

Writing the History of the Local in Victorian London

David W. Gutzke

The local in London has received some attention from scholars. The best study, Mark Girouard's *Victorian Pubs*, examines the architectural evolution of the capital's pubs, superbly illustrated with numerous photographs.¹ Innumerable studies of boroughs have appeared, some of them based on considerable research into primary sources.²

The London Metropolitan Archive possesses the largest collection of brewing records in Britain. Peter Mathias, author of the standard survey of the brewing industry before 1830, has written a helpful introductory essay about the nature of corporate archives.³ Detailed descriptions of each brewery's archives are contained in the survey by Richmond and Turton.⁴ Voluminous materials survive for many of the huge Victorian breweries in the capital: Barclay Perkins; Courage; Truman, Hanbury & Buxton; Watney, Combe and Reid; and (recently deposited) Whitbreads.⁵ Somewhat confusingly, the Scottish Courage archives in Bristol also holds records for all of these companies, save for Whitbreads'. Statistics about production, taxation, sales at licensed premises, profits and losses,

expenditure on maintenance of existing or for new brewing plant, beer brands, alterations of licensed premises (including building and rebuilding) are often recorded. Quite apart from the Annual General Meetings, the records typically remain uninformative, for example, about the rationale for decisions, declines in sales or competition with rival breweries. Strikingly absent is the grist of the historian's mill: correspondence, reports, memoranda, diaries, autobiographies, advertisements, leaflets, pamphlets, maps and photographs. Some leading breweries published in-house magazines, from the early 1920s and until well into the 1950s, that can offset the paucity of historical material.⁶ Photographs of new or rebuilt public houses, details about a brewery's tenants (including obituaries) and speeches by directors at openings of new premises all commonly appear. More recently, the larger breweries have distributed in-house newspapers which contain material about pubs.⁷

The LMA and the City of Westminster Archives Centre hold the capital's chief legal records, listed by Jeremy Gibson and Judith Hunter in their guide to

licensed victuallers' records.⁸ Among the most useful, licensing registers, compiled annually, often offer information about the name, occupant, owner, ratable value and licensing offences. Information about new premises, or rebuilding or alteration of licensed premises can be gleaned from Quarter Sessions records. Though petty session records survive in many instances, they subsume all such work under the generic name of 'alterations'. As an alternative, this information can be extracted from building registers, known to survive only for several large provincial cities, but not apparently for London.⁹ Without a register, building plans are recommended as a source of last resort. Seldom catalogued, they can be helpful in tracing how a building changed over time. Where these records have not survived or are unavailable for consultation, the researcher can turn to annual editions of London Post Office directories, which first appeared in 1799.¹⁰ Names of beerhouses and pubs with their addresses (but not owners) are listed alphabetically, together with the proprietors. In London, the most extensive collection of directories is held by the Guildhall Library, followed by the British Library. On open shelf, researchers can, for a fee, consult directories available at the British Genealogical Society. Rate Returns offer another way of researching breweries and licensed premises. To explore how the growth of breweries affected their business strategies, Raymond Riley, for instance, investigated rate returns for Portsmouth in the second half of the 19th century.¹¹

Census returns (1841-1901) give demographic data about the ages, birthplaces, marital status and occupations of publicans.¹² Edward Higgs' *Making Sense of the Census* provides a superb introduction to utilizing this source.¹³ The most recent census released, 1901, became the first to be put on-line. Such was the demand for information that the system collapsed within hours of being introduced. Service was quickly restored.

At the national level, much material can be gleaned from periodicals published under the brewing industry's auspices, especially between 1865 and 1970.¹⁴ Speeches delivered at trade functions, special feature articles on trends, photographs and coverage of current stories make these journals an indispensable guide. They are, however, generally available only at the British Library's Newspaper Library in north London (Colindale) or at the large research libraries where corporate records are held: London Metropolitan Archives, University of Warwick Library (Modern Records Centre), Scottish Brewing Archive, and the Oxford Brookes Library.

The political lobbying efforts of the industry are recorded in the minute books and annual reports of diverse organizations. In the capital, the Brewers' Company assumed a large role in raising funds. Some of its minute books from the pre-1914 years are deposited in the Guildhall Library.¹⁵ It merged with two other organizations to form the Brewers' Society in 1904. Electioneering, however, came to

be concentrated in the National Trade Defence Fund (rechristened the Association).¹⁶ Records of these bodies are now held by the Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick. Retailers organized and mobilized pressure through the Licensed Victuallers' (Central) Protection Society of London, which eventually merged with its commercial counterpart, the Licensed Victuallers National Defence League, to form the National Union of Licensed Victuallers. Recent moves have made historical records of retail organizations unavailable for consultation. Some of these organizations supplied copies of their annual reports, however, to the British Library.

Much historical information can be extracted from the evidence of governmental commissions and committees, bound in huge books and available at large university research libraries. Though the brief of each body focused on such issues as drunkenness, licensing laws and opening hours, wide ranging evidence on diverse other topics was collected. Moreover, members of the brewing and ancillary trades often gave testimony. Voluminous testimony was taken before these bodies. In the Victorian era, revealing evidence about running the local appeared in the Select Committee on Public Houses (1852-53), the Select Committee on Intemperance (1877-79) and the Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws (1896-99). The last informative body was the Royal Commission on Licensing Laws (1929-

31), before which brewers Sydney Nevile, Cecil Lubbock and Frank Nicholson gave detailed testimony. Evidence of this particular commission is difficult to find because the Government, as an economy measure during World War I, adopted a new policy of printing but not publishing the verbatim testimony of witnesses. Hence, generally only the copyright libraries and other specialized repositories have copies of the evidence, though the Report itself was published as part of the parliamentary papers.

There are thus many sources of information for studying the running of the Victorian local. Much remains to be explored about numerous topics, giving members of the Society considerable scope for defining their own research agenda.

Notes and References

1. It was published in 1975, and went into a second edition in 1987.

2. See, for example, Clifford, T. (1995) *Barking Pubs Past and Present*, London; A.J. Crowe, A.J. (1980) *Inns, Taverns and Pubs of the London Borough of Sutton: Their History and Architecture*, London; Packer, J. (1995) *Bexley Pubs: The History of Your Local*, Bexley.

3. Mathias, P. 'Brewing Archives: Their Nature and Use', in Richmond, L. and Turton, A. (1990) *Brewing Industry: A Guide to Historical Records*, Manchester, pp. 23-31.

4. Richmond, L. & Turton, A. (1990)

op.cit.

5. Little has survived for Meux & Co. This is also true of the records of Charrington & Co., Hoare & Co., Mann, Crossman & Paulin, and the Wenlock Brewery Co. What little exists is now consolidated at the Coors Museum, formerly owned by Bass Charrington. Deposited at the LMA, the archives of Noakes & Co. is slightly more extensive. Archives of London's two independent family breweries, Young & Co. and Fuller, Smith and Turner, remain with the companies.

6. For the London breweries, see *Anchor Magazine* (Barclay, Perkins & Co.); *Black Eagle Magazine* (Truman, Hanbury & Buxton); *Beer & Skittles* and *Red Barrel* (Watney, Combe, Reid & Co.), and *House of Whitbread* (Whitbread). Barclay and Whitbread produced the most informative magazines. Outside London, such publications came later and often with an inferior quality: *Butler's* (William Butler), *Malt & Hops* (John Davenport's Brewery); *Hop Leaf Gazette* (H & G. Simonds); and *Pennant* (Benskin's Watford Brewery). Quite late to appear was *Guinness Time*, issued by Guinness from the early 1950s.

7. See, for example, *Bass Brewers News*, *Courage News*, *The News* (Carlsberg-Tetley), *Red Hand* (Ind Coope) and *Truman Times*.

8. Gibson, J. & Hunter, J. (1997) *Victuallers' Licences: Records for Family and Local Historians*, 2nd ed., Birmingham, pp. 32-34. Outside London, these records are held by county record offices.

9. For Birmingham and Sheffield. The authors of *Birmingham Pubs, 1880-1939*, for example, drew on licensing registers for their research (Crawford, A., Dunn, M. and Thorne,

R. (1986) *Birmingham Pubs, 1880-1939*, Gloucester.

10. Guides for the provinces are most helpful in identifying when a directory was published and where it can be found. See the following: Maxted, I (1989) *British National Directories, 1781-1819: An Index of Places in the British Isles included in Trade Directories with General Provincial Coverage*, Exeter; Norton, J.E. (1950) *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales, Excluding London, Published before 1856*, London; Shaw, G. & Tipper, A. (1989) *British Directories: A Bibliography and Guide to Directories Published in England and Wales (1850-1950) and Scotland (1773-1950)* (2nd ed.), London.

11. Riley, R. (1976) 'Rate Returns and Industrial Geography: Nineteenth Century Brewing in Portsmouth', *Portsmouth Geographical Essays*, Portsmouth, 2: pp. 66-75.

12. Tracing beerhouse keepers before the late Victorian era can be far more difficult owing to the fact that many beerhouses had no name, just an address. An important starting place is Jennings, P. (1987) 'Studying Beerhouses', *Local Historian* 17 pp. 457-64; also see his (1989) 'The Masons Arms: A Study of a Bradford Beerhouse', pp. 61-66.

13. Higgs, E. (1989) *Making Sense of the Census: The Manuscript Returns for England and Wales, 1801-1901*, London.

14. See Appendix A.

15. Its provincial counterpart was the Country Brewers' Society.

16. Defence was later dropped from its title, and 'Development' substituted.

Appendix A

Drink Periodicals

Newspaper	Place	Affiliation	Dates
Barman & Barmaid	London		1879
Bartender	London		1934-
Bottling	London		1924-67
Brewer	London	Incorporated Brewers' Guild	1971-
Brewer & Publican	Birmingham		1889-94
Brewer & Wine Merchant	London		1901-47
Breweries and Distilleries	London		1890-92
Brewers' Assistant	London		1881-86
Brewers' Gazette	London		1905-31
Brewers' Guardian	London	Country Brewers' Gazette	1871-1906
Brewers' Guardian	London		1948-1998
Brewers' Guild Journal	London	Incorporated Brewers' Guild	1910-74
Brewers' Journal	London		1865-1967
Brewers International Journal	London		1971-72
Brewers' Technical Journal	London		1904-06
Brewers' Weekly	London		1899-1901
Brewing and Distilling International	London		1973
Brewing Trade Gazette	Leeds		1881-1886
Brewing Trade Review	London	Country Brewers' Society Brewers' Society	1886-1972
Brewing Trade & Investors' Gazette	London		1890-1891
Brewing Review	London	Brewers' Society	1972-
Caterer & Hotel Keeper	London		1933-
Caterer & Hotel Proprietor's Gazette	London		1878-1932
Country Brewers' Gazette	London	Country Brewers' Society	1877-1904
Distillers', Brewers', & Spirit Merchants Magazine	Glasgow		1901-05
Distillers' & Brewers' Magazine & Trade News	Glasgow		1898-1901
Era			1838-
Fellowship	London	Fellowship of Freedom & Reform	1921-23
Ferment	London		1988-

Harpers' Wine & Spirit Gazette	London		1952-
Holmes Brewing Trade Gazette	Leeds		1878-81
Hotel and Caterer	London		1912-13
Journal of the Incorporated Brewers' Guild	London	Brewers' Guild	1930-49
Journal of the Institute of Brewing		Institute of Brewing	1895-
Journal of the Operative Brewers' Guild	London	Operative Brewers' Guild	1910-29
L.V.	London		1903-04
Licence Holder	Bradford		1915-17
Licensed Trade News	Birmingham	National Trade Defence Fund National Trade Defence Association National Trade Development Association	1893-1955
Licensed Trader	Dublin		1904
Licensed Trader	Dublin		1894
Licensed Victualler & Catering Trades' Journal	London		1898-1903
Licensed Victuallers' Advertiser & Sporting News	London		1881-82
Licensed Victuallers'	London		1898
Advocate & Servants' Register			
Licensed Victuallers' Chronicle	Liverpool		1874
Licensed Victuallers' Gazette	London		1866
Licensed Victuallers' Gazette & Hotel Courier	London		1872-1941; 1958-1966
Licensed Victuallers' Gazette & Trade Advertiser	London		1872-73
Licensed Victuallers' Guardian	London	Licensed Victuallers' National Defence League	1869-87
Licensed Victuallers' Herald	London		1888
Licensed Victuallers' Magazine	London		1833
Licensed Victuallers' Mirror	London		1888-1904
Licensed Victuallers' Mirror	London		1888-92
Licensed Victuallers' Monthly Journal	London		1869

Licensed Victuallers' Referee	London		1904
Licensed Victuallers' Sportsman	London		1888-89
Licensed Victuallers' Chronicle	London		1903-04
Licensee	London		1880
Licensee	Bradford		1912-15
Licensing News & Public House Trades	London		1891
Licensing World & Licensed Trade News	London	Licensed Victuallers' (Central) Protection Society of London	1892-1967
Liverpool Brewers' and Victuallers' Journal	Liverpool	Liverpool Brewers' Association	1890
Mine Host	Belfast		1934-
Monthly Bulletin	London	Fellowship of Freedom & Reform	1931-72
Morning Advertiser	London	Friendly Society of Licensed Victuallers	1794-
National Guardian	Glasgow		1883-1975
National Trade Guardian	Glasgow		1882-83
New Licensed Victuallers' Magazine	London		1834
Northern Brewers' & Victuallers' Journal	Liverpool		1890-92
Off-Licence Holder	London	National Federation of Off-Licence Holders	1901
Off-Licence Journal	London		1924
Off-Licence Journal	London		1921-73
Off-Licence News & the Wine & Spirit Trade Review	London		1970-
Publican	London		1978-
Scottish Licensed Trade	Glasgow		1908-12
Scottish Licensed Trade News	Glasgow		1971-
Scottish Wines, Spirits & Beers Trades Review	Glasgow		1887-88
Sunday Advertiser	London	Friendly Society of Licensed Victuallers	1807-23
Sunday Herald	London	Friendly Society of Licensed Victuallers	1828-29

Trade Paper	Manchester		1908-11
Trade: Illustrated Journal of the Wine, Spirit & Brewing Trades	London		1893
Trade: A Weekly Journal for Licensed Victuallers	London		1881
Transactions of the Institute of Brewing		Institute of Brewing	1887-94
True Temperance Notes	London	True Temperance Association	1923-32
True Temperance Quarterly	London	True Temperance Association	1933-39
Victualling Trades' Review	Glasgow		1889-1908
Weekly Register	London	Friendly Society of Licensed Victuallers	1823-27
Wine Trade Circular, Licensed Victuallers' Gazette & Weekly Reporter	London		1852