7 Organised Crime, Criminality and the 'Gangster'.

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1. Introduction

In October 2013, the National Crime Agency became operational. Launched to deal with the United Kingdom's most serious organised crime, it replaced the Serious Organised Crime Agency that had been founded in 2006. According to a statement on the agency's website, the 'NCA is a new crime-fighting agency with national and international reach and the mandate and powers to work in partnership with other law enforcement organisations to bring the full weight of the law to bear in cutting serious and organised crime'.[1] Such developments in the governmental organisation of crime control are a relatively recent development. Hence, the criminologist Dick Hobbs has problematised the way in which the British government and the police have presented organised crime as 'a distinctly contemporary phenomenon, a malady of modernity, and the consequence of recent human activity'.[2] This is a position often echoed by historians and by criminologists. For example, Alan Wright has argued that contemporary organised crime is distinctive from its predecessors, 'Global drug markets, international fraud and other forms of enterprise crime make the old forms redundant'.[3] The impact of globalisation and the rapid development of the internet on the ability to traffic illegally in all sorts of commodities (money, goods, sex, pornography, people) has substantially altered the organised crime environment.

Historians too have seen organised crime as something of recent provenance. Clive Emsley has pointed to the last third of the twentieth century as a period in which the term ‘organised crime’ began to be used more frequently in England, implicitly linking the increasing public perception of organised crime to the process of globalisation since the end of the Cold War.[4] Consequently, few historians have attempted to address the history of British organised crime.[5] For instance, Alyson Brown has focused on the serious criminality of interwar criminals; Stefan Slater has written on organised vice, and Mark Roodhouse has explored the impact of the black market around the period of the Second World War.[6] Part of the explanation for the dearth of studies on the development of British organised crime in the twentieth century is not only due to lack of access to archives (for example, in the case of criminal offences the National Archives are closed for the remainder of the life-time of the individuals involved) but perhaps more significantly, because of the lack of clarity and paucity of definition as to what organised crime means and/or involves.

This chapter will provide some insight into the ways in which those definitions have evolved in Britain during the twentieth century. Part of the problem is the dual nature of organised crime. On one hand, we can trace a chronology of British organised crime that has been helpfully mapped out in recent decades by true crime writers. On the other hand, much of the organisation of crime remains unknowable and undetected. The ‘history’ of organised crime is largely based on what we know of those individuals, families and institutions identified and defined by law enforcers, politicians, and the press, as being organised in nature. This chapter will be constructed of three sections. The first will provide a chronological overview, focusing on the development of the key

forms associated with British organised crime. The second section will explore historiographical and criminological approaches. The limited nature of historical research in this area has already been noted. However, this section will also consider the development of the problematic true-crime genre, which has been largely responsible in providing an organised crime 'narrative', on which both historians and criminologists have relied. The third and concluding section will further explore the issues raised in the preceding sections by using two case studies: the first focusing on the gambling and protection rackets connected to the racecourses during the interwar period, and the second on the rise of project crime from the 1950s and 1960s.

2. Chronology

The definition of organised crime is far from clear cut. Alan Wright has suggested that there might be a distinction between the ways in which crimes, such as burglary for example, are organised and what we might think of as more professional organised crime activity.[7] Referring to historically contextual definitions, Clive Emsley has suggested that the 'professional criminal', a term which was used from the later nineteenth century, 'was someone of ability who had made a rational choice in his way of life and who skilfully used the expanding opportunities provided by faster communication and new technology'.[8] Hence, the terminology of the 'professional', the 'career criminal' and the organisation of crime were frequently associated with the processes of modernity. Originally the term 'organised crime' was used in connection with terrorism, and particularly in relation to events in Ireland in the 1880s when Fenian activity in Britain had escalated. The language was adopted from the late Victorian period to describe forms of organised rebellion and 'thuggery' and this connection to terrorism continued to be a feature throughout the twentieth century. Thus, by the

interwar period the press frequently referred to the outbreak of racecourse crime in terms of 'terrorism', 'insurrection', 'vendettas' and 'espionage'.[9] By the end of the nineteenth century, the term would be used more specifically to denote systematic criminality. In 1891 Robert Anderson, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, wrote about organised crime in the *Contemporary Review*, noting that 'organized and systematic crime might be stamped out in a single generation'.[10] Anderson suggested a 'crusade against crime', which defined organised crime as something deeply connected to society, to families, and to the structures and practices of the criminal justice system.

However, it was not until the interwar years that new paradigms of professional criminality would evolve in public and print discourses and references to organised crime became more prevalent. As Alyson Brown has noted in reference to the 1920s, 'the 'motor-bandit' and 'smash-and-grab raiders, were often depicted as new and 'modern'; more ruthless and calculating, more inured in crime than their predecessors and more exciting'.[11] This focus on 'new' forms of criminality was reflected in the memoirs of former detectives, which were increasingly common during this period.[12] In such writings, new methods and forms of criminality were closely associated with the organisation and planning of crime. In 1933, ex-Divisional Detective Charles Leach would describe the:

> …new criminal' of the post-war period: 'brought up on the "movies" and the "dogs,"; daily swelling the growing army of the new-style criminal, the "smash-and-grab" artists, the "cat-burglars", the motor-bandits, the confidence-tricksters, the Legion of the Lost who bend to their nefarious uses the latest

> attainments of Science as fast as the picked brains of the country evolve them…[13]

Nevertheless, the majority of gang crime in this period adhered to traditional forms relating to gambling, protection, violence and territoriality. As the first case study in this chapter demonstrates, there was wide reporting in the press about violent gang conflicts that broke out on the streets of London and the racecourses of the south-east. There was also significant concern about gang warfare in Sheffield during the 1920s and in Glasgow during the 1930s.[14] However, these concerns were arguably shaped by events in North America. By the early thirties, the real-life organised crime conflicts of New York and Chicago were being re-interpreted by Hollywood for a worldwide audience. The 'gangster' made his entrance into popular culture and became the personification of the organised criminal.[15]

The American 'gangster' was not the only perceived external influence on British organised crime. At various points in the twentieth century, organised crime was constructed as a problem associated with external forces; not least through the lens of immigration. In part, this was associated with the Jewish immigration of the late nineteenth century. Thus the 'alien criminal' would emerge from immigration 'hotspots', such as East London, and largely from poor Jewish communities. For example, there was concern in the early 1900s about Russian and Polish Jewish gangs. The Bessarabians were mentioned by George Sims in the first chapter, 'Alien-Land' of his 1911 publication, *Off the Track in London*.[16] They are also widely cited in the context of organised crime in popular histories of gangland. However, the murder that is most famously associated with the Bessarabian Society, as they are referred to, that of Henry Brodovitz at the York Minster Music Hall in November 1902, may have been

motivated by internal tensions within the immigrant community rather than by organised crime conflicts.[17] Nevertheless, the context of alienism and the fear of the alien criminal would profoundly shape the construction of press attitudes to organised crime for much of the twentieth century.[18] The 'racecourse wars' discussed below, were frequently associated with Anglo-Italian and Jewish communities. Moreover, the cocaine trade of the interwar years, sensationalised through the deaths in 1919 of actress Billie Carleton and in 1922 of dancer Freda Kempton, were understood by contemporaries as intrinsically linked to the alien criminal. In the Kempton case, this was typified by involvement of the flamboyant Anglo-Chinese Billy 'Brilliant' Chang, who would later be sentenced to fourteenth months imprisonment for drug dealing in 1924, followed by deportation.[19] The trope of alien criminality continued to be linked to immigrants and immigrant communities in the second half of the twentieth century. The Maltese Messina brothers established a prostitution empire in the West End from the inter-war period. In the post-war, new groups of immigrants became the target of press and police discourses that linked immigration and criminality. The apparent infiltration of gangs of Yardies and Triads into British society would be associated with immigration from the Caribbean and in urban British Chinese communities in the 1950s. However, at least in the case of the Yardies, Alan Wright sees them originating from the politically charged context of Jamaica in the 1980s, who extended their activities to the international drug trade.[20]

Whilst there were concerns about British gangsterdom in the interwar period, home-grown organised crime was still largely associated with local, territorial groupings with interests in gambling and protection markets. Arguably this began to change from the 1930s. As Dick Hobbs has argued, 'What is normally referred to as 'the underworld'

relates to the West End of London, Soho, during the late 1930s to the early 1970s, and to extortion and the economic relations of prostitution, gambling, and illegal drinking clubs'.[21] As well as the Messina brothers, this involved 'hard-men' such as Jack 'Spot' Comer, Billy Hill, Albert Dimes, and Ruby Sparks, who were active from the thirties through to the post-war period. The overlapping criminal networks with which these men were involved would have a lasting impact. For instance, in the 1930s, Jack Comer was involved in battles over territory with the White family, who had succeeded the Sabini family in running bookmaking pitches at greyhound and horseracing tracks. He was also apparently involved in an attempted raid on Heathrow Airport in July 1948, which was foiled by the Flying Squad.[22] Billy Hill was a contemporary, associate and subsequent adversary of Comer. Whilst, Hill had been active prior to the war, it was the opportunities and entrepreneurial possibilities of the black market during the Second World War, which really accelerated his criminal 'career'.[23] Notably, he worked with the zoo owner and gambling club host John Aspinall, at whose casino, the Clermont Club, Hill ran a successful criminal scam defrauding its wealthy clients.[24] Albert Dimes was an Anglo-Italian enforcer from Clerkenwell, who had been linked to the Sabini family, and was a close associate of Billy Hill.[25] Charles John Sparks, popularly known as 'Ruby', was a burglar and smash and grab robber who had also been involved in the notorious Dartmouth Prison Mutiny of 1932.[26] Sparks would work briefly with Hill after another escape from Dartmoor in 1940. Both Comer and Hill were characteristic of the metropolitan hard-men who would predominate the public view of 'gangland' by the post-war period. Certainly, both men were notable for their self-aggrandisement. For example, Comer had his biography written by the pulp-fiction novelist Stephen D. Frances, better known as

Hank Janson, and Hill had his biography ghost written by the crime correspondent of *The People*, Duncan Webb.[27]

Whilst London was home to groups associated with Hill, Comer and their contemporaries, in the decade after the Second World War, gangs involved in gambling and localised protection rackets were identified in many British cities. For example, Glasgow, which had had a significant gang problem in the 1920s and 1930s, was apparently the domain of Arthur Thompson in the post-war period.[28] By the 1950s, the nature of organised crime was changing. Organised robbery involving firearms planned and undertaken by groups of 'career' criminals seemed to mark a shift in practices from the 1950s and 60s. Billy Hill was particularly associated with 'project crime' that became a major problem in the 1960s and 1970s, due to the easing of financial regulations after the war and what seemed to be the willingness of criminals to use extreme violence. Moreover, criminal entrepreneurs would increasingly supplement the local rackets with which they had traditionally been involved, with these more ambitious and larger-scale robberies. Hill was believed to be involved in planning one of the early planned robberies in 1952, the Eastcastle Street robbery, in which the robbers escaped with £287,000.[29] The financial rewards escalated in pace with the ambition and violence deployed by robbers in such crimes, and robberies such as the Great Train Robbery of 1963 and that of the Brinks-Mat warehouse at Heathrow in 1983 epitomised the 'project crimes' of the period, which are discussed in the second case study below.

Whilst 'project crimes' have been defined as involving confederacies of career criminals, family-based crime groups such as the Kray twins of East London and the

Richardsons of South London dominate discussions of organised crime in the Sixties.[30] The 'family firms' of this period have been the subject of numerous autobiographies and true-crime studies, and a significant mythology has developed around their activities and legacy. In many ways Reginald and Ronald Kray were carrying on in the tradition of their predecessors Hill, Comer and Dimes, and were involved in the provision of 'protection' and in the club scene of the West End. However, the Krays and the Richardsons were also known for their involvement in long-firm frauds. This type of crime involves obtaining goods on credit then disappearing before paying; and selling the goods on to make an illegal profit.[31] Although frauds like this had existed previously, the profits from such crimes were significant by the 1960s; James Morton has suggested that such frauds could expect to net up to £150,000.[32]

During the Sixties, until their final arrest in 1968, the Krays combined their long-frauds, with reputations for violence and the running of their Knightsbridge club, Esmeralda's Barn. As Hobbs has noted, the twins' high-society connections gave them a certain invulnerability which they took every opportunity of flaunting: 'As the 1960s progressed the twins became more impudent in their confrontations with authority.'[33] However, inevitably, internecine power struggles would result in a series of deaths, most notably of George Cornell in 1966 and Jack 'The Hat' McVitie in 1967. The twins were finally arrested in a police investigation led by the Scotland Yard Detective, Leonard 'Nipper' Read in May 1968.[34] They were tried at the Old Bailey in March 1969, receiving life imprisonment for the murders of Cornell and McVitie.[35]

Whilst other criminal groups, including family firms like the Nash, Dixon and Tibbs gangs, attempted to fill the vacuum left by the demise of the brothers, many commentators have seen the prosecutions of the Krays and the Richardsons (who had been arrested in 1966) as marking the end of an era.[36] Alan Wright notes that before the 1970s, 'it was still possible to identify clear links with the 'underworld' represented by the Sabinis, Jack Spot and Billy Hill'.[37] In the late decades of the twentieth century in contrast, organised crime relationships were characterised by new forms of criminal enterprise which had ambitions and reach far beyond the predominately local territories of their predecessors. The increasing globalisation of technology, transportation and finance has been mirrored in the growth of new types of enterprise crime. In particular, this meant the growth of the market in drugs. By the 1980s and 1990s, a growing demand for drugs in the British night-time economy provided significant openings and opportunities for local groups of criminals, whom by their involvement in drug-trafficking became participants in international organised crime markets. Some vestiges of the older model of the 'family firm' remained, and the break between older traditions of extortion and fraud and newer forms of criminal enterprise are far from clear-cut.[38]

The Adams family, also known as 'The A team' or the 'Clerkenwell crime syndicate', apparently controlled London crime in the 1980s and 1990s, but were alleged to have had dealings with South American drug cartels.[39] The most prolific drug-trafficker in the 1990s was Curtis 'Cocky' Warren who had started as a petty criminal in the street gangs of Liverpool and became the only criminal to have featured on *The Sunday Times* rich list.[40] Warren had connections with Colombian, Turkish, Moroccan and European drugs producers, and became the main drug supplier in Britain, moving

shipments of cocaine, ecstasy and heroin. He was arrested by the Dutch police at his home in Sassenheim, in the Western Netherlands, where the police found 'three guns, ammunition hand grenades and crates with gas canisters, 1500 kilos of heroin, 50 kilos of ecstasy and $600,000 in cash'.[41]

3. Historiography

An academic history of organised crime in twentieth century Britain does not exist. Partly this is to do with the problematic issues of definition, discussed briefly in the introduction. Consequently, this section will look at three strands in the broader writing and research on organised crime. The first part will focus on the limited amount of work that has been done by historians that (at least loosely) relates to organised crime. The second part will briefly outline some of the key models constructed by criminologists, particularly those who have been historically sensitive to the development of organised crime. The final part will consider the proliferation of true crime during the later twentieth century, considering the impact it has had on both historians' and criminologists' explorations of organised crime.

In an article that spans both history and criminology, Philip Jenkins and Gary W. Potter argue that the relative lack of historical studies can be attributed to the dominance of North American structures of organised crime.[42] During the 1960s and 1970s, American criminologists saw British organised crime as far more rudimentary, and much less evolved, in comparison to the American context. Joseph Albini, an expert on American and International organised crime, argued that 'Britain had very little organized criminality, either past or present'.[43] Whilst this view has substantially

altered, and historians have started to illuminate criminal networks in past urban society, a more consistent historical analysis remain patchy.[44]

Clive Emsley, in an historical overview of organised crime, notes the important influence of American models, as well as the development of the idea of the 'professional criminal', and the connections made between organised crime and immigrant communities from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries similar to North American patterns in the early twentieth century.[45] However, Emsley also points to some forms of organised crime that may be more distinct to the British example, in particular he singles out the importance of the impact of the Second World War on the home front, and the relationship between the armed forces and the black market and other forms of racketeering.[46] The significance of the Second World War is also demonstrated by Mark Roodhouse's work on the black market, which focuses on case studies of Essex and Northern Ireland in order to investigate just how much black market activity there was in Britain both during and after the war. However, Roodhouse argues that the media accusations linking the black market with organised crime were often misplaced: 'Thanks to media portrayals…the public, and on occasion officials, came to associate this 'Black Market' with organized crime, though most black marketing involved established businesses developing an illicit side-line'.[47] In contrast petty criminality and minor fiddles were more characteristic.

In the 1950s, Billy Hill waxed lyrical about the war and its opportunities in his modestly titled biography, *Boss of Britain's Underworld*: 'Some day someone should write a treatise on Britain's wartime black market. It was the most fantastic side of civil life in wartime'.[48] In that book, published in 1955, Hill positioned himself in the pantheon of

criminal hard men, casting his glance back to the 'mobs' of the 1920s. The most notorious, or certainly the most written about, criminal family during the interwar period were the Sabinis, who are discussed below in the first case study. The Sabini gang, as they were known, was headed by Charles 'Darby' Sabini and consisted of several his brothers, as well other members of the Italian community in Clerkenwell. Recent research on the Sabini gang has positioned them very specifically in the context of the post-war concerns about crime, alienism and Englishness.[49] It would be the perceived foreignness of the Sabinis, and also of East End Jewish bookmakers such as Edward Emmanuel, which would confirm the connections made in the press between organised criminal activity and 'the alien'. *The Times* commented on the number of 'Italians and Foreign Jews' present during a fight at Greenford Trotting Track in April 1921.[50] Whilst the Sabinis were rooted very much in their local communities, their enterprises on the racetracks, and in bookmaking, protectionism, and the accusations of police corruption, had a strong similarity to the crime syndicates of transatlantic gangsters.[51] Nevertheless, using the terminology of organised crime to describe the racecourse gangs remains contentious.

Alyson Brown has investigated the criminal lives of men who were inmates in Dartmoor prison in the early 1930s. Some of these men had connections to the London gangs. Brown also traced connections between other London-based criminals, including the notorious Ruby Sparks, who along with his girlfriend Lillian Goldstein specialised in 'smash and grab' crime.[52] However, Brown is wary of assuming the widespread influence of organised criminality in Dartmoor. She suggests that the more violent, organised criminals tended to stand out, because they had 'attained a level of official and public notoriety'.[53] Having said this, Brown argues that the maintenance and

continuity of criminal networks whilst in Dartmoor does seem to have been more marked amongst the London prisoners, such networks, 'appear to have been quite loose affiliations based on fragmented networks and friendship'.[54] Similarly, Heather Shore notes in relation to the racecourse gangs, the, 'fundamentally loose nature of these alliances, with men switching allegiances, or groups joining forces when territorial concerns shifted'.[55]

By the late twenties transatlantic comparisons were increasingly marked.[56] Events in interwar Glasgow drew vivid comparisons to Chicago.[57] Such comparisons were not entirely misplaced. Andrew Davies's detailed analysis of the Glasgow gangs and the growth of racketeering during the 1930s shows that there was evidence of systematic extortion and protection rackets run by some of the most powerful gangs, the Billy Boys, the Kent Star and the Beehive Boys. However, as his account makes very clear, the picture is confused by the role of the press, both locally and nationally. Thus, in the early thirties the London-based *John Bull* published its account of 'Glasgow's Reign of Terror', cementing the impression that Glasgow was Britain's very own Chicago.[58] Davies's work is extremely valuable in providing one of the only detailed insights into how violence and criminality can become intertwined in young working-class men's (and some women's) lives. Work on Sheffield by J.P. Bean paints a very similar picture in terms of the networks that developed around gambling interests and territory, also in the interwar period.[59] Not coincidently, the Sheffield gangs had been suppressed by Percy Sillitoe in the late 1920s, who went on to become the Chief Constable of Glasgow between 1931 and 1943. Sillitoe's self-perpetuated image as the gang-busting cop, undoubtedly contributed to Glasgow's reputation for hardness.[60] Nevertheless, Davies does see Glasgow as distinct, pointing to the density of the

urban experience, the impact of long-term unemployment, and the specific influence of persistent sectarianism (and with it, violence) in the city.[61]

Whilst the violence linked to gambling and protectionism in interwar Glasgow, London and Sheffield has been subject to historical investigation, the historiography of other strands of organised crime in twentieth century Britain has been less significant. Two themes in the evolution of 'modern' British organised crime have been the underground commodification of drugs and vice. The latter has been the subject of Stefan Slater's work on prostitution in interwar London. Slater questions some of the mythology around the trade in foreign prostitutes during the interwar period. Concern about foreign prostitutes and white slavery had escalated in the 1930s when two murdered prostitutes were linked to a Latvian pimp, Max Kassel, who was 'believed to be a leader of an international gang of white slave traffickers'.[62] Slater understands such anxieties in the context of broader concerns about immigration, and particularly in relation to the apparent convergence of vice and criminality in Soho, an area with a 'reputation as the habitus of foreigners and a den of vice'.[63] He also points to the importance of the Messina brothers in reinforcing this connection. Despite the significance given to the Messinas' vice empire in many true-crime histories of the underworld: 'Even at the pinnacle of their influence, the Messinas had not much more than 20 prostitutes under their control'.[64] Again, the confluence of sensationalist journalism, public fears, and anxieties about 'foreignness' is apparent. This trinity also shapes the concerns about drug-taking and distribution in the interwar.

Drug control policies in Britain and in the United States, date from the early twentieth century. In Britain, regulation grew in part in response to moral panics about cocaine

during the interwar period.[65] Whilst Jenkins and Potter have described Soho between the wars, as 'the heart of London's drug underworld', this may be a problematic view.[66] Certainly, as Marek Kohn's history has shown, the drug problem was largely written about (and indeed policed) in the context of its perceived connection to 'alien' criminality in the shape of drug dealers such as Brilliant 'Billy' Chang and Edgar Manning. As Lucy Bland has argued, these cases also reflected fears about miscegenation, demonstrated in press coverage of the drug deaths of Billie Carleton and Freda Kempton in 1918 and 1922.[67] This is not to suggest that the organisation of drugs or vice was not prevalent in this period. Paul Knepper has written extensively on the role of the League of Nations and about attempts of contemporaries to grapple with the internationalisation of crime networks, both in the interwar period and in the late Victorian and Edwardian era.[68] However, whilst Knepper posits the importance of late nineteenth-century 'globalisation', he also points to the predominant western concerns about alien criminality.[69]

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, both historians and criminologists have had occasion to turn to the true-crime genre to fill in the narrative map of British gang crime. True crime publishing has proliferated from the 1980s. Whilst biographies and memoirs of criminals had been popular in the interwar period, and serious books about murder, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) and Norman Mailer's *The Executioners Song* (1979), were landmarks in crime writing, the boom in the British 'gangster' genre is relatively recent.[70] It would arguably be the thirst for publicity by the Kray brothers, Reginald and Ronald, which would feed the demand for true-crime texts about hard men and professional criminals. In 1967, at the height of their notoriety, they approached writer John Pearson to write their biography. The book that Pearson

eventually published in 1972, *The Profession of Violence: The Rise and Fall of the Kray Twins*, was not one that the twins particularly approved of. Whilst it was far from sensational, it can be seen as the blueprint for the wave of true-crime accounts and biographies that would appear over the following decades.[71] The Kray twins have often had a starring role, although other contemporaries are also the subject of such texts that celebrate the hard man, such as Frankie Fraser, Lennie McClean, Freddie Foreman, and Bruce Reynolds, the ring-leader of the Great Train Robbery of 1962 described in the second case study below.[72]

The publishing phenomenon of criminal biographies in recent years is not unprecedented, however the continual and growing popularity of such texts is striking.[73] Former criminal lawyer James Morton has contributed significantly with this growth, and has been one of the main authors to provide the historical narrative of British organised crime, along with writers like Robert Murphy and Brian McDonald.[74] Such texts have, to large extent, established the chronological and narrative framework of the British 'underworld'. These books do have some value and often the authors have sourced press accounts and police evidence in an attempt to provide credibility. Indeed, Morton has drawn on the records of the Metropolitan Police in his 'gangland' histories and Brian McDonald has used Old Bailey records. However, they need to be read critically and with some scepticism since their reliability and credibility remains questionable. Evidence is thin or lacking, and there is a tendency to repeat mythologies and indeed to create them. The writing tends to be characterised by a form of hyper-masculinity, the authors 'knowledge' often gained through some proximity or close association to the villains. As Brian McDonald writes in the introduction to *Gangs of London*: 'I am a south Londoner, descended from a

celebrated family that inhabited Lambeth and Southwark between the wars and in the years following World War Two, when criminal enterprise had some strange respectability. We knew our villains, even paid homage to some of them, and most people, including the police, accepted them'.[75]

Finally, a significant resource for the more recent history of British crime communities is the work of the criminologist Dick Hobbs.[76] Whilst still reliant on the work of historians and true-crime writers, Hobbs also draws extensively on interviews, providing an ethnographic context to criminal enterprise in the late twentieth century. His most recent book, *Lush Life: Constructing Organised Crime in the UK*, blends ethnography, criminology, history and criminal biography in a detailed survey of British (particularly London-based) organised crime in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. He argues that the British concept of organised crime 'should be understood within the context of political change, particularly in forms of global governance, post-industrialisation, unrestrained consumerism, and the intensity of contemporary illegal trading relationships…'[77] Hobbs notes that the targeting of immigrant cultures pre-dated the use of the term 'organised crime', and that the state responded to fears about alien criminality, by racialising the drug and sex trades and labelling them as organised crime.[78] His discussion of the evolution of what he describes as the 'marquee names of British crime' (including the Sabinis, Billy Hill, Jack Spot, the Krays and the Richardsons) explores the way in which these working-class individuals and groups (often bound by kinship) were essentially entrepreneurs, who exhausted the potential of their own locales by colonising new territories.[79] They did this primarily through violence. Hobbs see the traditional neighbourhood crime groups as the 'forefathers and cultural chaperones of contemporary, loose-knit, urban elites', post-

industrialisation (from the eighties) marked a decisive break with the past.[80] However, Hobbs says little about the more recent crime families that have dominated the British organised crime scene, for example the Adams in Clerkenwell and the Noonans in Manchester, as well as individuals like Kenneth Noye in London, Thomas McGraw and Paul Ferris in Glasgow, and Curtis Warren in Liverpool. This suggests that the history of the later twentieth century evolution of British organised crime, the 'break with the past', remains to be undertaken.

4. Case Studies

a) Racecourse Crime

Some of the earliest events to be clearly discussed as organised criminality were the activities of gangs associated with racecourse crime, which became more prevalent from 1919.[81] Racing experienced a surge of popularity during the post-war period, with attendance at racecourses increasing after 1918.[82] The combination of growing popularity with declining opposition to gambling provided fertile ground for the growth of gambling-related crime. The conflicts involved groups of men from various parts of the country with confrontations frequently taking place on the racecourse, or in close proximity to them. Nevertheless, many of the events described and further investigated by the police took place in local pubs, clubs and streets in London. Indeed, despite the connection to the racecourse, the violence was overwhelmingly perceived as metropolitan.

The criminal activity to which the 'racecourse wars' was collectively applied, has some features of organised crime as it has been defined by modern criminologists.[83] Thus they were predominantly territorial conflicts related to the control of gambling and

betting on the racecourse, but the evidence suggests that the gangs were involved in a variety of illegal activities, not just betting, protectionism and gambling. The earliest references to problems on the racecourses involving individuals who would go on to be associated with the racecourse wars date from the aftermath of the First World War. In December 1922, an attempt was made by the Metropolitan Police to provide a narrative of key events in the racecourse wars.[84] This account describes a key confrontation between Darby Sabini and the Birmingham Gang (also known as the 'Brummagen Boys') in March 1921, in which Sabini fired a revolver to frighten the Birmingham men off. Sabini was charged with shooting with intent but acquitted of the offence and fined for possessing a revolver without a permit.[85] The battle lines were roughly drawn between the Sabini gang, also known as the Italian Gang from Clerkenwell, and the Jewish bookmakers on one side and the South London Elephant and Castle Gang and Birmingham Gang, on the other.

In June 1921, on returning from a race meeting, the Birmingham men attacked a charabanc carrying bookmakers from Leeds, mistaking them for the Sabinis. This affray became known as the Battle of Epsom and was widely reported in the national press.[86] By 1922, the violence had escalated, and in that year several confrontations broke out on London streets. For instance, on Good Friday 1922, Elephant and Castle man Fred Gilbert had been slashed at the New Raleigh Club in Jermyn Street, allegedly by members of the 'Italian Gang'.[87] Alfred Solomon, an associate of the Sabinis was detained, but no further proceedings were taken. Then in July 1922, a confrontation between the 'Birmingham Gang' and 'Italian Gang; broke out on Gray's Inn Road. A Detective Rutherford, 'happened to be in and about the vicinity…and endeavoured to effect their arrest'. Rutherford was shot at and several arrests were

made of men who were charged with feloniously shooting at a policeman with intent to murder. In August 1922, a further confrontation involving firearms between the 'Italian Gang' and George Sage and Frederick Gilbert (from Camden Town, but affiliated to the Birmingham/Elephant and Castle Gang) in Mornington Crescent, resulted in a number of arrests.[88] Events reached a climax of sorts on the evening of 20th November 1922 when Darby and Harry Sabini were shot at by Augustus and Enrico Cortesi, in the Fratellanza Social Club in Clerkenwell.[89] After the Old Bailey trial of the Cortesi brothers in January 1923, confrontations and affrays continued, however press coverage of the events was rather less vigorous.[90] This would change in September 1924, when Sabini man Alfred Solomon was charged with the murder of a bookmaker named Barnett Blitz in a club shooting.[91] The case was presented as one of self-defence by the defence lawyer, the noted Q.C, Edward Marshall Hall. Solomon had apparently defended himself in a struggle during which Blitz had violently attacked Solomon's associate Edward Emmanuel. Solomon was eventually found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to three years penal servitude.

The following year saw significant press and political attention to racecourse violence. In particular this would be associated with the crusading Conservative Home Secretary, William Joynson Hicks who declared war on the race gangs in the summer of 1925.[92] The *Daily Express* reported on a number of confrontations that had allegedly occurred in London and other parts of the country between March 1924 and August 1925.[93] As a response to these reports, the Commissioner of Police initiated a full investigation into the London affrays which concluded that the *Express* had exaggerated the events and no further action was to be taken.[94]

After the mid-twenties coverage of the racecourse wars was much more sporadic, although it is probable that there were continuities in gang activity involving networks from the East London, Clerkenwell and Elephant and Castle areas.[95] The newspaper reportage of the gangs however, was far from the sensational coverage of the key events of the early twenties. By this time the Bookmakers Association and the Jockey Club had taken measures to more effectively regulate and control betting on the racecourses.[96] Moreover, by the later twenties, the Sabini gang were much less visible in the British press. Charles Sabini had been threatened with bankruptcy, probably as the result of a failed libel action the previous year.[97] It may be that Sabini's financial problems stymied the family's activities by the later 1920s. Darby Sabini had consolidated his interests in the south-eastern racecourses by taking up residence in Hove from 1926. Whilst his brothers remained in London, it may be that removal of the enigmatic Italian gang leader from the metropolis meant that the press lost interest.

Whilst occasional references to racecourse violence, and its main protagonists, would occasionally surface in the 1930s, only in 1936 did the press report racecourse violence with any of their previous vigour. In June 1936, a group of sixteen men, described as mostly coming from the Shoreditch, Bethany Green, Hackney and Dalton districts, were charged with frequenting Lewes racecourse to commit felonies.[98] The men were tried at Sussex Assizes and found guilty of wounding Mark Frater, a bookmaker's clerk, and assaulting both Frater and his employer, the bookmaker Alfred Solomon. Both the accused and the victims were men closely connected to the London racing fraternity. According to film historian, Steve Chibnall, it was on this event that Graham Greene loosely based his novel, *Brighton Rock*, published in 1938.[99] Another violent confrontation that was widely reported was a fight between two Italian brothers

named Camilo and Massimino Monte-Columbo, and a number of other men at the Wandsworth greyhound track. The men that were arrested and charged with the murder were 'racing men' from Clerkenwell - Bert Marsh (also known as Papa Pasquale) and Herbert Wilkins - and they were found guilty of manslaughter at the Old Bailey on 17th of November 1936.[100] In the press, the fight was presented as a result of a quarrel within the Italian gang.[101]

Despite the tendency in the press to isolate these events as the 'racecourse wars' it is clear that they have to be understood as part of a broader evolving set of networks in and around London. During 1936 in London, Jack 'Spot' Comer was (allegedly) taking part in the Battle of Cable Street and Billy Hill was sentenced to four years penal servitude for robbery. Moreover, notorious burglars and robbers like George Ingram and Ruby Sparks had pursued their 'criminal careers' in the twenties and thirties, in between frequent terms of imprisonment.[102] Thus criminal networks overlapped and, arguably, new forms of criminal organisation encompassed the more formal structures that were developing in relation to metropolitan territory and the gambling and associated protection industry.

b) Project Crime

It was the seminal work by Mary McIntosh that would define the form of armed robbery that appeared from the 1950s. According to McIntosh, there were four basic types of criminal organisation: *picaresque*, *craft*, *project* and *business*.[103] The 'picaresque' form of organisation referred to a permanent gang under one man's leadership, with profits shared according to the members rank. Craft organisation was 'typical of people performing skilled but small-scaled thefts and confidence tricks'.[104] Business

organisation included those involved in extortion and/or suppliers of illegal goods and services, who have gained some degree of immunity from law. Finally, McIntosh defined project crime as the 'organisation, typical of burglars, robbers, smugglers or frauds-men, engaged in large-scale crimes involving complicated techniques and advance planning'.[105] Such crimes were carried out by ad hoc teams of 'specialists' brought together for a specific job.

The methodology of these crimes had evolved, in part, as a response to the introduction of better and more robust safes and locks. Thus the old 'craft' crime, in which cutting devices would be used to outwit the development of new technology such as tumbler locks was finally defeated and replaced by armed robbery that took the more direct approach of firearms and violence.[106] William Meier has suggested that the rise of this type of robbery can in part be linked to the decline in economic regulations after the war and the rise of affluence that came with economic recovery.[107] However, he also points to the robbers' social and economic backgrounds. Thus the lives of the young men who became involved in armed robbery were often characterised by the experience of wartime evacuation followed by National Service (which trained young men in the practices of violence), early spells of custody in institutions such as approved schools or Borstals, a history of escapes from such institutions, as well as an entrepreneurial approach to employment opportunities.[108] Bruce Reynolds, the planner and organiser of the Great Train Robbery, typified this profile, as did his confederate Ronald Biggs. As Reynolds notes in his autobiography, upon arrival at the Borstal punishment centre at Wandsworth Prison, 'In the punishment centre, awaiting allocation, I met a very engaging bloke called Ronnie Biggs'. Like me, he'd been there before. He had gone to Usk in Monmouthshire, a grim

old Borstal miles from anywhere. It wasn't his cup of tea and subsequently he left without permission'.[109]

From the 1950s and 60s there would be a series of increasingly high-profile armed robberies, involving significant violence and reaping large financial rewards.[110] The Great Train Robbery of 1963 remains the quintessential project crime of the 'gangland' era.[111] For example, first earliest reporting of the robbery in *The Times*, on the 9th August 1963, noted that, 'For audacity and skilful planning the Post Office and British Railways cannot recall a parallel to what is widely believed to be the biggest train robbery in the country's history'.[112] The Home Office correspondence, reports and papers, and photographs are now open to the public, as are the records of the trial at Aylesbury Assizes.[113] Moreover, the robbery has become part of the cultural lore of the 1960s, featuring in recent histories of the decade.[114] Perhaps most significantly, in terms of the public understanding of 'project crime', it was an event around which a body of literature would subsequently build, telling the 'story' of the events from the perspective of the robbers.

Author Piers Paul Read, published what is regarded as the seminal true-crime account of the robbery, in 1978. Read had apparently been approached by the publishers W.H. Allen, who in turn had been approached by the robbers on their release from gaol in 1976. The resulting book, *The Train Robbers: Their Story*, was billed as 'the inside story' of the robberies.[115] Other true-crime accounts of the robbery were written by those involved, including the robbers, Bruce Reynolds and Ronnie Biggs, and the detectives, Malcolm Fewtrell, Jack Slipper and Frank Williams.[116] The sheer notoriety of the 'Great Train Robbery' was due, at least in part, to the flamboyant escapes of

three of the robbers. Bruce Reynolds spent five years on the run until he was arrested and sentenced in 1969; Charles Wilson was convicted in August 1963 but escaped from Winson Green Prison in August 1964; Ronald Biggs was convicted in September 1963 and escaped from Wandsworth Prison in July 1964.[117] It would be the contemporary press reporting, as well as the memoirs and autobiographies described above, which would contribute to the robberies iconic status in the following decades. As Reynolds noted, reflecting at the time, 'The heat was enormous. The daily papers were devoting page after page to the story, increasing pressure on the police. For their part, the Old Bill was throwing everything at the case – dozens of detectives, radio appeals, daily press briefings'.[118]

Other large-scale robberies occurred during the later twentieth century, including the robbery of the Security Express depot (£7 million) and the Heathrow Brinks-Mat robbery (£26 million) in 1983, the Knightsbridge Security deposit robbery (£40-60 million) in 1987 and the City of London Bearer Bonds robbery (£292 million) in 1990. However, in terms of the broader incidence of robbery, Clive Emsley has argued that the statistics for the twentieth century are problematic. Thus, at the start of the century, the number of robberies ranged between 200 and 300 per year. Whilst there were some minor rises and falls in between the wars and in the decade after the Second World War, from the end of the Fifties the figures would rise dramatically to a peak of 74,000 per year in 1995.[119] Whilst Emsley suggests that it is difficult to detect any broad trends in robbery, Dick Hobbs has noted that in the ten years before the Brinks-Mat robbery in 1983, armed robberies had risen by 349 per cent.[120] He argues that these types of large-scale project robberies tended to decline by the later twentieth century. In part this can be explained by further improvements in technology and

security, but also because the rewards of drugs became so much significant.[121] On the other hand, Roger Matthews has argued that the decline can be explained by the decreasing 'attractiveness of commercial robbery'.[122] In particular he points to the effectiveness of policing and sentencing strategies in reducing the number of career criminals who were involved in project crimes: 'The exceptionally long sentences that tend to be meted out to those convicted of armed robbery ensured that, once convicted of this offence, the vast majority of robbers were imprisoned for a considerable length of time'.[123]

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that organised crime in Britain is a relatively modern phenomenon. Whilst illegal activities have long been subject to some form of economic or social organisation, only recently can this be clearly identified as having taken place by larger-scale and systematic means, and with a series of impacts that reach beyond the local to have national and even global repercussions. Nevertheless, there are patterns relating to the organisation of crime that can be identified in historical documentation and in other cultural and social mediums such as the press. This chapter has focused more specifically on two periods in which concerns about organised crime can be seen to have undergone a marked shift. First, the 1920s, when concerns about the territorial fighting and protection rackets enacted on the metropolitan streets and south-eastern racecourses, reflected a confection of popular fears around alienism, terrorism and the gangster. Second, the post Second World War period, when new paradigms of organised and professional criminality merged with the more traditional models, and other financial and technological developments, enabled opportunities for entrepreneurial criminals to undertake ambitious robberies

and frauds. Ultimately, however, as Dick Hobbs suggest, organised crime is a 'shifting terrain'.[124] Its definition is rarely fixed, often fluid, and continues to be shaped from one generation to the next.

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[1] http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/

[2] D. Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life: Constructing Organized Crime in the UK* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 13.

[3] A. Wright (2006) *Organised Crime* (Cullumpton: Willan), 174-5.

[4] C. Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society in Twentieth Century England* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited).

[5] H. Shore (2007) '"Undiscovered Country": Towards a History of the Criminal 'Underworld'', *Crimes and Misdemeanours*, 1/1, 41-68.

[6] A. Brown (2011) 'Crime, Criminal Mobility and Serial Offenders in Early Twentieth Century Britain', *Contemporary British History*, 25, 4, 551-68; A. Brown (2013) *Interwar Penal Police and Crime in England: The Dartmoor Convict Prison in 1932* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 96-128; S. Slater (2007) 'Pimps, Police and Filles De Joie: Foreign Prostitution in Interwar London', *London Journal*, 32, 1, 53-74; M. Roodhouse (2011) 'In Racket Town: Gangster Chic in Austerity Britain, 1939-1953.' *Historical Journal of Film, Television and Radio*, 31, 4, 523-41.

[7] Wright (2006) *Organised Crime*, p. 2.

[8] Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society*, p. 87. F.P. Wensley (1931) *Detective Days: The Record of Forty-two Years' Service in the Criminal Investigation Department* (London: Cassell) and F.D. Sharpe (1938) *Sharpe of the Flying Squad* (London: John Long).

[9] H. Shore (2011) 'Criminality and Englishness in the Aftermath: The Racecourse Wars of the 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1–24, at p. 5.

[10] See the commentary in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 'How Crime Might be Abolished', 5th January 1891.

[11] Brown (2011) 'Criminal Mobility', p. 563.

[12] Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society*, p. 87.

[13] Charles E. Leach (1931) *On Top of the Underworld* (Purnell and Sons), p. 3.

[14] A. Davies (2013) *City of Gangs: Glasgow and the Rise of the British Gangster* (London: Hodder & Stoughton) and J.P. Bean (1981) *The Sheffield Gang Wars* (Sheffield: D & D Publications).

[15] A. Davies (2007) 'The Scottish Chicago? From 'Hooligans' to 'Gangsters' in Interwar Glasgow', *Cultural and Social History*, 4, 4, 511-27; Roodhouse (2011) 'In Racket Town', *passim*.

[16] G. R. Sims (1911) *Off the Track in London* (London: Jarrold & Sons).

[17] *Old Bailey Proceedings*, Trial of Max Moses, Samuel Oreman, Barnet Broziskersy [*sic*], Killing, Murder, 17 November, 1902 (t19021117-41); The National Archives (hereafter TNA): CRIM 1/80/6, Defendant: Moses, Max; Oreman, Samuel; Broziskevaki [*sic*], Barnett, Charge: Murder and wounding.

[18] M. Kohn (1992) *Dope Girls: The Birth of the British Drug Underground* (London: Granta).

[19] L. Bland (2013) *Modern Women on Trial: Sexual Transgression in the Age of the Flapper* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 65-69.

[20] Wright (2006) *Organised Crime,* p. 178.

[21] Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life*, p. 58.

[22] R. Murphy (1993) *Smash and Grab: Gangsters in the London Underworld, 1920-60* (London: Faber and Faber), 95-7.

[23] M. Roodhouse (2013) *Black Market Britain: 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 253.

[24] D. Thompson (2008) *The Hustlers: Gambling, Greed and the Perfect Con* (London: Pan).

[25] D. Thomas (2005) *Villains Paradise: Britain's Underworld from the Spivs to the Krays* (London: John Murray), p. 376.

[26] A. Brown (2011) 'The Smash-and-Grab Gangster', *BBC History*, January, 42-3 and A. Brown (2006) 'The Amazing Mutiny at the Dartmoor Convict Prison', *British Journal of Criminology*, 47/2, 276-92.

[27] H. Janson (1959) *Jack Spot: Man of a Thousand Cuts* (London) and B. Hill (1955) *Boss of Britain's Underworld* (London: Naldrett Press).

[28] Davies (2013) *City of Gangs* and Thomas (2005) *Villains Paradise*, 369-70.

[29] 'London Mail Robbery', *The Times*, 22nd May, 1952, p. 6 and Murphy (1993) *Smash and Grab*, 112-14.

[30] A considerable literature has grown around the family firms of this period, particularly the Kray twins. However, much of it is biographical and autobiographical and subject to the limitations of the true-crime genre detailed below. A good overview is available in Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life*, 70-81. The definitive study of the Kray twins is by John Pearson - see J. Pearson (1973) *The Profession of Violence: The Rise and Fall of the Kray Twins* (St. Albans: Panther). A follow-up was published after the death of the Krays, J. Pearson (2001) *The Cult of Violence: The Untold Story of the Krays* (London: Orion).

[31] M. Levi (1981) *The Phantom Capitalists: The Organisation and Control of Long-Firm Fraud* (London: Heinemann).

[32] J. Morton (1992) *Gangland: London's Underworld* (London: Little Brown), p. 107.

[33] Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life*, 73-4.

[34] 'Arrest of the Kray Brothers', *The Times*, 9th May 1968, p. 1.

[35] 'At least 30 years' - Gaol of the Kray Twins', *The Times*, 6th March 1969, p. 1.

[36] For the Nash, Dixon and Tibbs crime families, see Morton (2001) *East End Gangland* (London: Sphere) and 'Gang Leader Richardson Gaoled for 25 Years', *The Times*, 9th June 1967, p. 2.

[37] Wright 2006) *Organised Crime*, 173-4.

[38] D. Hobbs (1998) 'Going Down the Glocal: The Local Context of Organised Crime', *Howard Journal*, 37/4, 407-22.

[39] Morton (2001) *East End Gangland*, 314-17 and P. Gottschalk (2009) *Entrepreneurship and Organised Crime: Entrepreneurs in Illegal Business* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing), 17-18. Terry Adams, the leading member of the group, was not arrested until 2007 see 'Britain's 'Godfather' Behind Bars', *The Telegraph*, 10th March, 2007.

[40] Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society*, p. 102.

[41] Gottschalk (2009) *Entrepreneurship and Organised Crime*, p. 75.

[42] P. Jenkins and G.W. Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays: Organized Crime in London, 1920-1960', *Criminal Justice History*, IX, 209-30 at p. 210.

[43] J.L. Albini (1986) 'Organized Crime in Great Britain and the Caribbean', in R. Kelly (ed.) *Organized Crime: A Global Perspective* (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield), 95-112, cited in Jenkins and Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays', p. 210.

[44] Jenkins and Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays', *passim*.

[45] Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society*, 87-108 at 87-88.

[46] Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society*, p. 95.

[47] Roodhouse (2013) *Black Market Britain*, p. 256.

[48] Hill (1955) *Boss of Britain's Underworld*, p. 17 cited in Roodhouse (2013) *Black Market Britain*, p. 15.

[49] Shore (2011) 'Criminality and Englishness' and H. Shore (2015) *London's Criminal Underworlds, c. 1725 - c. 1930: A Social and Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

[50] *The Times*, 4th April 1921.

[51] Shore (2011) 'Criminality and Englishness', p. 10 and 13-15 and Jenkins and Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays', 221-2. See also Shore (2015) *London's Criminal Underworlds, passim*.

[52] Brown (2013) *Inter-war Penal Policy*, 99-101, p. 104 and 106-109.

[53] *Ibid*, p. 125.

[54] *Ibid*, p. 126.

[55] Shore (2011) 'Criminality and Englishness', p. 9.

[56] H. Shore (2014) '"Rogues of the Racecourse": Racing Men and the Press in Interwar Britain', *Media History*, 20/4, pp. 352-67.

[57] Davies (2007) 'The Scottish Chicago?'*, passim.*

[58] Davies (2013) *City of Gangs*, 192-5.

[59] Bean (1981) *Sheffield Gang Wars, passim*.

[60] Sir P. Sillitoe (1955) *Cloak Without Dagger* (London: Cassell).

[61] Davies (2013) *City of Gangs*, p. 2.

[62] Slater (2007) 'Pimps', p. 53. Also, S. Slater (2009) 'Prostitutes and Popular History: Notes on the 'Underworld', 1918-1939', *Crime, Histoire & Société*, 13/1, 25-48.

[63] Slater (2007) 'Pimps', p. 67.

[64] Slater (2009) 'Prostitutes', p. 217. For the Messinas see also, Jenkins and Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays', 214-17.

[65] Kohn (1992) *Dope Girls*, *passim*.

[66] Jenkins and Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays', p. 214.

[67] Bland (2013) *Modern Women*, 65-9.

[68] P. Knepper (2009) *The Invention of International Crime: A Global Issue in the making, 1881-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan) and P. Knepper (2011) *International Crime in the Twentieth Century: The League of Nations Era, 1919-1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).

[69] Knepper (2009) *The Invention of International Crime*, pp. 188-91.

[70] On crime memoirs see M. Houlbrook (2013) 'Fashioning an Ex-crook Self: Citizenship and Criminality in the Work of Netley Lucas', *Twentieth Century British History*, 24, 1, 1-30.

[71] Pearson (1973) *Profession of Violence*, *passim*.

[72] F. Fraser and J. Morton (1995) *Mad Frank: Memoirs of a Life of Crime* (London: Sphere); L. McClean (2003) *The Guv'nor* (John Blake Publishing); F. Foreman (2009) *Freddie Foreman: The Godfather of British Crime* (London: John Blake Publishing) and B. Reynolds (1995) *The Autobiography of a Thief* (London: Bantam Press).

[73] For evidence of this fascination in earlier periods see L.B. Faller (1987) *Turned to Account: The Forms and Functions of Criminal Biography in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[74] Morton (1992) *Gangland*; J. Morton (1994) *Gangland, Vol. 2: The Underworld in Britain and Ireland* (London: Little Brown); Morton (2001) *East End Gangland*; Murphy (1993) *Smash and Grab*; B. McDonald (2000) *Elephant Boys: Tales of London and*

Los Angeles Underworlds (Edinburgh: Mainstream) and B. McDonald (2010), *The Gangs of London: 100 Years of Mob Warfare* (Wrea Green: Milo Books).

[75] McDonald (2010) *The Gangs of London*, introduction.

[76] D. Hobbs (1995), *Bad Business: Professional Crime in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); D. Hobbs (1997), 'Professional Crime: Change, Continuity and the Enduring Myth of the Underworld', *Sociology*, 31/1, 57-72 and Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life, passim*.

[77] Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life*, p. 2.

[78] *Ibid*, 56-7.

[79] *Ibid*, p. 58.

[80] *Ibid*, p. 88 and Hobbs (1997), 'Professional Crime', p. 67.

[81] A longer version of this section can be found in the chapter on the Sabini gang and the racecourse wars in Shore (2015) *London's Criminal Underworlds*.

[82] M. Huggins (2003) *Horseracing and the British*, 1919-1939 (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p. 146.

[83] Jenkins and Potter (1988) 'Before the Krays', pp. 221-3.

[84] TNA: HO 144/10430, 'Racecourse ruffians: activities of the "Sabini" gang'; 'Memorandum', n.d.

[85] TNA: HO 144/10430, 'Metropolitan Police Report', 1st December 1922.

[86] TNA: MEPO 3/346, 'Affray at Ewell known as "The Epsom Hold-Up" on 2nd June 1921, following Race Meeting', 1921.

[87] See McDonald (2010) *The Gangs of London*, 115-280. For the events of the summer of 1922, see especially 168-77.

[88] Detailed accounts of these events can be found in the Home Office file, TNA: HO144/10430 and also Shore, 'Criminality and Englishness'.

[89] For example: 'Sabini Drama Heroine', *Daily Express*, 29th November 1922 and 'Club Shooting: Girl's Pluck', *Daily Mirror*, 29th November 1922.

[90] TNA: CRIM1/209, 'Cortesi, Augustus; Cortesi, George; Cortesi, Paul; Cortesi, Enrico; Tomaso, Alexander, Charge: Attempted Murder', January 1923.

[91] *The Morning Chronicle*, 19th November 1924 and TNA: MEPO3/374, 'Alfred Solomon charged with the Wilful Murder of Barnett Blitz'.

[92] Reported in the *Evening Standard*, 24th and 25th August 1925 and *Daily Mail*, 24th August 1925.

[93] *Daily Express*, 24th August 1925. For Joynson Hicks' campaigns see Kohn (1992) *Dope Girls*, p. 120, 140-1 and p. 149.

[94] TNA: HO144/10430, 'Minutes, H.O., August 1925'.

[95] For example, TNA: HO144/10430 covers the activities of racecourse ruffians and the Sabini gang until 1929. TNA: MEPO3/374 covers the murder of Barnet Blitz by Alfred Solomon and its aftermath from 1924 to 1931.

[96] C. Chinn (1991) *Better Betting with a Decent Feller: Bookmaking, Betting and the British Working Class, 1750-1990* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf), pp. 181-4.

[97] *The Times*, 16th December 1925; 30th June 1926 and 11th June 1926.

[98] *The Times*, 10th June 1936; *Empire News*, 14th June 1936 and *Empire News*, 21st June 1936.

[99] S. Chibnall (2005) *Brighton Rock* (London: L. B. Tauris), p. 17.

[100] TNA: CRIM1/882, 'MARSH, Bert; WILKINS, Herbert Charge: Murder, wounding with intent', 10th November 1936. *The Times*, 17th November 1936; *Daily Mirror*, 18th November 1936 and McDonald (2010) *The Gangs of London*, p. 257.

[101] *Daily Mirror*, 18 September 1936 and McDonald (2010) *The Gangs of London*, p. 257.

[102] Murphy (1993) *Smash and Grab*, 156-60; Hill (1955) *Boss of Britain's Underworld*, *passim* and Brown (2011) 'The Smash-and-Grab Gangster', *passim*.

[103] M. McIntosh (1975) *The Organisation of Crime* (London: Macmillan), 28-9.

[104] *Ibid*, p. 28.

[105] *Ibid*.

[106] R. Matthews (2002) *Armed Robbery* (Cullompton: Willan), 18-19.

[107] W. Meier (2011) *Property Crime in London: 1850-Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 118-20.

[108] *Ibid*, p. 124 and *passim*.

[109] Reynolds (1995) *Autobiography of a Thief*, 43 and Meier (2011) *Property Crime*, 128-9.

[110] HC Deb 01 August 1963 vol 682 c125W see http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1963/aug/01/armed-robbery

[111] A very detailed recent account of the robbery is by N. Russell-Pavier and S. Richards (2012) *The Great Train Robbery: Crime of the Century* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson).

[112] 'Bank Loses £500,000 in Mail Train Raid', *The Times*, 9th August, 1963, p. 8.

[113] For example, TNA: HO 242/3 to 242/5; ASSI 13/646 to 13/659. Many of the records of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) and of the Metropolitan Police (MEPO) relating to the robbery, are currently closed until the mid-twenty first century.

[114] D. Sandbrook (2006) *White Heat: The Story of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Abacus), p. 572.

[115] P.P. Read (1978) *The Train Robbers: Their Story* (London: Alison Press).

[116] Reynolds (1995) *Autobiography of a Thief*; R. Biggs (1994) *Odd Man Out* (London: Bloomsbury); M. Fewtrell (1964) *The Train Robbers* (London: Arthur Barker); F.

Williams (1973) *No Fixed Address* (London: W. H. Allen & Co Ltd) and J. Slipper (1981), *Slipper of the Yard* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson).

[117] 'Reynolds arrest ends long hunt by Yard men', *The Times*, 9th November, 1968, p. 1; '25 years for Bruce Reynolds', *The Times*, 15th January, 1969, p. 1; '15-Minute Raid Freed Mail Train Prisoner', *The Times*, 13th August 1964; 'Second Train Robber escapes from Prison', *Guardian*, 9th July, 1965, p. 1; 'Home Secretary Orders Escape Inquiry', *The Times*, 10th July, 1965, p. 8.

[118] Reynolds (1995) *Autobiography of a Thief*, p. 257.

[119] Emsley (2011) *Crime and Society*, p. 31. These are figures for robbery more generally (including street robbery), not just project crimes.

[120] Hobbs (2013) *Lush Life*, p. 147.

[121] *Ibid,* 147-9.

[122] Matthews (2002) *Armed Robbery*, p. 137.

[123] *Ibid*, p. 137.

[124] D. Hobbs (2001) 'The Firm: Organizational Logic and Criminal Culture on a Shifting Terrain', *British Journal of Criminology*, 41, 549-60.