London Lives is a fascinating new study that exposes the lesser-known experiences of eighteenth-century thieves, paupers, prostitutes and highwaymen. It charts the experiences of hundreds of thousands of Londoners who found themselves submerged in poverty or prosecuted for crime, and surveys their responses, to illustrate the extent to which plebeian Londoners influenced the pace and direction of change in social policy. Calling upon a new body of digital evidence, the book illuminates the lives of prison escapees, expert manipulators of the poor relief system, celebrity highwaymen, lone mothers and vagrants; revealing how they each played the system to the best of their ability in order to survive in their various circumstances of misfortune. In these acts of desperation, the poor and the criminal exercised a profound and effective form of agency that changed the system itself, and shaped the evolution of the modern state.

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London Lives

Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690–1800

Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker
This book is dedicated to everyone who helped create the *Old Bailey Online* and *London Lives*
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Preface

This book is one facet of a larger project: ‘Plebeian Lives and the Making of Modern London, 1690–1800’. Originally funded by the ESRC (RES-000-23-1217), this project digitised and made searchable some 240,000 pages of manuscript materials reflecting on criminal justice and poor relief in eighteenth-century London. The website, London Lives 1690–1800: Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis, provides access to these materials in combination with fifteen modern data sets created by previous projects. In total London Lives gives direct access to 3.35 million name instances, and allows users to link together records relating to the same individual. In doing so, it makes it possible to trace individual life histories and to assess the role plebeian Londoners played in shaping the development of modern social policy. This book is constructed as a product of that website and largely reflects the results of our research in it.

Since the vast majority of the sources consulted are freely available on the London Lives website, this book is best read online, allowing you to click through directly from the primary sources cited and quoted in the text to transcriptions and images of the original documents. Where possible, we have also linked to modern secondary literature and to printed primary sources, including Google Books and the English Short Title Catalogue for printed primary literature, and to the British Library’s Ethos system for unpublished doctoral theses. With Google Books we have linked to volumes available through ‘Snippet’ or ‘Preview’ functions, but not to those which provide only bibliographical data. With one exception we have restricted links to freely available materials. Where a pay wall makes the materials inaccessible for many or most readers, we have noted our use of the sites, including URLs and a date, but have not provided direct links. The exception to this rule of thumb is journal articles where a secure link could be identified, even when the relevant source was not freely available to all users.

We hope that these links will facilitate a new approach to reading monographs in which readers switch back and forth between the original...
sources, the contextual secondary interpretation, and the monograph itself - gaining a deeper understanding of the period and argument. The book is also designed to be read offline and in hard copy; and we have used a standard footnote referencing system so that readers can locate and follow up our sources, both online and in print, however they choose to read the book. For readers of the hard copy who wish to follow up references to the *London Lives* website (‘LL’), document reference numbers should simply be typed in the appropriate box on the search page. For references to ‘sets’, see below, p. 24, n. 67. For ‘lives’, go to www.londonlives.org/static/Lives.jsp.

Whether online or offline, or in some combination of the two, we hope you will find this book both accessible and rewarding.
Acknowledgements

First of all, we would like to thank the funders who made this book and the underlying electronic resources possible: the ESRC, funders of the ‘Plebeian Lives’ project; and the AHRC and Big Lottery Fund, who underwrote the Old Bailey Online, which in turn laid the foundations for ‘Plebeian Lives’.

This book may have two names on the cover, but it is the product of the work of many more; all of whom deserve more credit than can be given in a simple acknowledgement. Most importantly, Dr Sharon Howard managed the digitisation projects that underpin this book (both London Lives and, from 2005, the Old Bailey Online), and she also managed the online PMwiki environment in which the book was drafted as a collaborative text. Every page reflects her technical skill, her commitment to the project and her willingness to devise a solution to each new problem. Neither this book, nor the London Lives website would exist without her.

The ‘Plebeian Lives’ project was implemented by the Higher Education Digitisation Service at the University of Hertfordshire and the Humanities Research Institute at the University of Sheffield. At Hertfordshire, Ian Brearey, Asif Mohammed Farook and Geoff Laycock managed the initial rekeying process that underpins the site. At Sheffield we are particularly indebted to Jamie McLaughlin, Digital Humanities Developer at the HRI, who designed the underlying data infrastructure and made the website work. Katherine Rogers and Ed MacKenzie developed the automated text markup, and David Shepherd, former Director of the HRI, and Michael Pidd, Manager of HRI Digital, oversaw all the technical work, ensuring that the project came to a successful conclusion. Mary Clayton and Louise Falcini served as untiring research assistants in the archives of London, ensuring that the right materials were digitised to the best standard we could afford. And a team of ‘data developers’, under the leadership of Dr Philippa Hardman, embedded and checked the XML mark-up that makes it possible to search the digitised text effectively. We are grateful to Anna Bayman, Eilidh
Garrett, Carol Lewis-Roylance, Susan Parkinson, Anna Simmons, Gwen Smithson, Nicola Wilcox and Catherine Wright for their hard work. Ed Duncan and Viki Philpott contributed to the project as postgraduate interns, researching and writing several biographies (‘lives’). The list could go on. A website such as London Lives is not a book, it does not have an author (or even two). It is the product of many hands, and we would like to give credit to the wider collaboration involved. The same could be said about the original Old Bailey Online project.

We were beneficiaries of many contributions on the journey from website to book. Our undergraduate students, at both Sheffield and Hertfordshire, helped us to understand the material and suffered as we tried out one idea after another. Several Sheffield students are among the authors of the lives. Our postgraduate students, current and former, contributed through both reading sections of the text and acting as sounding boards for our ideas as they evolved. In this capacity we are grateful to Louise Falcini, Des Newell, Dianne Payne, Janice Turner, Richard Ward and Matthew White. We have also benefited hugely from the advice and criticism of many academic friends who took the time to read the manuscript. Their generosity was unstinting and exemplifies the best traditions of the scholarly community. Most importantly, Jeremy Boulton went through the text with a fine-toothed comb, saving us from real error and embarrassing misinterpretations. He and Leonard Schwarz also very generously allowed us access to their work on the St Martin in the Fields workhouse registers and settlement examinations. Joanna Innes also read the full manuscript, and her comments gave us pause for thought, again saving us from significant errors. John Levin, Katrina Navickas, Heather Shore, Brodie Waddell, Tim Wales, Richard Ward and Phil Withington all read and commented insightfully on sections of the text.

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The ideas presented in this book evolved over two decades and more; and did so in dialogue with a powerfully supportive historical
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This is also a better book for the contributions of the anonymous readers who ploughed through the sample chapters and final manuscript. We tried hard to heed their warnings against hyperbole and breathlessness, and while we may not have succeeded completely, we know the text is better for their warnings. We would also like to thank Richard Fisher, who encouraged the project of the e-monograph from its inception, and Elizabeth Friend-Smith, commissioning editor. Charlotte Thomas acted as production editor, Dr Jacqueline French copy-edited the manuscript and the index was compiled by Dr Richard Ward. We are grateful to all three for their great care and hard work.

On a personal level we would like to thank our partners and sons, Sonia and Nick Hitchcock, and Wendy Bracewell and Roland Shoemaker. This book took a decade from conception to publication and debts beyond repayment were incurred on every day of that decade.

Our errors and failures are our own, but this book is the product of friends and family, collaborators and critics, and we thank them all.
Abbreviations

BL  British Library
LL  London Lives 1690 to 1800: Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis (www.londonlives.org)
LMA  London Metropolitan Archives
PP  Parliamentary Papers (parlippets.chadwyck.co.uk)
WAC  Westminster Archives Centre