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## HETTIE'S REPORT C.1917 : DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENTS

### The provenance of 'Hettie's Report'

The document, "Hettie's Report", was given to Deirdre Mason among other family papers on the death of our father Peter Mason in 1986. It was tied attached to the 1948 covering note from Winnie Mason, Peter's mother – our grandmother. When Deirdre first read it she realised its connection to the BBC video that Peter had shown Deirdre and Chloë.

We believe it to have been written by Hettie Wheeldon, the acquitted defendant, possibly with the assistance of a lawyer, around June-July 1917.

During the trial in 1917, Hettie's constant note-taking was reported in both the *Manchester Guardian* 8 Feb 1917 page 10 and *The Times* 7 Feb 1917 page 3 [Held: newspapers].

Deirdre sent Dr Nicholas Hiley, historian, a copy of the Report and attached note and he replied (15 February 2012) as follows:

Nick to **To:** Deirdre Mason<sup>[SEP]</sup>**Cc:** Jenni Neary; Chloë Mason<sup>[SEP]</sup>**Subject:** RE: Alice Wheeldon - with attachment!

*Thanks for your email, and especially for the attachment, which is fascinating and very moving. It shows the enormous and lasting damage caused by the 1917 prosecution – still evident in this letter thirty years later.*

*The Broadmoor Hospital record is actually closed until 2048 – a hundred and sixty years after the birth of the patient. It is a crazy length of time, which I have complained about. I had to get special access, with the support of Rickard's surviving relatives.*

*The typescript that Win gave to your father in 1948 does look to be a single document. It was compiled after June 1917, because it mentions Parliamentary questions from that month, and probably before Alice's release in December 1917, because it has no reference to that event. It refers to writers in the plural, and I would think that it was written by Hettie, with the help of Nellie, in the months following the failure of the appeal in April 1917.*

*It is a fascinating document, especially in the background that it gives to Will's conscientious objection, and the fact that Alice urged him to go on the run. It is also very interesting to see that Hettie and Nellie got very close to working out what had happened, after the Attorney General said in June 1917 that Rickard/Gordon hadn't been employed as an agent since January 1917. They reasoned that the Attorney General would have been given information about Rickard/Gordon in January 1917 while preparing the case, and noted that he was then dropped both as a witness and as an agent. As they concluded, he probably had a criminal record and should never have been employed as a spy.*

The reasoning of Hettie's Report underpins the four page pamphlet that Hettie wrote and circulated in 1918; the pamphlet was entitled *Victims of Alec Gordon. The agent-provocateur. The true story of the Wheeldon case.* It called for the release from prison of her sister, Winnie Mason and brother-in-law Alf Mason.

Deirdre & Chloë Mason, 5 February 2014.