ONE MAN AND HIS WOMEN: DOMESTIC SERVICE IN EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

JOHN BENSON

University of Wolverhampton

The aim of this article is to modify the view of female servants in Edwardian England as the epitome of working-class subservience and powerlessness, drawing on recent analysis of their ability to challenge their employers only by expedients such as sulking, mishearing orders and wasting time. Through detailed engagement with the relationships that one Wolverhampton businessman, Edward Lawrence, had with the servants in his life, it argues that female domestic staff were less compliant than the existing historiography allows, and had more ways of protecting their interests than we are usually led to believe.

Domestic service is not the stuff of traditional labour history. Indeed, for many years the few labour, social and feminist historians who examined this sector of the Victorian and Edwardian labour market tended to regard the women who worked in it as the epitome of working-class subservience and powerlessness. They did not display class identity, claimed Theresa McBride. They did not form trade unions, stressed Edward Higgs. Even those who worked close to home, explained Leonore Davidoff Lockwood, found themselves virtually defenceless: ‘far from familiar surroundings and confronted with what was to them an alien way of life, many young servants were both frightened and lonely; they were often exploited with heavy work loads and open to sexual advances from employers or other servants.’ Such views have found their way into the historical mainstream. According to Paula Bartley (and many others), the women who worked in service led a bleakly vulnerable existence.

Utterly dependent on employers, domestic servants had little personal freedom. Employers were at liberty to interfere in their social lives or discourage them from having ‘followers’ or boyfriends. Equally, sexual harassment was an occupational hazard for domestic servants who had often to cope with the unwelcome advances of men who lived and worked in the household. In addition, aged, sick or pregnant servants were unceremoniously dismissed to fend for themselves as employers were not legally obliged to care for them.

Such claims, it is true, have been substantially modified in recent years. Employer–employee relationships, it is now suggested, were less easy to characterise than earlier literature allowed. Heterogeneity now tends to be regarded as just as important as...
homogeneity, with more depending than in most occupations upon personal as opposed to structural factors. ‘The element of chance was important’, stresses McBride, ‘— in the form of the character of the employer, the specific working conditions, and the ease of placement.’ The ‘relation of servant to employer was still that of subordinate towards superior’, explains Pamela Horn. ‘Yet within this framework, day-to-day contacts depended very much on the character of the individuals concerned. Some mistresses were kind and considerate to their employees; others were harsh. But for many it was the nature of each of the personalities involved which determined the quality of the relationship.’

Employer–employee relationships were influenced too, it is agreed, by the wealth of the employer, by the number of servants he or she employed, and by the prevailing economic, social and cultural conditions. As Davidoff points out,

... there was a very wide range of experience. At one extreme was found the better-known form of service in a great house within a graduated hierarchy of servants, which could lead to a measure of autonomy, a high standard of living and a good deal of authority over others. At the other, and numerically more important, extreme was the less visible, less well known ‘slavery’ in the lower-middle-class suburban or artisan household or lodging house.

‘In general,’ it is claimed, ‘the well-to-do with a large staff found it easier to recruit servants than those keeping one or two domestics only.’ Such families, it is accepted, offered their employees higher status, more attractive career prospects and more clearly defined work routines.

Indeed, servants everywhere, it is now emphasised, had their own, often effective, ways of dealing with their employers. In fact, it is almost a hundred years since Sidney and Beatrice Webb suggested why this might be the case. ‘In the all-important matter of carrying out the bargain it is the mistress, with her lack of knowledge, her indifference to details, and her preoccupation with other affairs, whose own ease of body and mind is at the mercy of the servant’s hundred and one ways of making herself disagreeable.’ Modern historians are inclined to agree. They suggest that rather than taking strike action or seeking legal redress, domestic staff, both male and female, turned to strategic subversive behaviours. According to Davidoff, Doolittle, Fink and Holden, ‘Servants had their own methods of revenge against unfair treatment, using familiar weapons such as sulking, mishearing orders, semi-deliberate spoiling of materials, wasting time, “the sullen dumb insolence and petty irritations” bemoaned by employers.’

Subservience and assertiveness

It is the aim of this article to explore further the employer–employee relationship — more precisely the master–servant relationship — in early twentieth-century provincial England. It will do so by examining the dealings that one Wolverhampton businessman, Edward Lawrence (1867–1912), had with the servants in his life. It will explore, so far as is possible, his relationships with the servants he was brought up with, the servants he employed, the servants he propositioned, the servants he slept with, the servants he lived with, the servants he fell out with — and the servant that he killed.

This is a controversial methodology. At best, its critics might object, the approach seems likely to produce something interesting but irrelevant. At worst, it threatens to
descend into an unedifying combination of the mildly salacious and the profoundly parochial. In fact, such concerns are far less well founded than they appear at first sight. It is certainly not intended to imply in this article that Edward Lawrence was typical of anybody but himself. But this does not invalidate the possibility of using the untypical to explore the typical. As V. A. C. Gatrell pointed out more than ten years ago in a pioneering investigation of early nineteenth-century rape, ‘The narrow universes in which most people experienced the exactions of power may often be better apprised in the microcosm than through aggregative analyses, the microcosm illuminating the universal.’

The article draws upon the fact that unconventional behaviour, failed businesses, unhappy marriages and deaths in suspicious circumstances tend to leave fuller and more revealing records than conventional behaviour, thriving businesses, happy marriages and deaths from natural causes. When Edward Lawrence’s wife sued him for divorce in 1905, the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court of Justice compiled a detailed set of court minutes, which are available in the National Archives. When he was charged with assaulting a mistress in 1907, the local press took a keen — not to say salacious — interest in the legal proceedings that ensued. When he was arrested, charged and tried for murder in 1908–9, the press, both local and national, covered the case, and the police opened a detailed file (also in the National Archives) examining what they described as Lawrence’s ‘antecedents’. When he was declared bankrupt in 1910, the local press returned to the fray, providing yet more evidence of what they saw as his deep-seated personal failings. When he moved to Kidderminster during the final few years of his life, the press there reported with some relish the misadventures in which he continued to get himself involved.

Such evidence provides unusually rich insights into the master–servant relationship. It suggests not only that early twentieth-century female servants were less compliant than the existing historiography allows, but that they had many more ways of protecting their interests than we have usually been led to believe.

**Edward Lawrence**

Edward Lawrence grew up in a family that seemed, on the face of it, to represent a textbook example of that well known Victorian stereotype, the upwardly mobile, lower middle-class provincial family. Lawrence’s father, Joseph, began life with few apparent advantages. He worked as a public house tenant during the 1860s, bringing up his growing family in a series of public houses in Wolverhampton town centre. There were rumours that he and his wife had a drink problem, and it was common knowledge apparently that their other son, Robert drank himself to death when he was barely thirty years old. ‘Drink’, concluded a local policeman, ‘it was in the family.’

Nevertheless, Joseph did well, and by the time he died in 1901 he was ‘in a large way of business, and possessed several important [licensed] establishments in Wolverhampton and elsewhere’. As he prospered, he and his family secured many of the trappings of middle-class success, status and respectability. He acquired an imposing home in one of the town’s better suburbs, he became a freemason, he was elected a Conservative town councillor, and he was appointed a director of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club.
Joseph and his wife took care to educate their children in ways befitting the family’s achievements and aspirations. They sent Edward and Robert to a private school near Bath, where the teaching, it was claimed, was ‘particularly suited to the requirements of Pupils intended to engage in Commercial, Agricultural and manufacturing pursuits.’ Edward Lawrence went on to train as a veterinary surgeon in Edinburgh, practised briefly in Shropshire, and then spent two years in South America before returning to Wolverhampton in 1891 to join his father and brother in the family business. Within a year or two, he married a West Bromwich woman, set up home and began raising a family of four sons and three daughters.

**Power and promiscuity**

Edward Lawrence’s relationships with the servants in his life seem, on the face of it, to present a classic example of another Victorian (and Edwardian) stereotype, that of the married, middle-class philanderer who abused his status and material power to pursue a life of unbridled sexual promiscuity in a series of encounters with women of lower social and economic status.

Lawrence, like virtually all Victorian and Edwardian middle-class men (and women), was brought up relying on working-class women for the smooth running of the households in which they lived. When he was young, his parents employed a teenage girl to help with childcare and housework. When he was in his mid-twenties, he lived briefly with his parents, who now had three resident staff to look after them. When he set up home with his wife in the early 1890s, they engaged two young women — a general servant and a mother’s help — to help care for their growing family. After his wife divorced him in the summer of 1905, he took on a series of women to work for him: a caretaker and three general servants, as well as a servant (who was also his mistress) and a housekeeper (who was another of his mistresses). Indeed, even after his bankruptcy in 1910, he went on to employ two further housekeepers and a general servant — as well as a man to help walk his dogs.

Like a large (albeit unknown) number of Victorian and Edwardian middle-class men, Lawrence also grew up looking to working-class women as potential sexual partners. We do not know whether he played any part in choosing the staff that he and his wife hired while they were married. We do not know whether he chose the staff he hired after he separated from his wife on the basis of their age and aptitude, or their physical attractiveness and sexual availability. What is known is that he formed several sexual relationships with the women who worked for him throughout his adult life.

Whatever Lawrence’s initial priorities, he saw that domestic service could be used as a device both for propositioning potential sexual partners and for reinforcing the dependence of the women with whom he was already involved. At the end of 1908, for instance, he was living with his long-time mistress (and mother of one of his illegitimate children), ex-barmaid Ruth Hadley. Ruth went to the home of one of Lawrence’s former employees, sixteen-year old Kate Maddox, and persuaded her to return to work for him immediately as a general servant. There was a lot to do when they got to the house and, although Ruth helped by peeling the potatoes and preparing the Brussels sprouts, the dinner was not ready when Lawrence returned home at about a quarter to
eight. He was ‘under the influence of drink’, recalled Kate, and greeted her in the kitchen:

‘Hello Kate have you come back again?’

Lawrence then sent Kate upstairs to ask Ruth where the whisky bottle was. Ruth, who was doing her hair, came down a few minutes later to ask him which bottle he meant.

‘The big one.’

Kate went upstairs again to speak to Ruth, who told her that it was in the pantry. Lawrence then called Kate to join him in the sitting room, where he made a desultory attempt to proposition her, putting his arm round her neck and trying to kiss her.32

The hiring of staff also provided a convenient cover for the installation of women with whom Lawrence had — or wished to have — a sexual relationship. He moved Ruth Hadley into his home within two days of his wife leaving him in the summer of 1905. Two years later, with Ruth temporarily out of the way, he installed as his housekeeper Emma Stacey, another mistress and the mother of another of his illegitimate children.33 Over the next few years, he lived with both women as man and wife, in Emma Stacey’s case keeping their young child with them in the house.34

The fact that Ruth Hadley and Emma Stacey were Edward Lawrence’s lovers as well as his servants complicated, but certainly did not overturn, the employer–employee — master–servant, superior–subordinate — relationship that was at the core of all domestic service. It was Lawrence who decided whether or not Ruth should live with him and/or work for him. As soon as he met her in 1904, he found her somewhere to live. When his wife left him the following year, he moved her into the family home; when they quarrelled a couple of months later, he instructed her to leave. When they were reconciled during the spring and summer of 1907, he invited her back; and when they quarrelled yet again, he ordered her out for what he thought would be the final time.35

Lawrence expected — and Ruth accepted — that she was responsible for, and should be prepared to help with, the cleaning and the cooking. She worried if the work was not done, and she expected, at least when she and Lawrence were separated, to be paid for the work that she did.36 Moreover, it was Lawrence, not Ruth, who decided whether, when and how much she should be paid. During one of their periodic separations, Ruth and her sister called on Lawrence to collect the wages that she claimed he owed her. Lawrence refused to pay her, she threatened to hit him, he threatened to shoot her, and somebody — probably Lawrence — called the police.37 It was not an isolated incident. During yet another of their arguments, Lawrence ordered Ruth — yet again — to leave the house.

‘Give me my week’s wages’, she retorted.

‘I haven’t got any. Now go out of my house when I tell you.’38

No doubt, Lawrence was less direct when dealing with those of his domestic staff with whom he was neither sexually nor emotionally involved. But he made it perfectly clear if he was not satisfied with their performance. On one occasion, for instance, Ruth
Hadley tricked his housekeeper (and Ruth’s former neighbour) Isabella Pickett into letting her back into the house by saying that she and Lawrence had been reconciled, and that he had ‘ordered’ her to return. When Lawrence found out what had happened, he informed Isabella in no uncertain terms that she must never again allow Ruth to enter his home.\(^{39}\)

By the time Lawrence moved to Kidderminster in 1910, he was drinking heavily, and this affected, sometimes very obviously, the way in which he treated the domestic staff whom he employed. Once installed in his new home, he engaged at least two housekeepers, one of whom was a married woman from Birmingham, Fanny Thompson. At first, Fanny found no difficulty working for him, but after a month or so, his drinking, she claimed, became a serious problem. His language was shocking and ‘he made accusations against her’. Fanny decided she had no choice but to leave, but returned to the house to collect her belongings. She was packing her box when Lawrence approached her at the door to her bedroom.\(^{40}\)

‘Mr. Lawrence, I’ve come to settle up with you’, she explained.

Lawrence reacted furiously: he ‘struck her on the breast a very violent blow, using at the same time very bad language.’\(^{41}\)

It is clear then that Edward Lawrence, like other middle-class householders, demanded obedience and competence in those he employed to look after him.\(^{42}\) However unconventional his personal life and however complicated his relationships with some of his employees, he showed no signs at all of being prepared to relinquish the authority that masters and mistresses routinely exercised over their domestic staff.

**Subversion and resistance**

However, it is easy to be misled. Edward Lawrence’s dealings with his domestic staff were by no means as one-sided as they appear at first sight. No doubt, Ruth Hadley, Emma Stacey, Isabella Pickett, Kate Maddox, Fanny Thompson and his other servants behaved as subversively as those employed by anybody else. No doubt they, like those employed elsewhere, sulked, spoiled materials, acted dumb, misheard instructions, and wasted time when it was possible for them to do so.\(^ {43}\)

But the women who worked for Edward Lawrence were a good deal less secretive and a good deal more confident and confrontational than even revisionist historiography allows. They certainly did not confine themselves to surreptitious, stereotypically ‘female’, ways of challenging the power and authority of the man for whom they worked.

Lawrence’s servants also manipulated, the two of them who could, the sexual and emotional relationships they had with their employer. They drew strength, several of them, from the kinship and neighbourhood ties that remained so marked a feature of many working-class communities. But they also adopted strategies more usually associated with members of the organised labour movement. Three of them withdrew their labour (when Lawrence threatened to attack one of his mistresses); and one of them looked for legal redress (appealing for police protection against Lawrence, and when this failed taking out a summons against him for assault).
Ruth Hadley certainly knew how to stand up for herself. The fact that she slept with Edward Lawrence as well as worked for him gave an edge — and more than an edge — both to their personal dealings and to their workplace negotiations. Inevitably, of course, the two became irretrievably entwined. We have seen already that their arguments over pay degenerated in a way impossible to imagine if they had been involved in an exclusively economic relationship.

We can see too that throughout their time together, Lawrence and Ruth behaved more like lovers (and ex-lovers) than like employer and employee. They slept together; they went away together for a two-week holiday on the Welsh coast. They squabbled; they shouted at one another; they threatened one another. They quarrelled over almost everything. There was the occasion, for instance, when Lawrence returned home at about a quarter to eleven after an overnight visit to Doncaster races. He refused to sleep with Ruth because, he said, she was drunk. Ruth retaliated by accusing him of going with other women, and then during the night confronting him with the revolver that he kept under his bed. Threatening to blow his ‘brains out’, she was restrained only by the combined efforts of Lawrence and his caretaker, Isabella Pickett. Ruth, explained Isabella, ‘was a very passionate and violent woman in drink.’

Lawrence’s other servants (with the exception of Emma Stacey) were in no position to behave like Ruth. However, this did not mean they were the supine victims that we are so often led to believe. Lawrence’s servants, like servants everywhere, knew what was going on even without making any effort to eavesdrop. In the summer of 1905, for example, one of Lawrence’s and Margaret’s servants was with Margaret in the kitchen of the family home in Wolverhampton when Lawrence came in, hit his wife on the side of the head, and attacked her several more times until she sought ‘protection at a neighbour’s house’. Five years later, when Lawrence was living in Kidderminster, it was one of his servants, naturally enough, who opened the door to the county court bailiff who had been sent to serve a summons on him.

Lawrence’s Wolverhampton servants, like most of those working locally, tended to come from the town or its immediate neighbourhood. This meant not only that it was relatively easy for them to return home, but that they were able to seek support from family, friends and neighbours and that they knew where to look for alternative employment when the need arose. Kate Maddox, for instance, lived with her family whether or not she was working for Lawrence. Ruth Hadley found work at a public house in Birmingham when Lawrence evicted her (but was sacked when, it was alleged, she threw another barmaid through a window). Elizabeth Wardle was able to find a friend or neighbour to discharge a revolver for her within twenty-four hours of secreting it out of Lawrence’s house. And in Kidderminster, Fanny Thompson went back to Birmingham when she left the housekeeping job which she had taken with Lawrence.

Ruth Hadley relied heavily on her siblings. We have seen already that she took her sister, Theresa Hardiman, with her when she called on Lawrence to try to collect the money she claimed he owed her for the work she had done. Ruth was angry, according to her sister, because her employer-cum-lover had ‘been up to his games again’. Theresa took Ruth’s side in the ensuing argument with Lawrence, intervened when the police arrived and defused the situation by taking Ruth away to stay the night at her house.
Ruth turned more often, it seems, to another sister, Kate Lewis. It was Kate who looked after Lawrence and Ruth’s illegitimate daughter, apparently for long periods of time. It was Kate who helped Ruth when she found it difficult to complete her domestic duties to Lawrence’s satisfaction. On Christmas Eve 1908, for instance, Ruth persuaded Lawrence to let her stay with him over the holiday period and cook his Christmas dinner for him. Immediately she had secured Lawrence’s agreement, she called for her sister and together they went round to where he was living. ‘I helped her to clean up the house’, recalled Kate.

Ruth received help too from at least one member of her extended family. When Lawrence persuaded her to leave his house towards the end of 1906, she took their daughter to her cousin, toolmaker Frederick Williams. Later the same evening, Ruth and Frederick returned to see Lawrence. Frederick stood at the gate with the baby, while Ruth knocked at the door. Lawrence opened it, revolver in hand.

‘What do you want?’ demanded Lawrence. ‘Go back with your bloody bully where you have been.’
‘I shan’t go; I want to come in.’
‘If you are not off, I’ll blow your brains out.’
‘If you won’t have me in, at least give me the baby’s food.’

Lawrence did so, but he still refused to let Ruth in, and she and the baby spent the night with Frederick and his wife.

It is clear then that Edward Lawrence’s servants benefited from living locally and from being able to tap into existing ties of kinship and neighbourhood. They benefited too from the fact that they rarely, if ever, worked for Lawrence or his family on their own. Lawrence was one of the middle-class householders able to afford more than one servant. He and his wife employed two members of staff. After his wife divorced him, he employed two and sometimes three servants; and even following his bankruptcy (and move to Kidderminster) he still employed one, and sometimes two, women to look after him.

His servants’ local, social networks and shared occupational interests also provided the preconditions for their use of more conventional weapons in the working-class, industrial-relations armoury. Like workers in more organised sectors of the economy, they were prepared to withdraw their labour when they felt they were left with no realistic alternative.

At the end of 1908, as has been explained, Lawrence’s household consisted of Emma Stacey, their young daughter, and three servants, Ethel Cross, Kate Maddox and Elizabeth Wardle. Three days before Christmas, Lawrence and Emma had a serious argument, during which the servants heard him threatening her: ‘If you don’t keep quiet, I will quieten you for good.’ All four women immediately left the house. We do not know how far the three servants were motivated by hostility to Lawrence and how far by solidarity with Emma. But they were certainly apprehensive about what he might do. The day after they left, Elizabeth Wardle returned to the house, saying that she had forgotten her slippers and pocket handkerchiefs. Lawrence let her look for them in the ‘top-room’, and while she was upstairs she took the opportunity of looking for his revolver, which she found, loaded, under a pillow in his bedroom. She took it home.
with her and, as we have seen, arranged to have it discharged in her back garden. Whatever the inter-personal relationships that had developed within Edward Lawrence’s household, the servants’ decision to walk out meant that they sided with the working-class, female ‘head of the house’ against the middle-class, male ‘master’ who employed them and paid their wages.

Even geographical distance and occupational isolation did not necessarily preclude servant activism. When Fanny Thompson moved from north-west Birmingham to Kidderminster to work for Lawrence in the autumn of 1910, it was one of the few occasions that he was looked after by a single member of staff. She soon found how difficult he was to work for, deciding to leave when he told her — in a telling reversal of conventional priorities — to take his son to the local workhouse, and collect his gun from a local pawnshop. She was scared to work for him, she said. But she was far from impotent. She went to the police, and persuaded them to send a constable with her when she returned to Lawrence’s house to collect her belongings and outstanding wages. When P.C. Bevan’s presence failed to prevent Lawrence swearing and hitting her, she took out a summons against him for assault, acquired a solicitor and barrister, and gave evidence in open court. She won the case: the ‘Bench had not the slightest hesitation of convicting the defendant. He had committed an unprovoked and dastardly assault which ought never to have been thought of much less inflicted.’

Fanny Thompson was obviously a strong and determined woman, but she was not as exceptional as one might imagine. Fifteen months before, a servant successfully sued her former employer in West Bromwich County Court, for a month’s wages — £1–4–0 — in lieu of notice. It was unusual, but by no means unknown, for servants across the country to take legal action against their employers in order to recover unpaid wages, to secure damages for unfair dismissal and, with the assistance of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to bring prosecutions for assault. In fact, a servant at Westminster County Court claimed in 1901 that, ‘she was in the habit of suing mistresses, who usually paid the money into court rather than appear.’

**Conclusion**

Not many Edwardian men lived with their mistresses and ended up killing one of them. Not many were divorced, found themselves arrested and put on trial for murder before being acquitted in the full glare of publicity. But it is Edward Lawrence’s untypicality that makes him of such interest when exploring master–servant relations in Edwardian England. Small incidents, as microhistorians insist, really can reveal a great deal about broader structures, attitudes and behaviour.

The material produced in the wake of Edward Lawrence’s arrest and prosecution provides a revealing insight into the balance of power within the often tightly controlled, and usually opaque, environment of domestic service. It shows that Lawrence’s relationships with his servants were much less straightforward than they appear at first sight. It suggests that we should be more than a little sceptical when faced with seemingly incontrovertible evidence of employer power and employee subservience in the domestic workplace.
Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the assistance of Carol Volante, the encouragement of Peter Ackers and Dilwyn Porter, the advice of Laura Ugolini and Harvey Woolf, the comments of two anonymous referees, and the financial support of the British Academy and the Scolaudi Foundation.

References

Domestic Service in Edwardian England

15 TNA J77/1, 859, 219856, High Court of Justice, Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division, Lawrence v. Lawrence, Court Minutes, Petition, 3 October 1905.
16 For example, *Midland Counties Express*, 19 January, 2 February 1907.
17 TNA A5516/44/4, 214971, Copy/Police Report as to prisoner’s antecedents, L.R. Burnett to Director of Public Prosecutions, 29 January 1908 [1909].
18 For example, *Midland Evening News*, 8 December 1909; *Express and Star*, 29 April 1910.
20 *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 5 March 1909; *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
21 *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 5 March 1909.
22 *Midland Evening News*, 2 December 1901.
26 Lawrence v. Lawrence, Court Minutes, Petition, 3 October 1905.
28 Census of England and Wales, 1871.
29 Census of England and Wales, 1891.
30 Census of England and Wales, 1901; *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
33 *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
34 Copy/Police Report, R. J. A. Boulton deposition.
35 Copy/Police Report, F. Williams deposition.
36 *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
37 *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
38 K. Maddox deposition; *Wolverhampton Chronicle*, 13 January 1909.
39 Copy/Police Report, E. Wardle deposition; *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 5 March 1909; *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
41 *Kidderminster Times*, 15 October 1910.
44 *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909.
45 *Midland Counties Express*, 6 March 1909. Also *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 5 March 1909.
46 *Express and Star*, 28 July 1905.

The probable exception was Ethel Lathe. See also Domestic Servants’ Advertiser, 20 May 1913.

Roberts, Woman’s Place, ch. 5; Benson, Working Class, ch. 5.

Copy/Police Report, K. Maddox deposition; Midland Counties Express, 9 January 1909; Wolverhampton Chronicle, 13 January 1909.

Midland Counties Express, 6 March 1909.

Copy/Police Report, E. Wardle deposition; Midland Counties Express, 6 March 1909.

Kidderminster Shuttle, 15 October 1910.

Midland Counties Express, 6 March 1909. Also Times Law Reports, xxv, 1908–9, p. 374.

Interview with great niece of Ruth Hadley, 1 November 2005; Times Law Reports, 1908–9, p. 374.

Copy/Police Report, K. Lewis deposition.

Copy/Police Report, F. Williams deposition.

Judson, ‘Domestic Servants’, pp. 54–6; Horn, Life below Stairs, p. 6; Light, Mrs Woolf, p. 61.

For example, Kidderminster Shuttle, 15 October 1910.

Copy/Police Report, K. Maddox deposition; Midland Counties Express, 6 March 1909.

Midland Counties Express, 6 March 1900.

Kidderminster Shuttle, 15 October 1910.

West Bromwich Weekly News, 11 January 1908.

Servants’ Advertiser and Register, 8 December 1900, 9 February 1901; Domestic Servants’ Advertiser, 20 May 1913.

Servants’ Advertiser and Register, 30 November 1901.

Servants’ Advertiser and Register, 10, 24 November 1900.

Servants’ Advertiser and Register, 6 April 1901.