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Coopers.

[Notes from Oct 1891 Report of Mutual Association of Coopers, & from First Report ~~of Stanton~~ 1889-91 of Amalgamated Society of Coopers]

There are three Societies of Coopers in London; the Hand-in-Hand, the Philanthropic, and the Amalgamated.

The first two are old & well established and are members of the general Society or Federation of Coopers' Societies called the Mutual Association of Coopers which was instituted in 1878.

The Amalgamated is a new Union with low contribution arising at time of St. Dock Strike 1889 and apparently including a great variety of coopers who had hitherto been outside the pale of the old Societies, which it undersold by its lower contributions. It applied for membership in the "Mutual" but was rejected, and now feels very sore about it.

Total Coopers Soc.s members ~~March~~ middle of 1891.

		1893 Nov.
Philanthropic	850	700
Hand-in-Hand	190	200
Amalgamated	412	400
	1452	1300

Mutual Association of Coopers founded 1878.

Governed by an executive consisting of the Executive of one of the Branches elected for the ensuing year. e.g. in 1890 the London "Hand-in-hand" formed the E.C. In 1891 the power was transferred to Bradford.

Length of office
How elected &c

It has Branches all over the Kingdom & a membership of 5511.
The Association has lately started a monthly Report, beginning September 1891.
It publishes Black Lists of non-members who take the places of members on strike.

(Powers &c)

London Hand-in-Hand. Sec { Safe Harbour Tavern, Arbour Square E
H. E. Strachan
46 St. Stephen's Road Upton Park E }

No. of members Oct 1891 = 190.

Meets on Saturday nights.

Work reported to be very middling there being five on the out-of-work benefit during the month.

London Philanthropic

meets at Coopers' Hall 90 Commercial Road
Saturdays 6 to 10, and every alternate
Wednesday 6-8.

Sec. { C. Foulds 47 Victoria Road
James Street, Walthamstow.

No. of members 850.
Engaged in a struggle to enforce the new List of Prices, which was resisted by a Master Coopers' Association. All the men were out on strike and attempts were being made to import German Coopers to take their places.

Contribution 10d a week

Amalgamated Society of Coopers.

Origin & history. (from their Report)

In 1889 the existing Coopers Societies in London had a membership of 750 & 120.

Outside their pale were a large number of disorganised Coopers in the Docks, Wharves, Factories, Rundlet & Dry Shops, whose wages had fallen in some cases as low as 5½d & 6d an hour for day work, with no uniform scale of prices.

In March 1889 the first meeting was held to form what was afterwards called the "Re-united Society of Coopers" the object being to include all coopers not already in a Trade Union.

In the first 3 months 60 members joined, after which circulars were scattered in seventeen Cooperages & Factories in London, Essex & Kent. A good many joined, principally day-coopers.

Then came the Great Dock-Strike which caused a great rush raising the total membership to nearly 1000.

When the excitement abated, some members left & joined the Philanthropic & Hand-in-hand

& some drifted out of Trade Unionism altogether, when the application of the Amalgamated Society for admission to the Mutual was refused (see below).

After this however an influx of members of the Rundlet Branch of the Trade took place: these members "have formed in great measure (the ch) backbone" of the Society.

(The actual no. of members in July 1891 is not given in the Report, nor any address of Branches or Secretary.)

~~After~~ Rules were now drawn up & the subscription raised from 2d ‡ to 4d a week. Several Branches having sprung into existence the Society was called the "Amalgamated".

The following is no. of Branches

	Date of estab.	Income (2 years) £ s d	No. of members estimated from contributions (Dec – March 1891).
Central	1889	277 . 11 . 2	260.
~~Bottleman~~			
Deptford	1889	(1½ years) 108 . 0 . 5.	130
Battersea	1890	(1¼ yrs) 11 . 4 . 2.	12
[Wouldham*]	1890.	(1¼ yrs) [53 . 7 . 9]	[75]
		London members	412
		Total members	487

* Outside London.

[‡ Sub = 2d for 1st 12 months]

On application to join the "Mutual Association" various objections were taken against the Amalgamated by the Older Societies.

(α). The title "Amalgamated" was objected to as misleading, - an objection which seems sound.

(β). The low contribution. It was said that the Coopers at the Rum Quay, 20-30 in number, W. India Docks were attracted from the Philanthropic. Amalg. reply that the men "enticed" away had not paid anything to Philanthropic for 10-20 yrs.

(γ). There were alleged to be members who were not Coopers. To this the Amalg. replied by quoting their Rule that "any person having qualified himself to work as a Cooper by serving a legitimate apprenticeship to the trade shall be deemed eligible to be once a member of this Society".

(δ). They were called "Hammer & Driver Coopers" i.e. lower skilled branches of the Coopering trade. This is admitted, but why not?

(ε). They had no Price List. To this the Amalg. reply that they had a Price list dated 1872, and that they were revising it at time of application.

It is said that the Coopers supposed to have been attracted away from the Philanthropic had first applied to be formed into a distinct class within the Old Society with lower payments & privileges, and had been refused. (They offered 6d but were told they could only join on usual terms i.e 10d.)

The work of the men in Bonded Warehouses is said to be so different from those engaged at the block as to warrant them ~~being~~ forming a distinct class.

The Amalgamated repudiate the charge that they are "a kind of non-descript, incompetent, incapable & incomplete interlopers or usurpers of others' privileges", and claim to be practical coopers.

The application for membership in the Mutual Association of Coopers was taken at a Delegate Conference in Essex Hall, Strand, when after hearing the representatives of the Phil. Hand-in-Hand & Amalgamated the conference resolved

"That having heard the representative of the so-called Amalgamated Society of

Coopers, London, the Delegates assembled recommend the said Society to conform to the requirements of the two existing Branches & to produce a practical price list before again applying to become members of the Mutual Association of Coopers."

[In the Monthly Report Oct 1891 of the "Mutual" regret is expressed at the opposition with which the Amalgamated are met "from a branch or two", & goes on "Amalgamated Society, London, the present E.C. with kindness asks you to prepare & establish a price-list & code of rules, each to work in harmony with the two existing Societies, & forward them to the E.C for their deliberation. We are anxious that steps should be taken which will commend themselves to the Executive for your admission in the M A] ---

Besides the dispute with the old Branches of Coopers, the Amalgamated have been embroiled with the Dockers' Union, who attempted to organise the Coopers in the Cement districts. At the time of the

Dock Strike "a large no. of Coopers, without waiting or looking to their trade for support, allowed themselves to be carried away by the momentary rush, & turning their backs upon their brothers became allied to a community of unskilled labourers."
They then tried with the leverage of the great temporary power of the Dockers' Union to compel members of the New Coopers' Union to join them. "Nothing will ever convince us otherwise than that they were desirous of gaining the control of the Cement Branch, & placing it under the jurisdiction of the Dockers".
The Report comments severely on the want of practical knowledge of the trade on the part of the Docker leaders, "beyond knowing that certain commodities termed casks were made at Northfleet & elsewhere for the purpose of holding cement.

Finance. £40 was spent on disputes in first two years. They levied 1s a member for the Australian Strike, to which £25 was sent; up to beginning of the year 1891 this realised £15 & the balance was placed to the members arrears account. Thus we see that

300 members responded to the levy.
The Society spends about £50 a year in salaries Pres. £10
Sec. £15
Sec. Deptford 5
[" Wouldham 4]
Secs Battersea & Nathfleet } 10% Commission.
Committee, certain payments for attendance.

Cabinet Makers.

Alliance Cabinet Makers

(Notes from Report 1890)

(i) Statistics of London Branches

	No. of members Jan. 1/89	Jan. 1/90	Ditto ~~on~~ subscribing to sick fund ~~Ditto on~~ Jan 1/91	Jan 1/92
1. Central London	265	349	152	151
2. West End do	240	380	101	116
5. Carvers London.	40	63	28	28
6 South London,	39	49	29	34
11. West End Chairmakers.	46	53	27	33
20 East London	41	102	21	33
37. West End Carvers	100	114.	23	27
	771	1110	241	422

(Thus only about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the members subscribe for sick benefit).

As regards growth of the Union

	Admitted Election.	"by clear card"	Erased for non-payment	Cleared Cards. gone Elsewhere.	Emigr. offer.	Abroad	Died	Expelled
1 Central London.	145	1	52	3	—	2	4	1
2 West End do.	170	7	34	..	..	2	..	1
5 Carvers Lond.	35	2	12	2	..	..	..	..
6 South Lond.	18	..	7	1	..	..	..	..
11 West End Chairmakers.	13	..	6	..	..	..	..	..
20 East Lond.	77	..	14	-	..	..	1	..
37 W. End Carvers.	16	6	6	..	..	..	2	..
	474	16	131	6	--	4	7	2

The Alliance Cab. makers Society had on Jan 1/91 2383 members in ~~46 Brs~~ 50 Branches.
It had grown ~~up~~ in the year from 1402.

The incomes of the London Branches were (in round numbers)

	£
1.	540
2.	515
5	79
6	99
11	91
20	100
37.	200