Abstract
The birth of a first child was a life-transforming event for most women in the years between 1945 and 1970. The post-war period was also a time when much about women’s position in society was under change. Married women were increasingly likely to participate in the workforce; early marriage, smaller families and longer life expectancy meant that childbearing no longer filled a woman’s whole life; contraception enabled women to plan their families and have control over their own bodies. The combined effects of post-war prosperity and social reforms meant that women were better educated, better fed and had improved access to health care, and women’s interactions with maternity services were greatly transformed. Women’s experiences during World War Two, with their participation in the war effort, had given them an increasing role in the public sphere. In reaction to this upheaval the growing emphasis on motherhood gave credence to the view that women’s place was still in the home. This article will examine the relationship between the public and private in women’s conception of themselves as mothers, both at the time and in the present day. It will discuss the ways in which women create an image of themselves as mothers, and how they present this image to a wider audience, in the course of oral history interviews. It will investigate the relationships between discourses of motherhood and the thoughts of the women themselves, to see the connection between the public imagery of motherhood and women’s private identities.

Key words: Identity, Motherhood, Narrative, Oral History, Social Memory.

Introduction
In the post-war period significant changes were taking place in women’s lives, and subsequently new expectations developed surrounding the role of women in society. Referring to the early 1960s Hannah Gavron argued that, ‘our society holds clear-cut views as to what constitutes the functions and tasks of a wife and mother. Today a woman is expected to run the house efficiently, higher standards of hygiene must be observed, but she must not be submerged by domesticity, which has definitely lost its sex appeal.’

The birth rate was rising after the war and women were having their children at younger ages. The total fertility rate for the years 1931-5 was 1.80, but peaked at 2.80 for the years 1961-1965. Age at first birth was falling throughout the years 1945-1970 reaching a record low mean of 23.9 years of age in 1972. The 1950s are often considered as a ‘golden age’ for the family, while in contrast the late 1960s are seen as years of dramatic change, with rising illegitimacy and divorce rates, and critiques of the family by second-wave feminists stressing the family could in fact be a source of harm to women. However, continuity existed alongside these changes. Throughout the period women were encouraged to stay at home with young children and the nuclear family was considered the ideal. The implication that only the nuclear family was ‘normal’ was
explicitly expressed by John Mogey in his study of Oxford in the early 1950s. He states, ‘the family as we saw it consists of husband, wife, and their children. Occasional families may be called incomplete in that one parent is missing or that there have been no children. These are accepted as deviations from the normal state of the family, both by us as investigators and by our informants.’ Mogey asserts it was not simply a case of sociologists arguing that the nuclear family was desirable, but that it was a commonly held belief in society at large.

This article will examine how the ideals of the family held in the 1950s and 1960s have continued to influence the ways in which women view themselves as mothers. Although there were a plethora of social surveys, community studies, and medical studies conducted between 1945 and 1970, which shed light on attitudes towards motherhood, they are not primarily focused on women’s thoughts and feelings. The questions asked reflect the interviewers’ preoccupations rather than the concerns of the women they are talking to. Through the use of oral history interviews this article will investigate the relationships between the discourses surrounding motherhood at the time and the thoughts of the women themselves, to see the connection between the imagery of motherhood in the period and how women construct their identities.

**Women and Motherhood in Postwar Britain**

Referring to the changing status of women since 1945 Jane Lewis argues that, ‘Three social trends have been of particular importance: first, the increase in the percentage of married women in paid employment; second, the dramatic increase in the divorce rate especially during the 1970s and 80s; and third, what has been called, ‘the amazing rise of illegitimacy’ which changes in the 1960s and increased rapidly from the late 1970s.’ The post-war period was a time when much about women’s position in society was being transformed. Early marriage, smaller families and longer life expectancy meant that childbearing no longer filled a woman’s whole life. Consequently, expectations of women’s role in the labour market altered as married women increasingly participated in the workforce. Penny Summerfield proposes that the post-war removal of the marriage bar in occupations such as the civil service and teaching led the way to the emergence of the dual-role discourse. The typical career pattern for women in the 1950s and 1960s was to work between school and marriage or probably first baby. They then left the labour force, returning to work, usually part time, once their children were older. The numbers of part-time women workers were rising dramatically. In 1951 there were 779,000 women working part-time, but by 1971 there were 2,757,000. The reasons why women worked were also under modification. In her oral history studies of Barrow, Lancaster and Preston for the periods 1890-1940 and 1940-1970 Elizabeth Roberts found that while financial need was consistently given as the main reason for working, definitions of need had changed. Earlier in the century women worked to prevent dire poverty for their families, whereas in the later period they worked to afford ‘extras’ such as holidays, cars and domestic appliances. Nonetheless, despite these transformations in their paid work, women’s domestic role was still given primacy. As Roberts has argued, ‘it was still possible to define a typical family unit in 1970. It continued to be one which lived close to relatives, one where adult children still lived at home until marriage and one where the husband was still the chief, and sometimes the only, wage-earner, and where considerable differences in the roles of men and women still remained.’

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Indeed there was a strong maternal ideology in the middle decades of the century which celebrated motherhood but also put pressure on women due to the influence mothers were deemed to have on their children’s psychological as well as physical well being. The view that maternal care in infancy was crucial for the physical development of the child had long roots stretching back to the late nineteenth century, with poor maternal care acknowledged to have a detrimental effect. What was new was the idea that mere physical separation from the mother was a pathogenic factor in its own right. Based on the findings of his work with institutionalised children during the Second World War, the child psychologist John Bowlby argued that, ‘a child is deprived if for any reason he is removed from his mother’s care.’ He stressed that, ‘What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother.’

Post-Freudian psychology and sociology in the post-war period provided new rationales for the idealisation and enforcement of women’s maternal role. Writing in the early 1970s at a time of reaction against these views, the feminist Lee Comer says John Bowlby’s theory of maternal deprivation was exactly what the world had been waiting for. He provided a ‘scientific’ basis for what was, by then, the status quo. Comer argues that no amount of reasoned criticism, demonstrating the deficiencies and simplifications of his work could reduce its significance because it sounded right. This was of course natural as society exactly mirrored his dictates. Encouraged by the experts’ conformation of the ‘naturalness’ of the situation, public policy continued to promote pronatalism and domesticity, long after mothers began returning to the labour force and fears about the declining birth-rate had subsided in the post-war baby boom. However it is important to note that this maternal ideology did not extend to all groups. Wendy Webster has demonstrated that West Indian women who immigrated to Britain in the 1950s were characterised as economically independent workers. This image contrasted sharply with the prevalent ideal of white women as wives and mothers who rarely strayed far from the home.

Cinema, the media and popular press implicitly (and in some cases quite overtly) acted as a transmitter for these ideals of the female role, enabling them to be permeated throughout society. Women’s magazines were a particularly significant vehicle for the dissemination of ideas about women’s roles because, as Martin Pugh estimates, in the late 1950s five out of every six women in Britain read at least one magazine a week. Indeed Marjorie Ferguson proposes that women’s magazines did not merely reflect the female role in society, but supplied one source of definitions of, and socialisation into, that role. However, there was not always a single and coherent message being propagated through the magazines, reflecting the wider difficulty of defining the role women should play in the post-war world. Ferguson believes the contradictions surrounding women’s roles within society at large were manifested in the magazines as the, ‘tension between individual and group norms, between traditional and emerging female roles, between what women’s magazines were saying and what women of many different kinds were doing.’ Images and ideals of marriage and motherhood were also under modification as the period progressed. Popular culture responded to the changing social climate of the 1960s and the ‘new woman’ they were told that existed. Brian Braithwaite explains that Nova, launched in 1965, was the first watershed title for women in the post-war years. Nova was boldly and overtly proclaimed to be ‘The New Magazine for the New Kind of
Woman’. That ‘new kind of woman’ was designated as intelligent, thinking and worldly. She would be well educated, radical, sceptical and definitely not the typical reader of the woman’s weeklies, with their mundane concentration on shopping and cooking. Indeed in contrast to the unquestioning attitude to the desirability of housewifery in the traditional magazines, Nova demonstrated an appreciation of the darker side of motherhood as well. In an article entitled, ‘Drugs: While everyone watches the teenagers, has anyone noticed how glossy-eyed Mum’s become?’ Ann Batt described the discontent and frustration among women about the sort of role society expected them to play, which she believed lead to this pill-taking.

Magazines also played an important role in propagating ideals of the nuclear family. Marjorie Ferguson asserts that, ‘The idealised iconographic role model for ‘the happy family’ was...the royal family.’ The Royal family was hugely popular in late 1940s and various members of the extended Royal family were constantly featured in women’s magazines. Indeed until the 1960s, they were most commonly referred to celebrities in these magazines, although Hollywood film stars were also beginning to feature. The Queen was also a significant figure in that she was viewed, at least at that time, as successfully combining her public and private roles, of monarch and mother. Her marriage to the Duke of Edinburgh was viewed as a model partnership embodying the ideals of companionate marriage, which was popular at this time.

Advertisements in the magazines further reinforced the view that women found fulfilment within the family, but also that success in the role could be found through consumerism. Janice Winship has noted that, ‘Making the right choice, according to the ads, brought you success as housewife and mother: household chores could be performed more easily and quickly; children and husband would be full of love and praise.’ The advertisements did clearly appeal to women’s desires to be good wives and mothers. For example, an ‘All bran’ advert ran under the heading, ‘Do you look after your husband properly?’ When a mother gives her family ‘Bisto’ in an advert for gravy power, she is told, ‘Mum, you’re wonderful’. The adverts also played upon women’s fears of being a bad mother. A lucozade advert formed a comic strip, which opened with the caption, ‘She was losing her child’s love!’ A young mother was upsetting her child due to her crossness towards him, as she was tired. She consulted her own mother who advised lucozade and all was well. The dominant and organising ideology of femininity in the 1950s adverts is of mother as housewife, always wearing an apron, youngish, smiling brightly. All the advertising in the popular weeklies assumed the readership cleaned, sewed, washed and looked after the children. Brian Braithwaite argues that in the 1950s, ‘The perfect Wife was the Perfect Housewife.’ Significantly, women used the discourses surrounding the housewife that appeared in the magazines and advertisements when describing their experiences of housewifery fifty years later.

Methodology
Oral history has played a significant role in historical enquiry into domestic life and therefore provides the most germane material for comprehending women’s experiences of motherhood at this time. This article will discuss the ways in which the women interviewed came to create an image of themselves as mothers and how they presented this image to a wider audience. In their book Social Memory James Fentress and Chris Wickham argue that, ‘memory is structured by language, by talking and observing, by

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collectively held ideas, and by experiences shared with others. This makes memory social as well.28 This process seems especially true when women are recalling their experiences of motherhood which is at once both an intimate and personal experience and also a public role and socially constructed ideal. Moreover, by their nature oral history interviews are both a personal and public process because as Penny Summerfield explains: ‘Women ‘speaking for themselves’ through personal testimony are using language and so deploying cultural constructions.’29 The following part of this article will therefore analyse the relationship between the discourses of motherhood discussed in the preceding section and the thoughts of the women themselves, to see the connection between the public imagery of motherhood and women’s private identities.

There are both benefits and limitations of using personal testimony as a source material. Oral history is not intrinsically more or less likely to be accurate than a written document and documents are often orality recorded. Parliamentary debates, Blue Books, royal commissions and judicial records are all essentially written accounts of speech. The issues surrounding the reliability of oral data can equally well be applied to other sources, for example, the context of the period they are describing, the agenda of the author, and other factors which could influence their narrative. Many of the questions that need to be addressed with regards to written autobiography are relevant for oral sources as well, such as the later experiences of the person telling their story, and the current situation from which they are looking back. With regards to this study, the question of perspective is a benefit rather than a hindrance as the aim is to examine how women review their experiences; to see how they look back upon the births of their first child in the light of later developments both in their own lives, for example becoming a grandmother, and in the light of changing attitudes towards women and maternity that occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. There are also some particular difficulties attributed to the use of oral data, due to the way in which people remember. While people are able to remember accurately, memory can also be distorted by external constraints. Memory is selective and subject to self-censorship. People recall the things they want to, and which correspond with the image of themselves that they are trying to present. In his interviews with Australian First World War veterans Alistair Thomson found his respondents remembered events in such a way as would provide acceptable accounts of their war service to their present selves.30 However, what respondents do not say can be as important sources of information as what they do say, and the way people remember is as important as what they remember. Even when the facts someone gives are wrong, the reasons why they do so can tell us about the society at the time they are describing and that of the present. To quote Alessandro Portelli: ‘Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did’.31 which is why oral history is such a suitable methodology for research into how women constructed their identities as mothers. Official records document the date a child was born and who its parents were, but not how a mother felt on the birth of her first child, and it is the women’s feelings that this study will investigate. The subjective nature of oral history reveals the relationship between the ideal and reality of motherhood.

This research is based on the results on over eighty oral history interviews conducted with women from different localities within Oxfordshire, rural, urban and suburban, with a range of educational backgrounds from minimum age school leavers to

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graduates to see how locality, gender and class influenced women’s experiences. The
women range in age from their late fifties to their nineties and had their children between
the 1940s and early 1970s to examine change, and continuity, over time. The article will
specifically refer to interviews conducted with two women, one who lived in Benson in
South Oxfordshire, and one who lived in Preston Crowmarsh a smaller village that
neighbours Benson, when they were bringing up their children in order to examine in
detail how the women constructed their accounts.

The Interviews
The remainder of this article will investigate how two Oxfordshire women, Annie
Armstrong32 and Helen Harris33, tried to reconcile the ideals of the mother role which
were being disseminated by popular culture within their narratives of motherhood at this
time. Annie Armstrong was born in 1944 in her grandmother’s house in Wallingford,
and grew up in the town, which was the nearest town to Benson. She had one younger
brother and came from a large, extended farming family. She moved to Preston
Crowmarsh, a hamlet outside Benson, upon her marriage in 1966 and members of her
husband’s family were natives of the hamlet. Before marriage she had worked as a
secretary and later helped her husband in his business. Her two children, a girl and a boy,
were born in 1969 and 1971 at St George’s maternity hospital in Wallingford. She still
lives in the village and has one grandchild. Helen Harris was born at home on a farm in
Aylesbury in 1943, an only child, and grew up on farms in the area. She moved to Preston
Crowmarsh after marrying in 1963 to join her husband who was in the RAF and
based at Benson. Before marriage she worked as a secretary and after marriage as a
housekeeper, ceasing work on the birth of her first baby, a girl, in 1968. She and her
husband then moved to Benson and had their second child, a boy, in 1970. Both babies
were born at St George’s maternity hospital in Wallingford. Helen Harris separated from
her husband ten years later at which point she returned to secretarial work. She still lives
in Benson and has three grandchildren.

Superficially the life stories of the two women are alike. They both grew up in
rural areas, they had clerical jobs between school and motherhood, they raised their
children in the same place, and both had two children in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
There are many similarities in the way they told their stories as well. For example, both
women described their childhoods as being a golden age, and talked of the freedom and
happiness they enjoyed. Helen Harris explains that when she was growing up in the
1940s and 1950s, ‘you had the run of the fields and whatnot, and as I got older and I had
my friends at school, we were able to go across the fields and have a lot more freedom,
nobody worried…Yes, I enjoyed my years there, because as I said, you could do
whatever you wanted just go off for the day over the fields.’ She presents this as a lost
world: ‘It was a different life than what it is today. So it was super. I had a very good
childhood.’ Similarly Annie Armstrong explains how, ‘we used to be up on the farm at
harvest, you know and that type of thing, it was fairly pleasant times really. You know,
we used to take the tea up the harvest field, you know to the people up on the tractors and
things…And that was really quite enjoyable.’ It is interesting that while both women are
keen to construct childhood as an innocent and carefree time Annie Armstrong herself
wonders whether she is over-romanticizing this period. She says her childhood, ‘always
seemed to be long hot summers really, but whether it was I don’t know.’ While there is
an element of doubt in her mind over whether her childhood could have been as idyllic as the picture she creates, she cannot resist the urge to do so. This conflict was also present when she talked about her school days. When asked whether she enjoyed being at school she replied yes, but later on said, ‘I think I was fairly happy, but I didn’t, I didn’t really like school too much I presume.’ Her confusion is mirrored in the contradictions in her narrative and I think these demonstrate her difficulty in reconciling her own experiences of school, which were not that happy, with the commonly held ideal of school days being the best days of your life.

Both women were also positive about their experiences of motherhood. They said their pregnancies and childbirths were on the whole successful. When Helen Harris was asked whether she enjoyed her pregnancy she said, ‘yes because I didn’t have any problems, I must say I had a fantastic pregnancy.’ When asked about her labour she said she had, ‘nothing to worry about on that front’. However despite her initial assertion that everything went fine, when asked further about it she explained she had a forceps delivery, which was traumatic for her. Similarly when asked about her pregnancy Annie Armstrong said, ‘I was probably fairly lucky, I didn’t have any complications everything was fairly, fairly easy really.’ But when asked if she enjoyed being pregnant she said, ‘I’m afraid I had four months of sickness, when Katy was born. I couldn’t, well I didn’t eat anything, the only thing I could eat was digestive biscuits, so the first four months weren’t very nice.’ Why did the women feel compelled to answer that it all went well despite the difficulties they had had? It seems that the women answered in this way for two principal reasons: firstly, because their conditioned response was to reply it all went fine, in a similar way to when people are asked how they are they reply they are well even when this is not the case. Their immediate reaction was to affirm that they did not have any problems. Secondly, and leading on from this, they believed that some degree of pain and discomfort was unavoidable in pregnancy and childbirth, and so it was not worth mentioning. This impression is supported by the accounts of women in Margery Spring Rice’s study of working-class wives in the 1930s initially replied that they were in good health, before listing the catalogue of minor ailments they in fact faced.

Moreover, women face difficulties in reconciling their personal experiences with public discourses because if their experiences deviate from the social norm their femininity is threatened. The two women interviewed interweaved elements of these public discourses within their own personal accounts to validate their own life choices. For example John Bowlby and D.W. Winnicott’s theories of maternal deprivation and the ordinary devoted mother were referenced by the women. The belief that a good mother was one who stayed at home with her children and devoted herself to them ran throughout their narratives. When asked if they stopped work when their children were born they both said they did not even consider staying on. It is interesting that while they are keen to say this was their own choice and one they still support, they also indicate that it was the only choice available to them; no one thought of doing differently, or thought that it would acceptable to do so. For example Helen Harris said, ‘at that point…you didn’t think about working shall I say. Once you had children as far as I was concerned that was it you left, whatever you were doing. And you gave your life to your children.’ Despite the influence of second wave feminism and the increased participation of women in the workforce that had subsequently occurred, both women still supported the view that the place of women with young children is in the home. Helen Harris argued that it

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harm children if their mothers’ work: ‘I don’t like this idea now that the children haven’t got their parents there I must say, I’m very anti that. I know in a lot of circumstances they have to, they need the money, but we managed, life wasn’t easy…I think it’s fantastic that in those days we were actually there because I was always brought up to understand that the first five years of a child’s life are their actual development years.’ Annie Armstrong furthers the argument arguing that it is not only the children but also their mothers who suffer: ‘We had a whale of a time I think…I just feel sorry for people today who have to go out to work, probably I think they probably do miss a lot really. Cause, it’s nice to have your children around you when they’re young. It’s…a shame.’ Indeed when talking about feminism, Annie Armstrong said, ‘I think a lot of the things women have done have shot themselves in the foot though. They’ve made their lives much worse…as I say we did have quite a nice life. I don’t know…whether it’s possible to live that sort of life [now].’

However there are interesting points in the narrative where the public and the personal diverge. At these points the ideals women wish to endorse do not fit their personal experiences and the women struggle to reconcile the two. For example Helen Harris’ portrayal of the 1960s as a golden age for the family, in sharp contrast to the present time, is undercut by her own experience of divorce. She compares the past when families got, ‘together round the table, no television or anything like that just having a quiet meal and talking’, with today when people, ‘just leave the kids to get on with it.’ However as she discusses this subject her narrative breaks down as she is forced to address the fact that her own family life did not meet this ideal. Her husband left her when her children were small, and she concludes that, ‘Yes life can be very, very difficult.’ Similarly in her narrative Annie Armstrong expresses strong support for the ideal of companionate marriage, with equal but different roles for husband and wife which she thinks is the best way of organising the family. However when she raises her son’s relationship with his family as an example of how things have changed for the worse she instead voices her regret that her husband had not been similarly involved. ‘My husband, he didn’t, he didn’t sort of change nappies or do anything like that. He was always fond of the children but he wasn’t involved in that type of thing really, washing or washing up, he wasn’t involved in household duties, I did most of it, whereas I know it’s very different today…My son cooks and my husband is only just beginning to cook a bit really… So I think, there is more of an equality between the sexes which is probably a good thing.’ Both women faced similar problems when trying to resolve the difference between the ideals they wished to uphold and the reality of their lives.

While both women were trying to address similar themes in their interviews the way they presented their role in the narrative differed substantially. Marie-Françoise Chanfrault-Duchet asserts that in telling their life stories interviewees use narrative models. These are borrowed from literary forms disseminated in social discourse through oral tradition, written literature, and television series. She argues these models are, ‘manifestations of a particular quest for values, a quest that contributes to the dynamics of the narrative and gives an axis of meaning and coherence to the life experience and to the self.’ Of the two women interviewed, Helen Harris saw herself as a heroic figure meeting the challenges she faced and maintaining a happy and positive attitude as she did so. An anecdote she told about the birth of second child, which she told on several occasions, exemplified this portrayal of herself: ‘My husband…was away taking an exam
and I actually phoned up a taxi to get me into Wallingford to have the baby…I was still sitting on the phone waiting for the taxi to come back to me and it arrived at the door and I was sitting there waiting for them to tell me that they’d got a taxi on the way…Nothing like that did actually faze me…and as I say I’d got a very good friend and I just took Mary up there and said, “here you are dear look after this because I’m going in to hospital.” In contrast Annie Armstrong presents herself as a more passive figure, she says she did not decide the course her life would take, rather she had no control over events. She says, ‘I just accept what life gives to me and don’t terribly plan it all that much, things seem to happen to me.’

Alistair Thomson argues that in oral history interviews interviewees are trying to construct a version of the past which is acceptable to their present selves. I think the women used these narrative models to help them fulfil this aim. Helen Harris constructs her narrative as a series of challenges, which she takes in her stride. Traumatic memories such as the birth of her first child, or her husband’s absence when her second child was born are told as humorous anecdotes, which means she does not have to address the painful or distressing side of these events. Annie Armstrong tells her life story as a series of situations that were imposed upon her, which she was not responsible for, and by doing so she is able to deny responsibility for the choices she made rather than confronting them. When asked if there was anything in her life she would have liked to have done differently she said, ‘Probably but I don’t actually think that way, what’s happened has happened.’ Although they describe the events in a different manner, neither of the women portray themselves as instigating events, they respond to situations rather than creating them, which is deemed to be a feminine characteristic. Both women told their narratives within the narrative spaces available to them.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, in their narratives both women tried to appear positive about their own experiences of motherhood. Moreover, they were positive about the roles mothers were expected play, and the ways in which they were expected to behave in the late 1960s. Both women interweaved elements of public discourses within their own personal accounts, such as the belief that a good mother stays at home with her children when they are young. These references to public discourses also served to validate their own life choices, particularly when these choices had proved difficult to make. However, there are interesting points in their narratives where the public and the personal diverge, and these occur where the women faced difficulties in reconciling their personal experiences with public discourses. These moments are particularly problematic for women because if their experiences deviate from the social norm their femininity is threatened. Therefore these silences and inconsistencies which appear in the women’s narratives are in fact as interesting as what do say. It is the gaps and contradictions which reveal the relationship between private experiences and public images of motherhood, and the difficulties for women in constructing their identities as mothers when they try to reconcile the two.

The women tried to overcome this dilemma by seeking reassurance from their audience that their stories are of importance and value. In an oral history interview, a narrator is not only trying to create a version of the past acceptable to themselves but also to their current audience. It is always a public performance. Describing interviewing women about their experiences of the Second World War Penny Summerfield explains...
how, ‘Our interviewees’ assumption that they were delivering their stories into the public domain was indicated in part by the preparations they had made, and in part by the way they spoke.’37 This was also very much the case in the interviews conducted for this article. For example, the women were concerned that their stories would not be interesting enough. Helen Harris explained, ‘This is why I wondered whether I could be any help actually because I felt that I just went through it.’ Later when asked if she had any problems in pregnancy she replied, ‘No I can’t say I did. That’s why when Amy said to me would I prepared to take part in this I though well what am I going to say, I’ve not really gone through anything dramatic. I don’t know if I’ve been any help.’ Annie Armstrong was worried that she was not a good storyteller, and therefore not a good interviewee, apologising on several occasions. The women were also aware of a wider public when they told their stories. They knew that theirs was one among many interviews and were keen to know what else had been found out, asking what other people have said. They wanted to validate their personal experiences by knowing that other people had given similar accounts, but they also wanted to feel that theirs was a shared experience and a shared history.
Endnotes

3 Halsey and Webb, *British Social Trends*, p. 44.
19 Ferguson, *Forever Feminine*, p. 77.
21 Anne Batt, ‘Drugs: While everyone watches the teenagers, has anyone noticed how glossy-eyed Mum’s become?’, *Nova* August 1968, p. 53.
22 Ferguson, M., *Forever Feminine*, p. 49.
23 The adult lives of the Queen’s children have led to her parental achievements being somewhat questioned.
27 Braithwaite, *Women’s Magazines*, p. 73.
33 Helen Harris, interviewed by author, 15 June 2004.