

## 4.

**Grafters not shirkers: reserved men at work**

The days at school are in the past  
A time to work is here at last  
For good or bad, I'll wait and see  
What the world of men will mean to me . . .

An office boy I then became,  
I found it clean but very tame.  
Marking the cards and making tea,  
This is not the job for me.

A boy welder, that soon passed,  
Apprentice fitter, a trade at last.  
Construct, design, repair worn tools,  
To work with brass, steel and rule.

The years roll by, we are now at war,  
We work as we've never worked before.  
Blackouts, rationing, the occasional bomb,  
We are sick and tired, but carry on . . .

Women also work in this man's domain  
To help the war effort, they explain.

They swear and smoke and toil like men,  
This place will never be the same again.<sup>1</sup>

Ron Spedding, who started in a railway wagon works in Durham in 1940 aged sixteen and then remained there for the next forty two years, evokes in his poem what war work meant to him. It speaks of the construction of masculinity in working class jobs and of male identities in wartime. Working class masculinity oozes from the lines in this ‘hard graft’ narrative as he refers to ‘tame’ office jobs, the transformative impact of war, the trespassing of women into ‘this man’s domain’ and the heightened intensity of war work. Spedding tried, unsuccessfully, to enlist with the RAF, like some of our interviewees as we saw in chapter three. He recollected ‘feeling peeved and also a little guilty when some of my friends joyously told me they had been released and were off to join the Air Force.’<sup>2</sup> Yet the Second World War afforded Spedding, and other men who were compelled to remain on the home front, opportunities and rewards, as well as restrictions and penalties. Strikingly, the impact that these changes had on civilian men has not, to date, been studied. This and the following chapter seek to fill this lacuna utilising a range of sources including personal testimonies, both oral interviews and autobiographies like Spedding’s, in order to uncover the lived experience of men working on the home front. A range of discourses are evident within these personal accounts, from ‘frustrated combatants’ to those comfortable with their wartime masculinities; from heroic ‘graft’ and ‘sacrifice’ narratives through to activist narratives which eschew the dominant discourses associated with the ‘blitz spirit’. Together, they reveal that the impact of the war on male workers’ identities was complex and sometimes contradictory.

### **Masculinities at work before the Second World War**

Understanding the mutation of conventional gender identities during the Second World War requires awareness of working class culture and lived experience in the inter-war period. Early twentieth-century masculinity was intimately connected to employment as this provided the resources for fulfilment of the provider/protector role as well as a sense of self-worth and esteem, the intrinsic rewards of purposeful labour. This economic role was, historically, the basis of men's superiority over women. Before the Second World War, manual work was saturated with social value. In his autobiography published in 1935, Glaswegian David Kirkwood asserted that working men had a deeply competitive work culture, were always 'scrambling for overtime' and 'lived their lives in their work'.<sup>3</sup> Manliness was forged in a strong work ethic that existed in middle and working class occupations and a powerful commitment to the breadwinner role. Working class masculinity, as anthropologist Daniel Wight has asserted, was incubated in hard graft and big earnings.<sup>4</sup> Bert Coombes, a South Wales coal miner in the 1930s, commented that 'men who do not do their share are treated with contempt . . . by their fellow workmen who are usually too ready to pour out their sweat and their blood.'<sup>5</sup> There was a moral economy to labour. London cabinet-maker Max Cohen reflected: 'The notion is dinned into you from boyhood that he who can sweat is good, noble, moral; and he who can't (for whatever reason) is bad, ignoble and immoral.'<sup>6</sup> Across industrialised economies, work was considered one of the main 'anchorages' of male identity.<sup>7</sup> The nineteenth-century bourgeois ideology of 'separate spheres', which located men in the public world of work and placed women in the domestic arena, continued to hold a powerful influence. According to the 1931 Census, a period in which high levels of joblessness were witnessed, over eighty per cent of adult men were in full-time paid employment, in comparison to less than twenty per cent of married women.<sup>8</sup>

Segregation in work was not immutable and male gender identities in reality were fluid, ranging across a spectrum from a 'rough' 'hard man' style of manliness to more 'respectable' masculinities; from dominant (heterosexual) to marginalised (homosexual) forms.<sup>9</sup> The significance of place, occupation and social class in the inter-war period are crucial to an understanding of gender identity and wartime transformations. There were marked differences in experience between the so-called 'depressed areas'<sup>10</sup> of northern England, west of Scotland and south Wales on the one hand, and London, the south and the Midlands where job opportunities were growing, on the other. Although provider masculinity was culturally dominant within traditional working class communities everywhere before the Second World War, in the northern heavy industries 'hard man' modes of masculinity prevailed whereas in the south 'softer' forms of 'temperate masculinity' were gestating in communities dominated by the new light engineering and consumer goods factories.<sup>11</sup> Apart from the very worst years of the Depression in 1931-2 'breadwinner' masculinity was much less under assault in places like the fast-growing industrial belt around the North Circular in London and in the 'sunrise' light manufacturing industries of the Midlands.

Male identities were nurtured in the tough street culture of the neighbourhood, in pubs and male-dominated spectator sports like football and were then forged in arduous, dirty, dangerous and all-consuming manual labour in mines, factories, farms, shipyards, docks and building sites. With few exceptions, working class children felt destined for manual occupations, articulating a sense that office and shop work was effeminate.<sup>12</sup> In the popular 1930s novel *Love on the Dole* the central male character, Harry Hardcastle, recalled his metamorphosis from the 'cissy' [sic] world of clerical work to an engineering factory in Manchester, where there were 'great muscular men . . . Phew! But they were men.'<sup>13</sup> Work in manual labour sculpted men out of boys. Entering blue-collar jobs

typically aged fourteen or fifteen, boys were de-sensitised to danger and socialised into a competitive, macho work environment. For some, like Jack Ashley who started work in a large asbestos factory in Widnes not long after his fourteenth birthday in December 1936, this transition to 'a new era in my life' was marked by moving up from wearing shorts to trousers.<sup>14</sup> The National Insurance card, which was given out to workers and to those that had completed their five-year apprenticeships, was another marker of masculinity as it was a symbol of their capacity to earn and pay taxes as well as their entitlement to social security. Max Cohen referred to them in his autobiography as 'badges of manhood'.<sup>15</sup> Becoming a craftsman was equated with status as a man. Ron Spedding noted 'I had reached my industrial mecca' when he began as a millwright in a railway carriage works.<sup>16</sup> Within this working class culture a powerful work ethic prevailed where the grafters with highest earnings, those able to get the trade union rate for the job and those most capable of tolerating hazardous and unhealthy work environments were most exalted. The wage packet was the outward symbol of power, denoting the transition from childhood to manhood, dependency to independence, and bringing with it a raft of privileges and different treatment in the home and family.<sup>17</sup> This was buttressed by a widely-held view that men were superior to women in the labour market; more highly skilled, with greater experience, physically stronger and more committed to work. Waged employment was their domain; a masculine space largely free of women. The economic value of men was expressed in the wide gender wage differential with male full-time workers earning over double that of women before the war.<sup>18</sup> Standing up for oneself was also deemed a key attribute of this male working class culture. Peer pressure policed this and young workers were socialised into the norms, rituals and practices of such behaviour.<sup>19</sup> Transgression risked censure, the questioning of manhood and being labelled 'sissy', 'queer' or a 'jessie'. One had to be seen to be a 'real man' in the face of work-hardened colleagues.<sup>20</sup>

Masculinity, then, was closely tied up with employment in the inter-war period and consequently the loss of work could be deeply emasculating. The experience of the dole, of under-employment, lower wages and insecurity cut deep into the male psyche in the 1930s, creating a crisis of masculinity. Labour market precarity was directly responsible for rising levels of mental health problems, depression, nervous breakdowns, suicide and domestic violence.<sup>21</sup> A man without a job lost status and was deemed a lesser man. The ultimate disgrace and loss of manhood came with admission to the poorhouse. The dominant cultural representations in photographs and social realist literature like George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) were of dole queues and unemployed men idly hanging around street corners.<sup>22</sup> Social commentary included accounts of derelict communities shattered by mass unemployment, such as Ellen Wilkinson's *The Town That Was Murdered* (1939) and Wal Hannington's *The Problem of the Distressed Areas* (1937).<sup>23</sup> Unemployment undermined a man's sense of worth, gnawed at his dignity and self-respect. This loss was felt deeply and expressed poignantly in workers' personal testimonies, including oral accounts.<sup>24</sup> A sense of shame, impotence and humiliation pervaded many men's memories of these years as Ian MacDougall's interviews with Scottish Depression-era workers made evident.<sup>25</sup> For working class men, dependency upon state benefits was deeply emasculating as it branded them as failing to fulfil what Marjorie Levine-Clark has referred to as the 'expectations of full masculine citizenship.'<sup>26</sup> This was exacerbated by the economic necessity in poorer families for married women to undertake paid work, thereby usurping the male breadwinner role. Moreover, bodies were damaged in this process and there was a direct correlation between loss of work and ill-health, as Stephen Thompson's seminal work on South Wales has shown.<sup>27</sup> Men's bodies were honed in habitual manual labour and with unemployment and under-employment skill and

muscle atrophied. George Blake referred to this in his novel *The Shipbuilders* (1935) when he wrote about out-of-work Clydeside shipbuilders ‘going soft in mind and body’.<sup>28</sup>

Workers were also more vulnerable to exploitation in this context, with the protective matrix of the trade unions being critically undermined following the failure of the General Strike in 1926. This was exacerbated by falling union membership and the neutering of the strike weapon for a decade thereafter.<sup>29</sup> In the south and the Midlands the prevalence of anti-trade union cultures in the ‘new industries’ curtailed effective collective action, while in the northern ‘Depressed Areas’ and heavy industry heartlands the insecurities, petty injustices associated with resurgent managerial power and the erosion of the provider role with mass unemployment in the 1930s deeply emasculated workers.

### **Forging Stakhanovites: the pressures of wartime work**

The Second World War both challenged and strengthened civilian masculinities in complex ways. Fundamentally, the war provided men with jobs, security and the capacity to provide for their families. War work quickly soaked up male unemployment and created a strong demand, especially for those with specialised and transferable skills that could be applied and adapted to the production of goods, materials and machines necessary for the prosecution of modern warfare. Unemployment fell from 1.7 million in 1938 to just 60,000 in mid-1943.<sup>30</sup> Writing in 1944, Labour MP and former Durham coal miner Jack Lawson waxed lyrical about this transformation:

A miracle came to pass. Men once forgotten were wanted. Also women. Depressed areas disappeared. Coal was wanted, ships, steel, guns, shells, ammunition, tanks, planes. The heavy industries were concentrated in depressed areas. A thing for the worldly wise to jibe at just yesterday. Coal is finished – nobody wants ships or steel! And now! More coal and more.

Give us ships. More steel. The heavy industries are everything. Will Britain forget that lesson? Will she forget the communities that almost perished and were discovered to be the life of the nation in her hour of need?<sup>31</sup>

For workers this was deeply empowering. As Max Cohen commented, ‘the scarcity of labour placed the working people, individually and collectively, in an almost impregnable bargaining position.’<sup>32</sup> Moreover, middle-aged, older, medically unfit and disabled men, who had been economically marginalised during the thirties with high unemployment rates and downward pressure on wages, were drawn back into the labour force. 310,806 disabled people were either placed in employment by Ministry of Labour officials or given training which led to them getting jobs during the war.<sup>33</sup> For example, elderly and disabled ex-miners in South Wales were found employment in shell-filling factories.<sup>34</sup>

As we have seen, those capable of tolerating the toughest and most dangerous working conditions and the longest hours, producing the most and, consequently, taking home the biggest wage packets had always been exalted within working class communities. Now they had the added layer of respect that they were directly contributing to winning the war. Like the Russian Stakhanovites, a movement of workers named after Aleksei Stakhanov whose performances of immense productivity far exceeded set targets,<sup>35</sup> these were the ‘big men’; the ‘workers not wasters’.<sup>36</sup> Although there was not the same degree of praise by the state or public for high production feats in Britain as the Soviet Union, working men’s roles in wartime production raised their importance and status commensurately. Moreover, it eroded the subordination which had been such a feature of working lives in the Depression in many parts of the country. This rebuilding of civilian working class masculinity was felt most acutely in reserved work that was directly connected to the war effort such as the production of tanks, guns, planes and ships, or service in ‘front line’ jobs in the Merchant Navy and firefighting.

War work was characterised by increased effort and more fatiguing work regimes. Peggy Inman, the official munitions industry historian, notes how working hours of between ten and twelve hours a day and sixty and seventy hours a week were common in war-related work (and between eighty and ninety hours a week in ship-repairing) in the months following Dunkirk. Long hours, Inman reflected, were ‘the badge of patriotism’.<sup>37</sup> The central male character in Mark Benney’s semi-autobiographical wartime novel, *Over to Bombers*, commented ‘we all wanted to set the pace, not follow it’.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, foreman Alfred Cleeton in Priestley’s novel *Daylight on Saturday* was ‘ready to work until he dropped . . . for war production.’<sup>39</sup> In a conversation about the whereabouts of others engineer Angleby in *Daylight on Saturday* reflected: “‘probably fighting somewhere. Which is more than I’m doing. Not my fault though”, he added apologetically.’ His girlfriend responded: “‘Don’t be a fool . . . I’ve learnt enough lately to know that you’re probably worth more to the war than a dozen of those chaps.’”<sup>40</sup> These novels depicted male war workers as essential to the war effort, stepping up as patriotic hard grafters, with the ultimate accolade being ‘a Dunkirk man’.<sup>41</sup>

The forced abandonment of so much heavy war equipment by the retreating British Expeditionary Force in late May and early June 1940, including 64,000 vehicles and 76,000 tons of ammunition, left Britain ‘appallingly ill-armed’ and prompted a massive production drive across the country.<sup>42</sup> Aircraft instrument maker Eddie Menday referred to the intense working pattern after Dunkirk:

I was only sixteen when war broke out. And we still had to work the same hours as the men, particularly after Dunkirk, where we worked from seven in the morning to seven at night, every day. Let us off at four o’clock on Sunday, in case we wanted to go to church, so we were told. And that went on for seven weeks. And then they thought we were getting a bit jaded by

that time, and of course, they then decided that we could have one Sunday off in three. And then gradually it came down to one Sunday off in two. Then we finished not so late on a Saturday, and so actually, it was Saturday afternoon and Sunday we were off.<sup>43</sup>

Accounts of the critical period of 1940, in which the Phoney War became very 'real' with Dunkirk, and then the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, emphasise 'hard graft' and long hours. Yet working patterns began to resume a less intense schedule as Munday notes. It was increasingly recognised that fatigue was cumulative and the Ministry of Labour advised a maximum working week of sixty hours in July 1940, reduced to fifty five in September 1943.<sup>44</sup> Yet there is evidence to suggest that in some industries this was not the case. Mass Observation noted that management had failed to absorb the lessons of declining productivity with longer working hours:

Yet during the greater part of 1940 these lessons, mainly learned in the last war and statistically proven, were ignored. In many factories they are ignored now [1942]. One of the most important factories we studied was still working a 7-day week, 11 hours a day, giving the workers one Sunday a month off.<sup>45</sup>

Significantly, Mass Observation found men were three times more likely than women to be working 'excessive' hours, defined as over ten hours a day.<sup>46</sup> This was largely accepted by men who rarely complained about lengthy shifts; only three per cent mentioned long working hours when they were asked what improvements might be made in their jobs.<sup>47</sup> William Ryder, who worked at Woolwich Arsenal, recalled how keen men were for extra hours:

Interviewer: During the war did you ever have to work overtime?

William Ryder: Oh blimey yeah. I only had two Christmas Days off during the war . . . We often started at six o'clock in the morning and sometimes it was six o'clock at night before you got away and one or two occasions we worked all night . . . Pay wasn't all that good really and a lot of pay was made up of overtime . . . The first two hours overtime of the day were at time and [a] third and the rest time and a half so that boosted your pay up a bit.<sup>48</sup>

Men were motivated to work long hours for a number of reasons. Undoubtedly for many there existed a powerful sense of patriotism, with men wanting to graft in order to contribute to the war. But part of the impetus lies with men's entrenched notion of their provider role and their socialisation in the years of Depression which sharpened a sense of needing to maximise earnings while there was the opportunity. This was linked to a widespread belief during wartime that after the war there would be a return to mass unemployment and the insecurities of the 1930s.<sup>49</sup>

The temporary 'emergency' suspension of hard fought for workers' rights, such as the maximum statutory forty eight-hour working week enshrined in the 1937 Factory Act, were largely accepted and even had the support of the men's trade unions.<sup>50</sup> Miner Bert Coombes was amongst those who noted the restrictions and frustrations associated with the 'breaking of customs', pointing in 1944 to the way union 'rules' were flouted in wartime, including demarcation (where tradesmen refused to allow anybody to undertake work except those specifically trained) and output limitation (sometimes referred to as 'the darg'). 'Old rules', Coombes noted, 'have been surrendered to the war need for coal.'<sup>51</sup> This prioritising of production over 'restrictive practices' was largely accepted by reserved men as their way of contributing to the war. Mass Observation quoted a bricklayer who asserted 'I am a trade unionist, and I want an 8-hour day, but owing to the war I realise we

can't, so my 10 hours are about right.'<sup>52</sup> 'Real' men endured lengthy shifts knowing they were for the duration only and welcomed the opportunity that war provided to bolster their masculinity which had been eroded by the insecurities of the Depression years.

The extension of the working week and the sacrifice of time this entailed were enduring features of wartime and are a recurring motif in interviews with reserved men. They took pride in describing, and sometimes exaggerating, how they withstood such demands. D.C.M. Howe, an aircraft fitter at Vickers Aviation, recalled the outbreak of war:

The foreman came round and said 'you know what that means from now on, it'll mean much longer hours.' And of course it did. Once we started then there were no days off at all. It was seven days a week for days and days on end . . . But everyone really got down to it. It was amazing the amount of work . . . We used to churn out twenty four, twenty five aircraft in one small place like that . . . in a week. When I went to work on night shift some few weeks after that we used to turn over one complete fuselage overnight.<sup>53</sup>

Howe accepted that the outbreak of war resulted in longer shifts and less days off despite the fact that many of these additional hours were not paid at overtime rates. He and his colleagues 'got down to it' and 'churn[ed] out' 'amazing' results. The pride in their output is evident. This is even more apparent in Henry Barrett's recollection of coal mining. He repeatedly mentioned that miners worked exceptionally hard, emphasising that while this was the case previously, wartime pressures exacerbated demands placed upon the body: 'I've never seen work like it . . . you shovelled coal. You shovelled coal as fast as possible. I ran the road loading coal. Shovelling it and loading it on a chute. And running the road, I mean *running* the road, pushing drams as fast as you can. Stripped to the waist.'<sup>54</sup> The pace at which he undertook his job is mirrored by the speed with which he describes the

‘shovelling’, ‘loading’, ‘pushing’ and ‘running’, all of which were physically strenuous actions.

In contrast to Barrett’s testimony emphasising his youthful speed, Scottish steel furnace worker Patrick McGeown, who was forty eight in 1945, ‘plodded along doing the best we could.’ He recalled ‘a common and ever-present weariness’ and ‘wondered how I would survive the hours on the furnace, but I always managed.’ Despite his age, McGeown empathised with the young combatants and took ‘rather a pride in it’: ‘That seemed to be the way with most grown civilians. It was like a general front and we felt much in common with the men in the forces.’<sup>55</sup> Like many of the older reserved workers, there was no evidence in McGeown’s autobiography of any sense of emasculation felt from being out of uniform. In a similar vein, aircraft factory worker Derek Sims recalled the numbing graft and fatigue of wartime:

The hours were, oh they were, they were killers really. When I think about it, we coped with them, and I’m sure there was an awful lot of illness, that you know we never knew about. Because as a youngster you don’t really think about these things. Well I have seen my Dad, sit[ting] at the breakfast table and suddenly his head would nod like that, and he’d be asleep. [Pause] You know there was no relent, no end or beginning to the day really, for them, especially right in the heat of the Battle of Britain. When aircraft were being shot down like nobody’s business, and had to be replaced [Pause] and then the Navy wanted Hurricanes on their, on their ships. Yeah, it was, it was very heavy pressure.<sup>56</sup>

McGeown and Sims clearly associated workplace sacrifice with the war effort, stressing the importance of reserved occupations, playing up the physical effort required and expressing their toughness and masculine resilience, by noting ‘I always managed’ and ‘we

coped with them'. Birmingham firefighter Edward Ashill articulated this fortitude in a typically heroic narrative which stressed wartime camaraderie and unity. Asked by the Imperial War Museum interviewer in 1990 what a firemen would look like after he had been engaged in fighting fires all night, Ashill stated:

Well the vision of him is in his steel helmet, firefighting tunic and his rubber boots. His face black. He's absolutely dripping wet through. He looked exhausted and tired and fed up but still managed to drag himself around. This was similarly true in the central areas when you had hour after hour after hour starting in the evening of the night before, all through the night, still burning the following day. Still the same firemen there, having had no relief, no rest, no food. They were just soldiering on.<sup>57</sup>

This rich description is evocative of the firemen depicted in the 1943 Humphrey Jennings' documentary *Fires Were Started*. Indeed, Jennings' work opens with the statement that 'fires were fought' and with explicit reference to 'the stress of battle' making evident the parallel with service in the fire brigades and service in the AFS.<sup>58</sup> Ashill's similar use of a military metaphor, that the firemen were 'soldiering on', is telling, denoting his belief in their parity. Like combatants, firemen were fighting on the frontline with no respite or refreshment, stoically enduring extreme circumstances which risked their lives. Interviewees were keen to iterate the multiple demands upon their time during the war. They were full-time workers but they were additionally volunteer members of the Home Guard, Air Raid Precautions and the Auxiliary Fire Service and undertook aerial raid and fire watching duties. These supplementary wartime tasks, to be explored in chapter six, were articulated by interviewees as additional work, as sources of further diminution of energy and 'free time' which eradicated periods of relaxation and reduced sleeping hours

and, for many, as an overwhelming sense of fatigue and exhaustion. Masculinity was endorsed through such sacrifice.

Others emphasised in their testimonies the hard labour undertaken during the war. Liverpool docker Frank Deegan recalled that men ‘were working all out for the war effort – ten hours daily and ten when on night work.’<sup>59</sup> Wartime railway guard William McNaul asserted ‘you worked damn hard . . . Nobody said, thought that you were dodging anything.’<sup>60</sup> His use of the term ‘dodging’ is interesting as it was not elicited, coming in response to a question about post-war television programmes. Shipyard worker Ted Boyle referred to the war as a ‘nerve-wracking time’ with the pressure of work exacerbated by wartime ‘cost-plus’ contracts<sup>61</sup> which encouraged employers to ‘speed-up’ and intensify the work: ‘The sooner they got the vessel built, the more profit. There was always somebody walking around saying: “What are you doing? You haven’t finished that job, have you?”’<sup>62</sup> The occurrence of air raids could add further pressure as working patterns were disrupted. Fred Clark, a wood machinist in an aircraft factory near Reading, recalled:

But then it got so bad, you was working all hours God sent you . . . You were eight days straight off [working] and then two days off . . . We started at eight o’clock in the morning and you finished at eight o’clock at night. But then you had to get to work. I had to bike four miles to get there on me bike, cos you can imagine, these aircraft factories wasn’t in the middle of the town, they were out in the country where nobody could get at them! . . . Some of the chaps used to bike in from Slough which was twenty miles away! Some nights they couldn’t get home. So they used to carry on working ’til they dropped . . . We wasn’t tired, we was just bloody walking dead! . . . Matter of fact, you only lived from day to day. Matter of fact, I’ll go further and say we only lived from hour to hour. Cos when we

got [to] the factory at the aerodrome, we felt shut in. Like a prisoner, you couldn't get out!<sup>63</sup>

This is an extreme example of a 'sacrifice' narrative recalling vividly the numbing weariness of wartime work, the toll upon the body (which led to his collapse and breakdown) and the lack of choice and control. Clark's use of the 'prisoner' metaphor to describe his sense of being incarcerated in the factory revealed his powerlessness. Other interviewees referred to being 'inmates' and to 'slavery' in their narratives to express this sense of subjection.<sup>64</sup> These were conscious attempts by narrators to define their masculinity by highlighting the pressures of wartime work and other 'duties' they endured (such as Home Guard and fire watching), the sacrifices that had to be made and the grim conditions that had to be tolerated; we 'survived'; we 'pulled through'; we 'coped'. 'It was difficult', aircraft worker Donald Kennedy recalled, 'but we managed to keep going.'<sup>65</sup> This echoes Penny Summerfield's 'stoic' narratives of wartime women workers in that these men stoically endured circumstances not of their choosing.<sup>66</sup>

Occasionally reserved workers expressed a sense that the attraction of the armed forces was that it enabled a respite from the unrelenting fatigue of war work. Lance Liddle, who worked in a light engineering factory from 1936 until he was conscripted into the army in 1941 as a result of the reservation age being increased releasing men into the services, recollected his relief at escaping the unremitting shift work:

The truth is I was glad to get out . . . Overtime was compulsory. You had to work a Saturday one week and a Sunday the next . . . Now actually speaking I was on me knees. I was wore out. You couldn't take time off. Overtime was compulsory, you had to work. I was really, I was run down. I think I was really tired and I was fed up. You couldn't go anywhere, you couldn't even go to the pictures, you were working a half-shift . . . Then I

did a week's night shift and you still got nowhere 'cos you start work at half past eight at night and actually I was quite pleased when they called us up, I thought I'd get out in the fresh air.<sup>67</sup>

Liddle's construction of an account about joining the forces in order to get 'fresh air' and to put a stop to overtime, changing shift patterns and crippling fatigue reveals how one ex-serviceman viewed his reserved work as more exhausting and constraining than being in uniform. Reserved workers were also pressured from all quarters to maximise their efforts. This included, officially at least, the trade unions and, in contrast to the First World War, many on the far left, with the Communist Party amongst the strongest supporters of the wartime productivity drive after the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in June 1941.<sup>68</sup> Mass Observation emphasised how pervasive and influential this 'propaganda' could be. Radio, posters and the press all exhorted workers to increase their production levels. The *Glasgow Herald*, albeit with a predominantly middle class readership, quoted the production discourse of the Chairman of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce in February 1942: 'Unless everyone pulls his weight and works to capacity we stand a poor chance of winning this war.'<sup>69</sup> This was at a time when Allied victory looked doubtful with German naval successes and the disastrous fall of Singapore. Visits to factories by Ministry of Labour officials, armed forces officers, disabled servicemen and assorted VIPs helped to maintain this sense of urgency and inspire war work efforts. Many war workers remembered such visits. Derek Sims recalled Lord Beaverbrook visiting the aircraft factory where he worked in Buckinghamshire and inveigling them from a balcony to increase their output to a rate of six hundred hurricanes a month.<sup>70</sup> Others spoke of foremen and supervisors cajoling them in 'pep talks' to 'think of the boys at the front'.<sup>71</sup> In a similar vein, wartime Bevin Boy Roy Deeley paraphrased a speech made by Churchill in 1943:

‘Some will say I was in the army, some will say I was in the Navy, but you can say with equal pride I cut the coal.’<sup>72</sup>

There were, however, physiological and psychological limits to over work and a slow recognition through the war that the ‘science’ of production had to replace *ad hoc* and knee jerk extensions of the working day and week. Bevin supported the ‘adjustment’ in the number of hours worked after the ‘production spurt’ following Dunkirk, as well as advocated for retention of a one-week annual holiday.<sup>73</sup> Production and hours picked up again in 1943-4 in the run up to D-Day and again tailed off and returned virtually to pre-war norms in the final year of the war. In some cases, uncontrolled and effusive expression of Stakhanovite masculinity had to be reined in and regulated for the long haul. Some workers voted with their feet, with absenteeism rates rising after sustained periods of long working, overtime, weekend working and loss of holidays.<sup>74</sup> Occasionally not going to work was a way that war workers expressed their agency in the face of the wartime ‘speed-up’ and tighter disciplinary regimes. Glasgow was identified as a particular ‘blackspot’ for absenteeism.<sup>75</sup> In part, this was an expression of autonomy and workers’ rights to determine their own work rhythms. When South Yorkshire coal owners tried to enforce working on New Year’s Day 1942 miners responded with ninety five per cent absenteeism.<sup>76</sup> Docking of pay was relatively ineffective as a penalty when bonus schemes, piecework and overtime working enabled lost wages to be quickly made up. Employers also complained that, despite the Essential Work Order and prosecutions for serious absenteeism, both the Ministry of Labour and local National Service Officers lacked the power to tackle ‘chronic slackers’.<sup>77</sup> Absenteeism and bad timekeeping, according to Mass Observation, was clearly gendered.<sup>78</sup> A Ministry of Labour enquiry estimated absenteeism rates in 1943-4 were around six to eight per cent for men and twelve to fifteen per cent for women.<sup>79</sup> This is suggestive of the continuities of the sexual division of domestic labour

and family responsibilities into wartime, the exhaustion of older women and the distance of many men from caring and nurturing roles. The slow pace at which the state opened nurseries exacerbated the problem. Men more frequently cited 'pleasure', including attending sports events such as football matches, as reasons for absenteeism from work. This suggests that unequal distribution of resources within family units may well have revived in wartime with the increased earning and spending power of men.

After the post-Dunkirk production surge there were experiments to reduce fatigue, ease boredom and raise output. These included official rest periods, known as 'tea breaks', live workplace shows such as ENSA (Entertainments National Service Association) and radio broadcasts such as 'Music While You Work', 'Workers Playtime' and 'Works Wonders'.<sup>80</sup> Mass Observation reported that listening to music 'helped production in a small but significant way', acting as 'a mental rest-pause without any stopping of effort'.<sup>81</sup> It had, according to Christina Baade, both a medicinal effect, acting as a 'drug' or 'tonic', and a disciplining one, creating more 'docile instruments of production'.<sup>82</sup>

Civilian working class masculinity was clearly bolstered by the wartime demand for male labour, which resulted in full employment, job security and long hours. Indeed, reserved men frequently drew upon a discourse of graft and sacrifice in their personal narratives to emphasise their contribution to the war effort and display their patriotic masculinity. For this, they were well recompensed.

### **'Quids in': the rewards of wartime work**

Civilian masculinity was further endorsed through high earnings, with male workers earning considerably more than soldiers. Comparisons with soldiers' wages are, however, difficult because the remuneration systems were different: soldiers received a low basic wage (initially fourteen shillings a week; increased to seventeen shillings and six pence a

week in 1941) but did not have to pay for food, accommodation, clothing and transport. The latter 'benefits' were estimated to have a value of thirty five shillings a week in a government report on forces pay in 1942.<sup>83</sup> Dependents allowances were also paid to married soldiers with children. In 1942, for example, having two children brought an additional allowance of fifteen shillings. There were small increments to these soldiers' wages for every year of service, small additional payments for 'proficiency' and a higher rate of pay if promoted. All this amounted to an estimated income for a newly enlisted unmarried private rank soldier of around £3 a week (taking into account that soldiers did not pay tax), rising to around £4 a week after three years' service. This compared unfavourably with the *average* civilian male net earnings after tax of £5 2s 0d a week in 1942-3.<sup>84</sup> The widespread popular view that male civilian workers earned considerably more than soldiers may have been an exaggeration when other non-wage 'benefits' for soldiers are taken in to account, but there was still a significant earnings differential in favour of reserved men nonetheless.

Moreover, during the war real earnings, which takes prices into account, rose significantly for reserved male workers. Ian Gazeley asserts that average real earnings rose by around twenty per cent between 1938 and 1945.<sup>85</sup> When broken down by gender, social class and skill it is evident that the Second World War witnessed some levelling (or convergence) with a reduction in wage differentials.<sup>86</sup> Average female earnings rose by around ninety per cent during the war while male earnings rose by seventy five per cent. Concurrently, wages rose faster for manual than non-manual workers while the wage differential between unskilled and skilled male workers narrowed from around seventy per cent in 1939 to around eighty per cent by 1945.<sup>87</sup> A key factor in wage levelling was the awarding of flat rate bonuses to wages across the board in wartime.<sup>88</sup> The meaningful differential as far as breadwinner masculinity was concerned, however, was the pay of

women. The average earnings of women compared to men hardly changed through the war, drifting up somewhat from around forty eight per cent pre-war to around fifty-two or fifty three per cent by the end of the war.<sup>89</sup> While the hourly wage rate differential between men and women narrowed significantly in key sectors like engineering, this was offset by men working longer hours and more overtime.<sup>90</sup>

Another feature of wartime work is the reversal of the fortunes of the most vulnerable groups of male employees during the 1930s recession: those who were older, disabled, the skilled manual workers in the 'traditional' depressed heavy industries and the unskilled where unemployment rates had been highest. Wartime work, like soldiering, could also 'make a man of you', and boys expressed a sense of achieving manhood earlier due to the pressures and opportunities of war. At seventeen, for example, Jack Ashley felt he was 'doing a man's job at the factory' and 'demanded a man's wages' while he also looked forward 'to fighting in the Air Force when I was eighteen'.<sup>91</sup> Ashley related here to both traditional breadwinner masculinity and to military masculinity. The relatively high wartime earnings of male workers, especially of the unskilled and semi-skilled, could provide more surplus for masculinity-affirming leisure activities, such as drinking, gambling and going to the dog racing, horse racing and football, which is explored in chapter six. As Thomas Carmichael, a wartime Merchant Navy engineer, recalled about his wages and war bonus: 'Oh I was quids in. I was really in the money by that time.'<sup>92</sup> Some interviewees expressed a sense of guilt at their wages compared to soldiers and commented on some resentment expressed towards them.<sup>93</sup> This was evident in House of Commons debates, within government and amongst sections of the public who criticised 'excessive' earnings of reserved workers. Home Intelligence Reports from London in July 1940 noted: 'Discontent expressed at differences between soldiers' allowances and high pay of men in some reserved occupations; equality of sacrifice asked for.'<sup>94</sup> Wartime engineering turned

John Thomas Murphy claimed in his 1942 autobiography *Victory Production* that 'it is impossible to move among the soldiers and sailors and airmen of all ranks without hearing scathing comments on the civilian population: on the munition workers who take home £10 to £15 a week.'<sup>95</sup> Lieutenant-Commander Gurney Braithwaite spoke in the Commons of the 'extraordinary and disgraceful discrimination against the rank and file of the Forces as compared with those in reserved occupations' who he noted were able to 'get fat' on high earnings.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, the Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Roger Keyes and MP for Portsmouth, stated:

Why should those who are in reserved occupations have advantages over their brothers and sisters in the Fighting Services who get no increases of wages and no extra pay for overtime on Saturdays and Sundays, but who sometimes have to fight and work the clock round in terrible conditions, especially at sea. Surely, such inequality of service to the State is thoroughly illogical.<sup>97</sup>

These comments of 1941, which reflect the biased upper class viewpoints of Keyes and Braithwaite, were made at a time when public confidence in the government's prosecution of the war was particularly low and criticisms of workers' and management performance were frequent. Mass Observation noted, however, in August 1941 that 'the question of difference between civilian and Service pay is not a major live issue.'<sup>98</sup> Army diarists complained of small pay but this was 'not related unfavourably to the better pay of civilians'. Indeed, there were 'extremely infrequent references' to civilian pay. Offsetting wartime workers' wages to some extent were the hikes in income taxes and rising cost of living in wartime.<sup>99</sup> Earnings could also be affected by shortages in the supply of raw materials and labour which generated anger and accusations of bad management and inept government supply officials amongst workmen. This could affect take home wages

considerably because of low basic wage rates and the prevalence of piecework, where wages were directly tied to production. A woman married to a skilled aircraft factory worker noted in her diary for Mass Observation: 'My husband last week earned no overtime or bonus, and his flat rate was not big enough to pay the household bills, let alone his expenses. We had to draw £1 from the bank.'<sup>100</sup> This sense of unpredictability may well have put more pressure on war workers to graft to maximise their wage packets.

The shift from time wage rates, which was a weekly basic wage, to payments by results wage systems and incentivising through bonus schemes extended further in wartime. This was a significant aspect of 'scientific management' and was married with a marked shift towards mechanisation, flow production and assembly line work techniques, associated with Fordism.<sup>101</sup> The work pace of some workers, in vehicles and aircraft manufacture for example, was dictated by the speed of the production track. Charles Hill, a semi-skilled lathe operator, noted 'It isn't the way I like working because everything had to be done in a rush.' Hill was paid on piecework and this could vary: 'Some of the prices were ridiculous. I mean it was ridiculous how they say X amount for these and Z for these, and the next job they don't pay quite as much. You can argue, [but] no, no, that's what we pay, and this is it.'<sup>102</sup> Coal miners were traditionally paid by results and work was further incentivised by wartime bonus payments. As coal miner Henry Barrett noted: 'It was mad working down there. They [coalface workers] were on a bonus. Their mates, their gang, were doing it so they had to do it. They worked so hard . . . it's unbelievable.'<sup>103</sup> A contemporary reflected: 'The miner is a big man when it comes to winning the war.'<sup>104</sup> According to a Ministry of Labour survey in July 1941 around sixty per cent of workers in the engineering sector were paid by results rather than by time.<sup>105</sup> It was also usual for an extra rate to be paid for night shift work, and the latter extended significantly in wartime. Results-driven wages contributed to the over-work culture in wartime. All the examples

collected by Mass Observation in 1942 of the highest earners in wartime production were men and a feature of these high earners was working long overtime hours.<sup>106</sup>

Whether paid by time or by some version of payments by results or piecework, men were preoccupied with job security and with protecting and maximising earnings. Harry McGregor, who worked as an apprentice engineer in a Glasgow railway locomotive works, stated: 'you cut corners to get money, you know . . . It all meant work for money. It was all about money.'<sup>107</sup> McGregor made repeated references to high wages: 'I was earning more money at home than if I had been in the Army'; 'I prefer to be in a reserved occupation, you know, because I think the wages were . . . two shillings a day or something like that in the Army, you know. And I was earning more at Hyde Park'; 'I think most of the Army thought, wished that they were in a reserved occupation.'<sup>108</sup> Another respondent, Willie Dewar, reckoned this was a cause of friction: male workers 'were getting the extra money. And that was a wee bit of a sore point with the Army people. They weren't getting big money, they were only getting a certain amount of money per month.'<sup>109</sup> Charles Lamb, wartime shipyard worker, recalled with some pride buying his first wallet and being able to save £25 in it over a year during the war.<sup>110</sup>

While manual workers on essential war work saw their wages rise substantially, non-manual, professional and other middle class occupations fared worse. Most middle class employees were not paid directly by results, did not earn bonuses nor work as much overtime. One survey found that office and administrative staff salaries had risen by ten per cent whereas manual workers' wages had increased by seventy one per cent between 1939 and 1942.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, Dudley Seers notes that while working class real net incomes had risen by over nine per cent, middle class ones fell by over seven per cent.<sup>112</sup> There were large differences within middle class incomes, with professionals, clerks and foremen, according to Guy Routh, being particularly badly hit (comparatively).<sup>113</sup> In this

respect, the wartime economic value of reserved working class men markedly exceeded that of middle class men. Higher earnings came at a cost, however, as Jack Jones, a Transport and General Workers Union official in wartime Coventry, argued:

They were working long hours of work. Working under great pressure. We used piecework extensively. In many cases it was six, seven days a week of work. I suppose it could be argued that they were doing well financially out of it, because it was piecework in the main, where I was. The incentive was the more you did, the more you earned. I would say workers got tired towards the war, physically tired, because of the demands of that sort of working. But there was no feeling that it would have been better in the Forces, or alternatively that people were shirking going in the Forces. Young men who were eligible went in, and those who were required to work in the factories, and it was a question of were required, it was essential work in the factories, had to work hard, and long hours. But it wasn't exactly a gift, not to go in the Forces.<sup>114</sup>

Jones' narrative provides an insight into the way that enhanced wage packets linked to high productivity in wartime enabled breadwinner masculinity to be bolstered among reserved men. He refers to the heavy demands that wartime work placed upon the body and by asserting that men were not regarded as 'shirking' by remaining on the home front, he denies the emasculating potential of civilian status. The fact that he feels he has to rebut the accusation of shirking in his narrative simultaneously illustrates the power of the cultural circuit. Coined by Graham Dawson, this term refers to the feedback loop between personal accounts and public discourses.<sup>115</sup> As referred to in chapter two, workers 'shirking' in wartime is a powerful motif in post-war public discourse across a range of cultural products, including television and film.

### **Validating masculinity: skill, strength and expertise**

Civilian masculinity was also validated by reference to skill, experience, physical prowess and technical and scientific expertise. These were attributes that were much in demand by the war economy and this in turn enhanced the economic and social value of such men. Strong, skilled and experienced workers were required to endure the rigours of long working hours and the pressures of war production in the mines, ironworks and shipyards. While unemployment and under-employment in the 1930s had reduced the demand for hard physical graft, war work enabled muscles to be honed and workers to again be able to extract maximum capital out of their physical strength and capacities to lift, push, dig, hammer and sweat. Craftsmanship was also again in demand, with apprenticeships operating as the traditional rite of passage through which many young men became adults and entered a world of more secure employment and more regular and higher wages with a 'trade', the status of which was now enhanced and endorsed by the state by being classified as 'reserved'. Male and female trainees, known as dilutees, also required experienced workers to train them and this drew many older, retired male workers back in to the workplace. Bevin Boy Ron Deeley recalled:

A lot of the old men came back. These men must have been sixty or seventy. But these men looked after us. We can only be grateful because they saved us many times from stupid things we might be doing in the mine. I'm always grateful to these old men, the miners, who'd come back in to the pits to help the war effort.<sup>116</sup>

The war also brought demands for technical skills and for supervision, management and leadership, with upward promotion common from semi-skilled and skilled positions to those of chargehand, foreman, superintendant and, in some cases, manager. In becoming a

‘leading hand’, with more discretion, responsibility and autonomy on the job, perhaps supervising women and fellow male workers, masculine status was enhanced. For young men the attainment of skilled status, and hence full manhood, could be accelerated. Adult male dilutee electricians, for example, could truncate the traditional five-year apprenticeship, advance to exempt status and attain a ‘skilled card’ after just a few months of training. They could then earn similar wage rates as skilled men. Nineteen-year-old apprentice electrician Frank Chapple, for example, made a formal complaint and, together with other apprentices, was upgraded. This also caused ructions. His foreman ‘nearly had an apoplectic fit when I presented my employment card – a skilled man and not yet 21!’<sup>117</sup> In these ways working men found both traditional and alternative routes to maintain and bolster their manliness, which in part at least negated the countervailing pressures associated with not being in uniform. In traditional heavy industries, such as coal mining and ship-building for example, the proportion of the labour force that was skilled hardly changed through wartime.<sup>118</sup> In exceptional cases, some skilled crafts, such as the boilermakers, flatly refused to allow dilution throughout the war. Masculine pride was also evident in the craftsmanship and the scale of men’s work, as, for example, in shipbuilding. In Victor Pritchett’s study of wartime shipyards, one worker is quoted as saying, ‘shipbuilding is a man’s job. You’re one of thousands who are making something big.’<sup>119</sup> Beneath a photograph of masses of men leaving a Glasgow shipyard Pritchett inserted a caption: ‘they swarm the streets; they own the city’. Skill also denoted higher earnings, as mechanical engineer Roger Major recalled: ‘If you were a good worker, and you were highly skilled, you made a lot of money.’<sup>120</sup>

Experience and skill mattered. Middle aged and older male skilled workers would be promoted more rapidly to supervisory and ‘staff’ roles, as George Dean, an apprentice engineering worker in the A.V. Roes aircraft factory, explained: ‘The setters that were

doing it were men, anything from forty upwards you know, to sixty five, they got foreman's jobs and charge hands, you see, all that sort of staff work.'<sup>121</sup> William Ryder, a thirty-year-old semi-skilled worker at the Woolwich Arsenal, for example found himself promoted to chargehand and supervising middle class male dilutees.<sup>122</sup> Men might be promoted to positions of authority because of their age, rather than based on their ability.

Mass Observation reported:

One of the jokes current in industry is the story of the man of 41 who registered and was asked what he wanted to do in munitions. He said he would like to start as a labourer. The Ministry of Labour interviewer replied: 'As a labourer? No fear. You'll start as a foreman and work your way down.'<sup>123</sup>

This quip about an older man being parachuted into the workplace to act as a supervisor rather than a labourer plays on the fact that even in wartime male gender and age conferred status, irrespective of lack of training and experience. This was a complex process however and the war undoubtedly witnessed deskilling as well as upskilling, degradation in male status as well as upgrading. There were victims of wartime changes in production and labour management as well as beneficiaries. In the American context, Stephen Meyer has argued that the combination of Taylorism, Fordism and technological change in flow production methods was inherently emasculating because they threatened skilled labour: 'their work became unmanly.'<sup>124</sup> Such methods spread more slowly in Britain before the war, largely being confined to cars, electrical consumer goods (such as hoovers and radios), artificial fibres, plastics and chemical manufacture, as there was less of a skill shortage than the States. In Britain, as noted, there was much upgrading and upskilling that went hand-in-hand with job fragmentation during wartime. While deskilling in wartime was evident in munitions, aircraft manufacture, vehicles and light engineering jobs where

assembly line flow production was most developed, it was relatively insignificant in the traditional heavy industries. Welding in the shipyards (replacing the process of riveting) provides perhaps the only significant example of deskilling, which was exacerbated by female dilution. The imperatives of wartime production, however, could lead to training being subverted and emphasis being put on routine operations and short, repetitive work-cycle times. Ronald Wakeman moved in wartime from Shorts aircraft manufacturing in Rochester, Kent to a job making gun carriages in Bowaters munitions factory in Northfleet, Kent. When asked if he liked the work he responded, 'I didn't like it at all . . . it's too much like mass production. There was no craftsmanship in it, it was just a matter of assembling it. This was the sort of work I'd done as an apprentice.'<sup>125</sup> Similarly, a Clydeside shipbuilding draughtsman recalled being denied autonomy and discretion during wartime when Denny's converted from producing paddle steamers to warships as the design plans were all drawn up externally by the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors at the Admiralty.<sup>126</sup>

In practice, the application of Fordist flow production and Taylorite rationalised 'scientific management' methods that were corrosive to skilled craft masculinity were limited in Britain in the 1940s. This was a result of managerial complacency and conservatism and in part a reflection of stronger trade unions. Moreover, product markets were very different for Britain compared to America. Britain retained a larger niche in bespoke, tailor-made products requiring high levels of skill, such as ships and locomotives. The Bedaux managerial system through which Taylorism was popularised in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s was only taken up by some 250 or so large firms and was discredited in wartime through the association of Bedaux with Nazism.<sup>127</sup> More typically, our interview cohort was upwardly mobile in wartime, rather than deskilled. Some respondents expressed a deep sense of pride and achievement in being able to apply their skills, experience and physical capacities to useful war work. This was very evident in the

testimonies of shipyard workers. Charles Lamb, for example, commented: ‘They needed shipbuilders . . . Anybody I suppose could fire a rifle but there wasnae everybody that could work in a shipyard.’<sup>128</sup> Similarly, shipbuilding worker Alexander Davidson recalled:

We used to find shortcuts sometimes to do the work and get it done. We took pride in our work, you know. And it had to be good. I mean, you couldn’t be slovenly about something that men’s lives depended on. They had to drive the boat and get it there and in the face of the enemy and if the boat broke down before it got there, they’d be taken prisoners, you know, if they weren’t shot at, you know.<sup>129</sup>

Despite taking ‘shortcuts’ in order to complete the workload according to target, Davidson recognised that the necessity for quantity could not be at the expense of quality. ‘Men’s lives depended’ on the skill of the shipbuilders.

The war also provided a lot of opportunities for reserved workers to combine conceptualising work with execution, rather than having the thinking removed from the task at hand, which was a key element of Taylorism. There was encouragement, for example, for new production ideas and improvements through redesigning jobs. In engineering especially, wartime meant constant changes in designs, types of orders, production runs and technologies. This called for reorganisation of work practices and renegotiations of wage rates, which increased the power of workers and their trade union representatives on the shop floor in order to make the changes quickly and efficiently. Apprentice plater Thomas Cantwell described how he successfully improved a plate metal job by welding on support bars thus earning the accolades of work colleagues and recognition from management:

[T]he lads were comin’ to me and sayin’ ‘that’s the best one that’s ever been done here.’ [Laughter] But hey I grew another two inches! [Laughter]

And anyway so the manager must've seen that as well, you know, and I got a list of jobs after that.<sup>130</sup>

Cantwell was evidently proud of his invention and the praise he received, joking that he had grown in stature. John Hiscutt reflected with a touch of arrogance that his craft was at the top of the pile in engineering, recalling: 'Tool making is considered the cream of engineering and I can do it but not many other people can.'<sup>131</sup> Mark Benney commented in his fictionalised account of 'tooling up' a bomber factory: 'the work had nothing of monotony in it . . . it was deeply, deeply satisfying.'<sup>132</sup> The last paragraph of the novel sees the workmen gathered outside to witness the first completed machine fly over the factory:

We watched till it was long out of sight, then looked at each other, unashamed of the pride shining through our eyes. After all we had built it . . . and it was a beautiful and powerful thing. Weapon for weapon, we felt the skilled slaves of our enemies had nothing so good to show.<sup>133</sup>

For draughtsmen the work could be as much art as labour:

It was a very skilled job . . . One of the things as far as draughtsmen are concerned, it isn't just the technical part of the job. It's the layout of the drawing, the quality of your printing and it's a work of art. Draughtsmen look upon their work as [a] work of art. So having been to the Ipswich School of Art for fifteen months or so you, it's something inside you. You wanna make a good job of a drawing.<sup>134</sup>

In a similar vein John Allen spoke passionately about the 'art' of shipbuilding:

[S]hopkeepers, other tradesmen, office workers, they hadn't a clue what the shipyard was all about . . . [T]hey find it amazing what you were able to do in the shipyard and how you could put all these plates together and

ships together, the bow ship, the propellers, everything like that. How you could walk the beams. That was an art itself.<sup>135</sup>

In these reserved men's accounts which describe both manual and non-manual jobs as 'art', we get a sense of the meaning of wartime work and the creativity and importance of male identities.

In similar ways, masculinity was nurtured and sustained in the wartime coal mines where despite desperate labour shortages only men were employed in all underground operations. In wartime, as in peacetime, coalminers' masculinity was forged through working in a tough, dangerous environment and through applying acquired skills, knowledge and experience to the process of winning the coal. 'Big hewers' who could sustain their energy through a long work day and get the most out of thin seams or tricky geological conditions were revered within the community. William Ramage recalled how he had worked a particularly difficult seam:

I did that for a long time. I was good at it too. That thirty feet was, took a bit o' shifting. There were some o' the lads that, out by, they wondered why basically we were making more money than them, you know. One or two o' them tried it, oh, they were lost. You needed the strength, the skill, the know-how. For instance, when you fired your shots, four feet deep, you had a mountain o' coal to shift before you could get a, we used steel bars, corrugated steel, seven and a half feet long . . . We did it ourselves. We didn't shout for a hand because there was nobody there to give you a hand. It was tough, but it was very rewarding in the fact that we knew we were good at what we could do.<sup>136</sup>

Ramage's sense of pride in the job, his independence and confidence in his masculine prowess as a producer is evident here. His narration of extracting thirty feet of coal ends

with the comment: ‘thirty feet, eh. It separated the men from the boys. Lots o’ people couldn’t do it. But I was one o’ the chosen few that could do it. [Laughter]’ A competitive environment co-existed with camaraderie within male working class culture. Men strove to produce more than one another; to be the ‘top dog’.<sup>137</sup> The war provided an environment conducive to the expression of such values. Nor were the dominant cultural and economic forms of masculinity necessarily mutually exclusive in wartime. William Ramage is an example of someone who embraced both traditional ‘hard man’ notions of masculinity and hegemonic military masculinity, expressing a persistent desire to enlist, eventually ‘escaping’ the pits into the army.

#### **‘Women flooded in’: reserved men, female labour and dilution**

The notion of women surging into and dominating war work is a pervasive one within both popular culture and historiographical treatments of the home front. The very presence of women in the spaces that men once occupied is often regarded as inherently emasculating. There is some truth in this interpretation: women were called up according to age and marital status and did penetrate significantly into the wartime workplace. At the peak in 1943 they constituted thirty nine per cent of the total labour force compared to twenty six per cent in 1938. In the engineering sector the proportion of women employed grew from ten per cent in 1939 to thirty four per cent in 1943; in transport from five per cent in 1939 to twenty per cent in 1943; in metal manufacturing from seventeen per cent in 1939 to forty six per cent in 1943.<sup>138</sup> However, the populist notion of a tsunami of women flooding into, and dominating, the wartime workplace by replacing men, thereby challenging male identities and undermining masculinity, needs to be seriously qualified.

Between two and three times as many men (10.7 million in 1943) were working on the home front compared to men in the armed forces (4.3 million), while 2.2 million

*additional* women, most of whom were married, were recruited into the wartime civilian labour force, up from 4.6m in 1938 to peak at 6.8m in 1943.<sup>139</sup> While there were more women and fewer men (around 2.5m less men by the end of the war) in wartime industry than pre-war, what is significant is that men still represented the majority of wartime workers (sixty one per cent), around half of whom were reserved.

Labour market segregation by gender was challenged by wartime circumstances, but nevertheless it did persist, both in terms of horizontal and vertical segregation.<sup>140</sup> There continued to be large swathes of work, including coal mining, iron and steel works, the railways, docks, heavy engineering, construction and shipbuilding, which remained almost totally monopolised by men and which continued to be regarded as ‘men’s work’. In *Builders* (1942), one of the few wartime propaganda films devoted exclusively to reserved workers, there are no women on screen.<sup>141</sup> Ewart Rayner recalled that the tool room where he worked at Shorts Aero in Rochester remained all men, but the ‘machine shop’ next door was mixed, with a large influx of women.<sup>142</sup> In lighter manufacturing, the entry of women proceeded more rapidly although even here most skilled and supervisory jobs remained dominated by men and female apprenticeships were virtually unknown. There also continued to be a dangerous work ‘taboo’ which excluded women from the most hazardous and chronically unhealthy and dirty jobs which were culturally deemed to be only suitable for men. This was legitimised by protective patriarchal legislation, such as the 1842 Act which banned women from employment underground, and regulations from the 1890s, for example preventing women from working in the white lead industry amidst fears about the negative impact of the work on women’s reproductive capacity. When women were exposed to danger and ill-health, for example in explosives factories, emphasis was placed on protecting their bodies and on providing rest breaks, while men were deemed capable of looking after themselves. Agnes McLean, the leader of the equal pay strike at Rolls Royce,

Hillington near Glasgow in 1943, recalled that young male workers did not have to go on courses whereas women did and that women were not allowed to set the machines: ‘there was unskilled men and others, and we were the others, and we were below even the unskilled.’<sup>143</sup>

How then did reserved men recall and represent women workers in their retrospective personal accounts? Some did not refer to female workers in their narratives and had to be asked directly about female colleagues. Charles Lamb, an apprentice shipwright in wartime, for example, apologised for his omission:

Oh well, the women, the women welders. Oh sorry aye, women, girls come in and they were, put through a course, or fast course, and they were good. They were very good. Aye . . . Just as well you mentioned that dear. Aye I was forgetting about the, the girls, aye, they were mixed in with the men.<sup>144</sup>

Others mentioned women spontaneously, such as Geoffrey Cooper who recalled how female workers were ‘accepted’ and ‘respected’ at RAF Farnborough where he was based during the war and noted that there were a number of female scientists, ‘some of them fairly high rank.’<sup>145</sup> Rural blacksmith Alexander Ramage ‘admired’ the ‘Land Girls’ who ‘mucked in’, noting ‘they were a real contribution.’<sup>146</sup> Fred Millican recalled that in Vickers Arms works in Newcastle women were integrated during wartime quite smoothly: ‘I never noticed any sort of animosity or anything like that, no. I think they were appreciated, what they were doing, and as I say some of them did quite heavy work, you know, men, what you would traditionally say “men’s work”, yes.’<sup>147</sup> These more gender tolerant representations were in part a reflection of shifting gender roles since the war and the absorption by older men interviewed in the twenty-first century of greater respect for women borne out of changing roles over the past fifty years.

This was evident in Derek Sims' narrative. He had joined the RAF in 1942 and later visited on leave the aircraft factory where he had previously worked:

There weren't that many [women] when I was there, but when I visited that aircraft factory when I was in the Air Force . . . oh the place was absolutely running alive with ladies. They were doing everything, you know [Laughter]. About the only thing the men were doing was making the tea! [Laughter]

Interviewer: Were they well accepted by the men in the factory?

Derek Sims: Oh yes, yes they were, because they were very, very good engineers. They had been trained by the men of course . . . Some of them in the Design Department of course had been to college. It was about the time when I think ladies were starting to feel their feet, you know, and saying you know, 'we're part of this', you know, 'we can do what he's doing', which was fair enough, they could.<sup>148</sup>

Sims' generally positive and effusive commentary about the reception of women in his old workplace was qualified by the point that 'they had been trained by the men of course'. In a similar vein, Roger Major waxed lyrical on how efficient the new female workers were in the engineering factory he worked in, telling a long anecdote about a 'brilliant' female crane operator. Strikingly, however, he observed that 'the older men resented them [women workers], yeah. Wouldn't show them anything. They thought, "oh, they're taking my job off us", aye that was, I mean it was the attitude.'<sup>149</sup>

Major recognised that age influenced attitudes towards women at work. Among our cohort of interviewees, who were young men during the war, there appears to have been a more liberal attitude towards the influx of women into the workplace. Certainly there is little overt discrimination expressed in our interviews. Some recalled the excitement of

having more young women around to talk to and the opportunities that created for romance and sex, as we explore in chapter six. Younger men had less capital invested in work experience and skills and perhaps felt less threatened than older craftsmen who were concerned to protect wage differentials and control the flooding of labour markets with what they perceived to be an unskilled and cheap reserve army of labour. These older workers would have been more socialised into traditional values that defined a married woman's role as homemaker and mother and the man's as breadwinner. Many of these older men would also have had bitter memories of the 1930s when their labour was deemed surplus to requirements and this partly conditioned their defensive response. These men were more set in their ways and more likely to begrudge change and perceive women dilutees as a threat. John Thomas Murphy, aged fifty when the war started, noted in his wartime autobiography that the entry of women to his railway engineering factory was 'cursed by most men' and that 'generally the men were reluctant to give anything away.'<sup>150</sup> This must have been recognised as a common occurrence as the documentary film *They Keep the Wheels Turning* (1942) shows the displeasure of a garage foreman at being allocated female dilutees, his initial scepticism changing to admiration as he acknowledges their capabilities. Men on the shop floor had similar reservations that were overcome by female colleagues' competence. Thomas Cantwell, for example, recalled: 'And I remember these girls coming in, and I was sayin' this "women welders?!" [Laughter] you know. And then when they came in, some of them, they were quite good. And all they had was two weeks trainin', and onto the shop floor to weld.'<sup>151</sup> Cantwell, who aged nineteen had a relationship with one of the welders, iterated 'And she was a good welder. [Laughter]' Similarly, railwayman Ron Spedding recalled in his published memoir: 'At first, the women were considered a source of amusement and thought incapable of doing the rough and heavy work expected of them. But they proved their critics wrong.'<sup>152</sup> Women were

employed 'in the heat, noise and dirt of the forge and the Smiths' shop. Some even operated heavy drop-hammers – a job considered rough and undesirable by any standard.'<sup>153</sup>

While acknowledging the significant role of wartime women workers, strikingly a substantial cluster of male reserved workers defined the contribution of women in a dismissive way, implying lesser capacities when it came to paid work. This was also a way of discursively affirming masculinity. This mirrored Summerfield's female war workers who downplayed the role of men, erasing them from their memories. In men's recollections, women, who performed a supplementary role, were trained and supported by men. Some men made revealing assumptions about management being opposed to the entry of female labour and women not wanting to work but being forced to do so. Frank Harvey, for example, a machine tool operator in Manchester, recalled this was because 'it was men's jobs really.'<sup>154</sup> In his autobiography Oxford tinsmith Arthur Exell recalled: 'These girls weren't quite up to it and they were a bit fed up . . . kicking against it and staying away from work. They were giving the management a lot of trouble for not trying with their work and taking lots of time off . . . Absenteeism amongst the women was really terrible.'<sup>155</sup> Wartime engineering turner John Thomas Murphy noted of women dilutees, 'some, of course, were dumb and slow'.<sup>156</sup> Harry McGregor represented the apprentice strikes in 1941 as a reaction to women earning more, which he clearly regarded as undeserving and a slight on his youthful masculinity. Women, he recounted, were 'pushing barrows from one shop to another and they were getting four pound a week, and we're getting an apprenticeship and practically nothing, and that's why we went on strike. We were out for six weeks.'<sup>157</sup>

There was a tendency among reserved men to represent women as being of less value, less capable and dependent upon men in the workplace. It was men that set up their

machines and supervised them and women were represented as ‘belonging’ to men, almost as if they were their property. George Dean recalled: ‘the foreman had said, “I’ve got your new girl here, George, this is so-and-so.”’<sup>158</sup> The process of dilution was one that invariably saw women brought in at the lowest level, on unskilled, poorly paid work. Jim Lister recalled that in the railways where he worked men were promoted upwards to do the most skilled and the heaviest, and consequently best paid, work:

Every fitter had a labourer . . . his mate. But what they done after that, they put women on the labouring to the fitter. And these fellers was used for other jobs, such as a mate of mine up in Edinburgh, he was in a signal box . . . They started to learn women in the signal boxes and when they’d done that . . . he was [transferred] on [to] the shunting.<sup>159</sup> Cos you couldn’t ask women to do shunting with the big poles and the hooks and what have you.<sup>160</sup>

Shunting was one of the most dangerous jobs in railway yards, with a very high accident rate. It was not deemed suitable for women because of the physical nature of the work and a protective ethos governed this type of labour. Lister provides an insight into the process that ensured such work was not allocated to women, who, he implies, were less ‘able’. In a similar narrative, John O’Halloran, a wartime clerk in Napier’s Engines and Motors in London, recalled women ‘teeming’ in the offices but not on the shop floor, commenting ‘working large machine tools didn’t seem to be their forte.’<sup>161</sup>

Mark Benney, a wartime dilutee retrained as a skilled reserved tool room engineering worker, depicts women workers in his wartime novel *Over to Bombers* in a similarly dismissive vein; they were resented by the men largely as a nuisance and a distraction. While one character, Vera Stone, is strong, respected and very capable, she is regarded as the exception to the rule. The vast majority of women recruited to the work are

disparaged as indifferent, ‘docile’, bored, ‘lazy and stupid’, ‘frail, temperamental, irresponsible’, with a poor work ethic and high absentee rate. They are depicted as more interested in their appearance than their output, spending an inordinate amount of time in front of the toilet mirrors.<sup>162</sup> They were deployed on simple, unskilled work because they were deemed incapable of anything more complex, made the men’s tea and ran errands for them, and were excluded from the responsible and the ‘dirty work’.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, women were blamed for most of the mistakes (‘snags’) picked up at the inspection stage. Most of the working men of Benney’s fictional bomber factory, particularly the older male craftsmen, did not want to work with the women, were hostile to them and only reluctantly trained them.<sup>164</sup> Benney’s central character is sympathetic, yet comments:

The women were another problem altogether. Industry as we know it is a man-made world. There is no place within its framework where women can function fully and at their ease. But equally it is difficult to imagine any industrial framework in which women as we know them could function satisfactorily . . . Women in our factory – with a very few exceptions – behaved with an exaggerated degree of femininity.<sup>165</sup>

There was, then, a marked tendency to diminish the contribution made by women in the wartime workplace by reserved men in both fiction and reality. Richard Fitzpatrick, an unskilled Glasgow chemical factory worker, noted:

They [female workers] were mostly out in the yard y’know, doing odds and ends, but never in the furnace shop or the crystal house or the store. They were mainly in different jobs out in the yard, very few women . . . Once the war finished the women all disappeared, y’know, bar the, where you made your breakfast, the women worked in there.<sup>166</sup>

Fitzpatrick trivialises the contributions made by women by noting they were ‘doing odds and ends’ and performing gendered roles in the canteen, providing to the needs of men and thereby enabling men to perform their vital work. Semi-skilled worker William Ryder described the women he came into contact with during the war in Woolwich Arsenal, London:

Ah only they were more or less cleaners. They used to keep the gangways clean and that sort of thing. It was hardly the hardest job in the world . . . They were a nuisance . . . Well you could never find them when you wanted them [Laughter] . . . You had to keep your eye on them. Like I say I never had much dealings with them. I used to just order the gear for them and leave them to it. I had my work cut out . . .

Interviewer: What other jobs did they do besides this sweeping?

William Ryder: There was some what they called diluting mechanics. Fitters. They used to do a bit of fitting. Fitting the mechanism of guns. They were classed as dilutee fitters. That was a sort of semi-skilled fitter.

Interviewer: How did they perform on that job?

William Ryder: Well I never had a lot of dealings with them because it was all little stuff they were fiddling about with. I never had any dealings with them.

Interviewer: You mean small scale work?

William Ryder: Yes, little bits and pieces. I was more or less dealing with hundreds of tons.<sup>167</sup>

Ryder provides a ‘rough masculinity’ interpretation. The concept of ‘rough masculinity’ has been used to define the culture and behaviour of male working class manual labourers, semi-skilled workers (such as car assembly line workers) and those involved in heavy,

dangerous work (such as mining and construction). This is in contrast to the 'respectable masculinity' of non-manual office workers, professionals, management and craft artisans where conceptualisation, 'pen-pushing' and technical mastery prevailed and where the culture stigmatised married women working.<sup>168</sup> Ryder highlights the importance and superiority of men at work and the lesser roles of women. The women employed on undemanding cleaning tasks, who often absconded, were a 'nuisance' and needed to be under continual supervision, and the female dilutees who were merely 'good enough' to 'fiddle' about on the easy, light work were no threat to Ryder's masculinity. Their presence was acknowledged, but they were dismissed as inferior and regarded as being of little importance.

Working class men positioned themselves, therefore, in relation to women. As the work of Penny Summerfield has shown, women invariably entered the labour market on subordinate terms, usually as unskilled dilutees, temporarily replacing men.<sup>169</sup> It was common for men to be promoted and women to be deployed to undertake routine unskilled and semi-skilled roles, sometimes with work being reorganised and split up. This fragmentation and deskilling of tasks further enhanced the masculine status of men remaining on the original intact work, whose earnings and prestige in the workplace could be augmented by the presence of women. Higonnet and Higonnet's concept of the 'double helix' is applicable here.<sup>170</sup> With its two intertwined and equidistant strands, the helix illustrates the progress and regress that women experienced both during and in the aftermath of the two world wars, as well as the consistency of women's subordination to men. In peacetime, the home in which women predominated was subordinate to the masculine arena of work upon which more prestige was conferred. With the mobilisation of women in wartime into roles that had previously been undertaken by men, women acquired a new status. This resulted in the feminine strand of the helix ascending.

Prompted by their new combatant role, men's status rose concurrently, leading to the masculine thread also moving forward. The helix illustrates that women's increased status in wartime did not challenge the gender hierarchy as the relative positioning between the sexes in terms of prestige remained intact. The concept of the double helix can be applied to a purely civilian context as well. Women might have assumed new roles in the workplace, but given their limited training, fragmentation of tasks, deskilling, lower pay and the recognised temporary nature of their participation in the labour force, women remained subordinate to civilian men who continued to be employed, often having undertaken lengthy apprenticeships, in jobs which were not broken down into component parts but were retained in their complex entirety, enjoyed higher pay and who would continue in these roles after the war. As long as reserved men could feel that women were still subordinate to them and that the change was a temporary wartime emergency measure then masculinities remained intact, relatively unscathed.

The continuities in the wartime sexual division of labour and gender identities are often underestimated. While there were significant challenges and transgressions, masculinity largely survived wartime pressures partly because there were clear limits to what women were allowed to do; their 'encroachment' was time-barred, contingent and defined. Mass Observation reported:

In the factories . . . no doubt there are women in key positions; they are blanketed by masses of men . . . The atmosphere is rather that the women are helping the men and *temporarily* taking over for the men to do something more important. The atmosphere is strictly masculine still . . . [E]verywhere the machinery, the control, the arrangement, the psychology of leadership and incentive is determined by men.<sup>171</sup>

Where women did ‘encroach’ in the workplace, reserved men could salvage their pride by recognising that the situation was temporary, as it had been a generation before. As Glasgow draughtsman Willie Dewar put it: ‘the whole story was that once the war was over the girls would be made redundant and the men would get their jobs back, so that was agreed.’<sup>172</sup> This patriarchal exclusionary strategy was strongly supported by the male-dominated trade union movement, which played a key part in the wartime rebuilding of traditional breadwinner masculinity.

Working class men consciously positioned themselves in relation to other men, as well as women. There were evident frictions in wartime dilution, involving men. In firefighting, for example, the formation of the Auxiliary Fire Service created enormous tensions and was opposed by some regular fire chiefs, such as in Birmingham. When asked about why there were ‘mutual resentments’ between regular firemen and dilutees, Edward Ashill recalled:

[A]s far as the auxiliary fire service were concerned, many of the auxiliaries were getting ranks which were superior to that of the regular firemen and therefore there was this great resentment on the part of the regular that they were, as it were, being bypassed in favour of people in the AFS who obtained ranks in the Auxiliary Fire Service and latterly of course in the National Fire Service.<sup>173</sup>

Kenneth Holland, a fireman in wartime Oldham reflected: ‘I’m afraid there was a view among regular firemen throughout the country that the auxiliary fireman was a lesser mortal.’<sup>174</sup> Similar tensions around dilution existed within the coal mines when the Bevin Boy scheme was established in December 1943. In some cases where the miners were paid bonuses these were not shared with the conscripts who were not deemed as deserving as the ‘real men’ who cut the coal.<sup>175</sup> Reluctant draftees to the pits had to prove themselves as

men in a highly dangerous workplace where safety was reliant upon the actions of others. Hierarchies of male labour prevailed and the position of reserved men was complicated by wartime dilution and the bringing in of quickly trained outsiders for the duration.

To some extent, these conflicts were about defending masculinity in that they defined work that was manly and hence was deserving of bonus payments and promotion. Masculinity, then, was not only classified in relation to women workers in wartime but was also labelled by reference to fellow male employees who were considered less manly. This was most evident across the manual/non-manual divide. Rough masculinity, for example of the shipyard riveting 'black squads', looked down upon office workers as effeminate and craftsmen as aloof and privileged. John Allan, an unskilled Clyde shipyard worker employed as a jobber and then a platers' helper, called these 'the gentlemen's trades'.<sup>176</sup> They were considered a 'cushy number' with more security and better work conditions compared for example to working out in the open in all weathers on a building site or in a shipyard. Railwayman Ron Spedding stated that 'signing chits, sweeping floors, making tea, running errands and worst of all being dressed complete with collar and tie was not my idea of engineering, wagon building or man's work.'<sup>177</sup> Middle class draftees and volunteers into the mines were regarded as lesser men, not to be trusted and recognised as less capable until they could prove themselves. Roy Deeley recalled: 'any hard work some of them would sort of take it off you because we were a bit softer than they were. They were quite tough.'<sup>178</sup> Deeley, who had volunteered for the pits, recalled a black-faced miner refusing to let him court his daughter because he was not man enough and being the butt of some ribbing for his politics: 'they called me Tory boy because of my standing up for Churchill and everything. "Roy Roy the Tory Boy."<sup>179</sup> While masculinity was recouped and affirmed in accounts of the inferiority of women workers, it could, then, be defined in relation also to dilutee men. William Ryder, who as we have seen had been

disparaging of women workers, also expressed his hegemonic working class breadwinner masculinity by positioning himself in relation to what he regarded as weaker and more effeminate middle class male dilutees:

Well why I think they made me chargehand was maybe the men we had were directed in there, they were older than me and they were men that were like, there was a fishmonger, a man had a salad stall, men that were in business and not used to hard work, not used to heavy work because these slings that we used to pick guns up with were sizeable . . .

Interviewer: But you said these people were directed to work in the arsenal. Was it like conscription?

William Ryder: I suppose it was a kind of conscription. But I think some of them nipped in there a bit sharp to avoid getting called up in to the forces. I'm not going to say they did but in the main they were older than me.

Interviewer: And you said they weren't used to muscular work so how did they perform?

William Ryder: Well we had to knock them in to shape.<sup>180</sup>

Doing hard physical labour and supervising middle class men as well as ordering material for female dilutees and having them perform some of the least skilled mundane servicing roles like cleaning positioned this interviewee nearer the top of the work hierarchy and affirmed his masculinity. He considered himself important because only he knew how to do the role and was promoted to a position where he supervised and trained the dilutees.

Ryder's story of 'lesser men' entering the domain of those accustomed to hard manual labour in wartime is mirrored in other accounts. London carpenter Max Cohen, for example, recalled wartime dilution of labour in the building trade with the influx of 'hammer and saw' men attempting, in his view, to 'bypass military service'. Cohen clearly

regarded these male dilutees with contempt, describing them as ‘incompetent’, ‘ignorant’ and ‘an economic liability’.<sup>181</sup> Cohen also noted the tension in wartime between working class craftsmen and a University undergraduate on a building site who was derided for his ‘superior air’, lack of proper craftsmen’s tools, limited knowledge and poor work ethic, and was accused of ‘months of aimless idling’.<sup>182</sup> There was a conscious attempt to distance legitimate reserved workers from interlopers considered to be trying to find a safe haven. In coal mining, Bert Coombes expressed a similar disdain for ‘the modern cult of the clean clothes and clean hands job’, arguing that ‘in war once again the value of the manual workers has suddenly been discovered’. Mining, Coombes asserted, ‘needs great skill and tests the energy of real men’.<sup>183</sup> Jack Ashley also described the ‘two worlds’ of office and manual workers in the copper factory he worked in and where he was a shop steward during wartime: ‘The office staff wore clean suits, collars and ties, and the women neat dresses, whereas we all wore dirty overalls. They came in at nine o’clock in the morning whilst we clocked in at seven-thirty. They were given sick-leave pay; we were not.’<sup>184</sup> Such divisions in experience were linked to manly attributes, suggesting a widely-held view amongst working class male youths and adult men that ‘pen-pushing’ jobs were effeminate. Michael Roper has argued, in one of the most comprehensive empirical studies of masculinity in the British workplace, that British work culture associated physical and dirty manual labour with manliness. He cites a post-war manager: ‘If you weren’t running around hitting bits of iron with hammers and wielding a spanner you weren’t a man.’<sup>185</sup> Reserved men in manual trades positioned themselves hierarchically above effeminate middle class pen-pushers, older men brought back in to help, young apprentices who lacked the experience and skill as well as female dilutees.

### **Squaring up to management: masculinity, trade unions and strikes**

For working class men, standing up for your rights in work, including facing up to the bosses and bullying foremen, had always been an important marker of masculinity, signalling toughness, independence and autonomy. Liverpool docker Frank Deegan recalled one of the leaders of the protest against wage cuts at the naval base in Invergordon in 1932: 'I thought here's a real man, prepared to fight even the state for a decent wage.'<sup>186</sup> Similarly, Scottish coalminer and union official Alec Mills commented: 'If you were a weak man you would have did what the boss said.'<sup>187</sup> Having conviction and being assertive made a man. Jack Jones, a Transport and General Workers' Union (henceforth TGWU) official, commented on his admiration for men that 'breathed defiance', rather than be 'subservient and compliant'; he had great respect for Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin.<sup>188</sup> Sonya Rose has noted that the Chamberlain government was associated with effeminacy, failing to stand up to Hitler, and the Coalition government with Labour representation, headed by Churchill, with 'fighting manhood'.<sup>189</sup> This is nowhere more apparent than in the David Low cartoon of May 1940 depicting the Cabinet, fronted by Churchill and Bevin, striding forward and rolling up their sleeves to get on with the job.<sup>190</sup>

The maintenance of some autonomy, control and dignity at work was central to male work culture, whether a lesser skilled labourer or a skilled tradesman. Talking about his father who was a foundry worker in Falkirk and 'very red' Tom Myles recalled: 'God help the boss that came and interfered with his work.'<sup>191</sup> Collective organisation was a powerful tool to maintain dignity at work and extend workers' rights. Historically, trade unions were capable of enabling breadwinner masculinity by negotiating higher wage rates and by keeping women out of skilled jobs, as Cynthia Cockburn's study of the printing trade and Sian Reynolds' account of Scottish bookbinders demonstrate.<sup>192</sup> Unions were strong proponents of the family wage and the ideal of the male breadwinner. Max Cohen noted how getting the union rate for the job in the building trade in the 1930s was 'a

touchstone of the utmost significance . . . [T]he staggering information that you managed to get “the rate” in a workshop of lesser paid men aroused not merely astonishment, and a certain measure of awe, but, inevitably, envy.’<sup>193</sup> In this respect, collective organisation in wartime, being ‘part of the union’, critically bolstered working class masculinity. Industrial action, including striking, could be directly associated with manliness, while non-unionists were denigrated as effeminate ‘scabs’. Jack Jones recalled in his autobiography: ‘as children we got to know what strikes were about and what a terrible person a “scab” was.’<sup>194</sup>

Wartime circumstances accelerated the revival in trade unionism. Union membership rose from a nadir in the Depression of less than 4.5m in 1933 (around twenty five per cent of the total labour force and thirty per cent of male labour) to 7.9m in 1945 (thirty nine per cent of the total labour force and forty five per cent of male workers).<sup>195</sup> By the war’s end, over eighty per cent of men in the key industries, such as coal mining, shipbuilding, heavy metals, railways and transport, were unionised. Moreover, after a sharp decline following the defeat of the General Strike in 1926, the number of strikes increased in wartime despite their illegality under Order 1305. 1944 was the highest year on record since the 1880s. Wartime strikes were characterised, however, by their short duration, with around ninety per cent lasting less than a week. Consequently, the number of working days lost remained relatively low, at around half the rate of the First World War, although this was still more than double the average of the 1930s.<sup>196</sup> Aircraft factory worker Ronald Wakeman remembered just one strike where he worked and that lasted just forty five minutes before management relented and reinstated a wage bonus scheme.<sup>197</sup> Shipyard worker Charles Lamb recalled several strikes and how sometimes just the *threat* of a strike achieved the desired aims: ‘The union fella went to see the manager and said, “if there’s no waterproofs down at the small harbour, or the harbour when we go in the next docking,

we're walking out." So the next time . . . they were there.'<sup>198</sup> Both anecdotes are suggestive of the shifting balance of power in the wartime workplace, which was in stark contrast to the 1930s.

For relatively militant reserved workers such as the coal miners and shipyard workers, the memories of the defeats, humiliations and unilateral control of the employers during the Depression years critically influenced their behaviour during wartime, as did fears of a return to mass unemployment after the war.<sup>199</sup> Employers and managers were widely distrusted by working class reserved men and wartime reports signalled that in places like Clydeside class antagonism was persistent and was as important as hatred of Hitler.<sup>200</sup> The 1930s witnessed a wide range of managerial industrial relations strategies, but mass unemployment certainly empowered the bosses. In the early stages of the war reserved workers could face recalcitrant anti-union bosses determined to impose strict discipline in the workplace to ensure maximum productivity for the war effort. Activists like Jack Jones and Jack Ashley reported on the struggles of organising non-union workplaces against autocratic management in Widnes and Coventry while Mass Observation noted the 'tough and antagonistic' attitude of northern shipyards towards their workers.<sup>201</sup> Men who left at 4pm instead of 5.30pm on Christmas Eve 1941 to go shopping were locked out, sacked, victimised throughout the region and machinery dismantled to ensure the factory did not work again.<sup>202</sup> However, power relations shifted significantly as the war progressed.

The war took trade unionism to many places it virtually had not touched before, such as Coventry, and to smaller firms that had previously been virulently anti-union.<sup>203</sup> The Amalgamated Engineering Union (henceforth AEU) rose from 334,000 members in 1939 to 825,000 by 1945, while the numbers of shop stewards more than doubled in the engineering and metals sector.<sup>204</sup> These transformations in industrial relations are well

covered in the literature.<sup>205</sup> However, the gendered aspects of this story have been overlooked; a lacuna we seek to remedy.

Trade unionism as a movement worked to protect and advance workers' rights and was not an exclusively male activity. Although women had been involved in a considerable amount of organisation and strike activity before 1939, the war significantly boosted female union membership, which reached 1.6 million in 1945, equating to around one in four female workers.<sup>206</sup> Nonetheless, the trade union movement remained dominated by men in terms of its leadership and membership. With 6.1 million male members in 1945, it was the interests of men that took precedence.<sup>207</sup> Policies reflected an acceptance, rather than a challenge, of the separate spheres ideology, such as the notion of the male breadwinner wage and statutory exclusion of women from some areas of employment, such as mining. There were few women delegates to either the Trades Union Congress (henceforth TUC) or Scottish TUC and only a handful in positions of power in trade unions above the shop floor. The vast majority of wartime strikes involved male workers, with around fifty per cent of all working days lost in the war through strikes of male coal miners alone.<sup>208</sup> Other strike-prone wartime workers were the male shipbuilding workers, heavy engineering workers and dockers. Sylvia Walby has demonstrated how the majority of trade unions practised discriminatory policies against women and the craft unions predominately refused to allow female membership.<sup>209</sup> The AEU finally relented in 1943 and only then in the face of pressure from the general unions, including the TGWU who had recruited women dilutees in engineering. Craft unions like the AEU worked to control women's wages and prevent undercutting of the male rate, thereby protecting the core interests of male craftsmen. The British trade union movement continued at all levels to be dominated by men.

There was a tension between class interests and male workers' interests in unions and industrial relations. To a large degree, male interests were dominant, as evidenced by lukewarm support for ideas such as equal pay, abolition of the marriage bar and equal access to all jobs. Sue Ledwith has noted that 'cultures of exclusionary masculinity' are deeply embedded in manual trade unions.<sup>210</sup> The patriarchal strategy of the trade unions was evident in their insistence on the maintenance of the dangerous work taboo and on statutory protection for male workers rights in the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act (1942). This mirrored the widespread view that women were only participating in the male world of paid work in a temporary and subordinate capacity. Referring to wages, wartime TGWU official Jack Jones recalled: 'I have to admit that there was latent and sometimes very open opposition from working men to women receiving higher rates.'<sup>211</sup> Even in the TGWU, a general union markedly more 'progressive' on gender issues than the skilled craft unions like the AEU, 'the stewards took the line of least resistance when confronted by the avarice of the men.' When his wife Evelyn put the women's case in 1941 for a fair slice of gang piecework earnings in Coventry she was told by the trade union convenor Len Brindley to 'piss off'.<sup>212</sup>

Wartime industrial relations were complex, although on balance the war empowered working men and facilitated the rebuilding of working class masculinities. The resurgence of trade unions was part of this. The state intervened to control both management and labour, with Bevin explicitly promoting a policy of trade-offs. Wartime restrictions on the movement of labour, under the Essential Work Order, and the banning of strikes, under Order 1305, were balanced by statutory improvement of working conditions and welfare, with, for example, canteens and improved on-the-job medical facilities, state-sponsored extension of trade union recognition and collective bargaining rights, removal of managerial power to victimise and the maintenance of wage levels. A

pivotal element of this for breadwinner masculinity was the introduction of the 'guaranteed week' in all workplaces covered by the Essential Work Order. For reserved men this virtually wiped out casual employment, endemic during the 1930s, for example among dock workers. Bevin also directly intervened to raise the wages of some of the lowest paid reserved workers, including agricultural labourers. Encroachment into managerial decision-making terrain, for example regarding production decisions, rate-fixing and overtime, was common by the end of the war in key sectors employing large numbers of reserved men, like engineering and metals, as well as coal-mining. As Jack Jones noted: 'What we were doing was challenging the divine right of management, and they didn't like it.'<sup>213</sup> Bert Coombes noted that in the new wartime Pit Production Committees 'master and workmen are meeting at a new angle . . . [T]his new discussion is one of management.'<sup>214</sup> The key change, perhaps, was that reserved workers' right to negotiate was supported by the state as a trade-off for union support on wartime production.<sup>215</sup> In the last resort, unions took disputes to conciliation officers and on to arbitration and, in wartime, invariably won. In squaring up to management, reserved workers now had the state mostly, although not wholly, in their corner. As Geoff Field has shown, the extension of collective bargaining rights was a marked feature of the war: Joint Production Committees in workplaces encroached on matters that had previously been considered managerial 'prerogative', such as production, rate setting and overtime, while by the end of the war around eighty five per cent of the 17.5 million workforce, and virtually all reserved male workers, were covered by voluntary or statutory collective bargaining.<sup>216</sup>

Wartime circumstances thus endowed power upon civilian workers as a group, while particularly empowering working class reserved men. For those wartime reserved workers old enough to have been of working age in the 1930s this could re-energise them with status and confidence that had been eroded by the experience of mass unemployment

in the Depression. This was expressed, for example, in the virtual disappearance of victimisation for strikers and curtailment of indiscriminate sackings by 1942. Both had been marked features of the 1930s. An immigrant engineering worker commented in 1942: 'I am surprised you have so much freedom over here. If one of the workmen wants a day off he takes it, and nobody can stop him.'<sup>217</sup> Absenteeism and bad-timekeeping continued to occur through the later years of the war. In 1943-4 the TUC identified fatigue amongst war workers as a root cause of absenteeism and campaigned to get a reduction of compulsory Home Guard and firewatching duties.<sup>218</sup> For blue collar workers, the revival of their trade unions and particularly the extension of collective bargaining to the shop floor in wartime, with the proliferation of shop stewards and the Joint Production Committees (henceforth JPCs) were other important ways in which working class masculinities were rebuilt after the ravages of the inter-war Depression. By the end of 1943 there were 4500 JPCs operating across the engineering and allied sector alone, covering some 3.5 million workers.<sup>219</sup> Shop stewards and representatives at the JPCs were overwhelmingly men, and they wielded considerable power and responsibility. Cultural disincentives to the participation of married women as well as real practical constraints of the 'double burden' of work and domestic duties left little time for volunteering for union posts or attending meetings. The exceptions tended to be single and childless married women.

How then did reserved men recall the role of trade unions and their participation in collective organisation and strikes in their personal testimonies? There was a range of responses as we shall see, from 'activist narratives' from committed union men and officials through to the apathy and indifference of inactive members and non-unionists and the bitterness of actively anti-union men. However, what is striking amongst our cohort of fifty six interviewees is the collective amnesia on strikes during wartime. The relative silence is linked to the ways in which reserved men retrospectively reconstruct their

narratives in the early twenty-first century. To attain composure and emphasise their masculinity in the face of cultural censure, most respondents played down involvement in trade unions and strikes. The latter smacked of unpatriotic division and self-interest which jars in narratives framed around personal graft and sacrifice as individuals' contribution to the war, as well as the popular myth of wartime harmony and everyone 'pulling together'. John Stephenson recalled being a member of the National Union of Railwaymen, but that there were no strikes in wartime, while Jim Lister commented: 'There wasn't the trouble because you were all pulling together . . . There was no confrontation. If they were wanting anything done, they give and take. They gave and took a lot more during the war than they would do after.'<sup>220</sup> Another wartime railwayman, William McNaul, recalled when asked about strikes: 'No. No, nothing like that. Wasn't allowed . . . No, no, no you daren't do anything like that.'<sup>221</sup> This denial and marginalisation of strikes was repeated across other war industries. Munitions worker William Ryder recalled: 'I mean during the war daren't dream of striking.'<sup>222</sup> Manchester tool maker Frank Harvey recalled: 'There was no strikes in there because I'm not too sure, but I think there was a bit of a law about, you were barred from striking actually you know, by the government, you know, but that never come into it, because they knew that people were losing their lives.'<sup>223</sup>

What is perhaps most surprising is the virtual erasure of unions and strikes in the oral testimonies of men in the most well organised and strike prone wartime sectors, such as coal mining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering. Wartime Bevin Boy Warwick Taylor, commented:

I can recall no industrial disputes whatsoever. You've got to realise this is wartime of course . . . There was no time for nonsense like industrial disputes. And of course it was work and pay . . . Everybody during wartime was absolutely keyed up and they put maximum effort in to everything right across the country.'<sup>224</sup>

Sheffield mining wages clerk Philip Rogers could not recall if he had been a trade union member and noted in a similar vein to Taylor: ‘I don’t seem to remember there being [a] strike, at that time. I think they [the miners] were too glad to have work and knowing the importance of it at wartime.’<sup>225</sup> Scottish Lothians coal miner William Ramage admitted there were ‘occasional strikes’, quickly qualifying this: ‘But it never affected us down here’. Alexander Davidson could only recall one shipbuilding union, despite there being seventeen across the different trades in the shipyards: ‘They didn’t do very much during the war because, you know, there was no call for it really.’<sup>226</sup> Willie Dewar recalled an apprentices’ strike in the North British Locomotive Works in Glasgow: ‘we all went out on strike . . . which was a daft thing to do during the war years.’<sup>227</sup> In response to the question ‘were you in a trade union during the war?’ sheet metal and forge worker Alfred Thomas remarked: ‘[T]here was no such thing as trade unions during the war. I was always a trade unionist, always a leftie, but during the war that didn’t apply. You were just like the Army, you did your job, full stop.’<sup>228</sup> Thomas’ assertion that male workers were ‘just like the army’ represents a powerful motif in men’s testimonies, pervasive enough to misremember the activities of unions and strikes that contradicted a dominant wartime narrative of ‘graft’, ‘sacrifice’ and ‘pulling together’ for the war effort. This association with war was an important way that reserved men out of uniform bolstered their masculinity. Stephen Smith recalled: ‘strikes were virtually forbidden . . . There were some strikes, like the, you’ll find out in your studies, the Betteshanger coalminers went on strike in Kent . . . By and large there were no strikes cos the foremost thing was to defeat Hitler.’<sup>229</sup>

The erasure of wartime unions and strikes in personal memory is also likely to be a product of the post-Thatcher assault on trade unions, the media barrage against strikes and overly-powerful unions and the sharp decline of union membership over the past thirty years, now at the lowest level since the 1930s. For more than three decades, post-1945

trade unions earned cultural legitimacy and became a respected part of the fabric of British society. Since the 1970s, their social and cultural standing has eroded, paralleled by a substantial decrease in trade union membership, collapsing from over fifty per cent of the workforce, down to twenty five or twenty six per cent by 2010-14.<sup>230</sup> Several of our respondents explicitly referred to what they regarded as later ‘abuse’ of power by the unions, or tarred them with being controlled by communists.<sup>231</sup> When Charles Hill was asked ‘Was there a trade union?’, he responded ‘Yes, but they had nowhere near the power they’ve got these days.’ He recalled a wartime strike in Coventry where the men were prosecuted, but noted ‘I’ve always felt striking was a rather stupid weapon anyway.’<sup>232</sup> Miner William Ramage offered the view that ‘they werenae like the militant people that appeared later, you know. Arthur Scargill and that lot.’<sup>233</sup> London war worker Eddie Menday recalled that trade unions were more active after the war than during it. When asked about the occurrence of wartime strikes, he responded hesitantly: ‘No, that was illegal. I mean, certainly, not in the engineering, I think there was, there was one or two strikes, in, in other industries up north I know of, that, uh, certainly, certainly not, uh, in our area.’<sup>234</sup> The fractured nature of his answer suggests a degree of discomfort and discomposure. Many interviewees clearly did not want to be associated with trade unions and strikes, which if admitted would have tarnished their narratives of selfless hard graft, patriotically doing their bit for the war effort.

However, there were individuals who were capable of constructing their stories in different ways, rejecting or modifying dominant discourses. Amongst the exceptions to this collective amnesia are the wartime trade union officials, shop stewards and activists who usually framed their narratives in divergent ways, emphasising the pivotal role played by unions, the agency and resistance of workers in wartime and the persistence of class conflict, as opposed to ‘harmony’.<sup>235</sup> These ‘activist’ testimonies tended to dualistically

portray employers as the villains and unions as the heroes, regarding the strike weapon, used in response to managerial exploitation, as fully justified even in wartime and necessary to win the war. There were old scores to settle and activist reserved workers often framed their narratives with reference to the context of exploitative autocratic management behaviour in the 1930s, the unequal sacrifice in wartime and the importance of protecting and extending workers' rights.

Trade union officials were also reserved and the records of the Trades Union Congress indicate that it lobbied hard to represent the occupational interests of union officials and staff. There were fears, for example, that employer control over reservation gave management the power to get rid of union activists that they found troublesome as they could 'let him drift into the Forces.'<sup>236</sup> They also opposed rescindment of reserved status as punishment for absenteeism and 'misconduct' and fought against the raising of the age of exemption for union officials from twenty five to thirty, then thirty five, on the grounds this would 'wreck the trade union machine'. After the switch to individual deferment the TUC continued to represent the interests of their reserved officials and staff at the Manpower Board, applying for deferment and lobbying the Minister of Labour.<sup>237</sup> Member unions were also circularised to advise them not to appoint new officials under the age of thirty five because of the risk of call-up.<sup>238</sup> Some significant concessions were made, indicating the power of the TUC as a pressure group in wartime.<sup>239</sup> In 1945, attention was switched to trying to get preferential release from the Forces of trade union and employer organisation officials to try to tackle what the TUC referred to as the 'staffing problem' within the trade unions.<sup>240</sup> Some trade unions were not immune to temptations to exploit the Schedule of Reserved Occupations. Walter Southgate, an exempt fifty-year-old chief clerk to the sheet metal workers' union, recalled being asked by the union General Secretary to step aside, on full pay, to enable a younger man to be promoted

to a reserved occupation in 1940. Indignant and principled, Southgate refused, ‘fell out of favour’ with the union hierarchy and as a consequence ‘suffered a nervous breakdown and walked out of the job.’<sup>241</sup>

A clutch of male working class ‘activist’ autobiographies and oral testimonies provide an alternative discourse on reserved status, the role of trade unions and industrial action in wartime.<sup>242</sup> Jack Jones in Coventry and Jack Ashley in Widnes played important roles rallying workers into unions in previously poorly organised workplaces.<sup>243</sup> As a young nineteen-year-old, Jack Ashley had to overcome his initial reluctance to organise a strike as he had previously briefly served in the army before being medically discharged. In this respect, like William Ramage, Ashley perhaps encapsulated the competing and intersecting ideals of manhood circulating in wartime: the military and the industrial. He subsequently narrated trade unionism and strikes, as did Jones, not as unpatriotic and undermining the war effort, as much popular discourse such as the cartoon below suggested, but rather as a legitimate action against autocratic employers, intransigent foreman and managerial ‘bullying’ which was inimical to good industrial relations and hence the successful prosecution of the war.<sup>244</sup>

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Figure 15: Leslie Gilbert Illingworth, *Daily Express*, 8 March 1944

Workplace culture amongst reserved workers was notably radical in areas like Clydeside and Merseyside. Among clusters of union and labour activists, radical class consciousness was capable of trumping patriotism. As in the First World War, for some on the far left anti-war sentiment ran high, at least up until June 1941 when the Soviet Union entered the war. Scottish Communist MP for Fife Willie Gallacher recalled militant shop stewards in Glasgow early in the war giving Bevin ‘a hell of a time’ when he came up to speak publically because they perceived Bevin’s wartime controls over labour mobility and strikes as ‘put[ting] the screws on them far more roughly than on the employers.’<sup>245</sup> Bevin

was capable, albeit reluctantly and under pressure, of using draconian state powers, including prosecutions and the threat of call-up against striking reserved workers, for example against apprentices in 1940-41 and 1944, at Betteshanger Colliery in Kent in 1942 and against ninety strikers at the North British Locomotive Company in Glasgow.<sup>246</sup> Indicative of the radical workplace culture in Scotland was that seventy one prosecutions of strikers under Order 1305 took place there, compared to only thirty eight in the whole of England and Wales.<sup>247</sup> However, these were unusual interventions, only involving in total some 6300 strikers, and more often than not strikes were short and allowed to play themselves out without punitive legal action.

Liverpool docker, communist and Spanish Civil War veteran, Frank Deegan constructed a narrative that revelled in his shirking of fire watching duties and railed against profiteering by the bosses: ‘This was a capitalist war and I had no real desire to fight.’<sup>248</sup> Similarly, Frank Chapple was a young reserved electrician in wartime Liverpool and London and a Communist Party member who initially abhorred the war. He recalled in his autobiography how ‘strikes were our contribution to the war effort’ and recited involvement in several walkouts at Royal Ordnance Factory building sites in 1939 and 1940, noting ‘we were a real bunch of bloody-minded reds.’ In one case Chapple and co-conspirators were sacked and the military were called in to march the strike committee off the premises. Some communists like Chapple actively sought ways to avoid call-up:

I had no wish to be called up to fight for a cause I didn’t believe in so I got into the docks to work, which put me in an exempt industrial category. I worked for a firm of ship-repair electricians . . . Most of London’s leading Communists from the ETU [Electrical Trades Union] were in the docks, carefully exempt from war service, but there was a remarkable lack of enthusiasm for war work. Whenever you walked into a ship’s engine

room, you stepped over people sleeping or playing cards. Patriotism was a bit of a joke.<sup>249</sup>

Deegan's and Chapple's testimonies provide a marked contrast to the dominant 'graft and sacrifice' narratives that are devoid of politics and erase industrial conflict that were so prevalent amongst our interviewees and other accounts of the war. Significantly, however, Chapple and other communists identify a change in 1941 when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. He left the Young Communist League, 'started to enthuse for the war and wanted to get into action' and was called up to the army in April 1943. From 1941 communists were amongst the most vociferous supporters of the wartime production drive and amongst the fiercest critics of strikes and any other action liable to disrupt production. Reserved tinsmith and communist Arthur Exell recalled:

That's all we ever thought of, do you see, during the war, was the war effort. We had to win . . . Some of us inside were trade unionists and Party members . . . We didn't try to dodge anything. Some people thought we were mad, but we thought we were up against it. We had to win. So therefore we did everything we could for the sake of production.<sup>250</sup>

Exell saw work as being associated closely with the war effort. In a clear expression of Stakhanovite masculinity, Exell and the Communist Party factory group went on to form a 'shock brigade' offering their services to management, expressing a willingness to do any job as needed 'any place and at any time'. The position of reserved men towards the war effort was thus affected by politics and by place, and subject to change as the war proceeded.

Jack Jones perhaps represents the more mainstream reserved trade union official from a Labour rather than a communist background:

I think the general feeling was that it was essential to win the war. I mean, to some extent, if people started to grumble, you could always say: ‘Well, go in the Forces!’ Couldn’t you? I was quite willing, myself, to go in the Forces. I’d been in the Territorial Army, I’d been used to weapons. I’d fought in the Spanish War, you know. So it wasn’t a problem for me, other than the fact that I was a union official and expected to get the maximum [production] for the war effort. So I understood that. I think we did more for the war in Coventry than many of the workers who went from Coventry into the Forces!<sup>251</sup>

Jones was completely comfortable in his reserved role in wartime. He was a Labour councillor in Liverpool and TGWU shop steward before taking up a reserved full-time union official post as Coventry Organiser for the TGWU in 1939. He was a strong supporter of the war effort and had volunteered to join the army before being told by Bevin that he would be of better use as a reserved trade union official working in Coventry to build the TGWU and ensure maximum production for the war effort. There is no sense of emasculation through not being in uniform evident in his testimony. Rather, there is a clear sense of how the political and economic environment enabled working class masculinity to be rebuilt in the workplace, with the unions reinvigorated as workers’ armour in squaring up to management. Indeed, any sense of emasculation was not evident across a cluster of autobiographies of older wartime reserved workers consulted here who appear remarkably comfortable in their wartime roles. As Jones put it, ‘Productivity was accepted as a major responsibility of the trade unions. I saw the workforce as the soldiers at the rear, a major factor in winning the war against Fascism.’<sup>252</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The war facilitated the reconstruction of traditional male breadwinner masculinity that had been so corroded in the 1930s by the vulnerability of labour markets, un(der)employment, low wages and the loss of power and dignity at work. This chapter has argued that masculinity was rebuilt in the wartime workplace, bolstered by full employment, long hours, large wage packets and the esteem that came with being a valued reserved worker that could face up to the greater pressures and dangers of the wartime productivity drive. Reserved men's status as indispensable 'skilled workers' and 'experienced labourers' provided some compensation for not being combatants. While a sense of emasculation is clearly evident among half of our interviewees who positioned themselves in relation to the dominant military man, the lived day-to-day experience and material circumstances of reserved work significantly augmented workers' sense of manliness, both economically and socially. The hegemonic wartime discourse of masculinity that exalted the combatants co-existed in tandem with traditional breadwinner and 'hard man' notions of masculinity within working class communities. For reserved men, then, the objective circumstances of war were ultimately empowering and facilitated a rebuilding of breadwinner masculinity.

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works: A Working Man's Life* (Durham: Durham County Library, 1988), p.viii. Every effort has been made to obtain permission to reproduce copyright material, and the publisher will be pleased to be informed of any errors and omissions for correction in future editions.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.vi-vii.

<sup>3</sup> David Kirkwood, *My Life of Revolt* (London: George Harrap, 1935), p.251.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Wight, *Workers not Wasters: Masculine Respectability, Consumption and Employment in Central Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993).

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- <sup>5</sup> Bert Coombes, *These Poor Hands* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1939), p.44.
- <sup>6</sup> Max Cohen, *What Nobody Told the Foreman* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1953), p.63.
- <sup>7</sup> Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago, 1997), p.297; Christina Jarvis, *The Male Body at War* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004).
- <sup>8</sup> Arthur McIvor, *A History of Work in Britain, 1880-1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2000), pp.36, 38.
- <sup>9</sup> Stephen Meyer, 'Work, Play and Power: Masculine Culture on the Automotive Shop Floor, 1930-1960' in Roger Horowitz, (ed.), *Boys and their Toys? Masculinity, Technology and Class in America* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
- <sup>10</sup> Jack Lawson, *A Man's Life* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1944), p.189.
- <sup>11</sup> Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor, 'Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydeside Heavy Industries, c1930-1970s', *Labour History Review*, 69:2 (2004), pp.135-52; Pat Ayers, 'The Making of Masculinities in Interwar Liverpool', in Margaret Walsh (ed.), *Working Out Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991); Mirium Glucksmann, *Women Assemble: Women Workers and the New Industries in Interwar Britain* (London: Routledge, 1990).
- <sup>12</sup> This persisted well into the post-war period. Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977).
- <sup>13</sup> Walter Greenwood, *Love on the Dole* (London, Penguin, 1933), p.48.
- <sup>14</sup> Jack Ashley, *Acts of Defiance* (London: Reinhardt books, 1992), p.22.
- <sup>15</sup> Cohen, *What Nobody Told the Foreman*, p.22.
- <sup>16</sup> Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works*, p.47.

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Willis, 'Shop Floor Culture, Masculinity and the Wage Form', in John Clarke, Charles Critcher and Richard Johnson (eds.), *Working Class Culture* (London: Hutchison, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> McIvor, *History of Work*, p.192.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Gaitens, *Growing Up* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936); Ralph Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals* (London: Pan, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Bert Coombes, *These Poor Hands* (London: Left Book Club, 1939); George Blake, *The Shipbuilders* (Edinburgh: B&W Publishing, 1935); Abe Moffat, *My Life with the Miners* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965); Alan McKinlay, *Making Ships; Making Men* (Clydebank: Clydebank District Libraries, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> Annmarie Hughes, 'Representations and Counter-Representations of Domestic Violence on Clydeside Between the Two World Wars', *Labour History Review*, 69:2 (2004), pp.169-84.

<sup>22</sup> George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933)

<sup>23</sup> Ellen Wilkinson, *The Town That Was Murdered* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1939); Wal Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937).

<sup>24</sup> Nigel Gray, *The Worst of Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression in Britain* (London: Scholar Press, 1986); Max Cohen's *I Was One of the Unemployed* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1945).

<sup>25</sup> Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Voices from the Hunger Marches Vol 1: Personal Recollections by Scottish Hunger Marchers of the 1920s and 1930s* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990); Ian MacDougall (ed.), *Voices from the Hunger Marches Vol 2: Personal Recollections by Scottish Hunger Marchers of the 1920s and 1930s* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991); Ian

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MacDougall (ed.), *Voices from Work and Home* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Marjorie Levine-Clark, 'The Politics of Preference: Masculinity, Marital Status and Unemployment Relief in Post-First World War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 7:2 (2010), pp.233-52. Here p.248.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen Thompson, *Unemployment, Poverty and Health in Interwar South Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> George Blake, *The Shipbuilders* [1935] (Edinburgh: B&W Publishing, 2004), p.159.

<sup>29</sup> Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A History of British Industrial Relations, Vol 2, 1914-1939* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> Peter Howlett, *Fighting with Figures: A Statistical Digest of the Second World War* (London: HMSO, 1951), p.38.

<sup>31</sup> Lawson, *A Man's Life*, pp.189-90.

<sup>32</sup> Cohen, *What Nobody Told the Foreman*, p.142.

<sup>33</sup> Steve Humphries and Pamela Gordon, *Out of Sight: Experience of Disability, 1900-50* (Plymouth: Northcote House Publishers, 1992), p.132.

<sup>34</sup> Peggy Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry* (London: HMSO, 1957), p.181.

<sup>35</sup> Stakhanov allegedly mined over a hundred tons of coal in less than six hours in 1935.

<sup>36</sup> Wight, *Workers not Wasters*.

<sup>37</sup> Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry*, pp.290, 294-5; Scottish Trade Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1941, p.64.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Benney, *Over to Bombers* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1943), p.192.

Benney, a journalist and novelist before the war, was writing from first-hand experience as a reserved wartime aircraft factory worker.

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- <sup>39</sup> J.B. Priestley, *Daylight on Saturday* (Heinemann, London, 1943), p.25.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.300.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.183.
- <sup>42</sup> John Ellis, *Brute Force: Allied Strategy and Tactics in the Second World War* (New York: Viking, 1990), p.14.
- <sup>43</sup> Eddie Munday, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.
- <sup>44</sup> Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry*, p.295.
- <sup>45</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production. An Enquiry into British War Production*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1942), p.158.
- <sup>46</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, pp.160-1.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.161.
- <sup>48</sup> IWM SA, 19662, William Edward Ryder, reel 1, 10 September 1999.
- <sup>49</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, pp.239-42; Tom Hanlin, *Yesterday Will Return* (New York: Viking Press, 1946).
- <sup>50</sup> Inman, *Labour in Munitions*, pp.127-8, 308.
- <sup>51</sup> Coombes, *Clouded Hills*, p.43.
- <sup>52</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.162.
- <sup>53</sup> IWM SA, 12882, D.C.M. Howe, reel 1, 1 May 1990.
- <sup>54</sup> IWM SA, 16733, Henry Barrett, reel 1, 2 July 1996.
- <sup>55</sup> Patrick McGeown, *Heat the Furnace Seven Times More* (London: Hutchison, 1967), pp.160-1.
- <sup>56</sup> Derek Sims, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 20 February 2013 (SOHC 050/12).
- <sup>57</sup> IWM SA, 11580, Edward Ashill, reel 1, 9 October 1990.

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- <sup>58</sup> Linsey Robb, “‘The Front Line’: Firefighting in British Culture, 1939-1945’, *Contemporary British History*, 29:2 (2015), pp.179-98.
- <sup>59</sup> Frank Deegan, *There’s No Other Way* (Liverpool: Toulouse Press, 1980), p.62.
- <sup>60</sup> William McNaul, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 27 March 2013 (SOHC 050/22).
- <sup>61</sup> Government contracts for war-related material, such as ships, were agreed at actual cost plus a percentage for ‘profit’, usually 10 per cent.
- <sup>62</sup> Ted Boyle, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.
- <sup>63</sup> Fred Clark, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.
- <sup>64</sup> Craig Inglis, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 10 May 2013 (SOHC 050/38); Alfred Thomas, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 3 May 2013 (SOHC 050/45).
- <sup>65</sup> Donald Kennedy, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.
- <sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, while women often felt uprooted, men in framing their stories in this way would not deny that they were in their rightful place. Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women’s Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).
- <sup>67</sup> IWM SA, 27263, Lance Liddle, reel 1, March 2005 (day unspecified).
- <sup>68</sup> Richard Croucher, *Engineers at War* (London: Merlin Press, 1982), pp.143-4.
- <sup>69</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 7 February, 1942, p.5.
- <sup>70</sup> Derek Sims, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 20 February 2013 (SOHC 050/12).
- <sup>71</sup> Harry McGregor, interviewed by Arthur McIvor, 13 July 2009 (SOHC 050/06).

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<sup>72</sup> IWM SA, 20055, Roy Deeley, reel 1, 26 January 2000. Churchill's exact words were 'One will say, "I was a fighter pilot"; another will say, "I was in the submarine service" . . . and you in your turn will say with equal pride and with equal right, "We cut the coal."'

<sup>73</sup> Chris Sladen, 'Holidays at Home in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 37:1 (2001), pp.67-89. Here pp.70, 76.

<sup>74</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, pp.173-81, 187-201.

<sup>75</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 23 September 1941, p.7.

<sup>76</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.181.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.188, 193; MO File Report 1631, 'Absenteeism and Industrial Morale', March 1943.

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry*, p.277.

<sup>80</sup> Marek Korczynski, Michael Pickering and Emma Robertson, *Rhythms of Labour: Music at Work in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>81</sup> MO File Report 1249, 'Radio', May 1942.

<sup>82</sup> Christina L. Baade, *Victory Through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.60-78.

<sup>83</sup> PP, *Pay and Allowances of the Armed Forces*, Cmd 6385 (London: HMSO, 1942), pp.2-3; HC Deb 10 September 1942, vol 383 cc332-495.

<sup>84</sup> Ian Gazeley, 'Manual Work and Pay, 1900-70', in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell (eds.), *Work and Pay in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.69.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

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<sup>86</sup> Penny Summerfield, ‘The “Levelling of Class”’ in Harold L. Smith (ed.), *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp.182-3; 186; Ian Gazeley, ‘The Levelling of Pay in Britain During the Second World War’, *European Review of Economic History*, 2, (2006), pp.175-204.

<sup>87</sup> Summerfield, ‘The “Levelling of Class”’, p.183.

<sup>88</sup> Gazeley, ‘Manual Work and Pay’ pp.74-5.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.69.

<sup>90</sup> Geoffrey Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.150.

<sup>91</sup> Ashley, *Acts of Defiance*, p.32.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Carmichael, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 15 April 2013 (SOHC 050/35).

<sup>93</sup> Ronald Tonge, interviewed by Linsey Robb 28 March 2013 (SOHC 050/24).

<sup>94</sup> Paul Addison and Jeremy Crang (eds.), *Listening to Britain: Home Intelligence Reports on Britain’s Finest Hour – May to September 1940* (London: Vintage Books, 2011), p.220.

It was also observed that conscientious objectors were in ‘safe jobs getting good salaries while other people’s sons and husbands are facing danger for a few shillings a week.’ Ibid., p.156.

<sup>95</sup> John Thomas Murphy, *Victory Production! A Personal Account of Seventeen Months Spent as a Worker in an Engineering and an Aircraft Factory*, (London: John Lane, 1942), p.138.

<sup>96</sup> HC Deb 17 December 1941, vol 376 cc1965-2043.

<sup>97</sup> HC Deb 25 March 1942, vol 378 cc2001-116.

<sup>98</sup> MO File Report 827, ‘Service and Civilian Pay’, August 1941.

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<sup>99</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.165.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p.169.

<sup>101</sup> Henry Ford had developed the mass production system in car manufacture in Detroit and this had spread to Britain, with Ford setting up his first British plant in 1911 in Manchester. He was influenced by the ideas of the ‘prophet’ of scientific management, Frederick Winslow Taylor. An American ‘efficiency engineer’, Taylor promoted the idea of timing jobs and analysing them with a view to breaking them down to raise productivity. Such changes in customary ways of doing work were not popular with sections of the workforce, especially the craftsmen, and the trade unions. See Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911).

<sup>102</sup> Charles Hill (pseudonym), interviewed by Linsey Robb, 16 April 2013 (SOHC 050/37).

<sup>103</sup> IWM SA, 16733, Henry Barrett, reel 2, 2 July 1996.

<sup>104</sup> Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil*, p.113.

<sup>105</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.163.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.165-8.

<sup>107</sup> Harry McGregor, interviewed by Arthur McIvor, 13 July 2009 (SOHC 050/06).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Willie Dewar, interviewed by Arthur McIvor, 9 December 2008 (SOHC 050/04).

<sup>110</sup> Charles Lamb, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 3 April 2013 (SOHC 050/27).

<sup>111</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.171.

<sup>112</sup> Dudley Seers, *Changes in the Cost-of-Living and the Distribution of Income Since 1938* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1949), pp.5, 8.

<sup>113</sup> Guy Rough, *Occupation and Pay in Great Britain, 1906-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp.106-7.

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<sup>114</sup> Jack Jones, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.

<sup>115</sup> Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.3-5. See also Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.7.

<sup>116</sup> IWM SA, 20055, Roy Deeley, reel 2, 26 January 2000.

<sup>117</sup> Frank Chapple, *Sparks Fly! A Trade Union Life* (London: Michael Joseph, 1984), p.33.

<sup>118</sup> Inman, *Labour in Munitions*, pp.140-3.

<sup>119</sup> Victor Sawdon Pritchett, *Build the Ships* (London: HMSO, 1946), p.11.

<sup>120</sup> Roger Major (pseudonym), interviewed by Linsey Robb, 27 February 2013 (SOHC 050/21).

<sup>121</sup> George Dean, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 28 March 2013 (SOHC 050/25).

<sup>122</sup> IWM SA, 19662, William Edward Ryder, reel 2, 10 September 1999.

<sup>123</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.112.

<sup>124</sup> Meyer, 'Work, Play and Power', p.17.

<sup>125</sup> IWM SA, 14963, Ronald Wakeman, reel 1, 16 February 1995.

<sup>126</sup> Roger Major (pseudonym), interviewed by Linsey Robb, 27 February 2013 (SOHC 050/21).

<sup>127</sup> Charles Bedaux was caught by the Allies helping to construct an oil pipeline in North Africa for the Germans. Craig Littler, *The Development of the Labour Process in Capitalist Societies* (London: Heinemann, 1982); McIvor, *History of Work*, pp.93-108.

<sup>128</sup> Charles Lamb, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 3 April 2013 (SOHC 050/27).

<sup>129</sup> Alexander Davidson, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 10 April 2013 (SOHC 050/32).

<sup>130</sup> Thomas Cantwell, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 24 May 2013 (SOHC 050/55).

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- <sup>131</sup> John Hiscutt, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 25 April 2013 (SOHC 050/42).
- <sup>132</sup> Benney, *Over to Bombers*, p 94.
- <sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236.
- <sup>134</sup> Bernard Casburn, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 31 May 2013 (SOHC 050/57).
- <sup>135</sup> John Allan, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 7 November 2011 (SOHC 050/09).
- <sup>136</sup> William Ramage, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 29 April 2013 (SOHC 050/43).
- <sup>137</sup> Arthur McIvor and Ronald Johnston, *Miners' Lung: A History of Dust Disease in British Coal Mining* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp.267-9.
- <sup>138</sup> Howlett, *Fighting with Figures*, pp.38, 47, 50.
- <sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>140</sup> Horizontal segregation by gender refers to the penetration of women across different occupational groupings and jobs. Vertical segregation by gender refers to the penetration of women to jobs by status, from 'top' jobs as employers and managers, down through skilled manual and non-manual work, to semi-skilled and unskilled jobs.
- <sup>141</sup> Linsey Robb, *Men at Work: The Working Man in British Culture, 1939-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- <sup>142</sup> Ewart Rayner, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 22 March 2013 (SOHC 050/18).
- <sup>143</sup> Neil Rafeek, 'Agnes McLean, 1918-1994', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, 30 (1995), pp.121-30. Here pp.122-3.
- <sup>144</sup> Charles Lamb, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 3 April 2013 (SOHC 050/27).
- <sup>145</sup> Geoffrey Cooper, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 21 March 2013 (SOHC 050/17).
- <sup>146</sup> Alexander Ramage, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 19 March 2013 (SOHC 050/14).
- <sup>147</sup> Fred Millican, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 26 March 2013 (SOHC 050/20).
- <sup>148</sup> Derek Sims, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 20 February 2013 (SOHC 050/12).

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- <sup>149</sup> Roger Major, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 26 March 2013 (SOHC 050/21).
- <sup>150</sup> Murphy, *Victory Production!*, pp.47; 52.
- <sup>151</sup> Thomas Cantwell, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 24 May 2013 (SOHC 050/55).
- <sup>152</sup> Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works*, p.6.
- <sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.
- <sup>154</sup> Frank Harvey, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 27 March 2013 (SOHC 050/23).
- <sup>155</sup> Exell, *Politics of the Production Line*, p.55.
- <sup>156</sup> Murphy, *Victory Production!*, p.52.
- <sup>157</sup> Harry McGregor, interviewed by Arthur McIvor, 13 July 2009 (SOHC 050/06).
- <sup>158</sup> George Dean, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 28 March 2013 (SOHC 050/25).
- <sup>159</sup> Shunting involved marshalling and moving trains between the yards and platforms, hooking on locomotives and detaching defective carriages.
- <sup>160</sup> Jim Lister, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 19 April 2013 (SOHC 050/38).
- <sup>161</sup> John O'Halloran, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 22 March 2013 (SOHC 050/19).
- <sup>162</sup> Benney, *Over to Bombers*, pp.105-10.
- <sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p.175
- <sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.108-9; 209-10.
- <sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-4.
- <sup>166</sup> Richard Fitzpatrick, interviewed by David Walker, 13 August 2004 (SOHC 022/01).
- <sup>167</sup> IWM SA, 19662, William Edward Ryder, reel 1, 10 September 1999.
- <sup>168</sup> Meyer, 'Work, Play and Power', pp.13-32; Michael Roper, *Masculinity and the British Organization Man since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- <sup>169</sup> Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*.

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<sup>170</sup> Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L-R Higonnet, 'The Double Helix' in Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L-R Higonnet (eds.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>171</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, pp.106; 112. Emphasis in original.

<sup>172</sup> Willie Dewar, interviewed by Arthur McIvor, 9 December 2008 (SOHC 050/04).

<sup>173</sup> IWM SA, 11580, Edward Ashill, reel 1, 9 October 1990.

<sup>174</sup> IWM SA, 12015, Sir Kenneth Holland, reel 1, 18 April 1991.

<sup>175</sup> IWM SA, 20055, Roy Deeley, reel 2, 26 January 2000.

<sup>176</sup> John Allan, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 7 November 2011 (SOHC 050/09).

<sup>177</sup> Spedding, *Shildon Wagon Works*, p.47.

<sup>178</sup> IWM SA, 20055, Roy Deeley, reel 1, 26 January 2000.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> IWM SA, 19662, William Edward Ryder, reel 2, 10 September 1999.

<sup>181</sup> Cohen, *What Nobody Told the Foreman*, pp.134-5.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p.134.

<sup>183</sup> Coombes, *Clouded Hills*, pp.58-9.

<sup>184</sup> Ashley, *Acts of Defiance*, p.40.

<sup>185</sup> Roper, *Masculinity and the British Organization Man since 1945*, p.117.

<sup>186</sup> Frank Deegan, *There's No Other Way* (Liverpool: Toulouse Press, 1980), p.10.

<sup>187</sup> Alec Mills, interviewed by Arthur McIvor and Ronnie Johnston, 19 June 2000 (SOHC 017/C1).

<sup>188</sup> Jones, *Union Man*, p.44.

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- <sup>189</sup> Sonya Rose, 'Temperate Heroes: Concepts of Masculinity in Second World War Britain', in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann and John Tosh (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p.186.
- <sup>190</sup> 'All Behind You, Winston', David Low, *Evening Standard*, 14 May 1940, British Cartoon Archive LSE2772.
- <sup>191</sup> Tom Myles, interviewed by Wendy Ugolini, 6 November 2008 (SOHC 050/02).
- <sup>192</sup> Cynthia Cockburn, *Brothers* (London: Pluto, 1983); Sian Reynolds, *Britannica's Typesetters* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989).
- <sup>193</sup> Cohen, *What Nobody Told the Foreman*, pp.48-9.
- <sup>194</sup> Jones, *Union Man*, p.17.
- <sup>195</sup> George Bain and Richard Price (eds.), *Profiles of Union Growth: Comparative Statistical Portrait of Eight Countries* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1980), pp.37-8.
- <sup>196</sup> Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry*, pp.392-4; Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil*, pp.101-11.
- <sup>197</sup> IWM SA, 14963, Ronald Wakeman, reel 1, 16 February 1995.
- <sup>198</sup> Charles Lamb, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 3 April 2013 (SOHC 050/27).
- <sup>199</sup> Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry*, pp.8, 85, 128.
- <sup>200</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, pp.245-6.
- <sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.
- <sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.26-7.
- <sup>203</sup> Jones, *Union Man*, pp.87-95.
- <sup>204</sup> Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil*, pp.97, 100.
- <sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*; Croucher, *Engineers at War*; Chris Wrigley (ed.), *A History of British Industrial Relations, 1939-1979* (London: Edward Elgar, 1996).

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<sup>206</sup> George Bain and R. Price, *Profiles of Union Growth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p.40.

<sup>207</sup> McIvor, *Working Lives*, p.207.

<sup>208</sup> Inman, *Labour in the Munitions Industry*, pp.392-6; Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil*, pp.104-5.

<sup>209</sup> Sylvia Walby, *Patriarchy at Work* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

<sup>210</sup> Sue Ledwith, 'Gender Politics in Trade Unions: The Representation of Women Between Exclusion and Inclusion', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 18:2 (2012), pp.185-99. Here pp.185-6, 191-3.

<sup>211</sup> Jones, *Union Man*, p.113.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Jones, *Union Man*, p.102.

<sup>214</sup> Coombes, *Clouded Hills*, p.34. These mining Committees paralleled the Joint Production Committees established throughout engineering and the metals sector from 1942. Angus Calder, *The People's War* (London: Pimlico, 1969), pp.396-9; Croucher, *Engineers at War*, pp.161-74.

<sup>215</sup> Jack Jones, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.

<sup>216</sup> Field, *Blood, Sweat and Toil*, pp.92-5.

<sup>217</sup> Mass Observation, *People in Production*, p.193.

<sup>218</sup> Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1943, pp.212-3; 1944, p 152.

<sup>219</sup> Calder, *People's War*, p.398.

<sup>220</sup> John Stephenson, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 23 April 2013 (SOHC 050/39); Jim Lister, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 19 April 2013 (SOHC 050/38).

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- <sup>221</sup> Willie McNaul, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 27 March 2013 (SOHC 050/22).
- <sup>222</sup> IWM SA, 19662, William Edward Ryder, reel 1, 10 September 1999.
- <sup>223</sup> Frank Harvey, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 27 March 2013 (SOHC 050/23).
- <sup>224</sup> IWM SA, 30468, Warwick Harry Taylor, reel 2, 18 April 2002.
- <sup>225</sup> Philip Rogers (pseudonym), interviewed by Linsey Robb, 19 March 2013 (SOHC 050/15).
- <sup>226</sup> Alexander Davidson, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 10 April 2013 (SOHC 050/32).
- <sup>227</sup> Willie Dewar, interviewed by Arthur McIvor, 9 December 2008 (SOHC 050/04).
- <sup>228</sup> Alfred Thomas, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 3 May 2013 (SOHC 050/45).
- <sup>229</sup> Stephen Smith (pseudonym), interviewed by Linsey Robb, 19 February 2013 (SOHC 050/11).
- <sup>230</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, *Trade Union Membership 2014: Statistical Bulletin* (June 2015), p.5. <http://stats.bis.gov.uk/UKSA/tu/sa20100430.htm> Accessed 31 August 2015.
- <sup>231</sup> Willie Dewar, Cyril Beavor and Charles Hill (pseudonym).
- <sup>232</sup> Charles Hill (pseudonym), interviewed by Linsey Robb, 16 April 2013 (SOHC 050/37).
- <sup>233</sup> William Ramage, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 29 April 2013 (SOHC 050/43).
- <sup>234</sup> Eddie Menday, interviewed by Linsey Robb, 15 May 2013 (SOHC 050/50).
- <sup>235</sup> <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.
- <sup>236</sup> Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1941, p.282.
- <sup>237</sup> Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1942, pp.93-4; 1943, p.132; 1944, p.153.
- <sup>238</sup> Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1943, pp.132-3.
- <sup>239</sup> Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1941, pp.145-6; Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1942, pp.93-4.

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<sup>240</sup> Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report*, 1945, p.180.

<sup>241</sup> Walter Southgate, *That's the Way it Was: a Working Class Autobiography 1890-1950* (Oxford: New Clarion Press, 1982), p.135.

<sup>242</sup> <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.

<sup>243</sup> Jones, *Union Man*, pp.87-118; Ashley, *Acts of Defiance*, pp.34-46.

<sup>244</sup> Ashley, *Acts of Defiance*, pp.34-43.

<sup>245</sup> William Gallacher, *Last Memoirs* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966), p.274.

<sup>246</sup> Di Parkin, *Sixty Years of Struggle: History of Betteshanger Colliery* (Deal: Brightsea Press, 2007), pp.37-52.

<sup>247</sup> Calder, *The People's War*, p.396.

<sup>248</sup> Deegan, *There's No Other Way*, p.58.

<sup>249</sup> Chapple, *Sparks Fly!*, p.34.

<sup>250</sup> Exell, *Politics of the Production Line*, p.56.

<sup>251</sup> Jack Jones, <http://www.unionhistory.info/workerswar/voices.php> Accessed 15 November 2014.

<sup>252</sup> Jack Jones, *Union Man*, p.104.