

## 9. Conclusion

Despite the importance of the venues examined in this book to Britain's political history, none remains standing on London's urban landscape. Newgate continued to operate as a prison throughout the nineteenth century, and although it underwent further renovation and extension during the century, it failed to shake its loathed reputation for squalor and harshness. Newgate's continued resistance to prison reform and the apparent inability to effect either reform or redemption of its prisoners were lamented throughout the century. By 1902, pending another wave of reform measures, the authorities evidently considered this resistance was intractable; a decision was made to demolish the prison and to build a new central criminal court, which continues to occupy the site today. Architectural historian Harold Kalman regrets the demise of Newgate: 'With it was lost a testament to the genius of George Dance the Younger, as well as an important milestone in prison design.'<sup>1</sup>

Few Londoners at the turn of the century might have shared Kalman's nostalgia for the architectural significance of the building. In 1900, the *Sphere* wrote that Newgate's demise was 'not to be regretted', for 'its history is of the most unsavoury order'.<sup>2</sup> Public hangings continued on the street outside Newgate until 1868 when Victorian sensibilities saw executions removed from the public gaze and to a site inside the prison.<sup>3</sup> That few traces remain of the prison, save an original cell door and some signage now placed in the London Museum, suggests that despite its historical and architectural significance, it remained a site of loathing and awe for much of the London populace. Its demolition provided an opportunity to erase not only its physical presence from the metropolitan landscape but also its horrors from public memory.

George Laval Chesterton's appointment as Governor of Coldbath Fields House of Correction in 1834 saw the prison move closer to the conditions that inspired Michael Ignatieff's study of the site. Chesterton sought to introduce the separate and silent system into Coldbath Fields, as well as the relentless, and infamous, hard-labour system that subjected prisoners to the inane task of picking oakum or hours of exhausting and unrelenting work on the treadmill.<sup>4</sup> The prison was substantially enlarged according to the radial design during the 1830s and, by

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1 Harold D. Kalman, 'Newgate Prison', *Architectural History*, vol. 12 (1969), p. 58.

2 Quoted in Anthony Babington, *The English Bastille: A history of Newgate gaol and prison conditions in Britain 1188–1902* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1971), p. 235.

3 Nevertheless, the prison continued to be a site of intrigue for Londoners. According to Anthony Babington, it remained a 'sort of penal museum' throughout the nineteenth century, regularly visited by throngs of interested sightseers. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

4 On developments at the prison under Governor Chesterton's management, see his memoirs: George Chesterton, *Revelations of Prison Life: With an enquiry into prison discipline and secondary punishments* (London:

the 1860s, more closely resembled the 'latest example of prison architecture at Pentonville'.<sup>5</sup> The prison's existence was, however, relatively short-lived compared with the venerable site of Newgate. The *Prison Act* of 1877 resulted in a swathe of prison closures and Coldbath Fields was one county prison considered superfluous by the newly appointed Prison Commissioners, who now oversaw the management and operation of Britain's gaols.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after its closure, the site was officially granted to the Post Office, which occupies it to this day. The current British Postal Museum and Archive web site maintains that postal workers of the late nineteenth century objected so vocally to working at 'Coldbath Fields'—a 'name long associated with the feared gaol'—that postal management was forced to revert to a former name for the area, Mount Pleasant, from 1888.<sup>7</sup> Though the physical structure of the prison remained intact for some time, the change in nomenclature helped in some way to erase Coldbath Fields House of Correction also from public memory.

Although the Crown and Anchor was renamed the Whittington Club after Douglas Jerrold successfully gained the lease of the premises for his new experiment in urban sociability, it continued to be known as the 'ancient Temple of Freedom' well into the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> As its Whig parliamentary patronage declined after 1832, so too it appears did the condition of the premises. Whittington Club members went to considerable effort during 1850 to raise funds to undertake substantial renovations, focusing particularly on a restoration of the Great Room. They eventually raised the considerable sum of £5000 deemed necessary to refashion the space, which included construction of a larger gallery for musicians, repainting the walls and providing extra gas lighting and cushioned seating around the room.<sup>9</sup> A ball was held to mark the restoration, celebrating the transformation of 'our Great Room' from 'the grub to the butterfly'.<sup>10</sup> How devastating for the tireless fundraisers that only four years later, in December 1854, the entire building was razed by fire.

When the blaze broke out in the tavern's kitchen at 5.30 am, fire engulfed the premises so rapidly that the 20 servants occupying the top floor of the premises were forced to make a 'rapid exit' in their nightdresses through one of the parapet windows, making a 'circuit of the stone coping round the building',

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Hurst and Blackett, 1856); Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life* (London: Griffin, 1862), pp. 275, 280–8; Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 189–96.

5 Thomas Archer, *The Pauper, the Thief and the Convict* (London, 1865; reprinted, New York: Garland, 1985), p. 152.

6 Babington, *The English Bastille*, p. 228.

7 The British Postal Museum and Archive, 'Mount Pleasant', <<http://postalheritage.org.uk/history/places/mountpleasant>>

8 D. Foster, *Inns, Tavern, Alehouses, Coffee Houses etc, In and Around London* (City of Westminster Archives, c. 1900), vol. 20, p. 301.

9 *Whittington Club Gazette*, 19 October 1850.

10 *Whittington Club Gazette*, 16 November 1850.

onto the roof and across to the adjacent premises occupied by the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>11</sup> In a matter of minutes, 'flames swept furiously through the great room' and burst through the large windows at its eastern end, creating an 'alarming appearance' for onlookers. Although the *Illustrated London News* considered that the 'building itself had little to recommend it', they nevertheless recognised it as a site of 'great historic interest', dedicating three broadsheet pages complete with illustrations to memorialise its significance in London's urban history (Figure 9.1).<sup>12</sup> With the premises now 'laid in ashes', and given the close proximity to the *Illustrated London News* offices, the editor offered an apology to his readers for the smudged paper used for the very edition that reported the Crown and Anchor fire. Thumbing through those pages more than a century and a half later, I was provided with a tangible, albeit brief, contact with a long lost radical space by those same smudges.



**Figure 9.1 Fire at the Crown and Anchor**

*Illustrated London News*, 9 December 1854

Following the fire, the premises were rebuilt on the same plan as the Crown and Anchor, and continued to operate under the name of the Whittington Club until the 1870s, although attracting a markedly different milieu than that

<sup>11</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 4 December 1854.

<sup>12</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 9 December 1854.

which promised so much under the Whittington Club. Even before 1854, the gender inclusiveness that was the hallmark of the club had all but sunk 'into oblivion'.<sup>13</sup> According to historian Christopher Kent, it 'became a more or less ordinary city men's club' though it retained a 'mild radical tint'.<sup>14</sup> Whittington women, both he and fellow historian Kathryn Gleadle concur, 'ceased to find the club congenial'.<sup>15</sup> The Whittington finally closed in 1873, though the building reopened the same year as the Temple Club—yet another incarnation of the site as an outlet for male metropolitan sociability (Figure 9.2).<sup>16</sup> By 1888, it was used as a printing house, with the *World* newspaper remarking that its 'Corinthian columns' were all that remained as a reminder of the Crown and Anchor epoch.<sup>17</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, London tavern and inn chronicler D. Foster referred to the tavern as an 'ancient Temple of Freedom' and anticipated that though 'the giants of democracy have passed away', the 'recollection of the Crown and Anchor will long live amongst the people of England'.<sup>18</sup> This book has sought to make a contribution to realising Foster's hope. For though the Crown and Anchor was a seminal site in British political and radical history, prior to this study, it occupied only an amorphous place in the rich body of historiography focused on this period. Lamentably, the current structure occupying the site now lives as a testament to the mediocrity and mendacity of mid-twentieth-century London architecture—a long way from its days as a leading cultural and political site of urban sociability.

Following George Holyoake's failed attempt to see the Rotunda restored to its former Carlilean glory under the tutelage of Emma Martin, the Rotunda passed to new owners. The new proprietors sought once again to draw upon one of the Rotunda's many layers of identity and applied for a licence to operate the premises as a minor theatre. The application was rejected in 1844 on the grounds that the Rotunda had been used 'for propagating infidel principles and socialism'.<sup>19</sup> The owners might have hoped time had erased these associations and they reapplied for the licence three years later. The application was again unsuccessful. By 1858, they surely envisaged that there was sufficient temporal distance between the notorious Devil's Chaplin, or the scandalous *Isis*, or indeed its later socialist connections, and applied for the theatre licence once more. On this occasion, the owners appealed to the licensing magistrates' sense

13 Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists: Radical Unitarians and the emergence of the women's rights movement, 1831–51* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), p. 170.

14 Christopher Kent, 'The Whittington Club: A bohemian experiment in middle class social reform', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1 (1974), p. 54n.

15 Gleadle, *The Early Feminists*, p. 169.

16 *Norman Collection of Taverns*, vol. 6, Guildhall Library, City of London, p. 74. See also Walter Thornbury, 'The Strand (Southern Tributaries)', *Old and New London*, vol. 3 (1878), pp. 63–84.

17 *World*, 26 December 1888.

18 Foster, *Inns, Tavern, Alehouses, Coffee Houses etc.*, p. 301.

19 See the advice from Lord Chamberlain's office to John Parkinson (son of James), dated 9 May 1844, Southwark Local Studies Library, London.

of nationalism, claiming that as the two largest theatres in London at the time were in foreign hands, the Rotunda could become the home of 'National Drama'. According to theatre historian Tracy Davis, the new owners hoped 'that such a noble aim would erase any tendency to exercise ideological grudges on dead managers and inanimate real estate'.<sup>20</sup> Their aspirations were soon quashed, however, when the magistrates rejected the application for a third time. The stench of infidelism, it seems, would take many years to fade.



**Figure 9.2 Front right corner of the Temple Club, following rebuilding on the same plan as the Crown and Anchor, c. 1880**

Strand Estate Collection. Copyright His Grace the Duke of Norfolk (per the Archivist, Arundel Castle)

Less is known of the Rotunda's days beyond the successive failure of its owners to secure a theatre licence. It reportedly operated as a penny gaff at some time during the mid-century, before it operated as the Rotunda Auction and Sale Rooms for 'trade purposes'. By 1908, the building was known only to be operating as the 'London depot of an Edinburgh firm'.<sup>21</sup> Despite surviving

<sup>20</sup> Tracy Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 35. See also David Worrall, *Theatric Revolution: Drama, censorship and Romantic period subcultures, 1773–1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 349.

<sup>21</sup> *Notes and Queries*, 19 September 1908.

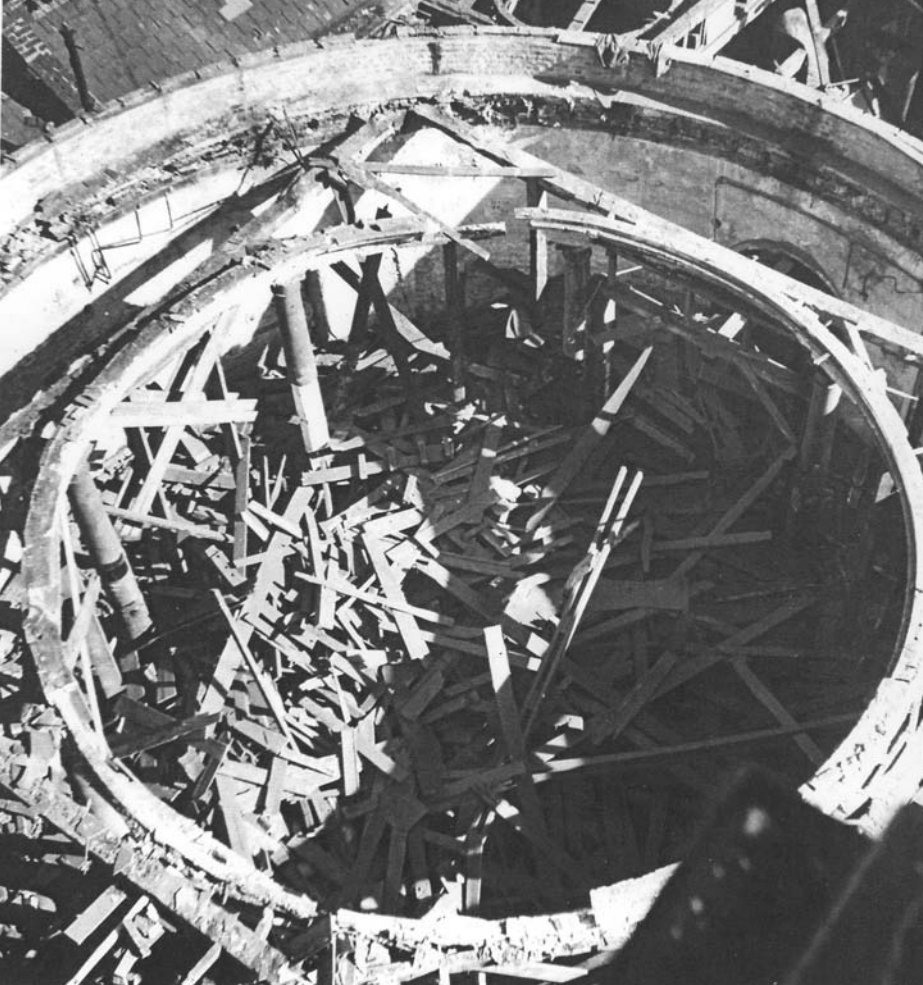


the wrath of the authorities throughout the nineteenth century, the Rotunda did not escape the devastation of enemy bombers during World War II. The *Survey of London* of 1950 contains a description of what it calls the 'mutilated remains' of the Rotunda still standing at that date (Figure 9.3a/b). It has since been demolished for modern office space—a somewhat melancholy postscript for the once great radical theatre.



**Figure 9.3a** Demolition of the Rotunda site in January 1958. The circular roof of the small theatre of the Rotunda.

Copyright Southwark Local History Library.



**Figure 9.3b** The marble columns of the small theatre are visible in the remains.

Copyright Southwark Local History Library.

The struggle surrounding the acquisition of a theatre licence by the new owners neatly summarises the underlying theme of this study—that the radical spaces of the past are not merely ‘inanimate real estate’ in which radical culture unfolded. That the Surrey magistrates continued to invoke an ‘ideological grudge’ against the building more than two decades after Carlile’s departure from his cherished Rotunda speaks to the complex associations between culture and space presented in this study. This study has argued that despite the diversity in the typology of radical spaces there is a dynamic, dialectical and symbiotic relationship between radical culture and the sites in which it operated.

This symbiotic relationship saw the sites themselves transformed into radical spaces; they became imbued with radicalism. Section one of the book

demonstrated how the configuration of Newgate gaol and its separate quarters for state prisoners made it easier for radicals to resist prison reform. In the new prison, exemplified at the time by Coldbath Fields House of Correction, architectural changes were intended to allow for the implementation of the ideals of reform—separate and solitary confinement, prison labour, religious instruction and the promise of redemption—and new regulations surrounding the management and operation of prisons were intended to eradicate the corruption of keepers predicated on spatial and financial hierarchies. Here again radical culture adapted and prevailed. The radical resistance to the criminal identity ascribed by the prison, as well as to the authorities' concern about the danger of ideological contagion, meant that reform measures failed to silence radicals. The new spatial arrangements of the prison, which originally disregarded political status, were altered to accommodate radical prisoners separately to the remaining prison population.

In the Crown and Anchor tavern, the venue was also shaped to a significant extent by its radical associations. To view the inclusion of the Crown and Anchor in the prints surveyed in Chapter 4, for instance, as merely a contextual or spatial apparatus for the artist—a convenient aesthetic backdrop—would be underestimating both the adroitness of the artist and the power of the symbols they employed to create meaning. The Crown and Anchor itself became part of the artists' palette of symbols and signs used to communicate with their audience, giving their work both a spatial and an ideological grounding. The venue was so imbued with its ideological associations that its nomenclature became a form of metonymy—or political shorthand—in the language of the public sphere.

The Rotunda was also indelibly marked by its radical associations. Despite its early, and well-known, incarnations as the Leverian Museum and the Surrey Institution, the Rotunda's radical political connections under Richard Carlile, the Devil's Chaplain and *Isis* were what provided the model for its later socialist occupants. Moreover, it was Carlile's tenancy that fuelled the 'ideological grudge' exhibited by the Surrey magistrates and which provided the rationale for the authorities to prevent a resurgence of radical ideals in any future public use.

If the venues themselves were transformed into radical spaces by those who populated them, the effect clearly worked both ways. This study has documented the vital relationship between space and radical culture, demonstrated by the way in which the spaces impacted on, and interplayed with, the multifarious radical identities of the early nineteenth century. Even the prison space—designed to punish and silence heterodox political and religious expression—provided an opportunity for radical men, and women, to assert a new status and define a radical identity. Radical culture prevailed in the age of prison reform and resistance of the identity ascribed by the prison space played a central role



in shaping the culture. As *The Times* mused in 1835, John Arthur Roebuck MP would ‘sink into insignificance’ as a radical publisher ‘unless anyone should be so senseless as to prosecute him once or twice and get him sent to rusticate in Coldbath Fields...[and] enter into the dietary by which radicals acquire strength and thrive’.<sup>22</sup> Radical prisoners resisted both the ideological and the spatial attempts to align them with other categories of prisoners and drew on the example of earlier (and less plebeian) generations of radical prisoners to assert their rights as political prisoners. Of particular significance in this regard is the case of Susannah Wright. In contesting her criminal identity, her gender became of secondary significance. She defined herself first and foremost as a radical—a status far more elusive for women outside the prison walls.

Such a paradox is also evident in the identity ascribed by the Crown and Anchor appellation. Despite the satanic and seditious associations of the tavern in the caricatures and satires featured in Chapter 4, as well as the often disparaging reports in the mainstream press, the representations of the venue in the print culture of the period helped establish the tavern as a legitimate space of political opposition. As a result of the venue’s longstanding parliamentary and bourgeois connections, it became synonymous with political reform achieved through established means and processes. The sheer size of the hall meant that it could readily serve as a venue for national gatherings of men who, *inter alia*, believed that their interests were not represented or respected in the House of Commons. Not surprisingly, the Crown and Anchor came to be known as an alternative parliament, a place where the *real* representatives of the people could assemble. As we have seen, in 1842, the assembly of a national delegation of the Anti-Corn Law League at the tavern was reported *Hansard*-like in the public press. At the same time, MPs deliberated on repeal a stone’s throw away. It was debatable where the real power lay.

This proximity to formal political power was reflected in the cultural conventions that developed at the site and which remained largely intact as middling, and later plebeian, radical groups vying for a place in the political nation began to appropriate the tavern space. The Crown and Anchor, both the site and the nomenclature, provided a political identity under which to associate, not only for the delegations led by respectable radicals, but for a new generation of radical men and women who demanded political reform but who shied away from the more militant milieu of other radical spaces such as the Rotunda.

As section three of this book reveals, however, the masculine and militant identity ascribed to the Rotunda was but one of many layers of identity

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22 *The Times*, 19 June 1835. The newspaper here is referring to the series of unstamped weekly addresses edited by Roebuck entitled *Pamphlets for the People*. On Roebuck, see S. A. Beaver, ‘Roebuck, John Arthur (1802–1879)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23945>>

developed at the Blackfriars Road site. By opening the premises to multivalent forms of radical expression, the Rotunda leaders responded to the needs of a whole class of people who were simultaneously becoming aware of their strength and culture and of their exclusion from political and social power. For those who ordinarily lacked the political voice or opportunity to express their discontent formally, attending Rotunda performances and interacting with radical leaders provided an opportunity to register disgruntlement with the injustices of 'Old Corruption' and to present a united stand against religious and political authority. It offered a politically muted section of the populace a chance to demonstrate their oppositional views and, more importantly, their political independence.

The Rotunda and its radical clientele exerted a significant impact and influence on the cultural and political environment of early nineteenth-century London. The immense, albeit short-lived, popularity of the Rotunda was due largely to its attraction as an agent of popular culture. It offered a congenial atmosphere for all members of the working class: men, women and children. It catered for a range of psychological needs, which included the powerful 1830s drive for knowledge and—to borrow from J. F. C. Harrison's account of popular culture—a 'craving for fellowship and community activity, love of ritual or ceremony, crusading for a cause, or even flirting with the forbidden'.<sup>23</sup> Crucially, it offered women an outlet for public political participation, both as orators and auditors, and marked an important moment of gender inclusiveness in radical culture, which was later largely lost during the Chartist years.

For radicals of the early nineteenth century, access to the spaces highlighted in this study also crucially meant a voice in the public sphere. Not only did removal from the public realm into the 'private' space of the prison fail to silence radical voices; it often amplified them. Susannah Wright's experience, and that of the many male radical prisoners in this study, suggests that prison failed to impede participation in the public sphere. The prison discourses of radicals—from the claim for the right to be treated better than other classifications of prisoners to use of their own prison publications to air their grievances—indicate that the radical public sphere did not operate in isolation from the mainstream. The ability of radicals in this period to initiate public debates over the status of political prisoners saw them influence public opinion, challenge the very notion of Britishness and alter the way the authorities responded to those imprisoned for political crimes. The concessions they won would have repercussions for the prison experiences of successive waves of political prisoners.

By crossing the threshold of an institution as prominent on the metropolitan landscape as the Crown and Anchor, we gain new insights into the development

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23 J. F. C. Harrison, *The Early Victorians, 1832–51* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), p. 132.

of the public sphere with the expansion of the political nation during the early nineteenth century. This study of the Crown and Anchor reveals that the bourgeois participants of Habermas's construct of the public sphere were not alone; this archetypal public venue catered to a much wider audience than Habermas allows.

Under Habermas's model of the public sphere, the Rotunda might be dismissed as a venue that merely attempted to imitate the cultural institutions of the middle classes. Although elements of the Surrey Institution are clearly evident in the operational conventions of the Rotunda, these melded with traditional plebeian forms of learning, political communication and sociability. By offering palatable politics in a venue with multiple attractions, Rotunda radicals introduced a new breed of Londoners to political and theological radicalism and to rational discourse and exchange—people who might otherwise have shied away from the rougher, more clandestine or masculine atmosphere of taverns and ale houses, or those averse to the formality of organised political groups. Such a plebeian space on the London cultural landscape challenges Habermas's dismissal of the plebeian sphere as mimicry. The fusion of traditional and nascent cultural forms evident at the Rotunda also disrupts the demarcation between the two spheres implicit at the heart of the counter-sphere thesis.

The view of radical culture as a counter-public sphere arose in response to Habermas's failure to recognise plebeian participation in his bourgeois construction of the public sphere. The criticisms of Craig Calhoun and Geoff Eley, to name just two, of Habermas's neglect in this regard are valid ones and their revisions have been crucial to placing the concept on the agenda of historians of popular politics. In chastising Habermas for his neglect of the plebeian public sphere, we have, perhaps, forgotten the key developments in British historiography. While English-speaking scholars are necessarily engaging with the 1989 translated edition of the book, we must remember that Habermas wrote the original German version in 1962. At this time, he did not have the benefit of the seminal work of E. P. Thompson, who was the first to comprehensively chart the public participation of England's plebeian radicals and reformers in forming public opinion and effecting political and social change.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Habermas can be excused for not recognising the importance of this rational-critical discourse among the working classes when, at the time he wrote the book, most scholars of British history had also failed to do so.

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24 Habermas himself notes the development in his contribution to Craig Calhoun's study, although 'confesses' that it was only upon reading 'Mikhail Bakhtin's great book *Rabelais and His World* have my eyes become really opened to the *inner* dynamics of a plebeian culture'. See Jürgen Habermas, 'Further Reflections on the Public Sphere', trans. Thomas Burger, in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 421–61.

Despite the paucity of attention to the plebeian elements of the public sphere, Habermas's neglect has opened a new vein of inquiry and debate. Although historians such as Brian Cowan lament the overuse of the concept, conclusions drawn in this study suggest that further interrogation of the public sphere has much to offer scholars of early nineteenth-century culture and society. If nothing else, it provides a conceptual premise from which to examine the expanding political nation through the lens of the physical spaces in which the public sphere happened. Moreover, if, as E. P. Thompson famously suggested, 'class happens', it happened in buildings of brick and mortar such as prisons, taverns and theatres. The different nature of these spaces—ownership, control, purpose—and their histories have provided us with an invaluable index of cultural activity over time, and of change, in terms of both class and gender.

This study has inevitably raised further questions than its scope allowed room to pursue. Three immediately suggest themselves. Although Irish political prisoners have attracted the attention of historians, British political prisoners as a whole remain an understudied group in modern British history.<sup>25</sup> Yet, as this book has shown, their story has much to reveal beyond a narrative account of life within the prison walls. This is particularly true of a nation that defines itself in large part by its legal traditions and the rights encapsulated by them. More work is clearly warranted on charting the attitudes towards, and the treatment of, the political prisoner in England throughout the nineteenth century. The concept of the political prisoner as—to borrow from Sir Leon Radzinowicz and Roger Hood—a '*sui generis* species' speaks to the values of a nation.<sup>26</sup> How these attitudes and values were transported, both literally and metaphorically, around the Empire would also enrich our understanding of the wider British world.

So too, a detailed analysis of the Rotunda's National Union of the Working Classes (NUWC), is wanting in radical historiography. The NUWC played a vital role in pre-1832 reform agitation and was seen as the exponent of militant working-class consciousness and as the forerunner of Chartism. A more thorough understanding of the ideology and organisation of the NUWC would enrich our understanding of Chartism as the first mass working-class movement in British history. A closer study of the NUWC's often contradictory attitude towards women might further illuminate how women charted the gendered terrain of radical culture in the early nineteenth century.

The methodology of populating radical spaces has shed new light on the participation of women in radical culture and, more generally, in the wider public sphere. This approach is particularly fruitful given the 'extremely limited

25 For example, see the recent study by Sean McConville, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1848–1922: Theatres of war* (London: Routledge, 2003).

26 Sir Leon Radzinowicz and Roger Hood, 'The Status of Political Prisoner in England: The struggle for recognition', *Virginia Law Review*, vol. 65 (1979), p. 1421.



audibility of mid-Victorian working-women's voices'.<sup>27</sup> Women are evident in places previously considered as providing a less congenial atmosphere for women. And although radical culture centred on taverns and coffee houses (with their largely masculine milieu), there were places, such as the Rotunda, that provided a welcoming and inclusive environment for women. Wright's experience of the legal system signals the need for further investigation of the gendered politics of the courtroom in this period. A similar approach to other public spaces might also find women where none were thought to gather.

This book has surveyed three examples of radical spaces in early nineteenth-century London: the prison, as an example of an imposed radical space; the Crown and Anchor tavern, as an established cultural space appropriated and contested by successive generations of radicals; and the Rotunda, as one of the first spaces controlled and operated by radicals themselves. This study reveals that, despite the physical, operational, temporal and spatial differences between the sites, such spaces were both shaped by and helped to shape the social and political aspirations of the generation of radical men and women who populated them. By the end of his long radical life, John Gale Jones had traversed them all—and undoubtedly many more. Though neither he nor most of his contemporaries lived to see the fruits of their endeavours, we might speculate that they would attest to the importance of these radical spaces on the long path to realising a new, more inclusive social and political order for Britain.

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27 Neville Kirk, *Change, Continuity and Class: Labour in British society, 1850–1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).