

# **Struggle for Identity: Issues Underlying the Enactment of the 1926 Adoption of Children Act**

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Until the 1920s, adoption in England was an informal arrangement. Eighteenth and nineteenth century novels frequently feature stories of orphans, benefactors and guardians<sup>1</sup> but in fact, apart from rare wardship and guardianship proceedings which only the rich could afford, the only adopted children with any legal status prior to 1926 were those placed for adoption under the 1899 Poor Law Act by the Boards of Guardians. Other children living as family with people who were not their parents remained the legal responsibility of their natural parents. Only after the First World War did a demand arise for a legal system of adoption, fuelled by the growth of independent adoption societies and by continuing concern about 'baby farming'. This article looks at the campaign in some detail and discusses differences in attitude among the protagonists over issues such as secrecy.

## **Background to the campaign for legislation**

It was not until after the First World War that adoption became an issue of real significance. The War generated public concern over the subject, following tales of abandoned infants, wives who had illegitimate babies while their husbands were away at the War, young women workers who became pregnant during fleeting affairs with soldiers, and war widows who could not afford to look after all their children. It was increasingly difficult to have children informally fostered since women who had previously looked after other people's children found they could earn more in factories and offices. There were also parents who wished to replace sons lost in the conflict, and single women who would never marry but who wanted a child to look after. Adoption seemed a ready solution to these human dilemmas thrown up in the aftermath of the War.<sup>2</sup> There was an explosion of interest in the idea, which was fuelled by the establishment of adoption societies.

Within two years of the War ending there was sufficient pressure concerning adoption legislation to influence Lloyd George's Coalition Government to set up a Parliamentary Committee in order to examine this issue. The pressure came initially from two sources. The traditional child protection societies like Dr Barnardo's and the NSPCC, founded in the second half of the nineteenth century when there was growing anxiety and awareness about the plight of vulnerable children; both those who were abandoned and those who still lived within their family. Secondly, there was pressure from the newly formed adoption societies. Anxiety was fuelled by some sensational cases of what came to be known as 'baby farming' or sometimes 'professional adoption' which was a mixture of adoption and child minding, and which attracted a seedy reputation for years to come. It involved the payment of money, usually a lump sum given by a parent who was typically an unmarried mother, to someone who offered to take on the complete care of their infant so that the former could return to work. There was clearly a tacit assumption that the baby farmer would in some way dispose of the child. Inevitably this led to notorious cases where the 'baby farmer' either murdered or so neglected the children that they died – resulting in lurid headlines when the police eventually found their bodies in the back garden or discarded in the street. One of the most infamous cases – which led to the establishment of the 1871 Parliamentary Select Committee on the Protection of Infant Life and legislation on the issue in 1872 – was the 'Brixton Case'

where eleven babies, five of whom subsequently died, were found in a house in Brixton in a state of total neglect. One of the two women involved was hanged.<sup>3</sup> In other cases, the baby farmers were found to have simply sold on the babies to people who wanted to adopt them for whatever reason.<sup>4</sup>

Extensive campaigning by the children's societies and other groups led to various legislative measures being passed to combat 'baby farming'. Starting with babies, people looking after children for payment had to register with their local council and were limited in how many they could look after. Gradually the age went up – the 1908 Children's Act stated that people caring for children of up to 7 years of age had to register. However, desperate women and unscrupulous child carers could evade these regulations and even in the 1920s the newspapers were still occasionally reporting harrowing details from the trials of 'baby farmers'. In 1919, a case was reported in Walton-on-Thames where nine foster children had been starved, two of whom died.<sup>5</sup> Barnardo's and the NSPCC were not particularly in favour of adoption, the latter having cited numerous cases of cruelty to adopted children,<sup>6</sup> but nevertheless supported legislation in the belief that it would help to eradicate baby farming.

Pressure for adoption legislation also came from the newly formed adoption societies. These were private agencies created with the sole aim of arranging adoptions. In the early 1920s the principal agency was the National Children's Adoption Association. It was organised in Exeter during the War by a Miss Clara Andrew who arranged for war orphans to find new families. Her work expanded rapidly and attracted prominent supporters including its Patroness, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone. In 1919, the Association moved into offices in central London and set up homes where children would wait to be adopted. The most substantial was a mansion in Kensington, Tower Cressy on Campden Hill. The demand for the NCAA's services was huge; between April 1919 and October 1920 (admittedly their own figures) 448 adoptions were completed, 2,310 children were passed as suitable for adoption (588 being rejected), and 1653 adopters were approved during this period.<sup>7</sup> By 1932 they reported to have organised nearly four thousand adoptions.<sup>8</sup>

The NCAA and the other main adoption group, the National Adoption Society, had a proselytising attitude towards adoption. They saw themselves as fulfilling a vital national need and drew descriptions of their work in floridly sentimental terms –

*Many have already stepped forward and have pitifully gathered the little ones into shelter ..where it is hoped and believed that these babies will grow up to be an honour not only to their rescuers but to Greater Britain.<sup>9</sup>*

The NAS strongly suggested a *purely voluntary* (their italics) donation to be given in three installments. However, the NCAA, by far the largest private adoption society, relied on donations and benefit events arranged by its extremely aristocratic and well connected list of patrons and vice-presidents<sup>10</sup> who saw the Association's work as enormously valuable for both the children and adopting parents. In the view of its founder, there was no reason to be particularly fussy about adopting parents when so little was asked of natural parents and moreover, since it might dissuade people wishing to adopt. Miss Andrew felt that, "... the adopted child has got to stand a little, like the child who is born to people".<sup>11</sup> She was keen that adoption be put on a legal footing because, like many other agencies involved with the practice, she was concerned that adopting parents should have legal entitlement to keep their children. Furthermore, she felt that the adopters should be free from any anxiety that the natural parents may reclaim their children when they were of an age to be economically useful.

### **Parliamentary Committees on adoption**

When the first Parliamentary Committee, under the chairmanship of Sir Alfred Hopkinson, was set up in 1920 to consider the question of adoption, the ostensible issues concerning the campaigners were thus baby farming, and whether adoption should be legalised. In fact, when one looks at the evidence presented by the groups interested in this issue to both this Committee, and the second one set up four years later, these issues appear relatively minor. Every witness felt that adoption should be legalised in some form, and baby farming had clearly ceased to be the pressing issue it had once been. Besides the case mentioned above, the only example to make national headlines in this period was a complex tale of a depressed alcoholic woman who despite wishing to have babies to look after ended up neglecting them.<sup>12</sup> The second Parliamentary committee which looked into adoption in the 1920s was dismissive of the charities' opinion, "It is obvious that if there be a legal system of adoption it will not be resorted to by those persons whose transactions give rise to the greatest evils".<sup>13</sup>

Both Committees looked at a wide range of issues affecting adoption. There was much discussion with witnesses about the procedures that should be used for adoption and issues of inheritance, which for the civil servants appear to have been the most pressing issues. The Hopkinson Committee recommended the preference of most of their witnesses concerning the use of the High Court (for the better off classes) and the County Court for general work, rather than the Magistrates' Court which was seen as too closely allied to criminal cases.<sup>14</sup> Ministers at the time – and more particularly the civil servants behind the scenes – were unhappy with the idea of county courts and preferred the use of magistrates. Indeed, they were unhappy with the whole idea of adoption refusing to publish the evidence from the Hopkinson Committee (publicly on the grounds of excessive cost, privately because the civil servants saw no need for new legislation and hoped the issue would fade away<sup>15</sup>), and consequently stalling through eight private members' bills on the subject in the early 1920s.<sup>16</sup> However, continuing pressure finally led the Labour Government of 1924 to form a second committee under Mr. Justice Tomlin. This was to examine matters pertaining to the choice of court, and to that of property and inheritance which adoption was seen as potentially undermining.

In fact, outside of Parliament the aforementioned factors were not the most pressing in the minds of the leading protagonists of the adoption debate. For the vast majority of the population inheritance was not a crucial matter in the early 1920s. Although there had been a relative rise in incomes among lower paid workers during the First World War, the situation of most people, described by Tawney before the War as being 'almost propertyless',<sup>17</sup> would not have significantly altered by this time. Though most interested parties preferred the idea of using County Courts, they did not feel passionately about the issue. Baby farming, as already discussed, was by now an emotive rather than a real issue.

### **Attitudes towards unmarried mothers**

The main issues which emerged were different, two of which were linked crucially to questions of identity. The first concerned the position of the unmarried mother; the silent figure behind the work of the adoption societies. Although there were still war orphans and foundlings, the majority of adoptees were illegitimate children (at least 75% of the NCAA adoptions even just after the War were of illegitimate children<sup>18</sup>). There are no figures for adoptions at this time as they were unofficial, but the number of illegitimate births had gone up during the First World War [to 6.3% of live births in 1918] and the mortality rate during the first year of life was more than double those of legitimate births [186 cf 91 per 1000 births]<sup>19</sup>.

Concern surrounding these figures constituted one of the main reasons behind the establishment of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child in 1918. The Council's members represented almost every organisation concerned with the welfare of women and children at the time and worked closely with the churches although it remained non-denominational. The opinion of this body was consequently broadly representative of the sentiment prevailing in the social welfare movement. Later on, in the 1950s and 60s, the NCUMC was a staunch advocate for the adoption of illegitimate children, but in the 1920s it was "...disapproving of adoption except in very special circumstances".<sup>20</sup> If it favoured the legalisation of adoption, it was only because it had dealt with a number of awkward cases involving the practice. The NCUMC certainly did not see adoption as "a solution to the problem of illegitimacy",<sup>21</sup> as its first Chairman, Mrs Lettice Fisher, wife of H A L Fisher, the then Minister for Education, explained to the Hopkinson Committee. The Council's concern was above all with the moral welfare of the unmarried mother and it believed that it was in the interests of both the mother and the child that there should be "...such arrangements and provisions as will enable the mother herself to bring up her own child".<sup>22</sup> If a child was "whisked" away from its mother the result was often a second 'fall' – another illegitimate child a couple of years later. Whereas with support to keep her child - monetary help and accommodation in a hostel with child care so she could work - the woman could be made a productive member of society. By 1926, the Council had fourteen hostels and homes for unmarried mothers in London and another nine across England.

Most of the witnesses before the Hopkinson Committee shared the views of the NCUMC to a greater or lesser degree. The spokesman for the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women described the work of his organisation as trying to keep unmarried mothers and their children together through financial aid, the provision of training, and by helping to find work for the mothers.<sup>23</sup> The Salvation Army also tried to keep them together, encouraging adoption only where children were orphaned or their mothers quite unable to look after them.<sup>24</sup> Lady Henry Somerset (who looked after children in her home for the NSPCC and individuals),<sup>25</sup> the National Council of Women (who advocated greater enforcement of paternal support for illegitimate children),<sup>26</sup> and Cecil Chapman, a Metropolitan Police Magistrate,<sup>27</sup> all expressed a strong preference for keeping mother and child together. They did, however, favour a properly regulated legalised system of adoption for those cases that were unavoidable.

Even Miss Puxley, representing the Maternal and Child Welfare department at the Ministry of Health which gave an annual grant to the NCAA's hostel in Kensington, thought that the running of the home was very good, and questioned: "...whether it is desirable to take a large number of children away from their mothers".<sup>28</sup> The grant, she stated "...does not mean that we necessarily approve of the system" and admitted that although Miss Andrew "has been to see us constantly ... I think she has never been able quite to convince us that sufficient care is taken [with adoption procedures]".<sup>29</sup> Miss Puxley expressed concern that adoption societies were focused solely on "wholesale adoption", when in her view, it was clearly preferable to keep the mother and baby together. The main problem was of course economic. She mentioned the possibility of 'mothers' pensions', a concept which was discussed at the time but never seriously promoted, and which was subsumed by both the campaign for family allowances and the debate over the idea of a 'family wage'. Similarly the Principal Medical Officer of Health for the County of London, Frederick Norton Kay Menzies, suggested subsidising the unmarried mother until she was in a position to earn a livelihood, or perhaps allowing local councils to contribute towards the costs of fostering.<sup>30</sup>

Clara Andrew of the NCAA paid lipservice to the idea of keeping mother and child together but was fundamentally uninterested in unmarried mothers and their problems. Her

focus was on fulfilling the desires of childless people and helping deprived and unwanted children. Her ideal system would have simply introduced a binding legal contract with no need for court sanction at all.<sup>31</sup>

### **Issues of secrecy and identity**

The new adoption societies, like the earlier child rescue societies such as Dr Barnardo's and the NSPCC, were driven by the total conviction of the rectitude of their work. Vital to this work was the other major issue relating to adoption which emerged during these years; that of secrecy. The concept of 'secrecy' pertained not just to the legal proceedings, but also to the fact that the natural parent should know nothing about the adopting family, and above all to where the child was to be placed. The natural mother could subsequently inquire whether her child was alive and well but would receive no other information. The adoption societies were less anxious about the adopting family having knowledge of the birth mother. The NCAA allowed them to know the mother's name and let them see papers relating to the child's origins.<sup>32</sup> The concern for secrecy arose from the much stated fear that the natural parent would seek to interfere with the adopting family if she could trace them. The Hon Treasurer of the National Adoption Society admitted in 1927, that in over 1400 adoptions arranged by his Society no relinquishing parent had ever tried to obtain the details of the adopter from the Society. Yet he argued that if they were given such details as of right they would be unable to resist contacting the adopting family.<sup>33</sup> Following on from this was the anxiety that the child would be stigmatized if there was common knowledge of its illegitimacy. Ultimately it was this taint of degeneracy and poverty which terrified the societies and the adopting families.

Although some working class and wealthy families adopted children, the clientele of the new adoption societies came above all from the lower and middle classes who were beginning to move into houses in the growing suburbs. Miss Andrew explained to the Hopkinson Committee that 15-20% of those applying to her society to adopt were from the upper classes, 25% working class, the rest were 'middle class,' which she defined as including "the professional classes, tradespeople, clerks and sergeants in the police".<sup>34</sup> As a number of historians have discussed,<sup>35</sup> the identity of the people moving into the new suburban houses was increasingly bound up with their sense of being private family units, distinct and separate from their increasingly distant neighbours, both literally and emotionally. 'Respectability' became ever-important to them. They wanted to distance themselves from their working-class past and maintain the status they had achieved. They dreaded their neighbours finding out that their children were illegitimate. A Miss Peto, who gave evidence to the Hopkinson Committee, had adopted seven children herself since 1908 (and also arranged adoptions for other people), confessed that above all she was horrified at the prospect of revealing to her children that they were illegitimate. She told both the children and their school that their parents were dead. She justified the story to the school for fear that the children would otherwise have been declined a place, or expelled.<sup>36</sup> A few years later, as adoption legislation came closer, an adopting parent, Charles Singer, wrote to the Duchess of Atholl, (an MP who took a keen interest in adoption and was a member of the Tomlin Committee until she was made a junior minister at the Board of Education) pleading for secrecy of proceedings to be included in the bill, "... no far-seeing adopter, with the interests of his child in mind, would exchange secrecy for legal status".<sup>37</sup> Miss Andrew was completely determined about the issue. She described the first adoption she ever carried out. It was with people "... of very small means, but very respectable. They said they had to fight all the time to prevent their neighbours knowing how they got the child. They said it was no business of anybody's to know it was not a relation of their own".<sup>38</sup>

Miss Andrew was asked directly if it was right to help people enter into contracts which tended "to destroy the identity of the child and its origin and to hide it from its mother". She assented vehemently that "...certainly in all illegitimacy and cruelty cases the best thing that can happen is that the child's identity should be hidden".<sup>39</sup> The energetic Metropolitan Police Magistrate, W Clarke Hall, agreed with Miss Andrew that "at the point of adoption the whole past history of the child should be shut down...when a child is adopted, its life from that time should begin *de novo*".<sup>40</sup>

Not all were of this opinion. In general, 'establishment' and judicial people, as well as senior civil servants, were far less likely to see a reason for secrecy once legislation was passed. This was not so much in consideration of the psychological needs of children with regard to their sense of identity, or of grieving birth parents' desire for continuing knowledge of their children. It stemmed more so from a reluctance to end the inalienability of parental rights which was so much a part of English Common Law.<sup>41</sup> Secrecy also had implications for the issue of inheritance and adoption which was eventually left vague in the legislation. If, for example, an adopted child was entitled to benefit from its natural parent's estate in the case of their intestacy, how could this happen if all links between them had been severed? It was the unease engendered by these questions which, as mentioned earlier, had encouraged the civil servants to stall behind the scenes on implementing adoption legislation.

Above all the policy makers were far removed from the desperate need of adopting families to avert the stigma of illegitimacy. They did not really understand the depth of the obsession with holding onto respectability and keeping up appearances. His Hon Judge Edward Abbott Parry who dealt with orphans who had money under the recent Workmen's Compensation Act was sensibly and reasonably against the idea of secrecy, but was blind to the passions that lay behind it:

*There might be reasons why the adoption should not take place, and it might be that the people locally ought to know of it...The child is going into a new household and going to be taken over by childless people, say. They may say it is a niece or nephew... but as a matter of fact, the whole street will know all about it very quickly.*<sup>42</sup>

And Mr. HB Drysdale Woodcock, a barrister and Recorder, despite his links for a time with the National Adoption Society, felt that secrecy was only an issue when new parents could be blackmailed – once adoption was legalised it would cease to be a relevant issue.<sup>43</sup> The Hopkinson Committee recommended what Murray Ryburn calls a "a form of open adoption" where the details of adopters would be known to birth parents who could apply for access to their child.<sup>44</sup> The Tomlin Committee was also dubious about the merits of severing links:

*Apart from the question whether it is desirable or even admissible deliberately to eliminate or obscure the traces of a child's origin so that it shall be difficult or impossible thereafter for such origin to be ascertained, we think that this system of secrecy would be wholly unnecessary and objectionable in connection with a legalised system of adoption, and we should deprecate any attempt to introduce it.*<sup>45</sup>

However, the Committee went on to recommend that the legal tribunals dealing with adoption should be able to do so in private, and that access by the general public to the Register of Adoptions, to be set up after legislation was passed, should be not be permitted.<sup>46</sup> Though unintended, this recommendation led to the beginning of an effective era of secrecy which would last fifty years. This was despite the 1926 legislation laying no particular emphasis on secrecy, particularly among the interested parties. Indeed in January 1927 a senior civil servant wrote:

*It is not intended that the name of the proposed adopter should be concealed from the natural parent... It is essential... that before a legal adoption takes place, the natural parent should have sufficient knowledge with regard to the proposed adopter to give a real consent... and it would not be possible for the Rules made under the Act to prescribe that the natural parent might purport to consent to the adoption without knowing who the proposed adopter is.<sup>47</sup>*

Despite these sentiments, behind the scenes the adoption societies were still lobbying hard for secrecy. Initially, quite innovative conditions were sometimes attached to adoption orders after the 1926 Adoption Act was passed.<sup>48</sup> Eventually though, the bureaucracy put in place meant that in practice it was extremely difficult for natural parents to retain any contact or even knowledge of their children. Subsequent legislation passed over the next forty years made it even more difficult for either birth parents or children to trace each other. It was not until the 1975 Children Act that adopted children in England and Wales gained reasonably easy access to their original birth certificates.

### **Conclusion**

The adoption societies obtained their wish concerning secrecy because they felt so strongly about the issue and because there was no equivalent campaign for a more open policy. The organisations which favoured unmarried mothers keeping their babies, adopted this attitude out of a desire to improve their moral stature rather than to assert the mothers' rights to their children. They had no particular viewpoint on secrecy in those instances where children were adopted. However, the adoption societies, as we have seen, were single-minded in ensuring the rights of the adopting families to remove all trace of a previous identity from their new offspring.

They were also in tune with a growing emphasis on the supremacy of the married two-parent family. Kiernan et al suggest that with the decline in widowhood during the interwar period not yet matched by an increase in divorce, there were proportionately more two parent families during this period and just after the Second World War than at any other time in history.<sup>49</sup> In theory single people could adopt, but it is unclear whether this occurred very often, especially in the period following the introduction of the 1926 Act. After a brief period of relative relaxation of condemnation towards unmarried mothers during the First World War, and the moralistic but benign attitude of organisations represented by the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child during the early years of the interwar period, the latter years certainly witnessed unmarried mothers being treated increasingly punitively. From 1927, the Poor Law authorities had sweeping powers to detain girls who were classified as mentally defective (often synonymous with unmarried motherhood) and in receipt of poor relief at the time of their child's birth. Kiernan et al point out that the benefits paid to unmarried 'wives' of servicemen via the National Relief Fund were also removed at about this time.<sup>50</sup> These policies correspond to the increasingly inflexible attitudes displayed by the adoption societies and eventually by the other professionals who became involved in the adoption process. However, as I hope I have demonstrated in this paper, there was no monolithic approach to the question of identity and secrecy during the years leading up to the passing of adoption legislation in 1926. As with so many of the issues raised by adoption, and now by the related areas of artificial fertilisation, surrogacy and cloning, the debates go round and round, the same questions keep coming up.

1. For example, children are 'adopted' in books by the three classic English novelists, Charles Dickens – *Bleak House* and *Oliver Twist*; Jane Austen – *Sense and Sensibility*; George Eliot – *Silas Marner*
2. For example, *Sunday Pictorial*, Nov 1917. "What can be done to bring together the childless woman with a mother's nature and the motherless child?"
3. For further details of this case see George K Behlmer, *Friends of the Family – The English Home and Its Guardians, 1850-1940* (Stanford CA, 1998), pp.278-280.
4. For baby farming and the development of the child protection societies see: George K Behlmer, *Child Abuse and Moral Reform in England, 1870-1908* (Stanford CA, 1982); Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare – England 1872-1989* (London, 1994).
5. *The Times*, 24/2/1919.
6. HO45 - 354040, Large Correspondence Folder, NSPCC Statement, 16/11/1920 and letter from Director, NSPCC, Robert Parr to S W Harris, Home Office, 31/5/1923. During the two years to 30/4/1923 they dealt with 738 cases involving adopted children, resulting in 14 prosecutions.
7. HO45 - 354040, Minutes of Evidence to Committee on Child Adoption, Miss Clara Andrew, 5/10/1920, p.11.
8. *The Times*, 28/1/1932.
9. National Adoption Society leaflet, undated, c1919, p.2.
10. For example a matinee organized at the Palladium, under the patronage of the Prime Minister's wife, Mrs. Lloyd George, *The Times*, 19/3/1920.
11. Minutes of Evidence, Miss Clara Andrew, p.18.
12. *The Times*, 22/9/1919.
13. Child Adoption Committee (chaired by the Hon Mr. Justice Tomlin) – First Report, 1924-25, Vol. ix, p.5.
14. Report of the Committee on Child Adoption (chaired by Sir Alfred Hopkinson KC), 1921, pp. 6-7.
15. E.g. HO45 – 354040, Large Correspondence Folder, comments, 29/3/1921, 7/4/1921; HO45- 11540, ; 1/4/1924. Governmental 'Conference on Child Adoption', 28/11/1921.
16. E.g. HO45 – 12642, comments, 8/3/1924.
17. Quoted in A B Atkinson, 'Distribution of Income and Wealth', in A H Halsey with Josephine Webb, (Eds.), *Twentieth –Century British Social Trends* (London 2000), p.359.
18. Minutes of Evidence, Miss Clara Andrews, p.5
19. Figures given in Hilary Mackaskill, *From the Workhouse to the Workplace – 75 Years of One-Parent Family Life, 1918-1993* (London 1993), p.9.
20. *The Women's Leader*, 19/3/1926.
21. Minutes of Evidence, Mrs. HAL Fisher, 27/10/1920, p.14.
22. *ibid.*, Mr. W Clarke Hall (member, executive, NCUMC), 26/10/1920, p.25.
23. *ibid.* Mr. S Cohen, 4/10/1920, pp.32-37.
24. *ibid.*, Commissioner Adelaide Cox, 5/10/1920, pp. 46-57.
25. *ibid.*, Lady Henry Somerset, 2/11/1920, p.20.
26. *ibid.*, Mrs. Edwin Gray, NCW, 2/11/1920, p.33.
27. *ibid.*, Mr. Cecil Chapman, 12/11/1920, p.10.
28. *ibid.*, Miss ZL Puxley, 27/10/1920, p.2.
29. *ibid.*,
30. *ibid.*, DR Frederick Norton Kay Menzies, 1/11/1920, p.8.
31. *ibid.*, Miss Clara Andrew, 5/10/1920, .p11.
32. *ibid.*, pp.7-8.
33. HO45-12695, Letter from Hon Treasurer Lt. Col. ACH Kennard to Sir Claud Schuster, 7/4/1927.
34. *ibid.*, p.9.
35. For example, Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England 1880-1939* (Oxford 1989); Diana Gittins, *Fair Sex – Family Size and Structure 1900-1939* (London 1982); Jane Lewis, *Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Brighton 1984); Judy Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain, 1900-1950* (London 1995).
36. Minutes of Evidence, Miss RSM Peto, 5/10/1920, p.41.
37. HO – 456209/42, letter from Charles Singer to the Duchess of Atholl DBE, MP, 19/3/1926.
38. Minutes of Evidence, Miss Clara Andrew, 5/10/1920, p.14.
39. *ibid.*, p.23.
40. *ibid.*, Mr. W Clarke Hall, 26/10/1920, p.25
41. Murray Ryburn, 'Secrecy and Openness in Adoption: An Historical Perspective, *Social Policy & Administration*, Vol. 29, No 2, June 1995, p.155.
42. Minutes of Evidence, His Hon Judge Edward Abbott Parry, 20/10/1920, p.3.

43. *ibid.*, HB Drysdale Woodcock, 19/11/1920, p.13.
44. Ryburn, p.154.
45. Tomlin Committee, First Report, p.9.
46. *ibid.*,
47. HO45 – 12695, Letter from AEA Napier to Mrs. Hubback, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, 11/1/1927.
48. For example, the Minute Book 1927-33, Adoption of Children Act 1926 for Bath Juvenile Court show occasional interim adoption orders being made with conditions attached e.g. 30/4/1930 where a father contested his daughter's adoption (made following NSPCC intervention after her mother died). The order was made but on an interim basis for two years with the father being allowed to see the child every three months.
49. Kathleen Kiernan, Hilary Land, Jane Lewis, *Lone Motherhood in Twentieth Century Britain – From Footnote to Front Page* (Oxford 1998), p.44.
50. *ibid.*, p.74.