

THE INDUSTRIALISATION OF THE LONDON BREWING TRADE: PART IV

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Chapter Eight: Beer-shops, Gin-palaces and Mild-ale

The Beer Retail Act of 1830 was the end of a process that had been ongoing since the beginning of the nineteenth century whereby the subject of alcohol consumption began to register on the national political scene. Whilst it is not the aim of this study to include the story of the temperance movement, it is nevertheless vital to include the social and cultural attitudes towards drinking alcohol in its various forms, particularly by the working classes. The 30 year period prior to the 'Beer Bill' raised the issues of monopolies, price-fixing, licensing and adulteration, which were interlinked, each having an effect on the other.

In the early nineteenth century the 'drink question' moved to centre stage in the political arena. The free trade movement allied itself briefly with an emerging temperance movement to press for radical reform of the liquor licensing system. The Sale of Beer Act of 1830 swept away the licensing system to create the beer-shops and gin-palaces of Victorian London. The porter-brewers were no longer the favourites of the government, and despite their protests, the beer-shop was bought in to break the power of the porter-brewers' monopoly and their tied-house system. It was hoped that this would increase competition and reduce the price of beer, it was partially successful. The increased competition brought prices down and slowly encouraged new brewers and their products to gain a foothold in the London market.

Despite this, the porter-brewers were able to maintain their grip on their monopoly due to the almost continu-

al growth of beer consumption throughout the nineteenth century. However, continuing concerns over the adulteration of porter contributed to changes in the public taste for beer. In London, the working classes began to abandon porter in favour of the cleaner taste of mild-ale, whilst the middle classes chose to buy their porter in a bottle, which was marketed as a new product called London Brown Stout.

The adulteration of porter, liquor licensing and the re-emergence of gin

The Committee for Public Breweries had cleared the major London brewers of the worst forms of adulteration in 1818, but the debate continued, focussing more on the public-house rather than the brewery. In 1820, Frederick Accum, an influential chemist published, *A Treatise on the Adulterations of Food*, which was the first major work on food adulteration. One thousand copies were sold in the first month,¹ which was widely reported in most newspapers, with excerpts from the book included, particularly the chapters dealing with bread, wine and beer. *The Morning Chronicle*, commented, 'we believe that its chief effect will be to put adulterers of food and drink upon their guard ... In this way the volume may be useful'.²

The book was given more critical treatment in *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine* under the title 'There is Death in the Pot', where Accum was accused of being 'an officious blockhead' who expected the public, when considering a drink, 'to resort to the cider cellar and Burton alehouse loaded with retorts and crucibles'.³ Thus, Accum was criticised as an alarmist meddler in

trying to sell his book, but there was a more concerted conspiracy to undermine his authority. Soon after its publication he was reported to the police for tearing pages from reference books in a major London library.⁴ The public ridicule that followed drove him to flee the country for his native Germany, where he remained for the rest of his life.⁵

Accum had upset powerful vested interests including the porter-brewers, although he had been careful to eliminate the eleven porter-brewers from suspicion because they, 'could not escape detection in their extensive establishments'.⁶ Whilst Accum's book had added little that was new in the use of cocculus indicus, quassia and the other well-known adulterants, he had reproduced the lists of prosecutions from the minutes of the Committee of Public Breweries of 1818.⁷ Furthermore, he brought new evidence of the commonest practice, which was the dilution of porter by publicans with either water or table beer. This was new research, where samples of porter, taken directly from the Anchor, Black Eagle and Horse-shoe breweries, were found to have an average alcoholic content of 5.25%. However, when samples of the same brewers' products were taken from various public-houses in London they were found to be lower. Porter was now found to be 4.5%, while brown stout had fallen from 7.25% to 6.5%.⁸ Clearly, the question of adulteration was now associated with the publican rather than the brewer.

The government thought the remedy was to allow the poor to obtain beer from elsewhere than the public-house, by having the same opportunity as the gentry to purchase unadulterated beer directly from a brewer. In 1823 the porter-brewers relented to public pressure, to allow the introduction of a new category of beer between table beer and porter, to be called intermediate. This was intended to allow working people some of the advantages of private brewing, 'by enabling them to have in their house a barrel of cheap, wholesome and refreshing beverage'.⁹ It was to be taxed at 5s. a barrel and was to be sold for no more than 10d. per gallon, or 27s. per barrel, when porter was 45s. a barrel.¹⁰ In this measure, price had been seen as the mechanism by which the respectable working class drinker could be separated from the excesses of the 'flash houses', a term used generally for public-houses of the lowest order.¹¹ This created a new class of brewery to supply this beer

for home consumption. However, they were largely unsuccessful due to these inhibitory clauses added to the bill at the behest of the porter-brewers. They were not allowed a tap-room for consumption on the premises, and they could only supply a special category of public-house.¹² Furthermore, they were not allowed within 100 yards of another brewery or 20 yards from a public-house.¹³

Others still believed that the way forward lay with the reform of the licensing system for malt liquor. In 1821, they had acquired a powerful new advocate in the lawyer and Whig politician, Henry Brougham, whose first attempt had been blocked by Thomas Buxton of the Black Eagle brewery. Brougham thought that the magistrates were too restrictive in issuing new licenses, thus allowing existing public-houses to have a monopoly in a district which resulted in the sale of an inferior commodity. He also claimed it resulted in increased gin-drinking, leading to 'a far greater evil to those who were compelled by the ill-quality of those beverages to drink bad spirits'.¹⁴ He also believed the taxation system reduced the consumption of beer in favour of gin, and sought support from those who feared a resurgence of the eighteenth-century 'Gin Craze'.¹⁵

However, despite these concerns about gin consumption, the Government took the extraordinary decision to lower the duty on spirits in 1825. This illuminates the attitude of all governments towards alcohol, which is to maximise revenue at the lowest cost, whilst paying lip-service to concerns about morality. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had been preoccupied with the loss of revenue from the smuggling of spirits into England for some time. In the north, this came from Ireland and Scotland where spirit duties on Whiskey were lower. In the south, Brandy from France and Gin from Holland were the culprits.¹⁶ The Chancellor proposed a reduction of the English spirit duty from 11s. 8¼ d. to 7s. a gallon.¹⁷ This was opposed by many including the member for Norwich, William Smith, who thought that this measure was immoral. In 1817, he quoted from the *Report on the Police of the Metropolis*, 'almost every crime of the most atrocious character, such as murder, robbery and burglary, was committed under the influence of ardent spirit'.¹⁸ Smith could claim some authority in this matter, he had been a partner in one of the largest distilleries in the country, before handing over to his son.

The Chancellor's reply took a route that was to become familiar in the debate on alcohol, where France and Holland, with lower duties, were exemplified as models of moderation and temperance. He went on to state that it was in countries where the price of spirits were highest that the greatest excesses took place. He explained:

It was the disposition of man, when he could only obtain an indulgence occasionally, to get as much of it as he could; but if the circumstances enabled him to obtain the gratification regularly, the temptation to commit an excess was removed.¹⁹

The Chancellor disagreed with Smith's argument, that halving the duty on gin would lead to a doubling of its consumption.²⁰ The Chancellor could not have been more wrong. He halved the duty and consumption *more* than doubled, from 3,684,447 in 1825 to 7,407,204 gallons in 1826.²¹ The argument for making drink as readily available as in the wine-drinking countries, where the population drank responsibly, now looked unsupportable.

The reformers continued to focus on the licensing system as the conduit to the real enemy, which was gin. The argument ran like this, take away the artificial restraints of the licensing system and the forces of competition would force down the price of porter which would then be cheaper than gin. The movement was fortunate in having the services of such a natural polemicist as Brougham, who returned to the attack in 1828 by arguing that it was the magistrates' misuse of power in restricting licenses which prolonged the porter brewers' monopoly and high prices. He stated in the House of Commons, 'About a dozen great brewers held the monopoly for the supply of beer to all London ... it was found impossible to stand in competition against them'.²² Within two months, a new attempt to reform the licensing laws was introduced by the member for Oxford, Thomas Estcourt, in the form of a consolidating Act. Magistrates' powers were to be curtailed, whereby the license applicant was given the right of appeal to the Quarter Sessions. Furthermore, he was not required to provide a certificate of good character, merely giving sureties of good Behaviour. Beer sold for consumption off the premises was freed from any control by license.²³

Estcourt had claimed that his original intention was to propose the abolition of the licensing system altogether,

but the Home Secretary, Robert Peel, thanked the member from Oxford, stated that the general principal of throwing open the trade was good, but, 'If, as a matter of police, it was necessary to exert this control, it was the first duty of the legislature to see that it should not be liable to abuse'.²⁴ Estcourt's bill of 1828 was generally seen as the final settlement of the liquor licensing question, which was true in many ways, as it became the basis for the licensing system until the present day. The exception was the 39 year period, 1830 to 1869, when beer could be sold in Britain without magisterial control. This period was later described by Beatrice Webb as a 'debauch',²⁵ which will now be explained.

Liquor licensing, beer duty and the Sale of Beer Act, 1830

The Duke of Wellington's faltering government of 1830, unexpectedly reopened the issue by appointing a select committee to consider the 'throwing open' of the beer trade. Furthermore, the Chancellor, Henry Goulburn, had managed to produce a budget surplus by some creative accounting with the national debt and planned to give away £3,000,000 to reduce the price of beer. This was to be achieved by either the abolition of the duty on beer or a reduction in the duty on malt.²⁶

The committee sat for three weeks in March, when 30 witnesses were called, including the leading London porter-brewers, Barclay, Calvert and Buxton.²⁷ Barclay used the committee to deliver a powerful defence of the brewers' monopoly, arguing that the beer duty should be totally repealed rather than a reduction in malt duty otherwise beer sales would be replaced by spirits. He then threw down the gauntlet to the government with this challenge:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer wishes for free trade, then let him put it on a fair foundation - do not let him hang round our necks such a weight that we can hardly bear it; otherwise, it is useless to pass this measure. You will not sell a single barrel of beer more; you will only change the trade from one class of retailer to another; you will change it from the publican to the beer shop, but you will not change it from the great brewers to the smaller ones. Who are to supply these beer shops, the person who can sell the cheapest and the best, and we say we can sell cheaper and better than others. We are the power-loom brewers if I may so speak.²⁸

The publicans stood to lose the most from the unlimited competition which would ensue from such a measure, and yet only six publicans were called to give evidence to the committee. This probably reflects the government's view that the publicans were the chief culprits for adulteration and therefore their opinions should count the least.

The argument for the repeal of duty on malt rather than beer was weak. Even the agricultural sector recognised that the country could not afford the abolition of malt duty, which would cost the revenue £7,000,000.²⁹ The farmers firmly believed that their fortune lay with the promotion of beer consumption and therefore wanted the abolition of the beer duty to be paid for by a concomitant rise in the duty on spirits.³⁰ This was a decision based on pragmatism rather than morality, far greater quantities of barley were consumed by the brewers than the distillers. A partial reduction of both duties would have the disadvantage of keeping the revenue collection system for both duties. The retention of the malt tax would also have the advantage of retaining the presence of the excise in the brewery, which would continue to discourage adulteration. Goulburn decided in favour of the removal of the duty on beer, giving the primary reason as the inequality of the beer tax. The gentleman who brewed for himself did not pay the beer tax and, 'is able to drink beer at a lower price than the peasant, who has to purchase the beverage'.³¹

The decision came down in favour of the repeal of the Beer Tax. The brewers withdrew their objection to the proposed abolition of the licensing system and abandoned the publicans to their fate. The two measures were now irretrievably interlinked when it was introduced to Parliament in March as a Budget Bill for repealing the duty on beer, and throwing open the beer trade. It was to be delayed until October because the government was convinced that the reduction in price would not be passed on to the consumer unless the trade was facing the new competition from the beer-shops.³²

When this was announced there was an outcry from the interested parties, the magistrates and the publicans. Hundreds of petitions were presented to Parliament, particularly from those who had recently invested in public-houses with the understanding that Estcourt's Act of 1828 had been intended to settle the licensing question once and for all.³³ Goulburn's plan to free the

trade of all licence restrictions was also met with objections from the clergy, which he mollified with the institution of a two-tier system.

A simple excise licence was to be required for premises selling beer only, whilst the sale of beer with spirits or wine was to continue to be licensed by the magistrates as before.³⁴ Spirit duty was merely raised by sixpence a gallon rather than the 4s. 8¼ d. needed to return to the levels before 1826. The Sale of Beer Act of 1830, entitled anyone, with a two guinea excise licence, to sell beer without restriction from an ordinary house, a petty chandler's shop or a country shack; 45,000 were opened within eight years.³⁵

Thus, the licensing system of three and a half centuries was swept aside in an ill-considered budgetary measure that still defies explanation. It upset almost everyone, with the exception of the brewers, who were quite sure that they could supply any increase in beer consumption, and the landowners who would supply them with the barley. Politically, it was seen as a partisan measure, but it alienated their own supporters whilst annoying the Whig opposition at the same time. The manufacturers complained that the Tory government had rewarded their own class and that he should have used the reduction in taxation to, 'get rid of those duties that fell on the manufacturers of glass, paper, soap etc.'³⁶ The porter-brewers were no longer in favour, seen as monopolists in a time when free-trade policies were emerging.

A large swathe of the middle classes, including the magistrates and clergy, stood back to witness the unfolding consequences of this acknowledged experiment with unconcealed disapproval. The existing publicans were outraged at the two-tier system of licenses. They complained of the injustice of competition from those with lower overheads, which drove down prices, but drove down standards further. If it was a conciliatory gesture towards the growing unrest in the countryside, it was to prove singularly unsuccessful. The new beer-shops were perfectly placed to provide meeting places for disaffected agricultural workers to organise their protests.

The intention to reduce the consumption of spirits was not realised. It was too little and too late, the urban poor had developed a taste for gin which was going to prove hard to change. As a free-trade measure, it failed to dis-

turb the comfort of the porter-brewers' monopoly at the time. However, viewed over the full 29 year span of the experiment, it did allow the ale-brewers a chance to exploit changes in the ubiquitous market for porter and thereby gain a foothold in the London market for beer.

The Beer-shop

The Sale of Beer Act 1830 resulted in the beer-shop, an institution that was to become the scapegoat for everything that was wrong with an increasingly industrialised and urbanised society. There was an expected flood of 1,588 applications for beer-shop licenses, in the first three months.³⁷ However, about half of these were from chandler shops that were previously allowed to sell beer without licence for 2d. a quart providing it was consumed off the premises, and were not therefore new entrants to the trade.³⁸ Generally, the price of porter fell by a full penny to 5d. a quart or lower. Thus, beer consumption rose steadily from 1.37 bushels of malt per capita in 1830 to 1.63 in 1831, peaking at 1.78 in 1836.³⁹

The beer-shops soon began to attract complaints, particularly in rural districts, and petitions were being presented to Parliament after only six months. Michael Sadler introduced a typical petition, where he claimed:

that the petitioners had distinctly traced the origin of much of the late incendiaries' work to the retail beer shops now opened throughout the country ... From his own knowledge he could declare, that these beer-shops had made many who were previously sober and industrious men, drunkards; and many mothers had also become tipplers. It was now not uncommon thing to see both parents in a beastly state of intoxication.⁴⁰

In 1833, the Select Committee on the Sale of Beer Act was appointed to dissipate the pressure from petitions to parliament. The line of questioning clearly indicates that the outcome was a foregone conclusion. A small concession was granted to the magistrates who were to take control of the opening hours of beer-shops, which would be set locally at Quarter Sessions. The idea was to extend hours in towns and restrict them in the country, confirming the preconceived opinion that the problems had been primarily in the villages rather than the larger towns. Beer-shop keepers must provide a

certificate of good character from six rated parishioners and the overseer, which again would operate more effectively in the village than the town. Penalties for misbehaviour were increased and the license fee was raised from two guineas to five pounds, 'to confine the trade to persons of substance and respectability'.⁴¹ Thus, the system underwent a minor adjustment rather than a thorough overhaul, and one thing was clear, there would be no return to the 'regime of the magistracy and the machinery of oppression, favouritism and jobbing';⁴² the beer-shop was here to stay.

Later in the nineteenth century, the temperance movement claimed that it had been the growing concern over the beer-shops, which had been their foundation in the 1830s. They offered proof of this by immortalising the comments of Reverend Sydney Smith in an otherwise unremarkable letter of 24 October 1830; 'The new Beer Bill has begun its operations. Everybody is drunk. Those who are not singing are sprawling. The sovereign people are in a beastly state'.⁴³ Smith seems to have had a change of heart, he had been advocating free trade in beer in the *Edinburgh Review* as recently as 1829.⁴⁴ However, since the contents of this letter did not enter the public domain until his memoirs were published in 1855, this was a retrospective account of events. Nevertheless, it was immediately incorporated into an article 'How to stop drunkenness', in the *North British Review*.⁴⁵ Thereafter 'the sovereign people are in a beastly state' was to become the battle-cry for the temperance movement. By 1855 they were opposed to the consumption of any alcohol, including beer, which had still been regarded as a benign agricultural product in 1830.

With the beer-shops being thrown open to all and sundry, existing alehouses sought to compete by providing additional attractions including gin, the more notorious of which became known as gin-palaces. The embryonic temperance movement, coalesced around the concern over gin-palaces. Their champion was James Silk Buckingham, member for the new constituency of Sheffield in the reformed parliament. He called for an inquiry into the causes of habitual drunkenness, comparing the preoccupation with beer consumption in agricultural districts as a fit and proper subject for legislative restraint, while, 'the sale and consumption of ardent spirits in the thickly-peopled towns is too harmless to be disturbed?'⁴⁶ The vote was carried and

the Select Committee drafted to look into the new phenomenon of urban life described by Buckingham as ‘the gorgeous splendour of the present gin-mansions’.⁴⁷

The Gin-palace

The first witness was Mark Moore, a London Evangelical missionary,⁴⁸ who was given a platform for his beliefs as if he were a government official. He proceeded to set out the most lurid tales of prostitution, drug-taking and abuses associated with the payment of wages in public-houses. He then produced figures for gin consumption at 14 London gin-shops based on the observations of two men employed by him, and claimed that:

there is a company formed in London for the purpose of buying up any old free public-house which is fitted up in the palace-like style which is a cause in the increase in drunkenness by their making such a show and being so splendid many are induced to go in.⁴⁹

When asked to substantiate the name of this company, Moore was forced to admit that it was a ‘general report’, in other words hearsay. The committee continued in this vein, taking personal opinions rather than evidence which resulted in list of recommendations which were too far-reaching for the time. Known as the ‘Drunken Committee’ in Parliament, its report was received with derision. William Cobbett summarised the opinion of the House of Commons, ‘There must be something left to the pulpit ... We are not to make laws here to correct every evil which arises in families or in society’.⁵⁰ No legislation ensued from the committee and in a narrow vote, its report just avoided the ignominious fate of not even being printed.

Thus, no further changes were made regarding the sale of alcohol, which meant that licensed public-houses were driven to find alternative strategies to compete with the lower prices of the beer-shops. It was not difficult to offer better accommodation as the typical beer-house consisted of a simple tap-room with benches and tables, where beer was drawn from the casks lined along the wall.⁵¹ Public-houses also had the advantage of staying open later than the beer-houses which was cited by many giving evidence to the committee as being important for workers with late finishing hours.

A particular feature of some London public-houses was to offer entertainment such as singing saloons or ‘penny gaffs’, which were crude theatres where classic plays were parodied. However, the more notorious public-houses provided facilities for popular street-culture activities including rat-killing, dog-fighting, cock-fighting and boxing.⁵² Some of these attractions were also provided by the more adventurous beer-shop owner. However, there was one area where the licensed victualler retained an advantage which was not legally available to the beer-shop retailer, the provision of gin for consumption on the premises.

The gin-shop had existed in London since its introduction from Holland in the seventeenth century, but its development into the gin-palace was a direct result of the Sale of Beer Act of 1830. In order to meet the new competition from beer-shops, some publicans saw the opportunity to invest in a new design that imitated the fashion of enriching shop facades in the 1820s.⁵³ A typical development was that of the *Ship and Shears* of Shadwell High Street, which was pulled down, along with the house next door:

to erect a splendid gin-palace with polished mahogany doors, plate glass windows, a handsome lamp and a large clock, a contrast with the mean dwellings, dirt and misery that surround it, the interior is the same with gas burners and casks of the most gaudy colours.⁵⁴

Descriptions like this fuelled the commonly-held belief that paupers were drawn to the gas lamps of the gin-palace like a ‘moth to the flame’. The helpless drinker could not pass by without squandering the family wages.

The biggest gin-palace in London was owned by Henry Fearon at 94 Holborn Hill, who gave evidence to the Select Committee of 1830. When asked if he had difficulty in keeping order, he replied, ‘we would not sell a gentleman as well dressed as you with more than one glass, so that excess with us cannot take place’.⁵⁵ The implausibility of this claim was not missed by the committee. It was obviously impossible to identify individual customers with an acknowledged clientele of up to 1500 in a single day. The real intention of such a policy was to ensure that any drunken behaviour was not going to happen on the premises. William Coates of 25 Whitechapel High Street, who ran the London’s second biggest gin-palace, also gave evidence which concurred with

Fearon's rule of one glass per customer to prevent intoxication. He claimed that this ensured there was always orderly behaviour in his establishment, which was further enhanced by a 'standing only' rule for drinkers. When the committee asked directly if there was any seating in his premises he replied, 'None whatever; we find that is an intolerable evil in a large trade ... they call for glass after glass, which is our custom not to allow'.⁵⁶

Coates's gin-palace was situated next to Spitalfields, the home of the silk-weavers, who were among the first casualties of the industrial revolution. The response of a silk-weaver to the earnest pleas of the Temperance Societies and Quakers to abstain from gin, went as follows:

I do work; and when I drink gin it is to stop myself going mad. My wife drinks gin sometimes and the children too. If you were as poor as us sir, you would learn that gin is bread, meat, fire and hope all in one. Without gin I would not have heart to work and we would go to the poorhouse or die. We say cold in the belly, but we mean hunger in the belly and despair in the heart. Gin cures both for a time; but it kills you say. Well, we can but die, with gin or without, and life such as ours, without gin, is worse than death.⁵⁷

This was from someone who at least worked. There were pockets of deprivation that even fell below that level where the gin-palace could ply its trade. Fearon's gin-palace served the worst slum in London, St. Giles, where the residents who drank gin were recognisable by, 'shaking hands, sore legs, creeping palsy, a hacking cough, rags, filth and stench; these are the marks by which we know the gin-drinker'.⁵⁸ These and other powerful accounts of the effects of gin-drinking were the main inspiration of the new temperance societies in London; compared with this beer-drinking was of peripheral concern. Gin consumption in London was described as, 'its indulgence is a mere selfish gulp and away; whereas even a coal-heaver must draw his breath upon a pot of beer'.⁵⁹ There was an inevitable comparison to be made between Hogarth's horrific depiction of *Gin Lane* and the benign image of the ale-house in *Beer Alley*.

The beer-shop could be seen as a successor to the village alehouse, which offered the comforts of a warm fire, good company and inebriation rather than intoxication. Although it was often rowdy with brawling and singing, it operated on a human scale where it was embedded in the community it served. Compare that

with the new urban phenomenon of the gin-palace, where anonymity was provided to the gin-drinker. This was an institution where all pretence was swept away, a place where you could get drunk without distractions from entertainment or conversation. The gin-palace represented industrialised drinking where all interruptions were removed. Swing doors opened at a touch, to take the customer directly to a long bar staffed by numerous assistants to dispense gin by the glass. Strategically placed mirrors allowed surveillance of customer behaviour. It was standing room only, no chairs or tables, where the drinker consumed his gin at the bar and left. Those who were obviously drunk were 'dragged by the heels outside the unhospitable [*sic*] door'.⁶⁰ The beer-shops had their defenders as well as their critics, but it was almost impossible to find anyone to say a word in favour of the gin-palace. What seems to have upset everyone was the contrasting opulence set amongst grinding poverty. Also the 'drink and go' policy which stripped the actual process of drinking of any humanity. Fearon and Coates defended this with the preposterous claim that each drinker was allowed only one drink and that the provision of only enough room for standing prevented 'tap room' behaviour.

Realistically, the removal of all licensing restraints was bound to have resulted in excesses. Although the gin-palace seems to have had a certain signature, the large clock, the swing doors and plate glass windows, it seems that any publican who wished to refurbish his premises ran the risk of it being labelled a gin-palace. All this contributed to the hysteria about the recurrence of a new 'Gin Craze' from the previous century, which was fuelled by government ineptitude. The duty on gin had been reduced by half to stop smuggling and the consumption doubled, the politicians just could not understand it.

The Sale of Beer Act of 1830, if viewed purely as a 'free trade' measure, can claim some success. Despite the social consequences of the beer-shops and gin-palaces, it introduced competition between retailers and reduced the price of porter. Publicans were forced to offer better facilities rather than a mere price reduction, albeit the middle classes disapproved of some of the activities provided as entertainment. Throughout the years of concern over adulteration and intoxication, the brewers had tried to stand aloof and point the finger of suspicion to the publicans. Whilst they could claim innocence over these matters, it

had become obvious that the tied-house system was indirectly responsible for many of these illegal practices. The new system of beer-shops was a pivotal point for the brewing trade, which could not ignore the fact that many respectable people would no longer drink porter.

The question for this study is the effect of the Sale of Beer Act on the porter-brewers. At first glance, they appeared to have emerged unscathed, they had shifted the blame, with some justification, on to the publicans. However, the porter-brewers had to sell their product somewhere, public-houses were now widely discredited, which had repercussions. Market forces began to work at both ends of the drinking spectrum, with the following results. The first was with the gentry, who no longer found it worthwhile to brew their own beer after the abolition of the beer duty. Many small brewers gained a new income by supplying them instead. Second, the middle class drinker began to seek the safety of bottled beer from a wine or beer merchant whom he could trust, complete with sealed corks, labels and all the paraphernalia of branding. Third and most important, was that the working class drinker demanded a beer that was free from adulteration. A new beer was introduced called mild-ale, which was supplied from the London ale-brewers.

Mild-ale

The monolithic market for porter of over one hundred years standing, began to fragment. The changing taste for beer was summarised by brewer, James Farren, giving evidence to the Select Committee on the Sale of Beer in 1833:

The new trade has introduced a different description of beer from that formerly sold at public-houses ... According to the taste of London, they will have nothing but what [*sic*] is mild ... nearly all the new trade is for mild-ale ... As a proof of the increased consumption for ale and the diminished demand for porter, the porter brewers, Messrs. Barclay & Perkins, Hanbury & Co. and others of a similar class, who until some time after the passing of the Bill had never brewed ale, are now turning ale-brewers, having erected new plants and premises to enable them to go into the trade.⁶¹

The term 'mild' did not refer to its taste or strength. In the early nineteenth century, it meant that a beer that

was no more than a month old, sent directly from the brewery to the publican without long term storage, as was the case with porter.⁶²

A definition of nineteenth-century mild-ale presents some difficulty. Perhaps the best way to gain an insight into the nature of this beer is to consider how it differed from porter, the qualities of which are well known. Mild-ale was sometimes described as sweet, which is misleading, it was just less bitter than porter. In 1824, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* defined the difference between porter and ale as follows, 'Ale is light-coloured, brisk and sweetish, or, at least free from bitter; while beer is dark-coloured, bitter and much less brisk'.⁶³ Mild-ale was not designed for long storage so fewer hops were needed; fewer hops meant less bitterness, it was relative. It was brewed from pale or amber malt, rather than the cheaper brown malt used for brewing porter, which meant that it was a brown beer, rather than the contrived, almost-black colour of porter at that time.

Whilst it was not immune from the most common adulteration, dilution with water, there was less need for the previously mentioned additives associated with porter production. In fact, it had been stated as early as 1820 that, 'it was not generally known that porter, affords a less proportion of alcohol than is produced from mild beer'.⁶⁴ At 5% alcohol, it was actually stronger than porter which was 4%, although this was to change over time.⁶⁵ This seems to confirm the widespread allegations that porter was strong in taste rather than in alcohol, to give the illusion of intoxication through drowsiness induced by various narcotics.

Mild-ale ale brewers were more inventive in offering a more diverse product than porter, in three different strengths and prices. In 1834, mild-ale was advertised in the *Morning Chronicle* as follows:⁶⁶

GENUINE MILD ALES, from malt and Hops only, as can be proved on oath by the Brewer.

	Per Nine Gallons.		
	s.	d.	s. d.
Best Table Beer	5	0	X Ale 9 0
Table Ale	6	0	XX ditto 12 0
Ditto, ditto	7	6	XXX ditto 17 0

The above Ales (being brewed from the finest Kent hops) particularly recommended for trial. -Address (for the Ale Brewery), 2, West-street, New-road, St. Pancras.

The use of the X to rate the strength of beer originated from Excise requirements to mark the barrels for beer duty assessment. Table beer was branded with a T on the barrel, whilst strong beer (porter) was branded X.⁶⁷ After the repeal of the beer duty this practice was redundant, but X was adopted by the ale-brewers to designate strength in an early example of branding beer. Thus, the accepted terminology for describing a beer's strength became accepted as X, XX, or XXX. However, this was not based on a scientific graduation of its alcoholic content; it was a primitive marketing tool. At 36s. per barrel, X-mild-ale was very close to the price of porter and was undoubtedly the most popular. It was probably offered as a loss-leader, making little money for the ale-brewer who could hopefully recoup his profit from sales of the higher-priced grades.

In marketing terms, the adoption of the word 'mild' to describe a beer that was actually stronger than porter was a master-stroke and a response to the growing temperance movement which was still primarily fixated on gin and adulterated porter. The words beer and ale were completely interchangeable at this time and infer no scientific meaning. However, in marketing terms, the adoption of the word 'ale', with its Anglo-Saxon connotations of an ancient past, was sure to appeal to a society which was seeking its lost heritage through the Gothic Revival movement.

London's Ale-brewers

Ale had been brewed in London throughout the years of porter's supremacy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, albeit on a much lesser scale. Regional ales such as Wiltshire, Dorchester, Derby and Burton ales had always been available in London. They were primarily brewed for the 'season' when the gentry brought the taste for their favourite ale to town, where it could be supplied by the capital's ale-brewers. In 1762, Michael Combrune, in *The Theory and Practice of Brewing*, the most comprehensive brewing manual of the eighteenth century, stated that, 'the famous Burton ale, its qualities and intrinsic value will be the same whether judiciously brewed in London or elsewhere'.⁶⁸ In retrospect we know that to be untrue because of the importance of the water supply, but at that time they believed it and there was a small but healthy market for ales of many varieties that were produced in eighteenth-century London.

A 'league table' of the six leading London ale-brewers had been published annually, similar to that of the porter-brewers. A comparison of the production figures demonstrates the dominance of porter until the 1830s. In 1812, the porter-brewers produced 1,405,210 barrels against the ale-brewers' production of 104,961 barrels, a ratio of 13:1.⁶⁹ The ale-brewers had gained ground slightly by 1830 when the ratio was reduced 11:1.⁷⁰ After 1830 the respective figures for porter-brewers and ale brewers were no longer published, they had been based on the beer duty which had been repealed. Thereafter, a table of production figures based on malt consumption was published annually which did not differentiate between ale and porter. In the 1830s, four ale-brewers, Charrington, Mann & Crossman, Goding and Courage, began to appear in these yearly figures, reflecting the changing tastes for beer in the metropolis. They were a disparate group, there was no equivalent of the Porter Brewer's Society, each having their own method of business. (See Table 9)

The Anchor brewery, Mile End

Charrington & Co. was a family firm which had been brewing fine ale at the 'Anchor' brewery at Mile End since 1757, catering mainly for private and family trade. The rise in their production was entirely due to their production of mild-ale and exemplifies the changes in the brewing industry, when compared with nearby porter-brewers, Taylor & Co., of Limehouse. In 1831 Charrington & Co. had been the second leading ale-brewer consuming 10,531 quarters of malt, half of the 21,845 quarters consumed by Taylor & Co., who were seventh in the league table. By 1837, Charrington & Co.'s consumption of 18,842 quarters of malt was close behind Taylor's consumption of 23,556 quarters, and within four years Charrington & Co. overtook their production figures completely.⁷¹

After the death of Nicholas Charrington in 1827, the two sons Edward and Spencer had tried exporting ale to India with some limited success.⁷² However, this was discontinued when the company took a change of direction in 1833, to merge with a local brewery, Steward & Head. The new company, Charrington, Head & Co., dropped the production of fine ale and table beer to concentrate on the supply of mild-ale to the stable of 100 public-houses they had acquired with the brew-

Brewery	1831	1834	1837	1840	1842	1852
Barclay & Co. (Anchor brewery) Southwark	97,198	99,674	100,326	115,561	114,090	112,191
Hanbury & Co. (Black Eagle brewery) Spttalfields	50,724	74,982	81,440	98,210	92,466	124,416
Whitbread & Co. (White Hart brewery) Moorfields	49,713	49,105	47,012	53,622	52,098	55,236
Hoare & Co. (Red Lion brewery) St. Katherines	24,102	29,796	32,347	30,310	29,607	33,769
Taylor & Co. (Ship brewery) Limehouse	21,845	20,835	23,556	27,300	19,430	17,660
Charrington & Co. (Anchor brewery) Mile End	10,531	18,197	18,842	18,328	20,423	26,366
Steward, Head & Co. Stratford	8,116	... }
Courage & Co. (Anchor brewery) Bermondsey	8,116	8,079	9,286	11,532	13,016	16,014
J. Mann & Co. (Albion brewery) Mile End	...	1,757	6,588	11,679	13,539	30,881
J. Goding & Co (Lion brewery) Lambeth	16,307	15,256	14,023	18,517	17,071	16,959
Hodgson & Co. (Bow brewery) Bow-bridge	4,206	2,080	2,400	5,704	4,983	...
E. Abbott (Sun brewery) Wapping	691	654	560	487	... }	...

Table 9. *The Quantity of Malt in Quarters consumed by the undermentioned Brewers of London 1831-1852.*⁷³

ery.⁷⁴ The business continued to steadily increase, achieving a 30% rise by 1850, but they were no longer ranked first among the ale-brewers. They had been overtaken by the relatively new brewing company, Mann, Crossman & Co. which had become the leading ale-brewery in London by 1849.⁷⁵

The Albion brewery, Mile End

James Mann had been brewing ale since 1826 at the ‘Albion’ brewery Mile End, less than a mile west along the Mile End Road, from Charrington’s brewery.⁷⁶ His production was modest, consuming only 6,588 quarters of malt in 1837, brewing merely for the private trade.⁷⁷ In 1846, the arrival of a new partner, Robert Crossman, transformed the brewery. Production doubled by 1850 with an output of 94,773 barrels based on the production of mild-ale.⁷⁸ Crossman had become the managing partner and targeted beer-shops for new business. He did not

favour the traditional ‘tied-house’ system. The company served 530 beer-shops but had acquired ties on only 14 of them due to bad debts.⁷⁹ Mann & Crossman had an aggressive policy on prices. They supplied mild-ale to beer-shops for 33s. a barrel which enabled them sell at 3½d. per quart, a very competitive price.⁸⁰ The lines between ale-brewer and porter-brewer were becoming blurred when Charrington also began to brew porter.⁸¹ They could now supply their beer-shops with porter which could sell for 3d. a quart, undercutting the public-houses by at least ½d.

The Lion brewery, Lambeth

Another prominent ale-brewer, Henry Goding, was the senior partner of the family firm, Goding & Co., which had been producing ale at the ‘Cannon’ brewery at Knightsbridge since the early nineteenth century. They increased their production by using their collecting

clerks as agents to identify suitable public-houses and persuade them to take mild-ale from them.⁸² By 1831 they were consuming 16,307 quarters of malt annually to rank first among the ale-brewers. In 1835 James and Charles Goding decided to build the spectacular new 'Lion' brewery on the south bank of the Thames at Lambeth.⁸³ Although the Goding brothers were still a long way behind the porter-brewers in production figures, they were still able to demonstrate their wealth with a typically ostentatious opening ceremony on the Thames, when they invited 1,500 licensed victuallers as their guests.⁸⁴

The Anchor brewery, Bermondsey

Two miles down-river, the Courage family had been brewing ale since 1787, at the 'Anchor' brewery, Horsleydown Stairs, Bermondsey.⁸⁵ In the 1830s, John Courage steadily increased production to consume 16,014 quarters of malt in 1852.⁸⁶ They operated a 'loan system', where they had extended the normal practice of 'tying' public-houses. In that system, a loan to the publican was secured on the leasehold or freehold of the premises and often a second loan from the distillers for the supply of spirits. This could now be augmented by a third loan for the supply of beers of special interest, such as mild-ale from Courage & Co., or India Pale Ale from Bass.⁸⁷ This system was to be the route by which the ale-brewers could gain access to the 'tied' houses of the porter-brewers. Where porter-brewers were slow to begin production of mild-ale to supply their publicans, the ale-brewers were free to step in as a 'special interest' supplier.

The publicans

Publicans, who felt that they had been made the scapegoat in the mounting scandal of porter adulteration, were unhappy with the increasingly complex system of loans and obligations. Faced with the competition from beer-shops and gin-palaces they issued their own penny newspaper, *The Gin-shop*, as a broadside against the brewing trade in general, and the gin-shops and porter-brewers in particular. They complained that the porter-brewers had brought in the eminent scientist, Michael Faraday, to devise a test for vitriol in a policy of 'search and test' of publicans' cellars to determine where adul-

teration was taking place. Faraday had made the embarrassing discovery that vitriol was found in the porter-brewers own product, the finings which were sent to the publican to add to the barrel of porter in the cellar.⁸⁸

The publicans were furious with the porter-brewers for instigating this policy which had undermined confidence in porter even further, allowing the ale-brewers to gain 'a four-fold demand for their articles'.⁸⁹ The publicans resented the imposition of this new beer with its additional problems, preferring the simplicity of dealing solely with porter and gin. A publican's provision of a new beer would not necessarily increase his sales, but it would mean increased storage space for casks, more money tied up in stock and more returns of stale beer. They simply hoped the problem would go away, saying, 'It might be thought insidious to oppose ourselves to the ale-brewers ... The ale mania will evaporate and business will flow again in its old channels'.⁹⁰ Unfortunately for them, they were wrong. Porter was too widely discredited for a public relations exercise, like Faraday's test, to be able to recover public confidence. As the price of mild-ale came closer to that of porter the change in working class drinking habits became irreversible. Those who continued to drink porter were probably past caring about adulteration or simply could not afford the alternative. After 1850, the price equalized with that of porter at 4d. a quart. Thereafter, it became known as 'four-ale', the staple drink of the working classes. As 'four ale' was sold in the public bar, it was frequently called the 'four ale bar', particularly when used to describe bad behaviour, as in 'the language of the four-ale bar'.⁹¹

The porter-brewers versus the ale-brewers

The porter-brewers' original strategy had not worked, which was to dominate beer supplies to the new beer-shops with aggressive price reductions to eliminate competition. When the beer duty was repealed, the price of a barrel of porter fell from 45s. to 36s., but the porter-brewers reduced the price by a further 3s., to 'crush persons who began in the new system'.⁹² However, this discount was destined to become permanent as the price war began and the competition refused to be crushed.

Porter-brewers now had no choice but to begin their own production of mild-ale, stating:

Have we not the remedy in our own hands? Let us build Ale brew-houses. Have we not the houses in our own hands? Each of us by forcing it on our tenants can at once command a large Ale trade.⁹³

Truman, Hanbury & Buxton were probably the first porter-brewers to brew mild-ale in 1834 when they produced 29,841 barrels, 14.8% of their total production.⁹⁴ Whitbread & Co. followed suit in 1835 with 11.3% of their production going over to mild-ale.⁹⁵ By 1838 only two of the twelve porter-brewers, Reid and Meux, were not involved in some degree of mild-ale production.⁹⁶

Although porter was still the predominant drink for the working class in London, the advent of mild-ale production had created new tensions in the industry which were summarised as follows:

Serious attempts have frequently been made to shake the businesses of the great porter breweries but the system was too deep rooted for its easy overthrow. A heavy though indirect stroke of this kind came from the ale-brewers of London, who some time since commenced brewing an ale article at so low a price as to encroach on the sale of 'entire'. In retaliation, the porter-houses, with the exception of three, were tempted to add a proportion of ale to their ordinary manufacture. They do not, however, carry this ale-brewing to any great extent and their porter monopoly remains little impaired.⁹⁷

This was only partially true, the dilatory reaction of the porter-brewers had been misplaced. By the time they had begun significant production of mild-ale, the ale-brewers had built up a reputation which would eventually match their own. Truman Hanbury, Buxton & Co. ruefully admitted that their close neighbour, Mann, Crossman & Paulins' mild-ale was superior to their own. They could not match its fullness of taste saying, 'Other Brewers' houses, as well as our own, are empty, while Mann's little houses, in out of the way back alleys, are full to overflowing'.⁹⁸ The porter-brewers' complacency throughout these developments can be better understood when considered in the context of increasing beer consumption. Apart from the economic downturn of the 1840s, annual beer consumption rose continually in every decade of the nineteenth century, until it peaked at 33.2 gallons per head in the 1880s.⁹⁹

The need for this new product seems fairly straightforward. It came from the widespread disillusionment of the working-class drinker who wanted a beer that he could trust not to contain ingredients that were harmful or unwholesome. Mild-ale could deliver this to some degree, because it was a fresher taste which could not mask the more blatant adulterations associated with porter. Furthermore, mild-ale was slightly dearer than porter which could also appeal to the artisan who wanted to disassociate himself from porter, the drink of the lower classes.

The factors on the supply side were more complex. The porter brewers had survived parliamentary enquiry yet again, but they realised that times were changing for them as for everyone else. Monopolies were no longer in fashion, and a reformed parliament had shown that it was prepared to act to encourage free trade and choice. The price of a pot of porter was now a highly political issue, ranking with that of a loaf of bread as a barometer of the cost of living. The mass market for beer in London would continue to be for porter but government pressure on prices meant that profits were pared to the bone. The London brewers saw mild-ale as an opportunity to stay in a market that was opening up to new competition from Edinburgh, Dublin and Burton-on-Trent, and more importantly, from the London ale-brewers.

After the initial investment, ale production was more profitable for several reasons. The most obvious being its higher price, but there were other factors including the long period of storage required in porter-brewing which was expensive in capital costs. Mild-ale could be sent from the brewery to the public-house within two weeks, with the obvious saving on costly storage facilities. As a brown beer it was particularly suited to the soft water available to the porter-brewers and a natural successor to porter. It was brewed in different strengths which widened its market appeal to compete with the stronger beers coming into London from the provinces.

Summary

Britain was industrialising in the North whilst London's industrial sectors began to decline. The London brewing trade was now in a mature phase of industrialisation, hidebound by tradition and unwilling to change. The Committee on Public Breweries found that the porter-

brewers were generally innocent of the adulteration of porter in the brewery, but were complicit in that which took place in the publican's cellar. The politicians among them wielded their power in Parliament to cripple the attempt to introduce an intermediate beer for home consumption. However, this was to be the last time. No longer the favourite of government, they were seen to be monopolistic as the move towards free trade increased.

They were ignored in the debate leading up to the Sale of Beer Act in 1830. They opposed the repeal of the beer duty but accepted it with resignation as broadly neutral to their trade in general. However, they saw removal of license restrictions as a direct assault on the tied-house system, which it was. When Charles Barclay asked who would supply the beer-shops if not the 'power-loom brewers', the answer turned out to be the London ale brewers, even though it took a long time. Eventually the porter-brewer responded to the ale brewers' challenge by producing mild-ale themselves. However, they had lost the exclusivity of producing London porter; mild-ale could be produced anywhere, and it was. Whilst the Sale of Beer Act was not successful in destroying the tied-house system, it did manage to weaken it. Thus, when transport improvements came, the London brewers faced realistic provincial competition for the first time, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Nine: Competition and Branding: Bottled Stout and Indian Pale Ale

Throughout this study it has been argued that London did experience some aspects of industrialisation in certain trades such as brewing, which predated the usual conception of the 'industrial revolution' of ceramics and textiles. However, by the early nineteenth century, the rest of Britain was industrialising fast, which had repercussions for the London porter-brewers. Some improvements in the industrial infrastructure worked in their favour, especially in the early part of the century. The London porter-brewers were of sufficient size and wealth to make efficient use of the steam engine, which set them further ahead of their competitors who could not.

However, they gained the most benefit from improvements to transport facilities, which at that time meant water transport. Beer was a cheap commodity which

was also heavy, which meant road transport was restricted to a few miles before it became uneconomic. In this chapter we shall investigate how improvements in London's transport system, particularly the new London dock system, brought opportunities to some London brewers. We shall also consider how the growth of Britain's canal system, steamships and eventually the railways worked against them, allowing competition from Dublin and Burton-on-Trent to gain a substantial foothold in the London market for beer.

London brown stout

Export opportunities for the porter-brewers had been transformed by the opening of the London Dock system in the period 1802-5, especially for those who had access to the Thames. They could take a consignment by barge right into the West India or London Dock to be loaded on to a ship bound for different parts of the Empire. However, it was the ending of the East India Company's shipping monopoly in 1813, which finally opened up the trade routes to competition and lowered freight charges to the level necessary to export low-value products like beer. The consignments were usually in hogsheads, and although porter was exported, it was more usual to send the stronger version, brown stout.

Early exports to Australia were generally anonymous, such as that advertised for sale in 1809 as, 'capital Brown Stout of the best London brewery'.¹ It was not until the 1820s that consignments of London brown stout were actually named. The first was from the Anchor brewery, Southwark in 1820 when, 'Barclay & Co's. best brown stout in hogsheads' was available from warehouses in Sydney.² Others followed suit, the Red Lion brewery, St. Katherines and the Stag Brewery, Pimlico sent consignments from time to time. These breweries were all located on the Thames or near it. The porter breweries without good connections to the river were either very late in exporting, such the Black Eagle, Spitalfields or more commonly did not export beer at all, such as the White Hart, Wood Yard and Griffin breweries. This left the export market open to London's smaller porter breweries.

The most important of these was the Ship brewery in Fore Street, Limehouse, which had direct access to the

Thames, giving the proprietors the opportunity to expand their production by brewing beer for export. In 1785, the brewery had been ranked fifteenth in the league of porter-brewers.³ By 1829, it had risen to seventh position under the name of Taylor & Co.⁴ Much of this growth was attributable to the development of brown stout for export by John Vickris Taylor, a noted Quaker of the abolitionist movement.⁵ In 1806 he had become the sole proprietor of the Ship brewery after the death of his partner Truman Harford.⁶ Production increased under his management as he pursued an aggressive policy of buying the leases of public houses.⁷ In 1816 he took a new partner, Isaac Walker, yet another Quaker brewer, and began trading as Taylor & Co.⁸

In 1823, they expanded the brewery,⁹ which heralded an export drive to sell their beer throughout the British Empire, particularly in Australasia. The campaign began in Hobart with 'Taylors & Co.'s Brown Stout' being available from the brig *Fame*.¹⁰ Taylor concentrated his main effort in Sydney, where his exports continued for the next 40 years. Other London porter-brewers followed Taylor's lead but he seemed to be more successful than his competitors in establishing his name as a brand. His beer was not the cheapest but a discount was offered on large purchases, 'Any purchaser of Taylor's porter may be accommodated with 10 Hogsheads and upwards at £10 each'.¹¹ He also offered three months free credit on the various different styles of beer under his brand-name; porter, brown stout, double brown stout, real brown stout and London brown stout.¹²

Taylor proved that exporting porter could be a profitable business at that time. To demonstrate the extent of this, we shall follow the delivery of a consignment Taylor's porter, transported by the *Admiral Cockburn* from the London Dock in May 1822,¹³ to arrive in Sydney in January 1823. It was sold for £10 a hogshead,¹⁴ which is equivalent to a price of £6 13s. 4d for a barrel. At that time, the cost of raw materials was about 18s.¹⁵ and the freight charge was 10s. per barrel,¹⁶ which rendered a profit of £5 5s. 4d. It is reasonable to suppose the cask would not always be returned, which had a return value of 12s. 6d. in Sydney,¹⁷ thereby reducing the profit to £4 13s. per barrel.

We shall now compare that with another barrel of Taylor's porter making an almost identical journey by

dray to one of his public-houses, *The North Country Cat*, Wapping High street, close to the gates of the London Dock.¹⁸ The publican paid 40s. for this barrel, which obviously had the same cost of raw materials, but carried an additional cost of 10s. beer duty, amounting to 28s. in costs. This left a profit of 12s. in London compared £4 13s. in Sydney, a margin of £4 1s. that would easily have paid the shipping agent's commission and still have left a very healthy profit for Taylor & Co.

Taylor dominated the brown stout market throughout Australasia and the Far East. His customers in Australia were generally publicans in the bigger settlements, as in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart.¹⁹ In smaller towns like Perth, local stores bought a few hogsheads of his beer for bottling and sold it as, 'Taylor's brown stout in bottle'.²⁰ In Australia, the market was a free trade with no 'tied houses' to rely on. Major London porter-brewers had to face a robust competition from smaller brewers like Taylor, who had got there first and stayed there. While others came into the market and then left, he made sure that his product was available all the time, particularly in the bigger towns, not just intermittently available from the last ship to arrive from London. His success was founded on establishing the brand-name 'Taylor', on all his different grades of porter and stout.

Dublin stout

In 1833, James Farren, a brewer from Vauxhall, was questioned by the Select Committee on the Sale of Beer about the extent of ale imports to London from other parts of the kingdom. He replied, 'there is ale bought from almost every county in England, and a vast quantity of porter from Dublin'.²¹ London porter-brewers were now facing competition from imports of Irish porter which was a complete reversal of the flow of trade between the two countries.

London porter had been exported to Ireland from the mid-eighteenth century, rising from 5,000 barrels in 1741 reaching a peak of 125,000 barrels in 1793.²² However, this trade had reduced dramatically during the French wars due to wartime constraints and by 1815 it had been extinguished, which allowed some Irish brewers to replace the imported beer with their own versions of porter.

Several breweries began to follow the London pattern of growth with the acquisition of 'tied' public-houses. The largest, Beamish & Crawford, of Cork, had attained a high reputation for its porter, producing over 100,000 barrels by 1815.²³ The other significant Irish brewers were located in a small area of Dublin, Samuel Madder, Manders & Powell, Patrick Sweetman and Arthur Guinness.²⁴ All faced difficulties in the post-war depression after 1815 as domestic sales contracted, but it was Arthur Guinness who differentiated himself from the other Irish brewers with his decision to carve out a niche market for a high quality porter called stout, aimed at the English market.²⁵

The use of the term stout by the porter-brewers to describe the attributes of their product went back to the eighteenth century. However, in the early nineteenth century there was a definite trend towards giving stout an identity as a stronger version of porter where it was said in 1824, '*Brown Stout* is brewed in the same manner as porter but a larger proportion of the same ingredients must be used to give it full strength'.²⁶

In 1820, the chemist Frederick Accum gave a more precise definition in his investigation of porter adulteration, where he found samples of brown stout to be 6.5% alcohol compared with 4.5% for porter.²⁷ Thus, the identity of porter diversified into a family of beers, where the drinker could select from a range of porters of different strengths, often with a confusing nomenclature. Guinness offered a range of three qualities, porter, single or brown stout and double or extra stout.²⁸

Improvements in transport facilities made it possible to achieve a profit on a barrel of beer after it had crossed the Irish sea. This was due to the advent of steam packet ships which began to operate between Dublin, Liverpool, Cork and Bristol from 1822.²⁹ They reduced the crossing from two weeks to a day, but freight was still not cheap, the cost of transporting a barrel to Liverpool was 3s. 6d., and Bristol 5s. 8d.³⁰ Thus, Guinness restricted sales of porter to Liverpool, concentrating on the more profitable, higher grades of single and double stout for Bristol.

Guinness sent his first shipment to Bristol in 1824, consisting of 70 hogsheads of superior porter, yet another pseudonym for stout, advertised by his agent, William Smith who claimed that, 'it is most particularly adapted

to exportation and will stand any climate in wood or bottle'.³¹ In 1826, the duties on exports to Ireland were removed, which led to an increase in exports, so the return freight charges to England were reduced.³² Guinness saw this as an opportunity to increase his exports via Bristol from where he could extend his trade in the wealthier south.

Thus, he prioritised his operations in Bristol, opting for a sole agency by switching to an established local importer, Samuel Waring, a relationship which was to last over 20 years and was essential to the advancement of Guinness & Co. in Britain. Waring was described as the main consignee of Guinness's stout for the Southern, Midland and Western counties who appointed agencies within those areas.³³ Waring set up a London agency in partnership with Henry Tuckett at 79 Lower Thames Street in 1825, which was a vital step in the expansion of Arthur Guinness's empire.³⁴

Bristol merchants had been active in London since the opening of the Kennet and Avon canal in 1810. Waring's plan was to import Guinness's stout into Bristol and then ship it from the Avon, using this cheap narrow-gauge canal to transport it by horse-drawn barge to Queenhithe on the Thames waterfront.³⁵ Thus, regular consignments were sent via Bristol to the capital for the next 25 years.

In 1829, the London agency advertised 'Guinness' Dublin Stout - sold in bottle and wood by Waring, Tuckett and Foster'.³⁶ A new partner, Myles Foster, had joined the agency with important consequences for the development of Guinness's marketing strategy in Britain. Foster had already established an important trading relationship with Burton brewer, Michael Bass, by agreeing to bottle his beer as an experiment in 1829.³⁷ The successful outcome led to the establishment of M.B. Foster & Sons, probably the first independent bottling company, which was to make its fortune bottling the beer that was beginning to flood into London via the network of canals that connected it to the rest of the country.

Arthur Guinness's strategy was simple, to expand production of a superior form of porter called stout, for export to Britain, whilst remaining solely a brewer. He was to have no involvement with the drinker whether it was in the public-house, hotel or private home. The

agent was responsible for marketing the beer as Guinness's Dublin stout, extra stout or sometimes Imperial stout, but it was Arthur Guinness's name on the label. Beer was supplied in the barrel to the agent, who was expected to arrange for it to be bottled and distributed to the retailers, ensure casks were returned, collect debts, prevent fraud and adulteration in return for commission of 20% of retail sales.³⁸

The rapid growth of Guinness's trading empire did not go unnoticed in Parliament. In a debate on the repeal of the union with Ireland in 1834, Thomas Spring-Rice, MP for Cambridge, told the House of Commons that:

A vast exportation of Dublin porter is now going on to almost all parts of England, and it is with some difficulty that the demand can be supplied. Guinness led the way, and has been followed by almost all the other brewers.³⁹

The matter arose again in another debate on the Corn laws, when it was confirmed that the amount ale and porter imported from Ireland amounted 2,686,688 gallons in 1835.⁴⁰

Brewers in the provinces claimed that the growth in Irish imports was due to widespread evasion of malt duty in Ireland. Petitions were sent to Parliament complaining that Irish brewers of ale and porter were 'able to undersell the English brewers even in their own market'.⁴¹ Guinness was not named specifically, but the implications were clear when he was the only Irish brewer to be called to give evidence in a subsequent inquiry into the collection of malt duty in Ireland. A noted maltster, Patrick Stead, from Yarmouth gave the following evidence, 'Irish porter comes over without being subject to the duty on malt ... it comes into London in large quantities and is increasing daily.'⁴² Safe from the threat of civil action, Sir John Tyrrell was more explicit when he stated in the House of Commons, that, 'gentlemen who drank Guinness's stout were not perhaps aware ... no questions were asked as to whether the duty upon it was paid or not'.⁴³

Guinness's letter of response in *The Morning Chronicle* was unconvincing. He gave a qualified denial of Tyrrell's accusation, saying that 'no human being purchasing malt could ascertain whether it was or was not smuggled'.⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, Guinness profited from the chaotic state of the Irish excise system as did the other

Irish brewers, but unlike them, he chose not to undersell the English porter-brewers. His prices were consistently higher than other producers of bottled stout in London, 7s. a dozen compared with 5s. 6d. for a comparable stout from Barclay & Perkins. He raised the specification of his stout to a quality which the London porter-brewers could not reproduce economically.

The superiority of his product was acknowledged by most of his contemporaries, including the authoritative nineteenth-century brewing writer, William Tizard, who praised the most 'respectable' Irish brewers for the quality of their porter which was attributable to the use of 'perfectly malted corn of the finest description'.⁴⁵ Guinness was content to allow the other Irish brewers to compete in the cheaper market for porter in areas such as Liverpool and Manchester. He was intent on dominating the British market for bottled stout of at least XX quality, particularly in London.⁴⁶ Consequently, *The Post Office Trade Directory* for 1841 lists nine agents in London for Guinness, with just one each for his Irish competitors, Beamish & Crawford of Cork and Patrick Sweetman of Dublin.⁴⁷

The advent of the railways in the 1840s brought the same transport revolution to brewing as it did with so many industries. For Guinness, it meant that the central counties came within reach of his agency network, which was then based on railway towns rather than coastal and riverside towns.⁴⁸ However, this did not apply to London, because of Guinness's distinctive use of the transport system between England and Ireland, where he had found a niche which relied on his beer being carried as ballast. The predominant commercial flow was of manufactured goods from the western ports of England to the eastern coastal ports of Ireland, which meant that agricultural products like beef, cheese, butter and beer, could benefit from the low rates of carriage on returning ships that were half-empty. However, once landed in Britain, the beer had to compete with other goods bound for London and this was reflected in the freight charges of the railways, which were expensive.

The railways in London were also inconvenient in another respect. The termini from the north of the country were situated over a mile from central London, whilst Paddington, which served the west, was over three miles away. To transport heavy casks from Paddington to central London would have been an

expensive operation, compared with the ease of landing them at Queenhithe on London's waterfront. Despite the railways and the docks, London was still a city of river-side industry. Thus, when the Great Western Railway reached Bristol in 1841, the beer continued to be transported by canal until the 1850s, when steam packet freight charges were sufficiently reduced to allow direct transport from Dublin to London.⁴⁹

The London porter-brewers accepted Guinness's intrusion into their home market with resignation. They were probably too concerned with the competition from mild-ale at this time to worry about this relatively expensive product. They thought that could afford to ignore it, consumption was still rising and it did not impinge on their main trade, which was the mass production of cheap porter to supply their public-houses, which were increasingly 'tied' to the brewery. They preferred to leave domestic sales of bottled beer to wine merchants. In time many of them went on to produce stout for their own bottling departments, Whitbread was one of the first. However, by the time they had all realised that there was a solid middle-class market for a superior porter, sold as bottled stout, they had allowed Arthur Guinness to gain an unassailable lead to become Britain's first national branded beer.

Bottled beer and exports

Charles Knight, an advocate for London's industries, described Guinness as:

a respectable enough drink but when compared with the balmy character of bottled London Stout, it is like the shallow efforts of a professional joker compared with the full-bodied wit of Shakespeare ... London particular is the perfection of malt liquor.⁵⁰

Originally, the term 'London particular' had only been used in India to promote any consumable product from London, including beer. However, the use of the term in Britain was intended to give the product the cachet of superior quality needed to be successful in the adverse climate of India. An equivalent description today would be 'export quality'. However, this was widely regarded as 'puffing', and a blatant plagiarism of the term used for Madeira wine. It was criticised as being inspired by a bottle of London Particular Madeira, 'we can have

London particular japan tea-boards, London particular flannel petticoats, London particular cyder and London particular brown stout'.⁵¹

The large porter-brewers were simply not interested in bottling their own beer as it was too labour-intensive compared with the cask trade. They were content to sell beer to others for bottling. Some of the more established wine merchants, who bottled and exported beer from a specific brewery, were allowed to market the cheaper beers under their own name. In the 1840s, West-End wine merchants, G. & J. Blockey developed a flourishing trade for, 'Nourishing London Stout' in bottles.⁵² However, in a seminal court case on beer trade marks, it was revealed that the beer actually came from Truman, Hanbury & Buxton.⁵³ Previously, in common with the other major porter-brewers, they sold beer in casks for others to bottle, but it was always under their own name. Now, Truman & Co. had allowed Blockey & Co. to develop a substantial market for bottled stout, with no acknowledgement of its true origin. Truman & Co. had been interested in bottling their own beer since 1838,⁵⁴ but the bottling plant was delayed for years, due to disunity in the boardroom.⁵⁵ This reveals how the uncoordinated management of the larger breweries gave low priority to new ideas like the sale of bottled beer, allowing smaller concerns to gain a foothold in the market.

As noted previously, bottled ales had been available in London since the beginning of the eighteenth century, but porter was generally considered too low in value to be worth bottling until the early nineteenth century. Bottling beer at that time was no more than a cottage industry, which was the province of the wine merchants who began to advertise bottled beer in magazines. In 1806, a 'purveyor of bottled Porter and Ales recommended his much admired bottled Ales and Brown Stout (or Porter) for private families'.⁵⁶ The beer was almost certainly from a small brewery as there was no indication of its origin, which was typical of such advertisements at that time.

The adulteration scandals which led to the public inquiry into the porter-brewers in 1818, drove the increased demand for bottled beer. This can be followed by the growing number of porter merchants listed in London trade directories. In 1808, there were 15,⁵⁷ which increased to 21 by 1823;⁵⁸ in 1841 they num-

bered 70.⁵⁹ However, glass bottles were expensive until Henry Ricket of Bristol patented his bottle-moulding apparatus in 1822, which speeded up production and reduced prices.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it allowed bottles to be produced to a uniform size and cylindrical shape that was straight-sided. This was invaluable in packaging for general distribution, but particularly for stowage in ships and the development of an export trade in bottled beer.

There was an early association between bottling and exporting beer, which is confirmed by the fact that it was usually the riverside breweries that were first to bottle their own beer. In 1807, John Walsby at the Imperial brewery, Battersea, offered the public, 'genuine beer in bottles as well as casks, now bottling off a very large quantity of Ales and Porter'.⁶¹ He also exported to the East and West Indies, where his beers, 'would stand the test of any climate'.⁶² The Dolphin brewery in Broad Street, Ratcliff was another brewery with direct access to the Thames, where Thomas and John Masterman, advertised bottled porter for export.⁶³ They also offered free delivery in town for orders of over two dozen bottles, as the 'inventors, patentees and manufacturers of bottling and corking machines'.⁶⁴

In 1826, the Masterman brothers had invented a machine for, 'filling several bottles with beer at one time'.⁶⁵ They also patented its necessary companion, a machine which compressed the cork and inserted it into the neck of the bottle with a metal plunger. This improvement was certainly overdue, as it was said that the previous method of compressing the corks was by, 'biting them'.⁶⁶ Together, these inventions represented an important advance in the development of bottled beer, which allowed a degree of mechanisation of the bottling process and the development of firms specialising in bottling beer. The casks of beer were brought to the bottling plant, laid on their side to settle before they were tapped. A siphon drew the beer into a manifold with six taps, which delivered the beer into bottles. As each bottle filled it was replaced by another from the nimble fingers of a worker, usually a boy, who then passed it on to a 'stout lad' operating the corking machine.⁶⁷ In this continuous operation it was possible to bottle 1,200 bottles an hour.⁶⁸

This exemplifies the industrialisation process which was taking place in places like Ratcliff in the East End,

the new industrial quarter of London which was developing around the Dock system. Brewers were able to farm out this specialised work out to subsidiary concerns which eventually became a separate trade. Leonard Schwarz described this process as 'the division of labour practised over a locality, where individual firms did not need to develop expensive specialisms'.⁶⁹ Ratcliff was also the centre of the green glass bottle industry in London providing cheaper bottles than Bristol, the country's main centre of glass production.⁷⁰ Thus, a cluster of small breweries in the East End could develop a symbiotic relationship with city wine merchants like Robert Byass of Fenchurch Street and John Hibbert of Old Jewry. Both ran their bottling operations from Thames-side locations, Byass at Limehouse and Hibbert at Wapping. From these small beginnings, both of these firms went on to become international bottling companies by the late nineteenth century.⁷¹

Despite the cost of glass bottles and the freight, it was possible to gain a good profit from exporting bottled beer. Quart bottles were available in London for 20s. a gross.⁷² Consignments of beer in quart bottles were packed in cases, called casks or tierces, in 3, 4 or 6 dozen bottles per case, which were calculated at 24 dozen per ton for freight charges.⁷³ This resulted in a freight charge of 3s. 4d. per dozen⁷⁴ which, when added to 1s. 6d. for raw materials and 1s. 8d. for bottles, amounted to 6s. 6d. per dozen. An early consignment of bottled beer was loaded on to the brig *Jessie* in the West India Dock, which sailed for Hobart in August 1820. It arrived in Sydney in May 1821, when brown stout in bottles was sold off the ship for 22s. per dozen, giving a massive profit of 15s. 6d. a dozen or £9 6s. a barrel.⁷⁵ However, it is important to remember that these huge profits had to pay for the bottler's fees and the inevitable losses from breakage and pilfering. Furthermore, these high prices in Sydney caused much complaint and ensured that the trade remained limited until prices were reduced.

Edwin Abbott at the Sun brewery, 200 High St., Wapping, was a pioneer in the export of bottled beer in the early 1820s. The capacity of the brewery was not large, with a mash tun capacity of only 40 quarters, but it fronted onto the river Thames, 'rendering the establishment complete for supplying shipping'.⁷⁶ The close proximity of the new London Dock gave

this small brewery an opportunity to compete with bigger rivals by brewing beer for export in bottles. This was executed by John Hibbert's bottling plant, a few yards down the road at 215 Wapping High Street.⁷⁷ Consignments were then exported to Sydney where they sold as Abbott's bottled pale ale, 14s. per dozen.⁷⁸ However, the cheaper brown stout was sold as Hibbert's double brown stout, £6 6s. per dozen,⁷⁹ despite the fact that Hibbert & Co. were not brewers.

On 15 May 1822, the London barque *Admiral Cockburn* sailed from the London Dock to arrive in Sydney on 9 January 1823 with, 'a few dozen of Abbott's pale ale and brown stout in bottles'.⁸⁰ Soon, this trickle from the Sun brewery developed into an eclectic range of beer, including porter, brown stout, pale ale and strong ale which were exported to Australia and the Far East throughout the 1820s. This was only made possible by the flexibility of a small brewery which did not have a large stable of public-houses to supply.

By 1832, he had settled on pale ale as his main product, offering, 'Abbott's Pale Ale, in Bottle, in casks of 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 dozens each'.⁸¹ Once beer is in a bottle it has an identity, which is projected towards the individual consumer directly. Those who exported beer in hogsheads for bottling locally, risked the fraudulent substitution of cheaper beer. Abbott, by taking control of the whole process of brewing, bottling and shipping in London, had ensured that his brand name was not subject to the vagaries of colonial agencies. He proved that a concentrated presence in a particular market could establish a name even in the face of competition from larger breweries.

At that time, Abbott's main competition was from Hodgson & Co. of the Bow brewery, which had been exporting pale ale to India for 60 years.⁸² Hodgson, having established a monopoly of the pale ale market in India was now intent on dominating the rest of the colonial market throughout the Far East. Thus, in 1824, the editor of *The Singapore Chronicle* welcomed fresh supplies of beer from Abbott which were as good as those from Hodgson, stating:

That is as it ought to be; for monopoly of any sort is injurious to the consumer and the public. We mean no disparagement to Mr. Hodgson, and should be truly sorry if he were to brew

worse ale or less quantity of it than at present, which amounts to 15,000 barrels a year.⁸³

Small communities like Singapore were vulnerable to monopolistic suppliers who could command extortionate prices and Hodgson was a master of that art.

The Bow brewery and Hodgson's Pale Ale

The Bow Brewery stood on the banks of the River Lea on the eastern periphery of London at Bow-bridge. This was an ideal location to supply beer to the East India Company's fleet, which lay at their Thames anchorage at Blackwall, two miles down the river Lea. The story of the brewery began in the early eighteenth century with Ambrose Page, one of the disgraced directors of the South Sea Company's 'Bubble' of 1720. Page was also a brewer, who had been in partnership with George Sibley at Bow since 1707.⁸⁴

In 1735 Page took a lease of five years on a brewhouse and malthouse which the plan shows to be on the north side of the great Essex road.⁸⁵ Subsequently, he relinquished his partnership with brewer John Childe and moved to Enfield where he died round 1743.⁸⁶ In 1753 his widow leased the site to George Hodgson, Edward Gordon and Robert Parker, brewers of Bow, which was described as, 'The Five Bells in Four Mill Street, Bromley St. Leonard, with a garden, yard, and wharf at the bottom thereof next Bow River'.⁸⁷ Thus, Hodgson & Co., who were already brewers in the brew house and malthouse on north side of the road to Bow Bridge now had a wharf south of Bow Bridge on the River Lea, and a new brewing dynasty had begun.

George Hodgson was a minor porter-brewer, producing 16,384 barrels in 1787, rated 22nd out of the first 24 London brewers.⁸⁸ (See Table 6) He also brewed a specific type of beer for export to India, using a pale malt and plenty of hops.⁸⁹ The preservative qualities of pale malt were well known and described by the leading brewing writer of the time, Michael Combrune: 'liquors brewed from very pale malts, preserve themselves for a long time'.⁹⁰ Combrune had also stated that pale malt-produced beers 'are better to allay thirst'.⁹¹ The preservative qualities of hops were equally well known, but Hodgson's innovation was to put additional dry hops in the barrel of finished beer

to improve the beer's chances of surviving the long voyage to India.⁹²

The combination of pale malt with an exceptionally high proportion of hops was intended to stabilise the beer against the constant rocking motion in the ship's hold during the long voyage to India. However, it also produced a distinctive bitter taste which proved to be a thirst-quenching drink, ideally suited for the Indian tropical climate. The use of pale malt caused the clear colour of the beer and also gave higher attenuation rates, whereby more of the saccharine matter in the malt was available for conversion to alcohol. The preservative qualities of the hop were exploited fully by using only top quality varieties such as those from Farnham, at the rate of 22lbs. per quarter of malt.⁹³ This included the process of 'dry hopping' where additional hops were added to the barrel.⁹⁴ This was a massive increase in the hopping rate for porter, which was 12-14 lbs per quarter, recommended 1762 by Michael Combrune, the acknowledged expert of eighteenth-century brewing.⁹⁵

By 1812, Hodgson was now 15th in the league of porter-brewers, producing 24,142 barrels of porter,⁹⁵ which was still a modest amount compared with the other porter-brewers. However these figures are misleading as Hodgson's exports did not pay beer duty and were therefore not included in the figures. Hodgson's Pale Ale had started as a sideline for the brewery but it was eventually to become the mainstay of their production as demand for this product began to grow in early nineteenth-century India.

The Bow brewery, complete with wharf, was ideally placed to transport the hogsheads of beer two miles down the river Lea by barge to the East India Company's shipyard at Blackwall. It was the prerogative of East India Company ship captains to carry private trade, which was lucrative enough to make them as wealthy as the directors and enable their retirement after two or three voyages.⁹⁷ This trade was known as their 'investment', which was free of freight charges up to 25 tons on the outward journey and 15 tons homeward.⁹⁸ Much of this allowance was taken up with consumables of every kind to satisfy the nostalgic palates of the expatriate community of East India Company employees in India, particularly beer. Hodgson allowed ship's officers up to 18 month's credit for the purchase of his pale ale which made up

a large part of their investment.⁹⁹ The link between the 'Honourable John Company' and the Bow brewery was reflected in the name of its tap-house, *The Bombay Grab*, after a 28 gun ship of the East India Company's marine service.¹⁰⁰

Hodgson's dominance in the provision of beer to the East India Company can be demonstrated by examining their system of communication with flags from ship to shore for the acquisition of stores. In 1818, the Company adopted the 'improved system of telegraphic communication', which designated codes for ordering stores including beer. There were codes for ordering generic types of beer, small beer, strong beer or ale, but additionally there was a specific code reserved for ordering 'Hodgson's Pale Ale' by name,¹⁰¹ demonstrating the importance of this product to the East India Company.

Although not alone in the export of beer to India, Hodgson's Pale Ale was singular in being identified by name. The first advertisement appeared in the *Calcutta Gazette* as early as 19 September 1793 as part of the private trade from the East Indiaman, *Britannia*,¹⁰² and again in November when Captain Browne of the *Hillsborough* advertised, 'Pale ale and porter in hogsheads from Hodgson'.¹⁰³ Thus, as the fleet of East Indiamen arrived each autumn the advertisements continued to appear. In 1794, ships *Contractor*, *General Elliot*, *Rockingham*, *Rose*, *Valentine*, *Lord Hawkesbury* and *General Goddard* variously offered for sale, 'Hodgson's Pale Ale, table ale and porter in butts and hogsheads'.¹⁰⁴ Some preferred to sell the beer personally, as the captain of the *Melville Castle* advertised, 'investment of Captain Lambe ... just landed and now exposed for sale for READY MONEY only, beer from Hodgson'.¹⁰⁵

It would appear that when ships were due to return to Britain any unsold hogsheads of beer were sold to one of the various agencies such as the General Commission Warehouse who would decant the ale into bottles and sell 'fresh beer and porter from Hodgson 10 rupees per dozen'.¹⁰⁶ The East India Company's officers' decision to use Hodgson's name in inviting buyers seems to have been of their own volition, there being no evidence of any active promotion of the name from the Bow Brewery at that time.

Mark Hodgson died in August 1810 before either of his sons had attained 21 years which meant, according to

his will of 1809, that the brewery would be run by his trustees and executors. The trust consisted of a London banker, David Remington and his friend and fellow brewer, Nicholas Charrington the elder, of Charrington & Co., Mile End.¹⁰⁷ The will dictated that the trustees were to continue running the business until both George and Frederick had attained their majority, when the business was to be handed over to them as joint owners. However, the eldest son George died in 1816 aged 23,¹⁰⁸ leaving Frederick under the age of majority by two months and ineligible to run the brewery independently of the trust. The trust continued to run the brewery for the next three years until 1819,¹⁰⁹ way past Frederick's age of majority which is unexplained.

However, this period, nine years in total, proved to be a time of growing prosperity for the company. During this period the trust had followed the specific instructions in Mark Hodgson's will, which was, 'to purchase public-houses in proper situations to enlarge the said trade until my said two sons shall become invited to the said business'.¹¹⁰ By 1819, the end of the trust's period of management, the brewery had acquired the freehold or leasehold of at least 20 public-houses.¹¹¹ The beer sold in these public-house would not have been pale ale but porter, reinforcing the view that the export trade was still secondary to the main business of brewing porter for distribution over a local area, usually in tied-houses.

Throughout this time, the Bow Brewery had remained the largest exporter of pale ale to India. The trust did not relinquish control until 1819, when Mark Hodgson's only surviving son Frederick took control.¹¹² Having been excluded from the management of the brewery until the age of majority, Frederick had set about developing his own career. He soon demonstrated leanings towards financial and commercial ventures, setting up as a stockbroker in Throgmorton Street, as early as 1817.¹¹³ He also entered into a partnership with Thomas Drane and Alfred Batson who were 'ale and porter merchants' at the Limehouse brewery, Commercial Road, Limehouse.¹¹⁴ Frederick Hodgson was more of an entrepreneur than he was a brewer. On taking control at the Bow Brewery in 1819, Hodgson installed Drane as the manager, while he pursued his political career as the MP for Barnstaple, Devon.

From about 1815, demand for Hodgson's Pale Ale for the Indian market had been steadily increasing. In order

to raise production to meet this growing market Hodgson enlarged the brewery in 1821.¹¹⁵ In 1824, Hodgson changed his trading methods. Traditionally, the commanders of East Indiamen were his best customers, his beer being one of their principal investments, for which he allowed them credit for up to 18 months. Hodgson altered this arrangement, with all future sales to be for cash only, regardless of financial status, whilst raising his prices at the same time.¹¹⁶ Hodgson's intention was to concentrate on the production of pale ale for export and to ship consignments abroad himself, taking advantage of the reduced freight charges and his close proximity to the new London dock system.

After the removal of the East India Company's shipping monopoly in 1813 many ship-owners entered the Indian trade and by the early 1820s freight charges fell dramatically.¹¹⁷ This brought new opportunities for entrepreneurs to export small consignments from the West India Dock, which had been made more accessible by the new Commercial Road built in 1803. Batson and Drane had continued the business in Commercial Road as, 'ale,porter and wine merchants',¹¹⁸ until 1822, when the partnership was dissolved.¹¹⁹ Drane, who was an experienced brewer from Limehouse,¹²⁰ became Hodgson's full-time managing partner at the Bow brewery, whilst Batson continued to run the business alone.¹²¹

In 1823, Batson bought new premises in Limehouse Causeway, about 250 yards from the entrance to the West India Dock, where he became one of the first concerns dedicated to the export of bottled beer.¹²² Beer was brought by barge from the Bow brewery in casks, via the Limehouse Cut, to Batson's premises in Commercial Road, Poplar, where he was listed as 'bottled porter merchant'.¹²³ Being adjacent to the canal, casks could be unloaded and transferred to his premises in Limehouse Causeway, where it was bottled and shipped to the colonies from the London or West India Dock.

One of the first consignments to be shipped in bottles was on the *Princess Charlotte*, which sailed from the London Dock to arrive in Sydney in January 1824 with, 'Hodgsons exportation brown stout and pale ale in hogsheads and tierces of 6 doz. each'.¹²⁴ Hodgson and Drane continued to brew porter and stout to supply their chain of public-houses, which they were content

for Batson to bottle and export under his own name. Thus, 'Batson's Bottled Stout and Hodgson's Ale in 7 doz. Tierces', arrived on the *Toward Castle* to Hobart in 1826.¹²⁵ When it came to bottled pale ale, Hodgson was well aware of the status of his brand as it was always sold under his own name. Once in a bottle, a beer has identity and Hodgson was intent on maintaining the integrity of his product by using a single, trusted agent to distribute bottled beer abroad.

Hodgson had the intelligence to grasp the new opportunities offered by the ending of the East India Company's monopoly of shipping to the East, but he was no free-trader. Like any other porter-brewer he sought to protect his trade by any means possible. Once the new brewery was operational, Hodgson sought to eliminate competition from the Indian market. It was later said that he had set out to 'monopolise the trade'.¹²⁶ When he heard of a speculative shipment from another brewer, he sent large consignments to flood the market and reduce prices. This was usually successful in deterring a second attempt from the rival brewer who had made considerable losses on the venture. On the succeeding year, Hodgson had the market to himself once again and reduced the supply causing prices to rise to as much as 200 rupees a hogshead, thus recouping the losses of the previous year.¹²⁷

Other brewers had tried to break into the market, with little success. John Walsby of the Imperial brewery in Battersea, specialised in the supply of beers, which, 'when brewed for exportation will stand the test of any climate, and are well known in the East and West Indies'.¹²⁸ However, Walsby had ceased brewing ale for the Indian market by 1817, reverting to the production of porter for private families.¹²⁹ A more immediate threat to Hodgson's dominant position emanated from the Imperial brewery of Bromley-by-Bow, less than a mile away from the Bow brewery on the river Lea. The proprietor, William Brown, ran a series of advertisements in *The Times* from 1817 to 1818, offering 'liberal terms for Pale Ale to merchants and captains for the East India and West India climate'.¹³⁰ However, Brown could not compete successfully with Hodgson, and by 1820 he was declared bankrupt.¹³¹

Thus, in a short time Hodgson had managed to control the market for pale ale in the Indian market by eliminating competition. This caused widespread resentment

within the East India Company and also with their commission agents in Calcutta, such as Tulloch & Co. They complained of a growing market for beer being restrained by the high prices, 'which had been caused entirely by the irregularity of supply, and the plans laid down by Hodgson and some of his moneyed neighbours to keep all others out of the market'.¹³² It also attracted criticism from other London brewers, who complained of Hodgson becoming, 'his own shipper, merchant and retailer'.¹³³ Eventually, there was a collective effort to, 'abolish the odious monopoly which checks the trade in beer',¹³⁴ by inducing other brewers to export pale ale to India. However, these brewers were not from London, but from Britain's first brewing town, Burton-on-Trent.

Burton-on-Trent and Indian Pale Ale

An apocryphal account of transactions between brewers from Burton-on-Trent and the East India Company, written 30 years later, has all the attributes of a morality play where Hodgson was cast as the villain. The story tells of a meeting between the director of the East India Company, Campbell Marjoribanks, and Samuel Allsopp, a prominent brewer from Burton-on-Trent. Marjoribanks wanted to know if Hodgson's Pale Ale could be duplicated. On tasting it, Allsopp is reputed to have said that he could go further and improve on it.¹³⁵ He was then said to have returned to his brewery with a sample of Hodgson's beer, where his head brewer successfully reproduced it 'in a teapot'.¹³⁶

The history of brewing is littered with such heroic accounts of invention and discoveries of new beers, but the implausibility of this one is suggested when exactly the same story was attributed to Allsopp's arch-rival Michael Bass, another Burton brewer.¹³⁷ The whole story was put into perspective by Charles Dickens in his publication, *Household Words*, where he describes the same story, except that the East Indian director meets neither Allsopp nor Bass, but that well-known personification of the brewing trade, Sir John Barleycorn.¹³⁸ Dickens was reminding the public of the brewers' tendency towards 'puffing', and Allsopp and Bass were evidently masters of that art.

However, there are elements of the story that were true. Burton brewers had been exploiting a similar niche in the market as Hodgson, by exporting their beer from

Hull to Russia as a return cargo for goods from the Baltic. When the Tsar banned that trade, they were forced to look for alternative markets.¹³⁹ Allsopp led the field in attempts to copy Hodgson's Pale Ale and the first shipments were sent in 1822. Hodgson responded by increasing supplies to lower the price and drive out this new competition. He doubled his exports in 1822 to 6,181 hogsheads and again in 1823 to 11,481 hogsheads, which flooded the market.¹⁴⁰

The Burton brewers faced a difficult task to reproduce the taste of Hodgson's Pale Ale and progress was slow, but from the beginning they entered into a dialogue with agency houses. Allsopp's first consignment in 1822 had disappointing results. The agency house of Mathew Gisborne wrote in July 1823 asking for permission to bottle the beer on its arrival, to improve its appearance.¹⁴¹ In 1824 another Calcutta merchant, J. Bailton, advised that the beer should be more bitter, saying, 'it wanted hop and required less malt'.¹⁴² The use of additional hops had been the basis of the success of Hodgson's Pale Ale since the 1780s and with careful empirical changes Allsopp was reproducing the taste in his own beer. By 1826, Allsopp's beer was quoted in the *Calcutta Weekly* at the same price as that of Hodgson's.¹⁴³ Other major brewers now entered the market including Bass & Ratcliff of Burton, Ind & Smith of Romford and Charringtons of Mile End.¹⁴⁴

The interaction between the Burton brewers and their agents in Calcutta are early indications of a change in brewers' attitudes towards marketing. Hitherto, brewers in Britain restrained competition within their locality by the process of 'tying' a public house to the brewery. In India the situation was different, where a growing market offered opportunities to new entrants to the export trade. However, they had to overcome the prejudice against newcomers; when it came to reputation, Hodgson's beer had a 60 year start. The solution was in careful attention to detail in the brewing process, but equally important was the need to publicise their product at every opportunity.

In 1822 Frederick Hodgson had left the family home at Bromley-by-Bow to a town address in St. James's Place in Westminster.¹⁴⁵ At that time he seemed more interested in his career as a politician than that of a brewer when he was elected as member of parliament for Barnstaple in 1824 with the notable achievement of

being away in France for the whole of the campaign.¹⁴⁶ Hodgson remained the member for Barnstaple for most of the next 25 years. He was known in parliamentary circles as, 'Brown Stout, for his size and complexion and as the owner of the famous brewery at Bow, whence came Hodgson's India Pale Ale'.¹⁴⁷ In 1831, he married and set up his new family home at Clarence Lodge, Roehampton.¹⁴⁸ This house had previously been purchased by the future King William IV in 1790 for £12,000 which gives a clear indication of Hodgson's wealth at that time.¹⁴⁹

There is little doubt that once a brewery had been established the proprietor had free time to pursue other interests. Many other brewers pursued a similar political career in Parliament to that of Hodgson, but they managed to keep a watchful eye on their business interests. Hodgson however, made little effort to improve his beer while others sought to wrest the monopoly of the Indian market from him. It would seem that it could have certainly benefited from some improvement. When staff at George & Co.'s Bristol porter brewery sampled Hodgson's Pale Ale in order to copy it in 1828, they described it as 'thick and muddy with a rank bitter flavour'. After an unsuccessful shipment to Calcutta they decided to brew it a paler colour to make it as 'similar to that of Allsopp's ale as possible'.¹⁵⁰

Thus, Allsopp, originally the imitator, was now setting the standard for the Indian market for pale ale. The reason for that lay in an inherent advantage for the brewers from Burton-on-Trent. This was the water supply, which was hard and contained natural sulphates and calcium from gypsum, unlike the soft well-water available to Hodgson. This gave a sharper bitter taste and displayed a sparkling clarity in the bottle. However, the development of more active strains of yeast in the Burton 'union' system of fermentation were equally important in producing a fully attenuated strong beer with little residual sugar, giving a dryness of taste that was compatible with a bitter beer.¹⁵¹ The Burton brewers' gradual erosion of Hodgson's lead gave them the incentive to seek constant improvement in brewing techniques, whilst Hodgson seems to have been complacent in comparison.

By 1832 the export of beer to Bengal was estimated to be 12,000 barrels, with Hodgson producing 3,636, Bass

3,193 and Allsopp 1,404.¹⁵² This was a remarkable achievement by the Burton brewers who had to overcome the inherent advantage of Hodgson's proximity to the London docks; it was a slow and laborious journey by barge from Burton to London via the Grand Union canal. An even greater feat was to overtake Hodgson's other advantage, which was his name. It was said by Messrs Tulloch & Co. of Calcutta, 'Another thing in Hodgson's favour was the high repute in which his name stood for beer; no other of good quality was bought by retailers'.¹⁵³ Hodgson's Pale Ale had achieved an iconic status in India as one of the earliest brand-names in bottled beer which would be envied today.

In India, Hodgson's Pale Ale was often shortened to *Hodson's*. In some circles, to pronounce the 'g' was regarded as a social gaffe and a clear indication of recent arrival to the colonies. Thus, *Hodson's* became a brand-name in itself, associated with Anglo-Indian life, which was one of respectability punctuated with danger, incorporated into stories for the young adventurer. A favourite theme was that of narrow escapes from death while hunting man-eating tigers. In these stories, the reader was initiated into the Anglo-Indian vocabulary as in *Rambles along the Styx*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Leach, who described his lifestyle in India as, 'living in *bungalows*, drinking therein, sundry bottles of Hodson's pale ale; shooting at everything from tigers, boa-constrictors to buffalo'.¹⁵⁴

These exotic descriptions were designed to catch the British reader's imagination, where accounts of hunting tigers and panthers from the back of an elephant were followed by *tiffin*, which consisted of, 'cold buffalo hump and Hodson's ale'.¹⁵⁵ In yet another account, the hero was seen to renounce a vacuous existence by saying, 'for three years I had nothing but dancing girls, curry and Hodson's pale ale, I got sick of it sir. I sent home for some Hobbes, Voltaire and Descartes'.¹⁵⁶

Hodgson merely described his beer as Hodgson's Pale Ale, knowing that he could be assured of its reputation as *Hodson's* followed the trade routes of the world to become a cultural icon of the growing British Empire. William Thackeray in his entertaining record of eastern travel, *Mr Michael Angelo Titmarsh's journey from Cornhill to Cairo*, had chronicled his joy at the arrival in Jerusalem, 'of a camel-load of Hodsons from Beyrout'.¹⁵⁷ Some wrote in poetic terms to describe the

drought conditions on the northern frontier of India 'that every heart was sickened when the usual supply of the beverage, which will immortalize the name of Hodgson, had not been received'.¹⁵⁸

Although India was the main destination for the beer, it could be found wherever British settlements existed. A more prosaic description from Canada spoke of, 'pigeon pie washed down with Hodgson's Pale Ale'.¹⁵⁹ Similar accounts from Burma, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were a constant reminder to the British public of his product. A correspondent from Argentina spoke of his 'one luxury being a consignment of Hodgson's Pale Ale',¹⁶⁰ whilst in Batavia, Sherry and Madeira were considered, 'too heating for the climate, yet they were compensated for in copious draughts of Hodgson's Pale Ale during dinner'.¹⁶¹

Hodgson did not try to compete with colonial beer on price, which was obviously much cheaper but far inferior. In Sydney, there were complaints that price of Hodgson's Pale Ale was so expensive that it would lead to an increase in the use of spirits because the 'Colonial beer was not fit to drink'.¹⁶² It was also more expensive than other bottled beer from Britain when, 'Superior English Bottled Ale' was advertised for sale as at 10s. per dozen,¹⁶³ much cheaper than, 'Hodsons pale ale at 13s. 6d. a dozen, imported from the ship *Louisa*'.¹⁶⁴ Clearly, the name *Hodsons* had acquired a reputation for quality which could command a higher price than its rivals throughout the British Empire. It was also one of Britain's earliest examples of a brand-name for beer.

Paradoxically, the one place you would not find *Hodsons* for sale, was in Britain; it was for export only, as described in the following contemporary poem:

Like Hodson's bitter ale, whose destination ...
Is not for home *consumpt*, but exportation'.¹⁶⁵

However, this was to change. In 1866, the manager of the Black Eagle brewery, Alexander Fraser, complained that London brewers' beer sales were static in the face of an influx of beer from Burton-on-Trent. He stated that this particular beer had been originally manufactured for the Indian market but had since been introduced to the London market, where, 'the taste of the metropolis altered to this bitter beer. The proprietors of the Bow Brewery were the people who first intro-

duced the article'.¹⁶⁶ This brief statement encompasses the development of bitter beer in Britain, beginning with India Pale Ale which had originated with Hodsons at the Bow Brewery. In the early 1830s, the Burton brewers had begun to produce a distinctive form of their pale ale for British consumption, which was marketed through a network of agencies as India Pale Ale (hereafter IPA).¹⁶⁷

Marketing the IPA brand in Britain

Allsopp had been the first to develop the agency system in India in 1830,¹⁶⁸ before concentrating the major British cities, including London. Bass had opened his London store at Great Tower Street in 1830 and Allsopp had a similar facility at Upper Thames Street.¹⁶⁹ Both were near the waterfront, which reflected their continuing need for water transport via the Grand Union canal, which was slow and insecure.¹⁷⁰ This made IPA relatively expensive but they were aiming at the emerging lower-middle class of shop-workers and clerks in London, who could afford to pay more.¹⁷¹

The Burton brewers gradually began to increase their share of the colonial market. In 1834, Hodgson's exports to Bengal fell to 1,604 barrels, behind 2,861 from Allsopp and 3,518 from Bass.¹⁷² (See Table 10) Hodgson decided to use a more modern method of marketing to introduce his product into Britain. He used London newspapers to place advertisements, such as the following in the *Times* in 1833:

The nobility and gentry (especially those from India) are respectfully reminded that they may be supplied with Hodgson & Co.'s Bottled Pale Ale by Alfred Batson of Limehouse, ... the only exporter of the above bottled ale.¹⁷³

Formal advertisements in newspapers or magazines by a major brewer was virtually unknown at that time. Having lost his supremacy of the Indian market Hodgson was making a bid to corner the growing demand for IPA in the home market. He was also identifying an attribute of his beer that was particularly appreciated by the upper classes who had connections with the British Empire. He was introducing an element of fashion whereby it was suggested that only the sophisticated palate of a gentleman that could appreciate the subtle astringency of a bitter beer. This was in response to the aggressive marketing techniques of the

Burton brewers who were now encroaching on Hodgson's home territory in London by the use of agents to distribute their products.

Any attempt to find a market for Hodgson's Pale Ale in Britain would have to begin in London, the only centre with a significant population of Anglo-Indians. The Oriental Club of Hanover Square had been set up in 1824 as an exclusive haven for returning servants of the East India Company, membership was restricted to those who had resided in India or the Cape of Good Hope.¹⁷⁴ The editor of *The Court Journal*, described it as the 'Mulligatawney Club', where the members could, 'order mulligatawney soup and Pillau for dinner, washed down with Hodgson's Pale Ale and a bottle of claret.'¹⁷⁵

This small but influential Anglo-Indian elite became established in London society bringing acquired tastes from the East. Some complained about the authenticity of attempts to reproduce a curry in England as, 'a hash flavoured with turmeric and cayenne'.¹⁷⁶ This was probably true. Sales of turmeric, the main ingredient in English curries, had increased threefold between 1820 and 1840.¹⁷⁷ They also drew unfavourable comparisons with the drinks that were manufactured for the Indian market, criticising pale ale in particular, saying, 'great are the lamentations over Hodson's pale ale, with which the home-brewed may not compare'.¹⁷⁸ This adverse comment probably reflected the fact that the IPA that Hodgson had begun to produce for the home market was inferior to the export brand. Export beer for India was not taxed, so there was a need to reduce costs to keep the price down in Britain by reducing the hop content.

Hodgson was a pioneer in marketing beer with the use of newspaper advertising. He placed advertisements outside London, beginning in Portsmouth and Southampton aimed at the, 'officers of the Navy, Army and Gentlemen, for exportation or home consumption'.¹⁷⁹ In 1835, he advertised in Liverpool, introducing a new format, 'Hodgson & Co.'s East India Pale Ale ... has a fine tonic quality, and is consequently much recommended by the faculty even to invalids.¹⁸⁰ This was another important development in marketing IPA, which now carried a new message that this beer was no longer solely for the Indian market. Its reputation was built on its medicinal properties based on its ability to combat the exhaustion generated by the

Indian climate, where it was said to be, ‘impossible to contemplate lunch without prefacing it with bitter beer’.¹⁸¹

In 1839 the Burton brewers acted collectively to petition Parliament for the Manchester and Birmingham Extension Railway Bill to be passed, complaining that their large and growing trade with London, Manchester and Liverpool, ‘in an article which is exposed to incessant plunder and adulteration by canal conveyance’.¹⁸² The bill was passed, Burton-on-Trent was connected to the rail network and production began to increase dramatically.

In contrast, Hodgson’s production began a long slope of decline. In 1838, the imports of beer to Bengal were about 19,000 barrels, which included, 7,325 from Bass, 3,738 from Allsopp and 1,420 from Hodgson.¹⁸³ (See Table 10) This was reflected in the malt consumption of the Bow brewery, which fell from 4,206 quarters in 1831 to 1,790 quarters in 1838.¹⁸⁴ (See Table 9) This appears to have been a critical time for Hodgson. His long-standing partner Thomas Drane left the partnership and removed to live in retirement in Babbacombe in Devon in 1837.¹⁸⁵ Hodgson also parted with his long-standing associate and sole agent, Alfred Batson in late 1837,¹⁸⁶ who remained in business until 1840 when he retired from the trade.¹⁸⁷

Hodgson’s nearest competitor, Edwin Abbott at the Sun brewery, Wapping, had continued to produce pale ale for the Australian market throughout the 1820s. In 1836, he began to market his beer as East India Ale in Australia,¹⁸⁸ which was more successful and his production quadrupled.¹⁸⁹ In 1838, it was announced in *The Times*, ‘Hodgsons East India pale ale in bottles for home consumption is now only available from the depot at Sun brewery Wapping’.¹⁹⁰ In the time-honoured fashion of the brewing industry, Hodgson had decided to merge with the competition.

The Sun brewery with its riverside frontage to the Thames offered good shipping facilities to export the beer to India via the London Docks.¹⁹¹ It was to be used for bottling, providing an ideal adjunct to the Bow brewery which concentrated on the actual brewing.¹⁹² Although Abbott was eleven years older than Hodgson, he was an experienced brewer and, unlike Hodgson, had a son who was interested in the business. The new

Year	Hodgson	Allsopp	Bass
1832/33	3,636	1,404	3,193
1833/34	3,075	2,514	2,901
1834/35	1,604	2,861	3,518
1835/36	.450	2,136	3,264
1836/37	2,058	3,598	6,407
1837/38	1,420	3,738	7,323
1838/39	1,343	3,375	5,680
1839/40	.737	3,924	6,663
1840/41	1,410	5,789	7,961
1841/42	1,184	6,707	5,345
1842/43	8	5,762	3,777
1843/44	-	6,582	5,229

Table 10. Exports of Beer to India in barrels¹⁹³

partnership seems initially to have been successful, malt consumption at Bow brewery made a dramatic recovery from 1,790 quarters in 1838 to 5,358 quarters in 1839.¹⁹⁴ A new advertising campaign began in 1838 with, ‘Hodgson’s East India Pale Ale and Stout - E. Abbott and Co. Wapping have the only depot in London of the above long celebrated beers in bottle’.¹⁹⁵

However, by late 1841, Hodgson’s trade in India had resumed its decline; his exports to Bengal fell to 1,184 barrels behind that of 5,343 from Bass and 6,707 from Allsopp.¹⁹⁶ (See Table 10) In December 1841, it was announced in *The London Gazette* that the partnership was dissolved by mutual consent and the Bow brewery was now under the management of E. Abbott & Co.¹⁹⁷ Hodgson had sold the business to Abbott, including the brand-name, ‘Hodgson’s Pale Ale’. They celebrated the deal with the London brewer’s usual flair for ostentatious publicity, when it was reported in *The Sydney Gazette*:

The firm of Hodgson and Abbott, pale ale brewers in Wapping, adopted a novel mode of complimenting the Duke of Wellington, as he passed their premises on the way to

Deptford. The river frontage was decorated with bottles of Indian pale ale. In front of the wharf, was the splendid yacht of Mr. E. Abbott, the partner of Mr. Hodgson, MP for Barnstaple.¹⁹⁸

The Sun brewery was put up for sale and Edwin Abbott moved into the brewery residence at 78 Bromley High Street,¹⁹⁹ and took over the management of the Bow Brewery with the following statement, ‘Hodgson’s Pale Ale, orders for the celebrated beer to be addressed to E. Abbott, Bow Brewery, the Sun Brewery at Wapping being closed’.²⁰⁰ Hodgson retired to live in Paris,²⁰¹ where he died in 1854.²⁰²

In 1841, Bass added a new element to his advertisements whereby he sought to maximise his lead in the exports to India as proof of the superiority of his beer in a new advertising campaign stating, ‘The quantity shipped to Calcutta in 1839:- by Bass 4,936 hogsheads: by Hodgson 1,483 hogsheads’.²⁰³ This advertisement was placed in *The Times* and was aimed at the British rather than Indian customers. By selecting Hodgson for the comparison, Bass was able to maximise the difference, rather than his greater rival, Allsopp and Sons who were fast overhauling Bass’s lead in India.²⁰⁴

Allsopp went a stage further in advertising in the *Medical Times* in 1844 in combining the medical qualities of his beer with the comparative quantities of hogsheads of beer exported to India in 1841 to 1842 were given as, ‘Allsopp 9,499, Bass 4,796, Hodgson 2,001’.²⁰⁵ This advertising ‘war’ became more intense as it was conducted in the columns of journals such as the *Indian Mail*, where Allsopp accused Bass of misrepresenting the figures of exports stating in an open letter of 29 March 1844, ‘Bass and Co. were the first to adopt a system of advertising to assume a position in India in the consumption of beer, to which they have no claim’.²⁰⁶ Bass immediately replied in a similar letter of 10 April where he gave a long and detailed refutation of Allsopp’s figures before adding, ‘Messrs. Bass and Co. are contents to leave the facts stated to bear their own comment’.²⁰⁷

They were more innovative than Abbott in seeking medical approval for their beer, seeking new media such *The Medical Times* and *The Lancet*. In a time of widespread concern about food adulteration this was a creative way of reassuring the public about their product. Despite

Hodgson’s massive advantage of reputation and location, rival brewers from Burton-on-Trent gradually overtook the lead in production with careful attention to brewing science and innovative marketing strategies. The arrival of the railway was significant for the Burton brewers as it was for other manufacturers who were seeking to gain access to the London markets, often to the detriment of metropolitan industrialists.

The decline of the Bow brewery

In 1843 Abbott had described himself in *The Indian Mail* as the ‘sole surviving partner of this long celebrated establishment’.²⁰⁸ Abbott began a new advertising campaign which was more circumspect in his claim to medical approval than his rivals, merely informing the public that his beer was ‘strongly recommended by the Faculty’.²⁰⁹ By 1845 it was reported in the ‘Commercial Intelligence, Bombay’ column in the *Times*, ‘Hodgson appears determined to recover his position, and several small parcels have been taken up in anticipation of October’s brew’.²¹⁰ However, this seems to have had little success, with a further report, ‘Hodgson’s Pale Ale, there is a small lot at market, but we hear of no sales’.²¹¹ The name of Hodgson’s Pale Ale, so long a fixture of the British Empire, had lost its dominance of the Indian market to Bass and Allsopp.

However, the Bow brewery continued to export its beer and by 1851 Edwin Abbott senior had handed over the management of the brewery to his son Edwin Morton Abbott, who was described as a ‘brewer employing forty men’ in the 1851 census.²¹² This was now a small concern compared with the Burton brewers who were forging ahead. We can gauge the amount that Abbott was exporting in reports of his disagreement with the Board of Excise over methods of sampling two shipments of beer totalling 1,400 dozen,²¹³ which amounted to no more than 120 barrels. This was a far cry from earlier shipments such as that of 900 barrels to Hobart in 1835, on the *Stirling Castle*.²¹⁴

Production of Hodgson’s Pale Ale continued to decline through the 1850s, until in 1859 a single line advertisement read, ‘Abbott’s Bow Brewery: expressly for private families’.²¹⁵ In 1860 Edwin Morton Abbott of Bow brewery was suspended from trading with liabilities of about £100,000. He blamed this on a large

shipment ordered by the Indian Government which was refused due to late delivery.²¹⁶ At a creditors meeting in 1860, Abbott said that he would seek a legal action to recover his expenses from the Indian Government, but the creditors were said to be unhappy about the way business had been conducted.²¹⁷ At some time between then and March 1862, Abbott had sold the brewery and its property to a new business called the Bow Brewery Company. At a subsequent meeting of creditors a committee of inquiry was proposed to establish what had happened to proceeds of the sale.²¹⁸ This was the ignominious end of Hodgson's Pale Ale.

Frederick Hodgson was a Conservative in every way. As an MP he voted against reform and free trade. As a brewer he took protectionist measures to eliminate competition. He inherited his wealth from his father who was the driving force behind the Indian export venture. Like so many who are born to riches, he was better at spending money than earning it. He showed little interest in the day-to-day management of the Bow brewery, and was therefore vulnerable to the more organised competition from Britain's first 'brewing town', Burton-on-Trent. His two main rivals were Allsopp and Bass, who ignored the tied-house system of the London brewers and set up a network of agents, initially in India and subsequently in London. They ran a strong advertising campaign maximising every opportunity to promote their product for its benefits to good health.

Martin Wiener speaks of a north-south divide in Victorian Britain, where northern businessmen were described as enterprising, adventurous, scientific and serious. In contrast, southern businessmen were seen as traditional, romantic, illogical, and frivolous.²¹⁹ The Burton brewers just seemed to have more appetite for the competition. Hodgson's response seems to have been lacking in vigour, but perhaps by this time, in his late 40s and with no son to hand over to, he had lost interest in the business, preferring a comfortable life in Paris. The arrival of the railway connection in Burton undoubtedly helped them, but that did not remove the inherent advantage that Bow brewery enjoyed in its proximity to the docks. Both Allsopp and Bass had the expense of maintaining large railway storage depots at Blackwall.

There was one advantage that Burton brewers had, which was the water supply. Initially, it had been a

matter of chance that it proved more suitable for the production of pale ale than London's water supply. However, it was their careful scientific approach to improvements in brewing techniques which capitalised on that fact. Their beer had a dry bitter taste and contrasted with the sweet taste of mild-ale and the thick, dark texture of porter, usually drawn from the barrel into a pewter tankard. Thus, they were able to deliver a bottle of clean-tasting beer that looked good in a clear glass and which was attractive to the aspiring middle classes. It was a beer for its time.

Summary

This chapter has been about the third stage of the porter revolution, which was one of stagnation. The principal factor for this was Government agency which took many forms, the removal of beer duty, reductions in spirit duty, alterations to the licensing system, the removal of the shipping monopoly of the East India Company. The secondary factor was the improvements in Britain's transport systems, canals, railways and steam-ships, which undermined the London brewers' inherent geographical advantage.

Transport improvements operated in favour of some of the smaller London brewers who carved out niche markets for various types of beer, which had only one thing in common; they were not porter. The export of brown stout was a lucrative trade, but small in comparison with the London market, hence the leading porter-brewers' initial reluctance to persevere with it. By the time they decided to compete, others had gained a reputation in the colonies where the tied-house system did not operate.

It was the change in the duty which allowed Irish brewers to exploit transport improvements and gain a foothold in the London market. However, it took the business acumen of Arthur Guinness to establish his own version of stout as a brand, which pioneered the marketing of bottled beer. The London porter-brewers were completely wrong-footed by this development, allowing bottled beer to develop without their input. Instead of leading the field they were forever trying to catch up with smaller breweries, which had more flexible management structures. Guinness gained control of the brown stout market from under the noses of the largest breweries in the world.

The development of Indian Pale Ale at the Bow brewery was a curious combination of innovation and apathy. The Hodgson family suffered the fate of many entrepreneurs, where inventions are copied by competitors who enjoy the advantage of not having to make developmental mistakes, but go straight to the successful model. The original concept, a bitter pale beer for India, was taken forward by Frederick Hodgson, whose innovation was to export beer in bottles which established an identity 'Hodsons'. Allsopp and Bass copied the finished product and maximised their natural advantage of better water supplies and lower costs, to gradually overhaul Hodgson's inherent advantage.

The Burton brewers' great breakthrough was to bring IPA to London by ignoring the tied-house system of the London brewers and set up their own network of agencies. The Burton brewers understood the importance their relationship with customers, through branding and quality control. This allowed Burton-on-Trent to oust London as the brewing capital of the country. Bass went on to become the largest brewery in the world without owning a single public-house.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Many economic historians claim that London's manufacturers did not industrialise. It has been the aim of this study to prove that London did experience a form of industrialisation, which was confined to relatively few trades including brewing, sugar-refining and distilling. The brewing trade is the best example we have of the industrialisation process in London, which was different from that of Manchester, Birmingham or Newcastle. London's industrial revolution took place in the early eighteenth century before the rest of Britain, and therefore offers a different model of industrial development. Mechanisation was a minor factor, limited to the development of pumps and wheelwork to carry water and beer around the brewery. The major feature was the use of larger utensils, where the economies of scale reduced the cost of labour and raw materials to produce a new beer called porter.

The development of porter grew from the fiscal policies of the late seventeenth-century governments of William III and Queen Anne, which gave London brewers tax advantages over provincial brewers. This encouraged

the London brewing companies to grow in size and wealth. These companies had the capital to brew beer for long term storage when malt was cheap, which allowed the brewers to iron out the fluctuations in malt prices. Porter required additional hops for preservation and larger storage vessels to allow this dark, bitter-tasting beer to mature. The drive for this was solely economic, any concerns about the taste, colour and texture of the beer were secondary.

The increased shelf-life of this new beer allowed the industrial development of the London brewing trade to begin. A beer that would keep for up to two years allowed the development of a centralised system of production which could supply a wider geographical area. This required a sophisticated distribution system, which was on a revolutionary scale. The brewing process was not particularly labour-intensive. Most of the porter-brewers' labour costs were for the organisation of the distribution system, where a small army of clerks, coopers, wheelwrights, draymen and farriers serviced a network of public-houses. The development of porter provided the larger brewers with the opportunity to create the infrastructure needed for mass production. This amounted to an industrial revolution in brewing, which underwent three stages, development, consolidation and stagnation.

In the development stage, between 1720 and 1760, growth was inhibited by an increased consumption of gin. Throughout this early period, the porter-brewers were in competition for the cheapest malt with the other great manufactures of London, the corn-distillers. As the porter-brewers operated a fixed price regime, any increase in malt prices led to lower profit margins, which determined that income could only be derived from mass sales. In a static market increased sales were obtained at the expense of the smaller brewers which were absorbed in a process of amalgamation and take-overs which became a feature of the London brewing trade as it became more capital intensive.

Porter-brewers were not allowed to sell beer directly to the public, their customers were London's publicans. To promote the sale of beer, the porter-brewers gave their publican customers assistance to provide facilities for their working-class patrons that were simply not available elsewhere. This included a wide variety of services, from banking, saving, employment and enter-

tainment, but this was not enough. The mass production methods made necessary by lower profit margins drove porter-brewers to guarantee their sales by other means, which led to the development of the tied-house system.

Initially, the tied-house system was no more onerous than a modern franchise. Publicans were offered loans by the brewer in return for the exclusive right to supply the public-house with beer. If the loan was large enough the brewer would expect to hold the lease of the public-house as security against the loan. The publican was supplied with beer on a monthly account, where he only paid for the beer he had used during that month. The money was collected by the broad clerk, who had the right to inspect the beer in the cellar, which still belonged to the porter-brewer until it had been paid for. The profit margins on porter were so small that many publicans were tempted to dilute the beer. It was the responsibility of the broad clerk and his assistant cooper to detect this, where possible. Unannounced inspections of the cellar were designed to act as a deterrent to the publican's adulteration of the beer, which often led to difficult relationships between the publican and the porter-brewer. The tied-house system did attract criticism, but should be seen against the contemporary protectionist economics of mercantilism.

The porter-brewers pioneered marketing methods in the eighteenth century. They marketed their new beer as 'entire-butt', with the clear message that it was wholesome and free from adulteration, but Londoners called it porter's ale or porter. The porter-brewers also displayed an early understanding of semiotics with the adoption of brewery names and symbols in an age of illiteracy. Their dray-horses' trappings were furnished with regalia based on the brewery name, which were unmistakable as the brewery drays took centre stage in London's streets. The development of the tied-house system allowed the porter-brewers to incorporate their name into the sign over the door of the public-house. This was probably the first instance of a brand-name, where the producer could be identified, as in Calvert's or Whitbread's 'entire-butt', which were household names.

The porter-brewers were masters of the art of public relations. Patriotism was used to counter foreign competition from French wine or German beer. The porter-brewers' response to the very real competition from gin, was to argue that drinking porter was manly,

giving working men the strength needed for manual labour. The government had given the London brewers tax allowances to protect them from provincial competition, but the porter-brewers went further to counter this threat by circulating the myth that porter could only be made from Thames water.

The porter-brewers' collective contribution to the nation's revenue guaranteed political recognition on a wide scale. Appointments ranged from Aldermen, Lord Mayors of London, Members of Parliament, and the occasional knighthood. The porter-brewers were respectable, but they were not gentry, even though many of them spent their considerable fortunes on country estates where they lived the life of country gentlemen, leaving their breweries to be run by well-paid managers.

The porter-brewers in parliament, deployed their rhetoric with skill to achieve the prohibition of the corn-distillers' use of barley in 1757. This brought an end to the 'Gin Craze', and sales of porter began to grow. The porter-brewers increased their margins behind the tax increase of 1760, which brought prosperity to the trade. It also brought increased revenue to the government, which was sufficiently grateful to sanction the building of the Limehouse Cut to facilitate the delivery of malt from Hertfordshire. Completed in 1770, it was one of Britain's earliest canals, opening just nine years after the Bridgewater canal, but the cargoes carried on its barges were malt not coal.

This was a time of consolidation, investment and innovation. The introduction of the large vats did have a serious purpose in extending the economies of scale, but the individual porter-brewers chose to use it as a way of satisfying their own vanity in a competition with their rivals. The hydrometer brought increased efficiency to the brewing process, which the porter-brewers used to manipulate the qualities of their product. However, it was perceived to have lowered the quality of porter, which brought the porter-brewers into public disrepute; they found that publicity has two sides to it. Claims for the 'magnificence' of their massive breweries fell on the deaf ears of their working-class customers, who found that their choice was being curtailed with the intensification of the tied-house system at the same time as the beer deteriorated. This is the hall-mark of the industrialisation process, where manufacturers use scientific improvements to rationalise their operations and

increase profits, only to face a backlash from a reactionary public.

Success brought its own problems. The idea that a business should outlast its proprietor in the early eighteenth century was not usual, particularly in manufacturing. As the porter-brewers began to amass great fortunes, they encountered problems with continuity. The lack of a male heir was an obvious problem, a widow could run a brewery but it was not without difficulties. Brewing was a rough business, which an heir might decline to adopt as a livelihood through nobility or pretensions of gentility. Then, the only solution was to sell up, which became increasingly difficult as the value of porter breweries escalated beyond the reach of a single individual. This meant partnerships, which could be difficult. Quaker families with banking connections proved to be a good source of new partners, as did other London manufacturing sectors such as sugar-refining and ship-building. A sign of maturity in the industrialisation of any trade.

By the late eighteenth century, the management of these breweries had reached a complexity that was beyond the capability of an individual. The porter-brewers grappled with the problem of creating cohesive corporate structures to match the patriarchal management they replaced. Although, this goal was not entirely achieved, it does not undermine the claim that the porter-brewers were the first to confront the problem.

Boardroom disunity allowed the porter-brewing trade to stagnate. In the face of public criticism, the porter-brewers reacted defensively, by tightening their grip on the publicans and opposing all parliamentary proposals for reform. A parliamentary committee was appointed to investigate widespread allegations of the adulteration of porter. The porter-brewers were cleared of actual criminal offences but their reputation was damaged by evidence of corrupt practices. This allowed a groundswell of resentment against monopolistic brewers to develop into a tidal wave of anger.

In 1830, in an effort to break porter-brewers' monopoly, the sale of beer was deregulated and anyone was allowed to open a beer-shop. Despite the controversy attached to the social consequences of this legislation, it did achieve some success. It allowed the smaller ale breweries a foothold in a changing market for beer, where mild-ale gained the preference of the working-

class drinker. Initially, the porter-brewers had tried to ignore this trend. Their delay allowed the London ale brewers to become a real threat to their dominance. It was the same story when the middle-class drinker turned to bottled beer. Irish Stout, which was sold through a network of agencies, built such a reputation that it made inroads into the market for porter. The dilatory response of the porter-brewers also allowed their smaller competitors and the incipient bottling companies to develop a market for bottled porter and Stout, particularly in the export trade.

The London brewing trade's greatest failure lay with the development of IPA. The Bow brewery, with all its inherent advantage of locality, tradition and reputation was unable to stop the Burton-on-Trent brewers from expropriating its colonial trade, followed by its metropolitan trade. It is true that the Burton brewers were helped by the advent of the railways and the quality of their water supply. However, this does not entirely explain how they were able to create a market for the finer bottled pale beers in London and elsewhere, to the exclusion of the London brewers.

It would seem that the industrial development of the London brewing trade was a process more than an event. It had a beginning, a middle and an end. There was nothing natural about this progression, it was born out of fiscal and political policies in the late seventeenth century and was subjected to government action throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Perhaps, the same could be said of the industrialisation of any trade. If you put the right conditions in place, industrialisation will take place, which will then enter a period of growth followed by stagnation and decline. If so, the same could be said for the wider 'industrial revolution' of Britain.

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