

PROBATION OFFICERS, SOCIAL ENQUIRY REPORTS, AND IMPORTUNING IN THE 1960s*

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ABSTRACT. *This article explores how probation officers encouraged magistrates to hand down supervision orders for men charged with importuning via Social Enquiry Reports in the 1960s, a period characterized by a penal-welfare approach to crime and delinquent behaviour. Using nine reports on men charged with importuning, the article will show how ideals of citizenship were crucial to securing supervision. The article will consider to what extent definitions of citizenship varied depending on the offender's social class. In particular, the article will explore how ideals of citizenship were invoked to encourage supervision in circumstances where the offender already had previous convictions for importuning as well as cases where there were none. Finally, the article will consider to what extent the liberalization of the sexual offences laws in 1967 affected the way probation officers defined citizenship for homosexuals and altered the way supervision was encouraged in reports for men charged with importuning. Rounding up the above findings, the conclusion will also look at how successful probation officers were in securing supervision orders by portraying importuners as good citizens and will assess to what extent probation can be conflated with leniency and permissiveness.*

For much of the twentieth century, the Probation Service was a core institution of the British criminal justice system. The original mission of the Service, 'to advise, assist, and befriend' the offender, placed probation officers at the heart of the penal-welfare approach to crime that characterized criminal justice practice in Britain between the 1890s and the 1970s, as argued by David Garland in *The culture of control*.¹ Indeed, the dominance of penal-welfare during the post-war period was attributed by Garland to the achievement of professionals like probation officers who provided the bedrock of support for correctionalist, non-punitive sentences.² In particular, the penal-welfare

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¹ David Garland, *The culture of control: crime and social order in contemporary society* (Oxford, 2001).

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

approach encouraged the supervision of offenders in the community by probation officers as a more effective way of tackling crime and delinquent behaviour.³ Getting an offender on to a Probation Order in the first place, however, usually required a probation officer arguing for it in a Social Enquiry Report. These reports were therefore very important in courts because they could tip the balance away from prison or other forms of custodial punishment.

Social Enquiry Reports go to the heart of Garland's penal-welfare criminal justice system. Summarizing their purpose, the Home Office leaflet, *The Probation Service in England and Wales* explained:

The evolution of penal policy which has led to the development of the probation system has been accompanied by growing recognition that the circumstances of the offender are relevant not only to the degree of his culpability but also to the way in which he may be expected to respond to the form of treatment decided upon by the court.⁴

Requested at the discretion of the magistrate, criminal cases would be adjourned after conviction to enable probation officers to conduct social enquiries into the offender's background. Their findings would be written up in Social Enquiry Reports, often with a recommendation for the magistrate on an appropriate sentence.⁵ A considerable amount of the probation officer's time was therefore spent preparing these reports, which included interviewing the offender and sometimes visiting their homes and families. Indeed, during the 1960s, Social Enquiry Reports were the area in which the Service's work had increased the most. In 1965, the total number of reports requested by courts was 43,456, rising to 66,405 in 1968.⁶ In 1971, a total of 91,010 Social Enquiry Reports were requested by magistrates' courts alone.⁷ (It has been speculated by officers that this increase in requests for reports reflected the nation-wide increase in crime.⁸)

Trained in fields such as sociology and psychology, probation officers in the 1960s regarded themselves as having the requisite skills to understand the causes of crime and delinquency. Probation officers were therefore also highly respected by the courts, who viewed them as experts well placed to offer advice about offenders. Moreover, Social Enquiry Reports were confidential and removed from critical public scrutiny and from the full force of popular

³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴ Home Office, *The Probation Service in England and Wales* (London, 1964), p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶ *Report on the work of the Probation and After-Care Department 1966–1968* (London, 1972), p. 79.

⁷ *Report on the work of the Probation and After-Care Department 1969–1971* (London, 1972), p. 66.

⁸ Martin Page, *Crimefighters of London: a history of the origins and development of the Probation and Aftercare Service* (London, 1972), p. 277.

opinion. Consequently, as a professional group, they were able to exert a disproportionate influence over magistrates and sentencing.⁹

The growing influence of psychology during the twentieth century as a tool of governance has been argued elsewhere by David Armstrong and Nikolas Rose.¹⁰ These studies highlighted the importance of psychology as an applied discipline and for what it could provide for a state increasingly concerned with managing its population. However, Rose's approach has been criticized elsewhere for being preoccupied with the 'aims, ideas, and even the practical tools of the professionals' that tended to 'assume their influence, without attending in sufficient detail to the way these failed or changed because of messy politics, competing interests, and economic realities'.¹¹ The emphasis on professional literature limited the focus of Rose's argument and tended to assume the influence of professional groups without attending in sufficient detail to how this failed or changed because of competing interests, or how they were influenced by other systems of thought—scientific, religious, political, and cultural—in other words how professionals were influenced by the particular historical context of their own times.¹²

Probation officers are one such professional group whose status in the court was partly underpinned by their perceived expertise in areas such as psychology and sociology.¹³ However, it is unclear how probation officers exercised their power and influence via Social Enquiry Reports to encourage magistrates to hand down supervision orders. The literature on the Probation Service is particularly quiet on this issue—no doubt because of the previous absence of records available. Maurice Vanstone's excellent history of probation theory and practice, for example, admitted his book described what probation officers said they did 'rather than what they actually did'.¹⁴ Fortunately, it was the habit of the City of London's Justice Rooms (Guildhall and Mansion House) to retain reports in their court records. This enables for the first time scrutiny of how these officials operated, particularly in the 1960s when requests for reports were becoming more frequent generally (see above for statistics). To find out the various ways supervision could be encouraged, this article will focus particularly on the Social Enquiry Reports about men charged with importuning in public urinals (more commonly known as 'gross indecency'). Although hundreds were requested for minor property offences by the City's magistrates, there were no more than nine reports for importuning over the course of the sixties.

⁹ Garland, *The culture of control*, p. 149.

¹⁰ David Armstrong, *The political anatomy of the body* (Cambridge, 1983); Nikolas Rose, *The psychological complex: psychology, politics and society in England, 1869–1939* (London, 1985); Nikolas Rose, *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self* (London, 1999).

¹¹ Mathew Thomson, *Psychological subjects: identity, culture, and health in twentieth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2005), p. 8.

¹³ Garland, *The culture of control*, p. 149.

¹⁴ Maurice Vanstone, *Supervising offenders in the community: a history of probation theory and practice* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 156.

This seemingly small number reflects the tendency amongst magistrates to fine importuners rather than request reports and hand down supervision orders. In 1962, for example, only one out of thirty-six proceedings for queer incidents at the Guildhall resulted in a Probation Order (the vast majority (83 per cent) were fined).¹⁵

Oral accounts from retired probation officers also suggest very few importuners came their way in the sixties. As John Walters recalled,

Cottaging was still being prosecuted. I remember people being brought to court by police who had been observing the length of time they had spent in the gents. We were never asked to get involved. I don't know how it was seen but I think it was already beginning to be seen as something that ought not to be dealt with by the criminal justice system. And I certainly never got asked to see anybody for cottaging.¹⁶

This perception was shared by other former officers as well who remembered supervising very few cases of importuning. For example, according to Gerry Matthews, 'There were very few cases which actually came to court. And certainly very few that came our way.'¹⁷ Tony Leach similarly remarked, 'I had the odd indecent exposure, one for cottaging ... but no rapes or indecent assault.'¹⁸ Will Watson said, 'that it wasn't a big problem in terms of numbers'.¹⁹

Although small in number, the reports are rich in variety and offer a snapshot of the types of men who frequented the City's urinals for sex. The offenders range from young working-class men in low-grade clerical jobs to older middle-class professionals, most having worked in or near the City of London itself and had visited urinals whilst on lunch breaks or after work in the evening.²⁰ Some had extensive lists of previous convictions for importuning, whereas others had fewer or none at all. Their Social Enquiry Reports were subsequently written by a local probation officer from within their respective court area (so an offender from Kent who importuned in the City would have a Kent probation officer write his report for the Guildhall, for example). Because there is no obvious pattern in the types of men being referred for reports, it is difficult to know the specific reasons magistrates had for seeking the probation officer's advice. Whether they were requested by certain sympathetic magistrates knowing the probation officer's recommendation would likely advocate leniency is difficult to say. As Matt Houlbrook highlighted in *Queer London*, some progressive magistrates in the 1930s used discretionary judicial powers in a veiled

¹⁵ Court Register, Guildhall Justice Room (GJR), London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) CLA/005/02/137, CLA/005/02/138.

¹⁶ Interview with John and Irene Walters, recorded by John Lunan (JL), London, 18 July 2012. ¹⁷ Interview with Gerry Matthews, recorded by JL, London, 17 Feb. 2012.

¹⁸ Interview with Tony Leach, recorded by JL, London, 9 Feb. 2012.

¹⁹ Interview with Will Watson, recorded by JL, London, 7 Mar. 2012.

²⁰ Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: perils and pleasures in the sexual metropolis, 1918-1957* (London, 2006), p. 263.

opposition to the sexual offences laws.²¹ Nevertheless, this diversity in offender background and probation officers enables a broader picture to emerge about how the Service responded to charges of importuning in the 1960s penal-welfare justice system.

This article will show how probation officers, who did not believe importuners required a punitive sentence, carefully constructed favourable and sympathetic Social Enquiry Reports that encouraged supervision. It will show that favourable depictions entailed portraying the offender as possessing the fundamental characteristics of good citizenship; however, the definition of good citizenship varied depending on the offender's social class.²² Sympathetic depictions entailed indicating the offender's homosexuality had emerged as a result of psychologically traumatic experiences during the offender's past. In particular, the first section will reveal the strategies used by probation officers to persuade and reassure magistrates that homosexuals with previous convictions for importuning did not deserve or require a punitive sentence but should have probation supervision instead. The second section will show how a lack of previous convictions for importuning had important ramifications for what was ultimately argued for in Social Enquiry Reports, with officers depicting the offence as a circumstantial aberration rather than indicative of homosexuality. The final section will look at how the decriminalization of homosexuality enshrined in the 1967 Sexual Offences Act affected probation officers in their attempts to get supervision, exploring how rapidly probation officers adapted and changed to evolving ideas on the social politics of sexual expression. More generally, this article contributes to the growing historiography relating to the history of sexuality, crime and punishment, and mid-twentieth-century ideas about masculinity and citizenship.²³

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

²² Abigail Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England 1950–1970', *Past and Present*, 187 (2005), pp. 157–85.

²³ For examples about the history of sexuality, see Alan Berrube, *Coming out under fire: the history of gay men and women in World War Two* (New York, NY, 1990); Harry Cocks, *Nameless offences: homosexual desire in the nineteenth century* (London, 2003); Hugh David, *On Queer Street: a social history of British homosexuality, 1895–1995* (London, 1997); Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming out: homosexual politics in Britain from the nineteenth century to the present* (London, 1977); George Robb and Nancy Erber, eds., *Disorder in the court: trials and sexual conflict at the turn of the century* (New York, NY, 1999); H. Montgomery Hyde, *The other love: an historical and contemporary survey of homosexuality in Britain* (London, 1970); Matt Houlbrook, 'The man with the powder puff in interwar London', *Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), pp. 145–71; Matt Houlbrook and Chris Waters, 'The heart in exile: detachment and desire in 1950s London', *History Workshop Journal*, 62 (2006), pp. 142–65; Matt Houlbrook, 'Soldier heroes and rent boys: homosex, masculinities and Britishness in the Brigade of Guards: c. 1900–1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 42 (2003), pp. 351–88; Matt Houlbrook, 'The private world of public urinals: London, 1918–1957', *London Journal*, 25 (2000), pp. 52–70. For examples about the history of crime and punishment, see Garland, *The culture of control*, p. 1; E. Carrabine, P. Cox, M. Lee, and N. South, eds., *Crime in Modern Britain* (Oxford, 2002); V. A. C. Gatrell, 'Crime, authority and the policeman-state', in F. M. L. Thompson, ed., *Cambridge social history of Britain* (Cambridge, 1995); S. D'Cruze, 'Crime', in I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in twentieth-century Britain*

I

Pushing for supervision in Social Enquiry Reports was no easy task when the offender already had an extensive record of previous convictions for importuning and had even spent time in prison for it. Justifying this recommendation therefore involved carefully depicting the homosexual as favourably and sympathetically as possible in order to persuade and reassure the magistrate that the offender did not deserve or require a punitive sentence. Depicting the homosexual favourably meant highlighting wherever possible evidence that the offender was already a good citizen. This was in stark contrast to post-war social anxieties surrounding homosexuality, and the growing panic fuelled by spiralling numbers of arrests for sexual offences, explored elsewhere by other historians.²⁴

However, the definition of good citizenship varied depending on the offender's social class. As has been argued elsewhere, this article supports the view that citizenship should be seen as a 'fractured concept' transected, particularly in the case of homosexuality and importuning, by the offender's age and social class.²⁵ Kathleen Canning and Sonya Rose have previously argued for a concept of citizenship as a 'multi-dimensional discursive framework', giving the language and categories for claims of belonging.²⁶ Abigail Wills argued that the languages of delinquency, citizenship and reform suggest that while citizenship may have been a fractured, discursive concept, it

(Harlow, 2001); B. Godfrey and P. Lawrence, *Crime and justice, 1750–1950* (Cullompton, 2002); A.H. Halsey and J. Webb, eds., *Twentieth-century British social trends* (Basingstoke, 2000); T. Morris, *Crime and criminal justice since 1945* (Oxford, 1989); C. William, B. Godfrey and P. Lawrence, eds., *History and crime* (London, 2008). For examples about the history of masculinity and citizenship, see Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950–1970', pp. 157–85; Marcus Collins, 'Pride and prejudice: West Indian men in mid-twentieth-century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), pp. 391–418; Kathleen Canning and Sonya Rose, 'Introduction: gender, citizenship and subjectivity: some historical and theoretical considerations', *Gender and History*, 13 (2001), pp. 427–43; Lesley A. Hall, *Hidden anxieties: male sexuality, 1900–1950* (Cambridge, 1991); Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and James Tosh, eds., *Masculinities in politics and war: gendering modern history* (Manchester, 2004); Sonya O. Rose, *Which people's war? National identity and citizenship in wartime Britain, 1939–1945* (Oxford, 2003); Graham Dawson, *Soldier heroes: British adventure, empire and the imagining of masculinities* (London, 1994).

²⁴ Houlbrook, 'Soldier heroes and rent boys', p. 386; Chris Waters, "'Dark strangers" in our midst: discourses of race and nation in Britain, 1947–1963', *Journal of British Studies*, 36 (1997), pp. 207–38; Chris Waters, 'Disorders of the mind, disorders of the body social: Peter Wildeblood and the making of the modern homosexual', in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters, eds., *Moments of modernity: reconstructing Britain, 1945–1964* (London, 1994), p. 134.

²⁵ Stephen Brooke, 'Identities in twentieth-century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), p. 155.

²⁶ Canning and Rose, 'Introduction: gender, citizenship and subjectivity: some historical and theoretical considerations', p. 431.

was also a powerful behavioural norm, grounded in ideas of acceptable gender identity.²⁷

This article builds on these arguments by showing that citizenship as a powerful behavioural norm was also applied to men charged with importuning. Making a case for supervision, probation officers demonstrated importuners were good citizens by highlighting their behavioural characteristics. However, there were slight variations in the way this was conceived and articulated, depending on the offender's social class. Ultimately, conceptions of citizenship were central for advocating supervision. By demonstrating the working and middle-class offender conformed to their respective conceptions of citizenship, probation officers could justify non-punitive sentences. The remainder of this section will explain how this was achieved.

Employment, for example, has been identified elsewhere by historians as a crucial hallmark of post-war masculinity and citizenship.²⁸ Probation officers also highlighted and discussed employment in Social Enquiry Reports when depicting the importuner favourably to secure supervision. Regardless of the number of previous convictions, or whether they had previously been under supervision, probation officers emphasized how well the offender performed in their jobs. There were nevertheless differences in how this was conceived and articulated in reports, with the emphasis on respectability and successful careers for middle-class homosexuals, whereas for working-class individuals it was more about demonstrating hard graft. For example, in 1962, James T, a stockbroker's managing clerk from a middle-class background, aged forty-eight, was charged with importuning at the Bank Station public urinal.²⁹ He had four previous convictions for importuning, resulting in three spells of imprisonment and one fine. With his poor criminal record, and another prison sentence looming on the horizon, the probation officer was nevertheless pushing for supervision in his report.³⁰ Justifying this recommendation, the probation officer pointed out positively James T's successful career and how he was a highly valued employee:

He is well suited to his employment as a clerk. For the past four years he has been working for the same firm as personal assistant to the director. Previously he has always lost his employment following conviction and imprisonment but on this occasion the company is aware of his difficulties and hopes to retain his services.³¹

In contrast, in order to secure supervision for working-class importuners, probation officers creatively interpreted their employment record to demonstrate hard graft. For example, Vincent A, a working-class messenger, aged twenty-six, was shown to have an industrious, hard-working attitude as well as

²⁷ Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950-1970', p. 174.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159; Collins, 'Pride and prejudice: West Indian men in mid-twentieth-century Britain', p. 417.

²⁹ Evidence Book, Mansion House Justice Room (MHJR), 19 Oct. 1962-29 Nov. 1962, LMA CLA/004/07/252, p. 49.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

responsibility towards his upkeep at home (he had pleaded guilty in 1964 to importuning and had also previously been on probation for importuning).³²

He has a good work record, having worked with a firm of X manufacturers locally from the time he left school until November 1962, when I understand he took his present employment as a messenger for the X Bank, attached to their X Branch, earning £14 per week as a basic wage but inevitably takes an average of £18 net per week; he contributes £3 per week for his keep.³³

Good character was also a fundamental characteristic of post-war masculinity and citizenship.³⁴ In order to encourage supervision, probation officers highlighted evidence for good character in men charged with importuning as well. However, there were differences in how this was conceived and demonstrated in reports, with the emphasis on highlighting the respectability of middle-class homosexuals, whereas working-class good character was more about demonstrating their obedience, maturity, reliability, and responsibility. For example, James T's probation officer pointed out his respectability whilst discussing how it was a deliberate response to compensate for his homosexuality:

He is deeply conscious of this disablement which interferes with his personal relationships, creates subjective feelings of unworthiness and colours his every action. In compensation, he has set out to prove to himself and to others, with obvious success, that he is more conscientious, more competent and more cultured.³⁵

James T's respectability was highlighted elsewhere in the report regarding his home background and hobbies, 'Much of his leisure time is spent in the home but, with his sister, he attends concerts, plays and a local music society.'³⁶

Terence B, a secretary from a middle-class background, aged thirty-five, was also shown to be respectable (he had pleaded guilty to importuning in 1963 and had also previously been under voluntary supervision with a probation officer for an importuning offence; indeed, his former probation officer was advocating a statutory Order out of fear Terence B was otherwise facing jail).³⁷ For example, Terence B's respectability was shown in relation to his upbringing and attitude to life, where it was suggested he had been raised according to strict moral standards, 'Little is known of B's family background but it would appear that he had an extremely strict upbringing. His outlook is in many ways quite Puritanical.'³⁸

³² Evidence Book, GJR, 31 Aug. 1964–5 Oct. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/479, p. 153.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁴ Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950–1970', p. 184.

³⁵ Evidence Book, MHJR, 19 Oct. 1962–29 Nov. 1962, LMA CLA/004/07/252, p. 49.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁷ Evidence Book, GJR, 28 Nov. 1963–28 Jan. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/473, p. 174.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

In contrast, there was more of an emphasis on demonstrating behavioural characteristics when proving working-class good character. The probation officer seemed to highlight Vincent A's good behaviour as the main reason for the magistrate to hand down supervision. For example, it had been put to Vincent A by his psychiatrist that, in order to remove himself from further temptation to importune, he should apply for a work transfer away from central London.³⁹ Then, it seems almost in response to the psychiatrist's suggestion, the Social Enquiry Report stated optimistically that Vincent A would follow this advice to the letter, as though showing the magistrate he was reassuringly obedient and mature, as well as reliable and responsible towards his future wife:

he claims that as soon as he is married he will make application for the post of messenger/care-taker in one of the flats attached to local branches of the X Bank. For the time being, however, he will expect to reside either in a flat, which he hopes to obtain locally, or with his future wife's family. He has £190 saved towards the wedding expenses.⁴⁰

Vincent A's good behaviour was also pointed out elsewhere with regard to his closely following the probation officer's original 1961 advice (after his first importuning conviction):

A appeared to accept advice and did in fact extend his social contact considerably by joining the local Civil Defence Corps and also a local photographic society. At this time A had already made contact with the Psychiatric Out-Patient Clinic at X Hospital and agreed to attend voluntarily for treatment.⁴¹

Moreover, it has been argued elsewhere how post-war citizenship was closely bound to notions of civic duty which might also explain why Vincent A's probation officer mentioned this as part of making a favourable impression in the report.⁴² Finally, the probation officer highlighted Vincent A's good behaviour by noting optimistically that he had resisted temptation and had 'never gone on to full homosexual relationship with any man'.⁴³ The importance of this point was reinforced in relation to his encouraging attitude towards his fiancée and upcoming marriage; noting that Vincent A himself believed his marriage would stabilize his sexuality,

he began to seriously court his fiancée in November X, and whom he plans to marry on October X. He is most anxious that his fiancée should not learn of his court appearance, and feels that his marriage will help him to come to terms with his admitted homosexual tendencies.⁴⁴

³⁹ Evidence Book, GJR, 31 Aug. 1964–5 Oct. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/479, p. 153.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁴² Abigail Beach, 'Forging a "nation of participants": political and economic planning in Labour's Britain', in Richard Weight and Abigail Beach, eds., *The right to belong, citizenship and national identity in Britain, 1930–1960* (London, 1998), p. 89.

⁴³ Evidence Book, GJR, 31 Aug. 1964–5 Oct. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/479, p. 153.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Besides flagging up their respectability, probation officers also highlighted the good behaviour of middle-class importuners, indicating behavioural characteristics were not exclusive ideals for working-class citizenship as was identified by Wills.⁴⁵ At least in terms of homosexuality and importuning, evidence for the middle-class importuner having self-control was crucial whilst for example making a case for supervision. Paradoxically, James T's self-control was alluded to whilst discussing his importuning, suggesting the offence itself was a relatively unusual occurrence and that he was normally able to control himself. This argument was reinforced by highlighting that James T himself was appalled by his own offending behaviour:

Mr T is not a persistent importuner. He has described the anguish he experiences when, after a period of latent desire, he is overwhelmed by a rapidly heightening sexual tension which finally precipitates another series of public offences. During this phase he is morbidly aware of the inevitable consequences of his importuning and yet he cannot desist. It seems that there is an important element of self-punishment accelerating his actions.⁴⁶

Likewise, the probation officer pointed out Bernard C's apparent self-control, 'He has had homosexual feelings almost as long as he can remember. He has tried to fight this and states that he has been successful on the whole.'⁴⁷ Terence B's probation officer alluded to his self-control within the context of a wider, sympathetic discussion of his background which warranted supervision, 'B is a man who, in spite of his good education and general background, is extremely lonely, mainly because of the homosexual tendencies which he has and which he tries hard to control.'⁴⁸

Arguments for supervision did not rest solely on assertions that the offender was a good citizen, however. Justifying supervision over a prison sentence also involved carefully depicting the offender sympathetically, indicating their homosexuality warranted sympathy rather than condemnation. This was more often where psychology came into play as well, with probation officers using their expertise to indicate psychoanalytical explanations of sexual deviance in a way that limited the offender's culpability for the importuning offence. For example, James T's probation officer indicated his homosexuality could be blamed on tragic experiences in his early childhood, 'Mr T was cared for from infancy by his elder sister who substituted for the deceased mother. He attended elementary schooling until the age of 14 years without distinction except that even then he was unhappy and apparently a quiet, sensitive misfit'.⁴⁹ Such observations seem to have stemmed from influential post-war theories,

⁴⁵ Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950-1970', p. 184.

⁴⁶ Evidence Book, MHJR, 19 Oct. 1962-29 Nov. 1962, LMA CLA/004/07/252, p. 49.

⁴⁷ Evidence Book, MHJR, 21 Feb. 1961-3 Apr. 1961, LMA CLA/004/07/235, p. 112.

⁴⁸ Evidence Book, GJR, 28 Nov. 1963-28 Jan. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/473, p. 174.

⁴⁹ Evidence Book, MHJR, 19 Oct. 1962-29 Nov. 1962, LMA CLA/004/07/252, p. 49.

particularly John Bowlby's belief that delinquency could be ascribed to an absence of maternal affection in the early years of childhood.⁵⁰

Indeed, some reports were more sympathetic in tone and content than favourable. For example, although there were clear indications that Bernard C was fundamentally a good middle-class citizen – 'His main interest is gardening. He attends church and occasionally plays the organ. Mostly stays at home, enjoys watching the television and taking his mother out in the car at weekends',⁵¹ – there was nevertheless no overt attempt by the probation officer to interpret creatively and develop this as evidence for his quintessential good citizenship.⁵² Nothing was made of Bernard C's impressive employment record running his own business either. Instead, the argument for supervision rested more narrowly on a sympathetic argument that insisted Bernard C was a rather harmless and tragic personality who deserved pity rather than punishment:

He has not had the courage to seek advice or discuss his feelings with anybody, even his own brother. He said that the present offence was not long premeditated but connected with his visit to a warehouse in the City. He went to the convenience to urinate and then committed the offence to obtain relief.⁵³

This sympathetic portrayal of Bernard C was reinforced in the report's concluding remarks:

He appears to be a quiet, gentle, depressed man. He states that in spite of being in business for so many years he lacks confidence, blushes easily and feels awkward in the company of others. He is ashamed of what has happened and very apprehensive of the outcome and even of any publicity which might arise.⁵⁴

Why was Bernard C's report more sympathetic than favourable? No doubt different probation officers had different approaches towards and understandings of homosexuality and importuning. However, it seems that when a prison sentence was more likely – as in the cases involving James T, Terence B, Vincent A – it became more urgent and necessary for the probation officer to put forward a stronger case for supervision. (James T had four previous convictions for importuning, resulting in three spells of imprisonment and one fine;⁵⁵ Terence B had four previous convictions for importuning, and had reappeared before court less than eight months after his previous offence;⁵⁶ Vincent A had reoffended after being put on probation for importuning.⁵⁷) Compared to the above three cases, Bernard C's record of importuning was far

⁵⁰ John Bowlby, *Forty-four juvenile thieves: their characters and home life* (London, 1946); John Bowlby, *Maternal care and mental health: a report prepared on behalf of the World Health Organisation as a contribution to the United Nations programme for the welfare of homeless children* (Geneva, 1952).

⁵¹ Evidence Book, MHJR, 21 Feb. 1961–3 Apr. 1961, LMA CLA/004/07/235, p. 112.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁵⁵ Evidence Book, MHJR, 19 Oct. 1962–29 Nov. 1962, LMA CLA/004/07/252, p. 49.

⁵⁶ Evidence Book, GJR, 28 Nov. 1963–28 Jan. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/473, p. 174.

⁵⁷ Evidence Book, GJR, 31 Aug. 1964–5 Oct. 1964, LMA CLA/005/06/479, p. 153.

better – one conviction seven years previously when he was fined £20. Consequently, although Bernard C's probation officer was similarly pushing for some kind of supervision order, the stakes were not so high as in the other cases mentioned and therefore the argument for supervision could rest on a more narrow and sympathetic argument. Unlike what has been suggested elsewhere by historians, these reports suggest previous convictions mattered in shaping responses towards offenders in the criminal justice system, at least for probation officers.⁵⁸ The importance of previous convictions for Social Enquiry Reports is further supported in the next section which considers two cases where the offender had no record of importuning.

II

This section will show how in cases where there were no previous convictions for importuning, probation officers argued the offence was a circumstantial aberration rather than as indicative of homosexuality. Ideals of citizenship nevertheless remained crucial in these cases, albeit for different reasons. Whereas in the previous section, demonstrating the offender's good citizenship formed the basis for recommending supervision, this section will show how probation officers could effectively depict the importuner as being *too much* of a good citizen, paradoxically blaming their commendable personalities as ultimately responsible for their importuning whilst at the same time using this as an excuse to justify a Conditional Discharge rather than requiring supervision. Conversely, this section will also show how recommendations for supervision could rest on the assertion that the circumstantial aberration was caused by the offender *lacking* the fundamental characteristics of citizenship as well as simultaneously using this as an argument for probation supervision.

In 'Soldier heroes and rent boys', Houlbrook highlighted how guardsmen's importuning offences could be construed by magistrates and recorders as 'temporary aberrations' in order to preserve their status as soldier heroes.⁵⁹ Such arguments were not limited to guardsmen, however. When there was a lack of previous convictions for ordinary civilians, probation officers argued the importuning offence was a circumstantial aberration. This could ultimately be the basis for suggesting a Conditional Discharge in reports. For example, in 1967, Wilfred B, aged fifty-three, from a middle-class background, pleaded guilty to indecent assault.⁶⁰ However, according to his report, rather than being homosexual, Wilfred B instead blamed his offence on intoxication following a boozy lunch. His probation officer, moreover, seemed to find this a credible explanation as it largely formed the basis for suggesting a Conditional Discharge, 'Mr B has been shocked by this affair and feels that his recourse to

⁵⁸ Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950–1970', p. 172.

⁵⁹ Houlbrook, 'Soldier heroes and rent boys', p. 376.

⁶⁰ Evidence Book, GJR, 3 Nov. 1967–20 Dec. 1967, LMA CLA/005/06/503, p. 82.

alcohol within the content of a business luncheon has been mainly responsible for this incident; he tells me he has resolved to refrain completely from alcoholic drinks in the future', and, 'It seems to me having interviewed Mr B at some length that this affair is an isolated occurrence, the nature of which seems to suggest an emotional reaction related to his anxieties over the past few years connected with his work.'⁶¹

Proving the offence was a circumstantial aberration, the probation officer put together a glowing report which repeatedly reinforced the perception that Wilfred B was a good citizen whilst at the same time also showing how this ultimately accounted for his importuning. Summing up his impression of Wilfred B, the probation officer noted, 'Mr B impressed me as a very conscientious man (possible to the extent of slight obsessionalism).'⁶² Indeed, as the probation officer subsequently made clear, it was his good character that was responsible for his importuning. Whilst pointing out his successful career and good reputation from the army, the report highlighted a particular incident when Wilfred B became 'morbidly depressed' following promotion at work whilst at the same time unfortunately having to make his loyal staff redundant:

By 1953 he had established himself in the position of General Manager. It is apparent that he took a great personal interest in the welfare and advancement of his staff (a point well documented in his numerous testimonials from the Army authorities) and when in 1962 his company was the subject of a take over bid he was placed in the position of having to make them redundant. Also his own position came under review and he was subsequently appointed an Area Sales Manager. During this period he appears to have suffered considerable anxiety and acute disappointment and for a time he became, from what I can gather, morbidly depressed.⁶³

However, such was his apparent contentiousness that he endeavoured to reemploy all his former staff. Indeed, it was the pleasure of reemploying a former staff member that had led Wilfred B to indulge in alcohol which resulted in the offence:

He tells me that on the day of the offence he had lunched with an ex-colleague whom he had persuaded to rejoin the firm and his pleasure at this achievement together with considerable feelings of well-being due to the security he was again feeling in his work, led him to indulge very heavily in Spirits and Beer to the extent that he became involved in the incident. He claims he remembers nothing of the incident whatsoever.⁶⁴

In the previous section, it was shown how probation officers linked homosexuality with traumatic experiences in earlier years. Consequently, when trying to prove the importuning offence was a circumstantial aberration

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

rather than anything more sinister, the probation officer highlighted that there was no evidence for a disturbed social background. In the case involving Wilfred B, this was also used as an opportunity to draw more attention to his good character, further supporting a Conditional Discharge:

Mr B tells me he has never been involved in any form of homosexual act before and cannot understand his behaviour. He tells me that before he was married, during his Army service, he had a normal relationship with contemporaries of the opposite sex and that he cannot remember in the past any conscious homosexual desires [and] his development appears to have been uneventful and apart from childhood bronchitis did not suffer any serious illnesses or separations from home. . . The family relationships appear to be very good and both Mr B and his wife describe their marriage as a successful and happy relationship. It is significant to add that Mrs B has offered her husband considerable support during his anxiety over this affair.⁶⁵

The probation officer then highlighted his exemplary education, military, and later work record as further evidence for his good character:

His educational attainment at school appears to have been above average. At the age of 18 he entered the Army and served from X when he was discharged with the Rank of W. O. 2nd Class; his military conduct being described as 'EXEMPLARY . . . sets himself a high standard in everything he does'. His subsequent career seems to have born out this assessment.⁶⁶

Were young, working-class men with no previous convictions depicted as favourably as Wilfred B? In 1963, Thomas M, a messenger, aged twenty-four, with no previous convictions, pleaded guilty to importuning.⁶⁷ Although Thomas M's offence was similarly construed as a circumstantial aberration, the probation officer indicated it was caused by his alleged immaturity—in other words, Thomas M's importuning was the result of him lacking the fundamental characteristics of good citizenship:

In discussing the offence with him, it is clear that he was egged on by others. It seems that during the lunch hour he used to eat his sandwiches in one of the London Squares. During these periods he became friendly with three or four other boys not employed by X. He tells me that one of the other lads said that he thought David liked him, and said, 'why don't you write a letter'. The boy David was there when this was said. M wrote the letter in question and it seems that David kept the appointment alone and that M was arrested. It seems that M gave one of the other lads the letter to hand to the boy David.⁶⁸

Consequently, the bulk of the Social Enquiry Report was given over to supporting the view that Thomas M was immature rather than anything more sinister, 'He does not really seem to appreciate the gravity of his behaviour.'⁶⁹ Pointing to his early years, the probation officer went as far as describing

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁶⁷ Evidence Book, MHJR, 15 July 1963–10 Oct. 1963, LMA CLA/004/07/258, p. 127.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

Thomas M as 'backward'. He 'was extremely backward at school and at the age of 14 came under the supervision of Mr. X, one of the X Mental Health officers. I have spoken to Mr. X who tells me that M is very young for his years, and of limited responsibility.'⁷⁰ This portrayal was reinforced with regard to the nature of his employment, 'It seems that he is employed doing work usually done by a much younger man, and X are unable to promote him.'⁷¹ Far from being sexually deviant, the probation officer argued Thomas M's biggest challenge was finding another job, 'The most difficult problem will be to find him suitable work if, as seems likely, he is discharged by X.'⁷² On this basis, therefore, his importuning offence was shown to be exceptional, 'M comes from an extremely good home, and it is his tragedy that he is so gullible. I think it extremely unlikely that he will offend again.'⁷³

Next to Wilfred B, how significant was Thomas M's probation officer arguing his importuning was caused by him lacking the fundamental characteristics of good citizenship? Are these two examples indicative of double-standards being applied to working- and middle-class offenders? Did probation officers need to emasculate effectively working-class importuners in order to preclude their capacity for agency in the offence, as Houlbrook found regarding state and press discourses towards guardsmen as they went about protecting their symbolic integrity?⁷⁴ The example of Vincent A in the previous section suggests this was not always necessarily the case. Vincent A was depicted as having appropriate behavioural characteristics of working-class masculinity and citizenship in order to secure his supervision. In a different case, Jerry G, a solicitor's clerk from a working-class background, aged nineteen, was also, like Wilfred B, given the benefit of the doubt after being convicted for importuning.⁷⁵ Jerry G had similarly insisted to his probation officer that he was not homosexual. Writing his report, the probation officer refused to side one way or another over his sexuality and offence and opted against making a recommendation to the court:

When I ventured to discuss the offence with G he protested his innocence, told me that he had never had any abnormal sexual urges, nor had he ever had the desire to masturbate, either in private or in public. He added that he intended to lodge an Appeal against his conviction. In view of this it is impossible for me to make any recommendation to the Court as to disposal of this case.⁷⁶

Therefore, rather than being evidence for double-standards, Thomas M is in fact an excellent example of the extraordinary lengths probation officers would go in order to get the offender a supervision order. Indeed, arguing Thomas

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷⁴ Houlbrook, 'Soldier heroes and rent boys', p. 377.

⁷⁵ Evidence Book, MHJR, 18 July 1962–18 Oct. 1962, LMA CLA/004/07/251, p. 8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

M's importuning was a circumstantial aberration was astonishing in light of his love letter produced as evidence in court.⁷⁷ Not only did he not deny his homosexuality, his love letter also clearly suggests Thomas M had a boyfriend and unashamedly participated in London's queer subcultures:

Envelope addressed to my darling David,
 Love from Trevor.
 Endorsed on back –
 You are charming, You are beautiful, You are a smasher

My dear David,

I was very disappointed, that you never came down to see me yesterday at lunch time, I was looking forward to seeing you. I think you had the day off yesterday. I am late tern this next week, so will not see you until the week after, now darling I love you very much, you are a lovely chap, handsome, good looking. We will have to get together some time and have some good fun. I would like to strip you down, and play around with you toss you off. Well darling I must close, as it's time I went to work. I often dream of you when I am in bed, pulling myself off.

I love you very much. Much love to you dear,
 All my love
 From Trevor.
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Any argument that insisted Thomas M had the fundamental characteristics of working-class masculinity and citizenship would have been untenable under the given circumstances. However, by reducing his offending behaviour down to a matter of immaturity, the probation officer was able to make a convincing argument for the merits of putting Thomas M on a supervision order. By inculcating maturity and responsibility, probation would ensure Thomas M would avoid getting into further trouble (this tactic appears to have worked as Thomas M was handed down a twelve-month Probation Order).⁷⁸ Therefore, this case demonstrates how denying an offender had the fundamental characteristics of good citizenship could also work as a strategy for securing supervision. Having explored the various ways ideals of citizenship were used by probation officers arguing for supervision and conditional discharges for men charged with importuning, the final section will consider to what extent this changed following the liberalization of the sexual offences laws.

⁷⁷ Evidence Book, MHJR, 15 July 1963–10 Oct. 1963, LMA CLA/004/07/258, p. 127.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

III

Although the 1967 Sexual Offences Act decriminalized homosexuality in private between adult men, importuning remains an offence. Nevertheless, the status of homosexuals in society was redefined following this landmark piece of liberal legislation.⁷⁹ Did this liberalization also have an impact on probation officers as they went about arguing for supervision for importuning in reports? It is argued here that there was continuity as well as change. Making a case for supervision or conditional discharges still involved depicting the offender favourably as a good citizen. Edmund P, for example, a clerk, aged thirty-seven, who pleaded guilty to importuning in 1969, was depicted as having the fundamental characteristics of good citizenship.⁸⁰ His successful career was highlighted by his probation officer who did not believe supervision was necessary (on the basis he had supportive relatives and was seeing his general practitioner), 'he achieved his ambition by joining a travel firm for whom he worked for five years. During this time he received promotion and was able to travel abroad.'⁸¹ The probation officer also indicated Edmund P's respectability by highlighting his wholesome hobbies: 'He is interested in gardening and Scottish dancing, he is an excellent cook and an avid reader. He does not normally drink.'⁸² In another case, Richard C, aged twenty-six, who pleaded guilty to 'soliciting for immoral purposes' in 1969, was likewise shown to be a good citizen.⁸³ His probation officer, who indicated supervision was needed, highlighted his good character in relation to his studies, for example:

Next April, Mr C sits the final examinations for a Fellowship of the X Institute, in which he is now an Associate. He has been studying for five years to this end, most of the work being done at home. Mr C has imposed a strict discipline on himself to do this work. Examination success is important to him, not only for the tangible result of furthering his career, but as proof of his intellectual capability.⁸⁴

Social Enquiry Reports also remained sympathetic about the apparent psychoanalytical causes of homosexuality as well. For example, the probation officer indicated Edmund P's deviant behaviour should be blamed on his disturbed childhood: 'It is apparent that P's lack of parental affection and guidance is significant', and

His mother died from cancer when he was four years of age ... His father remarried a year after his wife's death. P developed antagonism towards his stepmother and subsequently had little to do with his own home ... He tells me that his stepmother wanted him placed in an orphanage or institution, but describes his own mother as a kind and protective person.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, p. 263.

⁸⁰ Evidence Book, GJR, 27 Dec. 1969–3 Feb. 1970, LMA CLA/005/06/519, p. 174.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 174. ⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁸³ Evidence Book, GJR, 25 Aug. 1969–8 Oct. 1969, LMA CLA/005/06/516, p. 119.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁸⁵ Evidence Book, GJR, 27 Dec. 1969–3 Feb. 1970, LMA CLA/005/06/519, p. 174.

Richard C's probation officer drew attention to his worries and anxieties, 'Mr C presents an introverted, anxious man. He worries about his accommodation, his parents' situation, his lack of outside interests and, above all, his lack of friends.'⁸⁶

However, there is some evidence to suggest the liberalization towards homosexuality enshrined in the 1967 Act had an impact on probation officers as they went about arguing for supervision and conditional discharges for importuning. For example, Richard C's report suggests there was a more liberal climate towards homosexuality, 'At the time of interview, Mr C could not give any reason why, on rare occasions, he feels impelled into such behaviour, particularly as the climate of opinion towards homosexuality is now much more tolerant.'⁸⁷ This statement was perhaps also intended as an implicit reminder to the magistrate that attitudes had changed. Moreover, whereas in the early 1960s, highlighting the importuner's respectability was done to compensate effectively for their homosexuality, by the end of the decade it appears this was no longer the case. Edmund P's respectability, for example, was demonstrated with regard to his long-term relationship with another man as proof *against* the idea he was sexually deviant and promiscuous, 'he has formed a meaningful relationship with a younger man, who remains very loyal to P at this stage'.⁸⁸ Furthermore, where previously homosexuality might have been highlighted for sympathetic reasons as evidence for causing difficulties in the offender's life, the breakdown of Edmund P's marriage was not linked to his homosexuality at all, as though to do so would have reflected negatively on him. Instead, his marital breakdown was attributed to the problems associated with having a long-distance relationship with his wife:

In 1960 P married an X girl whom he met in X, and although there are two sons of the marriage, now aged 8 and 6 years, the union was far from successful. Apparently the wife remained in X whilst the husband lived in London, until they finally split up two years ago.⁸⁹

IV

Social Enquiry Reports played an important role in the era of penal-welfarism that characterized the post-war British criminal justice system. Believing importuning did not require a punitive response from magistrates, regardless of the offender's age and social class, probation officers encouraged supervision or conditional discharges, depending on the circumstances of the offence. In particular, conceptions of citizenship were crucial to securing these outcomes. However, the definition of good citizenship varied with the emphasis on

⁸⁶ Evidence Book, GJR, 25 Aug. 1969–8 Oct. 1969, LMA CLA/005/06/516, p. 119.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁸⁸ Evidence Book, GJR, 27 Dec. 1969–3 Feb. 1970, LMA CLA/005/06/519, p. 174.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

demonstrating respectability and successful careers for middle-class men, whereas appropriate behavioural norms such as maturity and hard graft were more often highlighted by probation officers for working-class importuners. Nevertheless, in some respects the boundaries between working- and middle-class masculinity and citizenship were blurred, with self-control a particularly important behavioural characteristic also looked for in reports on middle-class importuners.

The number of previous convictions for importuning had an important impact on the extent to which offenders were depicted as good citizens in reports. Ironically, offenders with worse criminal records could end up being portrayed more favourably compared with those with fewer convictions because there was a greater likelihood of going to prison. Furthermore, a lack of previous convictions for importuning gave probation officers the opportunity of arguing the offence was a circumstantial aberration rather than indicative of sexual deviancy. In one case, the offence was effectively blamed on the offender being too much of a good citizen. This was intended as a kind of backhanded compliment intended to absolve the offender of his crime whilst at the same time indicating why the magistrate should hand down a Conditional Discharge. In a different case, however, the circumstantial aberration was attributed to the offender lacking the qualities of good citizenship. In doing so, this challenged the idea the offender was homosexual, remarkable in light of the evidence produced in court that suggested otherwise and indicative of the extent probation officers would go to secure supervision for all types of offender. Finally, with the passing of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, it seems probation officers were quick to adapt to the more liberal climate towards homosexuality. In one case, it seems the definition of good citizenship was redefined somewhat to include a long-term same-sex relationship as evidence for respectability, or at the very least proof against the idea the importuner was sexually promiscuous.

How successful was invoking good citizenship for persuading magistrates to hand down supervision orders for importuning? Houlbrook found that even by remaining silent and adopting the posture of innocent victim, guardsmen were rarely successful in evading the law's wrath, 'because it was often undeniable that men had broken the law and should face punishment'.⁹⁰ In contrast, probation officers were much more successful in securing supervision and conditional discharges in court via Social Enquiry Reports, even in cases like Thomas M where the offender had obviously wilfully importuned and had clearly broken the law, or in cases like James T and Vincent A, with their multiple and recent convictions, respectively. In all of the above cases, the magistrate followed the probation officer's advice to the letter, handing down supervision orders and conditional discharges. Whether a supervision order was more or less lenient than receiving a fine is difficult to say, however. If recollections of the sixties by retired probation officers are anything to go by,

⁹⁰ Houlbrook, 'Soldier heroes and rent boys', p. 381.

the experiences of being supervised for importuning could vary tremendously. Referring to his first and only instance of supervising a homosexual, Jim Cannings took a tolerant approach:

I did not try and cure him of his homosexuality. He was perfectly happy in it. Perfectly set in it. And it would have been totally inappropriate for me to do or try anything...I think of all the people I'd supervised it was the most inappropriate supervision order I'd ever had.⁹¹

However, other probation officers may have viewed homosexuality in an altogether more negative light. Tony Leach candidly looked back on the sixties as a time when probation officers viewed homosexuality as an illness that required treatment: 'homosexuality was still regarded as an aberration, largely ... even among probation officers I think'.⁹² As Tony went on to explain, this ultimately shaped his approach and understanding of the homosexual he once had under supervision, 'I think – not in a sort of vindictive or unpleasant way – but I did sort of see my goal with X as being to sort of cure him of his homosexuality – for the best of motives'.⁹³ However, in practice, as has been found in subsequent investigations by practitioners, the embarrassment surrounding sexual issues meant probation officers might never have even tackled the subject of homosexuality with the offender, let alone attempt to provide 'treatment'.⁹⁴ This mirrored Tony Leach's own experience, 'we didn't actually talk about sexual issues very much at all to be absolutely honest, I think, during the period of supervision, so in that sense it was a bit of a non-event'.⁹⁵ For these above reasons, it cannot reasonably be said with any certainty that putting importuners under supervision was a genuinely lenient response. For the same reasons, it would be unwise to conflate recommendations for supervision with permissiveness associated with the 1960s⁹⁶ (although the apparent shift in definitions of good character by the end of the decade appears to reflect the move towards greater personal freedoms that Wills argued flourished in the later sixties as holistic visions of society fell from favour).⁹⁷ Whether or not the probation officers regarded themselves and their recommendations as in any way lenient, in deconstructing Social Enquiry Reports, this article has provided a rare insight into the workings of the penal-welfare justice system and reveals some of the ways in which probation officers tried to influence magistrates in the post-war period.

⁹¹ Interview with Jim Cannings, recorded by JL, Boston Spa, 11 July 2012.

⁹² Interview with Tony Leach, recorded by JL, London, 9 Feb. 2012.

⁹³ Interview with Tony Leach, recorded by JL, London, 9 Feb. 2012.

⁹⁴ Terry Crolley and John Paley, 'Sexual problems and the Probation Service', *Probation Journal*, 29 (1982), pp. 133–7.

⁹⁵ Interview with Tony Leach, recorded by JL, London, 9 Feb. 2012.

⁹⁶ Marcus Collins, ed., *The permissive society and its enemies: sixties British culture* (London, 2007).

⁹⁷ Wills, 'Delinquency, masculinity and citizenship in England, 1950–1970', p. 185.