Roddy, Sarah, Julie-Marie Strange, and Bertrand Taithe. "Building and Protecting Charity Brands." *The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870–1912*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 59–80. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 25 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350058019.ch-003>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 25 April 2023, 23:39 UTC.

Copyright © Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange and Bertrand Taithe 2019. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Building and Protecting Charity Brands

The concept of branding seems singularly modern. Yet business historians are divided on the issue: while some see no substantive, conscious commercial branding before the eighteenth century, others argue that it is ‘as old as known civilisation’, so that even the ancient Greeks are deemed to have produced ‘proto-brands’.¹ Whatever, most agree that the late nineteenth century was especially significant in the development and global spread of branding practices. This was a time when, in Britain and beyond, manufacturers of items as diverse as soap, beer and clothing became trusted household names as a result of conscious strategies to mould consumer choices. Given the well-noted salience of entrepreneurs in bringing about this branding revolution,² it ought to come as little surprise that charity entrepreneurs of the period were similarly adept at creating and managing brand identities and developing what marketing scholars call ‘brand personalities’ for their organizations as part of a conscious drive to direct the donating public’s largesse towards their coffers.

In branding as in much else, then, those who ran Victorian and Edwardian charities could be cutting-edge. To be sure, few charities would have spoken explicitly about their organization in terms of a ‘brand’, but their social practices relating to crafting, promoting and protecting their identities and reputations bear key markers of the branding process. This chapter argues that, far from charity and non-profit branding being a recent phenomenon – some scholars and practitioners speak of it as a product of the late twentieth century³ – charities in the latter decades of the nineteenth century were acutely sensitive to the significance of creating a unique identity, promoting that identity through a system of visual and linguistic signs and protecting it from imitation. The chapter starts by exploring the foundational elements of charity branding: names, logos and slogans. It then interrogates how far and in what ways Victorian charities developed branding, particularly in the emergence of ‘brand personalities’ that communicated their values to the donating public. Finally, we elucidate the ways

in which charities protected their brands, once established, from the taint of scandal and infringement by competitors.

What's in a name? The elements of branding

It has proved notoriously tricky for historians and other scholars of brands to agree on a precise definition of the term, but the most expansive interpreters of branding – those who see the roots of the process in the ancient world – necessarily give the most open version. According to this reading, brands have two fundamental purposes: first, to convey information about a product or service, and second, to convey an image or meaning, often to do with quality or values. This elastic definition allows claims of branding going back thousands of years, even if those making the claims admit that branding has gained multiple layers of complexity up to the present day.⁴ Those complexities have notably increased since the later nineteenth century, when many of the technologies on which modern branding relies first became widely available. Developments in transport, printing, advertising and public relations, among others, all played a role in making brand creation possible for commercial enterprises. Yet, as the previous two chapters have shown, charities of the period were equally willing and able to capitalize on these advancements for their own ends, and did so. Thus branding could be and was a crucial part of the charity arsenal far earlier than many imagine. This section will concentrate on the first part of the above definition, conveying information, to show how all voluntary charities engaged with the branding process to some degree, with specific focus on names, slogans and logos.

An organization's name was, of course, its most immediate unique identifier, and a vital means of conveying its purpose to the donating public. Yet before we get to the parts of the names that conferred uniqueness, it needs to be noted that, just as, to the Charity Organisation Society's (COS) chagrin, there was a significant degree of overlap in the provision of particular welfare services, there was also overlap in some of the language used in naming the organizations that provided them. Indeed, the COS's archive, which contains a broad spread of voluntary charities for the period, suggests that names tended to fall into a relatively slim range of categories: multiple 'associations', 'societies' and 'funds', slightly fewer 'unions', 'leagues' and 'refuges' and still fewer 'institutes', 'asylums', 'orphanages' and 'hostels'.⁵ The two most popular soubriquets used by charities were 'mission' and 'home'. All of these naming conventions, as the next section

of this chapter discusses, indicated something about the values inherent in the organization, but they equally allowed charities to convey something – accurate or not – of the structure they took and the nature of the activity they carried out, thereby shaping donors' expectations and, to an extent, because of the increasing familiarity of the terms, reassuring them that they were supporting a legitimate charitable enterprise.

The relative popularity of these names indicates the shift that was well under way in the charitable world. 'Institute', 'asylum' and 'orphanage' were terms that were falling out of fashion in the late nineteenth century, implying a trend away from austere, distant names that were often associated with the state and were inextricably bound up with notions of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. Meanwhile, 'union', 'society', 'association' or 'league' suggested organizations that operated on the principles of joint effort and collective responsibility, even if, in practice, many such organizations may have been the archetypal 'one-man-bands' we touch upon in Chapter 4. Nonetheless, an image of cooperation was communicated. And while a 'fund' had a temporary air about it, terms like 'society' and 'league' evoked solidity and permanence, avoiding any hint of 'fly-by-night' begging. Moreover, the mutuality implied by these epithets was of a piece with the kind of relationship the organizations wished to build with their donors. They said, concisely, that working together solves whatever problem the charities and their donors set about tackling.

The two most popular voluntary charity names, 'home' and 'mission', varied in the degree of information they imparted about the structures and purposes of the manifold institutions that bore them. While 'homes' intimated residential institutions – by implication friendlier than 'orphanages' – and so required donations to pay for the board and lodging of their inmates (whether children, the elderly or the disabled), 'missions' were an altogether more slippery concept. Missions that distinguished themselves through spatial prefixes (Wood Street Mission, Manchester City Mission, Tower Hamlets Mission, North East London Mission, South East London Mission, Drury Lane Mission, Great Arthur Street Mission and so on) often encompassed a vast range of activity, and developed seemingly ad hoc welfare services to the generic poor and needy in their localities. To be a local mission, then, was to be a 'one-stop' welfare shop, fighting poverty in whatever forms it manifested itself, and appealing to myriad donating constituencies: whether you fretted over child poverty, unemployed men or the elderly, a local mission probably had a scheme that could use your money. The very flexibility of the term 'mission', which first and foremost implied an organization was Christian (and, by implication, trustworthy)

but also allowed a charity to expand, contract and change its operations as its overseers saw fit, is a large part of the explanation for its popularity. Equally, there were some ‘missions’ that distinguished themselves through object-driven prefixes (Deaf and Dumb Mission, the London Spectacle Mission, Watercress and Flower Girls Mission), thereby identifying their precise purpose. There was, then, a relatively limited palette of recognizable names readily available to charity entrepreneurs, and it can be useful to think of this part of the naming process, in an effective distinction proposed by business historians, as ‘name selection’ while the addition of prefixes and other qualifiers – or indeed, the occasional use of entirely unique organizational descriptors such as ‘Army’ – represented a form of ‘name composition’ which made individual organizations distinctive, more of which later.⁶

A further part of the branding package was the visual image projected by charities, for which there were many outlets, and which often functioned in much the same way as the generic descriptors above by communicating the essence of an organization at a glance. For example, by the early 1900s, printed materials for the National League for the Blind depicted its name, date of establishment and the image of two interlocked hands denoting solidarity and friendship, a striking visual reflection of the collective action of the organization.⁷

Meanwhile, Fegan’s Boys Homes was among several charities that incorporated images of the buildings that housed them into their letterheads, a move that had the twin effect of distinguishing it from multiple other ‘boys’ homes and establishing its credentials as a fully operational and evidently well-supported charity that could afford substantial premises.⁸ Some were more literal in communicating their charity’s purpose: the letterhead of the Children’s Country Holiday Fund featured a roundel containing images of playing children in an obviously bucolic setting.⁹ That of the Ladies Printing Press, a charity for ‘necessitous gentlewomen’, featured a similar roundel depicting the women hard at work; in this instance, it acted as a double marketing strategy since among the female printers’ services was die-stamping of letterheads with addresses and distinctive logos.¹⁰

Others drew on existing associations. The Mariners’ Friends Society, which helped sailors in distress, featured a naval-type flag on its printed matter, and St Andrew’s Waterside Mission, which also worked with sailors, sometimes used an anchor symbol.¹¹ Symbols with religious connotations, meanwhile, were understandably popular. The militaristic and religious featured not merely in the Salvation Army’s name and structure but also in its material culture. Its crest, developed in 1878, was red (symbolizing Christ’s blood), yellow (connoting the

fire of the Holy Spirit) and blue (representing the purity of God). At its centre, a cross was overlain with an 'S' to denote Salvation through Christ's death, with two crossed swords, denoting the Army's conception of war against sin. The cross and swords were encircled by a blue ring bearing the words 'Blood and Fire'. A series of dots at the bottom of the crest denoted the Gospel. The circle is encased by yellow rays (Fire) and topped with a crown that proclaims Christ as King. A red banner underneath carries the name of the Army. As a visual image it is striking and was used widely on officer uniforms as well as printed matter. The Church Lads' Brigade, similarly, used a crest with a cross at its centre, overlaid on crossed swords and a helmet, and containing the letters C, L and B.¹² Even beyond those charities that assumed quasi-military form, recognizable badges, crests and monograms were popular, appearing on appeal literature, annual reports, adverts, stationery, receipts, donation slips, buildings and even clothing. The Liverpool Food and Betterment Association, for example, had monogrammed 'costumes' and food carriers for its lady helpers.¹³

Yet, lest we fall into the trap of thinking of logos as primarily visual and, by implication, nonverbal, it ought to be noted that a particular typeface was potentially just as important an identification cue. Most charitable ventures, however small, had branded stationery; even if this did not feature crests or pictures, it did tend to have the name and address of the organization printed in a distinctive font, and sometimes in colours other than black, creating a striking and memorable effect.¹⁴ The vast expansion of typography in the latter half of the nineteenth century meant that new and innovative typefaces could shape and enhance a brand identity. That charities were interested in the strategic use of typography is suggested not only by the print matter they left behind, but also by the survival in some charity archives of ornate printers' business cards proclaiming the latest technology.¹⁵ Some organizations, such as the Guild of Brave Poor Things, adopted the florid styles associated with the Arts and Crafts movement.¹⁶ Others, such as the League of Welldoers in Liverpool, preferred a heavy Gothic type.¹⁷ Bold, creative typeface and design could also, as noted in Chapter 1, present a stark distinguishing feature to appeal literature when so much charitable print material continued to reproduce reams of text.

Another means of distinguishing and quickly establishing the purpose of a charity, as well as of aiding recall of the brand, was to fashion a motto or slogan to accompany the name and visual identifiers. The slogan (a word, appropriately in some instances, derived from the Gaelic for 'battle-cry') remains an important aspect of branding, since it is a further opportunity to raise awareness of and clarify the branded product's purpose, something that names and images,

necessarily, can only do in the most succinct fashion.¹⁸ Slogans therefore have to be designed to extend and support, rather than contradict or confuse, the impressions created by the brand name. In the commercial world, scholars and practitioners remain unsure about why particular slogans work and others do not catch on.¹⁹ If it is difficult to establish the effect slogans have today, it is infinitely more so to understand the impact of charity mottos in the nineteenth century. What we can say is that slogans were as varied in their tone and inspiration among Victorian charities as they are among today's enterprises, with some relatively prosaic in form and intent, and others more reliant on allegory and (frequently biblical) allusion. The Home of the Holy Rood simply declared itself to be 'For aged and incurable women.'²⁰ Donation slips for the North East London Mission carried the slogan 'To succour and to save' with an image of a disabled girl.²¹ The Female Mission to the Fallen advertised itself as 'A woman's mission to women,' a neat summary of the charity's remit.²²

Contrasts of light and darkness were relatively commonplace biblical references used in charity tag lines. The Christian Mission to the Fallen and Outcast Women claimed through its motto to bring 'light in the darkness,' while Drury Lane Mission routinely employed 'Light that shineth in a dark place,' a line taken from the Gospel of John, and usually accompanied in their literature by a clever image that used different shading techniques around the words.²³ Similarly, the slogan for St. Andrew's Waterside Mission proclaimed, 'Our sailors into all the world,' a reference to missionary activity taken from St. Mark's Gospel.²⁴ Literary allusions also featured in charity slogans. The rather patronizingly titled Bristol disability charity, the 'Guild of the Brave Poor Things,' appeared to have a fittingly condescending slogan in 'Laetus sorte mae' or 'Happy in My Lot' which was taken (via a similar institution in London) from a novel by Juliana Ewing.²⁵ Tower Hamlets' Mission, meanwhile, shamelessly appropriated the title of Andrew Mearns's sensational pamphlet 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London' (1883) for its appeal literature, some thirty years after it had first been published.²⁶ Its overseer, F. N. Charrington, evidently thought the slogan worth recycling regardless of changes in the city in the intervening period.

For others, slogans played a significant role in communicating a particular unique selling point of the charity. Barnardo's famous claims, plastered across much appeal literature and even the very buildings of the organization, were of an 'ever open door' with 'no destitute child ever refused admission.'²⁷ The 'League of Welldoers,' meanwhile, promoted itself from its renaming in 1907 to the founder's death in the 1930s with the expansive slogan 'Everybody's charity'. In its earlier incarnation as the Food and Betterment Association, the charity had

often specified 'Irrespective of creed' on its printed materials.²⁸ Slogans could thus play an important role in establishing the principle of openness, both to recipients and donors, and thereby avoid closing off parts of the donor market before people had read further into the appeal literature. They said to the public that these organizations needed, wanted and welcomed them.

Giving one's organization a name, parts of which might be shared with multiple other organizations, or using a visual sign or motto to complement that name, were hardly innovations. These signifiers might happen to coincide with one another, and they might happen to mark an organization out in donors' minds, but they do not constitute conscious branding strategy as we know it today. This is to misunderstand two fundamental points about these charities' very real branding prowess. The first is that, as much as charity branding now is highly professionalized, often employing the same creative agencies as commercial entities,²⁹ in their own context, many Victorian charities were highly professional in their approach to branding. The confluence of name, logo and slogan was usually a result of conscious deliberation, assessment of rivals' efforts and exploitation of emerging technologies, precisely the same process that the likes of Lever Brothers went through in creating brands such as Sunlight or Lux soap, albeit in those cases with limited aid from a trademark and patent agent.³⁰

The second factor that indicates the conscious strategy behind charity branding is the persistent appearance in charity archives of efforts to adapt or rethink brands. Although frequent alterations in nomenclature could indicate a charity trying to hide past scandal or mismanagement (see Chapter 4), most changes suggest charities' awareness of a shifting market and the need to adapt and regulate brand identity in order to be competitive. For example, both Thomas Barnardo and William and Catherine Booth initially founded missions with virtually identical names; respectively, the East End Juvenile Mission, opened in 1868, and the 'East End Christian Mission', established in 1864. Each enjoyed moderate success, but their names suggested spatial specificity and limited ambition, something from which neither party suffered unduly. By the 1870s, Barnardo had 'rebranded' into the much more distinctive 'Dr Barnardo's Homes for Destitute Children', or often simply 'Dr Barnardo's Homes'.³¹ Meanwhile, the Booths, under pressure of direct competition with multiple other nonconformist missions of one sort or another in London alone, gave their venture the new and strikingly different name of the 'Salvation Army'. Both name changes indicate charity entrepreneurs who were consciously strategizing their place in the emerging marketplace, in what turned out to be tremendously successful bids to improve on existing success.

Barnardo and the Booths were pioneers, but as the period wore on, smaller organizations also paid attention to branding, and adapted their brands when they did not work. Sometimes, the market simply moved away from an existing successful brand, forcing change. As subscriptions to the ‘Home for Destitute Children’ (founded 1874) in Liverpool began to drop off in 1912, the charity abandoned the distinctly ‘Victorian’ terminology of ‘destitution’ to become simply ‘The Home’, printed in a large modern typeface on the front cover of reports. The change cast off potentially Dickensian associations but also implied that this was the definitive home for children, although the name’s claim to this status was undercut by the explanatory ‘For Girls under Twelve Years of Age’ printed in brackets below.³² Similarly, the North End Domestic Mission in Liverpool began to use ‘North End Mission’, a reflection perhaps that ‘Domestic’ carried outmoded notions of ladies bountiful patronizing the poor.³³

On other occasions, there was recognition by charities that, however well considered, a brand identity just failed to catch on. The organization ‘Santa Fina’, formed in 1907 as an offshoot of Manchester University Settlement, took its name from a saint, Seraphina, who was paralyzed in youth and bore her sufferings with grace and fortitude. There was logic in this name choice, since the charity did educational and recreational work with disabled children. Its use of floral imagery drew on Seraphina’s association with white violets. Yet while donors were likely to recognize Santa Fina’s parent organization, the university settlement, it is doubtful how many potential donors were familiar with ‘Santa Fina’ or her significance. From 1909, recognizing that the branding was too subtle for most, the charity printed a sub-name on its donor receipts and publications, ‘Ancoats Crippled Children and Disabled People’, before changing the name of the charity in 1912 to the more direct ‘Invalid Children’s Aid Association’.³⁴

Charitable values and ‘brand personality’

The charitable sector in the period 1870–1912 showed a clear and evolving awareness of the power of branding as a means of communicating key information to donors and recipients alike. This reflected similar emerging practice in the business world. But there is one aspect of branding where charities were arguably ahead of, rather than in step with, the commercial sector. In the past three decades, business and marketing scholars have begun delineating and exploring the concept of ‘brand personality’, with Jennifer Aaker defining this as ‘the set of human characteristics associated with a brand’.³⁵ The creation of

brand personality is therefore seen as a two-way process, where brand managers are saying something about the traits and values of their organization and their brand, and consumers of a branded product are also saying something about their own traits and values in consuming it. Brands are not solely or primarily material constructions then. As one recent work puts it, they are 'cultural things' and 'exist primarily in the minds of the people who participate in the surrounding culture'.³⁶ Seen in these terms, it would be difficult to argue other than that Victorian charities' image management was a form of branding and quite sophisticated branding at that. While Lever Brothers, Colman's and other commercial enterprises were still engaged in the later nineteenth century in the mass selling of their branded products largely based on perceptions of product quality, and only later began consciously cultivating brand values,³⁷ charitable enterprises were, as we will show, implying quality but *also* establishing a set of shared values with their would-be donors which constituted, in effect, prototype 'brand personalities'. This section identifies charities' core strategies for promoting particular values and ideals.

Despite contemporary commentators' (and some historians') misplaced anxieties about secularization, the near-ubiquitous value embedded in the vast majority of charitable branding practices at the end of the nineteenth century was Christianity and the implication and expectation of compassion and benevolence that came with it.³⁸ In that context, it is hardly surprising that Christmas was the peak period in the philanthropic fundraising calendar, given the season's powerful resonance with humanity and compassion. Indeed, as multiple commentators noted at the turn of the twentieth century, Christian compassion was so deeply embedded in wider culture, and in social and moral practice, that individuals did not need religious faith to subscribe and respond to Christian values. These values of religious faith and compassion could be inscribed in brands in several ways. Most obviously, many charities promoted explicit associations with Christian compassion through formal affiliations to established confessional cultures and particular institutions. To a point, the hierarchies, networks and identities of organized religion provided 'parent' brands to myriad charitable endeavours that claimed kinship. At the most formalized level, the Church of England directly sponsored multiple organizations, from national initiatives such as the Waifs and Strays Society (established in 1881), to more specialized outreach initiatives, such as St. Andrew's Waterside Mission (established 1864). These organizations could communicate their official endorsement in diverse ways. The Waifs and Strays Society was, in its full title, 'The Church of England Incorporated Society for

providing Homes for Waifs and Strays', while St. Andrew's Waterside Mission put its patrons – seventeen bishops headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury – front and centre on its publications.³⁹ To be a Church of England charity was, certainly for Anglican donors, a kitemark of trustworthiness and quality. This explicit association also automatically drew the singular charity into the web of values and ideals supported by the church, investing it with credibility and authenticity, especially given the Anglican Church's ties to crown and state.

The Catholic Church similarly boasted a network of national and regional organizations that capitalized on diocesan structures and recognizable confessional identities. One of the largest was the 'Catholic Rescue' initiative, an umbrella brand for multiple children's homes nationwide by the end of the century, for which 'Rescue Saturday' diocesan collections were taken.⁴⁰ Many of the constituent homes which were partly funded by these collections then had an additional unique brand identity that made their Catholic credentials clear while also, often, intimating something else. This might be a further note of compassion and familial comfort, as in 'Father Berry's Homes', in Liverpool, or 'Father Hudson's Homes', in Birmingham, both named for their clerical overseers. Or it might be an association with a particular saint and, by extension, their personal qualities; 'St Joseph's Girls' Home' in Manchester, a laundry, had a patron who was at once known for his work and his model parenthood, powerful implications that Catholics would have grasped.⁴¹ Institutions so named might also benefit from some lay individuals' tendencies to harbour enduring 'devotions' to particular saints or other religious entities such as the Sacred Heart. In any case, this universal identification in branding of Catholic charities *as Catholic* had two purposes. First, it told Catholic donors that the church was doing something to prevent what Catholic Rescue literature characterized as the 'proselytizing' of Catholic children by other supposedly nonsectarian charitable institutions (and by extension discouraged devout Catholics from donating to the latter).⁴² Second, it assured donors that their money would be spent according to a Catholic ethos, which did not coalesce with prevailing (Protestant) Victorian notions of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' but saw the poor as inherently holy and their relief as part of one's religious duty.⁴³

The implication of shared Christian values within charities linked to nonconformist chapels, rapidly on the rise in urban districts across the country, could be just as overt. Their names often conflated some combination of confessional identity, particular places of worship, localities, congregations and individual ministers under the term 'mission', and, as noted above, many chapel-based 'missions' extended to include one particular or even a range of

philanthropic endeavours. A snapshot of Liverpool at the turn of the twentieth century highlights nonconformist missions centred around temperance (the Wesleyan Mission, the Welsh Women's Total Temperance Union or the North End Domestic Mission) or women's rescue, such as the Calvinistic Methodist Women's Town Mission. The near-ubiquitous word 'mission' in itself was shorthand for core Christian values and practices. At its most basic, 'mission' meant going out into the world for religious purposes.⁴⁴ To specific confessional constituencies, the established 'brand' of the parent sect signalled that more fine-grained shared ideals would be applied in whatever relief work was undertaken: the values of charities that were sponsored by a chapel were, *de facto*, the values of its congregation. Such missions necessarily limited their appeal beyond a sometimes relatively small and often very local core of fellow travellers (and certainly to Catholics, as noted). But there were, equally, *de facto* nonconformist charity entrepreneurs whose precise Christian affiliation was kept deliberately unspecific in their branding, or who laid claim, via brand signifiers, to a clearly Christian but nonsectarian ethos in order to circumvent that limitation and appeal more broadly. Both Barnardo and Lee Jones of the Liverpool League of Welldoers to some extent fell into this category: both were obviously Christian, and indeed obviously Protestant, but pointedly claimed no proselytizing motive for their organizations, a claim that did not always wash with Catholics but had more success with Anglicans.⁴⁵

That was one branding response to the potentially limiting identification with a particular minority religious denomination; the other was to go entirely in the opposite direction and make a virtue of one's evangelicalism and nonconformity. Although the Salvation Army jettisoned the word 'mission' from its original title, its new name still clearly adverted to a bullishly missionary ethos. But renaming enabled them to cast off the expectations and norms of orthodox Methodism (they had been criticized by the Methodist circuit, for instance, for accruing debt). 'The Salvation Army' had no immediate confessional connotations, yet still made powerful, value-laden claims: that salvationism lay at the core of the enterprise and that the scale and cost of the task was akin to making 'war'. The Army's branding ensured that its missionary impulse consistently linked salvationism with salvation from poverty, while simultaneously suggesting that the dynamic 'Army' was capable of tackling both deficits. Booth's lightning-quick appropriation of Henry Morton Stanley's popular *In Darkest Africa* (1890) for his own *In Darkest England* (1890) was a case in point. Not only did this show the Army's eye for a catchy brand name, it also associated the Army with the colonies and foreign missions, a field where evangelical enthusiasm and

cooperation was at that point growing, even as nonconformist unity at home was fraying at the edges.⁴⁶ Both urban poverty and the empire, of course, were of considerable interest to constituencies beyond nonconformity. Hence reframing the Army's mission in these terms did not downplay its nonconformist side, and did not retreat into wishy-washy Christian platitudes, but did emphasize the organization as a particularly vigorous exponent of universal Christian, and indeed, British values. This was savvy brand positioning.

Compassion and humanity may have been values inherent to Christian charity, but they could, of course, be intimidated through more secular branding signs too. Appeals issued by St Giles Chapel Mission in the 1880s, already carrying clear Christian significance through its name, featured the allegorical figure of Charity, for example.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, many charities deployed images of 'waif' children or elderly people as part of their brand identity, intrinsically sympathetic figures that were supposed to evoke pity in the donor while associating the charity with humanitarian values. It is notable just how many organizations chose to focus on children or, to a lesser extent, the aged, as the principal recipients of their munificence, even when their services catered to a much broader population. For example, the Watercress and Flower Girls' Mission played shamelessly on the affective status of poor little girls even though, by the 1890s at least, they were catering to the aged, infirm, generically poor and children of both sexes.⁴⁸ The addition of terms such as 'waif', 'children', 'street arab', 'boys' and 'girls' to charity titles and slogans played to donors' emotional responses. When allied to descriptive terms such as 'home', donors could imagine they were giving their cash to places where caring staff and eminently deserving recipients lived in quasi-familial networks, associations that carried obvious affective and moral capital.

But, perhaps perversely, these same branding elements can also be seen as cultivating a more hard-headed brand personality in order to play into the values of more discriminating donors. Claims to the 'deservingness' of one's beneficiaries represented a conscious way for charity entrepreneurs to nullify criticism by the emergent 'scientific charity' lobby (including the likes of the COS and the League of Help) that voluntary charities were too prone to giving 'indiscriminate' aid to potentially undeserving beneficiaries. They implied to potential donors, whether this was the full story or not, that a charity dealt with a legitimate, 'deserving' constituency of recipient. Judicious use of adjectives, as in 'distressed gentlewomen', 'aged poor' and 'crippled children', similarly implied authentic need. Genuine advocates of 'scientific charity' would not have accepted such practices in and of themselves as being of a piece with their philosophy.

Nevertheless, for potential donors, overwhelmed by the plethora of causes to support, and at least dimly conscious of a growing culture of suspicion and caution around them from the likes of the COS, these associational adjectives and images of the 'deserving' operated as shorthand for a worthy cause. Charities attempted, through branding, to reassure donors that their money would be safe with them.

This kind of selective marketing, which saw organizations putting their best face forward and obfuscating the potentially more problematic aspects of their work, is also reflected in the example of the RSPCA's 'Liverpool Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs'. Established in 1883, its brand personality was consciously developed and modified over the following two decades in pursuit of a winning formula. The Home was founded ostensibly to provide shelter to stray dogs, reunite lost dogs with owners, rehome dogs for a donation (the 'sale' of the dog) and destroy dogs suspected of carrying disease. In the context of moral panic about rabies, the charity destroyed the vast majority of dogs, giving rise to a potentially sinister association with the 'temporary' nature of residence.⁴⁹ Early imagery on annual reports varied between friendly mutts and malnourished, howling hounds. Each type was affecting, albeit in different ways: the friendly dog implied the pet dog's loyalty and companionship while the starving hound appealed to donors' pity. Pointedly, neither image made much association with the destruction of stray dogs. The charity tried assorted variations on these themes, including a 'before and after' version with both images, before settling in 1899 on pathetic canines and an outstretched human hand. In 1904, the charity became 'The Liverpool Dogs' Home' while annual reports downplayed the number of destroyed dogs while suggesting that these dogs were exclusively ferocious or diseased.⁵⁰ The charity's branding reflected that in giving over their money to a dogs' home, most donors were expressing compassion for animals, and the organization was happy to join in fostering that image.

At the individual level, charities made attempts to incorporate additional, more distinctive traits into their brand personality. This was often about communicating a sense of competence and professionalism. It is notable that some charities deployed official titles and status indicators in their system of value signs. Clerical titles intimated religious authority, credibility and legitimacy and conferred the same on the organization tied to their name, as in 'Father Berry's Homes'. Such was the weight of clerical identifiers that founders with no theological training might appropriate titles for their 'market' value. Critics of Reuben May, who ran Great Arthur Street Mission, were keen to note that he 'describes himself as a "pastor"', despite no evidence of his ministerial

authenticity ever having come to light. As another complainant noted, May was usually ‘clothed somewhat in the garb of a clergyman’.⁵¹ As the next chapter shows, the ‘Reverend’ Hugh Jones similarly headed multiple charities in the Wirral where, again, critics were unable to locate substantiating evidence of his clerical qualifications.

Other titles played on similar connections with established professions to invest charity brands with their associated traits. Thomas Barnardo was, according to his biographer, rather vain with an acute theatrical sensibility. It was probably his desire for public status that led him to adopt the title of ‘Doctor’ over plain ‘Mister’ or ‘Brother’ Barnardo.⁵² But ‘Doctor’ also endowed Barnardo with gravitas and removed his charity from the intensely competitive world of assorted, relatively undistinguishable men of ministry, into something more cerebral and official. ‘Doctor’ brought to mind medicine, and encouraged the public to associate the charity with objectively good social reforms of health and sanitation, being led by an increasingly respected medical profession. In this sense, Barnardo’s appropriation of the title as a kind of trademark for authority and professionalism was astute. This was also, of course, a branding tactic adopted by many producers of medical products in the nineteenth century in a bid to avoid the taint of ‘quackery’.⁵³ It was unfortunate for Barnardo that his rivals, resentful of his charity’s momentum and doubtful as to the morality of some of his techniques, publicly queried his moral right to use the title when he had started, but not completed, a medical degree.⁵⁴ However, as with the medicine brands, the proof was in the product and Dr Barnardo (he later did enough to merit his medical title) weathered this storm. On balance, the title probably did the Barnardo brand more good than harm.

Various forms of patronage also served to imbue charity brands with certain positive traits. Endorsement by well-known individuals was an important signifier of an organization’s trustworthiness and merit, but it also invested the charity brand personality with associated characteristics. The most striking example, perhaps, was in the prefix ‘royal’. For the likes of the ‘Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals’, royal endorsement was perhaps the greatest accolade in terms of social capital and the charity was quick to include the royal crest in its promotional material. It suggested to the public that this was a charity that was traditional, respectable, established and influential, since, surely, the crown would not allow their brand to be tainted by association with anything less. Of course, the endorsement of an organization by public figures (including royals) operated to mutual reputational benefit as a kind of branding pact. The patron promoted the charity’s values and, in turn, became associated

with those values. For the charity, the sheen of celebrity, 'noble' birth or financial success reflected on the surface of the organization. Aristocratic endorsements conferred noblesse oblige, tradition, authority and stability.

Other endorsements seemed more one-sided in the sense that the charity that adopted the prominent individual's name had most to gain. The use of the late General Gordon's name by numerous boys' homes, with the cooperation of his sisters, was in part a memorialization of Gordon, but his reputation was such that it hardly needed the boost at that point. The homes, however, capitalized on the heroism, dynamism, inspiration and boldness that the public associated with the general, all traits that any charity seeking funds to shape boys' lives would be happy to appropriate.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, in a move no doubt designed to counter claims that their work among the poor, especially men, fostered crime, the League of Welldoers sought and gave prominence to the Liverpool Police Head Constable's endorsement of their work.⁵⁶ That, again, shows the clear-minded and conscious branding in which charity entrepreneurs were engaged. Ultimately, although the jargon of 'brand values' and 'brand personality' would have been utterly alien to them, those who ran Victorian and Edwardian voluntary organizations had to be and, as we have shown, were acutely aware that reputation and the emotional and cerebral responses they evoked in their donor markets were one of the most important parts of their business. As business historians Casson and Lopes observe, strong brand identities were particularly important for nondurable consumer goods because they encouraged repeat buys. Donations were the ultimate nondurable because causes almost always demanded a 'repeat buy'.⁵⁷ In that context, charity brands needed careful development and management.

Protecting the brand

That being the case, brands also required protection. Since cultivating a brand identity, imbuing it with positive associated traits and disseminating it among the donating public required considerable effort, charity entrepreneurs had to be alive to potential brand damage caused either by scandal within their own organizations, or by jealous competitors. The legal tools for engendering such protections were relatively limited in the late nineteenth century and used only by some charitable organizations to any significant level. Yet there were numerous other channels through which the integrity of a brand could be maintained. This section will look, first, at those non-legal initiatives which insulated brands against reputational damage caused by internal flaws and failings and imitation

by external actors, before moving on to discuss the use by charities of the new technology of ‘trademarks’ and other legal constructs in defending their brands.

As Chapter 4 will discuss in more detail, when scandal arose in individual charitable organizations it could be greeted in a manner that sought to protect the reputation of charities as a whole by portraying the offending institution as operating outside the sector’s self-imposed norms. Thus, for the legitimate enterprise that found itself, for example, associated with an errant treasurer, as Wood Street Mission did in 1908, brand management needed to be swift and deftly handled if reputational damage was to be avoided. Wood Street’s committee recognized as much and, as soon as the story broke, had a notice placed in the local newspapers in which the renowned chairman, Alfred Simpson, reassured the public that no losses had been made by Wood Street on foot of this ‘defalcation.’⁵⁸ Meanwhile, when Barnardo was under attack in the events surrounding the so-called arbitration, one of his key adversaries used a ‘miserable’ photograph of the founder in a bid to tarnish his reputation: Barnardo’s features were blurred and his ‘dandy’ pose undermined any serious import. In response, Barnardo distributed a carefully posed carte-de-visite, an image of sober earnestness and unostentatious respectability with his facial features clearly defined.⁵⁹ Gillian Wagner sees this image of Barnardo as a turning point in his life but it was also a turning point in the branding of the charity. Following the public disputes over his management of the charity, Barnardo agreed to ‘professionalize’ with a committee of trustees and to publish his financial accounts. Yet while seeming to surrender control in one sense, Barnardo’s release of this photograph as a tactic to rebuild trust indicated how far he perceived himself as the core of the charity’s ‘brand’. Lesser charities used photographs in a similar way. When the editor of the journal *Truth* publically invited Walter Austin, founder of the London Cottage Mission, to explain the financial accounts for the charity, Austin’s riposte was his portrait.⁶⁰

Appeals to past reputation and modifications to the brand were both ways of dealing with a brand imperilled by internal problems. Yet if a brand’s chief purpose was to communicate the distinctiveness of the entity to which it was attached, a far greater problem came from external actors who, seeing its success, might attempt to appropriate it by using a similar name. An equal amount of difficulty might arise in instances where two organizations arrived at similar names by coincidence, a state of affairs that was not unlikely given the fashions in naming practices discussed above. For example, however the ‘Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children’ (SPCC) and the ‘Society for the Protection of Women and Children’ (SPWC) arrived at their strikingly similar names,

the former evidently found it problematic. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children complained that the SPWC, unlike the SPCC, did not carry out rescue or preventative work with children. Thus the name was both a close imitation of the complainant's brand, and, the SPCC claimed, misleading.⁶¹ The SPCC asserted its authentic and exclusive 'right' to its name or anything resembling it.

Distinguishing names was clearly important, both in terms of identifying objectives and ensuring that donors' gifts reached the cause for which they had been intended. But many of the weapons for staving off imitation were inherent in the branding practices explored earlier. A name might be buttressed by multiple other brand signifiers which formed a bubble of informal protection for a charity's identity and helped make its encroachment by others much more difficult. One of the most common means of doing this was through the prominence of the charity's named founder or overseer in the brand. It is notable how many organizations featured founders' names, signatures and photographic likenesses in their brand strategy. London Cottage Mission branded its child welfare services as 'Walter Austin's Homes'.⁶² Great Arthur Street Mission was more commonly known as 'Reuben May's Mission' and his signature, photographic likeness and personal history formed a steadily ageing but indisputable brand throughout his lifetime.⁶³ Liverpool Sheltering Homes, an organization responsible for emigrating 6,000 children from Liverpool to Canada between 1873 and 1911, was inextricable in the local imagination from Louisa Birt. The charity was often referred to as 'Mrs. Birt's Homes' with Louisa, a formidable Evangelical, depicted as an affectionate, maternal figure.⁶⁴ But while this kind of personal branding promoted important brand values, chiefly a sense of stability and familial intimacy, it also spoke of authenticity and trust. If donors were accustomed to seeing a particular person as the face and personification of a particular institution, it became much more difficult for others to imitate it.

Architecture could work similarly. Buildings often featured prominently in the material branding of charities, with many larger charities commissioning distinct edifices. Liverpool Infant Orphan Asylum, for instance, self-consciously developed an architectural style that reflected the civic pride of other key buildings in the city. The new premises intimated the social value, ambition and reach of the charity while making a bold statement about the success, legitimacy and value of the charity and its endorsement by Liverpool's sponsoring elite.⁶⁵ While it shared the grandeur of civic architecture, the Asylum was, in itself, branded with core 'trademarks' of the charity: the buildings bore the name and foundation date of the Asylum. Other charities celebrated their

plain buildings as signs of pragmatism and thrifty accounting. In turn, as we have seen, representations of charity architecture were reproduced in appeal literature and on stationery. This fetishization of buildings within branding did two things. First, it established the distinct location and identity of the charity and literally grounded it in donors' minds, so that any would-be imitator would be disadvantaged by not being associated with the familiar image of the building. Second, it guarded the brand against suspicions about internal operations. Charities that offered children's accommodation were particularly sensitive to allegations of poor sanitation, overcrowding and decrepit furnishings, so that their annual reports typically featured photographs of neat and clean dormitories, pristine kitchens and dining rooms, and wholesome staff in starched uniforms. The brand was therefore protected against damage from both external and internal sources.

The conscious nature of these brand protection measures becomes clear when we examine instances where imitation and imposture arose. Charities urged would-be donors to take careful note of their identity markers (signatures, crests, logotypes, images and so on) as a way to avoid giving to the 'wrong' institution. There were, of course, levels of 'wrongness'. Names might, as stated, coincide quite innocently. Moreover, the flipside of charities using fashionable designs from local printers was that two organizations might use the same design. Both Liverpool Teetotal Crusade's and the League of Welldoers' print material between 1909 and 1912 featured a red and black floral vine motif.⁶⁶ In a climate of fierce competition, such seeming coincidences could give rise to suspicions of deliberate imitation in a bid to confuse donors. These suspicions were compounded by the intermittent reality of 'sham' collectors for charities real and imagined, going about telling convincing narratives and rattling collecting boxes.⁶⁷ Victims of imposture wrote to newspapers to remind the public to seek the charity's 'trademark', that is, its core symbols and signatures, to authenticate the collector. Wood Street Mission, in 1907, had to notify the public that people using collecting cards to raise money for its summer camp were entirely unofficial. Wood Street did not issue any such cards.⁶⁸ Aware of bogus collectors having claimed their name, the Glasgow Poor Children's Dinner Table Society notified readers of the *Herald* in 1898 that its official lady collectors would have 'collecting books bearing the signatures of the secretary and treasurer' and copies of the annual report 'which will this year have a pink cover'.⁶⁹ The secretary for the Royal Hospital for Children and Women reminded readers of *The Standard* that he always gave printed receipts for donations that bore the lithographed signatures of himself and the Treasurer.⁷⁰ Distinguishing

brand features were a tool that could be used to authenticate organizations when under immediate threat of imitation.

The development of these kinds of authenticating brand signifiers was an informal kind of 'trademarking'. But, in formal terms, trademarks must be understood as being distinct from brands: while it became possible, from 1876, to register the tangible elements of a brand, names, logos and mottos, the intangibles of values and brand personality are not seen as part of that intellectual property.⁷¹ That may go some way to explaining why the official, legally actionable trademark found its way into relatively few charities' armouries. Since charities were already innovators in 'brand personality', the benefits associated with registering a trademark formally (and expensively enforcing that registration if necessary) were less apparent to them than to commercial enterprises.

Nonetheless, some charities with clearly commercial interests thought it worth the cost of registering trademarks. The Salvation Army, once again, was at the cutting edge, registering the name 'Blood and Fire Salvation Army' along with its crests and logo as early as 1884 for use on musical instruments and cotton handkerchiefs.⁷² By 1891, the Army had registered the same trademark for use in a whole slew of goods: tools, cutlery, razors, pocket knives, ice skates, machine parts, instrument cases, leather labels; all manner of leather goods and shoes; cigar and cigarette cases; tobacco pouches; regular clothing; sanitary clothing; safety clothing and gloves; photographic paper and goods; printing inks; lampshades; printed matter; newspapers; periodicals; books; bookbinding materials including cloth; photographs; stationery; adhesives for stationery or household purposes; artists' materials except paint; typewriters and typewriter ribbons; office requisites; instructional and teaching materials other than apparatus; ordinary playing cards; prints; engravings; paper filters; duplicating apparatus and inking sheets for duplicators; insulating paper; and music cases.⁷³ This phenomenal (and selective) list gives a sense of just how 'commercial' the Army was but, also, just how commercially astute. By contrast, there is no record of 'Barnardo's' in the trademark registers until 1989.⁷⁴

Other charitable outfits laid claim to a 'trademark' although it is doubtful whether the mark was ever legally registered. The National Working Boys' Home provided accommodation for boys who made and sold tinware. The organization was a rather unusual hybrid of the charitable and the commercial. It was established as a charity that raised money through selling home-manufactured goods, but after several years, it registered as a commercial company (probably to avoid the prying eyes of the Charity Organisation Society). The name remained the same and the company marketed itself as an organization whose profits

supported otherwise homeless or workless boys, thereby maintaining a kind of charitable fiction. The marketing was sufficiently convincing that most people appear to have believed it was a philanthropic organization.⁷⁵ The advertisements for the Home's tin goods carried a 'Fraud Caution', warning against imposter sales representatives and fake goods. Authentic Boys' Home tinware carried a trademark stamp (a heart with the initials 'NWBH') that was also reproduced on circulars, Home vans and receipts. The stamp was of course reminiscent of the traditional maker's marks that metal manufacturers had long used, and which they increasingly registered formally after 1876.⁷⁶ Although the National Working Boys' Home used the language of 'trademarks' and clearly understood the value of stamps of authenticity, there is no evidence that they ever went to the expense of registering their trademark officially.

The blurred boundaries between commerce and charity in the NWBH may well explain the embracing of a literal, if not legal, trademark. It is notable that seemingly connected branches of the Boys Home, often bearing the same name or a minor deviation from it (such as 'NWBH, Peckham', 'National Working Boys Depot', 'Working Boys Institution', 'Working Lads Self-Help Brigade') also produced and/or sold domestic goods (often but not always tinware) with similar trademarks. The NWBH, Peckham seemed to be a neat imitation of the NWBH: the Peckham home was ostensibly called 'Farnborough House', the road on which the original home was situated; both mentioned the high risk of imitation in their circulars; and both Homes manufactured goods that carried a heart stamp, although the Peckham outfit's stamp was less elaborate for those eagle-eyed enough to spot it.

Each of these organizations operated in a murky area, preying on the benevolent public who mistakenly assumed they were supporting a charity. More worrying was the proximity of these organizations' names and their proclaimed practices to those of authentic charities. Pelham House Home for Working Boys, supported by Royalty, opened in 1892.⁷⁷ There was a St. Andrew's Home and Club for Working Boys in London, established 1866, that enjoyed aristocratic and high Anglican support, and provided accommodation and self-improvement facilities for homeless or friendless boys.⁷⁸ The Reverend of St. Giles opened a Working Boys' Home in Drury Lane in 1886.⁷⁹ Birmingham and Sheffield were among the first provincial 'Working Boys' Home' (established 1880 and 1881 respectively).⁸⁰ By the 1890s, cities as diverse as Chester, Sunderland and Hereford had Working Boys' Homes while Liverpool and numerous Scottish urban centres had Catholic Working Boys' Homes.⁸¹ Most were allied to local civic and church committees and operated as a form of superior lodging home with

improving recreational facilities. Few employed the boys in the manufacture or sale of goods. It would not be surprising if many members of the public assumed that the 'National Working Boys' Home' was an umbrella organization for the multiple provincial homes, since, as outlined in Chapter 6, some charities did operate within a 'franchise' system. The scope, then, for confusion and imitation was considerable, and informal trademarks were one device that organizations (whether genuine charities or essentially commercial operations posing as such) might use to help would-be supporters distinguish among them.

The power of names and signatures as identifying trademarks for charities was something clearly understood by the Secretary of the London Society for the Employment of Necessitous Gentlewomen, James Colmer. When, some time in the 1870s, the aforementioned Ladies Printing Press, which he ran as part of that society, lost the contract to print the annual report for his uncle William Colmer's Indigent Blind Visiting Society (IBVS; founded in 1835), James embarked on a conscious and vengeful campaign of brand damage against the latter charity. Following his uncle's decision to move printing elsewhere, James established a rival charity for the blind, calling it the 'Indigent Blind Relief Society', and bringing his brother, also called William, on board. Having appropriated the subscription list to their uncle's charity, the two brothers sent their circular appeals to established donors of the IBVS. The similarity in the organizations' names would almost certainly have led some donors to confuse the two charities and send money to the nephews' organization. But the IBVS and James Colmer were also acutely aware of the fact that the addition of the signature of a 'William Colmer' might act as a further assurance to potentially confused donors that they had the right organization. The IBVS urged its donors to recognize that 'the William Colmer who signs himself as secretary of the new society is not the same person as our secretary, Mr Wm. Colmer' – note the subtle differences in the signature.⁸² Following complaints from donors and 'Uncle' William, the nephews changed the name of their organization to the Blind Poor Relief Society.

Yet, that was not the end of the tale. Having initially been keen to use the good reputation of the IBVS for their organization's gain and been thwarted, the pair then began to mailshot circulars that undermined the established charity and deliberately created 'doubt and confusion' among its donors. Several false allegations of financial irregularities were made, resulting in the nephews finding themselves in court on charges of libel, which were ultimately sustained.⁸³ One periodical surmised that James Colmer felt he 'got off cheaply' with a £50 fine, which he paid 'with a jaunty air and left the court laughing'.⁸⁴ It seems probable that lasting damage was caused to the IBVS.⁸⁵ But the episode contains within

it several indicators that charity entrepreneurs grasped not just that brands and unofficial trademarks were needed to establish bona fides, but that they could be damaged easily and required protection, through the courts if necessary.

Conclusion

The reasons for the emergence of modern branding in the commercial world had many similar and equally compelling motivations in the charity sector. These included distinguishing from competitors in a burgeoning market, communicating notions of quality and trustworthiness in services offered and protecting one's market share once established. But charities were pioneering in one significant sense: the nature of their 'business' was such that values had to be integrally inscribed into their brands from the outset. While commercial enterprises were still feeling their way towards developing what would later be identified as 'brand personality', most charities' entire fundraising strategies were centred on creating a communion of sentiment between fundraiser and donor. The 'purchase of compassion' which giving money to charity represented necessarily involved a negotiation between seller and buyer as to what specific notions of compassion were being bought and sold, and the most successful charities recognized that and developed brands and brand personalities every bit as sophisticated as anything that later emerged in the commercial sector.

If charity brands were ahead of their commercial counterparts in that respect, however, they lagged in terms of brand protection, for reasons that in part are linked to the cultivation of brand personality. Despite the existence of a trademark register from the 1870s, most 'trademarking' in the charitable world in this period was of an informal nature: signs and signatures that confirmed the authenticity of the organization to those in the know, but were open to flagrant abuse by anyone determined enough to do so, as the Colmer case demonstrates. We can speculate that most charities did not formally protect their brands with trademarks because it would have been expensive to do so. Moreover, paying to defend a brand against infringement in court was not within the means of many, and for those who might have afforded it, it was surely beyond the bounds of acceptable expenditure as far as some subscribers were concerned. Moreover, as Barnardo found during his 'arbitration' with the COS, and as the IBVS found despite winning their libel case against James Colmer, the whiff of scandal emitted by a court case, even a vindicating one, might be more difficult to throw off than any damage wrought by the original brand infringement.