association (NPA) requested that government facilities be made available to correspondents and photographers to cover assignments, as they would be unable to do so unaided.⁴² As well as this, the MOI was responsible for the distribution of all “official communiques to all newspapers and news agencies represented in London”.⁴³

Information was received at the news agencies every day, from government and news divisions, and it was here that the MOI enacted its pre-censorship of press material.⁴⁴ Government news divisions would send out daily bulletins, at 12pm and 4.30pm, to the MOI central office in Malet Street, London. These messages would not be on behalf of particular departments, but general news from the government.⁴⁵ These bulletins would come from the Ministry of Information liaison officer, assigned to the Home Security War Room, and passed onto the news division, which in turn, gave the information to the MOI, and then newspapers once they had been appropriately vetted. Censor’s from various ministries, including the Foreign Office, War Office and Ministry of Home Security were housed at the

⁴¹ Taylor, ‘Censorship in Britain’, p. 163. Also see McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, pp.40-42.

⁴² St Bride’s Library, NPA Files Box 29, 5th September 1938, Meeting Home Office and NPA Representatives, p. 5.

⁴³ TNA, INF 1-156, Memo: ‘News Division’, May 1939.

⁴⁴ Taylor, ‘Censorship in Britain’, pp. 163-164.

⁴⁵ TNA, INF 1-156, ‘Memo: ‘News Division’, May 1939, p1. See also Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 48.

central offices of the MOI to advise on matters which related to their individual spheres of control, before allowing news to be released to the press.⁴⁶

Newspapers would also voluntarily submit articles which had been written to the Home News Section of the Press Censorship Division in the MOI. The censor's worked twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty five days a year and were available for consultation by the newspapers either by post or telephone. Articles and reports submitted to this Division were required to be labelled with a] the name of the newspaper, b] the title of subject matter and c] the category involved, for example Air, Sea, Miscellaneous. If articles could not be passed, as they posed an immediate danger to military security, they were held up at head office and released at a later date.⁴⁷ Photographs were dealt with in the 'photograph section' of the censorship division, which was concerned solely with the censoring of photographs submitted by the press.⁴⁸

Nicholas Pronay has argued that the system of voluntary newspaper pre-publication censorship eventually became effective as it allowed news editors to exercise:

Their long acquired skill in giving a great variety of form to what in fact was centrally released [information], and thus reinforced their credibility through the illusion of many apparently independent presentations. Members of the public could reassure themselves by comparing what they took to be instantaneous, hence uncensored – communication over the radio, with the variegated and elaborated version in the newspapers next morning.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Taylor, 'Censorship in Britain', p. 165.

⁴⁷ *Newspaper Press Directory*, 1945, pp. 52-53.

⁴⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory*, 1945, p. 52.

⁴⁹ Nicholas Pronay quoted in Taylor, 'Censorship in Britain', p. 165.

While there was a considerable level of control over the official information newspapers received, this did not mean that the press was controlled by the government in all aspects of publication. For example, a memo from Sir Walter Monckton to another leading MOI official Sir Kenneth Clark in June 1940, stated that newspapers “still have freedom of expression, however widely we distribute our material, it cannot compete with newspaper articles”.⁵⁰ Ultimately state censorship made the wartime relationship between press and state more formalised. The relationship between the MOI and the press was certainly not as officially controlled as the MOI’s relationship with the BBC, which required the ministry to have advance details of BBC programming and to directly censor scripts.⁵¹

The relationship was, however, a practical one, designed around mutual assistance and understanding of wartime aims. This was not to say that the government and press were in agreement on every element of wartime policy. For example, the *Daily Express* was vehemently opposed to rationing, claiming it was ‘utter madness’.⁵² Although there were on-going arguments about the level of interference from government in press content and production throughout the war, it appears that their relationship was, in broad terms, one of “close and efficient co-operation”.⁵³

Section 2: *Daily Express* Wartime Content

The reduction in the *Daily Express*’s size heavily impacted on the content of the wartime newspaper. The *Express* was forced to remove a good deal of newspaper content that would have been present prior to the war. A.J.P Taylor has argued, however, that the wartime

⁵⁰ TNA INF 1-256, Letter from Sir Walter Monckton to Sir Kenneth Clark, 15th June 1940.

⁵¹ Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939-1945*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996) p. 18.

⁵² Opinion, *Daily Express*, February 7th 1940, p. 6.

⁵³ Williams, *Press, Parliament and the People*, p. 6.

Express lost none of its opinionated vigour, using its articles to channel “every sort of grumble and grievance: campaigning against rationing, the blackout and even buying airplanes for America”.⁵⁴ Richard Allen also argued that despite the drastic changes to its appearance, the wartime *Daily Express* retained its “superb presentation”, while covering a variety of topics, such as war news, home news, sport, humour and much more in its pages.⁵⁵ The removal of content from the *Express* is borne out in a letter from Christiansen to Beaverbrook on 23rd May 1941, with Christiansen noting that the process of “hardening the paper” was a question of ongoing experimentation, and that he would remove all false “sentiment, triviality, and over written human interest” from the *Express* to make way for relevant wartime news.⁵⁶

[i] The Leverhulme Data.⁵⁷

This section analyses a sample of the *Daily Express*'s wartime content to ascertain to what extent the wartime *Express* managed to retain the content which made it a ‘family newspaper’ in the 1930s. During wartime, did the *Daily Express* still contain content for every member of the family? Did it still attempt to educate and entertain its readers? Or did Christiansen’s ‘hardening’ of the newspaper undermine its ability to appeal to the ‘family’ in wartime?

The number of pages in the *Daily Express* was reduced from September 1939 onwards. The size of the *Express* was immediately halved on 5th September 1939 from twenty four to twelve pages. Throughout the remainder of 1939, the *Express* experimented with the number of pages, editions could be eight, twelve, fourteen or sixteen pages long. The

⁵⁴ Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, pp. 398-399.

⁵⁵ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, p. 77.

⁵⁶ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/111, Letter Arthur Christiansen to Beaverbrook, 23rd May 1941.

⁵⁷ The data analysed was the sample taken for the Leverhulme group project, ‘The British Press and the Second World War’. See Volume II, Appendix B, pp. 25-33.

type of content included in the *Express* also fluctuated during the remainder of 1939, as editors investigated what could remain in the newspaper and what could be removed.

The Leverhulme data sample revealed that between September and December 1939, the *Express's* content did not alter greatly from the inter-war period. It continued to print a diverse range of news items and features which appealed to a variety of different readers. Display advertisements remained proportionately high as a percentage of all newspaper space throughout the war, in comparison to other content. This was to be expected, as advertising revenue was a key source of income for the newspaper and helped to keep it profitable.⁵⁸ Advertisers were also keen to prove their worth in wartime, by addressing topics and themes which would be familiar to newspaper readers.

In the 1939 sample, over 96% of advertising space in the *Express* was made up of display advertising, with only 3% devoted to classified adverts. By 1945, display advertising constituted 90% of all the space devoted to advertising.⁵⁹ The percentage of all space in the paper, taken up by advertising, was reduced as the war progressed. However, the amount of physical space in the newspaper also reduced as the war progressed, meaning the amount of space afforded to commercial display advertising reduced exponentially. A further breakdown of wartime advertising content will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Throughout the 1939 sample, the *Express* continued to include in its newspaper a variety of content, including news from home and abroad, regular feature articles, cartoons, and women's, sports and picture pages.⁶⁰ The similarity in appearance and content between the 1939 sample and inter-war copies of the *Express* was not unexpected, as the war itself was still in its infancy from September to December 1939. Although references to the war did

⁵⁸ For information on *Express* profits see Volume II, Appendix D Figure 2, p. 40. For information on wartime Advertising Rates in the *Express* see Volume II, Appendix D Figure 1, p. 40.

⁵⁹ See Volume II, Appendix B, Figure 2, p. 26.

⁶⁰ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 1, p. 25.

appear in *Express* content between September and December 1939, the dramatic changes to the production of newspapers and the content of the *Express* developed later.

The *Daily Express* initially endeavoured to retain the same pre-war appearance and tone of the newspaper in wartime, in an attempt to preserve normality for its readership. Beaverbrook argued that change, though necessary, should be gradual as the newspaper had a responsibility and role in wartime “to provide news” not sensationalism and panic.⁶¹ The *Express* continued to discuss topics which made no reference to the wartime situation. For example, 50% of the *Daily Express*’s total content in the 1939 sample, and 40% of the sample’s home news coverage, contained no reference to the war at all.⁶²

Home news articles appeared to show that wartime life continued as normal and that despite wartime conditions, readers must not panic. For example, articles such as ‘If you’re going out, tell your neighbour’ informed the public of their responsibility to co-operate with the census authorities. Its language was calm and informative, describing the general distribution of forms and that their completion was dependent on the “co-operation of householders and hotels – be helpful”.⁶³ As the *Express* reduced in size in 1939, Home News continued to be placed throughout the newspaper, intermixed with other content such as feature articles and picture news.

All newspapers in the 1939 sample continued to cover a mixture of different topics in Home News during 1939. As we can see from Appendix B Figure 3, the *Express* favoured discussion of social, economic, and general home news however, which took up 17% (social) and 24% (economic and general) of total space in that paper in the sample.⁶⁴ Articles such as

⁶¹ House of Lords, Beaverbrook Archives, BBK H/110 ‘Correspondence Beaverbrook and James Agate, 24th September 1939.

⁶² See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 4b, p. 29.

⁶³ *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, If you are going out, tell your neighbour: Census Man MUST see you’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 5.

⁶⁴ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 3, p. 27.

‘Pensioners Go Hungry’, ‘Blind Denied Right to Wed’, and ‘City Men Will Hear Stop Waste Talks’ discussed everyday social and economic issues.⁶⁵ Other more ‘sensationalist’ home news coverage, such as articles on divorce and murder, were scattered throughout the 1939 sample. News such as ‘Years to live Women Murdered in Sleep’, ‘Mrs Wilmer Will get her Divorce’ and ‘Divorce Decree for Madeleine Carroll’ were often placed on general news pages, interspersed with larger articles about the war, advertisements and small general news items.⁶⁶ General home news, which might contain elements of human interest or general entertainment for the reader, such as ‘What I have to Hold’, the story of a London Zoo Tiger, or ‘BBC Discover a Ghost’, were also intermixed throughout general news pages for light relief.⁶⁷

The *Express*’s desire to maintain normality for its readers did not mean, however, that it ignored the impact of the war on British society. 14% of *Daily Express* content in the 1939 sample contained manifest war content, with 35% referring to the war in a latent manner.⁶⁸ The language in articles with direct references to the war were informative, yet encouraged the readership to continue on as normal in wartime. For example, Mary Welsh’s article on 23rd September claimed that “nothing breaks the fabric of English traditions. Not a War

⁶⁵ William Barkley ‘Pensioners Go Hungry says MP’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 7. Anon, ‘Buyer Becomes the Boss’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 3. Anon, ‘£40,000 Saved’ *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 5. Anon ‘Blind Denied Right to Wed’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 7. Anon, ‘City Men Will Hear Stop Waste Talks’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 3.

⁶⁶ Anon ‘Year to Live Women Murdered in Sleep’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 7. Anon ‘Mrs Wilmer will get her Divorce’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 7. Anon, ‘Divorce Decree for Madeleine Carroll’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 7. See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 5, p. 43.

⁶⁷ Anon, ‘What I have to hold’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 3. Jonah Barrington, ‘BBC Discover a Ghost – Official’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 8. See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 5, p. 43.

⁶⁸ For an explanation on the meaning of Latent and Manifest War Content in news stories see Leverhulme Group Project Coding Book, Volume II, Appendix A Figure 1, p. 18. For tables relating to Manifest and Latent War Content in the *Express* in 1939 see Volume II, Appendix B Figure 4a and 4b, pp. 28-29.

Examples in the sample include Anon, ‘Lord Dawson Says Open The Hospitals’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 7. William Barkley, ‘Unions Want to Help in Armaments Speed Up’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 12. S.W. Alexander, ‘City Get Set for the First War Loan’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 8. Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Mosley Asks Anderson, Why Not Name Us?’ *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 12.

anyway”.⁶⁹ The home news articles did, however, recognise the negative impact of the war on British society. For example, the *Express* noted the economic problems of rationing and conscription,⁷⁰ and the impact of possible bombing.⁷¹ Foreign news continued to be an important aspect of the *Daily Express*’s content during the 1939 sample, taking up 7% of total newspaper space.⁷² As with the inter-war copies of the *Express*, foreign news articles were placed throughout the newspaper, side by side with home news and picture features.⁷³ With the reduction in size of the *Express* however, the majority of foreign news was placed on the front, second and back pages of the newspaper. The *Express* primarily covered foreign political and military topics, with 44% of foreign news articles containing latent references to the war and 29% directly engaging with the war effort abroad.⁷⁴

Although the *Daily Express*’s content did favour home and foreign news, much of the newspaper’s content in the 1939 sample consisted of regular sections [15% of total space], like sports and entertainment, and other editorial content [10% of total content], such as correspondence, cartoons and fiction. Despite the reduction in the number of pages included in the 1939 *Express* sample, sports and picture features remained regular pieces of content for the newspaper, with 42% of total space devoted to regular columns allocated to pictures and 30% given to sports in the 1939 sample.⁷⁵ Both sports and women’s features were still given

⁶⁹ Mary Welsh, ‘The Law which Altereth Not’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 3.

⁷⁰ *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Little Men are Left Out’; *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Aliens Getting Our Jobs says Waiters’ *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 5. *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Conchies Helped at 2d a Time’; Anon, ‘Army Camp Thieving Scandal’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 8.

⁷¹ Anon, ‘Many Bomb Zone Schools to Re-Open’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 7. Anon, ‘Air Raid Sirens Ruined Boarding House’, *Daily Express*, 17th November 1939, p. 5.

⁷² See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 5, p. 30.

⁷³ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 6, p. 43.

⁷⁴ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 6, p. 31. *Daily Express* Correspondent, ‘Duce Makes a Peace Gesture’; *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Rumanians Blame Nazis for Murder’; Turks Seek Alliance with Soviets’ *Daily Express* 23rd September 1939, p. 2. *Daily Express* Military Correspondent, ‘Swiss and Dutch Talk New Precautions’; Anon, ‘German Dogs Bark Take Cover’; Reuters, ‘Goebbels in Warsaw’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 2. *Daily Express* Correspondent, ‘Nazi put Screw on Rumania’; *Daily Express* Radio Towers, ‘Rome Radio says Spain is with us’; Reuters, ‘Prince gives £2,000 for Allied Wounded’ *Daily Express*, 17th November 1939, p. 2.

⁷⁵ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 7 and 8, pp. 32-33.

their own pages, with 8% of space in regular columns devoted to women's features.⁷⁶ Articles such as 'Here are this week's food prices' and 'Don't be Afraid of Pheasant' gave advice to women about cooking and the effects of wartime on the household.⁷⁷ These papers contained features which were familiar to pre-war women readers, such as horoscopes, fashion news and articles about the home, yet at the same time they also addressed the emerging problems associated with war.⁷⁸

Items for men and children still remained a small part of the *Express's* content, with each taking up 2% of regular feature space in the 1939 sample. Items such as the *Rupert Bear* cartoons and gardening features were the token content for men and children in the 1939 *Express* sample, included alongside radio announcements and the daily horoscope.⁷⁹ Sports features, however, remained a prominent piece of *Express* content for men in the 1939 sample, with over 30% of regular feature space given to sports news.⁸⁰ For much of the 1939 sample, sports news was given its own pages, however, this was reduced to only one or two pages from four in pre-war editions, depending on the issue.

The 1939 sample indicated that the *Express* attempted to keep as much recognisable pre-war content as possible in its newspaper during this period. Other content such as the opinion column, comic strips, serialised fiction and puzzles remained in the *Express* throughout 1939. Cartoons such as 'Our Wilhelmina', 'Colonel Up Private Down' and Strube were included alongside a range of articles, features and columns. These cartoons and features covered a wide variety of topics and were scattered throughout the *Daily Express*.

⁷⁶ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 7, p. 32.

⁷⁷ Anon, 'Here are this week's food prices', *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 9. Anon, 'Don't be Afraid of Pheasant', *Daily Express*, 17th November 1939, p. 9. Anon, 'Mixed Pickles', *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 9.

⁷⁸ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 7, p. 43.

⁷⁹ *Rupert Bear*, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 7. *Rupert Bear* was included in every edition of the 1939 Leverhulme sample, making up the majority of the 2% of children's articles in regular feature space. Gardening features include Anon, 'Mr Middleton Asks for Plenty of Bulbs', *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 7. See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 7, p. 32.

⁸⁰ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 7, p. 32.

They also discussed war related issues such as financial deals, the blackout, the BEF in France and holidays on the home front.⁸¹ Thus, in these early months of the war, the paper tried to maintain a normal style and appearance, while simultaneously adapting its content to respond to the developing situation.

[ii] Daily Express Content: 1940 Onwards:

The Leverhulme sample for the first half of the 1940 saw little change in the content of the *Daily Express*. The size of the *Express* continued to fluctuate between eight and twelve pages from January to May 1940, however, the percentage space afforded to particular areas of content remained fundamentally the same.⁸² For example, other editorial content, such as puzzles, fiction, correspondence and cartoons, only reduced from 10% to 8% of overall space in the first half of 1940.⁸³ Items such as ‘Death at the Bar’ and ‘Enter Hercule Poirot’ [pieces of serialised fiction], as well as entertainment pages containing crosswords, horoscopes and radio programming remained firm features of *Daily Express* content.⁸⁴ There were, however, minor changes to the 1940 *Express* sample, in that particular content, such as cartoons and women’s features no longer appeared on the same page every day. Although there is no evidence to suggest that this was a deliberate editorial practise, the *Express* appears to have

⁸¹ Lees, ‘Our Wilhelmina’ *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 4. ‘Walter’ Colonel Up Private Down’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 9. Strube, ‘Trying to do the right thing’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 4. S.W. Alexander, ‘Bowler Hat Deals get Round Price Restrictions’, *Daily Express* 13th December 1939, p. 4. William Hickey, ‘They Don’t Fall Plump’, *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 9. William Barkley, ‘It’s Taken All This to Make Us Friends’, 23rd September 1939, p. 9. Also see Walter, ‘Colonel Up Private Down’; William Hickey, ‘These Names Make News: Unkindest Cut’, *Daily Express* 2nd November 1939, p. 4. Lees, ‘Our Wilhelmina’; William Hickey, ‘These Names Make News: Double Dutch Puns’, *Daily Express* 17th November 1939, p. 4.

⁸² See Volume II Appendix B, Figure 1, p. 25.

⁸³ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 8, p. 33.

⁸⁴ Ngaio Marsh, ‘Death at the Bar’, *Daily Express* 25th January 1940, p. 8. Agatha Christie, ‘Enter Hercule Poirot’, *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940, p. 8. Entertainment Pages, *Daily Express*, 1st March 1940, p. 11; 9th March 1940 p11; 20th March 1940, p. 11.

been experimenting with where to place particular items, to keep the newspaper lively and exciting to look at.⁸⁵

The content and appearance of the *Express* sample began to change more noticeably in the second half of 1940. With wartime events such as the German invasion of the Low Countries and the British evacuation from Dunkirk, we see a steady rise in the amount of war coverage appearing in the *Express*, from 7% of total sample space in 1939 to 15% in the second half of 1940. Articles containing manifest war content rose from 14% in 1939 to 33% in the second half of 1940 and it rose again to 47% by 1942, which was nearly half of all *Daily Express* content. By the end of 1940, the progress and conduct of the war had clearly infiltrated *Express* content.⁸⁶ Articles, [such as, ‘Battle? It Was a Chase!’ and ‘Gibraltar Heavily Bombed’] directly dealt with the progress of the Allied war effort abroad.⁸⁷ As we can see from Appendix D Figure 8, home news, feature articles and cartoons also began to include far more manifest war content. Articles [such as ‘Her Holiday Money Helps to Buy Plane’ and ‘ATS to Get Chocolate for Breakfast’] were written as short, light-hearted home news stories, but contained important messages about the war on the home front and the need for wartime sacrifices.⁸⁸

By the end of the 1940 sample, particular categories of content began to decrease or disappear from the *Daily Express*, so as to make room for articles which dealt with the progress of the war. The *Express*’s headlines began to reduce in size, to make room for more

⁸⁵ Paul Holt, ‘Striptease Packs up After the Holidays’, *Daily Express*, 20th March 1940, p. 11. Paul Holt, ‘4 Villains are Heroes this Week’, *Daily Express* 1st March 1940, p. 11. Lees, ‘Our Wilhelmina’, *Daily Express*, 20th March 1940, p. 11. *Daily Express* Staff Report, ‘10 Men Charged with Army Plot’; Walter ‘Colonel Up Private Down’, *Daily Express* 28th May 1940, p. 7.

⁸⁶ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 4b, p. 28.

⁸⁷ Anon ‘Battle? It Was a Chase!’, *Daily Express*, 16th July 1940, p. 1. Anon, ‘Gibraltar Heavily Bombed’, *Daily Express*, 1st August 1940, p. 1. Also see Anon, ‘Australia to make us £6,500,000 Munitions’, *Daily Express* 16th July 1940, p. 2. *Daily Express* Staff Correspondent, ‘Tanks are his Problem’, *Daily Express* 18th September 1940, p. 6. Anon, ‘Bombs or Splinters’, *Daily Express* 6th December 1940, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Anon, ‘Her Holiday Money Helps to Buy Plane’, *Daily Express*, 16th July 1940, p. 1. *Daily Express* Staff Correspondent, ‘ATS to Get Chocolate for Breakfast’, *Daily Express*, 18th September 1940, p. 3. See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 8, p. 44.

stories on each page. Home news decreased from 18% of total space in 1939 to 16% by the second half of the 1940 sample, fluctuating between 14%-17% from 1942-1944 and eventually rising to 22% in 1945.⁸⁹ Home news still occupied an important place in the *Daily Express* throughout the war, nonetheless, the newspaper reduced the space devoted to types of home news, in order to respond to the restrictions forced by paper rationing. For example, in 1940 there was a reduction in the reporting of social and economic home news stories, reduced from 17% and 24% of home news respectively in 1939, to 10% and 19% by the second half of 1940. The space devoted to women's, men's and children's features also reduced dramatically, with women's pages reducing from 8% of space in 1939 to 1% in the second half of 1940. Men and children's content also decreased in the first half of the 1940 sample, with no men's interest columns being printed and only 1% of regular feature space given over to children's features.⁹⁰ By the end of 1942, 'women's features' no longer existed in the *Daily Express* as a separate page.⁹¹ The size of women's features also became smaller, with less space left between different items on each page. *Rupert Bear* became the only content appropriate for children – although there is no evidence that this was a deliberate editorial practice, *Rupert Bear* appeared to be a token gesture on behalf of the newspaper for the benefit of child readers.

The space occupied by men's features items, as a percentage of all space allocated to regular features, actually increased to 12% by 1942. However, the number of men's feature items in the sample increased from one in 1939 to only three in 1942, demonstrating that men's features remained a token item in *Express* content, alongside women's features and the *Rupert Bear* cartoon.⁹² The size of men's feature, in relation to the size of the newspaper

⁸⁹ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 1, p. 25.

⁹⁰ Anon, 'Don't let the children get rusty', *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940 p. 9. Also *Rupert Bear* remained in every edition of the *Express's* 1940 sample.

⁹¹ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 7 and 8, pp. 32-33.

⁹² Anon, 'Mr Middleton's Garden', 8th August 1942, p. 2. See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 7-8, pp. 32-33.

however, appeared to remain the same, unlike women's features which reduced dramatically by 1942.

This changed content in the *Express* and altered its appearance from pre-war editions, where sports, women's, finance and picture items often had their own pages. The wartime reduction in overall space, however, forced the *Express* to put regular articles on different topics side by side. As Appendix D Figure 9 shows, the 28th May 1940 edition of the *Express*, placed sports, finance and entertainment features on the same page.⁹³ Articles on different topics were not however mixed together, with each item occupying its own section of the page. For example, sport still occupied the most space, taking up half of the left hand side of the page. Finance news took over an estimated 1/5th of the page, in the bottom right hand corner, while entertainment news took 1/5th of the top right of page six. Advertising was placed around these features at the edge of the paper.

Larger sports news features, such as John Macadam's 'London Semi-Final' and The Scout's 'Mountain Ranger is best Bet', were placed at the top of the page, with large attention grabbing headlines. They were placed alongside smaller items however, such as 'Last Night's Boxing' and 'Today's Sports'.⁹⁴ This demonstrated that the newspaper wanted to include a variety of sporting topics, but had to reduce some items to small bulletins. Entertainment news was reduced in this edition of the *Express* to two small features about radio personalities by Jonah Barrington and Paul Holt. Unlike the inter-war editions of the *Express*, the wartime entertainment section did without the large pictures which had habitually accompanied its features and film reviews.

⁹³ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 9, p. 44.

⁹⁴ John Macadam, 'London Semi-Final is at Chelsea, 6.40pm'; The Scout, 'Mountain Ranger is Best Bet'; Anon, 'Last Night's Boxing'; Anon, 'Today's Sports', *Daily Express*, 28th May 1940, p. 6.

A mixture of news items and regular picture features on the same page also became more common from 1940 onwards in the *Express*. Over half of the sections that appeared regularly in the *Express* in the second half of 1940, were picture features, demonstrating the editor's determination to retain them as an exciting and lively part of the newspaper. They were scattered throughout the wartime newspaper and were included alongside extended front page news stories and advertising. As we can see from Appendix D Figure 10, they occupied a large proportion of the pages they were placed on. In the first half of 1940, picture features tended to be on the back page of the *Express*, taking upwards of half the space on the page.⁹⁵ For example, Appendix D Figure 10 shows a number of picture stories combined together on 1st April 1940, to make a 'feature'. They discussed a variety of issues, including Allied military routes in the Mediterranean, RAF fighter pilots in the Shetlands and the wedding of a New Zealand RAF Officer.⁹⁶ By the second half of 1940, however, space given to picture stories was reduced to 25% of the back page, with picture stories no longer combined together to make a 'feature'. They were scattered throughout the newspaper as individual picture stories. For example, in Appendix D Figure 11, we can see the 16th July 1940 edition of the *Express*, with one picture story, describing the arrest of a woman on its back page. Another picture story is found on page 5, however, showing evacuated children arriving in Canada.⁹⁷

By placing picture stories throughout the newspaper, the *Express* broke up its written content, making the newspaper more visually appealing to the reader. These picture stories ultimately replaced other visual content such as pictures and drawings previously included with the entertainment and women's pages, which was being streamlined or removed

⁹⁵ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 10, p. 45.

⁹⁶ Anon, 'The Back Door Leak in the Allied Blockade', 'Nazi Rear Gunners See our Attack this Way'; 'beneath a Lych Gate', *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940, p. 12.

⁹⁷ Anon, 'Chief Inspector Beveridge on the Yard', *Daily Express*, 16th July 1940, p. 6. Anon, 'Canada is Their New Home', *Daily Express*, 16th July 1940, p. 5. See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 11, p. 45.

completely. These picture stories would retain their importance to the appearance of the *Express* as the war progressed. They simultaneously allowed editors to demonstrate visually the impact of the war to its readers, without the need for long articles, and kept the appearance of the newspaper lively and exciting.⁹⁸

Throughout the 1940 sample, the *Express* experimented with its content, slowly restructuring the newspaper's appearance to accommodate wartime paper rationing and the need to report wartime events. The removal and restructuring of content meant the newspaper's appearance progressively changed as the war progressed between 1939-1942. By 1942 the *Express* had developed into the newspaper it would remain for the rest of the war. By January 1942, it had reduced to four pages per issue. There were further reductions to the newspaper's paper ration later in the year, which the *Express* chose to accommodate by reducing its print run.⁹⁹ It is interesting to speculate to what extent the *Express* would have been classed as a recognisable 'popular' newspaper in wartime, if it had reduced the number of pages in its newspaper even further to accommodate this reduction in paper. Presumably if the *Express* had reduced its size any further to two pages, it would have been classed by its readers as a news sheet and not a newspaper.

Although the daily news content continued to fluctuate, from January 1942 onwards the appearance of the *Daily Express* did not drastically alter.¹⁰⁰ The front page contained the *Daily Express* banner headline and a mixture of home and foreign news. Page 2 was the leader page, devoted to editorial opinion, plus entertainment news, political cartoons and feature articles. Page 3 was a combination of picture stories, general news items, occasional cartoon strips and feature articles. Page 4 also contained picture stories and general news continued from page 1, and sports. Every page allotted an estimated 20-30% of space to

⁹⁸ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 11, p. 45.

⁹⁹ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 2, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 12, p. 46 for A-Typical *Daily Express* pages from 1942 onwards.

advertising [at least], which were typically placed around the borders of the page. Although advertising space was reduced dramatically in the *Express* from 32% of total space in 1940 to 15% of total space in 1942, advertising remained a vital part of the *Express*'s content.¹⁰¹

While the *Express* adapted much of its content because of the war, the leader page on page 2 remained relatively unchanged from its pre-war appearance. The inter-war *Express* leader page had contained a variety of other editorial content, including the opinion column, several feature articles, regular columns such as Beachcomber, reader's letters, and a topical cartoon.¹⁰² As we can see from Appendix B Figure 8, other editorial content was streamlined during the war, however, from a reduction in the number of puzzles and competitions, to the complete removal of the serialised fiction page and reader's letters from the leader page.¹⁰³ By the end of the 1942 sample, content from other pages, such as the crossword puzzle, the *Rupert Bear* cartoon and film and radio listings began to appear on the leader page, having been removed from women's, children's and entertainment pages.¹⁰⁴

By 1942 however, the leader page had become a key area in the *Express* for discussion about the wartime situation. 76% of feature articles on the leader page in 1942, [such as 'Mines were Laid in Enemy Waters', 'Why do we make those sweeps on France', and 'The Miracles Stories of Stalin's Hidden Factories'], discussed the waging and progress of the war.¹⁰⁵ There was a sense, therefore, that the *Express*'s leader page content became more serious and 'hardened', as a result of the war effort and as prescribed by Beaverbrook

¹⁰¹ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 2, p. 26.

¹⁰² Cartoons such as 'Colonel Up and Private Down' which were included on the inter-war leader page did appear intermittently on other pages of the *Express* however.

¹⁰³ See Volume II, Appendix B Figure 8, p. 33.

¹⁰⁴ Both the *Rupert Bear* Cartoon and the crossword had been placed on women's and children's pages in pre-war editions of the *Express*.

¹⁰⁵ Flight Lieut X, 'Mines were Laid in Enemy Waters', *Daily Express*, 15th May 1942, p. 2. Basil Cardew *Express Air Reporter*, 'Why do we make those sweeps on France', *Daily Express*, 8th August 1942, p. 2. William Taunton, 'Here's the Miracle Stories of Stalin's Hidden Factories', *Daily Express*, 24th August 1942, p. 2. See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 13, p. 47.

and Christiansen.¹⁰⁶ The removal of unnecessary content and the increased coverage of wartime events were, however, to be expected if the *Express* was to be of practical use to its readers in wartime. From this evidence, it seems clear that the leader page was carefully protected by the *Express* in wartime, as it allowed the *Express* to still publish recognisable content for its readership, as well as present its opinions and ideas about the waging of the war.¹⁰⁷

From 1942 onwards, apart from the leader page, no specific page in the *Express* was devoted to a particular regular features or type of news. For example, pre-war editions of the newspaper often made clear which pages of content were specifically for women, men and children, and by 1942 this was not the case. The changes forced on the *Express* resulted in the relegation, if not the disappearance of pages devoted to particular gendered content among readers. This material, such as sports news, fashion items and children's cartoons, were then integrated, when it appeared, with the general content of the paper. As a result of the disappearance of dedicated feature pages, the *Express* cultivated an image of more inclusive and less gendered content.¹⁰⁸ The *Express* still sought to retain its readership's interest by continuing to include a variety of content however, and as such can be said to have retained its appeal to different members of the family, in spite of restrictions on newsprint and space. The newspaper did appear, however, to be addressing a broader and more united wartime readership.

The language used in the leader page was also important as a means of addressing a more broad wartime readership. It addressed *Express* readers, not as individuals, but as a

¹⁰⁶ Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords, BBK H/111, 'Letter Arthur Christiansen to Beaverbrook', 23rd May 1941.

¹⁰⁷ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 14, p. 48.

¹⁰⁸ This did not mean that particular aspects of the content did not appeal to one gender more than another. For example, the Mass Observation 1942 readership survey noted that men preferred to read the leader page and front page news items. Women, however, did not enjoy reading the sport features, favouring instead feature articles by writers such as William Hickey. See Mass Observation File 1339, *Report on Daily Express Readership*, pp. 14-18.

homogeneous group. In a sense, the *Express* addressed a more general ‘family of readers’, united behind the war effort. The *Express* was no longer targeting particular individuals with its discussions and opinions on the leader page, with the opinion columns often addressing readers in a more direct fashion, using the pronoun “we” or “us” to invoke a connection between the newspaper and its readers. Roger Fowler has argued that this type of language created an “implied consensus of national community” amongst newspaper readers.¹⁰⁹ The generalised tone of address was also evident in the use of nationalistic language on the leader page.¹¹⁰ Statements such as “the British are the most united and patriotic nation in the world. They know exactly what they are fighting for”¹¹¹ projected an image of *Express* readers as patriotic and united behind the war effort. Other phrases such as “but everybody agrees” and “we all know this to be true” implied not only a sense of national unity, but also a sense of a united readership.¹¹² The tone was informal yet paternalistic, with the newspaper placing itself in the role of educator and articulator of opinion. The *Express* addressed its readers as though they wished to better themselves - using the newspaper to inform and create discussion. This invoked an image of a united ‘familial’ readership, made up of individual readers but united in the pursuit of a successful war effort and social improvement.

Imagery as well as language on the leader page cultivated national unity. For example, the most recognisable figure from *Daily Express* topical cartoons was ‘The Little Man’ created by Sydney Conrad ‘George’ Strube. First introduced to the *Daily Express* in 1929, ‘The Little Man’ was described by his creator as,

¹⁰⁹ Roger Fowler, *Language in the News*, (London: Routledge, 1991) p. 189.

¹¹⁰ Sonya Rose has noted that this is not uncommon as wartime often creates “conditions likely to stimulate passionate identification with the nation on the part of a relatively large number of people”. See Rose, *Which People’s War?* p. 12.

¹¹¹ Opinion, *Daily Express* 27th July 1940, p. 4.

¹¹² Opinion, *Daily Express* 21st January 1940, p. 6.

The man with his umbrella, bow-tie and bowler hat, he was a national symbol of the long-suffering man-in-the-street, struggling with his everyday grumbles and problems, trying to keep his ear to the ground, his nose to the grindstone, his eye to the future and his chin up - all at the same time.¹¹³

Fellow cartoonist David Low noted in October 1939 how important this well-known pre-war cartoon of 'The Little Man' was to wartime national identity, exclaiming that other symbols of 'Britishness' in wartime were no longer appropriate,

The British Lion and what not are nothing but a lot of obsolete rot – RIP to all that Britannia Stodge I say. And that includes John Bull, that symbol of smug and narrow patriotism too, who bears no resemblance, inside or out, to the modern educated fit Briton.¹¹⁴

From his inception, 'The Little Man' was considered to be the personification of 'Britishness'. As described by Henry Morten in 1927, "no matter how dire his peril, how deep his woe, he is always dignified, he is always brave, he is always keeping his end up".¹¹⁵ As can be seen in Appendix D Figure 15, the *Daily Express* cartoons often portrayed 'The Little Man' as a well-mannered, yet long suffering individual, subject to the whims of others, whether it be the government, Hitler or his wife. His appearance was always 'respectable'.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Anon, 'Sidney Conrad Strube: Biography' <http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/artists/sidney-conradstrube/biography> Accessed June 2015.

¹¹⁴ Sian Nicholas, 'From John Bull to John Citizen: Images of National Identity and Citizenship on the Wartime BBC', pp.36-58, in (eds.) Richard Weight and Abigail Beach, *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain 1930-1960* (London: I.B.Taurus, 1998), p. 40.

¹¹⁵ H.V. Morten, *Introduction to Strube: His Cartoons from the Daily Express*, (London: 1927), p. 53.

¹¹⁶ Rod Brooks, 'The Little Man and the Slump: Sidney Strube's Cartoons and the Politics of Unemployment 1929-1931', pp.49-61, in *The Oxford Art Journal*, Volume 8, No. 1, (1985), p. 55.
H.R. Westwood, *Modern Caricaturists*, (London: 1932) p. 26.

He was the epitome of the *Express*'s idealised reader, representing the paper as a dependable newspaper, orientated towards encouraging support for the war effort.

Appendix D Figure 15 also illustrates how during wartime 'The Little Man' appeared in a variety of "uniforms", acting as a policeman, a warden, a fireman, and an everyday 'middle class man'.¹¹⁷ Always seen to be engaging in his wartime duty on the home front, 'The Little Man' was a symbol deployed by the *Express* to comment on political ideas and discussion. He was also an image that *Daily Express* readers could identify with, and look to as an example of correct behaviour. His image allowed *Express* reader's to engage with wartime problems, such as the blackout, new taxes, fear of Hitler and invasion. The 'Little Man' was the visual representation of the 'man in the street', and the *Daily Express* reader was encouraged to identify with him.

Section 3: The *Daily Express* and Wartime Readership

This section discusses the readership of the *Daily Express* during wartime. Few readership surveys were conducted during the war. However, those that were, such as Mass Observation's *Report on the Press*, (1940), the *Report on Daily Express Readership* (1942) and the Kimble Survey (1943) did not cover all aspects of the demographic of the *Express*'s readership.¹¹⁸ Much of our understanding of the *Express*'s readership during wartime has to be inferred from post-war readership surveys, such as the Atwood, IPA and Hulton 1947 Readership Surveys and the *Royal Commission of the Press* (1947-1949).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 15, p. 48.

¹¹⁸ Mass Observation File 38A, *Report on the Press: Newspaper Reading Habits*, (May 1940). Mass Observation File 1339, *Report on Daily Express Readership*, (June 1942). Kimble, *Newspaper Reading in the Third Year of the War*, (London: George, Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1943).

¹¹⁹ HATS Archive, Institute of Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising, *The Atwood National Publications Readership Survey*, (March 1947). J.W. Hobson, 'The Hulton Readership Survey 1947', (London: Hulton Press). W.D.Ross, *Royal Commission of the Press, 1947-1949*, (London: HMSO, 1947).

[i] Sex, Age and Class

Evidence from the 1942 Mass Observation Report on the *Daily Express* suggests that a higher percentage of men than women read the *Daily Express* in wartime – a factor unchanged from the pre-war era. This was not unusual for newspapers of the period, however, as only the *Daily Mirror* had a higher percentage of women readers than men.¹²⁰ The surveys show there was still an even distribution of *Express* readers across all age groups, indicating that material in the newspaper continued to appeal to a wide variety of the population throughout the war.

The IPA survey from 1939 indicated a slightly smaller number of much younger and older readers who bought the *Express*.¹²¹ The highest concentration of *Express* readers in the 1939 IPA Survey appeared in the 25-44 age brackets, with 22.5% of readers from this survey located in this age bracket. This percentage appeared to rise across the war, with 27.8% of people in this age group from the 1947 IPA Survey purchasing the *Express*.¹²² This was also the case for the 44-65 category, with 20.8% of the surveys age group purchasing the *Express* in 1939, rising to 25.7% of the surveys 44-65 yr. olds in 1947. Although the figures from different surveys were not strictly comparable [see chapter three] we can reasonably infer that the popularity of the *Express* remained strong and even increased with 25-65yr olds throughout the war. The data therefore showed that the *Express* primarily appealed to a large cross section of the wartime population, providing content for readers who were young adults, middle aged and older.

The class distribution of *Daily Express* readers in wartime appeared to be also unchanged from the pre-war period. The 1942 Mass Observation survey noted that the *Express* had the most “equally distributed class readership of any national daily” during

¹²⁰ File 1339, *Report*, p. 3.

¹²¹ See Volume II, Appendix C Figure 9, p. 38.

¹²² See Volume II, Appendix D, Figure 16, p. 49.

wartime.¹²³ It was primarily favoured, however, by middle or lower class readers, the “small shopkeeper, the skilled worker, and the policeman, what is sometimes called the ‘petty bourgeois’”.¹²⁴ Although each post-war readership survey noted that a higher number of *Express* readers were middle and lower class, the samples taken indicated the *Express* appealed to a broad range of readers from different classes. This wartime newspaper was designed for all readers and “lacked any exclusive [appeal] to a specialised public”.¹²⁵

[ii] Regions

The regional distribution of *Daily Express* readers did not change dramatically during wartime. As we can see from Appendix D Figure 17, Scotland retained a high proportion of *Express* readers. 30% of the readers in Scotland in the 1939 IPA Survey purchased the *Express*, which increased to 37% of readers in Scotland who purchased the *Express* in the 1947 IPA Survey.¹²⁶ As previously stated in Chapter Four however, the increased reach of the *Express* in Scotland was helped by the regional Scottish press which printed and distributed local copies of the newspaper. London and the South East remained a key region for *Express* distribution, with the Hulton, IPA and Atwood survey data showing an average of 25% of readers from these regions purchasing the *Express*. The Hulton Survey noted, however, that a slightly higher percentage of readers than the 1947 IPA Survey, located in the South West, South Wales and the Midlands, purchased the *Express* in the later 1940s. Again, it is difficult to compare individual survey data directly due to differing survey methodologies.

Nevertheless, this data suggests that the regional distribution of *Daily Express* readers became more even during wartime. This indicated that as the *Express*’s circulation slowly

¹²³ File 1339, *Report*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ File 1339, *Report*, p. 6.

¹²⁵ File 1339, *Report*, pp.4-5.

¹²⁶ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 17, p. 49.

increased towards the end of the war, the newspaper was increasing in popularity throughout the UK, not just in one particular region such as London or the South East.¹²⁷

[iii] How did People Read the *Express* in Wartime?

As the size, content and appearance of the *Daily Express* adapted to wartime conditions, it was only natural that its readers would adapt the way in which they interacted with the newspaper. For example, some of the content which attracted readers to the *Express* in the 1920s and 1930s, such as its range of feature pages and articles, was either reduced or removed completely between 1939-1945. The 1940 and 1942 Mass Observation Readership Surveys showed, however, that despite the changes to the paper's *content* during wartime, its readers still viewed it as a "good, sensible all-round newspaper which "presented its news in a reliable way for all".¹²⁸ Therefore, did the readership of the *Express* consider the newspaper to be family friendly during wartime?

The 1940 Mass Observation Survey acknowledged that many people who engaged with the *Daily Express* and other newspapers did not do so in a household setting. It noted that a proportion of newspaper readers engaged with a paper outside the home; on the tube or bus, in a café or outside on the street and that because of wartime conditions fewer people were reading a newspaper on the street, in the park or on the bus, due to fears of bombing and because of the blackout.¹²⁹ Wartime circumstances therefore tended towards encouraging readers to take their newspapers inside. This suggested that the home became of even greater importance to readers as a place where papers were read.

¹²⁷ See Volume II, Appendix D Figure 2, p. 40.

¹²⁸ File 1339, *Report*, pp.15-16.

¹²⁹ File 39A, *Report on the British Press*, p. 1.

Despite the wartime changes to the content of the *Express*, the newspaper appeared to remain popular and above all, useful and informative for its readership. There was a “high degree of satisfaction amongst the readers of the *Express*”, with many in the 1942 Mass Observation Survey stating it provided ‘up-to-date’ and relevant news items - “summing up content quite impartially” and it “contained the news yet wasn’t as dull as *The Telegraph*”.¹³⁰ Satisfaction with the *Express*’s news content gave the newspaper a regular readership, with 82% of the 1942’s Mass Observation survey sample reading the *Express* every day.¹³¹ Some readers in the 1942 survey were critical, however, of the *Express*’s apparent tendency towards “stunts and sensationalism” in wartime, and its use of flashy, misleading headlines.¹³² These criticisms were by no means confined to the *Express*; they were “common amongst the attitudes of readers of all popular papers” during this period.¹³³

Although there was no direct discussion in the 1942 survey of readers’ opinions about the *Express* as a ‘family newspaper’, it was clear nevertheless that the *Express* was valued in wartime for its variety of content which meant that it had appeal to different household members. The most popular pages of the *Express* in July 1942 were the front page and the leader page, with the leader page being read “with close attention by an exceptional proportion of readers”, over 40% of the survey’s sample.¹³⁴ Although the 1942 Mass Observation survey demonstrated that the *Express* was primarily respected for its news service, its readership clearly valued its other editorial content as well.¹³⁵ The retaining of an identifiable op-ed page in the wartime *Daily Express* also allowed the newspaper to retain an element of its pre-war identity and appearance.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ File 1339, *Report*, p. 15.

¹³¹ File 1339, *Report*, pp. 12-16.

¹³² File 1339, *Report*, p. 20.

¹³³ File 1339, *Report*, p. 20.

¹³⁴ File 1339, *Report*, p. 16.

¹³⁵ File 1339, *Report*, pp. 17-18.

¹³⁶ File 1339, *Report*, p. 23.

Conclusion

The construction, content and appearance of the *Daily Express* altered significantly during the war. Wartime circumstances impacted on the type of content included in the newspaper from 1939-1945. The press were forced to adapt to wartime conditions, as a result of paper rationing and bombing. This impacted on the circulation and size of the *Express* and other newspapers, in turn requiring editors to modify the amount and type of content included in the newspaper. For example, the most dramatic change was the *Express's* physical size, reducing from an average of twenty-four pages per issue in 1939, to only four pages by 1942.¹³⁷ Wartime censorship also forced newspapers such as the *Express* to adapt the way they acquired news, also influencing what they could and couldn't print.

These changes did not mean, however, that the *Daily Express* ceased to be recognisable in wartime to its pre-war readership. The newspaper continued to include much of the content which would have been familiar to pre-war readers, such as home and foreign news, sports pages, picture features and cartoons. With gradual reductions in the amount of paper assigned to newspapers, however, from 1939-1942, the *Express* experimented with the content of the newspaper, gradually streamlining it and adjusting to wartime constrictions.

Coverage of military events and the progress of the war naturally increased in the newspaper as the war progressed. Coupled with the reduction in size of the newspaper, content either slowly reduced in space, or was removed entirely. For example, women's and children's feature pages were slowly removed from the newspaper throughout 1940 and 1941, along with serialised fiction and comic strips. Coverage of legal, social and general home and foreign news was greatly reduced during 1940 and 1941. From 1941 onwards, sports and picture content were no longer given specialised pages; these articles were now

¹³⁷ Despite this reduction in size, the *Express* still remained a broadsheet throughout the war.

placed alongside other content. Reader's letters were also removed completely from the *Express* by 1942, only reappearing in the sample briefly in 1945.

By 1942, the *Express's* appearance began to stabilise, remaining at four pages in size for the remainder of the war. Home and foreign news were included throughout the newspaper; page 2 contained the leader page; and pages 3 and 4 were a combination of feature articles, sports news, adverts and picture features. Although individual content fluctuated on a daily basis, depending on wartime events, the newspaper's appearance did not drastically change between 1942 and 1945. The *Express* still contained elements of its pre-war appearance, such as large headlines, a leader page, cartoons, opinion columns, sports items and picture features; the amount of content included in the newspaper was merely streamlined. The role of the *Express* in wartime was to inform, yet maintain a sense of normality for its readers. By including content familiar to a pre-war readership, the *Express* was performing an important wartime role.

Quantitative evidence suggests, however, that gender-specific material such as women's and men's feature pages were removed entirely from the newspaper. Content which had appeared on these pages, such as gardening advice columns, makeup tutorials and cooking advice were placed intermittently elsewhere in the newspaper. The general appearance of the *Express* therefore became more generic, with editors designing pages that would appeal to men, women and children. It was less clear from the layout of the paper, which pieces of content were aimed at individual members of the household. The *Express* therefore sought to retain its readership's interest by continuing to include a variety of content, and as such can be said to have retained its appeal to different members of the family, in spite of restrictions on newsprint and space. The newspaper therefore remained a 'family friendly newspaper', in that its content was designed to inform and entertain all members of a household in wartime. There was a sense, however, that the *Express* was no

longer appealing to individual readers, but a united readership – experiencing wartime problems and difficulties together, both as individuals and family members.

Chapter Six:

The Family, Evacuation and *The Daily Express*

This chapter investigates the portrayal of evacuation in the *Daily Express* during the Second World War. In particular it will analyse how the *Daily Express*'s coverage of evacuation represented the family. It will address the ways in which family are presented in the evacuation stories and the extent to which this developed and changed over time.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first provides contextual information on the Evacuation Scheme. It explains why the Evacuation Scheme was thought necessary by the government and outlines the number of people involved in the preliminary evacuations and the problems that were encountered. Section two outlines the evacuation policy and the ways in which the government interacted with the press on this issue, in particular the *Daily Express*.

Section three discusses the *Daily Express*'s coverage of evacuation in 1939. It outlines the parameters of that coverage and evaluates how the paper attempted to portray the different practical issues inherent in evacuation, particularly how images of family life were presented and used in the paper's discussion of the scheme.

Section 1:

[i] The Evacuation Problem

Sporadic discussions in the press and in government ministries about evacuation had been on-going since the mid-1920s. As a result of contemporary fears about possible future aerial bombardment and its effect on British cities, various committees had been established by

successive governments, in an attempt to formulate policies for public safety.¹ Evacuation of inner cities was considered a necessity in order to reduce the numbers of casualties expected in any future bombing campaign. The government saw the official evacuations of September 1939 as ‘simply and solely, a military expedient - a counter move to the enemy’s objective of attacking and demoralising the civilian population’.² Ideas and guidelines about evacuation were, however, not considered in isolation, but were discussed within a wider debate about an integrated system of civil defence.³

The most influential of these committees on evacuation was the Anderson Committee, whose findings were published in July 1938. Led by Sir John Anderson, a senior Civil Servant and Member of Parliament from January 1938, the Report recommended that the government sponsored Evacuation Scheme should not be compulsory, but should be strongly recommended on the grounds of public safety.⁴ However, although the Anderson Report highlighted the difficulties of billeting and feeding the evacuees, it failed to provide comprehensive answers to these problems. Clarification of these issues had been provided by the Committee for Imperial Defence in June 1938 with its suggestions made in its ‘Draft Emergency Scheme Y’, in which the role of evacuation was outlined.⁵ Led by Sir Warren Fisher, Head of the Home Civil Service, and Sir Maurice Hankey, Cabinet Secretary, the scheme, adopted in October 1938, propounded a general policy that would enable a prompt response from civil organisations, such as the police and medical services, in the event of a

¹ John MacNicol, ‘The Evacuation of Schoolchildren’, in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, pp. 3-31, (ed.) Harold L. Smith, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) p. 5. For further discussion of the fear of bombing in the 1930’s see Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilisation, 1919-1939*, (London: Penguin, 2009) pp. 334-336 and Uri Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber: The Fear of Air Attack and British Politics 1932-1939*, (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980), p. 13.

² Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, (London: Longmans Green and Co. 1950), pp. 23-24.

³ These committees included concerns about Imperial Defence (met between 1924-1929), Air Raid precautions (formed early 1931) and the mental health of the population (formed April 1939).

⁴ CAB 16/191, *Evacuation: Report of Committee of M.P.'s: Cmd. 5837 July 1938*. TNA RAIL 1124/250. Also see Committee of Imperial Defence: Home Defence Scheme Sub-Committee: Measures for an Immediate Emergency, 15th September 1938, p402. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 1, p. 50.

⁵ TNA CAB 16/191, ‘Draft Civil Defence Emergency Scheme “Y”’: Committee of Imperial Defence: Prepared by Air Raid Precaution, ‘Dept. of The Home Office’, June-August 1938.

national emergency.⁶ Frank Pick was appointed the Chief Evacuation Officer for London, with the task of co-ordinating transport arrangements.⁷

In addition, other Ministries and organisations were involved in the organisation of civil defence policy. The Ministries of Health, Education and Transport, along with the Home Office [HO] and the London County Council [LCC], all formed their own sub-committees to tackle the problems of civil defence, guided by ‘a policy of collaboration and co-operation’.⁸

Although war was not declared until 3rd September 1939, preliminary evacuations from London and the South coast, known as ‘Operation Pied Piper’, began on 1st September. Initial government planning identified up to 3.5 million people who might need to be evacuated in case of war, with an estimated 300,000 children from London taking priority.⁹ Between 1st - 3rd September over 820,000 school children, 13,000 expectant mothers, 7,000 disabled adults and children and 100,000 teachers and helpers were evacuated from different parts of the country to multiple locations.¹⁰ Assessment of the exact number of people evacuated revealed, however, that only 1.5 million of the estimated 3.5 million were evacuated in the first three days of the campaign, amounting to less than 48% of the total number anticipated.¹¹ Many local authorities did not receive the numbers of evacuees

⁶ TNA CAB 16/191, Draft Letter to Region Heads’, 16th August, 1938, pp. 1-7.

⁷ TNA CAB 16/191, ‘Draft Letter to Region Heads’, p. 210.

⁸ TNA CAB 19/191, Sir George Chrystal ‘Draft Civil Defence Emergency Scheme “Y” Minutes 1st Meeting of the Sub-Committee for the Co-ordination and Control of Civil Authorities for Passive Defence Purposes in War,’ 29th June, 1938, p. 26. Also see TNA HLG 68/5, ‘Evacuation Sub-Committee: Preparation of Evacuation Scheme: Conference between the Board of Education, Ministry of Health and London Country Councils, 14th September, 1938, Present: Sir John Maude (Ministry of Food), Sir Maurice Holmes (Board of Education) Mr J.C. Rigley (Ministry of Health) Mr E.M Rich and Mr Lowndes (LCC).

⁹ Titmuss, *Social Policy*, p. 104. For specific details on prioritising London see TNA ‘Letter from L.H. Hornsby to S.F. Wilkinson, Ministry of Health’, 21st April 1941, in HLG 108/18, Publicity on the Anti-Drift Back Campaign.

¹⁰ Titmuss, *Social Policy*, p. 105.

¹¹ Titmuss, *Social Policy*, p. 104. See also (eds.) Richard Padley and Margaret Cole, *Evacuation Survey: A Report to the Fabian Society*, (London: Routledge, 1940) pp. 46-47.

projected, for example Cambridge had expected over 24,000 evacuees and received only 6,700.¹²

Margaret Cole, writing on the topic for the Fabian Society in 1940, commented however that the evacuation policy had been drawn up by minds that were “military, male and middle class” and that it demonstrated a lack of forethought about the practical problems that the scheme might encounter.¹³ Evacuation generated multiple problems relating to the availability and conditions of billets, food, transportation, education and child health and so provoked the return of over 500,000 schoolchildren and 145,000 mothers by January 1940.¹⁴ In some areas of the country, such as Clydeside in Scotland, over three quarters of the evacuees who left on 1st September had returned to the city by Christmas 1939.¹⁵ Additionally, as evacuation evolved from a short-term policy into a more permanent and “broadening social question” of war-time life, the government faced extensive pressure from the press and public.¹⁶

[ii] Evacuation, Government and the Press

The government viewed evacuation as a crucial part of wartime civil defence, as it was a scheme designed in the national interest, with “every effort made to reduce the hardships that will inevitably occur [from bombing]”.¹⁷ Evacuation required a policy of “collaboration and co-operation” between government ministries and local authorities, and evidence suggests

¹²(ed.) Susan Isaacs, *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey: A Wartime Study in Social Welfare and Education*, (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1941) pp. 34-35.

¹³ Padley and Cole, *Evacuation Survey*, pp. 36, pp. 57-58.

¹⁴ Padley and Cole, *Evacuation Survey*, p. 43.

¹⁵ (ed.) William Boyd, *Evacuation in Scotland: A Record of Events and Experiments*, (London: University of London Press, 1944) p. 31.

¹⁶ F. Le Gros Clark and R.W. Torns, *Evacuation – Failure or Reform?* Fabian Tract 249, 1940, p. 2

¹⁷ TNA CAB 16/191, ‘Draft Civil Defence Emergency Scheme “Y”’: Prepared by Air Raid Precaution Dept. of The Home Office’, 16th August, 1938, p. 188.

that this was also the relationship desired when dealing with the press.¹⁸ The press was an important tool in the presentation and ‘selling’ of the evacuation scheme to the public. Government documents suggest there was an on-going dialogue between sections of the government and the press about evacuation before the war. While this evidence does not contain detailed correspondence with every daily newspaper, these documents can provide an ‘idea’ of the relationship that existed between press and government on this issue.¹⁹

As we can see from Appendix E Figure 2, from September 1938 onwards the government’s Information Bureau, an early incarnation of the MOI, was set up to communicate government plans to a variety of different media, including newspapers, radio and film.²⁰ Memos and letters were sent to newspapers containing information on Ministry-run initiatives, thus allowing the government to control the flow of official information given to the press. The language used in these memos and letters was often courteous, for example, asking editors “would it be possible to include this information”.²¹ There was no indication that newspapers were being forced to acquiesce, for as Sir Thomas Fife Clarke, the Press Officer for the MOH, argued in 1941, the government relied on its goodwill:²²

Throughout the war we have had the consistent support from the press on the principle of evacuation. Indeed, had it not been for the steady and even enthusiastic co-operation of the press, we could not have done anything like as much as has been done under the voluntary system. I feel that the department cannot afford to lose that

¹⁸ TNA CAB 16/191, Sir George Chrystal (Permanent Secretary, MOH), ‘Draft Civil Defence Emergency Scheme “Y” Minutes 1st Meeting of the Sub- Committee for the Co-ordination and Control of Civil Authorities for Passive Defence Purposes in War,’ 29th June 1938, p26. TNA CAB 16/1919, ‘Committee of Imperial Defence’, Meeting Minutes, June 29th 1939, p. 26.

¹⁹ TNA AN 2/10/19, Ministry of Health, Emergency Arrangements: Evacuation of the Civil Population Part II, ²⁰ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 2, p. 50.

²¹ TNA AN 2/10/19, R.H. Hill, Ministry of Transport Memo, May 19th 1939.

²² TNA, Sir Thomas Fife Clark, ‘Evacuation’ in HLG 108/3, ‘Ministry of Home Security Evacuation Policy: Relations with Censor’, 7th May 1941.

goodwill and any restrictions on news about evacuation should be limited as tightly as possible.²³

Generally, communication between press and government about evacuation appeared to have been informal, with the passing of information and the conclusion of agreements made over the telephone and not formally minuted.²⁴ There also appears to have been a level of trust in the press and its attitude to the scheme, with the government giving newspapers the freedom to “discover angles of their own on the story”.²⁵ Nevertheless, in the absence of specific documentation, it nonetheless reasonable to assume, given the complexity of the issues at stake, that most national daily newspapers received information from the government about evacuation on a regular basis. By offering as much material to as many periodicals as possible, the government was able to provide information about the policy to a wider audience. This was clearly the case in December 1939, when, according to an official in the Ministry of Health and Local Government,

A steady stream (of information) has kept the problem before the public. In addition to this, the M.O.I has been influencing editors to deal with the subject in their leaders, to encourage the rest of the staff to use the information and suggestions contained in the material we have supplied to them, and to instruct their special writers to deal with definite aspects of the problem.²⁶

²³ TNA, HLG 108/3, Fife Clark, ‘Evacuation’, 7th May 1941.

²⁴ TNA, AN 2/10/19, R.H. Hill, Ministry of Transport Memo, 19th May 1939.

²⁵ TNA, Anon, ‘Memo for Mr E.R.’, in HLG 108/19, ‘Public Health Propaganda: Press Office: Education Publicity’, 8th December 1939.

²⁶ TNA, Anon, ‘Memo for Mr E.R.’, 8th December, 1939, HLG 109/19.

Ultimately, it appeared that the relationship between press and government on the issue of evacuation was one of co-operation, as both had the common objective, in the interests of public safety of keeping the public calm and informed during evacuation.

[iii] Newspaper coverage of Evacuation before September 1939

A limited qualitative survey and analysis of mainly the popular press prior to September 1939 was conducted by reading a wide range of articles on this topic, and it suggests that after an initial period of optimism about evacuation, newspapers began to reflect growing concerns about the way the evacuation scheme was organised.²⁷ The press's primary concern was the scheme's impact, both financially and psychologically, on evacuees and the families who were to billet them.

The press had begun to discuss the issues surrounding evacuation as early as September 1938, as a result of fears of war stemming from the Munich Crisis.²⁸ In January 1939, one *Daily Express* commentator claimed that the scheme would unite the public as "one big happy family in times of crises".²⁹ In April 1939, Sir John Anderson asserted in Parliament that convincing the public to engage with evacuation directly would not be difficult as the scheme would 'capitalise on the great volumes of good will and readiness – in all sections of the community'.³⁰ However, discussions about evacuation in the press and

²⁷ The following papers, the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, the *Daily Herald*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Express*, were consulted from the period September 1938 to August 1939. All major references to evacuation were noted and examined with a view to determining the main lines of approach of the papers to the issue.

²⁸ See for example The *Express's* coverage of 'Gas Mask Sunday', highlighting the issues of public safety in the event of destructive air raids, *Daily Express*, 26th September 1938, p. 5. Also see A Special Correspondent, 'Save the School Children', *Daily Mirror*, 19th September 1938, p2. Anon, 'Protection of Children', *The Times*, 21st September 1938, p. 7.

²⁹ Daily Express Political Correspondent, 'Census to find War Homes for 3,000,000 Children', *Daily Express*, 6th January 1939, p. 1.

³⁰ Sir John Anderson, 'Civil Defence Bill', *Parliamentary Debates – Commons*, 4th April, 1939, Vol. 345, col. 2633-2634.

Parliament developed beyond this simple optimism. The principal theme of several articles in newspapers in January 1939 was about how the scheme would be implemented at a local level. Both the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* raised the problems of billeting and feeding extra children and lamented the lack of government organisation and consultation with local councils.³¹ The *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Express* complained that the government could not decide on the best course of action for civil defence, be it shelters or trenches, evacuation camps or billets or whether the scheme should be voluntary or compulsory.³² As a result of the government's indecision, the evacuation scheme was not deemed comprehensive enough by these newspapers.³³

There was also concern expressed about the consequences of mixing people from different regions and social classes. *The Manchester Guardian* reported in January 1939 that Welsh nationalists feared an influx of English urban evacuees who would damage and 'overwhelm' the religious, cultural and linguistic structure of Welsh rural life.³⁴

Apprehension in the newspapers about the possible mixing of people from different classes illustrated the deep social and cultural divides that existed in Britain during this period.³⁵ The fear amongst the middle classes of having to interact with the poor at first hand was a genuine concern.³⁶ For example, on 23rd January 1939 the *Express* reported that more affluent members of the community in Cirencester did not support compulsory evacuation as

³¹ Anon, 'Feeding Evacuated Children: Communal Kitchens', *The Manchester Guardian*, 28th January 1939, p. 3. Also see Anon, 'Health Resorts and Evacuation: Danger of Congestion in an Emergency', *The Times*, 27th January 1939, p. 6.

³² Opinion, 'Needed Urgently', *Daily Express*, 17th January 1939, p. 8. Anon, 'What is Behind these Lie-Down Strikes?' Wal Hannington, *Daily Express*, February 17th 1939, p. 10.

³³ Opinion, 'The Revolt', *Daily Mirror* 6th January 1939, p. 6. Opinion, 'No, Yes!', *Daily Mirror*, 18th January 1939, p. 11. Lord Forbes, 'Tut Tut Sir John', *Daily Express*, 13th January 1939, p. 8.

³⁴ Our North Wales Reporter, 'Evacuation Plans: Refugees a Danger to Welsh Culture', *The Manchester Guardian*, 31st January 1939, p. 4.

³⁵ For further discussions on class and society in Britain between and during the war see Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

³⁶ Lloyd E. Lee, *The War Years*, p. 89.

“families with totally different outlooks and upbringing would not live contentedly in one home for long”.³⁷

The critics argued that, although they supported the premises of the scheme, placing city refugees with working class or unemployed people in South Wales rather than with middle class families would be better as then evacuees could mix with people of their own social class.³⁸ A reader’s letter from 25th January 1939 concurred, arguing that “The turning loose of a hoard of slum children in a country house filled with beautiful furniture is as sensible as giving them the unsupervised run of the South Kensington Museum”.³⁹ Anxieties about working class people in “country houses filled with beautiful furniture” were not, however, the only complaints made about evacuation plans.⁴⁰ From a working class perspective, some mothers were concerned about placing their children in middle class homes where their presence would be resented. For example a woman from Romford wrote to the *Express* in January 1939 asking:

I think there will be many thankful mothers if their children are not billeted with the Gentry of Gloucester. Please tell the hard hearted landowners that most mothers in working-class districts would rather keep their children with them in the danger zones under their own loving care than risk the misery they would endure there.⁴¹

³⁷ Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Rich No Not Want Child Refugees’, *Daily Express* 23rd January 1939, p. 1.

³⁸ ‘Child Refugees’, *Daily Express*, 23rd January, p. 1.

³⁹ Readers’ Letters, H.B. Thomas, Surrey, *Daily Express*, 25th January p. 10.

⁴⁰ H.B. Thomas, *Daily Express*, 25th January p. 10.

⁴¹ Readers’ Letters, N. Draper Staffordshire, ‘Billeting’, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1939, p. 10. Readers’ Letters, Mrs A Romford-Road, Essex ‘Rebuke’, *Daily Express*, 26th January 1939 p. 10.

Some criticised this attitude however, noting that class prejudice was undesirable at a time “when national unity is so essential”.⁴²

[iv] The Family and Evacuation before September 1939

Prior to the outbreak of war, representations of the family appeared regularly in newspaper articles and letters about evacuation. A prominent theme was concern for the stability of family life and the disruption that a national evacuation might cause. *The Times* noted some of the public’s concern about the physical separation of family and friends. A letter to the paper in January 1939 argued that evacuation would do ‘considerable harm’ to family life in Britain and affect wartime morale.⁴³ At the heart of this letter was the importance of family life to some in Britain. A stable home was presented as being of great national importance as it provided consistency and happiness, for children in particular, both in peace and war.

Content relating to evacuation contained, however, explicit references to individual gendered roles in the family unit. For example, a letter to *The Times* in January 1939 asserted that if evacuation were to take place,

Most of the transferred children would not be accompanied by either parent. In keeping the homes going, the women would really be in auxiliary employment of essential national importance.⁴⁴

⁴² Readers’ Letters, Mrs A. Romford-Road, Essex ‘Rebuke’, *Daily Express*, 26th January 1939, p10. Readers’ Letter, Mr Lee, ‘Smug Minority’, *Daily Mirror*, 12th February 1939, p. 12. Readers’ Letters, N. Draper Staffordshire, ‘Billeting’, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1939, p. 10. Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘A Pity they were not Shot’, Lord Winterton Speech, *Daily Express*, 26th January 1939, p. 1.

⁴³ Letter to *The Times* Editor, C. Helsby Trafalgar Sq. *The Times*, 2nd January 1939, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Anon, ‘Evacuation and Education’, *The Times*, 3rd January, p. 11.

However, the *Express* reported that “children under the school age will be accompanied by mothers”, thereby clearly emphasizing who the organisers believed were the primary caregivers in family life.⁴⁵ Another article, which discussed the rejection of the scheme by families from Cirencester, noted that the complaints came from “many members of Cirencester Rural Council - chiefly men of independent means, landed gentlemen-farmers and the Cirencester Urban Council”.⁴⁶ They asserted that city children would “not take kindly to the country”, making clear that social divisions existed not only between classes, but also between town and country.⁴⁷ A letter in the *Daily Express*, in January 1939, however, encouraged the public to see evacuation as a unifying experience for families across the UK, claiming that class divisions in a time of emergency was “snobbish and hard hearted”.⁴⁸ By acknowledging the lack of support for evacuation from some sections of society, newspapers were, in fact, recording the fact that the nature of family life in 1939 varied according to class and geographical location. The possible disruption to family life and the mixing of different classes implied by the scheme were considered real problems.

The family was presented by the press, however, as a diverse unit, subject both to class and cultural divisions. The fact that the evacuation scheme might lead to boundaries of class and culture becoming blurred was treated as a serious issue prior to the war. However, the representation of the nature of the family in the press was uniform. Women, no matter what the family’s class or geographical location, were seen as primary care givers in the family unit, with the press emphasising that social stability was linked to the pleasures of a stable family life.

⁴⁵ *Daily Express* Political Correspondent, ‘Census to find War Homes for 3,000,000 Children’, *Daily Express*, 6th January 1939, p. 1.

⁴⁶ *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, ‘Rich do not want Child Refugees’, *Daily Express* 23rd January 1939, p. 1.

⁴⁷ ‘Rich do not want Child Refugees’, *Daily Express*, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Readers’ Letters, N. Draper Staffordshire, ‘Billeting’, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1939, p. 10.

Section 2: Evacuation and the *Daily Express* Coverage

This section outlines how the *Daily Express* covered the evacuation scheme during 1939. It analyses nine weeks of the *Daily Express*, from 1st – 23rd September, 23rd October – 11th November and 4th - 23rd December 1939.⁴⁹

[i] September 1939

The evacuation of school children and other dependents from danger zones began on 1st September and was widely covered by many of the national daily newspapers.⁵⁰ The amount of coverage about evacuation fluctuated over the three sample weeks and was clearly affected by the need for the newspaper to cover other wartime events. For example, unsurprisingly the highest number of evacuation stories was found in the *Express* at the beginning of September, in the days following the commencement of the scheme. Over 23% of home news in the *Express* sample was devoted to evacuation stories on 1st September 1939, a total of seven out of thirty home news stories.⁵¹ *Express* articles on the 1st September primarily stressed ‘optimism’ and ‘calm’. The newspaper did not believe war was inevitable, however, merely describing the evacuation scheme as a “precaution during this period of tension”, stressing the need for public composure.⁵² By encouraging its readers to back the scheme and to remain calm, the *Express* showed its support for government policy.

Other newspapers also demonstrated that the press were keen to affect a positive spin on the scheme. For example, the *Daily Mirror* announced that children had travelled to their

⁴⁹ See Chapter 3 for a full explanation of the methodology used in the selection and analysis of the material in this chapter.

⁵⁰ Anon, ‘A Good Time Will Be Had By All’, *Daily Mirror*, 1st September 1939, p3. Daily Mail Reporter, ‘The Children Have All Behaved Marvellously’, *Daily Mail*, 2nd September 1939, p. 4. Anon, ‘Evacuation To-Day’, *The Times*, 1st September 1939, p. 7.

⁵¹ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 3, p. 51.

⁵² Anon, ‘Four Day Move by Rail’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5.

“safety resorts like Lords and Ladies” and *The Times* claimed that over three million mothers and children had been evacuated to safety.⁵³ The *Express* also emphasised that in London “you will see no children - the Pied Piper has played his tune”.⁵⁴ This positive engagement with evacuation revealed that newspapers prioritised the level of public participation in their assessments of the success of the scheme.⁵⁵ Journalists, however, needed to supply readers with detailed and relevant information about the movement of evacuees to the countryside.

Out of the seven *Express* articles dealing with evacuation published on 1st September 1939, six were general news items and one was a feature article from the leader page. Five out of the seven articles were on pages 4 and 5 of the *Express*, a positioning which allowed readers to gather information about the scheme from one section of the paper. By clustering such a high proportion of its stories together, the *Express* created greater visual impact, increasing the likelihood that the reader would engage with the material. Each article also covered a variety of topics to do with evacuation, from the transportation of evacuees, to expectant foster families in the countryside.⁵⁶

As we can see from Appendix E Figure 7, the *Express* made clear its support for the removal of people from the danger zones by providing practical information about the evacuation scheme.⁵⁷ For example, the London evacuation scheme relied heavily upon public transport, particularly the railways. On 1st September, the *Express* provided its readers with a relatively detailed map of the nine main routes which the scheme would use.⁵⁸ The accompanying article encouraged the public not to make any unnecessary journeys which

⁵³ Anon, ‘Evacuation’, *The Times*, Monday September 4th 1939, p. 2. As previously stated, however, this number was an exaggeration by the newspaper.

⁵⁴ Anon, ‘They packed up their troubles’, *Daily Mirror* 2nd September 1939, pp. 14-15. Hilde Marchant, ‘Walk through London’ *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Loyd E. Lee, *The War Years: A Global History of The Second World War*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989) p. 89.

⁵⁶ Anon, ‘Evacuation Today’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 1. Anon, ‘5 Day Move by Rail’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5. Anon, ‘Night Decision by Minister’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5.

⁵⁷ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 7, p. 54.

⁵⁸ Anon, ‘The Great March Out’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 4.

might disrupt the smooth running of the scheme.⁵⁹ The language and pictures in the *Express* encouraged those involved to remain calm, showing children getting ready for the “big trek” and encouraging volunteers to “help the children go away in a cheerful mood”. These articles highlighted the fortitude of children in the face of the unknown and treated the subject in a positive manner.⁶⁰

The newspaper’s positive approach to evacuation stories continued in subsequent editions. For example, on 2nd September, a feature article by Hilde Marchant published photos and stories of a young evacuee, Florence, arriving at her new countryside home.⁶¹ Photos showed Florence on the train with her gas mask and walking with other children to the village, while the language comforted readers with the knowledge that city children were safe in the countryside, “their wit and cockney imagination will flourish in this gentle setting. The children are safe”.⁶²

Despite the positive attitude of *Express* articles towards the scheme after 1st September, the amount of home news devoted to evacuation decreased in subsequent editions.⁶³ By the 2nd September, 13% of home news articles discussed evacuation, dropping dramatically to 2.3% by the 4th September.⁶⁴ As we can see from Appendix E Figure 3, another cluster of stories about evacuation appeared in the *Express* on the 6th September, making up 22% of home news stories.⁶⁵ The newspaper used a variety of different content to

⁵⁹ Anon, ‘These are the one way roads out of London today’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 4. Anon, ‘Evacuation of 3,00,000: The Plans’, *Daily Mirror*, 1st September 1939, p. 4. Although *The Times* did not provide a map for its readers, it gave detailed information regarding evacuation travel plans. Anon, ‘Home News: Warning to Passengers’, *The Times*, 1st September 1939, p. 7.

⁶⁰ Anon, ‘Four Day Move By Rail’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5. L.C.C. Chief, ‘Safe Return to Dear Old London’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 6, p. 54.

⁶¹ Hilde Marchant, ‘Florence of EC1 Sees her First Village’, 2nd September 1939, p. 9. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 8, p. 55.

⁶² ‘Florence of EC1, 2nd September 1939, p. 9.

⁶³ Anon, ‘Starts with a Game’, *Daily Express*, 2nd September 1939, p. 12. Anon, ‘London’s Children are Safe’, *Daily Express*, 4th September 1939, p. 5. Anon, ‘This Will Help them Settle Down’, *Daily Express*, 5th September 1939, p. 9.

⁶⁴ See Volume II Appendix E Figure 3 p. 51.

⁶⁵ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 3, p. 51.

present the information to the reader, including two feature articles, three letters, one photo news item and a regular women's feature.⁶⁶ The language in each item was personal and conversational, describing individual experiences and opinions about the scheme.

The content not only showed how children had settled into their new homes, reassuring the readers of the scheme's success, but also implied that London was not a healthy environment for children in wartime.⁶⁷ For example, a letter from a middle aged man to his evacuated elderly mother described how London was now empty, except for

Sandbags! – The chief trouble I find is that there is so little to do without the theatres and cinemas. It is all very well if you live in a large household, but when you live alone, like I do now, you can't very well pass the time with games.⁶⁸

Although the letter was bright and cheerful in tone, describing the day-to-day activities of a man in wartime London, it implied that due to the blackout and air raids, life in London was not conducive to good wartime morale. The clear message of the letter was that the man's mother was better off in the countryside. After the 6th September, however, the number of evacuation stories as a percentage of all home news stories in the *Express*, continued to decline. Between the 7th - 23rd September, evacuation stories occupied between 2% and 12% of all home news stories on any given day - that is between only 1-3 stories per day.

⁶⁶ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 8, p. 55.

⁶⁷ Daily Express Staff Reporter, 'First Air Raid Warnings', *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 5. Reader's Letters, Colin Catheart 'Collapsible Buggies' *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 6. Mrs C.B. 'Billeting', *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 6. Anon, 'This is Ann, Somewhere in the Country', *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 7. Anon, 'Now She's Away, You'll Have Time to Knit Her Something', *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 9. See Appendix E Figure 5.

⁶⁸ Hugh Bateson, 'A Letter to my Evacuated Mother', *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 6.

Individual news items on the topic were also shorter in length, with the issue often discussed only in reader's letters.⁶⁹

As we can see from Appendix E Table 5, the primary focus of articles in the *Express* also shifted in the second and third week of the sample, between 8th- 23rd September 1939.⁷⁰ During this period, *Express* evacuation articles cultivated primarily a feeling of positivity about the scheme, one which could counteract other content in the paper which was highlighting the negative experiences of evacuees and foster families. For example, on 12th September an article entitled 'Let Them Stay' implored readers to "let them [children] stay where they are for their own safety, it will not be as easy to evacuate them as a week ago".⁷¹ Another article by Hilde Marchant on 19th September entitled 'The Children are Back' also asked readers to see the positive side of the scheme, arguing "a lot of families have settled down, and others, with patience will get down to a working basis. Stick with it".⁷²

To encourage this feeling of positivity, from 12th September onwards, the *Express* showed primarily the activities of children in the countryside, with children's improved health also discussed as an important secondary theme. Seven items from the *Express*'s 2nd sample week, such as 'Owns the Village at 8' on the 12th September and 'They Brief a Learned Friend' on 14th September examined the new lives of the evacuees, with five of these items also focusing on how children benefitted from being outdoors, improving their health, making new friends and enjoying themselves.⁷³

⁶⁹ Reader's Letter, W.E. Phillpott, 'Overheard Yesterday', *Daily Express*, 8th September 1939, p. 4. Reader's Letters, L. Jackson, 'Nurses', *Daily Express*, 15th September 1939, p. 4. Reader's Letters, Emily Mackle, 'Visits', *Daily Express*, 18th September 1939, p. 4.

⁷⁰ See Volume II, Appendix E Table 5, p. 53.

⁷¹ Anon, 'Let Them Stay', *Daily Express*, 12th September 1939, p. 5.

⁷² Hilde Marchant, 'The Children are Back', *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 3.

⁷³ Anon, 'They Brief a Learned Friend', 12th September 1939, p. 8. Anon, 'Owns the Village at 8', 14th September 1939, p. 7.

A small increase in evacuation coverage on the 15th September, to 11.5% of all home news stories, was, however, as a result of the newspaper's recognition of the scheme's problems.⁷⁴ For example, it published grievances from foster parents who grumbled about dirty and unhealthy children "covered in vermin".⁷⁵ Complaints by evacuated families were also published, noting that some would "rather stay here [in London] and take what danger there is coming to us than be frozen out by someone who doesn't even show a human courtesy".⁷⁶

As a way of counteracting these protests, however, the *Express* continued to include items in the third week of the sample, which showed positive aspects of the scheme. This positive content was also a way of showing the *Express*'s readers how people should be interacting with the scheme. For example, feature articles gave practical advice to readers about activities for evacuees, designed to make their experience more enjoyable, as can be seen in 'Send the Children Blackberry Picking' and 'Lady of No Leisure'.⁷⁷

The *Express*'s September 1939 coverage of evacuation attempted to show positive aspects of the scheme. While the newspaper recognised evacuation had negative repercussions on normal family life, it gave readers information and advice about how to cope with these problems. Although its content gave somewhat 'mixed message' to its readers about the relative success of the evacuation scheme in September 1939, both the positive and negative coverage of the evacuation scheme served to show *Express* readership the desired, correct behaviour when engaging with the scheme. The importance of the scheme

⁷⁴ Anon, 'They Don't Know What to Do', *Daily Express*, 14th September 1939, p. 9. *Daily Express* Parliamentary Reporter, 'Mothers are Evacuations No. 1 Problem', *Daily Express*, 15th September 1939, p. 5. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 3, p. 51.

⁷⁵ *Daily Express* Parliamentary Reporter, 'Mothers are Evacuations No. 1 Problem', *Daily Express*, 15th September 1939, p. 5. Hilde Marchant 'The Children are Back', *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Hilde Marchant 'The Children are Back', *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 3. *Daily Express* Staff Reporter, 'Evaacs Give Up Jobs', *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 5.

⁷⁷ Anon, 'Send the Children Blackberry Picking', *Daily Express*, 21st September 1939, p. 9. Anon, 'Lady of No Leisure', *Daily Express*, 22nd September 1939, p. 7.

to British wartime society was never questioned by the *Express*, despite teething problems in the scheme's execution.

October and November 1939

From 23rd October – 11th November 1939 there was a noticeable drop in the number of evacuation stories in the *Express*. Only fifteen stories were included in the *Express* over three weeks, with no more than two articles per edition, and with six editions containing no articles discussing evacuation at all. As we can see from Appendix E Figure 9, this represented an average of only 2% of all home news stories which discussed evacuation during the October and November sample, the largest number of evacuation stories, as a percentage of all home news stories, was 9.5% on the 3rd of November.⁷⁸ This was not because this edition of the *Express* contained more articles about evacuation but simply because it contained fewer home news stories than the rest of the sample.

Coverage of evacuation had clearly reduced from September, as the *Express* began to report other wartime home news. For example, the newspaper was vehemently opposed to rationing, claiming it was 'utter madness'.⁷⁹ Discussions about the November 1939 government decision to implement nationwide rationing in January 1940 were therefore met with an increased number of home news stories in the *Express* about rationing.⁸⁰ The reduction in *Express* coverage of evacuation could also be attributed to the newspaper's reluctance to draw attention to the scheme's apparent failings as evidenced by the return,

⁷⁸ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 9, p. 56.

⁷⁹ Opinion, *Rationing*, *Daily Express*, 7th February 1940, p. 6.

⁸⁰ Anon, 'Nov 13 – Ration Day', *Daily Express*, 23rd October 1939, p. 1. *Daily Express* Staff Reporter 'If you Can't Shop by 6, Go Hungry', *Daily Express*, 24th October 1939, p. 5. Basil Cardew, 'Little Men Blame Mr Pool', *Daily Express*, 26th October 1939, p. 7. Anon, 'Here is Your Butter Ration', *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 1. *Daily Express* Staff Report, 'Butter or Marge: Can you Tell?' *Daily Express*, 3rd November 1939, p. 3.

during October and November 1939, of so many women and children to the cities.⁸¹ Instead, articles in the *Express* continued to show the newspaper's support for the scheme by acknowledging its short-comings while asking readers to continue engaging with it. As we can see from Appendix E Table 10, articles included in the October and November sample were a mixture of positive and negative aspects of the evacuation scheme.⁸² For example, the newspaper continued to use photo news stories to publish positive images about evacuation, with four out of fifteen evacuation articles in the sample containing imagery of young evacuees, engaging in fun activities in the countryside.⁸³

Throughout October and November 1939, *Express* articles continued to encourage evacuees to stay in the countryside, arguing that the newspaper “knows only too well how the [children] are missed in the home. But hopes parents will not encourage them to return yet”.⁸⁴ The *Express*'s language in the articles was also more pointed in October and November, with headlines such as “In the Town They Have Bombed” and “Bomb Zone Schools Re-Open” playing on reader's fears about bombing and the deaths of returning children to “danger zones”.⁸⁵ It drew attention to the unsuitability of the cities for children as a way of galvanising support for the scheme.

Readers' letters continued, however, to refer to the negative aspects of the scheme, indicating individual problems encountered by evacuee families and foster families. For example, a letter from 28th October complained of the economic problems experienced by evacuee families, stating that some working-class families did not earn enough to support

⁸¹ Macnicol, *The Evacuation of Schoolchildren*, pp. 18-19.

⁸² See Volume II, Appendix E Table 10, p. 57.

⁸³ Anon, ‘The Day They Dreamed About’, *Daily Express*, 23rd October 1939, p. 7. Anon, ‘Children Follow the Hunt’, *Daily Express*, 6th November 1939, p. 8. Anon, ‘Exciting News Inside’, *Daily Express*, 7th November 1939, p. 7. Anon, ‘Don't Forget to Wash Behind the Ears’, 9th November 1939, p. 3. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 11, p. 58.

⁸⁴ Anon, ‘Keep the Children Out of London’, *Daily Express*, 24th October 1939, p. 7

⁸⁵ Anon, ‘Bomb Zone Schools to Re-Open’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 7. William Barkley, “In the Town They Have Bombed”, *Daily Express*, 3rd November 1939, p7. Anon, ‘3 Small Boys Walk Home’, 8th November 1939, p. 7.

evacuees away from home.⁸⁶ Another letter from 1st November complained that fuel rations, which were being used to provide petrol for vehicles parents used to see their evacuee children, took away vital petrol resources from businesses. Foster families were also expected to entertain parents when they visited, exacerbating the problems of food shortages for families; the writer complained that “the fuss made of evacuee children is ridiculous”.⁸⁷

The *Express* continued to encourage readers to engage with the evacuation scheme in the October and November sample. The newspaper’s language and attitude was more pointed, however, than in September, warning readers about the dangers of returning to the cities, rather than images of happy and healthy children.

December 1939

As we can see from the graph in Appendix E Figure 12, the amount of coverage about evacuation in the *Express* December sample rose relative to that in the period between October and November 1939.⁸⁸ The increased attention given to evacuation by the *Express* can be attributed to the renewed government interest in the scheme and the government publicity drive to keep evacuees in the countryside over the Christmas holidays.⁸⁹ The government wanted to encourage evacuees to remain in the countryside by “building up the story” about evacuation “gradually”, through a variety of different media, including the BBC, films, posters and the press.⁹⁰ Stories in the December sample therefore focused primarily on the positive aspects of the evacuation scheme, with many articles galvanising support for the scheme by covering evacuees celebrating Christmas. Analysis of the December sample

⁸⁶ Reader’s Letters, L.W. ‘Why Evacuees Return’, *Daily Express*, 28th October 1939, p. 6.

⁸⁷ Anon, ‘Rations’, *Daily Express*, 1st November 1939, p. 6.

⁸⁸ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 12, p. 59.

⁸⁹ TNA HLG 108/19 Public Health and Propaganda, Ministry of Health, November 1939.

⁹⁰ TNA HLG 108/19, ‘Evacuation and the Return of Children to Dangerous areas’, in Public Health and Propaganda, Ministry of Health, 1st November 1939, p. 15.

demonstrates, however, that the newspaper did not constantly bombard its readers with positive evacuation stories. For example, four out of eighteen editions of the *Express* in the December sample contained no articles about evacuation at all.

By the final week of the December sample, however, the *Express* had slowly built up its coverage, eventually including at least one evacuation story every day between 16th-22nd December. The highest percentage of evacuation stories, as a percentage of all home news stories, was found at the beginning and the end of the sample with evacuation stories making up 7.4% of all home news on the 4th and 10% on the 23rd of December.⁹¹ Again, however, these editions of the *Express* contained fewer home news stories than the rest of the sample. The largest number of evacuation stories appeared on the 21st and 22nd December 1939, with each edition containing three short articles.

A variety of different articles was used by the *Express* to discuss the scheme, with nine news items, seven feature articles and four photo news stories used throughout the three week sample. Photographs were often included with news items and feature articles, publishing images of happy children enjoying Christmas parties with their parents and foster families.⁹² Fourteen out of the twenty-seven stories in the December sample also contained photographs or cartoons as part of the article. John Hartley has described a picture as being “worth a thousand ideological words” and evidence suggests that in December, as with its September coverage, the *Express* used photography and cartoons to cement support for evacuation.⁹³ Articles with photos were not clustered together, however, in that they

⁹¹ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 12, p. 59.

⁹² See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 14, p. 61.

⁹³ Joh Hartley, *Understanding News*, (London: Routledge, 1982) p. 31. See, Hilde Marchant, ‘Five Hour Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 4th December 1939, p. 12. Photo News, ‘The Children Wait’, *Daily Express*, 4th December 1939, p. 12. Anon, ‘It doesn’t have to be December 25th’, *Daily Express*, 18th December 1939, p. 7.

appeared intermittently throughout the three weeks. This made the newspaper's coverage more visual, helping to present a positive and happy image of the evacuation scheme.⁹⁴

The *Express* continued to recognise the problems of evacuation, publishing articles which lamented failures within the scheme.⁹⁵ From the 8th-11th December a cluster of four stories focused on the return of children to the cities, with one news item noting a lack of consistency in evacuation experiences for children in different classes. For example, children who were evacuated privately were returning home for the holidays, while it was noted that poorer children evacuated at government expense, "even if they wanted to, their parents could not afford to bring them home".⁹⁶ The *Express* not only admonished families who rejected the scheme but also the government for its handling of evacuation, arguing it did not provide sufficient help to foster families and evacuees. For example, a feature article on 19th December discussed discrepancies in the treatment of evacuated children throughout Britain, asking "is it better to be a horse than a child" under evacuation?⁹⁷

The *Express*'s December sample saw an increase in the number of stories about evacuation, as the newspaper attempted to galvanise support for the scheme once again. While articles presented positive aspects of the scheme, such as children and foster parents at Christmas parties, the paper *acknowledged*, through its coverage of the issue of returning children, that evacuation as a policy was in certain respects, under considerable strain.

⁹⁴ Anon, 'Yesterday was Christmas', *Daily Express*, 5th December 1939, p12. Mary Welsh, 'The Queen Eats a Meal Costing 3d', *Daily Express*, 8th December 1939 p. 3. Anon, 'Better than a Clip', *Daily Express*, 22nd December 1939, p. 3. Anon, 'The Deserted Town', *Daily Express*, 22nd December 1939, p. 6.

⁹⁵ Anon, 'Evacuation Will Collapse', *Daily Express*, 20th December 1939, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Daily Express Staff Reporter, 'Back for Christmas Families', 11th December 1939, p. 5. See also Anon, 'Conscientious Objector Refused to Help Evacuate', *Daily Express*, 9th December 1939, p. 7. Reader's Letter, *Daily Express*, 11th December 1939, p. 6.

⁹⁷ W.J. Brown, 'Is it Better to be a Horse than a Child?' *Daily Express*, 19th December 1939, p. 6.

Section 3: Representations of the Family in the Context of Evacuation

This section discusses representations of the family in *Express* evacuation stories between September and December 1939. It is based upon a discussion of the main themes relating to family which appeared in evacuation articles, such as those focusing on mothers, fathers, children, new foster families and family health.⁹⁸

[i] September 1939:

Representations of the family were widely used in *Express* articles throughout the sample. These articles contained, however, a central paradox in that the evacuation scheme was designed to break up individual families, yet throughout the newspaper's sample coverage, imagery and language which was used to support the scheme relied heavily on the idea of a close knit family unit. Evacuation was presented in *Express* articles as a necessary disruption to the family, however, in order to save it from wartime destruction. Readers were reassured that although normal family life was being broken for the sake of the scheme, another type of family would replace it.

In articles which discussed evacuation in the *Express* on 1st September 1939, the family was not a primary theme, however. It was a secondary or tertiary topic embedded in the fabric of articles which discussed the practical issues surrounding evacuation, such as the transportation of evacuees.⁹⁹ However, ideas about the family running through the articles in the September sample drew on common social assumptions about the institution, its components and role in society. The *Express*'s representations of the family did not have to

⁹⁸ For a full breakdown of these individual themes, see Volume II, Appendix E Figure 4 p.52. The dates covered in this analysis can be found at the beginning of Section 2 in this chapter, p.130. Also, a full explanation of this chapter's methodology can be found in Chapter 3, pp. 42-47.

⁹⁹ For a reminder of the definition of primary, secondary and tertiary topics in articles, see Chapter 3, pp. 42-47.

be explained to the readership by the newspaper, as its strength lay in familiarity. By framing the newspaper's discussion of evacuation with a 'familial rhetoric', it naturalised the process of evacuation, by placing it within a framework of normality. It is in the unremarkable nature of the references in *Express* articles that the textures of social ideas about the family are revealed. Representations of the family in the *Express*'s September articles were based, however, on an image of family rooted in traditional gender values. The importance of familial respectability, irrespective of class, and the importance of the maternal role were heavily stressed.

Children and Foster Families

Articles in the September 1939 sample focused on the importance of children in the family unit, with articles demonstrating that their safety was a primary concern of the scheme. Articles, such as 'Four Day Move by Rail' on 1st September, made clear that the mass movement of evacuees was the "biggest thing of its kind in history".¹⁰⁰ News stories were keen to reiterate, however, that the scheme was not destroying the children's sense of familial normality. They would merely be received in the countryside by foster families or 'temporary parents'.¹⁰¹

As we can see from Appendix E Figure 5, six articles in the first week of the September sample contained the category of 'new families' as their primary theme.¹⁰² The image of healthy, clean, loving foster families, concerned for the emotional wellbeing of

¹⁰⁰ Anon, 'Four Day Move By Rail', *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ Anon, 'New Home Starts With a New Game', *Daily Express*, 2nd September 1939, p. 12. Anon, 'These are Temporary Parents', *Daily Express*, 2nd September 1939, p. 16.

¹⁰² See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 5, p. 53.

evacuees in need, was therefore promoted by the *Express* in order to allay people's fears about the scheme's disruption to British society.¹⁰³

Articles such as 'Village Plans its Welcome' on 1st September demonstrated how villagers eagerly anticipated the arrival of evacuees, noting "Everybody was looking forward to the coming of the children. Spinsters and old women were finding motherly instincts they never knew they had".¹⁰⁴ This article presented evacuation as a positive for wartime society, as it allowed 'spinsters and old women' to be a part of a family unit, fulfilling important maternal roles. Not only would these women step into the breach and care for the children, creating a sense of formalised normality for the evacuees, but in doing so, spinsters would find maternal fulfilment otherwise denied to them by their position in society. Their role as temporary mothers was crucial to a continuing sense of familial normality for the children, keeping the family unit at the centre of wartime society. Articles in subsequent editions of the *Express* continued to imply that 'family' life might even be improved for the evacuees in the countryside,

The desks were the same as those at home, the blackboard, the map on the wall, and the coloured drawings round the desks. But the playground is grass, and an oak grows in the middle. No sandbags, no air-raid shelters —just the warmth and peace of an English country village. Their wit and cockney imagination will flourish in this gentle setting. The children are safe.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Herbert Morrison 'Safe Return to Dear Old London', *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5. Anon, 'Village Plans its Welcome', *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Anon, 'Village Plans its Welcome', *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Hilde Marchant, 'Florence of EC1', *Daily Express*, 2nd September 1939, p. 9.

By showing its readers that evacuees were part of temporary, yet stable and healthy, new form of home life, the articles in the *Express* implicitly sought to allay the fears of those who thought evacuation would place a strain on family life and public morale.¹⁰⁶

Representations of this ‘family life’, however, were based upon a particular image of family in wartime society. It was the image of familial respectability, whatever your class or geographical location. Ross McKibbin has argued that the image of the middle class family in the 1930s and 1940s was complex and multi-layered, based around numerous different categories such as class, education, dress, deportment and aspiration.¹⁰⁷ Whereas the image of working class life was based upon strict role segregation in the family home and lifestyles based on a close community of neighbours or family members.¹⁰⁸ However, one common aspect of class behaviour between middle and working class families was the concept of ‘respectability’, the idea that your family was well behaved, clean and tidy, and engaged in good, helpful deeds in the community.¹⁰⁹

Express articles from the September sample showed primarily that, irrespective of their class, foster families that created a new respectable ‘family’ environment for evacuee children were doing their social duty, by protecting the institution of family. Evacuation, despite its ability to break up families, was a good thing, as ‘new families’ were being created by the scheme. The issue of class was downplayed in the *Express*’s language and imagery, with articles highlighting the importance of children entering healthy, clean homes, irrespective of the households class, with ‘parents’ who were concerned for their well-being.¹¹⁰ A happy and staple family life was shown by the *Express* to be crucial in wartime

¹⁰⁶ Daily Express Staff Reporter, “Families with totally different outlooks and upbringing would not live contentedly in one home for long”, ‘Rich do not want Child Refugees’, *Daily Express* 23rd January 1939, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 45, p. 101.

¹⁰⁸ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 204.

¹⁰⁹ McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp. 198-201.

¹¹⁰ Anon, ‘This Will Help them Settle Down’, *Daily Express*, 5th September 1939, p. 5. Anon, ‘Our Harry Gives up His Bed’, *Daily Express*, 7th September 1939, p. 3

society, for the sake of good morale. As we can see from Appendix E Figure 15, the photo from 2nd September showed a neatly dressed couple taking in two evacuee girls.¹¹¹ Although the new ‘family’ was crowded into one small room, everyone looked happy and healthy, with the new ‘mother and father’ engaging with the children, reading the newspaper and smiling. One small girl was carrying a cat in her arms, implying that the children had a new ‘friend’ to play with. The ‘parents’ dress was clearly working class, the man with rolled up sleeves, tattoos and a pipe, and his wife in a simple house coat. The family looked clean, healthy and happy however; an ideal, decent family environment for two young children, who from their dress might be working or middle class. This image of the welcoming, respectable foster family fed into the narrative that Angus Calder has dubbed the ‘People’s War’; the idea that the war created greater unity in society and broke down class barriers.¹¹²

Other images published in subsequent editions of the *Express* depicted the evacuee’s new family life as an extended ‘holiday’, with children spending time at the beach, fishing near the river and enjoying afternoon tea.¹¹³ These articles demonstrated the good health of evacuated children, with country living providing fresh food and fresh air,

One of the girls has just discovered a row of parsley in the garden, and with visions of parsley sauce and stewed eels she is urging me to stop writing and get on with the eel catching. Excuse me, please.¹¹⁴

These ‘classless’ images downplayed the idea of the ‘feckless and dirty’ working class family which had appeared in newspaper coverage of the evacuation scheme prior to September

¹¹¹ See Volume II Appendix E, Figure 15, p. 62.

¹¹² Calder, *The People’s War*, pp.18-19, p. 44.

¹¹³ Anon, ‘Safe and Happy’ *Daily Express*, 4th September 1939, p5. Anon, ‘This is Ann Belinda Leather’, *Daily Express*, 6th September 1939, p. 7. Anon, Evacuated Boys’ *Daily Express*, 7th September 1939, p. 10. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 8, p. 55 and Appendix E Figure 15, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ Tom Float, ‘Town Children are Keen Eel Fishers’, *Daily Express*, 8th September p. 7.

1939. This stems from the fact that when war broke out, the *Express* proved keen to moderate this image and show that families who engaged with the evacuation scheme were respectable members of British society.¹¹⁵ For example, an article published on 15th September 1939 reported George Buchanan MP attacking those who insulted working class evacuees for being dirty and uncouth, and their mothers uncaring, arguing “you are asking their fathers to fight and yet you come here with these villainous and slanderous accusations against their children”.¹¹⁶ When *Express* articles did discuss urban working class families who were not clean and healthy and who attempted to bring their children back to the cities, they were shown in stark contrast to the rural, respectable families who were providing a safe and stable family life for evacuee children.¹¹⁷

The image of evacuated ‘families’ in the countryside was shown in *Express* articles to be a semi-classless image of family life, one that incorporated working and middle class ideas of respectability, good health and child care. This new ‘family’ life that was created as a result of the evacuation scheme was depicted as flexible and inclusive when it came to issues of class, allowing members of society from all walks of life to unite together. Evacuation also allowed individuals, such as spinsters, to take on new maternal roles by looking after evacuees. This image of the idealised, respectable, rural family still left room, however, for disapproval to be expressed in the paper of those in society, such as the ‘feckless working class’, who did not engage with the scheme as they should.

¹¹⁵ The issue of incompetent and uncaring working class families was still considered an issue by some in wartime British society and was often seen through the eyes of social groups unaware of the challenges extreme poverty and poor education posed for parents. For example, a pamphlet from the National Federation of Women’s Institutes in 1940 argued that working class families, especially mothers, appeared uninterested in their children’s wellbeing when they were evacuated in 1939, noting an “appalling apathy from the evacuee mothers: children being literally sewn into their ragged little garments”. See National Federation of Women’s Institutes, ‘Town Children Through Country Eyes’, (Dorking, 1940) pp. 5, p. 21.

¹¹⁶ Daily Express Parliamentary Reporter, ‘Mothers are Evacuation Problem No.1’, *Daily Express*, 15th September 1939, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Hilde Marchant, ‘The Children Are Back’, *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p.3. Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘The Evacs. Give up their Jobs’, *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 5.

Mothers and Fathers Left Behind

Nevertheless, while these articles demonstrated the health benefits of evacuation, showing how children were better off with new families in the countryside, they maintained that this was only a temporary measure. Hilde Marchant noted on 12th September that this time away from the cities would allow children to eventually return to the tenements “a new sturdy race”.¹¹⁸ Articles in September 1939 still asserted the importance of the connection between parents left at home and evacuated children in the countryside. For example, on 1st September an article pointed out that:

A million children in all are to be moved, and special printed postcards telling of their safe arrival will be awaiting them. The cards will be signed by them and posted to their parents—and this will be the first indication mothers and fathers will have of their new homes.¹¹⁹

A letter from a reader, Victor Schafer, on 5th September also asked that photographers in evacuated areas take pictures of the evacuees with their new families, as this would ease parents’ concerns about their children; this would provide “a real personal service that would add greatly to the peace of mind of the people whose children are away”.¹²⁰

Articles also helped parents deal with the separation of evacuation in a practical way, giving them advice about how to play an active part in their child’s life. For example, feature articles such as ‘Now You have Time to Knit her Something’ and ‘They Don’t Know What to Do’ encouraged mothers to knit outfits for their children and provide them with regular letters

¹¹⁸ Hilde Marchant, ‘Anglers still sit on the Pier’, *Daily Express*, 12th September 1939, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Anon, ‘Four Day move By Rail’, *Daily Express*, 1st September 1939, p. 5.

¹²⁰ Reader’s Letters, Victor Schafer, *Daily Express*, 5th September 1939, p. 6.

reminding them how to behave with their foster parents.¹²¹ These items therefore implied that family life was a crucial part of the children's and parents' lives, despite the absence of children from the family home. However, this coverage aimed at parents' left behind, typically addressed the role of individual parents in a gendered manner, reinforcing the gender roles of women in the family unit. These articles implied that women were the primary care givers in the family unit, and they still had a motherly role to play even if children were physically absent. The role of fathers in the family unit was not specifically addressed, however, until October and November when mothers and children began to return to the cities, and then only briefly.

[ii] October/November 1939:

Mothers and Children Return

The *Express* reported in late September 1939 that evacuees and foster families had begun to reject the evacuation scheme for various reasons including: a lack of hospitality by foster families; vermin infested evacuees provoking hostile responses from those who had to billet them; disruption to normal family life; and financial problems for family members left behind.¹²² Many women returned simply because they felt they were not fulfilling their family duty as while evacuated they were not looking after their husbands at home.¹²³

¹²¹ Anon, 'They Don't Know What to Do', *Daily Express*, 14th September 1939, p. 9. Anon, 'Plan For it: Knitting', *Daily Express*, 18th September 1939, p. 9.

¹²² Hilde Marchant, 'The Children are Back', *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p3. Daily Express Staff Reporter, 'Evacs. Give up their Jobs', *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 5. Anon, 'School Starts Again', *Daily Express*, 21st September 1939, p. 3. Anon, 'What Does it Cost to Keep an Evacuee?' *Daily Express*, 23rd September 1939, p. 6.

¹²³ Daily Express Parliamentary Reporter, 'Mothers Are Evacuations No. 1 Problem', 15th September 1939, p. 5.

Articles also reported a lack of “human courtesy” by foster families and cases of evacuee mothers who were not treated as “those in need of relief”.¹²⁴

In the October and November sample, the *Express*'s representation of family shifted its focus from the image of the loving ‘temporary’ family in the countryside and set out an alternative to bringing children home, by galvanizing support for the scheme by focusing on the issue of child health and children’s place at the centre of a future British society.¹²⁵ For example, a focus on the healthy lifestyle open to evacuated children was evident in the picture story on 6th November, ‘Alf and Jim Run with the Crawley’, which depicted several children following the local Sussex Hunt. The image showed evacuees out in the fresh air, with bright smiles on their faces “racing along behind the followers”.¹²⁶

The *Express* also appealed to parent’s sense of security where returning children were concerned. Articles asked evacuated mothers and those parents’ who remained in the cities to fulfil their social duty by ensuring that their children were kept well away from wartime bombing. For example an article on 24th October, ‘Keep the Children Out of London’, pointed out to parents’:

You are bearing in mind aren’t you, if you bring them back to crowded areas if bombs fall, if buildings are tumbling down that you and I will be frightened, but those children may be terrified and for the rest of their lives their mental balance may be upset – apart from any bodily harm that may befall them.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Hilde Marchant, ‘The Children are Back’, *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 3. Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Evacs. Give up their Jobs’, *Daily Express*, 19th September 1939, p. 5.

¹²⁵ Anon, ‘Alf and Jim Run with the Crawley’, *Daily Express*, 6th November 1939, p. 8. Anon, ‘Exciting News Inside’, *Daily Express*, 7th November 1939, p. 7.

¹²⁶ See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 11, p. 58.

¹²⁷ Anon, ‘Keep the Children Out of London’, *Daily Express*, 24th October 1939, p. 7. Also see, Anon, ‘Bomb Zone Schools to Re-Open’, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 7. William Barkley, ‘In the Town They Bombed’, *Daily Express*, 3rd November 1939, p. 7.

Mothers and Family

Although articles in the October and November sample often focused on the theme of child health, language and imagery in *Express* articles continued to imply, as they had done in September, that women were primarily responsible for their child's or their evacuee's wellbeing.¹²⁸ For example, feature articles which gave advice about how to entertain and educate evacuees such as 'Lady of Leisure', on the 3rd November, and 'School Lessons', on the 9th November, were placed on the women's pages.¹²⁹ The newspaper's placement of these articles appears to have been based on the assumption that the everyday lives and activities of evacuees was the responsibility of women.

As a photo news item on 23rd October shows, the *Express* was still keen to show that mothers in the city still had an important role to play in evacuees lives.¹³⁰ Mothers from London were shown visiting their children in Essex, kissing them as they arrived at the station. The mothers were well dressed, happy, and described as "Basket bearers - carrying goodies".¹³¹ The photograph depicted an image of a traditional mother. She was doing her duty by visiting her child with presents, thereby caring for the child's emotional needs. Yet, her visit also signalled her support for the evacuation scheme and her duty to her child's physical health; she was keeping her child in the countryside.

Images of Queen Elizabeth in evacuation articles also reinforced the idea of women as primary care givers and mothers. Two articles published on 24th October and 9th November 1939 specifically presented the Queen 'as a mother'. Not only did she demonstrate concern for evacuee's safety and wellbeing, she was presented as a symbol of families who were

¹²⁸ Also see Anon, 'Exciting News Inside', *Daily Express*, 7th November, p7. Anon, '3 Small Boys Walk Home', *Daily Express*, 8th November 1939, p. 7.

¹²⁹ Anon, 'No Free Trips', *Daily Express*, 3rd November 1939, p9. Anon, 'School Lessons', *Daily Express*, 9th November 1939, p. 9.

¹³⁰ Anon, 'The Day they have Dreamed About', *Daily Express*, 23rd October 1939, p. 7. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 11, p. 58.

¹³¹ Anon, 'The Day, 23rd October 1939, p. 7.

sacrificing familial comfort and normality for their child's wellbeing. For example, the article, 'Keep the Children Out of London', was presented as having been co-written by the Queen and the Parliamentary Secretary to the MOH, Florence Horsbrugh. The Queen asked readers to heed her advice about keeping children evacuated by appealing to them from her own standpoint "as a mother".¹³² The article from 9th November, entitled 'Don't Forget', depicted the Queen visiting young evacuee children who were "playing mothers" with their dolls. The Queen was shown giving advice to the little girl about how to care for her doll, advising "don't forget to wash behind its ears".¹³³ The stories showed evacuee children as safe and healthy away from the cities. Embedded in them, however, was the assumption that despite the Queen's elevated position in society, she was still a 'mother figure', exemplifying traditional ideas about the relationship between women, children and families.

Men and Family

The role of men in family life was only briefly alluded to in the October and November *Express* sample, perhaps as a result of the absence of men [due to conscription] from the wartime family home, or because they were not themselves evacuated. There were, however, two letters in the October and November sample which referred to the problems confronted by men, as a result of evacuation. For example, a letter printed on 27th October put the case for why a father had to bring his family home:

¹³² Anon, 'Keep the Children Out of London', *Daily Express*, 24th October 1939, p. 7.

¹³³ Anon, 'Don't Forget', *Daily Express*, 9th November 1939, p. 3.

My wages are £3 8s per week. I send my wife 30s, rent is 15s. Clothing and coal club 7s, instalments on furniture 4s. fares to work 2s. 4d. This leaves 10s. for food, light and incidental expenses. I am forced to bring my family back.¹³⁴

The economics of evacuation meant that this man had to bring his family home, if he was to make his wages stretch. Another letter from 1st November also complained of the economic problems consequent on evacuation: “Petrol is being used for motor-coaches for parties of mothers to visit their evacuated children, while hundreds of fathers cannot get enough petrol to carry on their businesses”.¹³⁵

These letters contained a set of assumptions about the family and men’s role in it: firstly, that men had special responsibility for family finances. Secondly, that evacuation added to the financial problems faced by working-class families who already lived precariously on the edge of poverty. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, that male responsibility for finances and working class poverty were assumed to be in some sense normal, and that evacuation was undercutting that normality.

[iii] December 1939

As we can see from Appendix E Table 13, evacuation articles from the December 1939 sample included a variety of themes about the family, with the *Express* continuing to recognise both the positive and negative aspects of evacuation.¹³⁶ In contrast, however, to the *Express*’s negative coverage of the scheme in October and November, articles in the

¹³⁴ Reader’s Letters, *Daily Express*, 27th October 1939, p. 6.

¹³⁵ Reader’s Letters, *Daily Express*, 1st November 1939, p. 6.

¹³⁶ See Volume II, Appendix E Table 13, p. 60.

December sample began to focus more readily on positive aspects of the scheme, such as improved child health and the Christmas season.

Foster Families and Christmas

The image of the extended foster ‘family’ was once again used in *Express* articles from the December sample, as it showed families experiencing Christmas together, with parents and foster families from different backgrounds uniting to support the evacuation scheme. *Express* articles began to once again highlight the important role of the foster parent, with 25% of the number of December sample articles discussing the creation of ‘new families’.¹³⁷

Articles focused on aspects of the Christmas season, reaffirming the idea of there being loving and welcoming families in the countryside. For example, a feature article on 6th December noted how Mrs Shultz from Eastbourne welcomed three more evacuees into her home, for the Christmas season, despite already caring for twelve children.¹³⁸ The ‘Lady of No Leisure’ feature article on page 9 of the same edition also noted how a woman welcomed a “little angel” [evacuee] into her home at Christmas, as her mother had returned to the city to care for her husband.¹³⁹ Another article from the 13th December noted how Mrs Middleton “nearly despaired” of turning her 10 evacuees into a “happy family for Christmas – but running a large family is all very simple, when you know how”.¹⁴⁰ By showing that ‘temporary mothers’ were happy to welcome children into their homes, with the attitude of “the more the merrier”, the *Express* was illustrating just how welcoming foster families could

¹³⁷ See Volume II, Appendix E Table 13, p. 60.

¹³⁸ Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Mother of 12 Evacuees has 12 More at Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1939, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Anon, ‘Lady of No Leisure’, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1939, p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Her Birthday’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 3.

be, especially during the festive season.¹⁴¹ Although these stories about families taking in extra evacuees were probably the exception rather than the norm in British wartime society, they suggest that the *Express* wanted to maintain a positive attitude when discussing evacuation, providing an example of ideal behaviour when engaging with the evacuation scheme.

As with the September coverage of foster families in the *Express*, the image of ‘temporary’ families in December were not ‘normal’, however, but an example of the mutability of family life now being experienced by evacuees. Foster families were temporary, unusual, perhaps even unorthodox, as they were an amalgamation of people from different walks of life. These families, despite their individual differences, shared a common interest, however, in the care of evacuee children and the defence of traditional, respectable family values. The *Express* attempted to show readers that evacuation underpinned ‘traditional’ family values and Christmas became an opportunity for emphasising that. For example, by encouraging families to celebrate the Christmas season, even if “Christmas Day without children is a barren prospect”, the *Express* was encouraging a sense of continuity and normality for families across Britain.¹⁴²

The newspaper pressed the government view that the Christmas season was a “deeply-rooted tradition in this country, in that family, no matter how widely scattered, make supreme efforts to meet together”.¹⁴³ Although the newspaper appreciated that many families would be physically separated on Christmas Day, it emphasised that this should not hinder

¹⁴¹ Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Mother of 12 Evacuees has 12 More at Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1939, p. 3.

¹⁴² Hilde Marchant, ‘676,500 are Returning to Homes in Towns’, *Daily Express*, 18th December 1939, p. 7.

¹⁴³ TNA HLG 108/19 ‘Evacuation and the Return of Children to Dangerous areas’, November 1939, p. 15.

the public in celebrating the time of year in some way, reminding the reader that “he who once gave us Christmas was once an evacuated child”.¹⁴⁴

Images from the *Express* gave a particular inflection to the season, however, demonstrating how flexible the image of ‘family’ could be in evacuation coverage. For example two picture stories from the 5th December and 18th December showed children enjoying Christmas parties with their mothers, foster families and other evacuees.¹⁴⁵ The image from the 5th December showed people who were clean and nicely dressed, around a table filled with food and gifts for the children. The 18th December image showed a crowded room filled with women and children from different classes, all enjoying food and drinks. These images did not depict a ‘normal’ family, however, but a temporary gathering of mothers, foster mothers, and evacuees, united together in the interest of the children and the defence of ‘traditional’ family ideas, such as Christmas. These images emphasised ideas which were important to wartime family life, such as unity, respectability and the care of children, while at the same time, downplaying the image of class.

Imagery of Queen Elizabeth once again appeared in the *Express*’s Christmas evacuation coverage, to emphasise the idea of classlessness when engaged with the Evacuation Scheme. David Cannadine has argued that images of the Royal Family have often been used by the media as a reassuring symbol of “consensus, community and stability” in society, with it being depicted as an idealised role model.¹⁴⁶ Sonya Rose concurs, noting that images of the Royal Family taking an active part in the war effort was an effective way for newspapers and the media as a whole to disseminate the message of “equality of sacrifice” to

¹⁴⁴ Hilda Coe, ‘So Tomorrow is Christmas Eve’, *Daily Express*, 23rd December 1939, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Anon, ‘Yesterday Was Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 5th December 1939, p. 12. Anon, ‘It Doesn’t Have to be December 25th’, *Daily Express*, 18th December 1939, p. 7. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 14, p. 61. Also see Appendix E Figure 16, p. 63.

¹⁴⁶ David Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*, (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2000) p68.

the wartime public, thereby downplaying the idea of class¹⁴⁷ For example, on 8th December a feature article showed the Queen enjoying a Christmas meal with evacuees “only costing 3d: she ate the same meal as the children, Irish stew, bread and raspberry jam tart”.¹⁴⁸ The image of the Queen engaging with the same experiences as the evacuee children and foster families presented an idealised image of social unity, in which all classes sought to make the scheme a success. This article, which showed people from different backgrounds “adopting strangers into their hearts as well as their homes”, demonstrated a sense of wartime unity in defence of evacuation and the family unit.¹⁴⁹

Christmas was therefore deployed in the paper to imply that all families were united by the season, though apart, and that even children in foster homes, could experience the continuity of the season. The image of family at Christmas was nevertheless not an image of ‘normal family life’ per se. These foster families were ‘temporary’ and representations in *Express* evacuation stories allowed for flexibility in their attitude to class. Temporary families were united by their common interest, however, in the care of evacuee children, traditional family values and the celebration of Christmas.

Women and Family

Although the imagery used in the *Express*’s December sample concerning foster families demonstrated the immutability of new ‘temporary’ families, depictions of female gender roles in the family unit remained the same. Women continued to play a central role in family life in the *Express*’s December coverage. Articles such as Hilde Marchant’s ‘5 Hour Christmas’ on 5th December portrayed women as the emotional centre of the family, providers of “warmth

¹⁴⁷ Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁸ Mary Welsh, ‘The Queen Eats a Meal Costing 3d’, *Daily Express*, 8th December 1939, p. 3. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 16, p. 63.

¹⁴⁹ ‘The Queen Eats a Meal, 8th December 1939, p. 3.

and happiness in a united family”.¹⁵⁰ Women continued to be depicted as the driving force behind ‘the family Christmas’. The images in Appendix E Figure 16, of evacuee Christmas parties, had women at the centre of Christmas activities, fussing over children and looking after their wellbeing.¹⁵¹ Articles, such as one published on 14th December, written by Hilde Marchant, portrayed the care of the family as vital war work, essential to the success of the scheme and the strength of the country which, in turn, “lies in the solidarity of its domestic life”.¹⁵² The *Express* recognised, however, that some women were unable to remain with their children in the countryside, and therefore promoted the role of ‘temporary mothers’ who were “designed by nature to keep evacuees happy”.¹⁵³ The primary role of a woman was to protect her family, either by assuming the role of a ‘temporary mother’ or leaving her children with foster parents if necessary. Mothers who brought their children home were admonished by the *Express* for being careless with their children’s lives, arguing “neither the press nor the government approve of the move [of children back to the cities]”.¹⁵⁴

The role of women in the family home was further emphasised in articles during December. On the 16th December 1939, a news item noted that male Civil Servants were unhappy about being evacuated from the cities and that if they were removed from the family home, their wives would have to shut down their houses “inflicting hardships on their wives and families”.¹⁵⁵ Another article on 21st December discussed the same issue, with women complaining to the Minister of Health, Walter Elliot, about “broken homes, of young girls

¹⁵⁰ Hilde Marchant, ‘5 Hour Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 5th December 1939, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ ‘5 Hour Christmas’, 5th December 1939, p. 5. Anon, ‘Yesterday Was Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 5th December 1939, p. 12. Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Her Birthday’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p.3. Anon, ‘Minister is Father Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 22nd December 1939, p. 7. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 16, p. 63.

¹⁵² Hilde Marchant, ‘Fathers to break up for Christmas at Home’, *Daily Express*, 14th December 1939, p. 3.

Hilde Marchant, ‘We know what it is to be parted from our children’, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 6.

¹⁵³ Daily Express Staff Reporter, ‘Mother of 12 evacuees has 3 more at Christmas’, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1939, p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Hilde Marchant, ‘676,500 are Returning to Homes in Town’, *Daily Express*, 18th December 1939, p. 7.

¹⁵⁵ Daily Express Industrial Reporter, ‘We Want to Stay with our Wives’, *Daily Express*, 16th December 1939, p. 3. Also see Opinion, ‘The Wives are Right’, *Daily Express*, 16th December 1939, p. 6.

who have never left home being sent among strangers two hundred miles away, of delicate husbands to whom damp beds might be fatal”.¹⁵⁶ These articles focused, therefore, on women as having lives centred on the home, taking responsibility for household chores and caring for the welfare of their husbands and children.

Men and Family

The December sample affirmed the position of men in the family unit, highlighting their presence, as well as their financial role. There was no mention in *Express* articles, however, of the role of men as role models or ‘temporary father figures’ to evacuated children.

December articles about foster families primarily focused on the role of ‘new mothers’, with other articles highlighting instead the important role men had to play in the normal family home.

Articles and letters, represented family life as being as important to men as it was to women.¹⁵⁷ For example Hilde Marchant’s feature article, cited above from 14th December, described how important family life was to evacuated male Civil Servants; she argued that “the family must be brought together again’ and asserted that “the men are looking forward to the reunion, they talk of nothing else”.¹⁵⁸ The *Express* highlighted how the evacuation of men from the family unit threatened individual morale, as it not only deprived the family home of financial stability, but also a key member of the domestic unit. For example, the article from 16th December which discussed the evacuation of male Civil Servants, quoted one civil servant and his concerns about the loss of the male domestic figure to the family unit, arguing that,

¹⁵⁶ Trevor Evans, ‘8 Women Take Tea with Mr Elliot’, *Daily Express*, 21st December 1939, p7. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 16, p. 63.

¹⁵⁷ ‘5 Hour Christmas’, 5th December 1939, p5. Reader’s Letters, *Daily Express*, 20th December 1939, p6.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Fathers to Break Up’, 14th December 1939, p. 3.

We are protesting to the board because we think the transfer will hamper our work. Besides, definite hardships will be inflicted on our private lives by separation from our wives and families. We will do everything possible to stay in London.¹⁵⁹

Other articles, such as Trevor Evan's '8 Women Take Tea' on 21st December, discussed the problems encountered by families when men were evacuated away from the family home.¹⁶⁰ For example, men had financial responsibilities to their wives and families, which evacuation threatened. Women in the article claimed that "when you send him away my home will go, I shall have to go and live with relatives in Shropshire", while another argued that "if you send him away now, I'll have to move from my home because we won't be able to pay the instalments on our house".¹⁶¹ Although evacuation was deemed a necessity for the safety of children, the evacuation of fathers and husband's endangered the family home. The financial presence of men in the family home also allowed women to fulfil their role as housewife and mother, thereby providing emotional support to children and their husbands.

Conclusion:

The *Daily Express*'s coverage of the evacuation scheme fluctuated between September and December 1939 and was clearly affected by external factors and the need for the newspaper to cover other wartime events. The newspaper's representation of family was, however, a common theme throughout its coverage, with articles drawing on common social assumptions

¹⁵⁹ Daily Express Industrial Reporter, 'We Want to Stay with our Wives', *Daily Express*, 16th December 1939, p. 3. Also see Opinion, 'The Wives are Right', *Daily Express*, 16th December 1939, p. 6.

¹⁶⁰ Trevor Evans, '8 Women Take Tea with Mr Elliot', *Daily Express*, 21st December 1939, p. 7. See Volume II, Appendix E Figure 16, p. 63.

¹⁶¹ Evans, '8 Women Taka Tea', 21st December 1939, p. 7.

about the institution of family, its composition and its role in society. The central paradox of evacuation was that the scheme broke up individual families, but sought to create new types of families in their place. New foster families took on the role of ‘temporary parents’, providing familial continuity and stability for children in the countryside.

The families which developed in the countryside as a result of evacuation were, however, not ‘normal’ per se, in that evacuation demonstrated the mutability of the image of family life in wartime. Representations of foster families and ‘temporary parents’ welcoming children into their homes gave the impression of a new type of family, one unaffected by class and geographical location. Key individual roles within the family unit remained the same, despite the impact of evacuation on the family, and were represented as such. Children were central to the family unit, with their protection forming the basis for the Evacuation Scheme and this was made clear in the coverage. Men and women were also represented as fulfilling social expectations about individual roles in the family unit. This conception of the family was based upon the idea that marriage was the norm and that parenting was characterised by distinct, gendered, roles. Women were presented as the emotional centre of family life, providing care to both children and spouse, while men were seen as the primary financial support for their family.

The *Express*'s representations of the family did not have to be explained to the readership however, as their strength lay in familiarity. Although new foster families were not ‘normal’ families, in that they were the product of familial disruption brought on by evacuation, representations of family were still rooted in core assumptions about gender roles, the importance of the maternal role and respectability. By framing the newspaper's discussion of evacuation within traditional ideas about the family, it naturalised the process of evacuation, giving it a framework of normality. Representations of the family in the *Express*'s 1939 evacuation coverage were based upon communality and the idea of a

classless, more united family life, despite the paradox that the evacuation scheme actually broke up normal family life in the short term.

Chapter Seven:

The Family, The Beveridge Report and the *Daily Express*

This chapter analyses the *Daily Express*' coverage of the Beveridge Report and its discussion of the family in the context of that coverage between 1942 and 1945. It includes a selective content analysis of four weeks of the newspaper's coverage of the Report in that period, plus discussion of the ways in which the family was represented in the paper.

The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one outlines the history of the Beveridge Report and how it was published. It also analyses the government's approach to publicising the Report, noting both Cabinet and Ministerial involvement in the process. Section two analyses four weeks of selected content from the *Daily Express*, analysing the extent of coverage of the Report in the newspaper, and the immediate response to its publication by other popular newspapers, such as the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Herald* and *News Chronicle*. It also briefly outlines coverage of the Report during the 1943 Parliamentary debate on Beveridge and in the run up to the 1945 General Election. Section three analyses the ways in which the *Daily Express* represented the relationship between the Beveridge Report and the family in its coverage.

Section 1:

[i] History of the Beveridge Report

The Report's publication in December 1942 was considered ground-breaking by contemporaries. It generated predictions in the press that it would 'banish want' and bring

about 'utopian social change'.¹ The history and importance of the Beveridge Report has been well documented by historians such as Jose Harris, Angus Calder, John Stevenson and Paul Addison. Addison has argued that the Report's conclusions breathed a 'spirit of optimism and confidence' into British wartime life at a particularly crucial moment in the war, by offering the possibility of real post-war social change.² Stevenson and Calder have argued, however, that the Report was not as 'revolutionary' as Beveridge and his contemporaries thought, as its suggestions were based primarily on existing social insurance policies.³

Historians are, however, in agreement when discussing the importance of the press in covering the Beveridge Report. Harris and Ian McLaine, for instance, have highlighted the large amount of coverage given to the Report by the press, noting the "blaze of publicity which accompanied the Report's release".⁴ Michael Bromley has argued that the press as a whole helped "mobilise public support behind the [Beveridge] project".⁵ There is, however, limited discussion about the content of this coverage. Arguments about the press's coverage often don't go beyond the initial publicity of December 1942 and do not elaborate in detail about whether it was mentioned in the press in 1943.

¹ Anon, 'Beveridge tells how to Banish Want', *Daily Mirror*, Wednesday, December 2nd 1942, p. 1. Opinion, 'Freedom From Want', *The Times*, Wednesday December 2nd 1942, p. 5. Anon, 'The Beveridge Report: A Complete Digest of the Historical Document', *News Chronicle* 2nd December 1942, pp. 2-3. Anon, 'By Courage, Faith and Unity', *Daily Herald* 2nd December 1942, pp. 2-3.

² Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 154.

³ John Stevenson, 'Planners Moon', *The Second World War and the Planning Movement*, pp. 59-77, in *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (ed.) Harold L. Smith, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) p. 72. Angus Calder, *The People's War? Britain 1939-1945*, (London: Pimlico Publishers, 1969) p. 526.

⁴ Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in WWII*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), p. 159. Also see "Beveridge's Report received maximum publicity in the press", Jose Harris, *William Beveridge: A Biography*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Paperback Edition, 1997), p. 415. "Brendan Bracken, for a brief moment whipped all the horses of publicity", Calder, *People's War*, p. 528.

⁵ Michael Bromley, 'Was it the Mirror What Won It? The Development of the Tabloid Press during the Second World War', pp. 93-124, in *Millions Like Us? in British Culture in the Second World War*, (ed.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) p. 93, p. 114.

[ii] Social Security prior to the Beveridge Report

Prior to the implementation of the Beveridge Report, social insurance, such as health insurance and pensions, was based around a multilateral contribution system from the tax payer, private employers and the government.⁶ Due to a lack of comprehensive coverage for all members of the family, many households often relied on private insurance to cover illness or unemployment.⁷ Problems arose from the government's administration of social insurance as over seven different government departments were involved in the management and distribution of benefits to the public. These included the Home Office, the Ministry of Health, the Unemployment Assistance Board and the Ministry of Pensions.⁸

However, the primary problem, in addition to the overlapping administrative structures, was the lack of standardisation in the amount of benefits people received. It did not properly recognise the different types of households in Britain, which fluctuated depending on class and geographical location. In addition the amounts paid often varied depending on the claimant's circumstances and the justification for providing assistance. For example, the average weekly insurance benefit for a man with a wife and two children in 1940 was 20s 6d for sickness, 38s for unemployment and 42s 6d for industrial injury.⁹ From November 1931 onwards the government had relied on a system of means testing for unemployment benefit, which accounted for different amounts of benefit received by each claimant. This new system stipulated that any unemployed person who had received twenty-six weeks insurance benefit should undergo a means test to assess his or her need for government assistance.¹⁰ All resources available to applicants were assessed as part of the

⁶ Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 365.

⁷ Calder, *The People's War?*, p. 526.

⁸ Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 365.

⁹ TNA, CAB 87/76, 'Basic Problems of Social Security with Heads of a Scheme', William Beveridge, 11th December 1941.

¹⁰ W.R. Garside, *British Unemployment 1919-1939: A Study in Public Policy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 64-65.

process, including “pensions, savings and investments and the income of other household members”.¹¹ This method of determining benefits had a negative impact on households and families, both financially and socially in the inter-war period. For example, applicants could find themselves reliant upon other family members for money, undermining the traditional roles occupied by certain members of the household.¹² Men who were no longer considered by the assessors to be the primary wage earner, could lose their social and cultural status as ‘head of the household’.¹³

Another problem associated with the benefit system was that it did not cover the whole population. Angus Calder noted that by 1941 over 21 million were covered by the state old age pension, 15.5 million were covered by unemployment insurance and 20 million by health insurance.¹⁴ Also, help received from the State system would vary substantially, depending on your age, gender and previous employment history. For example, women’s ability to claim insurance was dependent upon their employment and marital status. Employed single women paid lower contributions and received a lower rate of benefit than men, whereas housewives received coverage based on their husband’s contributions. Wives and families of male contributors were not however covered by the national health scheme and had to make their own provisions.¹⁵ Also, the flat rate of payment for health insurance disproportionately hit the income of the lower classes. With widespread unemployment throughout the UK in the 1930s, working class households were often unable to meet the minimum financial requirements for insurance. This could lead to lapsed payments and the loss of coverage.¹⁶ So, when Beveridge published the Report in 1942, the system of social

¹¹ Stephanie Ward, *Unemployment and the State in Britain: The Means Test and Protest in 1930s South Wales and North-East England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) p. 67.

¹² Ward, *Unemployment and the State*, p. 96

¹³ Ward, *Unemployment and the State*, p. 68, p. 96. See also Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p. 129

¹⁴ Calder, *People’s War?* p. 526.

¹⁵ Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 391.

¹⁶ TNA CAB 87/76, ‘Problems which have arisen in the Administration of the Scheme of Health Insurance and Pensions’, August 1941.

insurance system was a “tangle of contradictory principles and inadequate coverage” for the majority of people in the UK¹⁷ There were, however, some in government who by 1941 recognised there was “no justification” for this non-standardised system of insurance and wished to review it.¹⁸

[iii] What was the Beveridge Report Designed to Do?

The Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services was established in June 1941 by the wartime coalition government; it was asked to investigate a wide range of social problems which had developed from the ‘haphazard and piecemeal growth’ of the social security system in the last half century.¹⁹ The desire for reform had both popular and political support, with many viewing improvements to society as an essential part of post-war reconstruction.²⁰ Social commentators of the day, including Rowntree and Keynes, had written during the interwar period about the inequalities of the system.²¹ However, as Richard Titmuss has noted, wartime circumstances, such as heavy inner city bombing, had highlighted the inadequacy of the social services and the need for immediate reform.²²

Chaired by the senior civil servant and administrator Sir William Beveridge, the Committee was asked to provide a “survey of the existing national scheme” of social insurance “and to make recommendations”.²³ Its primary remit was to assess the

¹⁷ Harriss, *Beveridge*, p. 391.

¹⁸ TNA T 161/1161/1, ‘Problems which have Arisen in the Administration of the Schemes of Health Insurance and Pensions’, Ministry of Health August 1941, *in* General: Beveridge Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, 1941-42; Publication of Report.

¹⁹ Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 365.

²⁰ TNA, PIN 8/163 ‘A System of Family Allowances’, 1940-1942. PIN 8/85 ‘Workmen’s Compensation and Social Insurances’, 16th May 1941. See also Nicholas Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*, (London: Harper Collins, 1995) pp. 31-36.

²¹ John Maynard Keynes, *How to Pay For the War*, (London: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940). Seebohm Rowntree, *A Social Survey of Merseyside*, (1931).

²² Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, pp. 66-73.

²³ TNA T 161/1164/1 ‘Beveridge Committee’, 22nd December 1941.

administrative difficulties of the current system and not to deal with in-depth problems of policy. It soon became clear, however, that Beveridge intended to range “wide and deep” with his investigations and make the Report more “ambitious” than the government had intended.²⁴ The Committee was made up of middle- ranking Civil Servants from seven departments, nonetheless, Beveridge dominated proceedings with ideas that had been formulated largely before he reviewed the evidence.²⁵ The first draft of the Report was submitted for government approval in June 1942, with the final draft completed in October 1942. Between June and September, discussions between Beveridge and Treasury officials continued in an attempt to re-draft sections of the Report.²⁶ Official documents reveal that the government was keen to distance itself from Beveridge’s final conclusions, fearing his recommendations would be mistaken for actual government policy.²⁷ Nonetheless much of the document remained unchanged at publication due to Beveridge’s “unwillingness to modify key ideas”.²⁸ The Beveridge Report was finally released by the government on 1st December 1942.

[iv] Beveridge Report Content and Family

The Beveridge Report contained a wide variety of recommendations for the government to consider on the topic of social security. It stated that a post-war government should maintain full employment, create a national health service and provide full family allowances,

²⁴ TNA T 161/1164/1 ‘Beveridge Committee, 22nd December 1941.

²⁵ Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 405

²⁶ TNA, PIN 8/86 ‘Sub-Committee: Administration of Beveridge Scheme’, 1942. PIN 8/87 ‘Beveridge Old Age Pensions Transitional Arrangements, E Hale 18th July 1942, ‘Beveridge Report, Meeting at the Treasury’, 22nd July 1942.

²⁷ “He can’t have the best of both worlds viz. a free hand as to the contents of the report, coupled with the implication that his advisors and assessors agree with his conclusions”. TNA PIN 8/87 R Hamilton Farrell to E. Hale, 3rd September 1942.

²⁸ Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 404. For more information on the government’s desire to distance itself from the report see TNA, CAB 87/79 Arthur Greenwood to William Beveridge 27th Jan 1942. T 161/1164/2 “A Matter of Government Policy” Mr B.D. Fraser 29th September 1942. TNA. PIN 8/87 R Hamilton Farrell to E. Hale, 3rd September 1942.

irrespective of the employment status of the claimant.²⁹ It is clear, however, that Beveridge designed the reconfiguration of social insurance around the family unit. By measuring and assessing “family needs”, Beveridge hoped to achieve the Report’s primary aim, the banishment of “the five giants on the road of reconstruction: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.”³⁰ The Report also recommended that insurance be a help in meeting “special expenditure arising at birth, marriage and death”, key moments in the life of a family unit.³¹ In a paper written in January 1942, Beveridge admitted that the “average family was a statistical myth”, and that the composition of the family in British society was more diverse than the state had previously recognised.³² For example, the Report made note of the falling birth rate in Britain and the rise of average life expectancy, indicating that the composition of families now included fewer children and older parents than in previous years.³³ Families were no longer seen as primarily an economic unit, having children because of their future earning potential. The Report was therefore designed to help as many families as possible by accepting and accommodating their “different ways of life”.³⁴

Although the Report was aimed at improving the lives of different kinds of families, its references to the family focused on individual members of the unit and how they would be affected by the recommendations. It divided society into six categories of social security: employees, independent workers, housewives, unemployed, below working age and the retired.³⁵ Beveridge’s desire to account for a range of different circumstances allowed for

²⁹ TNA T 161/1164/1 ‘Beveridge Committee’, 22nd December 1941.

³⁰ William Beveridge, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, (London: H.M Stationary Office, December 1942) p6.

³¹ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 6.

³² TNA CAB 87/79, ‘The Scale of Social Insurance Benefits and the Problem of Poverty’, William Beveridge 16th January 1942.

³³ Beveridge, *Social insurance*, p. 6. For more information on average family numbers and composition in Britain see Michael Anderson, ‘What is New about the Modern Family?’ pp. 67-90, in *Time, Family and Community: Perspectives on Family and Community History*, (ed.) Michael Drake, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994) p. 69.

³⁴ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 9.

³⁵ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 10.

discussion of mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, housewives, widows, children and the elderly as individual claimants. One of the Report's primary concerns was to bolster the economic stability of families in Britain and in so doing raise working class people above the poverty line. For example, the Report argued that the provision of child allowances for all dependents under the age of sixteen, irrespective of the working status of their parents, would help raise the standard of living for many poorer families. If the allowance was only paid during times of joblessness it would mean that family income would be higher when unemployed and the incentive to work would be lost.³⁶ The Report therefore conceived of the family not as an economic unit, but through the prism of the needs of its individual members.

Housewives were assigned their own category in recognition of the vital work they did in "ensuring the adequate continuance of the British race and British ideals in the world".³⁷ Similarly the position of women in the family was recognised by the Report when it argued that family allowances should be paid directly to the mother. The Report's discussion of women's role in the home was, however, part of a wider debate about the role of women in British society. The debate centred on whether women should be given equal recognition to men in the work place or whether they should receive state recognition of their 'different' roles as "child bearers, housewives and carers in the home".³⁸ Although the Report recognised the place of women in the workplace, and their right to receive state insurance benefits, these women were often presumed to be single and their rights not equal to those of men. Much of the language in the Report assumed that men were the primary bread-winners, providing "more than the minimum for *himself* and *his* family".³⁹ The Report's recommendations

³⁶ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 8.

³⁷ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 53.

³⁸ Susan Pendersen, *Family, Dependence and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France 1914-1945*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp. 138-336.

³⁹ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 7.

therefore reinforced traditional ideas about women's position in the home, celebrating them as a "contributor in the home in kind if not in cash".⁴⁰

This orthodox conception of women's role in society was further compounded by the Report's lack of recognition or support for separated or divorced women, single mothers or domestic spinsters.⁴¹ Although Beveridge had been keen to include provision for the circumstances of divorce and separation, he was overruled by the committee. It is clear that the Report did little to challenge fundamental questions about the contemporary social structure, women's rights and their position in British society.⁴² As this was not the overall intention of the Report, however, this is unsurprising. The Beveridge Report recognised the changing financial circumstances and physical makeup of the family during the twentieth-century but did not challenge social assumptions about the role of individuals played within the family. Social security was designed to apply primarily to people living within the family unit and despite some references to individual circumstances, the Report did not recognise adequately the role of people living outside of that institution.

Section 2: The Press and The Beveridge Report

[i] Press Discussion of Social Security and The Beveridge Report prior to December 1942

As Harris notes, the issue of social security and post-war reconstruction was a topic of "widespread intellectual and popular discussion" prior to the release of the Beveridge Report

⁴⁰ Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Harris, *Beveridge*, pp. 394-396.

⁴² Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 393.

in December 1942, including the press.⁴³ The presentation and attitude of the press towards social security and its post-war role was not, however, the same in different newspapers. For example, in 1941 the *Daily Herald*, *News Chronicle* and *Daily Mirror* had all published articles which discussed favourably the need for social change in post-war Britain and the Welfare State. News items such as ‘Report on Family Allowances’, ‘Blue Print for a New Britain’ and ‘Peace Aims Debate’ reported on the 1941 Labour Party Conference and the Party’s determination to resolve issues surrounding social security in Britain, such as unemployment benefits, housing and family allowances.⁴⁴ Articles from the *Daily Herald* noted that discussion of social benefits was the “nation’s affair” and that the war effort was “incomplete” without it.⁴⁵ Opinion columns, such as ‘Planned World’ published on 27th May 1941 in the *News Chronicle*, also supported more universal and fairer access to social benefits, arguing it was “the first step towards a planned world, a world which is peaceful and secure – the attachment of which can alone justify the agonies of this generation”.⁴⁶ The *Mirror*, *Herald* and *Chronicle* were keen to show their support for changes to social security, arguing it would foster a greater sense of “family citizenship that will end the power of money and exploitation”.⁴⁷ It would also give the British population equal treatment when

⁴³ Jose Harris, ‘Political Ideas and the Debate on State Welfare, 1940-1945’, pp.233-263, in (ed.) Harold L. Smith, *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) p. 236.

⁴⁴ Anon, ‘Labour Conference Pass Executive Report on Family Allowances’, *News Chronicle* 3rd June 1941, p. 3. Anon, ‘Blue Prints for a New Britain’, *Daily Herald*, 5th June 1941, p. 1. Anon, ‘Peace Aims Debate’, *Daily Mirror*, 2nd June 1941, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Opinion, *Daily Herald*, ‘Give them Justice’, *Daily Herald* 28th June 1941 p2. Also see Opinion, ‘Labour’s Message’, *Daily Herald* 5th June 1941, p. 2. Lady Sanderson, ‘Your Home after the War’, *Daily Herald*, 10th July 1941, p2. Louise Morgan, ‘Housewives will help Reith’, *News Chronicle* June 24th 1941, p. 3. Anon, ‘Skilled Men’, *Daily Mirror*, 8th August 1941, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Opinion, ‘Planned World’, *News Chronicle*, 27th May 1942, p. 2. Also see Ian Mackay “Labour Demands a People’s Peace Pledge by Premier: Mr Churchill has Avoided it So Far”, *News Chronicle*, 27th May 1942, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Ian Mackay, ‘Labour Demands a Peace Pledge by Premier’, *News Chronicle*, 27th May 1942, p. 3. Also see Anon, ‘Labour Stands by Election pact –demands family allowances’, p1, Opinion, ‘Square Deal’, *News Chronicle*, 28th May 1942, p. 2. Political Correspondent, ‘Family Allowances: Next Step’, p1, Opinion, ‘Harley Street’, *News Chronicle*, 19th June 1942, p. 2. Anon, ‘No Selfish Use of Enormous Power’, *News Chronicle*, 22nd June 1942, p. 3.

receiving help from the government, a “square deal” no matter what their class, age or gender, creating a “happier and healthier community”.⁴⁸

The *Express*, however, talked about issues of social security and post-war social change in a different manner to other wartime popular newspapers. It recognised that post-war reconstruction was part of a national dialogue in 1941 and 1942, centred on events such as the 1941/1942 Labour Party Conference, the 1942 Budget and the release of the Beveridge Report.⁴⁹ For example, articles such as ‘There are Miners on the Dole’, ‘School Meals for Children’ and ‘Unions Differ over Family Payments Issue’ were published between May and September 1941, and discussed social problems in wartime society, addressing issues such as poverty, working hours and strike action.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, rather than supporting the need for post-war changes to the social security system, which might alleviate some people’s fears about current social problems, the *Express* chose to discuss these issues as current news items. Few, if any, solutions to these problems were offered by the *Express*, with these articles merely reporting the news, rather than opinions about how to solve the problem.

The *Daily Express* was most reluctant to show any kind of support for changes to social security in post-war Britain. For example, in June 1941 it acknowledged the Labour Party Conference’s discussion of post-war aims, but rejected the idea of discussing these issues in wartime because Britain must concentrate on “winning the war first”.⁵¹ The *Express* was concerned primarily with galvanising support for the war effort and unwilling to

⁴⁸ Opinion, ‘Square Deal’, *News Chronicle*, 28th May 1942, p2. Opinion “Harley Street for All”, *News Chronicle*, 19th June 1942, p. 2. Also see Anon, “Labour Conference Pass Executive Report on Family Allowances”, *News Chronicle* 3rd June 1941, p. 3. Anon, ‘Blue Prints for a New Britain’, *Daily Herald*, 5th June 1941, p. 1. Anon, ‘Peace Aims Debate’, *Daily Mirror*, 2nd June 1941, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Anon, ‘Women Defend Family Payments’, William Barkley, ‘Socialist Split’, *Daily Express* 28th May 1942, p. 3. Vivien Batchelor, ‘7 Women of Poplar plan post-war homes’, *Daily Express* 29th May 1942, p. 3. Express Staff Reporter, ‘9 out of 10 will see clinic doctors’, *Daily Express*, 19th June 1942, p. 3. Express Parliamentary Reporter, ‘Family Allowance Decision Help Up’, *Daily Express*, 24th June 1942, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Trevor Evans, ‘There are Miners on the Dole’, *Daily Express*, 12th June 1941, p. 2. Trevor Evans, ‘Bevin’s Men Defy his Wage Ban’, *Daily Express*, 20th August 1941, p. 4. Anon, ‘School Meals for Children’, *Daily Express*, 29th September 1941, p. 3. Trevor Evans, ‘Pensions for All - £2 a Week’, *Daily Express* 1st April 1942, p. 1. Trevor Evans, ‘Tribunal for Wages’, *Daily Express* 8th August 1942, p. 3.

⁵¹ Opinion Column, ‘Labours Testimony’, *Daily Express*, 3rd June 1941, p. 2.

encourage discussion of the subject as the “British people are more interested in our war plans than our peace aims”.⁵² The *Express* also believed that post-war spending was not a high priority for wartime governments, and that wartime austerity and the need to “cut red tape” would bring victory on the home front, allowing politicians to engage with possible changes to the social security system afterward.⁵³ It also noted that the Beveridge Report would not reveal anything new to the public but merely highlight an issue that could not currently be solved.⁵⁴ If there was to be discussion about the post-war world, it was better this was about international problems such as maintaining peace and reviving industry in Europe.⁵⁵ The *Express* most probably took its cue, on the newspaper’s discussion of Beveridge from Churchill, whose close relationship with Beaverbrook was well known; Churchill commented in 1943 that discussion of post-war change and Beveridge had led the public to believe in “false hopes and airy visions of Utopia and Eldorado”.⁵⁶

The *Express*’s coverage of unemployment, pensions and family allowances did not ignore the problems of the social security system prior to the release of the Beveridge Report. It merely qualified its position on the issue of post-war change, arguing, in effect, that wartime was an inappropriate moment to discuss changes in the post-war world such as this.

⁵² Opinion, ‘Power to Win’, *Daily Express*, 6th June 1941, p. 2. Opinion, ‘Deeds Will Tell’, *Daily Express*, 15th August 1941, p. 2.

⁵³ William Barkley, ‘Curse and Swear Get the Job Done’, *Daily Express* March 25th 1942, p. 2. Anon, ‘Make Watch the Meter your Motto’, *Daily Express*, 19th March 1942, p. 3. Anon, ‘Austerity’, (Cartoon) *Daily Express* 2nd April 1942, p.2. Opinion, ‘Hew More, Use Less’, *Daily Express*, 25th April 1942, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Anon, ‘There Seems little for Sir William to Say in 1942’, *Daily Express*, 28th November 1942, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Kingsbury Smith, ‘US plans 5 Power Peace Bloc for Post War World’, 25th May 1942, p.4. William Barkley, ‘We must ruler Germany after the war’, *Daily Express*, 3rd June 1942, p. 3. William Barkley, ‘After the Peace Starts Word War’, *Daily Express* 4th June 1942, p. 4. Anon, ‘Ideal Britain Plan begins the day after the war ends’, *Daily Express*, 15th August 1942, p. 3. Trevor Evans, ‘120 Big Business Men Plan their Post War World: Control – but Not by State’, *Daily Express* 11th November 1942, p. 3. Anon, ‘Post War Plan for Big Business’, *Daily Express* 25th November 1942, p. 3.

⁵⁶ TNA CAB 66/33, Note on ‘Beveridge Report’ by the Prime Minister added to document, 15th February 1943, ‘Promises about Post-War Conditions’ 12th January 1943.

[ii] Press Publicity, Government and The Beveridge Report's Release:

There was public discussion about the Beveridge Report prior to its publication in December 1942, thanks to a publicity campaign conducted personally by Beveridge which included public appearances and interviews with the press.⁵⁷ For example, throughout 1942 Beveridge wrote several feature articles for the *News Chronicle*, such as 'We Need a New Spirit', 'Work For All After the War' and 'Enough For All After the War', which discussed post-war reconstruction, housing, employment and the need for a Welfare State.⁵⁸ He argued that Britain needed to care for the nation as a whole and that "the wartime government should think ahead for the nation, but not for itself. They should be a suicide club, prepared to die politically, that Britain and civilisation may live".⁵⁹ Not all press coverage in the run-up to the Report's release was favourable, however. The *Daily Telegraph* claimed in an interview with Beveridge that the Report would politically take Britain "half way to Moscow", a statement strenuously denied by Beveridge.⁶⁰ Also, as discussed above, the *Daily Express* urged its readers to concentrate on the war effort, rather than post-war social aims.⁶¹

Beveridge had been forced to organise a campaign of publicity for the Report because of disagreements amongst the Cabinet about the amount of publicity the Report should receive. For example, Churchill was concerned about some of the Report's conclusions and wished to avoid a detailed public discussion of post-war social policy. He viewed it as an unnecessary distraction from the war effort. However, according to Clement Attlee's

⁵⁷ Sir William Beveridge, 'Work For All After War', *News Chronicle*, 31st July 1942, p. 2. Sir William Beveridge, 'Enough For All After the War', *News Chronicle*, 14th October 1942, p. 3. Anon, 'Planned Abundance after the War', *The Times*, 19th October 1942, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Sir William Beveridge, 'We Need A New Spirit', *News Chronicle*, 19th March 1942, p. 2. Sir William Beveridge, 'Enough For All After the War', *News Chronicle*, 14th October 1942, p. 3. Anon, 'Planned Abundance after the War', *The Times*, 19th October 1942, p. 2.

⁵⁹ 'We Need A New Spirit', 19th March 1942, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Anon, 'Half Way to Moscow', *Daily Telegraph*, 19th November 1942, p. 3. See also Michael Bromley, 'Was it the Mirror What Won It? The Development of the Tabloid Press during the Second World War', pp. 93-124, in *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War*, (eds.) Nick Hayes and Jeff Hill, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999) p. 109.

⁶¹ See Chapter 7, p. 173.

biographer Kenneth Harris, Attlee was broadly in favour of the Report and wanted to help with publication.⁶² On 26th November 1942, however, the Cabinet began to recognise the public and press appeal of the Report and concluded that it was “unwise to hold publication of the Report up any longer than possible”.⁶³

Once the Cabinet eventually decided to publish the Report in full, it was keen to control the way in which it was published, denying Beveridge official facilities to host his own press conference at the MOI. On November 26th it concluded that as “it is a government Report - it is for the government to decide how and when it should be published”.⁶⁴ It was happy, however, for Beveridge to conduct a press conference after the publication of the Report.⁶⁵ This was at variance with the actions of the MOI. The Report was well received by the MOI and Brendan Bracken the Minister of Information as, according to Paul Addison, it served as a “brilliant propaganda weapon” against Nazi Germany.⁶⁶ The Report was therefore given “maximum publicity” by the MOI upon its release.⁶⁷ Bracken arranged a press conference for Beveridge and released large numbers of a summary version of the plan to the public and press.⁶⁸

The reason for this apparent difference between the Cabinet’s position and that of the MOI’s is difficult to ascertain, however, as no MOI documents about the publicity campaign survive. The memoirs of Francis Williams who, as Controller of Press Censorship, was a key figure in the MOI from 1941-1945, do not give details about how or why the Ministry made

⁶² Kenneth Harris, *Attlee*, (Orion: London, 2nd Edition 1995), pp. 216-222.

⁶³ TNA, CAB 195/2/2 ‘Cabinet Secretary Notebook’, 26th November 1942.

⁶⁴ TNA CAB 65/28/29 ‘Cabinet Conclusions’, 26th November 1942. There was no objection to Beveridge broadcasting “after the release of the report”.

⁶⁵ TNA CAB 65/28/29 ‘Cabinet Conclusions’, 26th November 1942.

⁶⁶ Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 217. See also, Charles Lysaght, *Brendan Bracken* (London, Allen Lane, 1979), p. 228.

⁶⁷ McLaine, *Ministry of Morale*, p. 181. Lysaght, *Brendan Bracken*, p. 228.

⁶⁸ Francis Williams, *Press, Parliament and People*, (London: 1946) pp. 82-83.

the plans “widely known and appreciated” amongst the public.⁶⁹ In addition, no evidence appears to exist elsewhere in the National Archives on how the Report was published, that is who was directly involved, how many Reports were to be printed and where it was to be distributed. They have either been destroyed or removed. However, what we do have is the press coverage of the Beveridge Report.

The lack of government documentation about the Report’s release demonstrates, at best, that there were differences of opinion within government at the highest levels about the extent to which the Report should be given publicity, and that these differences were expressed in the manner in which it was discussed and handled in November and December 1942.⁷⁰

The Report was eventually published on 1st December. The *Daily Mirror*, for instance, splashed the story across its front page on 2nd December, popularising the phrase “from the cradle to the grave” and demonstrating how the Report’s recommendations, if implemented, would support its readers’ throughout life.⁷¹ Detailed feature articles, such as ‘Social Security for All’ and ‘We Can Afford It’, were spread across pages 3 and 4, accompanied by graphic tables illustrating what “the plan does for everyone”.⁷² The *Daily Herald* and *News Chronicle* also included double page spreads on the release of the Report, covering at least 90% of the two inside pages, presenting tables which broke down the cost of

⁶⁹ Francis Williams, *Press*, p. 90.

⁷⁰ No Cabinet Papers throw any light on the reasons why these documents no longer exist. A list of Cabinet Documents consulted are as follows: TNA, CAB 21/3762 ‘Reminiscences and Reflections, by Lord Beveridge’, December 1940- April 1958; CAB 65/29/29 ‘War Cabinet Conclusions’ 4th November 1942; Cab 117, ‘War Cabinet Reconstruction Committee: Beveridge Public Opinion’ 14th November 1942; CAB 195/2/2 ‘Cabinet Notebook: Beveridge’ 26th November 1942; CAB 123/50, ‘Amendments to a Pamphlet by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs concerning the Beveridge Report on social security’, 1943.

⁷¹ Anon, ‘Beveridge Tells How to Banish Want’, *Daily Mirror*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

⁷² Anon, ‘Social Security for All – If We Work?’, Sir William Beveridge, ‘Britain Can Afford It’; Anon, ‘What the Plan Does for Everyone’, *Daily Mirror*, 2nd December 1942, pp. 3-4.

the report's recommendations for the individual tax payer and the national exchequer.⁷³ The report's release took up large amounts of space in these newspapers as it was, according to the *News Chronicle* "so profound in its significance for the life and happiness of the British people, it must today monopolise public attention".⁷⁴

Michael Bromley has argued, however, that there were subtle differences in the coverage of the Beveridge Report between different popular newspapers. For example, the *Daily Herald's* language was more formal and impersonal than the *Daily Mirror's*, addressing readers as a "typical family of man, wife and two children" with information about the Report primarily focused on government statistics about social security⁷⁵. On the other hand, the *Daily Mirror* focused on the everyday impact of the Report on its readers. It presented much of the information in graphic form, addressing the reader less formally as 'you'.⁷⁶

Whatever the differences in newspaper presentation, the prospect of establishing economic stability for families was at the heart of the Report's recommendations and its subsequent presentation in the popular press. Popular newspaper coverage, therefore, concentrated on the economic benefits to the family, characterising the Report as a "housewives' charter", designed to help families financially and unite husband and wife "as a sharing team".⁷⁷ The *Chronicle* and the *Mirror* also stressed that economic stability for families would help the birth rate rise, thereby allowing people to have larger families if they wished.⁷⁸ Although popular newspapers such as the *Herald*, *Chronicle* and *Mirror* differed slightly in their presentation of the Report, the message of support from these newspapers

⁷³ Anon, 'The Cost of Beveridge', *News Chronicle*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2. Anon, 'For Housewives: For Children', *Daily Herald*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

⁷⁴ Opinion, 'Beveridge', *News Chronicle*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Bromley, 'Was it the Mirror What Won It?', p. 110.

⁷⁶ Bromley, 'Was it the Mirror What Won It?' pp. 110-113.

⁷⁷ Anon, 'Housewives Charter', *Daily Herald*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Anon, 'Social Security for All', *Daily Mirror*, 2nd December 1942, p. 4. Anon, A.J. Cummings 'Insurance for All: £2 a Week Pensions – Free Medical Care', *News Chronicle*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

was the same. Their press coverage supported the Report's conclusions and they urged that the "Report should be adopted as a whole" for the "happiness of the common man".⁷⁹

While these newspapers supported the recommendations of the Beveridge Report, there was no indication, however, that they were realistically asking for its immediate implementation in wartime. They were simply more willing to discuss the benefits of the Report in the hope of securing government legislation, which would show a firm commitment on behalf of the government to the Report's findings in the post-war world.

Section 3: The *Daily Express* and the Beveridge Report

This section will provide a detailed analysis of data and articles gathered from 4 weeks of the *Daily Express*. The weeks cover the release and immediate coverage of the Report between 2nd -8th December 1942; the Parliamentary debate about Beveridge in the week of the 15th -21st February 1943; and the run-up to the 1945 General Election between 18th -2nd July 1945.

[i] The Release of the Report: 2nd-8th December 1942.

The *Daily Express*'s coverage of the Beveridge Report's release was slightly different to that of other popular newspapers such as the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Herald*. Although the *Express* printed a comprehensive breakdown of the Report's content, the space afforded to the discussion of the Report was distinctly less than in other popular newspapers. Its support of the Report's recommendations was also far more reserved than other newspapers. The *Express* reported the likely benefits that would flow from the recommendations while emphasising criticisms of the Report.

⁷⁹ Anon, 'Social Security for All', *Daily Mirror*, 2nd December 1942, p. 4. Opinion, 'Beveridge', *News Chronicle*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

Between 2nd and 8th December 1942, five out of the six editions of the *Express* contained a reference to the Report, amounting to a total of fifteen articles over the week.⁸⁰ The majority of space devoted to articles about the Report appeared immediately after its release on the 2nd and 3rd of December 1942. On the 2nd December, seven articles were included discussing the Report in some way, taking up 29.4% of the total space devoted to news content in the newspaper.⁸¹

Four of the seven articles on 2nd December were included on the front page of the *Express*, taking up 30% of total space on page one.⁸² A photograph of Beveridge was included alongside the headline “300,000 words by hand”.⁸³ This photo news caption, however, mainly discussed William Beveridge’s forthcoming marriage to Mrs B.D. Mair, rather than the Report’s conclusions. The other three articles focused on the financial and political implications of the Report’s recommendations. For example, the *Express*’s Industrial Reporter Trevor Evans outlined the preliminary details of the Report in ‘Beveridge How My Plan Works’, giving basic information on the financial implications of the proposed system for *Express* readers.⁸⁴ Evan’s language was simple and explanatory, indicating the level of contributions individuals and employers would have to make under the proposed scheme. His tone and language when discussing the Report was neither excitable nor inflammatory; he simply outlined the relevant information for the *Express* reader. Although Beveridge described the Report as heralding a “British revolution”, Evans was careful to assure readers that the Report’s main proposal lay in the “co-ordination of all existing services”, rather than a radical overhaul of the social security system.⁸⁵ His argument that Beveridge’s scheme was “unlike the Soviet Scheme, which does not raise contributions from insured persons at all”

⁸⁰ Sunday was not included in the week’s data.

⁸¹ By December 1942 the *Express* contained 4 pages. See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 3, p. 65.

⁸² See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 1, p. 64.

⁸³ Anon, ‘300,000 Word By Hand’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Express Industrial Reporter Trevor Evans, ‘£2 Week Pensions for All: Beveridge How My Plan Works’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Trevor Evans, ‘£2 Week Pensions’ 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

seemed designed to reassure *Express* readers that the Report was not taking Britain “half way to Moscow” as the *Daily Telegraph* had claimed on the 19th November.⁸⁶ The article attempted to be as impartial as possible, pointing out the possible benefits that might arise while also noting that there would be “many critics” of the Report, especially among workers whose contributions would increase and insurance companies whose revenue would decrease, pointing out that: “the miners will criticise Sir William’s suggestion in his compensation plan that dangerous trades, including theirs, should take additional levies to the compensation fund”,⁸⁷

Guy Eden’s ‘Debate: Then a Decision’, printed on page one, was also measured in its use of language. Eden suggested that readers should not be too excited about the Report’s recommendations, as a decision on their implementation would require future careful political thought; after a “full debate in Parliament” and “on the views then expressed a final decision will be made about the plans”.⁸⁸ The front page of the *Express* on 2nd December therefore provided an initial indication that its coverage of the Report was descriptive and cautious. The front page also demonstrated the complexity of the *Express*’s ensuing coverage of the Beveridge Report. While on the one hand the paper projected a sense of restraint about the likely immediate benefits of the recommendations, on the other it recognised the positive implications of the document. For example the article, ‘All Europe Hears It’ represented the ideas in the Report as a “beacon of hope” for those in Nazi occupied Europe.⁸⁹

An estimated 50% of the leader page on page 2, however, was occupied by discussion of the Report’s conclusions and recommendations and the *Express*’s opinion on them. A

⁸⁶ Anon, ‘Half Way to Moscow’, *Daily Telegraph*, 19th November 1942, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Express Industrial Reporter Trevor Evans, ‘£2 Week Pensions’, 2nd December 1942, p.1.

⁸⁸ Guy Eden, ‘Debate: Then A Decision’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Anon ‘All Europe Hears It’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

feature article entitled “The Beveridge Blue Print”⁹⁰ set out the “essence” of the Report in a text box outlining the financial impact of the Report for readers, breaking down the exact amount they would be expected to pay to be eligible for benefits.⁹¹ The opinion column highlighted the positive aspects of the Report, noting that it was a “welcome and new, vigorous contribution to the discussion of our social problems” in Britain.⁹² At the same time it urged its readers to:

Read it. Consider it. Discuss it with friends. For this is a document of capital importance to every man and woman in this island. This programme deserves the closest and most critical examination.⁹³

The column framed its response in a way that was neither an outright endorsement nor a rejection of the entire Report. The *Express* therefore maintained the attitude it held towards social security prior to the Report’s release, that changes to the system were inadvisable in wartime. It was simply more vocal about this point than other popular newspapers at the time.

The *Express*’ attitude to the Beveridge Report can be perhaps explained, in part, by the close relationship between Lord Beaverbrook and Churchill.⁹⁴ As noted earlier, Churchill was not in favour of the publicity Sir William received prior to the Report’s release, as he believed this would put pressure on the coalition government to implement the Report’s findings without delay – something he was unwilling to do.⁹⁵ He did not want to make

⁹⁰ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 2, p. 64.

⁹¹ Anon, ‘Beveridge: What it Does’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

⁹² Opinion, ‘The Report’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

⁹³ Opinion, ‘The Report’, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

⁹⁴ In a letter on 29th November to Churchill, with Beaverbrook described himself as “a difficult colleague and close friend” of the Prime Minister. Beaverbrook Papers, House of Lords Archive, BBK C/87 Beaverbrook and Churchill Correspondence, Letter from Beaverbrook to Churchill, 29th November 1941.

⁹⁵ Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 216.

promises to the British public he was unsure could be kept in the post-war world.⁹⁶ He later argued, in 1951, that the public would be “liable to get very angry if they feel they have been gulled or cheated [out of the Report]”.⁹⁷ Therefore it is reasonable to infer that Beaverbrook wanted to support Churchill’s position over Beveridge by not raising expectations about the implementation of the Report’s recommendations.

On the following day, 3rd December 1942, the *Express* focussed on the public and political reaction to the Beveridge Report. Seven stories dealt with the political and financial implications of the recommendations including the *Express* opinion column, cartoons, and news articles such as ‘Beveridge Explains’, ‘Beveridge Thinks We Can Afford It’ and ‘£5,000,000 Insurance Falls’.⁹⁸ A Strube cartoon ‘The Tasters’ included on the leader page, depicted a group of men, representing different occupations, with one woman looking on, her back turned to the reader, sampling a ‘beverage’ from the ’42 VAT, provided by Sir William Beveridge. Strube’s cartoon demonstrated that the recommendations had to be considered carefully by those potentially affected.⁹⁹

On the 3rd December 1942, there was a sharp decline in the percentage of space devoted to articles about Beveridge in the paper. Although discussion occupied 13.5% of the space devoted to all news content in the *Express*, this was a drop of 16% from the previous day.¹⁰⁰ Articles were also shorter than on the previous day. The language in the paper, however, remained committed to downplaying any excitement surrounding the immediate application of the scheme nationwide. For example, a front page news item noted that “legislation during 1942 is certain, but the whole of the scheme may not be passed at the

⁹⁶ Harriss, *Beveridge*, pp. 422-423.

⁹⁷ Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, (London: Casell, 1951), pp. 861-862.

⁹⁸ Express Political Correspondent, ‘Beveridge Explains: Tory MPs Consider the Report’, *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 1. Express Industrial Report Trevor Evans, ‘Beveridge thinks we can afford it: But another inquiry is urged’, *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 3. Bernard Harris City News, ‘£5,000,000 Insurance Falls’, *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 3.

⁹⁹ Strube, ‘The Tasters’, *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 2. See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 4, p. 66.

¹⁰⁰ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 3, p. 65.

same time”.¹⁰¹ A more downbeat note was struck in “5,000,000 Insurance Falls’ which highlighted some immediate economic consequences of the Report’s publication. It reported that the value of shares in insurance companies had now fallen dramatically in the City “unsettling other sections of the market also”.¹⁰² The newspaper’s opinion column highlighted what it believed to be the priority – the war effort. It argued that:

For three years our war aim has sufficed. We must keep the hands of the invader off the life of this land. Even a year ago the man who raised the questions posed in Mr Eden’s speech would have been reproached for distracting attention from the real business at hand.¹⁰³

The newspaper’s political correspondent echoed this:

UTOPIA here we come! But all the Beveridges, the Portals and the Jowett’s depend on total victory against Germany, and the submission of the German and any other aggressor in Europe or Asia to the force of the United Nations.¹⁰⁴

The decline in coverage of the Beveridge Report continued throughout the week, with only one news story, less than 1% of the space devoted to news content, focusing on Beveridge by the 4th December 1942. For example, the opinion column on 4th December entitled ‘Hearth and Home’, mentioned Beveridge briefly in relation to labour shortages, conscription and the interference of the State in the family home. No articles discussing Beveridge were included

¹⁰¹ ‘Beveridge Explains’, 3rd December 1942, p.1

¹⁰² ‘£5,000,000 Insurance Falls’, 3rd December 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Opinion, ‘Looking Ahead’, *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 2. The Opinion Column refers to a speech given by Anthony Eden about post-war Britain on 2nd December 1942 in the House of Commons, after the conclusion of a two day debate on planning and reconstruction.

¹⁰⁴ Express Parliamentary Reporter William Barkley ‘Allied Force Will Keep the Peace: 3 Point Security Plan for the World’, *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 4.

on the 5th and 6th December and only one small article appeared on the 7th December, taking up 1.5% of total space devoted to news content.¹⁰⁵ This article appeared on page 3, entitled ‘New Brains to Kill Five Giants’, and was placed at the top left hand corner, taking up 10% of total space on the page.¹⁰⁶ The article questioned to what extent the Report’s main recommendations should be implemented at all. However, it also stated that the debate should not go on too long as the country had other priorities:

Abolishing squalor and idleness might raise political issues about the ownership of land, private enterprise, profit motive and the function of the State. This is why we should reach an agreement on this now.¹⁰⁷

Whereas Paul Addison has argued that the national press, with the exception of the *Daily Telegraph* “behaved as though” the Beveridge Report “fell slightly short of the millennium”, it is clear that the *Express*’s approach did not fall into this characterisation.¹⁰⁸ The paper appeared to approach the Report in the same spirit as Churchill, and some of the Cabinet. While it reported factually the contents and recommendations of the Report, it continually raised points which suggested implementation was either premature, or that there needed to be much more discussion and thought, or, that the recommendations were potentially undesirable.¹⁰⁹ The Cabinet’s decision in February 1943 to postpone any definitive commitment to the Beveridge Report and its recommendations therefore harmonised with the paper’s ongoing approach to the Report.

¹⁰⁵ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 3, p. 65.

¹⁰⁶The figure for the percentage space given to individual articles on specific pages was arrived at by measuring them and the pages individually.

¹⁰⁷ Anon, ‘New Brains To Kill Five Giants’, *Daily Express*, 7th December 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Addison, *Road to 1945*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁹ TNA CAB 66/34/8 ‘The Beveridge Plan: Interim Report of the Committee on Reconstruction Priorities’, Cabinet Memo, 11th February 1943.

[ii] The Parliamentary Debate on the Beveridge Report:

The Debate: 16th-18th February

Parliamentary debate about the Beveridge Report was scheduled for February 1943. A new committee, chaired by Sir John Anderson the Lord President of the Council, was set up on 12th January 1943 by the Cabinet. The Committee was asked to address the recommendations by the Beveridge Report and develop a ‘government line’ on the Report in readiness for the February debate.¹¹⁰ The Committee met for the first time on 22nd January and was asked to read a memo from Herbert Morrison, the Labour Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security. Morrison asked the Committee to ignore the financial pessimism of some in the Cabinet and agree to support the Report’s recommendations:

I need not point out to my colleagues that the great majority of the public is looking forward expectantly to the adoption of something substantially like the Beveridge Plan. It will be grievously disappointed if this cannot be done and will ask a number of searching questions to which the government will have to find convincing answers.¹¹¹

Despite Morrison’s pleas, the Committee concluded that the government should tacitly accept, in principle, three basic recommendations of the Beveridge Report - those relating to children’s allowances, a comprehensive health service and the maintenance of employment, while making it clear that “no firm commitment can be entered into at the present time”.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ TNA CAB 87/13 War Cabinet and Cabinet: Committees on Reconstruction, Supply and Other Matters: Minutes and Papers: Reconstruction Priorities Committee.

¹¹¹ TNA ‘Memo’ Herbert Morrison to Sir John Anderson, 20th January 1943, in CAB 87/13 Committee on Reconstruction.

¹¹² Sir John Anderson, ‘Conclusions’, 11th February 1943, in CAB 87/13 Committee on Reconstruction.

After the debate was concluded on 18th February, Parliament was divided on the extent to which the Beveridge Report should be implemented. Forty-five Tory back bench MPs asked the government to create a Ministry of Social Security in wartime, while Labour back benchers demanded the immediate implementation of the Report's recommendations. In the final Parliamentary vote on 18th February, ninety-seven Labour MPs, three Independent Labour Party members, one Communist, nine Liberals and eleven independent MPs voted against the government on the Beveridge Report, amounting to what, in the conditions of wartime politics was, in the words of Corelli Barnett, "a significant rebellion".¹¹³

The *Express's* Coverage 15th-22nd February 1943.

The week analysed in the *Express* included both the run up to and aftermath of the Parliamentary debate and consequently, the percentage of space devoted to stories about Beveridge, as a percentage of total space devoted to all news stories, fluctuated.¹¹⁴ The *Express* included sixteen articles about the debate throughout the week, with the three days surrounding the debate, 17th-19th February, receiving the most coverage from the *Daily Express*, a total of twelve articles in three days. The *Express* ran only one story per issue on the 15th and 16th February, however, and by the 20th February, the end of the week, only one story about Beveridge was printed in the *Express*.

The *Express's* coverage of the Parliamentary debate on the Beveridge Report was similar in tone to the coverage in December 1942. The newspaper was happy to discuss the issues of social security, as stimulated by the Parliamentary debate, as it was a current news story. It did not, however, support the immediate implementation of the recommendations

¹¹³ Correlli Barnett, *The Audit of War: The Illusion and Reality of Britain as a Great Nation*, (London: Macmillan Ltd, 1986), pp. 30-31.

¹¹⁴ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 5, p. 67.

and encouraged its reader's to focus on the war effort rather than social reform on the home front.

The debate started on the 16th of February and the final vote was on the 18th. On the 15th, 8% of the space devoted in the newspaper to news content was taken up by the day's only story on Beveridge, about the run-up to the Parliamentary debate: 'The Anti Beveridge Barrage Opens'. The article, which took up 30% of the space on page 3¹¹⁵, noted the savage attacks aimed at Sir William and his ideas by the National Conference of Industrial Assurance Approved Societies.¹¹⁶ The National Conference argued that the financial burden on the individual of implementing the recommendations would be too great and that "the State has no business to commit future governments to pay these benefits: the Beveridge Plan is cumbrous and unworkable".¹¹⁷ The article did, however, highlight the support the Report had from some Labour MPs and Trade Unions, with the National Association of Trade Unions in Glasgow arguing "we are fools if we don't accept it".¹¹⁸ On 16th February the *Express's* only article about Beveridge, an opinion column on page 2, continued to show the *Express's* disapproval of the discussion surrounding post-war social security, arguing once again that concentrating on the war effort rather than post-war change was necessary. While the column recognised that the public had concerns about the post-war world, it insisted that the Beveridge Report was a distraction from the war effort:

¹¹⁵ The percentage space of individual stories on particular pages was measured on a case by case basis.

¹¹⁶ The Industrial Approved Societies were groups of different companies which provided voluntary insurance for a multitude of issues, including sickness benefit, health insurance, burial expenses and general life insurance. For more information on their role in British society prior to the creation of the Welfare State in 1947 see Michael Heller, 'The National Insurance Acts 1911–1947, the Approved Societies and the Prudential Assurance Company', in *Twentieth Century British History*, Volume 19, Issue 1 (2008) pp. 1-28.

¹¹⁷ Express Industrial Reporter, 'Anti Beveridge Barrage Opens', *Daily Express*, 15th February 1943, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ 'Anti Beveridge', 15th February 1943, p. 3.

These are not projects to be contemplated at the present time. The enemy is at our throat. If we lose, we lose everything, Beveridge and all. When the three day debate is over, the Parliament and Government must again bend their thought and energies exclusively to the one overriding urgency of beating the Germans and the Japs, who seeks to destroy Britain and the Empire. ¹¹⁹

By the 17th February, the second day of the debate, the *Express* increased the amount of coverage devoted to Beveridge; 17.1% of all space devoted to news content focused on the debate, a total of six articles in one edition. News items were spread throughout the paper and a variety of different types of articles were used to discuss the debate, including feature articles, an opinion column and cartoons. The position of the *Express*, outlined in its opinion column the day before, was unchanged however. William Barkley's piece on page 2 noted that the government had accepted the Report in principle only, and was not "committed to introducing it" at the present time. ¹²⁰

In Strube's cartoon 'Social Security' William Beveridge is depicted placing a placard with the phrase a 'proposed site for the foundation of social security' on what is clearly a bomb site, strewn with debris. A stork has brought a baby to the site, as symbol of the 'future generation', ready to see the construction of the post-war world. ¹²¹ The cartoon applauded the sentiment of the Report, but was deeply ambivalent, for although the bomb damage was labelled 'old economic confusion', implying that with this destroyed, new foundations could be built, it also implied that the new system would be built, if at all, on very insecure foundations. Strube's depiction of bomb damage, destruction and the building of social

¹¹⁹ Opinion, 'Beveridge', *Daily Express*, 16th February 1943, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Express Parliamentary Reporter William Barkley, 'Government Accepts 'General Lines' of Beveridge', *Daily Express*, 17th February 1943, p. 1.

¹²¹ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 6, p. 68.

security on top of this was a stark reminder to the reader of the wartime situation and the *Express*'s concerns about the immediate implementation of the Beveridge Report.

Coverage of the debate over the next two days continued to be buoyant in the *Express*, with four articles included on the 18th and two on the 19th February, taking up 13.3% and 16.5% of all the space devoted to news content. These articles implicitly reiterated the newspaper's perspective on the question of whether the Report's recommendations should be implemented in wartime, while at the same time recognising the support Beveridge had in Parliament.¹²² For example, William Barkley's article 'Chancellor Can't Budget for Beveridge' printed on the 18th February, although it discussed the contradictory ideas being debated in the Parliamentary Beveridge Debate, it concentrated on the government's financial concerns about the Report and "whether the nation can afford it".¹²³ When the government won the Parliamentary vote on the 18th February, halting any immediate changes to the social security system, William Barkley's editorial on the 19th stated that "the nation cannot be committed to the date of such a big advance in social legislation without knowing whether what Mr Greenwood called 'Meaningless symbols' are in the purse".¹²⁴ By 20th February 1943, as the topic faded from the immediate news agenda, only 2% of space devoted to all news content in the *Express* related to Beveridge.¹²⁵

¹²² Guy Eden, 'Beveridge Crises: Premier asked to intervene – Big Anti-Govt. vote feared', *Daily Express*, 18th February 1943, p. 1. 'Chancellor Can't Budget for Beveridge', *Daily Express*, 18th February 1943, p. 3. Express Staff Reporter, 'Beveridge Vote Today', *Daily Express*, 19th February 1943, p. 3.

¹²³ William Barkley, 'Chancellor Can't Budget for Beveridge', *Daily Express*, 18th February 1943, p. 3.

¹²⁴ Express Parliamentary Reporter William Barkley, 'We have Beaten the Clock: Working for a Paradise and Moving Fast', *Daily Express*, 19th February 1943, p. 3.

¹²⁵ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 5, p. 67.

[iii] The Beveridge Report, the *Daily Express* and the 1945 General Election

This section discusses the *Daily Express*' coverage of the Beveridge Report between 18th June and 2nd July 1945, two weeks prior to the 1945 General Election.

By April 1945 it was clear that the allies had won the war. Churchill wanted to continue the coalition until the defeat of Japan but the Labour Party wanted an Election.¹²⁶ On 23rd May 1945, Churchill resigned as the head of the Coalition government, and an election was called. The campaign lasted from 1st June till the 4th of July, and a series of polls commenced on the 5th of July 1945. The results were not announced until 23rd July, however, as a several constituencies voted later as a result of the election's interference with local holidays.¹²⁷

Post-war reconstruction and reforms to social security were key aspects of political discussion in the run-up to the General Election. The Conservatives, Labour and Liberal parties produced manifestos in May and June 1945 which focused on a programme of post-war reconstruction, including ideas about full employment, social security, a National Health Service and the control of industry.¹²⁸ It is unsurprising then that discussions about these issues featured heavily in the popular press's coverage of the campaign in June 1945. However, in the light of the *Daily Express*'s coverage of the Beveridge Report in 1942 and 1943, it is not surprising that there was *no* mention of the Beveridge Report in the *Express* from 18th-2nd July 1945.

Although it lacked specific details about changes to the social security system, the Conservative Party manifesto was similar in certain general aspects to the Labour Party's. Paul Addison has pointed out that the Conservatives were committed to a programme of post-

¹²⁶ Addison, *Road to 1945*, p. 257.

¹²⁷ Addison, *Road to 1945*, p. 259.

¹²⁸ Addison, *Road to 1945*, pp. 263-265.

war reconstruction, including full employment, changes to social security and the health service, and improving industry. These policies, although similar in flavour to the Labour and Liberal ones, would be implemented differently and at a slower pace.¹²⁹ In the weeks examined, the *Express*, rather than providing a platform for Beveridge or for details of future Conservative plans, instead challenged the policies of Labour and Liberal politicians.¹³⁰ For example, the *Express*'s opinion column on the 18th June argued that future Labour governments would impose social security and industrial policies in an authoritarian way, and asserted that "only fools resent discipline in the army. But who wants it in their private life?"¹³¹ Another opinion column on 21st June accused the Labour Party of planning:

A social revolution in Britain, even if it means the slaughter of the rights and liberties of the people. The Socialists will not hesitate to tamper with the power of Parliament and they will not hesitate to bypass the course of laws.¹³²

The *Express*'s coverage of reconstruction and the post-war world was primarily based on the Conservative policies of encouraging industry and hard work, rather than State intervention.¹³³ On 25th June, the *Express* referred briefly to Conservative plans for new housing programmes and changes to the welfare system, "Churchill's four year plan".¹³⁴ The finer details of Churchill's plan were, however, not discussed during the week, most likely

¹²⁹ Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 265.

¹³⁰ Opinion, 'Sandy Challenges Bevin', *Daily Express* 19th June 1945, p. 2. Trevor Evans 'This Man Laski', p. 2. Anon, 'Magic Housing Wand for Socialists', p. 4, *Daily Express* 20th June 1945. Cartoon, 'Tossing the Caber', p. 2. Brutus, 'Did you of didn't you Mr Bevin?', p. 2, *Daily Express* 20th June 1945. Opinion, 'Coats Off', *Daily Express*, 27th June 1945, p2. Guy Eden, 'Man Power Freed for the factories', p. 1. K. Pipe, 'More labour Needed for Record Crops, p3, *Daily Express* 28th June 1945.

¹³¹ Opinion, 'Soldier Abroad', *Daily Express*, 18th June 1945, p. 2.

¹³² Opinion, 'At All Costs', *Daily Express*, 21st June 1945, p. 2.

¹³³ Express Staff Reporter, 'Socialism Even if it Means Violence', *Daily Express* 20th June 1945, p. 1. Opinion, 'Determined to Affect Revolution', *Daily Express*, 21st June 1945, p. 2. Opinion, 'Ruled by Caucus', *Daily Express* 23rd June 1945, p. 2

¹³⁴ Opinion, 'The Churchill Plan', *Daily Express* 25th June 1945, p. 2. Opinion, 'Rule by Caucus', *Daily Express* 23rd June 1945, p. 2.

because the plan was never published and was a “hasty concoction” of different ideas by the Conservative Party.¹³⁵ The *Express*’s preferred to focus on trade, industry and wages. For example, Strube’s cartoon ‘Jobs’, published on 21st June, encouraged readers to rebuild Britain through hard work, better wages and increased industrial production, after which they could enjoy the benefits.¹³⁶ Beaverbrook was also quoted in the same issue, asserting that “Prosperity is infectious: the man who is well paid works with zest. High wages are good business”.¹³⁷

Paul Addison has argued, however, that by focusing its coverage on issues of trade, industry and political insults, while ignoring a detailed discussion of post-war social security and welfare, the *Express*’ election coverage ran counter to the opinions of many voters and of other popular newspapers.¹³⁸ Between 18th June -2nd July, the *Mirror*, *Herald* and *News Chronicle* attacked the *Daily Express*, specifically Beaverbrook, for its coverage of the General Election campaign and its rejection of the Beveridge Report’s recommendations. For example, on the 21st June, the *News Chronicle* accused the Conservatives and Beaverbrook of “stunt mongering: making attempts to divert the public’s attention from the real issues of the election – houses, jobs, social security and food”.¹³⁹ On the 22nd June, the *Daily Mirror* continued the attack with a cartoon by Phillip Zec depicting ‘Beavers in a Brook’ building a damn of ‘Tory electoral lies’, being drowned by a river of “Determination of the people to build a better Britain”.¹⁴⁰ Another cartoon from the *Herald* attacked Beaverbrook and the Conservatives for their rejection of the Beveridge Report, by depicting Beveridge’s 5 Giants

¹³⁵ Calder, *People’s War?*, p. 574.

¹³⁶ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 7 p 68. Sidney Conrad Strube, ‘Jobs’, *Daily Express*, 21st June 1945, p. 2.

¹³⁷ Laurence Wilkinson, ‘Daily Express: The Way to High Wages’, *Daily Express*, 21st June 1945, p. 2.

¹³⁸ Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 267.

¹³⁹ Anon, ‘Morrison and Attlee denounce Stunt Mongering: Attempt to Mask Real Issues of Election’, *Daily Herald*, 21st June 1945, p. 1.

¹⁴⁰ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 8 p. 69. Phillip Zec, ‘The Brook that’s Too Large for the Beavers’, *Daily Mirror*, 22nd June 1945, p. 2.

of Squalor, Ignorance, Want, Disease and Idleness following them down a road to a future Tory Britain.¹⁴¹

At the same time as attacking the *Express* and Beaverbrook, the *Mirror*, *Herald* and *Chronicle* embraced discussions of the Beveridge Report, with the *Chronicle* printing feature articles by Beveridge about his recommendations.¹⁴² On the 23rd and 29th June he wrote two feature articles for the *News Chronicle* discussing topics such as housing, the health service and the need for greater national spirit in post-war Britain.¹⁴³ He continued to promote the Beveridge Report, asking readers to vote for politicians who would “not go back to the pursuit of private interest again as the main motive in our national life”.¹⁴⁴ In addition, on the 20th June 1945, the *Herald* argued that the Conservative’s rejection of Beveridge was a “conspiracy of greedy men who want the opportunity to do what their predecessors did in 1919”.¹⁴⁵ The *Chronicle* showed its support for Beveridge again on the 21st June, pointing out that the public knew the difference between “the real Beveridge Scheme and the Conservative imitation”.¹⁴⁶

The promotion of the Beveridge Report in the run-up to the 1945 election by the *Chronicle*, *Mirror* and *Herald* is unsurprising considering the support the papers had given the Report on its release in 1942. Although these newspapers promoted the Report as a key factor in post-war reconstruction, the lack of discussion about the Beveridge Report by the *Express* in the weeks surveyed were unsurprising, considering its Conservative political affiliations and coverage of its release in 1942 and of the Parliamentary debates in 1943.

¹⁴¹ See Volume II, Appendix F Figure 9, p. 69. ‘Tory Britain’, *Daily Herald*, 20th June 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴² Beveridge entered Parliament in October 1944 as an Liberal MP for Berwick. See Addison, *Road to 1945*, p. 264.

¹⁴³ Sir William Beveridge, ‘Jobs for All Without Regimentation’, *News Chronicle*, 23rd June 1945, p2. Sir William Beveridge, ‘I am Beveridge’, *News Chronicle*, 29th June 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Sir William Beveridge, ‘I am Beveridge’, *News Chronicle*, 29th June 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ H.R.S. Phillpott, ‘Mr Attlee’, *Daily Herald*, 20th June 1945, p. 1. See also Dr Stephen Taylor ‘Health: Labour shows the way – More Babies Die under Tory Rule’, *Daily Herald*, 21st June 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Lady Rhys Williams, ‘Mock Beveridge’, *News Chronicle*, 21st June 1945, p. 2. Also see J.F. Horrabin, ‘National Plan for Health’, *News Chronicle*, 18th June 1945, p. 2.

[iv] Family, The Daily Express and the Beveridge Report

Families were central to the content of the Beveridge Report as they were directly affected by its proposed changes to social security and the health service. Discussion of the family in the *Express's* coverage of Beveridge was not as extensive, however, as was expected, considering the report was constructed around the idea of improving family life in Britain. Not all articles which discussed Beveridge in the *Express* mentioned the family either, making it difficult to give a detailed understanding of how the *Express* portrayed the family in British society during this period. However, this section will provide a broad understanding of some of the implicit references to family in the *Express's* coverage of Beveridge during December 1942, February 1943 and June and July 1945.

Family Finances

For the *Express*, discussion of Beveridge and the family was a political issue, not a social one. Therefore much of its *characterisation* of family in the sample was mediated through the coverage of the economic implications of the Beveridge Report.

For example, the *Express's* December 1942 coverage primarily discussed the content of Beveridge and its possible implementation, thereby referencing the family unit as individuals, affected in different ways by the receipt of benefits from the report. As we can see from the 2nd December article 'Beveridge Blue Print', the *Express* gave a detailed outline of the cost of the recommendations for individual members of the family:

Sir William proposes that weekly contributions to a single fund shall be 7s 6d for men, 6s for women: 40s a week in unemployment for a married man without means

test, 24s a week for a single man or woman and 8s for each child. No family will get less than £2 a week – a help to many.¹⁴⁷

The *Express*'s industrial reporter Trevor Evans discussed both the financial benefits and drawbacks of the scheme. He noted that the report was designed to help society through particular life events based around the family unit, providing money for “birth expenses, marriage allowances, interruption of earnings through unemployment, and burial costs”.¹⁴⁸

Discussion of how the report affected society was understood, therefore, in a familial context with Evans noting that “a man with a wife and two children, who now gets a maximum 43s. a week will get 76s. for 13 weeks and then a pension up to 76s. a week”¹⁴⁹

On the surface, this *Express* article focused primarily on financial issues surrounding the Beveridge Report. However, basic social assumptions about the family were also implied in its discussion of the report. By providing financial assistance for key life events, such as births, marriages, sickness and death, both the Beveridge Report and the *Express*'s discussion of it made the assumption that the family unit played a central role in life in British society. The centrality and stability of this unit was considered crucial to the growth and improvement of British society, with the article ‘Brains to Kill Five Giants’ arguing that unless families experienced financial stability and “security from want, there will never be large families, and unless more children are born, the British race will not survive”¹⁵⁰

The *Express*'s discussion of family finances and post-war stability in the article ‘Five Giants’ revealed, however, that during wartime the family unit was under strain and in need

¹⁴⁷ ‘Trevor Evans, ‘Beveridge Blue Print’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, 1942, p. 2. See also *Daily Express* Industrial Reporter, ‘£2 a Week Pensions for All’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Trevor Evans, ‘Beveridge Blue Print’, *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, 1942, p. 2.

¹⁴⁹ Trevor Evans, ‘Beveridge Blue Print Continued’ *Daily Express*, 2nd December 1942, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ Anon, ‘New Brains to Kill Five Giants’, *Daily Express*, 7th December 1942, p. 3.

of buoyancy and support in the post-war world. It demonstrated that, for some, the current system of social security was inadequate, and that Beveridge's recommendations would bring greater security for families in post-war Britain, targeting social problems such as want, idleness, squalor, disease and ignorance.¹⁵¹

Rather than supporting the implementation of these ideas, however, the *Express* rejected the Beveridge Report's recommendations on the grounds that it might cause *more* financial strain to families in the post war world. For example, on the 3rd December, Trevor Evans article 'Beveridge Thinks We Can Afford it' pointed out that family members would be expected to "work much harder to make sufficient surplus for workers to pay 7s 6d a week "in contributions "after the war.¹⁵² Although this article did not provide an alternative to Beveridge and his ideas about post-war family finances, it indicated how important the financial stability of family life was considered to be in British society, and how the *Express* did not view Beveridge as the answer to families' financial and social problems.

A discussion of the financial burden the report's recommendations might impose on individual families also continued briefly into the *Express*'s February 1943 coverage. An article on 17th March entitled, 'Anderson's Statement on Beveridge', warned that the "contributions fixed in the report may be more than some families can easily bear", and that some families might be worse off financially were the report to be implemented.¹⁵³

While much of February's coverage of Beveridge focused on the government's financial problems in implementing the scheme, describing its inability to "accept a binding commitment to the scheme until post-war finances are better known", the *Express* did reveal

¹⁵¹ Anon, 'Five Giants', 7th December 1942, p. 3.

¹⁵² Express Industrial Reporter Trevor Evans, 'Beveridge thinks We Can Afford It', *Daily Express*, 3rd December 1942, p. 3.

¹⁵³ Anon, 'Anderson's Statement on Beveridge Continued: 20 Years Pensions Scheme? No!', *Daily Express*, 17th March 1943, p. 3.

the centrality of the family unit to British society, and the importance of a family's financial stability in the post-war world.¹⁵⁴

Marriage and The Role of Women

The *Express*'s December 1942 and February 1943 coverage, however, reflected the idea that a family's financial stability in post-war society was based on a traditional, conservative view of the family. Despite the pressures placed on the family unit by the current system of social security, the *Express*, and indeed the Beveridge Report, expressed the idea that the post-war world would thrive by adhering to conservative ideas about the family unit, and traditional gender roles therein.

For example, Trevor Evans 'Beveridge Blue Print', [published on 2nd December 1942], stressed the social expectation of marriage for the creation of a stable family unit. It drew attention to the financial difficulties men and women would face living outside the official confines of marriage: "And he, Beveridge, mentions without reaching firm conclusions, the complications arising from people living together without being married legally".¹⁵⁵ Although this statement showed recognition of the different kinds of living arrangements in British society, it demonstrated the social *expectation* that couples living together must be married if they were to create the financial stability for their future family. It also expressed the commonly held view that "married people are to be considered a team [in the family unit]", emphasising that both men and women's roles in the family unit were vital to its stability.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Express Parliamentary Reporter, '£ S D are Just Symbols', *Daily Express*, 17th February 1943, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ 'Beveridge Blue Print', 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ 'Beveridge Blue Print Continued', 2nd December 1942, p. 3.

The centrality of women to the family unit was made clear in the Beveridge Report and the *Express*'s coverage of it in December 1942. In the article just quoted, Evans asserted that women, although not the financial head of the family, occupied a key role in caring for and supporting the family unit:

Married women must be regarded as occupied on work which is vital, though unpaid, without which their husbands could not do their paid work and without which the nation could not continue.¹⁵⁷

He also argued that “in the next 30 years, housewives and mothers have vital work to do in ensuring adequate continuance of the British race, and of British ideals in the world”.¹⁵⁸ Their role in the post-war family was clearly at the centre, as housewives and mothers.

The *Express*'s Opinion column on 4th December 1942 entitled ‘The Family’ reiterated the centrality of women in the family unit by arguing that “husbands, sailors and airmen must have peace of mind knowing that the family structure is kept intact in their absence”, despite the pressures placed on it as a result of war.¹⁵⁹ It was also made clear that both husbands, and society in general, needed to be reminded that without the labour expended by women in the home, not only the post-war home, but the post-war “nation would suffer”.¹⁶⁰ The status of housework and women’s place in the family home was elevated to an issue of ‘national importance’ in both the Beveridge Report and the account given of it in the *Express*.¹⁶¹

Women were also shown to be central to the family unit, not just as wives and housewives, but as sisters and mothers who might possibly play the role of housekeeper to

¹⁵⁷ ‘Beveridge Blue Print’, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Beveridge Blue Print’, 2nd December 1942, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁹ Opinion, ‘The Family’, *Daily Express*, 4th December 1942, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Opinion, ‘The Family’, *Daily Express*, 4th December 1942, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ Beveridge, *Report on Social Insurance*, pp. 7-9.

un-married bachelor relatives.¹⁶² Trevor Evans described these women as “entitled to benefits and protection as any other woman”, demonstrating that women were central to the family home without marriage being an essential factor for the creation of an extended family unit.

This representation of the role of women in the family home continued briefly into the *Express*'s coverage of Beveridge in February 1943. ‘Anti Beveridge Barrage Opens’ on the 15th February stated that the report allowed “women to come into her own and recognised her true value in the home”, in turn strengthening the position of the family at the centre of post-war British society.¹⁶³ Also, although articles in the *Express* in the run-up to the 1945 General Election did not directly address Beveridge, they did continue to place women at the heart of the post-war family unit. For example, on 20th June 1945, one article argued that the post-war family, its health and women’s place in the home must not be sacrificed as a result of the war:

The family should not suffer in health because of the war - The meals, the milk in schools, maternity welfare centres, milk and nursing mothers and their babies; houses that will be easier to work in, so that the housewife won’t be a house drudge.¹⁶⁴

Another article by Hilda Coe on the 23rd June 1945 argued that family life was the “lynch pin” for successful post war reconstruction and that both married and unmarried women should embrace a stable family life in the home:

¹⁶² ‘Beveridge Blue Print’, 2nd December 1942, p. 2.

¹⁶³ Anon, ‘Anti Beveridge Barrage Opens’, *Daily Express* 15th February 1943, p. 3. See also Express Parliamentary Reporter William Barkley, ‘Chancellor Can’t Budget for Beveridge’, *Daily Express*, 18th February 1943, p. 3. Express Parliamentary Reporter William Barkley, ‘We Have Beaten the Clock’, *Daily Express*, 19th February 1943, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Anon, ‘Lord Woolton’s Pledge: We’ll get the Houses Built’, *Daily Express*, 20th June 1945, p. 4.

During the war many more women have been given many other jobs to do besides homemaking. Will former housewives willingly return to the kitchen? Will they willingly give up their higher standards of living? Should we rephrase these questions and ask ‘Will not housewives welcome the opportunity to be mistress of their homes again? Will they not be happy to devote their skills to the service of their family? Will they not be delighted that a higher standard of life – of love, co-operation, confidence, joy and freedom from fear – may be established within the home circle? I say to young women who have the opportunity of marriage – become home makers.’¹⁶⁵

The role of women, as central to the post-war family, was embedded in many of the *Express*'s articles about Beveridge and the post-war world, and the *Express* assumed its readers would recognise and identify with the image of ‘normal’ family life being presented to them. Although this image of ‘normal’ family life could take on multiple incarnations, including just married couples, as well as extended families with brothers and sisters, women were presented as central to the family unit. The *Express* endorsed the view that in the post-war world, despite the strains placed on family life in wartime, women would be home-based, whatever their position in the family unit, and were not society’s bread-winners.

Children and the Post-War World

The central theme of family in the *Express*'s Beveridge articles was children and their importance to the family unit in the post-war world. The wellbeing and support of children after the war was a central issue in the Beveridge Report, with Beveridge arguing that “child

¹⁶⁵ Hilda Coe, ‘To Every Woman With a Home’, *Daily Express*, 23rd June 1945, p. 2. Also see Lieutenant H. Love, ‘The Kind of World I Want’, *Daily Express*, 27th June 1945, p. 2.

weekly allowances should be regularly paid” to families “whether or not the parents are working or unemployed”.¹⁶⁶ Family allowances were also the one of the only aspects of the Beveridge Report, which the coalition government agreed, in principle, to accept in February 1943, demonstrating how important it considered the health and stability of children to post-war British society.¹⁶⁷

Coverage in the *Express* throughout December 1942 and February 1943, although it did not support the implementation of the Beveridge Report, demonstrated that the health and security of children in the post-war world was vital to the continuation of British society. For instance, ‘New Brains to Kill Five Giants’ argued, on 7th December 1942 that “without security from want, there will never be large families, and unless more children are born, the British race will not survive”.¹⁶⁸ An article by William Barkley, on 17th February argued that although the family was experiencing momentary strain in wartime, it was being experienced “for the sake of the abolition of war and for a world in which our children will not have to fight for their existence as men are fighting for today”.¹⁶⁹ Although this statement was used in article which identified why the government could not commit to the implementation of the Beveridge Report in post-war society, it demonstrated how important children were to the family unit. No mention was made of children and their role in the family unit in the run-up to the 1945 General Election, however. When the *Express*’s briefly mentioned the family it focused primarily on the role of women.

¹⁶⁶ Beveridge Blue Print, 2nd December 1942, p. 2. Beveridge, *Social Insurance*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁶⁷ William Barkley, ‘Beaten the Clock’, 19th February 1943, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ Anon, ‘New Brains to Kill Five Giants’, 7th December 1942, p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ William Barkley, ‘Chancellor Can’t Budget’ 17th February 1943, p. 3.

Conclusion

The *Express's* coverage of the Beveridge Report was more complex and nuanced than has been recognised in current historiography, with the newspaper differing in its attitude towards the report from other popular wartime newspapers. Whereas Paul Addison has argued that the national press, with the exception of the *Daily Telegraph* “behaved as though” the Beveridge Report “fell slightly short of the millennium”, it is clear that the *Express's* approach does not fit into this characterisation.¹⁷⁰ The paper appeared to approach the report in the same spirit as Churchill, and some of the Cabinet. While it reported the factual contents and recommendations of the report, the *Express* continued to suggest that implementing the Report's ideas was unfeasible at the present time, and that more discussion was needed when the war was over.¹⁷¹

Its discussion of the Report's impact on family life in Britain was therefore kept to a minimum. For the *Express*, discussion of Beveridge and the family was a political and economic issue, not a social one. Therefore much of its *characterisation* of family in the sample was mediated through the coverage of the economic implications of the Beveridge Report. However, basic social assumptions about the family were also implied in its discussion of the financial impact of the report on families. By basing its discussion of the Report around the members of the family unit, the article demonstrated the importance of familial financial stability in British society and the centrality of the family unit to key life events, such as births, marriages and death.

The *Express's* coverage of Beveridge recognised that the family in wartime was under considerable financial and personal strain, from bombing and evacuation, as well as problems

¹⁷⁰ Addison, *Road to 1945*, p. 221.

¹⁷¹ TNA CAB 66/34/8 ‘The Beveridge Plan: Interim Report of the Committee on Reconstruction Priorities’, Cabinet Memo, 11th February 1943.

with the current system of social security. However, it was clear that the Report, and the *Express's* coverage of it, articulated that the post-war world would thrive by adhering to conservative ideas about the family unit, and traditional gender roles within this unit. For example, the status of housework and women's place in the family home was elevated to an issue of 'national importance' in both the Beveridge Report and the account given of it in the *Express*. Women were rewarded for their position in the home by the suggestion of greater financial support from the government. The role of women as housewives and child carers was central to the position of the family in post-war British society. At a time of strain for the family, the paper pressed a conservative perspective on the nature of the family, its role in society, and the role of the individual components within it. In essence, the preferred notion of the family promoted by the paper was both traditional and socially conservative.

Chapter Eight:

The Family, Commercial Display Advertising and the *Daily Express*

This chapter discusses commercial display advertisements in the *Daily Express* from 1939-1945.¹ It analyses how the idea of the family was represented in commercial display advertisements and examines recurring themes therein relating to wartime family life such as marriage, childhood and gender roles. It discusses the extent to which advertisements presented a particular image of family life to *Express* readers by tracking how these themes developed across the war. The analysis draws on content analysis of advertisements in the *Daily Express* between 1939-1945 and is based on a sample of seven constructed weeks, taken from the Leverhulme group data project.²

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 1 outlines how historians have assessed the history of the advertising industry in the twentieth-century and the extent to which they have analysed advertising content and its impact on wartime society. Section 2 gives a brief history of the advertising industry in relation to the *Daily Express*. It discusses the *Express's* dealings with advertisers during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, in an attempt to understand the importance of advertising to the structure and content of the newspaper. Section 3 contains a detailed content analysis of advertisements in the *Daily Express* from 1939-1945. It analyses the imagery and language used in advertisements and examines the representations of family life in wartime embedded in the advertisements.

¹ Commercial display advertising is paid for advertising that is also display advertising, and usually for commercial companies.

² See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 1, p. 70.

Section 1: Historiography of Advertising

There is no shortage of work on advertising and its central position in twentieth-century media.³ Many of these studies, however, concentrate on how advertisements are created for different media outlets, such as newspapers, television and radio.⁴ General histories of the press often discuss the development of advertising and its effect on the newspaper industry, particularly the nineteenth-century radical press. For example, historians such as James Curran, Jean Seaton and Kevin Williams stress the economic impact advertising had on newspapers. They argue that advertising exercised increasing influence on nineteenth-century newspapers, as without advertisers' support, newspapers which were not in receipt of political subsidy ceased to be economically viable.⁵

According to Williams, success in attracting advertising would often dictate a paper's relative success or failure in the mass market because it had become the "basis of the economic structures in the newspaper industry".⁶ Curran emphasised that advertisers' influence was not only economic, but was also political. Advertisers had the effect of discriminating against "alternative and anti-business voices" by focusing financial support on papers considered politically acceptable to advertisers.⁷ Stephen Koss, however, argued that advertising revenue encouraged the press to be self-supporting. Advertising revenue was more lucrative and less politically compromising than the paid announcements "doled out by

³ John C. Driver and Gordon R. Foxall, *Advertising: Policy and Practise*, (London: The Advertising Association, 1984); Daniel Delis. Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman, 1900-1999*, (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2002); Tony Yeshin, *Advertising*, (London: Thompson, 2006); Winston Fletcher, *Powers of Persuasion: The Inside Story of British Advertising 1951-2000*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁴ Peter Meech, 'Advertising', in *The Media in Britain: Current Debates and Developments*, (eds.) Jane Stokes and Anna Reading, (Basingstoke: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language*, (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵ James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, pp. 36-37. For more discussions on the economic impact of display advertising in the 19th century see George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate, *Newspaper History from the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (London: Sage Publications, 1978) and J. Silberstein-Loeb, 'The Political Economy of Media', in *The Routledge Companion to British Media History*, (eds.) Martin Conboy and John Steele, (London: Routledge, 2014) pp. 75-85.

⁶ Kevin Williams, *Get Me a Murder a Day*, p. 58.

⁷ Curran, 'The Impact of Advertising', in *Power without Responsibility*, p. 1.

government agents”.⁸ The press could therefore hold successive governments and officials to account as newspapers were no longer dependent upon government patronage. Analysis of newspaper advertising can therefore provide insights into how newspapers interacted with the society they operated in.

In addition, historians such as Adrian Bingham and Sonya Rose have discussed the role and social impact of advertising in Britain, although advertising has not been their primary concern. Bingham has argued that although advertisements were central to the wellbeing of the inter-war press, individual advertising companies could not dictate the actions of large national newspapers.⁹ His work stresses the importance of advertising and its role in educating the public on matters such as social attitudes, gender roles and the family.¹⁰ Both Bingham and Rose analyse beauty advertisements in the popular press, explaining how advertising imagery often placed cultural expectations on women to remain beautiful and attractive, even in wartime.¹¹ Bingham also notes that advertisements in the press placed much of the responsibility for family life on women and that they also emphasised the maintenance of particular gender roles for men and women.¹²

A more detailed understanding of the role advertising played in wartime press and society is, however, lacking in current scholarship. General histories of the Second World War, such as Angus Calder’s *The People’s War*, do not engage with the role of display advertising in wartime and its influence on British culture.¹³ Nor do works which discuss British wartime consumer culture, such as Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska’s *Austerity in Britain*, which concentrated primarily on government policy, rather than the influence of the

⁸ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press*, pp. 49-50.

⁹ Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers?* p. 23.

¹⁰ Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p. 62. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 156.

¹¹ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 175. Rose, *Which People’s War?* pp. 107-115.

¹² Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, pp. 91-104.

¹³ Angus Calder, *The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945*, (London: Pimlico, 1969).

advertising industry on wartime spending habits.¹⁴ This is also the case with T.R. Nevett's more general study, *Advertising in Britain*, which briefly mentions wartime advertising, but only in relation to paper rationing and government propaganda.¹⁵ Even George Begley's *Keep Mum: Advertising Goes to War*, which concentrates on the role of advertising during wartime, only provides a broad assessment of a series of particular advertisements.¹⁶ It contains no detailed understanding of the way advertisers operated during wartime and little in-depth analysis of the imagery, themes and content of particular advertisements. A more in-depth discussion of the symbolism and cultural impact of advertising can be found in work on other countries, such as the United States and Germany. Inger L. Stole's work *Advertising at War*, and Pamela Swett's, *Selling under the Swastika*, give an indication of how the history of advertising needs to be approached in a British context.¹⁷ For example, Swett argued that advertising and consumer culture in Germany under the Nazis made individuals feel part of a community. Advertising played a "reassuring role", by reminding people of products they knew in peacetime and offering strategies for dealing with wartime hardships.¹⁸

David Clampin's more recent work, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II*, has, however, sought to provide a detailed breakdown of the content and themes of wartime advertising in the UK.¹⁹ Using a study of *Picture Post*, Clampin argues that wartime advertising was a form of propaganda which both encouraged the consumption of particular

¹⁴ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Terence R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History*, (London: Heinemann on behalf of the History of Advertising Trust, 1982).

¹⁶ George Begley, *Keep Mum: Advertising Goes to War*, (London: Lemon Tress Press, 1975).

¹⁷ Inger L. Stole, *Advertising at War: Business, Consumers and Government in the 1940s*, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2012). Also see John Bush Jones, *All out for Victory! Magazine Advertising and the World War II Home Front*, (Waltham, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2009). Pamela Swett, *Selling Under the Swastika: Advertising and Commercial Culture in Nazi Germany*, (Stanford University Press, 2014).

¹⁸ Swett, *Selling Under the Swastika*, p. 14.

¹⁹ David Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II: Cultural Identity and the Blitz Spirit*, (London: I.B. Taurus, 2014). Also see his PhD thesis, David Clampin, *The Role of Advertising during the Second World War*, PhD Thesis Dept. of History and Welsh History, Aberystwyth University (2007).

products and reflected the complexities of wartime society and culture.²⁰ Advertising helped to promote normality and set out to explain how this could be achieved through the consumption of advertisers' products.²¹ Although his work did not directly discuss the theme of 'family' in advertising, Clampin noted the range of complex images of both men and women in wartime advertising.²²

Building on Clampin's approach, this chapter provides the first detailed analysis of advertising in the *Daily Express* during the Second World War. Work on the *Daily Express*, such as Robert Allen's *Voice of Britain*, omits discussion about the important role advertising played in the appearance and tone of the *Express*.²³ This chapter, by examining the imagery and the development of common themes about the family in *Express* advertising from 1939-1945, addresses these issues. It also builds on the work of historians, such as Bingham and Clampin, on gender and advertising. It will analyse the representation of gender roles in relation to the family, and discuss how these developed over the war years. The analysis of wartime advertising in the *Daily Express* will be confined to commercial display advertising, however, and does not include classified advertisements or listings for reasons of manageability and because they tended not to contain visual imagery, which was so important to the representation of the family.

²⁰ Clampin, *The Role of Commercial Advertising*, p. 30.

²¹ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II*, p. 224.

²² Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II*, pp.171-210.

²³ Allen, *Voice of Britain*, (1983).

Section 2: The *Daily Express* and Advertising: Data Analysis

[i] What is a Family Advertisement?

My analysis of display advertising in the *Daily Express* is based on seven constructed weeks from 1939-1945, with specific dates taken from the Leverhulme group data analysis on the Second World War press.²⁴ The definition of a family advertisement was developed via a qualitative sampling method. Twelve dates were used from the seven constructed weeks, with each date's display advertisements analysed for common themes relating to family life in wartime.²⁵ The imagery and language was categorised into general themes about the family, such as marriage, children, family health, family economics, and family relationships. This method allowed me to quantify the number of advertisements which contained family themes, and the context in which they were invoked.²⁶

For the purposes of this chapter therefore, a display family advertisement makes a direct reference to the family unit, either in its text or in its imagery. For example, it depicts an image of the family together, or mothers with children, or a married couple discussing family issues. Other display advertisements which referenced products that could be used in the family home also contained overt references to the family. These were analysed qualitatively, and were not taken into account when generating statistical data on advertisements with a family theme, as a percentage of all space devoted to display adverts in the *Daily Express*. The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, which noted whether display advertisements made direct or indirect references to the family, allowed

²⁴ See Volume II, Appendix A Figure 1, pp. 1-5, for methodology of the Leverhulme group data. For the dates of seven constructed weeks used to analyse display advertising in the *Daily Express*, see Volume II, Appendix G Figure 1, p. 70.

²⁵ For these sample dates see Volume II, Appendix G Figure 1 p. 70.

²⁶ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 4a-4c, pp. 73-76.

fuller understanding of the ways in which the family was represented in *Daily Express* advertising.²⁷

[ii] Display Advertising in the *Daily Express*.

This section discusses the information about display advertising gathered from the seven constructed weeks from the *Daily Express*, 1939-1945.

Analysis of the constructed week data suggests that display advertising remained an important part of *Daily Express* content throughout the wartime sample. The *Express* did not, however, determine the subject matter or imagery of the display advertisements in its pages. Newspapers such as the *Express* simply provided the space for advertising agencies to buy. Advertising agencies designed advertisements which they thought would be appropriate for the newspaper display.²⁸

While display advertising remained an important aspect of the *Express*'s wartime content, the amount of space afforded to display advertising was reduced from 1942 onwards, as the size of the *Express* got smaller due to paper rationing.²⁹ In the 1939 sample, 28% of total space in the newspaper was devoted to display advertising. By 1942 display advertising had reduced to 17% of total newspaper space. By 1945, only 16% of total space in the *Express* was devoted to display advertisements.³⁰

²⁷ Of course many of these adverts would appear in a range of publications, so this chapter has relevance to other popular papers, something which time and focus did not allow this thesis to engage with.

²⁸ C. Mitchell and Co. Ltd, *The Newspaper Press Directory* (C Mitchell: 1945), pp. 58-61. Newspapers did reserve the right to not carry advertisements if they questioned their suitability. For example see Adrian Bingham, 'The British Popular Press and Venereal Disease During the Second World War', in *The Historical Journal, Volume 48, Issue 4*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.1055-1076.

²⁹ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 3a. p. 72. See also Christiansen, *Headlines*, p. 189; *The Newspaper Press Directory*, 1945, p. 59.

³⁰ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 3a, p. 72.

As the primary role of display advertising was to encourage the purchase of products, *Express* advertisements contained a variety of different images and ideas designed to sell a range of products. References to the family were therefore not the only device used to sell products. The *Express* and other popular newspapers presented imagery and ideas in advertisements that had been prominent in inter-war display advertising. For example, Adrian Bingham argued that the inter-war *Daily Express* and other newspapers carried advertisements which promoted the importance of women's physical beauty, encouraging them to be, above all "beautiful" and "sylph like". Sonya Rose has pointed out that the idea of "being physically attractive" and focusing on "self-adornment" continued unabated into wartime advertising.³¹ For example, Appendix G Figure 2, shows three cosmetic advertisements with imagery that endorsed an idealised picture of women and 'beauty'. The women were slim, clean and attractive, with language prioritising a "youthful" and "not made up" look.³² Each product also promoted itself as the ideal and most practical way to achieve socially expected standards of beauty.

David Clampin has argued that the role of display press advertisements in wartime was to maintain a sense of normality, promoting products familiar to the British public. It was vital that advertisements maintained the public's 'brand awareness' of pre-war products, as well as helping readers with wartime problems.³³ The imagery and issues embedded in display advertising were therefore designed to have an impact on newspaper readers. Their primary job was to sell the product being advertised. However, images in display advertisements could also reinforce existing cultural messages, such as social expectations about the role of the family in wartime.

³¹ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press*, p. 175. Rose, *Which People's War?* p. 134.

³² Cream of Milk, *Daily Express*, 2nd November 1939, p. 8. Shade Face Powder, *Daily Express*, 17/11/1939, p. 8. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 2, p. 72.

³³ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, pp. 38-42.

Section 3: Themes of Family in Advertising

This section discusses how display advertising in the *Daily Express* presented images and ideas about family to the reader in wartime, noting what advertising can tell us about the contribution of the wartime British press to popular discourses about the family in wartime society.

Appendix G Figure 4a indicates that themes and images relating to the family remained a part of display advertising throughout the sample.³⁴ A wide variety of issues relating to the family were used in display advertising to sell different products, including references to motherhood, children, marriage, family economics and the health of the family unit. Often, if display advertisements contained references to the family unit, they addressed multiple aspects of family life. For example, some display advertisements sold products primarily addressing issues about family economics, but the imagery used also highlighted secondary issues about the family, such as women's role in the family unit.

The space devoted to display adverts with explicit references to the family, as a percentage of total space devoted to display advertisements in the *Daily Express*, fluctuated throughout the wartime sample. For example, in 1939, 34% of display advertisements in the *Express* sample contained themes and images relating to the family. By 1942, this had dropped to 20%, with lows of 11% by 1943. However, by 1944 over 22% of *Express* display advertisements contained references to the family unit, dropping slightly again by 1945 to 15%.³⁵ The reduction of advertisements containing imagery of the family in the *Express* is unsurprising, as advertising space as a whole was reduced in wartime as a result of paper rationing, and therefore space had to be spread more thinly. Nonetheless, throughout the war advertisers clearly thought that that images of family remained an effective way of selling

³⁴ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 4a, p. 73.

³⁵ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 3b, p. 72.

products, and by implication demonstrated the continued importance of the institution of the family.

[i] Domestic Normality

As discussed on page 208, advertisers wished to be seen as useful to wartime society, not only by helping the economy and encouraging normal consumer culture, but also by providing advice and guidance to newspaper readers struggling with the effects of war.³⁶

Providing practical advice to the public was seen by the industry as a vital role for advertising. Bodies such as the Advertising Association, the Incorporated Practitioners in Advertising (IIPA) and the magazine *Advertisers Weekly*, believed that advertising was a part of the “everyday fabric of life” and therefore viewed as a trustworthy source of information by the public.³⁷ For instance, *Advertisers Weekly* noted in 1940 that it was the role of advertisers to teach the public to “buy wisely” in wartime, adding that:

It is our task to educate the public to purchase those branded basic materials or ingredients which by domestic work in the home, can be turned into consumable goods, replacing those existing highly processed articles that use labour needed for the prosecution of the war.³⁸

It was therefore vital for advertisers to encourage a sense of normality amongst newspaper readers, allowing them to make sensible and informed decisions about purchases, even more so than in peace time. Indeed, David Clampin has pointed out that the advertising industry

³⁶ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 41.

³⁷ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 42.

³⁸ *Advertisers Weekly*, 18th January 1940 pp. 41-44.

used the theme of family in display advertisements, overtly and implicitly, to give practical advice to newspaper readers, showing them that ‘life went on’ despite the war.³⁹

Advertisements in the *Express* often referred to a familiar and recognisable pre-war image of family life, to encourage a sense of normality. For example, Appendix G Figure 5 shows a Rowntree’s Cocoa advertisement from 11th September 1939, which promoted its product as the answer to a family’s financial and health problems.⁴⁰ Taking up 13% of total space on the back page, it occupied a prominent place.⁴¹ The imagery and type face was bold and clear, making its content noticeable to the reader. The language directly discussed the economic difficulties faced by this growing family and how this “Birmingham family of 6 manages on £3 a week for everything”. It broke down the Garner family’s budget outlining their expenses for rent, clothing, food and other amenities. This demonstrated Rowntree’s apparent understanding of the economics of family life and the company’s desire to be practically helpful. The advertisement addressed the public directly through the voice of Mrs Garner, with her description of the family’s everyday life and why they used Rowntree’s Cocoa:

That’s why we always have Rowntree’s Cocoa — it helps to satisfy all their appetites. And I know they’re getting all the nourishment they need when they drink Rowntree’s Cocoa, because it aids digestion and so makes all the food more nourishing.⁴²

The informal tone encouraged the public to feel greater trust in the product and see for themselves how other families lived. The advertisement also described the realities of family

³⁹ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 79, p. 226.

⁴⁰ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 5, p. 77.

⁴¹ Percentages of individual adverts on a particular page were measured individually.

⁴² Rowntree’s Cocoa, *Daily Express*, 11th September 1939, p. 8.

life, noting the limited funds, the need for the eldest child to work and the difficulty in providing nourishing food for a growing family. Despite the family's financial problems, the image used was not of a desperately poor family from the inner city. The Garners appeared more like a respectable, lower middle or working class family, a clean, cheerful, well-dressed and close-knit unit: "there's always a real crowd when we all sit down to our evening meal together". The mother was seen tending to her youngest child, while the elder children appeared to be listening to their father. The photograph does not show the father's face, but all other members of the family are turned to face him, either listening or engaging him in conversation. Another photograph showed the young, healthy and well-presented children, "lively youngsters –full of pep", playing affectionately.

Familial normality was also stressed in other wartime adverts. For example, a Colgate Toothpaste advertisement from 18th September 1940 depicted a story about Betty and how she attempted to get Jimmy to notice her.⁴³ The advertisement, which occupied 20% of space on page 2, showed Betty's Aunt commenting that "there is something wrong when a boy ignores an attractive girl like you Betty".⁴⁴ After taking the advice of a doctor, Betty starting using Colgate Toothpaste, got rid of her bad breath and eventually became engaged to Jimmy. Although the appearance of Jimmy in uniform makes it clear that this is a wartime advert, it is clear that the imagery and ideas used made it a typical pre-war advert. The imagery reinforced the importance of a woman's hygiene and physical appearance and how crucial it was to be attractive to men. The interactions between Betty, her Aunt and Jimmy could have occurred in any pre-war social situation.

On the surface, these images of the family were a marketing ploy to sell Rowntree's cocoa and Colgate Toothpaste, by giving practical advice to families about how to save

⁴³ Once again, percentages of individual adverts on particular pages were measured and worked out individually. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 6, p. 78.

⁴⁴ Colgate Toothpaste, *Daily Express*, 18th September 1940, p. 2.

money and to be healthy. These types of advertisements would also have been familiar to *Express* readers, as companies such as Rowntree, Cadbury and Colgate used images of families to sell its products in pre-war editions of the newspaper.⁴⁵ However, the image of the happy pre-war family jarred against the realities of British society in 1939 and 1940, when evacuation, conscription and shortages were causing upheaval for many families. These representations of the family therefore served another function, reminding readers of normal family life.

[ii] Adapting to Wartime Family Life

As the war progressed, imagery of family life in display advertising began to adapt to wartime circumstances, acknowledging the impact of war on the family and presenting their products as solutions to specific wartime problems. In the *Express* sample, the highest proportion of advertisements with explicit references to the family and the war effort appeared in 1941 and 1942, with five adverts from each year containing secondary references to the family and the war effort.⁴⁶ However, advertisers had recognised the impact of the war on British society during the early months of the war. For example, a Bournville Cocoa advertisement from 13th December 1939 dealt directly with problems facing a new ‘family’, as a result of taking in three evacuated boys from Sheffield.⁴⁷ This advertisement attempted to provide advice for the new ‘mother and father’, advocating the nutritional and economic benefits of Bournville Cocoa. It was a clear example of the advertising industry discussing

⁴⁵ See Volume II Appendix G Figure 5, p. 77.

⁴⁶ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 3, p. 72. London Trams, *Daily Express*, 21st January 1941, p. 3. Karswood Poultry Spice, *Daily Express*, 16th May 1941, p. 4. Food Needed, *Daily Express*, 22nd September 1941, p. 2. Phosphorene, *Daily Express*, 7th January 1942, p. 3. Bisto Gravy, *Daily Express*, 19th May 1942, p. 4.

⁴⁷ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 7, p78.

practical wartime problems and showing concern for newspaper readers. In addition the advertisement touched on another family-related theme:

Most mothers who have taken in evacuated children know how to cater for them, but when a childless couple had three hungry boys on their hands it wasn't so easy. My husband and I have always wanted children, though we have none of our own – so when the evacuation plans were made we offered our home.⁴⁸

The advertisement explicitly placed the institution of family at the centre of the war effort. By providing evacuated children with normality and a healthy lifestyle, this family replicated the pre-war ideal family life. At the same time it underpinned the idea that a married couple ideally needed to have children in order to be a proper family.

The stability of family life and the way this linked to the war effort was stressed in other advertisements in the *Daily Express* sample throughout the war. For example, the September 1939 'Rent Your Radio' advertisement stated that having a radio was of "national importance", as listening to the radio provided both information and entertainment, providing what appeared to be a sense of pre-war social continuity for the household.⁴⁹ Another advertisement from 7th January 1942, which sold Bob Martin's Conditioning Dog Powders, reminded readers that maintaining aspects of pre-war family life, such as owning a pet, would help guard against wartime problems such as the blackout.⁵⁰ By buying this product for the family dog, readers would have a 'cheery and lovable companion' in their homes, and families could help ward off the problems created by wartime conditions such as declining

⁴⁸ Bournville Cocoa, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Rent Your Radio, *Daily Express*, 11th September 1939, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Bob Martin's Condition Powders, *Daily Express*, 7th January 1942, p. 3. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 8, p. 78.

health. Although these advertisements did not depict family members, the language used implicitly referenced the family and the wartime household. By placing “ordinary consumptive practises” in a wartime context, advertisements allowed readers to signal their commitment to the war, while maintaining a normal pre-war cultural identity.⁵¹ By discussing wartime morale and the family home, they also tacitly highlighted the importance of family to the war effort.

The inclusion of images of the family by advertisers also revealed cultural assumptions about family life in British society during wartime. In spite of the problems of wartime, the family appears stable and contented. Traditional gender roles were assigned to men and women, with men providing for a growing family, while women concentrated on the home, children and household expenses. The primary role of display adverts such as the Rowntree’s and Colgate advertisements was to demonstrate how its product could help solve the multiple problems for families associated with budgeting, health, and feeding growing children, and that despite privations and problems family life could be happy and, by implication, underpin the war effort.

[iii] Housewives and Family

Explicit references to the family, home and the war effort became more apparent in the *Express* sample when advertisements discussed individual gender roles in the family unit. As we can see from Appendix G Figure 4c, advertisements in the *Express* showed women in a variety of roles in the family unit, including as housewife, mother and wife.⁵² One of the most prominent primary themes in family advertisements from 1939-1941 was the role of women as housewives. This was perhaps unsurprising as Penny Summerfield has argued that the

⁵¹ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 115.

⁵² See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 4c, p. 73, pp. 75-76. .

maintenance of peacetime norms and the position of women within family life were encouraged by all sectors of wartime society. The fact that the government did not “compel women to enter the workplace” prior to 1941 was symptomatic of society’s attitude towards the role of women in family life.⁵³ The ‘good’ female citizen therefore “remained committed to domesticity” in her attempts to help with the war effort.⁵⁴ Sonya Rose concurs, noting that government policy prior to 1941 insisted that the housewife was “not to be one of the war’s first casualties”.⁵⁵

These ideas certainly applied to imagery and language about the housewife used in display advertisements in the *Express* sample between 1939-1941. Some advertisements focused primarily on encouraging the housewife to take care of her appearance. As we can see from Appendix G Figure 9, a Singer Sewing Machine advertisement from September 1939 contained a small picture of a woman mending a dress, presenting the sewing machine as the answer to the problems of repairing and re-using clothes, while making sure “the professional look is not lost”.⁵⁶ It encouraged women to take care of their appearance by maintaining pre-war standards of dress in the home. Another advertisement from 13th December 1939, for Fairy Washing-Up Liquid, echoed this theme of the importance of appearance, and showed a housewife next to the washing-up bowl, with her hands made to sparkle by a fairy. The text exclaimed “you can have lovely hands *in spite of* housework”.⁵⁷ The woman is neatly dressed, clean and smiling – delighted that her “rough, red, chapped hands are gone forever”. In the same edition, a Rinso Washing Powder advertisement showed

⁵³ Penny Summerfield, ‘Discourses of Women and Work in World War II’, in *Nationalising Femininity: Culture, Sexuality, and British Cinema in the Second World War*, (eds.) Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 39

⁵⁴ Summerfield, ‘Discourse of Women and Work’, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Rose, *Which People’s War?* p. 150.

⁵⁶ Singer Sewing Machine, *Daily Express*, 11th September 1939, p. 4. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 9, p. 79.

⁵⁷ Fairy Liquid Soap, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 4. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 9, p. 79.

images of two housewives using two different washing powders.⁵⁸ The first woman is surrounded by steam, working hard to remove stains from the wash; she looks tired, frustrated and unkempt. The other image shows the housewife who used Rinso smiling and looking clean, tidy and happy and exclaiming “No Boiling Now with Rinso”. These early wartime advertisements in the *Express* were thus encouraging women to take care of their appearance while normalising their domestic chores, the imagery confirming their position in the home and reinforcing pre-war norms about gender and the family.

In addition the advertisements across the whole of the sample from the *Express*, depicted how the housewife’s role in the home aided the war effort. While imagery often continued to emphasise a housewife’s physical appearance, embedded in the texts were ideas about the need for housewives to make wartime economies by saving and ‘making do and mend’. Encouraging housewives to make savings in the home was not a wartime construct, however. Advertisers in the inter-war period strove to show how their products could lighten the load of the housewife, allowing her to create an ideal domestic life.⁵⁹ The message of economisation, of ‘making do and mend’, was even more pronounced in a wartime context, however, as a result of shortages and rationing.

Government campaigns in particular, such as those in 1940 on the Kitchen Front and the 1942 Fuel Economy Drive, which highlighted the importance of economising in the home, ran throughout the war.⁶⁰ Government advertisements which appeared in the *Express* sample were particularly vocal about the role of the housewife in wartime. For example, a National Salvage Scheme advertisement from 18th September 1940 used the phrase “Up Housewives and at ‘Em” as a rallying call for women to recycle and economise in the home as much as possible. The cartoon gives a glimpse into the world of the ordinary housewife - a

⁵⁸ Rinso Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Bingham, *Gender and Modernity*, p. 98.

⁶⁰ Sian Nicholas, *The Echo of War*, pp. 70-73.

simple brick house and garden, surrounded by pets and friendly neighbours. We see two housewives chatting over the garden fence, neatly dressed in cleaning aprons, watching their neighbour salvage household items. The image depicts both older and younger housewives, thereby suggesting that women of any age can be involved in this wartime scheme. The advertisement addressed the reader, validating the housewife's activities by asserting "She's doing a good job" and that "the housewife who saves – can be proud of the job she is doing".⁶¹ Ministry of Food's 'Food Fact' advertisements which appeared in 1941 and 1942 likewise thanked women for their help in the home, acknowledging that "things are bound to be difficult in war time – but we know you're doing a grand job on the Kitchen Front".⁶²

It is unsurprising then that display advertisements were keen to show how their products could also help housewives make economies in wartime. Advertisers strove to be helpful, for example, the Fairy Liquid Soap advert from December 1939 urged the reader to purchase it on grounds of economy: "think of the fuel you'll save – that's money saved".⁶³ Other adverts, such as a January 1940 Velveeta spread advert and a December 1943 Sunlight Soap advert demonstrated that purchasing particular products would help make wartime economies in the household, thereby allowing housewives to "get involved" with the British wartime spirit.⁶⁴ Products which encouraged housewives to achieve a "bright and healthy home" and how to be "proud of the home" continued to appear in the *Express* sample, particularly between 1939-1941.⁶⁵ Although these advertisements addressed any *Daily*

⁶¹ Up Housewives an at 'Em', Salvage Scheme, *Daily Express*, 18th September 1940, p. 2. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 10, p. 79.

⁶² Food Facts, *Daily Express*, 7th January 1942, p. 2. Also see Food Facts, *Daily Express*, 22nd September 1941, p. 2.

⁶³ Fairy Liquid Soap, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 4. Other adverts in the sample which encouraged household economies included Oxydol Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 3 "How to Make Lemonade without Sugar" *Daily Express*, 27th July 1940, p. 3. "It's more than saving – it's double saving" Sunlight Soap, *Daily Express*, 15th December 1943, p. 3.

⁶⁴ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p131. Seven Seas Cod Liver Oil, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 3. "It's more than saving – it's double saving" Sunlight Soap, *Daily Express*, 15th December 1943, p. 3.

⁶⁵ *Mansion Polish*, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1940, p. 4. Smart's Furniture, *Daily Express*, 22nd September 1941, p. 4.

Express reader with a home, they contained implicit references to an ideal family life embedded in its imagery and language, through the advertisement's invocation of the ideal domestic home.

In the *Express* sample, washing soap advertisers in particular were keen to show how housewives could cultivate family and domestic life, while at the same time saving time, effort and fuel.⁶⁶ For example, an Oxydol Washing Power advertisement from January 1940 implied that the product could help housewives engage in the war effort, arguing it could save “two thirds of your gas and coal” and allow clothes and linen “to last much longer”.⁶⁷ Another selling Lux washing powder from April 1940 was much more explicit about the housewife's role in helping the war effort:

Wartime has brought a big new problem: how to make your household linen and the clothes last. For replacing what you have with things anywhere near so good, may be difficult – even impossible.

Lux could help here, as it was designed to reduce wear-and-tear when washing clothes, and by implication reduce the demand for replacements at a time when fabrics were increasingly in short supply.⁶⁸

The image of women at housewives doing vital wartime work was also developed in food advertisements.⁶⁹ David Clampin has argued that particular wartime food adverts, such

⁶⁶ Washing adverts in the sample which contained imagery of the family: Rinso Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 8. Persil Soap, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 9. Sunlight Soap, *Daily Express*, 1st October 1942, p. 3. Sunlight Soap, 15th December 1943, p. 3. Rinso Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 16th February 1945, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Oxydol Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Lux Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940, p8. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 11, p. 80.

⁶⁹ Examples in the sample include Cod Liver Food Extract, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 3. Bengers Food Drink, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p4. Rowntree's Cocoa, *Daily Express*, 27th July 1940, p. 4. Malteasers, *Daily Express*, 7th January 1942, p. 4.

as those advertising chicken and beef extracts, soups, pickles and table salt, became more useful in the wartime food market as they were shown to improve the “bland and limited goods that were soon to be available” in wartime as a result of shortages and rationing.⁷⁰ These products were shown to be the “friend of the housewife”, whose job it was to provide the family with varied and appetising meals, keeping family members as fit as they had been pre-war.⁷¹

For example, a Bovril advertisement from December 1939 exclaimed “Thank Goodness for Bovril: A Staple in Difficult Times. The more difficult the times, the greater is the nation’s demand for Bovril”.⁷² The advertisement showed a well-dressed and happy woman and child carrying the shopping and urged the reader to connect the product with the role women were expected to play, that is to keep their family well-fed and happy ‘in difficult times’. The language also suggested that purchasing Bovril would bring stability to a person’s life in wartime, as it would improve nutrition and guard against strain, leaving you “at your best – cheerful, vigorous, ready for anything”. Another advert from December 1940, advertising Marmite, showed how women could use Marmite in their home cooking, to liven up meals for their husband and “give a new sparkle to the old”. The questions in the text made it clear, however, where the responsibility lay where the provision of meals was concerned: “What would you like for dinner dear? How many times have you asked that question and got a vague answer?” A woman’s wartime role was clearly defined as keeping her husband healthy and happy, so that he too could fulfil his wartime duty.⁷³

Both Bovril and Marmite were of course popular pre-war products, well known to the *Daily Express* reader. By purchasing these products, people could retain some sense of pre-

⁷⁰ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 80.

⁷¹ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 80.

⁷² *Bovril*, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 1. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 12 p.80.

⁷³ Marmite Yeast Extract, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1940, p. 5. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 12, p.80.

war normality in their lives, while remaining cheerful and healthy and supporting the war effort. Imagery and language also played on culturally embedded assumptions from before the war, about the role of women in wartime, that is, to do the shopping and cooking, take care of the children and bring stability and normality to the home.

Although references to women as housewives appeared in the *Express* sample intermittently after 1941, they were not as common between 1942 and 1944.⁷⁴ Wartime circumstances, such as the start of female conscription in the spring of 1941, allowed women to move into more traditionally masculine spheres of work. Housewifery was not necessarily the sole occupation of women at war anymore. This did not mean, however, that advertisers abandoned images and references to women and their role at the centre of the family unit. The image of women and her role in the family unit merely became more of an implied than stated presence in display advertisements. The role of the mother at the centre of family life, and her role in caring for family members health, therefore, became a more prevalent image in the sample after 1941.

[iv] Family and Health

An important recurring theme throughout the *Express* sample was the health and general well-being of the family. 28% of the advertisements in the sample had family health as a primary theme.⁷⁵ Of course, advertisements for medicines and health advice had been a major part of press advertising since the nineteenth-century with advertising often playing on people's fears and desires surrounding health. Advertisements for medicines and health care were also extremely profitable for newspaper proprietors. For example, repeated attempts in the 1930s by the British Medical Association to have the inflammatory claims of patent

⁷⁴ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 4c pp. 75-76.

⁷⁵ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 4c, pp. 75-76.

medicines removed from newspapers were unsuccessful due to their profitability to newspaper proprietors.⁷⁶

Concerns about public health, specifically child health, had also existed prior to the start of the war. For example, the government feared a declaration of war would bring immediate and continuous aerial bombardment to Britain, with predictions of 600,000 deaths and double the number of casualties.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, a committee of psychiatrists in October 1938 had predicted at least three to four million cases of hysteria and war neurosis in the first six months of the war alone.⁷⁸

Once war was declared, events such as evacuation ignited discussion about the health and condition of the working classes. Concerns about “feckless and dirty” slum children mixing with middle class families, and the threat this posed to health, were raised in the press throughout 1939 and 1940.⁷⁹ The *Daily Express* also amplified concerns about health in its opposition to rationing, and argued that it would impact society’s health by “taking (food) away from workers who need it”.⁸⁰ It was unsurprising then that concerns about family health and nutrition should manifest themselves in newspaper advertising.

From the beginning of the war, advertisements referred prominently to women’s role as a mother, and the benefits of mothers remaining healthy. For example, a Beechams Pill advertisement from December 1939 discussed the benefits of Beechams in maintaining a woman’s health and appearance; the pills would help her “save herself from everyday ills: to

⁷⁶ PEP 1938, p. 21. Also see Bingham, *Gender and Modernity*, p. 93.

⁷⁷ Calder, *The People’s War*, p. 60.

⁷⁸ Richard Titmuss, *History of World War II: Problems of Social Policy*, (London: 1950) pp. 19-20.

⁷⁹ National Federation of Women’s Institutes, *Town Children through Country Eyes*, (Dorking, 1940) pp. 5, 21. Readers’ Letters, H.B. Thomas, Surrey, *Daily Express*, January 25th 1939, p. 10. Also see John MacNicol, ‘The Evacuation of Schoolchildren’, in (ed.) Harold L. Smith, *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War*, pp. 3-31, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) p. 5, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Opinion, ‘Out of Place’, *Daily Express*, 7th November 1939, p. 6. For other examples of the *Daily Express* and its objections to rationing see Opinion, ‘Support the Shop Keeper’, *Daily Express*, 6th November 1939, p. 6. Opinion, ‘Good News, Bad News’ *Daily Express*, 29th November 1939, p. 6. Anon, ‘Sugar Ration is 75 Lumps a week’, *Daily Express*, 1st December 1939, p. 1.

avoid constipation and keep slim”. However, it also positioned women as mothers: “the modern mother takes Beechams Pills: Mothers nowadays know how to retain their good looks”. The primary theme of the advertisement was women’s health and appearance, but by addressing them as mothers it assigned to women a particular role in society as central to family life, and appealed to the idea that even a mother needed to continue to appear attractive.⁸¹

Other advertisements, such as one for Solidox Toothpaste from April 1940, highlighted the links between a woman’s appearance, her health and in turn, the health of other family members.⁸² The advertisement showed a picture of a woman reading to two children, smiling happily. The text focused on the health and beauty benefits of the product, and exclaimed that “this woman tells a lie every time she opens her mouth”. The primary message was therefore that women should take care of their teeth and appearance. However, the language in the advert revealed this woman to be a ‘fake’. By using the Solidox product, she had achieved an ideal appearance, which could be replicated by anyone. The advert did not state that the product was specifically for mothers and children, nor a particular member of a family. By associating the image of a mother and children with this product, however, Solidox evoked the idea that taking care of her teeth was in some way linked to her role as a mother. It stated that “this woman might be you”, implying that you, the reader, also could become a well-kept healthy woman, caring for your children’s health and well-being. It inferred that this was an image women should identify with and aspire to imitate.

The responsibility women had for their children’s health was particularly emphasised in the *Express* sample. 17% of the sample contained references to and images of children,

⁸¹ Beecham’s Pills, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939 p. 8.

⁸² Solidox Toothpaste, *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940, p. 2. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 13, p. 81. For another advert with mothers and family health as a primary theme see California Syrup of Figs, *Daily Express* 25th May 1940, p. 7.

with many addressing the importance of a child's health to the family.⁸³ Advertisements which stressed the importance of child health were often products specifically for children or babies and so, unsurprisingly, used imagery of children. For example, a Virol advertisement from March 1942 used the image of a happy and healthy baby to sell its product. There was no explanation as to why the baby needed to use the product; the happy and cheerful photo implied that by using Virol, readers would be keeping their children healthy and contented.⁸⁴

Other advertisements, however, stressed more explicitly the important role women played in caring for their children's health. Often the language and imagery played on social fears about family illness and in so doing, emphasised traditional gender roles. For example, a Nurse Harvey's Baby Food advertisement from January 1940 emphasised the benefits and "soothing effects" of its product for new-borns. Although it contained no imagery, the language was designed to appeal to a mother's concerns about her child's health and assist with the practical problems of child rearing. In claiming that the product was good at "curing cross babies", it reassured the reader of the product's "perfect safety, suitability, the result being perfect health, freedom from pain and peaceful sleep".⁸⁵ Another advertisement, selling Thermogene Vapour Rub in January 1940, depicted a woman rubbing the product into her son's chest, with the words "It's so worrying when the little ones start to sneeze and cough – a cold may lead to anything. Don't let the cold take hold – don't run any risks".⁸⁶ The image depicted an image of a middle class mother and son, both clean and well-dressed with the little boy holding a small toy train. The mother is shown engaging in her primary duty of care to her sick child. Although the advertisement's language doesn't tell women directly it's

⁸³ See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 4c, pp. 75-76. For examples of these adverts in the sample see Odol Toothpaste, *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940, p. 8. Ovaltine, *Daily Express*, 6th December 1940, p. 1. Fry's Chocolate Drink, *Daily Express*, 7th January 1942, p. 4. Virol Baby Feed, *Daily Express*, 7th September 1944, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Virol Extract, *Daily Express*, 9th March 1942, p. 1. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 13, p. 81.

⁸⁵ Nurse Harvey's Baby Mix, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 9.

⁸⁶ Thermogene Vapour Rub, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 11. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 13, p. 81.

their responsibility to look after a child's health, the message is unmistakable in the imagery. Although much of this imagery and rhetoric would have been familiar to readers, as it appeared in peace-time copies of the *Express*, its message took on greater meaning in wartime. The importance of maintaining good health in wartime became ever more important, as described at the beginning of this chapter.⁸⁷

As references to women as housewives diminished in the sample from 1942 onwards, references to women as mothers and child carers remained. The imagery in advertisements placed greater emphasis on children from 1942, although the role of the mother and her concern for her children's health was still emphasised. It is possible that the effects of wartime upheavals on children, such as the evacuation scheme, may have raised the level of concern society had about child health in wartime. As we can see from the Haliborange Tonic advertisement from February 1943, it contained cartoon drawings of a small child, both before and after taking the tonic. The text focused on the mother, however, stating "Nobody knows better than mummy what a transformation Haliborange makes to peaky lows and pale little cheeks".⁸⁸ Phillip's Dental Magnesia was even more direct in its tone of address demanding "MOTHER! You want your children to grow up with teeth safe from the danger of decay".⁸⁹

Advertisements reinforced this direct tone of address by including references to official advisers such as doctors, midwives and scientists. These figures served to give authority to the advertisements' messages about the roles of women in the wartime family. For example, a Robinson's Groat advertisement included a large image of "Mrs Motherwell", who appears, though this is never stated, as if she is a uniformed nurse or midwife, staring out at the reader alongside the drawing of a small baby. She addressed mothers directly and

⁸⁷ See Chapter 8, pp. 205-208.

⁸⁸ Haliborange Tonic, *Daily Express*, 12th February 1943, p. 4.

⁸⁹ Phillip's Dental Magnesia, *Daily Express*, 1st February 1944, p. 4.

reminded them of their responsibilities to their child, by stating that “you are feeding baby *before* he is born”.⁹⁰

The use of figures such as ‘Mrs Motherwell’ implied that the social role of women as mothers was officially sanctioned. Another advertisement for Cow and Gate Milk from September 1944 claimed that “your doctor will tell you that you can’t go wrong with Cow and Gate Milk”.⁹¹ In this instance the doctor is both endorsing Cow and Gate Milk, and validating the role of women as the primary carers of children. This role could also be taken by school teachers, as was the case in a 1940 Persil advertisement.⁹² It depicted several children with a teacher showing disapproval, because a student’s shirt was not as white as it could be. The text exclaims “Oh Ethel – someone’s Mother isn’t using Persil yet”, and asserted that “Every mother ought to know”, thereby implying that their child’s appearance, and subsequent social acceptance, is their responsibility.

Family health was an important theme in the *Daily Express*’s wartime sample. A range of adverts were shown to help *Express* readers achieve good wartime health, as well as others adverts, such as Marmite, Bovril and Rowntree’s advertisements, which stressed readers should stay fit and healthy for all forms of wartime work. Simply by buying these products and remaining in good health, readers were in tune with the spirit of the war effort.⁹³ Discussions about the family’s nutrition and health revealed other assumptions about family in display advertising, however. Not only did advertisements for these products help sustain pre-war ideas about happy and healthy families, but they also revealed how the idealised image of the family, its relationships and interactions, was culturally embedded in British

⁹⁰ Robinson’s Patent Groats, *Daily Express*, 1st April 1940, p. 11. See Appendix G Figure 13b. For more examples of adverts with official ‘advisers’ in them see, Bournville Cocoa, *Daily Express*, 13th December 1939, p. 8. Dettol Wash, *Daily Express*, 28th May 1940, p. 3. Angiers Cough Mixture, *Daily Express*, 29th July 1941, p. 4.

⁹¹ Cow and Gate Milk, *Daily Express*, 7th September 1944, p. 4.

⁹² Persil Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 25th January 1940, p. 9. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 13b, p. 82.

⁹³ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, pp. 114-115.

society from pre-war. By appealing to readers concerns about cleanliness, health and appearance, display advertisements appealed to an ideal image of the family which had existed prior to the start of the war. Advertising therefore stressed an image of familial continuity, with family health and the maternal role at its centre, which took on even greater importance under wartime circumstances.

[v] Men and Family

The role of men in the family did not feature as prominently in the *Daily Express* sample as the role of women. This was to be expected, however, as in wartime many men were absent from home life as a result of service in the armed forces, only appearing intermittently on leave. The pre-war idea of the family unit was therefore challenged by wartime conscription.⁹⁴ Despite the absence of many men from the family unit, advertisers were keen to show that they had continuing connections to the family. David Clampin has argued that male identity in wartime advertising was, perhaps surprisingly, directly the opposite of the “hyper masculine nature of the German male”.⁹⁵ Instead, men were typically portrayed as devotees of home life and family and as father figures, not as a “distant patriarch but as an active and involved constituent, once more promoting the softer side of the British man at war”.⁹⁶ Images of men and the family in the *Express* sample echoed Clampin’s perspective. The image of men at the heart of the domestic sphere was not, however, a wartime construction. Sonya Rose has argued that during the inter-war period, the cultural expectation for men to present an image of ‘manly stoicism’ and to suppress emotions lessened, as a result of violent experiences suffered by many in the First World War. Men became more

⁹⁴ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 198.

⁹⁵ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 201.

⁹⁶ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 204.

connected to the home and the domestic sphere with advertising reflecting this change displaying men as softer and more caring.⁹⁷

Advertisements throughout the *Express* sample showed that men had a role to play in family life in wartime. For example, a cluster of advertisements in the sample from 1942 focused on the importance of family stability in wartime, demonstrating that a man's primary responsibility lay in his ability to earn money for his family's future. A War Savings advertisement from March 1942 depicted a father's role as "fighting for future generations" through sound economic investment in the war effort. The advertisement did not depict an image of a 'father', choosing instead to show the photo of a young boy with the emotive question "Going to smash his dreams dad?" The language appealed to fathers throughout society, stating that "Money is wanted to remove the risk from our womenfolk and our youngsters". The language in the advert reminded men that their responsibility was to the family's safety and stability; that men's primary job was to 'protect' and 'nurture' rather than aggressively 'defend' the family unit. The picture of the young boy was also portrayed as intellectual, rather than hyper-masculine and aggressive, presenting a paradox to the reader in some senses as this boy was supposed to grow up and protect 'the women-folk'. In actual fact, the advert is arguing that both women and children needed protecting, and that men could do this in a multitude of different ways in wartime. Fathers could fight the war on the home front, providing money for the war effort and stability for their family's future, as well as be members of the armed forces.⁹⁸

Even when men were depicted in uniform, however, they were shown to be no less devoted to family life than their home front counterparts. Concerns about threats to family

⁹⁷ Rose, *Which People's War?*, pp. 179-180. Also see Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender and National Identity, 1939-91*, (London: IB.Taurus, 1997), p. 50.

⁹⁸ War Savings, *Daily Express*, 9th March 1942, p. 4. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 14, p. 83. See also Lloyds Bank, 'Will and Savings', *Daily Express*, 25th September 1942, p. 2. National Bonds, "Not all Affairs of State are settled in Whitehall", *Daily Express*, 1st October 1942, p. 2

life in wartime, such as marital infidelity and loss of families to wartime bombing, were keenly felt by society, and especially by men in the armed forces.⁹⁹ Men in uniform in the *Express* sample were, therefore, often shown as retaining pre-war civilian values about family life, as a way of reassuring readers of its continued importance.¹⁰⁰ For example, a Bisto advertisement from May 1942 showed a sailor returning home on leave, excited at the prospect of “meals just like mother used to make”. It reminded the reader that despite the young man’s uniform, he still valued his home, and the role his mother played at the centre of his family in wartime.¹⁰¹ Another advertisement from April 1944 entitled ‘Salute the Soldier’ depicted a soldier in the front line “battling the Hun”, yet he never forgets his civilian life: “George was keen on football – seems to dream about it his mum used to say”. By directly referring to George’s mother, it reminds the reader that this man is part of a family. His duty is primarily to protect his family and their way of life, “what are they fighting for?”¹⁰² A Peck’s Meat and Fish Paste advertisement from February 1945 showed a drawing of a returning soldier, holding and playing with his children. The text showed the “the thrill of anticipation”, of both the father and his children, for the return of a key family member to civilian life,¹⁰³ the return to pre-war social norms of “home, the little man and ordinariness”.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, these depictions of uniformed men reinforced traditional ideas about the family, as they depicted them as relaxed, cheerful soldiers, who were not primarily military men, but who, at their core, loved domesticity and family, and had been fighting for just that.

⁹⁹ Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British Culture and the Royal Air Force 1939-1945* (Oxford: 2008) p. 85. Also see Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 199.

¹⁰⁰ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, pp. 190-193. Also see Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?* pp. 151-196.

¹⁰¹ Bisto Extract, *Daily Express*, 19th May 1942, p. 4. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 14, p. 83.

¹⁰² Salute the Soldier, *Daily Express*, 4th April 1944, p. 3. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 14, p. 83.

¹⁰³ Peck’s Meat and Fish Paste, 21st February 1945, p. 4. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 14, p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars*, (London: Routledge, 1991) p. 59.

[vi] Family and the Post-War World

From 1943 onwards *Express* display advertisements began to tentatively discuss the post-war world and a return to normality. Paul Addison has noted that in the 1945 election, Labour were keen to put “the material needs of the average family above all else in its campaign”.¹⁰⁵ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska concurs, arguing that throughout the war, popular attitudes to austerity incorporated a “longing to return to normalcy”.¹⁰⁶ It is not surprising then, as David Clampin has argued, that by engaging with the “rising popular consciousness regarding post-war planning”, advertisers could promote brand awareness, in readiness for the return of peace and increased consumerism.¹⁰⁷

While some advertisers certainly made a point of invoking a ‘reconstruction’ agenda of change about the post-war world, advertisements in the *Express* sample carried within them ideas about how the post-war world would be, which were often rooted in pre-war ones about the role of the family.¹⁰⁸ These adverts often referenced images and ideas associated with the family, alongside aspirations for peace, prosperity and the end of austerity in a post-war world. For example, in April 1944, Goblin Cleaners presented the image of a small child cleaning a globe announcing that “the world will be a cleaner place when Goblin Cleaners are available again”.¹⁰⁹ In August of that year, Sharp’s Toffees also showed women and children having a picnic outdoors, a typical scene suggestive of female care and family enjoyment, declaring that, “Such peaceful, happy scenes as this are, we hope, just around the corner”.¹¹⁰ One advert for H. Samuels from September 1944 encouraged readers to think about a more normal future, one with hope based around the traditional ideas of courtship, followed by engagement and marriage. The advert showed a couple becoming engaged; they were “head

¹⁰⁵ Addison, *Road to 1945*, p. 267.

¹⁰⁶ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, p. 204.

¹⁰⁷ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 216.

¹⁰⁸ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁹ Goblin Cleaners, *Daily Express*, 4th April 1944, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ Sharp’s Toffees, *Daily Express*, 18th August 1944, p. 3.

over heels in love” and “Bob wanted nothing but the finest ring his money could buy”.¹¹¹

Now the war was coming to an end, readers could begin to think of their future and the place products such as jewellery might have in it.¹¹² Advertisements such as these placed family members and family activities at the heart of ideas about what the post-war world would mean.

It is important, however, to register the context within which these advertisements appeared, in order to recognise how the messages they contained were competing with those from other advertisers. Display advertisements with images of the family in the post-war world were not given much space. The Goblin Cleaner and Sharp’s Toffee advertisements were placed in the bottom left of the page, as part of a cluster of adverts, and did not stand out markedly from the other advertisements. For example, the Sharp’s Toffee advertisement took up only 2% of the space on page 3.¹¹³ Surrounding it were five other advertisements focusing on wartime problems. An MOI advertisement warned “Pipe Down: The Germans are now more than ever anxious for any scrap of information about our next step to victory”.¹¹⁴ Another, selling shoes, advised people to “wear shoes on alternate days” allowing them to last longer and save resources.¹¹⁵ Advertisements which encouraged readers to think of a post-war world were, therefore, merely part of a larger set of messages from *Express* advertisers.

While images of women as housewives had never disappeared completely from the sample, advertisers had concentrated on other aspects of family life as the war progressed. By 1945, the sample began to focus once again on the image of the housewife, and women’s role

¹¹¹ H Samuel, *Daily Express*, 7th September 1944, p. 3. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 14, p. 84.

¹¹² Also see Peck’s Meat and Fish Paste, “the thrill of anticipation – may be a hackneyed phrase: it certainly is no empty one. Who can fail to find joy in looking to good times, good things – soon we home, to be our happy lot when Victory brings us peace and plenty”, *Daily Express*, 21st February 1945, p. 4. See Volume II, Appendix G Figure 14, p. 83.

¹¹³ Space given to individual adverts on specific pages was measured individually.

¹¹⁴ ‘Pipe Down’ Ministry of Information, *Daily Express*, 18th August 1944, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ Wartime Shoe Hints, *Daily Express*, 18th August 1944, p. 3.

in the home. Products for cleaning and washing associated these activities with the woman's role, using phrases like "Millions of women know how good Johnson's Floor Polish is" and "Housewives who use Parazone don't worry when the weather breaks".¹¹⁶ Their role as the custodians of family health recurred in advertisements such as one Robinson's Groats advertisement in January 1945, which addressed the idea that readers needed to be aware that "children need an adequate supply of nourishment to help them through this winter".¹¹⁷ Another advert from 21st February 1945, asked 'Why do women fail at omelettes with dried eggs'? implying in the very wording of the terms of the question, that it was women who did most of the cooking in the home.¹¹⁸

By using imagery of the family and referring to an idealised image of women's pre-war role in the family home, *Express* display adverts reinforced ideas about the role of the family in the post-war world. *Daily Express* advertising in the sample made it clear that family life would play a key role in the construction of society after the war, as long as it was based on pre-war ideas about gender roles in the family unit.

Conclusion

Display advertising had a vital role to play in wartime newspapers, to direct and inform, sustain morale and retain a sense of normality for the wartime British public. As with their German counterparts, British advertisers played a "reassuring role" in wartime, by reminding

¹¹⁶ Johnson's Floor Polish, *Daily Express*, 16th February 1945, p. 3. Parazone Cleaner, *Daily Express*, 20th January 1945, p. 2. Also see Rinso Washing Powder, *Daily Express*, 16th February 1945, p. 3. Gumption Smooth Paste Cleaner, *Daily Express*, 21st May 1945, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Robinson's Patent Groats, *Daily Express*, 30th January 1945, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Dried Eggs, *Daily Express*, 21st February 1945, p. 3.

people of products they knew in peacetime and offering strategies for dealing with wartime hardships.¹¹⁹

Advertising in the *Daily Express*, as shown in the sample used here, employed traditional ideas and images of family life to sell a variety of products. Images of family life were utilised by advertisers throughout the war and the image of family in the *Daily Express*'s wartime display advertising sample was based on the idea of continuity with the pre-war family. Continuity, this stress on normality and its desirability, continued even while the advertisements acknowledged the problems faced by the wartime family unit, such as conscription, rationing and evacuation. Advertisers' representations of family life were, however, narrow ones. For *Express* advertisers, family life revolved around mothers, fathers, children and marriage. Although historians have noted the diversity of representations of gender in newspapers and advertisements prior to the war and during the conflict, in the context of family themed advertisements, this was not the case. The role of women, in particular, as the conventional centre of traditional family life was a constant throughout the sample used here.

A variety of themes about family appeared in wartime display advertisements. Advertisers attempted to help readers with the problems of wartime life, demonstrating how their products sustained a stable home and family life. The importance of family health was stressed and depicted as crucial to the war effort. It was also the responsibility of women to take care of their family's health, particularly that of their children. Many advertisements showed women taking advice about health and home from professionals, such as doctors and midwives, which underscored the importance of figures of authority in validating and supporting family life during wartime. The position of women in the home was also

¹¹⁹ Swett, *Selling Under the Swastika*, p. 14.

portrayed as vital war work and the family unit key to bolstering the war effort and the stability of the country.

Men's role in family life was not as common a theme in the sample as the role of women, but was nonetheless important. Fathers were portrayed at the centre of family life, fulfilling their wartime duty by either working at home or fighting abroad. Men in uniform were portrayed as relaxed, cheerful individuals, fighting for a return to a traditional world of home, domesticity and family life. Thoughts of family were men's antidote to wartime privations and problems in the armed forces. Men at home were portrayed as defending the family unit in a multitude of ways, such as sound economic investment and fighting in the armed forces. Advertisements in the sample also stressed the fact that men valued family life and domesticity, such as home-cooked meals and spending time with family members.

The sample of display advertisements discussed in this chapter point to a number of things. The representation of the family in advertisements remained traditional throughout the war, drawing on pre-war ideas about normality. Within these representations, women and men fulfilled traditional roles as carer and provider and defender respectively. The advertisements imagined the post-war world as a continuation of the pre-war norm. While the representations of gender had become more diverse in the 1930s and even during the war, where advertisers in the *Express* were concerned, women were represented in relation to their role in the family in a very traditional manner.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press*, p. 175.

Chapter Nine:

Conclusion

This chapter reviews the conclusions of this research and sets them in the context of their contribution to existing knowledge and thinking about the popular press in the Second World War. It recaps the aims of the research. It then reviews each of the chapters, with an emphasis where appropriate, on drawing out the conclusions of each chapter and what they contribute to our understanding of the history of the popular press in the Second World War. It then draws together the main contributions the thesis makes to existing knowledge on this topic and discusses their wider significance for historians of the period.

Aims

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate a number of issues in press history, through examining the popular press in the Second World War, in particular the most widely read of the popular newspapers, the *Daily Express*. In so doing, it examined the ways in which the *Express* adapted to wartime conditions and how it represented the family during those years.

The *Daily Express* was the largest selling popular newspaper in Britain during the 1930s and 1940s, defining itself as a modern popular newspaper. The term ‘family newspaper’ was used, however, by some popular newspapers during the first half of the twentieth-century to describe their content to advertisers. It has also been used by historians as a way of understanding and contextualising the content that was included and excluded from particular newspapers, such as the *Daily Express*. This thesis explored the meaning behind the idea of a ‘family newspaper’ in relation to the *Daily Express*, the extent to which the *Express* could be described as a ‘family newspaper’ during the Second World War and

how the newspaper's content and appearance changed in wartime.¹ In so doing, it addressed relevant literature, including ideas on the history of the press in the twentieth-century, the history of the *Daily Express*, research on British society in the Second World War, the history of the family during the twentieth-century and its representation in the media and the press.

The Literature Review

Writing on the history of the press has been framed within a number of key assumptions or frameworks, many of which have proven very influential.² The so called 'liberal' interpretation of press history has dominated studies of newspapers throughout the twentieth-century.³ This interpretation depicted the history of the press as a struggle against the state, with historians arguing that the press became independent in the mid nineteenth-century, not only from government but also from party and social interest, enabling it to become the voice of the people, holding government to account.⁴ Koss has, however, asserted that freedom of the press from party political influence did not occur fully until after the Second World War.⁵

The liberal theory has nevertheless been critiqued by James Curran and other historians, who argue that its approach to press history is too narrow, encouraging press

¹ Bingham, *Family Newspapers*, p. 53.

² Tom O'Malley, 'History, Historians and the Writing of Print and Newspaper History', p. 290. These theories have also been outlined and critiqued in detail by James Curran in, 'Media and the Making of British Society', pp. 135-154.

³ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press*; Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

⁴ I.R. Christie, *Myth and Reality in Late Eighteenth Century Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1970); Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c. 1780-1850* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1977); Richard Boston, 'W.T. Stead and Democracy by Journalism', in Joel H. Wiener, ed., *Papers for the Millions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

⁵ Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press*, pp. 615-656.

historians to address the underlying social and economic forces which shaped the press, rather than simply focusing on individual texts and press barons.⁶

Other theories of press history were also reviewed, including the feminist and radical narratives, which revealed a variety of ideas concerning the representations of women in the press, the extent to which media representations reflected the reality of women's roles in society in the nineteenth and twentieth-century, and questioning the extent to which capitalism plays a role in the production, reception and manipulation of the media. Historians such as Cynthia White and Janet Todd have argued that the women's press in the nineteenth-century often portrayed a narrow view of women's role in society.⁷ Nineteenth and twentieth-century popular women's journalism also presented the central concerns of women as winning and keeping a man, home making, motherhood and their appearance.⁸ However, Adrian Bingham has challenged this idea, arguing that in the inter-war period, gender roles were the subject of intense debate, and newspaper content reflected this as its content was adapted to appeal to wider sections of the public.⁹

What this survey of press history revealed, however, was the lack of research about the role of the popular press during the Second World War, and despite a core foundation of work on the *Daily Express*, there has been no sustained scholarly history of that important newspaper. Although historians such as Paul Addison have argued that the war resulted in "very modest changes to society", it was nevertheless important to ascertain to what extent the wartime popular press discussed ideas of social change.¹⁰

⁶ Tom O'Malley, 'History, Historians and the Writing of Print and Newspaper History in the UK', p. 291. Also see James Curran, 'The Rise of the Westminster School.' p. 33. Curran, 'Media and the Making of British Society', pp. 141-143.

⁷ Cynthia L. White, *Women's Magazines*, p. 12. Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angelica*, pp. 100-104.

⁸ Curran, 'Media and the Making of British Society', p. 141.

⁹ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 246.

¹⁰ Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 14, pp. 18-19.

Despite the fact there has been much commentary on the *Express* in research about individuals who worked at the newspaper, such as Lord Beaverbrook and Arthur Christiansen, there has not been a detailed examination of the newspaper's war time role. Study of the *Express* has allowed the relevance of the liberal theory of the press, in relation to war time conditions, to be investigated and the extent to which the *Express* and other newspapers in wartime were influenced by government interference and censorship. In addition, this study has been able to explore, more fully, the role of gender and family in the popular press during the Second World War, and the extent to which newspapers and their representation of family were influenced by traditional gender values. Understanding aspects of the radical narrative were also pertinent, as it considered the relationship of the *Express* to dominant social narratives of domesticity and family in wartime society, through a study of representations in newspaper content and advertisements.

This research therefore sought to address some of the issues raised in press historiography by considering the idea of the 'family newspaper' in wartime through examining the *Daily Express*. 'Family newspaper' was a term used by popular newspapers in the first part of the twentieth-century and subsequently by historians, but it had not, as yet, been explored in detail. This was achieved by looking at the history of a popular newspaper in wartime, the *Daily Express*, and by considering the ways in which the 'family' was represented in the paper, in particular through examining three key issues: the 1939 Evacuation Scheme, the release of the Beveridge Report in 1942 and advertising in the *Express* between 1939 and 1945.

Content analysis

The research deployed in this thesis used analysis of secondary literature, and manuscripts from archives around the UK to develop its perspective and to investigate the issues. It also used selective content analysis of the *Daily Express*, as a tool for understanding the *Express*'s representation of family in wartime. This was a valuable method of analysis as it allowed for the tracking of different themes pertaining to the family in wartime and the registering of changes and adaptations in the *Express*'s representations of family life during this period. However this technique was only one, albeit important tool used amongst others, in particular, the information available in primary printed and secondary printed sources and manuscript collections. The findings generated have been viewed in the light of the information and insights in those other sources.

The Daily Express 1900-1945

Chapter 4, 'The *Daily Express*: The Evolution of a 'Family Newspaper'', aimed to provide a history of the *Daily Express* from 1900-1939, outlining the newspaper's origins, how it was constructed, its production, and its staff during the 1920s and 1930s. It also analysed both the newspaper's content and readership during the 1930s to see how far the newspaper could be defined as a 'family newspaper' prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.

The chapter demonstrated that the interwar popular press contained a diverse range of content, particularly in its representations of sexuality, gender and British society, conforming therefore to other work in this field.¹¹ During the 1930s, the *Express* provided a variety of separate pages for each member of the family. Men's, women's and children's pages in the *Express* reflected a sense of optimism about British society in the 1930s, and

¹¹ See Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 256.

helped create a modern newspaper discussing a variety of topics including gender, sexuality, consumerism and entertainment. Although the *Express* did not describe itself as a ‘family newspaper’ in the inter-war period, the chapter showed that it presented much of its content in relation to a domestic environment, advertising consumer goods for the family home, entertainment for individual members of the family and depicting men and women as having active roles in the home. Women were the emotional centres of family life, in charge of child care, while men were depicted as breadwinners. The chapter also demonstrated both the problems with using surveys conducted in the inter-war years to determine readership, and also the spread of the papers appeal across class, region, gender and age. In sum this chapter brought together information about the inter-war *Express*, providing fresh insights into how it operated in these years.

Chapter 5, ‘*The Daily Express: A Wartime ‘Family Newspaper’*’ led directly on from Chapter 4, in that it investigated the history of the *Daily Express* between 1939 and 1945, noting how the *Express* adapted its content, appearance and staff during wartime. It also investigated the extent to which the *Express’s* content changed and how far the newspaper could still consider itself a family newspaper in wartime. The evidence presented showed that the wartime *Daily Express* remained similar in tone to its pre-war editions. Although its appearance and content did adapt as a result of wartime circumstances, primarily, the *Express* maintained a sense of continuity for its readership. It could not afford to either damage its growing circulation, nor alienate the loyalty of its readership by making the newspaper unrecognisable. Specific gendered content, however, such as men’s, women’s and children’s pages disappeared from the newspaper. Some content which had been included on these pages remained, such as sports news, *Rupert Bear*, and the horoscope. They were placed, however, intermittently throughout the newspaper between 1939-1941. By 1942, the size of the *Express* had stabilised at four pages and stayed so for the remainder of the war. Home and

foreign news were included throughout the newspaper: page two contained the leader page: and pages three and four were a combination of feature articles, sports news, adverts and picture stories. Although individual content fluctuated daily, depending on wartime events, the newspaper's appearance did not drastically change between 1942 and 1945. The *Express* remained a family friendly newspaper during wartime, in that its content was designed to inform and entertain all members of a household. There was a sense, however, that the newspaper was no longer appealing to individual readers, but a united readership – experiencing wartime problems and difficulties together. In sum the chapter, whilst supplementing some of the information found in some of the previous studies, provides a new, detailed contribution to our understanding of the complex ways in which the *Express* responded to wartime conditions, whilst seeking to sustain continuity with pre-war traditions of content and approach.

The *Daily Express* and Evacuation.

Chapter 6, 'The Family, Evacuation and the *Daily Express*' was the first of three case studies about the *Daily Express* and its representation of family in wartime. A content analysis of the *Express* between September and December 1939 was designed to show how the image of family developed in the newspaper during the first wave of the Evacuation Scheme. The chapter added to work on the 1939 Evacuation Scheme by historians such as John Macnicol, while expanding our understanding of the press's coverage of the scheme.¹² While the *Express* supported the scheme, it did not print only positive stories about evacuation. It showed that the scheme placed family life under considerable stress, both emotionally and

¹² John Macnicol, *The Evacuation of Schoolchildren*, pp. 18-19. Also see John Welshman, 'Evacuation and Social Policy During the Second World War', pp. 28-53, in *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 9, Issue 1 (1998). Jennifer Crane, 'Rethinking How Evacuees Influenced Post-War Thinking on Health', pp. 22-41, in *Retrospectives 2: Warwick University*, (2013).

financially, forcing families to live apart as a result of wartime circumstances. From late September 1939 onwards the *Express* also began to report problems with the scheme and the return of families from the countryside. In line with the government's aim of making the scheme work, it depicted new foster families, to which evacuees were sent, as taking on the role of 'temporary parents', providing familial continuity and stability for children in the countryside.

The representation of families in the countryside in the *Express*, which developed as a result of evacuation was, however, not 'normal' per se, in that evacuation demonstrated the mutability of family life in wartime. Representations of foster families and 'temporary parents', welcoming children into their homes, gave the impression of a new type of families in which class and geographical location were of minimal importance compared with the need to protect evacuees and give them a satisfactory second home. The *Express's* representations of the family did not have to be explained to the readership however, as its strength lay in familiarity. It was still rooted in traditional gender roles and the importance of the maternal role and of family respectability. By framing the newspaper's discussion of evacuation within traditional ideas about the family, it naturalised the process of evacuation, giving it a framework of normality. The representation of family in the *Express's* 1939 evacuation coverage was based upon communality and the idea of a classless, more united family life, despite the fact that the evacuation scheme actually broke up normal family life in the short term. This chapter therefore demonstrated how the paper, whilst recognising the difficulties of evacuation, developed its coverage within a framework of traditional ideas about the nature of the family, and the role of women therein.

The *Express* and Beveridge

Chapter 7, 'The Family, the Beveridge Report and the *Daily Express*', was designed to investigate how the paper reported the Beveridge Report, examining four weeks' worth of content, from the Report's release in December 1942, through the debate on Beveridge in Parliament in February 1943, to two weeks prior to the 1945 British General Election. It also investigated the representation of the family in *Express* articles about the Beveridge Report.

The *Express*'s coverage of the Beveridge Report was noticeably different to that of other popular newspapers of the period such as the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Herald* and the *News Chronicle*. The *Express*'s discussion of Beveridge on its release in December 1942 and the Parliamentary debate in February 1943 were much less than other popular newspapers, a point not noted by those historians who have, to date, looked into the way the popular press recounted the Report.¹³ There was also no discussion of Beveridge in the run up to the 1945 General Election, as appeared in other popular newspapers. Whereas other popular newspapers covered the Report's recommendations in a positive manner, the *Express*'s discussion of the Report did not favour a wartime commitment to its implementation after the war, claiming that in wartime other priorities took precedence and was not an appropriate time to discuss post-war social security. The *Express*'s antipathy to the Report was possibly, in part, due to Lord Beaverbrook's relationship with Churchill, and Churchill's well-known rejection of the report's findings, as well as Beaverbrook's Conservative politics and the Conservative Party's rejection of the Report.

As a result of the newspaper's limited discussion of the report in the 1942, 1943 and 1945 sample, explicit discussion of the family was also limited in Beveridge articles, more so than was expected, considering the Beveridge Report was based upon the idea of

¹³ Bromley, 'Was it the Mirror What Won it?' pp. 93-124. See also Jose Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 415. John Stevenson, 'Planners Moon', p. 72. Calder, *The People's War*, p. 526.

improving family life in post-war Britain. Explicit discussion of the family in the *Express* focused primarily on the financial effects of the Beveridge Report on the family unit, however, some Beveridge articles contained embedded assumptions about the family and its position in post-war British society.

The coverage dealt with the fact that the family unit was under strain in wartime, as a result of bombing, evacuation and conscription, as well as problems with the current scheme of social security. In addition, it also emphasised the importance of the financial stability of families and the fact that, according to some of its reports, this was threatened by the Beveridge recommendations. The *Express's* December 1942 and February 1943 coverage also articulated the idea that a family's financial stability in post-war society was based on traditional, conservative understandings of the family, with the man as the main breadwinner and the wife as home keeper.

The paper made it clear that a legitimate family was one in which the couple was married, and it was one in which, women were viewed as being in the home, occupying the role of housewives. Even mothers and sisters, who took on roles as housekeepers for unmarried male relatives, were viewed as occupying roles of vital importance in British society. By giving greater financial support to women in the home, the Beveridge Report did not challenge traditional social gender roles, but cemented them in the post-war world and the paper endorsed this.¹⁴ Children were also seen by the paper as central to the family unit, with their safety and good health important for the maintenance of future generations. Thus the *Express* did not support the implementation of the Beveridge recommendations in post-war Britain and it framed this response within representations of the family based on traditional ideas about the make-up of the family unit and of the roles therein. This coupling of a cool approach, with an invocation of the traditional image of family life, made the *Express* stand

¹⁴ Jose Harris, *Beveridge*, p. 415.

out amongst its rivals in the popular press, most of which were far more enthusiastic about Beveridge's recommendations.

Advertising and the *Express*

Chapter 8, 'The Family, Commercial Display Advertising and the *Daily Express*', discussed display advertisements in the *Daily Express* from 1939-1945, analysing how the idea of the family was represented in *Express* advertisements and examined recurring themes therein, relating to wartime family life such as marriage, childhood and gender roles.

Display advertising had a vital role to play in wartime newspapers in directing and informing, sustaining morale and cultivating a sense of normality and continuity for the wartime British public. As with their German counterparts, British advertisers played a "reassuring role" in wartime, by reminding people of products they knew in peacetime and offering strategies for dealing with wartime hardships.¹⁵ Advertising in the *Daily Express*, as shown in the sample used here clearly did this. It used traditional ideas and images of family life to sell a variety of products. Images of family life were utilised by advertisers throughout the war and the image of family in the *Daily Express*'s wartime display advertising sample was based on the idea of continuity with the pre-war family. This stress on continuity and normality, continued even while the advertisements acknowledged the problems faced by the wartime family unit, such as conscription, rationing and evacuation.

Advertisers' images of family life were, however, narrow. For *Express* advertisers, family life revolved around mothers, fathers, children and marriage. Although historians have noted the diversity of representations of gender in newspapers and advertisements prior to the war and during the conflict, in the context of family themed advertisements, this was not the

¹⁵ Swett, *Selling Under the Swastika*, p. 14.

case.¹⁶ The role of women, in particular, as the conventional centre of traditional family life was a constant throughout the sample used here. The position of women in the home was portrayed as vital war work and the family unit key to bolstering the war effort and the stability of the country. Fathers were also portrayed at the centre of family life, fulfilling their wartime duty by either working at home or fighting abroad. Men at home were portrayed as defending the family unit in a multitude of ways, such as through making sound economic decisions and fighting in the armed forces. Advertisements in the sample also stressed the fact that men valued family life and domesticity, such as home cooked meals and spending time with family members. They imagined the post-war world as a continuation of the pre-war norm. While the representations of gender had become more diverse in the 1930s and even during the war, where advertisers in the *Express* were concerned, women were represented in relation to their role in the family in a very traditional manner.¹⁷

The *Daily Express*, The Family and the War.

This thesis has sought to investigate how the *Daily Express* manifested itself as a ‘family newspaper’ during the Second World War, and how the newspaper represented the family in wartime. It demonstrated that the *Express* adapted its appearance and content to wartime conditions, reducing in size as a result of paper rationing, and removing particular content to accommodate for this shift in size. In spite of the removal of particular gendered content, such as women’s and children’s pages, the *Express* sought to retain key elements of its pre-war content, such as the home and foreign news, sports news, cartoons, opinion columns and picture news items. The idea of being a ‘family newspaper’ was also important to the *Daily Express* in the inter-war and wartime periods, even though the newspaper did not use the term

¹⁶ Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, pp. 114-115.

¹⁷ Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 175.

‘family newspaper’ on its masthead or to promote itself as such with advertisers. As this thesis has noted, however, a popular paper had to appeal to the ‘family’ in the broadest sense if it were to appeal to the widest possible audience. While the war clearly led to the *Express* cutting back on particular pages for particular members of the family, it still sought to retain that appeal during the war in the material left.

The representation of the family in the wartime *Express* was consistently socially conservative, across a range of content surveyed. In the *Express*’s coverage of evacuation, or the Beveridge Report, for instance, whilst recognising the strains that families were under as a result of financial and wartime-induced disruptions, the newspaper projected representations of the family that were essentially traditional. The *Express*’s idea of the family, intended to reach all parts of its multi-class readership, was fundamentally traditional in that it was based on a man and woman, married with children, fulfilling established gendered roles. It is even possible to suggest, that in particular instances, since sustaining national unity was crucial to the wartime newspaper, the *Express*’s representations of the family were part of that process.

This image of the traditional family was echoed in the newspaper’s commercial display advertising, which although not generated by the newspaper itself, was nonetheless like the *Express* in that it tapped into traditional ideas about the family and gendered roles within it. Thus, this research has shown that wartime changes for particular gender roles, such as women playing a greater role in the wartime workplace, did not fundamentally alter the social vision of the *Express* in terms of family life. Whatever diversity of representation existed in relation to the ways in which these roles were acknowledged in the paper, or had been in pre-war papers, the *Express*, on the issue of family, remained primarily conservative in its representations. This research has also demonstrated that in order to get a better sense of

the role of the press in wartime, it is necessary to look at individual papers in more detail, looking at both production and content, and considering, where relevant, issues of readership.

Representations of the family were therefore heavily embedded in the content of the *Express*. These drew on common social assumptions about the institution of family, its components, and its role in society. The *Express's* representations of the family did not have to be explained to the readership by the newspaper, as their strength lay in their familiarity. Family life was represented in fundamentally socially conservative terms, with men, women and children occupying key roles in the domestic family unit. Despite the diverse range of representations which appeared in the wartime *Daily Express* in relation to gender, when discussing family a strong core of conservatism ran through the newspaper.

The thesis, therefore, has contributed new insights into a number of areas of historical research. The *Express's* history in the Second World War was characterised by a close relationship with government, an adherence to pre-publication censorship, as well as a willingness to criticise through opinion pieces. It does not fit easily into the liberal narrative of the press, which argues the press was free from government influence by this point in history, nor does it fit into a narrative of a newspaper which encouraged social change, in regards to society and the family unit.¹⁸

With regard to wider arguments about British post-war society, this thesis supports the idea that the Second World War probably only resulted in modest changes to society as a whole.¹⁹ Historians such as Richard Titmuss and John Stevenson argued that post-1945 British society was a time of widespread public support for political and social change, and that the political, economic and social effects of the Second World War created a more

¹⁸ James Curran, 'Media and Making of British Society', pp. 136-138.

¹⁹ Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945*, (London: 1977) p. 14, pp. 18-19.

egalitarian post-war society, helping to change the status of women and children.²⁰ However, this thesis appears to support the work of historians such as Angus Calder, Paul Addison and Penny Summerfield, who argued that the war's effects on popular culture and social attitudes, particularly with regards to the family and women, may not have been as radical as previously argued.²¹

This research has demonstrated that the wartime British press, in order to maintain and increase its circulation, had to appeal to a wide variety of different readers and, therefore, primarily presented ideas and views which were in accordance with current social attitudes the newspaper wished to promote. It could therefore be suggested, in many respects, that the *Daily Express*, as the nation's highest-selling daily newspaper, with one of the most socially diverse readerships in terms of age, sex and geographical location, typified a conservatism which pervaded British popular culture.

More detailed research and comparisons are needed between the *Express*, other wartime newspapers, and different media, in order to fully understand the extent to which social conservatism pervaded wartime society and the press. However, this thesis has also begun to demonstrate that other newspapers, such as the *News Chronicle* and *Daily Mirror*, while different in political outlook to the *Express*, were still conservative about particular social issues, such as gender roles in the family unit. For example, while the *Daily Mirror* openly championed the social improvements of the Beveridge Report, designed to help change and improve the lives of families throughout Britain, the newspaper did not

²⁰ Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, p. 508. See also Richard Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 2nd ed. 1963). John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945*, p. 17.

²¹ Calder, *The People's War?* pp.17-19. Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945*, p. 14, pp. 18-19. Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, pp. 15-20. Also see Henry Pelling, *Britain and The Second World War*, p. 92. See also Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War*, pp. 15-20. Jose Harris, 'War and Social History', pp. 32-33. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp. 518-536. Lucy Noakes and Juliette Pattinson (eds.), *British Cultural Memory*, pp. 15-19.

fundamentally challenge the pre-war gendered construction of the family, with women remaining at the centre of the family unit.

The *Express*'s depiction of women, where issues of the family were concerned, was more conservative than might have been expected, given the findings of work on the inter-war press.²² Findings from this thesis conform more readily with the views of feminist historians such as Janet Todd and Cynthia White, who have argued that the popular press articulated primarily conservative ideas about gender.²³ This would suggest that the *Express*, as well as other popular newspapers, articulated commonly held views about the family, its place in society and its individual make-up. If they had not reflected, in some way, the views and ideas of its readers, they would not have been able to maintain consistent, larger readerships. This thesis also appears to demonstrate that the traditional gender ideologies propagated by the *Express*, in some sense helped to ensure that the achievements of women in the workplace during the war were clearly for the short term only. Despite the post-war movement of many married women into part-time work, they would continue to be defined, most particularly in the media, by their familial and compassionate roles.²⁴

Although these newspapers recognised the changing and adapting nature of society in wartime, such as the introduction of more women into the workplace, this research has demonstrated that socially conservative views and ideals about the family and gender roles within it remained central to public discourse in British society at the time. This lends support to the view that social attitudes in Britain, post-1945, were not as radical as previously argued (as evidenced, among other things, by the re-election of the Conservative party in 1951), and that historians' assumptions about the effect of the Second World War on society, particularly

²² Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p. 246. Bingham, *Family Newspapers?* p. 264.

²³ Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family* p. 5. Todd, *The Sign of Angelica*, pp. 100-104. White, *Women's Magazines*, p. 12.

²⁴ Lesley Johnson, 'As Housewives We Are Worms' p.489. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity*, p.286.

in relation to gender roles and family, should be modified.²⁵ In this sense, the thesis echoes to an extent the argument that on key issues the popular press has tended to stress conservative, non-radical perspectives.²⁶ But, as the focus here was on just one issue, the ‘family’, this needs to be seen as a tentative contribution to that debate.

Ultimately this research shows that arguments about wartime society, post-war social change and the role of the press in society are more complex than have previously been recognised. To state that the wartime press contained only conservative images of the family and its individual members oversimplifies the nature of British society during this period, and the ability of the press to recognise changing social circumstance. Instead, one can see the importance of looking in-depth at papers like the *Express*, a paper which clearly continued to appeal to a wide readership during the war, in order to gain a more nuanced and detailed picture of the relationship between the popular press and society, both during and after the war.

The newspaper continued to be critical of the government, over issues such as evacuation, and its unenthusiastic reception of the Beveridge Report. The *Express* was careful, however, in the way it articulated its position on particular issues, consistently framing its discussion of ideas on traditional social ideas about the family and gender roles in the unit. In this sense, it was in agreement with much of the family-related display advertising which appeared in its pages and in those of other wartime popular newspapers.

There clearly needs to be more in-depth studies of newspaper production and content in the Second World War, in order to develop a greater understanding of the complexities of the press in these years. This work has shown the need for more thorough investigations of

²⁵ David Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, (London: Routledge, 1979), p. 40.

²⁶ For further historical discussion and critique of the radical narrative of the press see James Curran, ‘Media and the Making of British Society’, p. 147. John Steele, ‘The Radical Narrative’, p. 222.

newspapers, their content and appearance, and how they adapted to wartime circumstances. It has also demonstrated the importance of the popular press in wartime and its role in perpetuating social discourses about family life. A united, happy and healthy family unit was presented as the idealised representation of family life in wartime Britain, despite the strains placed on family life by the war effort. In wartime, continuity was a more powerful discourse than change, for the *Express*, for its appearance, and for its representation of the family during the Second World War.

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