Sex for Sale in Scotland
Louise Settle

Sex for Sale in Scotland examines the various formal and informal methods that were used to police female prostitution in Edinburgh and Glasgow between 1900 and 1939 and explores how these policies influenced women’s lives. The book uses a rich combination of police, probation, magistrates’, poor law and voluntary organisations’ records to demonstrate how these organisations worked together to establish a more ‘penal-welfare’ approach towards regulating prostitution in Scotland. By mapping the geography of prostitution, the book argues that prostitution was not necessarily forced into the outskirts of society, either physically or socially. The book examines both indoor and outdoor prostitution and the relationships that developed among the wide range of people who profited from commercial sex. Particular emphasis is placed on the experiences of the women involved in prostitution, highlighting the poverty, exploitation and abuse they faced, but also the ways in which they negotiated these dangers. This social history of prostitution maps how the organisation, policing and experiences of prostitution developed in an ever-changing urban landscape during a period of extraordinary developments in technology and entertainment, alongside the wider socio-economic changes brought about by the First World War.

Controlling the ‘Social Evil’: Policing Prostitution
Louise Settle

in Sex for Sale in Scotland: Prostitution in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1900-1939
This chapter focuses on the ways in which legislation was implemented by the police and magistrates on a day-to-day basis, and the impact police policies had on the regulation and organisation of prostitution. Rather than there being a ‘crack-down’ on prostitution, as was the case in other cities such as London during this period, in Edinburgh and Glasgow the number of arrests and convictions sharply declined. The chapter uses police, magistrates and prison records to explore these trends further and examine the various reasons behind these patterns, including the wider changes in social attitudes towards prostitution and the importance of police chief constables and police officers in shaping the way that individual men and women were treated under the law. In particular, the importance of the Scottish method of using cautions, a system that relied on distinguishing between ‘amateur prostitutes’ and ‘hardened prostitutes’, will be examined. The first half of the chapter begins by examining the policing of street prostitution and the second half explores the policing of brothels and ‘pimps’.

‘Unnatural Carnal Connection’: Bestiality and the Law in Early Twentieth-century Scotland

Roger Davidson

in Illicit and Unnatural Practices: The Law, Sex and Society in Scotland since 1900

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Chapter 4 constitutes a pioneering study of the practice and prosecution of bestiality in twentieth-century Scotland. In turn, it examines the social status, background, lifestyle and possible motive of offenders, the nature and location of the crime committed, and the process by which it was brought to the attention of the law. The variety of roles undertaken by the police in investigating complaints and preparing evidence for the Procurators Fiscal is detailed. In addition, the significant contribution of forensic and veterinary medicine to building the prosecution case is illustrated, as is the limited use of psychiatric evidence after the First World War. The chapter also discusses the impact of the social taboo surrounding bestiality on the reluctance of Procurators Fiscal at times to initiate prosecutions and the secretive nature of many trial proceedings. Finally, sentencing practices in the period 1900–30 are examined and the degree of continuity and change in medico-legal perceptions of the offence identified.
‘An Open and Notorious House of Lewdness’: Dora Noyce and the Danube Street Brothel

Roger Davidson

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Chapter 6 explores the life of Dora Noyce and her business enterprise at 17 and 17a Danube Street, Edinburgh, as a peg upon which to hang a broader review of how the law operated at the local level to regulate prostitution and brothel-keeping in late twentieth-century Scotland. Primarily based on oral history interviews and newspaper reports, the study reveals the social background and outlook of Dora Noyce before describing the operation of her brothel, including details of sexual transactions and the social status and motivation of the women employed as prostitutes. Thereafter, the history of the Danube Street brothel is located within a more general review of the law relating to brothel keeping in Scotland and its previous implementation prior to the Second World War. The study then focuses on the possible reasons for the degree of tolerance shown by the police authorities in Edinburgh to Dora Noyce from the 1950s through to the 1970s and the extent to which this signified a more complex and nuanced relationship between the law and the sexual underworld than is conventionally conveyed in police and court records.