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December 6th [?1894] S. H. B.

W. Wesson. Hoop Bender. 119 Spa Road. SE.
& Truss Hoop maker.

He employs 7 benders & 1 truss hoop maker.
Of the other houses in the Trade.
Peacocks employs. 8 benders.
Maude . . . . 4 or 5.
Curtis . . . 2 or 3.
These are the largest houses — he gave Batts' & Ryan's as two other small firms in the trade.

Mr Wesson himself has an office in 3 Miles Lane Upper Thames Street but he does not manufacture there: he sent me down to Spa Road & told his foreman to give me all he knew about the Trade.
The following is therefore an interview with the foreman & the 6 men working there who joined freely in the discussion.

There are not more than 20 working hoop benders in London altogether about ⅓ of whom are society men (ie 15/.

All work is Piece work.

The hours in Summer are from 7 to 7 for 6 days. In winter from 7.30 or 8 until 7 The men come in when they like and go when they like.

An average man makes 28/- in regular work. A very good worker and a young one in a very busy season can make as much as £2.5.0 to £2.10.0 (These sums the foreman had actually made when he was younger & things were brisker)

All work is casual and in a slack time the men if they get work at all can only expect to get 15/- in the week or half pay for half-time.

Winter is generally the busiest season

In slack times the men shift to odd things, any jobs they can get but they always give up what they are doing & come back whenever there is a rush of business.

Trade has fallen off in London but has increased in the country. The cement works now make their own & do not come to London for their casks.

45 Coopers

Steam cooperages (started 30 years ago) are trying to use their own hoops but they do not seem to go ahead.

The work is decidedly skilled & you must be brought up at it from a lad if you are to be any good & a man who has not been trained is a very slow worker & breaks a great many of the staves.

The men begin to lose their capacity for work at 50 There are 2 men in the trade over 70.

It requires a great deal of bending stooping & is generally done in a draughty place.

Surrey & Sussex are the principal places for the wood for hoops: it is mostly hazel & ash but any kind of underwood of 10 years growth is used.

It is cut in the woods by the wood men & put in lengths: then he gives it to

countrymen who split it & shave it & then it is sent up in bundles to the hoop benders who keep them by season & bend them in jaws. The men work with the hoops (the same for the sticks) in their two hands working them between a pair of steel jaws curved to suit the curve of the hoop to be made. While making the stick is kept in its curve & allowed to pass freely by being supported by the toe of the right foot which is guarded by a stout piece of leather to preserve the boot.

The hoop sticks when bent are tied up & kept in position by being put inside a shive or standard hoop.

5 or 6 are put inside each 'shive' hoop.

The men always bend two hoops at a time.

Truss hoops are made of ash.

This is the most skilled branch of hoop bending. They are made to suit all kinds of casks. They form a standard of measurement for coopers, for it is according to

to the size of the truss hoop that the number
& curve of the cask staves is settled.
The truss hoop makes here said there were only
one or two noted men in London besides
himself
The different sizes of sticks for making hoops
are known in the trade as.
Fourteen feets. Middlings (13ft). Long pipe (12ft).
Short pipe. Hogshead. barrel. Killikin.
Ferkin. Long Pink. Five feets. Short Pink.
Dunlock. Threes. Twos & ones. (referring
to 3, 2 or 1 gallon casks).
The latter. Middlings. Long pipes & short pipe are used
for sugar casks or packing hogsheads.
The rest are used for dry & tight work of every
sort.

There is a small society called 'The hoop benders.
Philanthropic Society.
This is the third society among hoop benders.
This first two were trades unions regular.
The first began in 1800 (about). This man's
father (the man himself must be well over
60.

60/ belonged. It broke up in 1847 when the second was started and lasted till 1854. The third began in 1857 was turned into the present Philanthropic Society in 1866 it has 15-20 members now & a price list which it enforces.

Unionist & Non U may do work together. All the masters in London pay the list prices.

A father may bring his son; otherwise there are no apprentices.

Benefits.

Sickness. 12/- 3 mths & 6/- 3 mths.
Out of work. 8/- 3 mths off & 3 on.
Death £5 member. £4 wife.
Pension. 1/- week.
Subscription 6d- ---.

Trade has fallen greatly in last 10 years. Foreign competition in Holland & France. But their wood is not so good as ours; it is too brittle when seasoned. The Crimea was the best year they have ever had (1852) so many casks were wanted for packing.

His foreman had been working in the track for 50 years.
20 years he had been at Peacocks where he now has a brother.
30 years at Wrasom. where he now has a son.

December. 6th S. H. D.

Messrs Tyson. General coopers. 285 West Ferry Road. Millwall.

They have two Scotchmen apparently who have served their time in Glasgow.

Tight Coopers average £2.5.0 at Brewers work. Dry £2.10.0 or £2.15.0 a Piece.
Some men on contract work have made as much as £4.10 or £5 but this is exceptional.
Aslow. Brewers coopers however may make as little as 30/-
Dry Coopers. average. 35/- a Piece. a very quick worker can take £2.15.0.
Racket coopers. who work for White lead Coopers are mostly on piece: when working a day work they calculate to make 8d per hr.

When Daywork is the rule. 59 hours is the full week for 36/-10 at 7½ per hour.

Some others pay 7½ per hour & Brewers generally 8½

For piecework also the full week is 59 hours. The days work begins at 6 — 6 PM. 1½ hours for meals. & until one o'clock on Saturdays.

Winter is the busiest season for general coopers & summer their slackest time.

Brewers & distillers are busier in Summer & again in the autumn for the October brewings.

Here they employ from 4 to 10 men. Men here are pretty regular up to this last year the trade has been poor. Pieces: a good proportion of the casks go for export work.

The Bicton gas works which used to employ 40 men have now only 2.

One house is often busy while another is slack.

Steady men stay but in London Coopers have a way of shifting about a good deal.

91 was a very good year & it was difficult to get men at all.

92. was a fair year but things were on the decrease.

93. very quiet. (Six men came round to look for a job this very morning 6.XII.93).

The work is skilled in all its branches but Tight are more skilled than ~~wet~~ dry coopers.

The timber used (Quebec oak for dry work gen) comes over some ready for use & some in the rough in any case it has to be planed by the men.

The men are 'about the busiest lot going' There is no doubt of it. He thinks that Breweries have a good deal to do with it but it is very hard work. Wharf coopers & tar coopers work out of doors & so perhaps it does not matter so much.

Brewers coopers work indoors.

Coopers serve a 7 years apprenticeship. All London must & do do so and they

are all bound by indentures.

To make a cask:

You take your staves & saw them to the proper length.

Then you 'back' them i.e. you plain them smooth on the back.

Then you hollow them out on the inside i.e. you 'Belly them'.

Then you joint them to the proper height. i.e. you shove them down a long plane & 'put a bilge' on them. The bilge is the slight tapering at either end.

Then you raise the staves in the Truss hoop i.e. you stand them all round inside an iron or wooden hoop fitting together as many as will go round in the iron circle.

Then you put on a truss hoop over the whole, the widest one called an 'over-runner' & force it down as far as it will go: then you put the cask that is to be over an iron pan holding burning shavings & allow it to stay until the staves are warmed through.

so that they become pliable: Then you
put more truss hoops on ie you truss
up' & get the cask to proper shape
with the different sized truss hoops
& hoops in a Brewers truss & 7 in a
dog.
Then the cask is 'rounded off' ie the ends
are chamfered round with an adze (3)
Then it is "chived' ie the staves are levelled
round on the inside & then grooved or
'crozed' for the heads to be fixed in.
The head is bebelled on both sides to fit the
groove or croze.
If the head does not fit the groove exactly
then it is 'flagged' ie a rush is laid
round the edge which swells with the
wet & fills up any chinks.
Then the outside is all shaved smooth with
'bazz' or a swift which is a Kind of
plane
Then the iron hoops are put on.
Casks are tested or "flown off with
Steam'

Mr Russell of Chippendales Cooperage or Mrs Mills of Limehouse might give information.

Rents. The houses (290. West Ferry road to the Bridge) are 6 roomed. with a fair garden - about 20 yards long. for 10/- mostly lived in by 2 parties.
Better houses eg. 285. W.F.R.d are let for 13/6.
Some 6 roomed houses on the other side of the road to 285 are let for 7/- but they are not up to much.
In Cubitt town 6 rooms are let for 10/- to 11/-

December 8th 1904

Isaac Rogers. Secretary to the London Philanthropic Society of coopers. 53 Spey St Bromley.

& J. Edwards. a friend. a Brewers Cooper who was also present & took part in the interview.

The Society was founded. March 21. 1821.

They have 700 financial members now & have latterly lost some.

There are not more than 1000 (the outside figure) men in London who could belong to the society if they wished to.

Every man is accounted a member who has ever entered the society & paid a subscription & has not subsequently offended against the rules.

This society only accepts men capable of doing any class of coopers work: as a matter of fact all the members are "tight coopers" & the majority of them are employed.

in the making of new Brewers & Distillers casks & repairing all light casks.

In this line (ie skilled men who can do any kind of coopers work there are 60 or 70 (work. 70). Non Unionists at the present time; more than there have ever been. Before this year there have hardly ever been any non-Unionists.

There is only one yard in London (Parnells in Charlotte St Blackfriars) who has not signed the Price list. Union & non Unionists do not work together.

The relations of employers & employed are somewhat, & much so (said Jedwards), strained now owing to the recent introduction of machinery - Mr Rogers himself favoured machinery because he said that wherever machines were introduced, wages rose & hours of work were less but admitted that there were very few in the Society who shared his views.

Mr Rogers. said that 3/4 paid 1/5 of the cost of the finished article for the

labour employed in making a cask. so that the profit for machines must come out of this. Wood will cost just the same & machines are very expensive so that he did not see that the masters would make so very much out of this.

Masters are anxious reduce the wages saying they cannot compete with machinery:
2 years ago a rise of 10% was obtained after a 14 weeks 'strike or lock-out'.

There is no standing board of arbitration but there is a clause in the price list which says that where a new price for new work must be settled then 3 masters shall meet with 3 men & their decision shall be final & binding.

In winter ie from Nov. 1. to March 1. the hours are from 8-7 for 5 days. and from 8 to 1 on Saturdays.

In summer. 1 March to Oct. 31. the hours are from 7—6.

The men go in to work when they like come out when they like. Nearly all work is Piece

work & no overtime is allowed whatever among

Pay Rates

4/5 of the trade are Piecework: a little repairing is Daywork: Examining & Trimming casks is often done: Time work & so is any out of the way work for special orders.

"Piece Coopers taken on at Daywork are to receive 7/6 to 8/6. per working day of 9 hours for the first 5 days: 6 hours to be worked on Saturdays; such working hours not to include mealtimes: or 7/- per day of 9 hours inclusive of meal time & a full days pay for Saturday."

Piece coopers called from a piece to a day job are to get 1/- for the first 2 hours & 10d for each additional hour

Weekly engagements may be arranged for between masters & men.

Men work as long as they are capable there is no favouring of younger men: if an old man can do good work he may take his time, pay is by results, he will not earn so much but the

Coopering is busiest in winter when Brewers ~~Coopers~~ are replenishing their stocks.
The slackest time is the beginning of May
For Brewers coopers there is a difference best of 200 men between a winters & a summer season ie 200 more are employed in a busy than in a slack season.
Overtime is very exceptional & is only worked when it is absolutely necessary to get work finished. The Union decrees that masters must pay 6d an hour beyond the ordinary piece rates. When this rule was passed the masters found it very seldom necessary to work OT so that in 1892 OT was abolished altogether.
Weekly men - of whom there are very few may work OT if they care to.
There is no tendency on the part of the men to share the work but the masters try to let all men get something even in slack times. This year (1893) was the worst year Mr Rogers has ever known & in spite of it there have been fewer men totally out of

work than other & better years.

Coopers will not shift to any other trade: but a tight cooper in slack time will do any coopering job that may turn up.

There is a great deal of shifting from house to house; they have been called Nomadic-tish. Nothing interests a cooper outside coopering & the men keep themselves very much aloof from other workmen.

Mr Rogers was in 27 ~~years~~ jobs in 3 years & has only had the sack given him twice in his whole life!

Since his marriage he has changed house 20 times but is getting tired of it now. Said he was a sample of a coopers ways.

Every man must serve an Apprenticeship for 7 years or be a clear member of the M.A. (Mutual Association). The diff societies forming the M.A. may have different rules. Each though belonging to a central body is autonomous. Thus any society admitting members who have only served say 5 yrs, if is considered sufficient is considered a

Such members may work in any town in England & join any other of the Coopers Societies in England.

In London a man is not admitted as a fully member at 21 years of age unless he is already out of his time (1901).

He must then be proposed & seconded by 2 clear members who are responsible for his efficiency.

There are 3 Societies in London.

1. The London Amalgamated - consisting for the most part of dry coopers & coopers in Docks & Harbors.
2. The Hand-in-hand Soc. 200 members. used to be called the 'Molasses' coopers: they do Sugar trade & pickle casks: they have very little new work.
4. The Philanthropic.

The Mutual Association (M.A) with a Centre in Belfast (i.e. for this year for a central town is elected annually) is an association of all the Societies in the Coopering trades in the

United Kingdom except those in Cork & Dublin.
Said there was not so exclusive a place
as Dublin anywhere, the men there are
a very peculiar lot & always have been.
Each branch is totally independent as
to rules & customs eg. some branches are
allowed to work with machinery & others not
[illegible] about. The rules of a locality prevail only in that locality.
The object of this Assoc is to help one
another in case of dispute; & to disseminate
knowledge of the trade.
Machinery has been a success in America &
Scotland because of the want of
really skilled labour (he said to judge
by the Scotch coopers who sometimes
came to look for work in London)
A cooper on the look out for a job speaks
of looking for a 'block' for he must
have a block to chop on. which is
is a stout wooden block let 2 ft
into the ground & standing about
2 ft out
Drink is not so bad as it used to be. There

are still old men who drink a good
deal & the coopers have the reputation
as is the case "in every Trade where
the work is highly skilled" where the men
are sociable among themselves & very
exclusive as regards others, of the weavers."
He quoted from an American journal of Economics
where a man had made a quotation
from Boccaccio as to coopers in his time
saying they were "Roystering, improvident
irresponsible set, transient & Ishmaelitish."
They are still this but the young men
are of a different class altogether.
Work is highly skilled; no measuring, the
top of a stave & the bottom are planed
by the eye only & a cask must fit
to a pint.
Coopers are all over London; but there are
more in East than in the West.
The average wage of a good man throughout
the year would be 40/- per week for
tight work. But there is a great
difference between coopers, some earn

30 years ago some men could earn £5 £6 or £7
working very long hours getting a very
high price because they had a greater
monopoly of labour then.
It is very much of a family trade.
Mr Rogers represents 5 generations of
coopers & Mr Edwards 3.
One Cooper may have one Apprentice & that
the son of a dear member.
One master may have 2 App.
One firm may have 3 no matter how large.

Rents. 53 Spey Street. 12/- per week.
6 rooms & small entertom & washhouse
& 20 ft garden - water upstairs.
A few other smaller houses in the street at 10/6.
None more than 12/-

Will send Rules & Price lists.

Dec. 19th S.H.D.

Percy Gilling. General wine & spirit Coopers.
& Randlet coopers : 3 Catherine Court.
Seething Lane - Works at Coats Buildings
Upper East Smithfield & Copenhagen
Wharf Salmons Lane. Lime House.

Employs 15 Coopers in a slack & 17 in a
busy & 1 one foreman at a Salary
of £3 per week & 8 or 9 carmen &
Labourers.

The men work from 8-7.
They are all paid list price.
They are all Society men except one : there
is no friction on this account.

A fair man working at wine & spirit work
would make an average of 32/- he
would think : He could make very
much more if he worked hard
& had work throughout the year.

Work is pretty regular throughout the Trade but the men go out & drink & are very unsteady at times. When you have a lot of work in very often they take it easy which is annoying to the master.

Randlet (pronounced & often spelt randlet) work is the making of small casks for wines or spirits. Small men can make these: tall men will only do large work because there is less stooping

July & August are slack. Everyone is fully stocked for the tourist season so that coopers who were busy getting ready the casks for filling have nothing to, but they are busy again as soon as the casks are emptied & must be repaired

Winter is the regular busy time. As a rule all are busy together though in a slack time it may so happen that one is busy while another is slack.

In slack time the men here work a half time & give all a share, but other coopers often discharge their men if they cannot fully employ their men.

When a man sees that another house is busy he thinks he can get more work & he shifts at once. Here they don't shift much.

91. was a very fair year.

92. falling.

93 very slack: does not remember ever to have had so little wine & spirit work to do.

A man is trained by being put as an apprentices to a journeyman; a master or to a firm.

a journeyman can insist on having an apprentice (the apprentice) whom he at first pays $\frac{1}{3}$ of what he earns & then after 4 years $\frac{2}{3}$. A master may have 2 App & then he take the same proportion and a Firm may have 3.

Coopers labourers paint the tops of barrel
make the bung holes & "blow off" the
barrels & test them.

It is hard work. a Coopers is beat when
young. Some men much better than
others an industrious man who is not
skilful will not make more than
30/ however hard he work.
How? say a coopers began to lose power at 50.

They drink a good deal: he cannot say he
has noticed much improvement in this
respect.

Thinks there are often non unionists now. ~~than~~
is
will be glad to answer any further questions:
was friendly: I may go to see his
works any time.

Said that he had made out an average for several
months comparing earnings of men before &
after they had obtained the rise of 10%. I
found they earned rather less after than
before with he sh[ould] say the same oppor-
tunities of work.

Dec. 20th G. H. D.

Mr. Davis. Master Coopers at the London Docks on an introduction from Mr. Beck to whom I was introduced by H. F. Donaldson.

Employs. 45 permanent coopers
" 14 extra men ⅔ of whom are always employed.

They have work which is peculiar to the Docks.

1. They must sound the casks as they arrive.
2. Knock the bung out to gauge the wine the cask contains
3. Cut the particulars of ship merchant, contents upon the head.
4. When ordered by merchants they draw samples & rack portions from large into smaller casks.
5. They go round periodically to

to see that there is no leakage.
All this is not exactly coopering but coopers are employed to do it.

The Londn & St Katharine D. has a master cooper & staff.
E & W India - - - - - - - - -
Victoria & Albert - - - - - - -
Tilbury - - - - - - - - - - -
but he could not say what the numbers were.

The permanent men get 37/- per week, & wmld average 35/- throughout the year
The extra men get 32/- (?).

The extra men always work on Piece to start with & then the best of them work up to fill the places of the Regular men & then become day-workers.
The permanent men begin at 32/- & work up to 37/- They get half pay when sick

In winter is from Nov. 1. to Feb. 28
the full week consists of 42 hours.
from 9 AM to 4.30. of which
½ hour goes for meals. This not
reckoned. But on any day that
overtime is worked the day is counted
as 7½ hours.
In Summer the full week is of 48 hrs.

Only repairing & trimming work is done here
no new work. Any new work that
is wanted is made at the 'Stores'
Dept. or is got from the an outside
master cooper.
The extra men get 8d per hour & 9d & 10d
for overtime.
In the trade generally one master is often
busy while another is slack and
the men shift freely to where the
work is but this is not the case
here for one here as permanent
staff the men never shift.
The work here is rather scientific than

physically hard.

All the men employed have served a 7 yrs Apprenticeship.

Mr Davis fears that machinery will take the place of hand work he hears that the new plant set down by some makers is so good. That which was started some years ago was very indifferent & failed

He has good workmen of 60 who are naturally not so nimble: but he only takes on new men between 23 & 30 years of age.

Was very friendly & took me round the vaults of the London Docks.

Dec. 19th G. H. D.

J. Brown. foreman in the Stores Department of the London Docks.

Employs 8 men in a busy & 4 in slack times.

Christmas is busy because of the issues of wines for the Xmas table & then things are very slack for 2 months.

As a rule there is very fair work the hard dancing 9 months in the year.

At this moment he only has 5 men working for him, it has been such a very bad year for coopers, one of whom is a Society man & two are not.

The men are turned off in slack time but they don't shift much anywhere else as they do in the ordinary business houses in the Trade.

The men are paid according to the Docks list prices which are sometimes higher & sometimes lower than that the Union's list.

The men can earn from 25/- to £2 per week of 42 hours.

As low mans wage would be 26/-

The men work the hours which the Dock is open ie 9 to 4. for 6 days. They get take half an hour for dinner but sometimes a shorter time.

Here they do new & repairing work & make Casks for casks (dry work).

It is unskilled work & all done by the Eye.

In the wine trade each wine has a different size & cooper is grouped diffly.

Oil work is quite different from tight work oil is a sort of tight work but oil has not the fermenting force that wine has. All the American casks are made by machinery.

A wine or brewers Coopers can make an oil cask but not vice versa.
Men are good at their work till pretty old, here a man of 64 can earn 34/- or 35/- in the week.

The men use the jointer or plane down which they shave the staves.
The Bick iron is which they fashion the iron hoops; it has two holes over which the nails are driven for keeping the hoop ends together.
The Stockdriver is used for driving down the hoops. it is a thick wedge shaped tool with a groove at the end of the thin end which fits on to the edge of the hoop.
At the 'Block' the rough wood is cut with the 'heading Knife' the 'heads' are trimmed & grooved to fit into the 'croze'.
The men have 'a sad reputation for the bottle' Mr. Brown although Irish is a teetotaller.

Dec. 20th E. H. D.

Messrs Shuters. Tight Coopers. Shad Thames. on an introduction from Mr. Wm Hoare.

This is the largest tight cooperage in London & has lately amalgamated with the second largest in Chipping-dales of Stratford.

They only do tight work.
All work is Piece work.
A good man will probably make an average of 35/- throughout the year. He generally earns over £2 & a very good man can make £3 but altogether he would not average > 35/- (this is perhaps rather under than above the mark) for one of his men will go & do Brewer's work at times when Brewers want extra work done from them

unless they are promised £2 per week./.

Brewers.
Wine. } is all tight work.
Spirit }

Nov. 1. to June 1. is the busiest time be-
cause of the Brewers demand for
casks. By June 1. the houses are
stocked for the thirsty season & then
the Coopers are slack for a bit as
they are also for the first fortnight
after Xmas. But as soon as the
barrels are emptied, then there are
repairs & work is brisk again.
Stout Brewers 'Butts' is the best paid work
[But: 108 gallons. it is the hardest
work & requires the best workmen.
'Pins' are the ordinary 4½ gallon
casks which is the general run
of tight work.
91. Spring trade was good.
92. worse.
93. v bad though improving a good deal

They employ 94 regular coopers including apprentices & 26 labourers are about the yard. (for blowing off, painting) In slack times this will drop to 45 coopers.

As a rule in slack times Apprentices stop & work even though the journeyman to whom they are apprenticed goes to seek work elsewhere.

A great many of the men have boys working with them who must always be the sons of coopers & whose earnings they share so that it is difficult to tell exactly how much a given man makes in a given week. Sometimes the men are lazy & let the boys do their work for them especially if they have served more than a year & have learnt their trade so that their work requires very little altering & redoing after having been finished.

A firm or a master may have as many apps as the Union allows them, in this case the earnings of the boy are paid into the firm or master in the recognized proportions.

Neither of the Mr Shuters have served their time or could make a cask but they can take apprentices to themselves (3 for a firm)

As a rule the men are not so keen to have Apps as might be supposed. It will be a year before a boy begins to pay his way. For the first 12 mths, much of his work is worthless, useless, he will spoil much work, & waste the journeyman's time so that he will not earn so much, but after a year a sharp boy can put a good deal into the pocket of his men so that the man will often loaf & not work up himself.

Some of Mr Shuters best men are over 50. They may not be the quickest workers or earn the largest amounts weekly

but their work is good & steady & they have lost the roving habits of youth.

Messrs Shutes in conjunction with Messrs Chippendales have started machinery lately; they have had the best they could find for ~~some~~ years. The actual reason of its being started was the Strike in 91 (Autumn) when the men were out for 5 mths & would not budge.

The market was flooded with Scotch & foreign goods & they feared there would soon be no more trade; added to this Courage one of their largest & most conservative customers - a brewer - started machinery for himself.

To stop the strike the men were allowed a rise of 10% until a new list could be arranged.

When the new list was presented the masters found that the men had often added 20% & 30%. There was a great meeting & discussion finally the masters gave way & so the men got more than 10%.

Shutes machines are made by Dunbar of

Liverpool. At the machines the coopers still work at the heads but they do not manage the machines.

12 Non Unionist men work the machines at Stratford.

Both Sluters & Chippendales are very old firms. They were established about 1765.

Says he thinks they have won back all the London Trade which they lost during the strike.

Has great hopes of this machinery: says it did not succeed before because machine casks could not stand the active force of fermenting beer. In Germany wine casks are made by machinery so why not in Engl
In America all the oil casks are by mach. but oil has not the same pushing force of beer.

Good men dont shift when there is any work to be had.

Sluters may be busy while others are slack but as a rule all are busy & slack together.

Was v friendly will make full wages return & take me round machinery at Stratford himself.

Dec 20th G.H.D.

Messrs Mead & Co. Wood Hoop Merchants & Coopers.
"Dealers in all kinds of Straight & coiled wood
Hoops, truss hoops, Coopers' tools etc"
128. High Street. Wapping.

Wooden hoops are used for bottled beer casks
& general casks eg. Hennes & those casks
which are sent to the West Indies with
Ammonia & come back full of sugar.

A great many hoops are sent in the country
but one of his men (who has worked with
them 45 years) said that most of the
men in the Trade were Londoners & had
not come from the country.
Mr. Mead employs 20 men altogether of
whom 6 to 8 are benders in busy time
to 2 or 3 in slack. The other men
are labourers connected with packing
& loading barges etc.
The hoops Summer is the busiest time because

because more bottled beer is drunk & there are greater shipments to the West Indies in summer.

Now (Dec) & in the winter generally they are apt to be slack.

All work is Piece work.

Work from 6 — 6 in Summer.

& from 7 — 5 in Winter

Dinner hour 12 — 1.

A first class bender in regular work would make about 30/- per week. When slack the men here are allowed to earn from 20/- & 25/-

He would say that of the trade gen work was pretty regular (this however was partly contradicted by the old man working who said they were practically all casuals & that a great many benders were glad to & did get other forms of employment.

He did not think trade was leaving London although foreign competition from France & Holland is certainly stronger than it used

to be. The Crimean war was the great year both for coopers & benders. Somuch was packed in hooped casks.

He did not know of the existence of a Union & did not think as far as he knew the men shift much. They dont here.

One or two drink but as a rule the men are a steady lot.

Machines are used in Scotland but the machines do not tie them up.

A fair man can count on getting 40 weeks work in a year.

91 was a bad year but on the whole trade has been better since.

93. not at all bad.

The hoop sticks are soaked in water & then beat as before described.

The men worked in long sheds. some open & piled up with hoops of different lengths. was offriendly & gave introduction to the Harpers Coopers in Limehouse.

Dec. 22nd G. H. D.

Mr. Wiseman. W. India Dock Cooperage
on an introduction from Mr. Beck of the
London Docks.

The men here work on the "Rum" Quay &
they have to handle & attend to the
puncheons of Rum from the W. Indies
which are discharged & kept in bond
here

Mr. W. said that the work required great skill
& was very responsible. Each man is a
skilled tight cooper. Each is given charge
of a certain lot of casks & has to know
where each one is & the amount of
rum in each. This they do by hitting
the cask with a hammer & tell by
the sound how far each is full.
The vaults are very ill lighted & no
candles are allowed, all the light comes
from low grated windows & the men
read the figures on the casks by their

of tin reflectors.

27 is the standard number of 'Permanent' men at this Quay.
10 are 'extras' who get a standard wage of 32/- without variation.
There are also a certain number of first class labourers at 24/- regular pay who generally get 5/- to 6/- extra for Piecework every week.
These are the men who here rack the casks.
The Permanent & the Extra men have their daywork pay & there are too certain jobs which are piece work. He thinks 4/- is a fair average of the extra that men make regularly every week in this way.
Permanent men get £2.4 per week as an av. wage.
Extra men £1.16 - — — —.
He showed me the wages books which gave the day work rates & his statement

seemed correct from what I saw. He let me look at several weeks where I liked. The Piecework money is paid them in a lump & divided among themselves so that it was impossible to fill up the further wages returns.

The permanent Coopers begins at 32/- regular rate & works up to 38/- Day- (Daily pay ceases when Piecework begins).

The Extra men always have 32/-

8 Arg to 4.30 for 6 days in Summer.

9 - — - 4.30. - - - - - Winter.

This includes ½ hour which the men take for dinner.

The men all do the same work, ie tightening the casks, repairing (putting heads in) hanging (or shiving) up & supervising the hands - which are the casks given over to each as mentioned above & they are responsible for any leakages going on.

91 was a very busy year for the hinter

was severe & there was a great deal of rum drunk. Influenza?

92. fair.

93. slack.

Coopers as a rule get "as tight as a bottle" but all that sort of thing Mr W. has put a stop to here. He called the men together, raised their wages & said he would sack any man whom he found twice drunk. Several were sacked but the others learnt a lesson & now he never has any complaint

He thinks that coopers are as a rule a very migratory & independent lot. Here they are steady for 6d per week is deducted off the wages of Permanent men & an pension is given after certain no of years service & half wages paid during sickness.

All his men have served their 7 years elsewhere none comes as an apprentice here.

He likes men of about 40 as extra men for then they have settled down & have some

Experience

Summer is busy for imports.
Winter for deliveries.
This machinery will never be able entirely to dispense with coopers.
Has very friendly agreed an introduction to a Mr. Miller of Aldgate who will be able to tell me about the life of coopers as he has had more than 40 years experience.

Dec 22nd G.H.D.

Mrs Campbell Swainston. General Coopers
Thomas Street Burdett Road.

All work is Piece work.
They employ from 70 in a busy to 50 in a slack season.
They employ. Tight Coopers.
Dry Coopers.
Packing case makers.
Wine & Spirit & Brewers. Coopers & Tight Coopers - for the same man can make all. make 40/- per week as a fair average throughout the year.
The foreman said he had once made by himself £3.15 in a week.
Dry coopers make from 35/- to 40/- in a full week.
Winter & Spring are the busy seasons Autumn & Spring used to be the busiest times because of the great Stock brewings at those seasons but brewers

brew so very little for stock now.
Summer is slack because brewers dont brew
so much in Summer as in winter and
a master cooper is not anxious to make
so much because the wood shrinks
& starts in hot weather especially if
it is very hot. This happened this
last summer when a great deal of
their stock needed repairing.
In summer not many men are knocked off
some leave of their own accord & seek
work elsewhere, but they work short
hours. The men are not limited
directly as to the amount they
can earn but they are as to the
time in which they can earn it.
A good man can expect to get 52 weeks
work in the year
Dry coopers shift a great deal more than
tight coopers & are not such
skilled men: they will get in a
rule 40 weeks in the year.
Dry very seldom do tight Coopers work at

tight in slack time do dry work.

89. 1890 were very good years.

91 was fair.

92. falling.

93. very quiet.

Tight is unskilled & dry work is also skilled but not so much as tight.

Tight coopers serve a 7 years Apprenticeship regularly.

Dry. need only serve 5 years & a great many have never served at all.

The capacity of tight coopers falls very quickly after 50 years of age. It is very hard work & they lose the power of working so quickly. They will not earn more than 30/- ~~40/-~~ when they had been making 35/- to 40/-. What they turn out is good work but not so much of it.

After 30 a man gets a good average sight which never fails him until his eyes or health may give way for other reasons.

A big cooper does not drop so much they have men of 60 & 70 who are still earning 18/- to 20/- per week.

6 of the men have boys working with them. They must always be the sons of coopers. The drawback at the beginning prevents men from being over-anxious to take a boys. For the first 6 months a man loses by having a boy to teach but after 12 mths he begins to feel a decided gain.

Oil casks are nearly always second hand casks, a new cask would absorb too much oil to begin with. For oil casks old & stinking beer & wine casks are used

The foremen who was present during the interview said he thought there was too much waste of wood in the machinery that was now used by a certain firm — Shatters; but he thought that machinery was sure eventually to come in. At Shatters the mistake was made of having an en-

. gineer to work the machines, now an en-
. gineer can have no knowledge of the
nature of different kinds of wood which
is so necessary in a good cooper.
He must get a cooper to learn how
to work the machine before machinery
will be a success.

Combes brewery use machinery but only because
it is a hobby of of Mr Combes - it is
not done to pay.

Bass has machines at Burton because he
never could find enough men to make
his casks for him.

The society lost 34 men after the introduct-
ion of machinery at Combes this was
a great blow to them. The men who
had been brought up in Combes employ
refused to join the society - (apparently
they did come out, but went back
again)

Drink is not so bad as it used to be, Coopers
used to be 'the Scum of the earth' but
they are now much better especially

The younger men though among the older there are many who like a drop of beer some who boast to drink 6 gallons per day to 'keep their trade up'.

All overtime has been stopped by the action of the Trade Society.

They are now working from 8–4 and on Saturdays from 7–1 because things are slack. In Summer they work 6–1 on Sat.

He must beg the further wages return before his board of management before giving any promise of filling them in but is in favour of doing it himself.

Dec 22nd S. H. D.

The Hand-in-Hand Society of Coopers belonging to the Mutual Association of Great Britain -
W. Wright President. H. Rosenfield Secy. at the house of the Secretary 8. Oban Street. Poplar. Both being present.

known as the Society of the 'Molasses Coopers'
The Society embraces both the Tight & Dry coopers & are especially 'Molasses coopers' "men who are fit to do any form of coopering work"
Founded 1824.
200 financial members.
400 coopers of all sorts are knocking about as non-Unionists & taking all 3 Societies together is 1300 members (700 Phil. 200 Hand in Hand & 400 Amal.) there would be one non Unionist to every 3 Society men.

The 3 London Societies meet in Congress every 3 months. The duty of each secretary being to call a meeting in turn.

Unionists + non Unionists do work together. If a non Unionist comes into a Unionist shop then the work is forced to pay to the funds of the Society but he does not become a clear member until after a certain time (differing according to his age) + he must pay an entrance fee.

Each Society has a different Price list; the relations with the employers have not been strained on the part of this Society but are not so good as they might be in the other 2 Societies.

They believe in arbitration. In case of dispute the Shops collector first meets the masters. Then the President + Secretary meet them + if they too are unsuccessful a general meeting is called + its decision is law.

Nearly all work is Piece work. The average earnings are at the rate of 8/- per hour + this is

is the day work rate by the rules of the Society.
In busy times £2 to £2-10 is a fair average of
what a man can make
In a slack time they make 15/- to £1.
The hours depend on the hours of the shipyards
are working in.
A cooper is a long liver : he begins to fail
a bit at 50. (Wright is 49 & Fessenfield
45) both say they could make as much
as ever they have done if they had the
work to do). They have numbers of
36 to 80 making £ a week.
Autumn is the busy season because of the Baltic
trade taking syrups to lay by for the
winter.
Slack in Spring because the Baltic is shut with
ice
His branch depends upon the trade in sugars,
syrups & molasses.
There are now only 5 where there used to be
36 sugar manufactories in London.
because of the bounty on foreign sugars
Crosse & Blackwell give all their orders.

for sugars to Austria & Russia.

The Union is dead against overtime on principle
¼ extra for the first two hours is paid
by some houses in others no difference is
made but they have no rule against
it & the amount worked & the amount
paid for O.T. depends upon the masters
for whom you work.
The Union generally tries to persuade
masters to take on extra men rather
than to work O.T.

In slack times some are fully employed
and others get nothing.
These coopers keep to their own trade also
& rich that those labourers who work
at some shops doing heading up &
shiving off would mind their own busi-
-nesses, but let them alone & not
touch their work.

Very few oil casks are made new in London
but a great many are repaired.

The men shift to dry or light work according to
their ability. They may work with Brewers

Coopers but then they by the rules laid
down by the Brewers Coopers Soc
for their yards.
It is nothing against a man to shift one
house is often busy while another is
slack. & men shift accordingly.
The Union says that men must have been
apprenticed for at least 5 years this
7 years is the recognized time.
A man must be fit to do any work that he
is sent to.
When a master makes application to the
Society for workmen then the President
& Secretary choose the man they think
fit for the job & he is expected to
fulfil it — This seems to be a system
by which as few men as possible can
be got into the society & must lead to
some complaints of favouritism though no
mention was made of them at the time.
Now every apprentice is registered & must shew his
indentures before admission, old men must
be able to give a satisfactory account of

themselves

White Coopers. make nothing but fancy goods eg. pails, washing tubs, churns, powder kegs (wood bound & copper hoops). it is very skilled work.

The shops in London are mostly small masters who make them in back yards, some in the evening after they have left the Docks. There are only 3 big shops, ie Carpenters Kettles & Davis.

They are gen small journeymen who have set up as masters - work from hand to mouth. great many in the Boro' & Bermondsey work is very badly paid & the majority of the men are unsteady men

Machinery is much used in dry work especially in the country but he did not think it would succeed in wet work.

At Courages' Brewery only the heads are machine made the bodies are by hand & the same is true of Combes.

There is none used in the molasses line - (molasses is a syrup of cane) said there was very

little cane sugar now used in England.
The Subscription is rather more than that to the Miners, Carpenters, engineers societies but not so much as to the Philanthropic"
He would rather not give the rules etc.
Benefits are given for out-of-work but "we are rather reticent on the matter."
for superannuation & death but nothing for sick pay - if a widow chooses to continue her husbands subscriptions she may ensure herself something at death.
Drink - Great improvement in present generation though the old ones are still very fond of it.

Rents. 8 Oban St Poplar.
11/6. wk. 8 rooms. Same rent all along the road or for the 200 houses on this estate.
Downstairs - Front & back.
Upstairs - - - -
2 kitchens. & washhouse. 14 ft garden.
Lewens Rd. 9/6 for 6 rooms (incl. 2 kitchens & yard.
Abbotts Rd. 13/ - - - - - -
Spey St. Bromley 12/- - - -
All these houses are on the 2 family system and have a 16 ft. frontage.

Dec 28. 93. GA

Amalgamated Society of Coopers.
Interview with Mr T. Salt. Secretary.
44 Upton Park Road, Forest Gate. E

There are three Unions in London and an Association of Unions for the whole of the country. Amalgamated Coopers was established in March 1889.

The number of unionist Coopers he estimates as follows:

Hand in Hand Soc—	mostly dry coopers.	200
Philanthropic	" wet "	800
Amalgamated Soc.	All not included by over other societies	800
		1800

Of the 800 in Amal[ted] Soc. about 100 are in the Rochester branch so that the London membership is a little over 700. The Central Branch (East London) has Nos 1 to 522 & the Deptford Branch runs up to 700. Kennington branch has been closed. [This estimate of membership is probably

two high as some of the members represented in the consecutive numbering are sure to have lapsed.]

The membership of the Amal. Soc. includes all sorts of coopers. They may be classed as under:

(1) Rundlet Coopers – The backbone of the Society – make the small barrels used for spirits and oysters.

(2) Cement Coopers. Make cement casks. The number of men has decreased owing to introduction of machinery.

(3) Oil Coopers.

(4) Lead Coopers.

(5) Dock Coopers. A large number of men, who are taken on as extra coopers at the Docks. Nearly all old men who would not be taken by the other Societies.

About half the men in the Society can do the 'wet' work but they work at their own branch only take the other if out of work. Brewers' coopers have the heaviest work and as they get old cannot do it. They then take to one of the lighter branches. Have a large proportion of old men who could not join the other Societies.

Thinks unionists are in proportion of 3 to 1.

In the Docks, where societies have no control the unionists and non-unionists work together: also to a small extent in other place.

Relations with employers are very good; work well together.

Disputes are settled by arbitration; an equal number of masters & men settling the dispute. This method is now a recognised custom. Most disputes arise through alteration of the size of casks. There is great competition amongst the dry coopers but the masters have agreed to a price list.

The usual hours are from 8 to 6 pm. Are now working short time.
Daywork is paid 8d to 9d per hour. Brewers & wine & spirit coopers get 9d; the others 8d per hour. Nearly all the work however is piece. Would quote average earnings as follows:

Well Coopers.

Wet coopers, 40/- per week; Oil coopers. 36/-; Cement coopers 30/-; Runlet coopers 37/-; Lead. 35/-. "A steady cooper can always depend on more than 40/- a week."

Men work to a good age, that is when they are steady. There are a great many old men in the trade. Employment would be difficult to obtain after 50 years of age.

For the trade as a whole, the summer is slack and the winter busy. In the sections the seasons vary. Runlet coopers become busy at the beginning of the oyster season; Brewers' coopers - about October; Wine and spirit coopers are busy in the summer while the cement coopers' is practically a summer trade.

Very little overtime. The societies are opposed to it.

In slack season the shop's company will work short time instead of dispensing with some men. This is the usual thing. A great many

are

are discharged at the Docks where formerly the man out of work found his best chance. About 20 or 25 years ago it was the custom of apprentices when out of their time to go to the West India Dock & "get a number". Then when out of work they would go to the Dock and get taken on as extra men. About 200 men were employed there then on sugar barrels. Now all that trade is gone.

When do shift. A general cooper will turn his hand to anything. About half the trade comes under this description. A wet cooper cannot turn to the dry work readily. It is too light for him & he would make the casks too well. Could not earn his money.

Continually changing employers. "The most independent class of men it is possible to meet."

Wet coopers are apprenticed for 7 years. For the first years the lad would make himself useful

about the yard. In the second year he would be placed with a cooper who would get what he could out of him, giving him a little extra to supplement his wages - for about two years. Master give very little: 1st year 1/6 per wk. 2nd year 2/-; 3rd year 6/.; 4th year 10/- per week and afterwards 2/3rds of earnings. All apprentices have indentures.

Candidates for membership must have served an apprenticeship and be proposed and seconded by two members who are responsible for his qualifications. (See Rule 12).

Every so much better now than formerly from a temperance point of view. A great many of the young people are total abstainers; dont resort to the publichouses & take an interest in social work. Have an influence on the older men, which is improving the tone of the trade. The old men are the topers. There are great temptations to drink, working at breweries, wine & spirit vaults etc. Mr Sall was a teetotaler until he was 24. Cement men are sober. Brewer's coopers drink most. (See p. 69)

Prospects of machinery are not very bright. It is very costly and wastes material. If a man had a running order for one description of work it might pay him to use machinery but the variety of work is so great that he thinks it impossible. Then the wood has to be tempered if hard; must have a cooper for this. In machine work all staves receive the same pressure. Only in cement work, where boys can learn to finish off the work (as at Northfleet) can it take the place of the cooper. In good work, a cooper would be needed to finish off, to fix the capacity of the cask & to "flag" it to close it.

White coopers almost extinct. Used to make wooden buckets, washing tubs etc. These have been superseded by the galvanised iron goods and the men have gone into the other branches of the trade.

Nearly all the Dock 'extra' men are in the Amal. Soc. There is a little Society in the Dock called the "Foremen and Permanent Coopers' Ass". Its main object is to regulate the coopering in the Dock.

Formerly made a number of paraffin barrels. This has died out, the oil being imported now in tanks vessels and carried about in tank carts. Also used to make 1000's of hogsheads for government contracts to take beer for Africa etc. Now the malt is exported & the beer made on the spot.

Talking of the men's temptations to drink, Mr S. said that casks used to be returned after the spirit was taken out. Men would then put waters in and after letting it stand a little time get a quantity of strong spirit. This became so prevalent that the Customs now water the casks & let them stand for 24 hours before allowing them to go out of bond. Men used to get the spirit & sell it.

Gave a copy of the Rules and promised to send a Price List.

Jan 1. G.H.J.

Messrs Carpenter. White Coopers. 115. Black-friars road. Mr. Glover manager.

This is a branch of tight coopering & these men say they belong to the Philanthropic Soc. but he does not believe they do.

He pays sometimes under sometimes the same as Society prices.

His great customer is the A.D.N. stores & all the other London coopers come to him for small work which their men do not undertake or dislike to do.

Butter tubs.
Dolly barrels (for washing)
He polished barrels in Public Houses.
Ships buckets.
Stable buckets.
All the tubs used by confectioners & Licensed Offices Kit tubs (making bath, table, seat & box for packing kit.)
Sink tubs.

All these he makes.
This is by far the largest house, having
9 permanent men. In the Spring &
when busy he will employ as many
as 16. The men are very irregular
he can always give them work but
they very seldom will take it.
The next largest employs 2 men. There
are not more than 7 masters in
London.
The men shift to light work in the winter
when lights are very busy & make buck
& white coopering in the Spring
It is the poorest part of coopering.
Thinks machinery will soon take the
place of mens work; it should be very
easy for machines but does not yet
see his way to it & it is hardly
perfect enough yet.
Makes work for joggler;
scene in which clown runs off with
miller's daughter, millerscees him,
throws tub at clowns head, tub

fall to pieces, covers clean with flour.
Job very carefully made, must be exact
to come to pieces at a touch & so not
hurt cleaners hand.

A man never earns more than 35/-
The sink tubs which he sells for 3/6 are
put in Doc list as 3/4 for making.
He only pays 8d for same. His men
can make them so quickly.
In slack time men only earn 25/-
some less.

In the further wages return he engrave me
the men earning 18/ & 14/- for full weeks
were odd lots who would laze about.
He uses up the ends sawn off by other coopers.
All Piece work.
Some few are home workers & gradually ac-
cumulate a stock & then sell them
but most of these even buy from
him whenever they have an order
from a large house.
Vat making he can but does not do; each
paid branch: but make go home

wood clogs fixed in the vice instead of shooing it down the jointer as regular coopers do.

Such is the case of the men. only 5 out of the 10 had turned up today as he was black it did not so much matter but if he had been busy he would have taken their block away from them.

There are not 50 white coopers in all England he said.

The American. margarine tubs & the galvanized iron tubs are their great competitors. The tubs are so well made on purpose to be sold for something else afterwards.

In summer trade is slack for tubs fall to pieces in the heat so are not bought. it is best to buy a tub in spring rub it well so that it may stand the weather both frost & sun.

Abstracts from the 'Price List' of the Philanthropic Society of Coopers - dated 1892

The "List" extends to 48 pages, (Large Post 8vo) and deals with a great variety of articles as the following summary of Index shows:

Barricoes
Brewers' New York.
Articles on Brewers Casks generally.
" " " Heading
Cases for bobbling
Casks from Baltic Timber Stout.
do do extra stout.
do do Intermediate
do do Slight
do Bosnian Timber
do Quebec & American do-
do Sclavonian & Hungarian do-
Cleansing Casks.
Filling of Casks & Cases.
Nozzle Casks
Open Grained & Milk-holey Timber
Rounds or Pontoons.
Specification of Iron hoops (widths & gauges)
Specification of Timber (Staves & Heading)
Machine made Heads.
Shaving clean inside & levelling joints inside
Blocking Casks for stock in new hoops.
Putting in 2 Bung Staves
Sample Casks.
Intermediate sizes
Topping down Chimes
Second Firing or Browning Casks.

Blazing off a Browning Heads.
"Pompeying" casks.
Hagging
Extra Wide Grooves
Packing
Matting Packs
Brewers' Remade Work & Cobbling.
Buoys.
Day Work
Dry Casks
General Articles (governing the whole list)
Government Work.
Provision casks
Dry Tonnage casks.
Dry casks
India contract Hogsheads
Tight & Dry-tight casks.
Harness casks
Heading up
Oil Work
Printing Ink bases
Ships' Water casks
Stout, Slight & Ships' Water Puncheons.

Articles as Stout, Slight & Ships Water Puncheons
Cobbling — do —
Old Drums for — do —

Vat Work

Extra Hoops on Vats.
Round Bouge Vats
do Splay do
do Open Work
Oval — do —
do Vats & Casks
Setting Brass, Copper & Galvanized Hoops

Vinegar Work (New Re-made & Cobbling etc)

West India Work

Rum, Molasses & Provision Casks & Packs
{ Chopping & Backing Rum Puncheons
{ Staves etc. Packing, Clamping & Matting

Wine & Spirit Work

Stout Distillers Casks
Slight Spirit do
Wine do
Cobbling etc Wine Casks
do Spirit do
Cases for Cobbling etc Spirit Casks.

Dry Cases for Spirit Casks.
Cobbling Dry Cases for - do do
Packing do do.
Articles on Cobbling
Machine - made Heads for Wine, Spirit & Vinegar Casks.

Day Work.

Piece Coopers Taken on by the day.— 7s. 6 to 8s 6 per Working Day of 9 hours for the first five days & 6 hours on Saturday, such working hours not to include Meal-times; or 7s per Day of 9 hours inclusive of Meal-times.

A full days pay for Saturday

Piece Coopers Taken on by the Hour.— 1s. 5d per hour for the first 2 hours & 10d per hour for each additional hour in each day.

The above prices are not to apply to weekly engagements, the terms for which may be mutually arranged between Employers & Journeymen.

The Working Hours under such Weekly engagements shall not exceed 12 hours per day, inclusive of all Meal-times; & Saturday 8 hours inclusive of Meal-times Overtime beyond these hours to be paid at the rate of time & a quarter.

General Articles.

Employers to supply & keep in repair Grindstones, Hones, Bick-irons Jointers, Crissets, Truss-hoops, Hammers Drivers & Punches. All tools supplied shall be signed for by the Journeyman on receipt thereof; & they shall be returned to him, on his leaving the yard, or he shall pay the cost of such tools, failing which the cost shall be paid by the

Philanthropic Society of Coopers, where such Journeyman is a member of that Society, & of the "Hand in Hand".

Where Journeymen are not members of either Society, the Employer shall take a cash deposit, as security for such tools.

That it shall be optional on the part of the Master either to allow chips, & to pay a cash equivalent of 2½% on the Journeymen's earnings. But where chips are allowed a Journeymen shall only take (once a week) those he has himself made, & such jag a bundle shall not exceed 3'0" in height & 2'0" in diameter And the Philanthropic Society of Coopers bind their members generally to prevent destruction of Timber in the Shops for the purpose of making chips.

(Note - Subject to final approval)

No piece cooper to stop worm holes except under the hoops.

Putting down Blocks or Bick-iron Stumps Hooped, if put down by the Cooper on the Employer's instructions is 6 raising Blocks 6; the Employer alone having the option of deciding whether Blocks or Bick-iron Stumps shall be put down or raised by Coopers or Labourers.

Sunday Work to be paid double.

Coopers to be allowed a fair remuneration for Stowing or unstowing

The working hours shall be as follows:—

From 1st November to 1st March 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.; after 1st March to 31st October 4 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Overtime to be paid 6 per hour or any part thereof beyond piecework prices, but no overtime shall be

paid to any Journeyman who has not worked 46 hours during such week in which he is employed beyond the usual working hours.

Only one hour per week overtime allowed to be worked.

That the Journeyman be booked on Friday, & all work booked on that day shall be completed by the Saturday following, & any such work not completed shall not be paid for until the following week.

The Imperial Gallon to be the Standard by which all wet baskes in this list shall be paid.

The Journeymen, of the respective yards collectively, shall be held responsible for the capacity and workmanship of all baskes put away in stock, & also for any baskes returned by Customers after delivery, being small or faulty in workmanship.

but he shall not be held responsible unless they are returned within a fortnight of the date of delivery from the yard.

The prices stated in this list were mutually agreed to on

and shall be binding upon both Masters & Journeymen for a period of three years from above date, at the expiration of which time, should either Masters or Journeymen require to make any alterations, six months' notice shall be given thereof. And every facility shall be given by both parties for the discussion & mutual agreement of such desired alterations.

Prices for work not specified in this List shall be mutually agreed upon by three Masters & three Journeymen (with a referee or referees, to be mutually appointed by both parties, if necessary), & the decision of such three Masters & three Journeymen

(or of the referee or referees, if the matter is referred) shall be binding upon the whole Trade.

Any dispute as to the quality or description of Timber, or as to the proper interpretation of any of the Clauses of this List, shall be first referred, by way of "Preliminary Survey," to one member of each Committee of the respective bodies, who shall proceed forthwith to the yard where such disputes occur, & shall there & then mutually decide the same if possible, & such decision shall be then in writing & signed by each of them when it shall be binding upon both parties to the dispute. Failing mutual agreement by this means, however, the matter shall then be referred to a Board of Arbitration consisting of three Masters, to be appointed by the London Master Coopers' Association & three Journeymen, to be appointed by the

Philanthropic Society of Coopers.
The decision of such Board of Arbitration, or of five of its members, shall be final & binding upon the Trade.

And it is hereby agreed that, upon any dispute arising between any of the members of the respective bodies, notice shall be forthwith given thereof to the Executive of each, & the "Preliminary Survey" shall immediately take place; but if Arbitration is found to be absolutely necessary to decide the dispute, then such Arbitration shall be fixed at the earliest possible moment; but pending the said Arbitration the Journeymen shall continue at their employment, it being mutually agreed that the decision of such Board of Arbitration shall be retrospective & apply to any of the work in dispute, whether already paid for or not at the disputed price or prices.

January 14th 1895. F.H.D.

Owen Hugh Smith. Hay's Wharf.

re. Tea Coopers.

Employs ~~70~~ 140 men ~~of~~ who do tea coopering
of whom 70 are regular weekly men.
Wages 6d. per hour.
Hours 8 – 4.
Overtime after 8 P.M. 8d. per hour.
Contingency money ("Cons") 3d. per day.
Thus with contingency money a mans
full pay for the day is 4/-
½ an hour at 12.30 for dinner.
Busy season winter
Slack Summer.
Seasons used to be strongly marked but
since the increased importation of Indian
and Ceylon Tea & Java tea work
has been spread over the year.
They had a strike in 91 (?) when the men
left because they wd not pay for the

Dinner hour. A compromise was finally arranged by which the men took ½ hr for dinner and instead of being paid regularly the 3d. if they wanted it to repre-sent work only given the 3d as con-tingency money provided they were not found lazing about. The foreman can stop any man's 'cos' whom he thinks is not working up.

Before the strike they used to have Piecework. Men could earn 7d or 7½.
Now they have all T. & find the men more regular.
The foreman has worked out the results several times and finds they actually get rather more work done now than formerly, there is not so much ar-rangement & combination among the men under time as under P where they wd work in a body & take out a job on contract. The men also are less independent ie they depend more on the masters wishes than upon their fellow men

Tea chests on arrival are opened & the iron hoops at either end are knocked off, the nails taken out & the lid taken off: they (lid) is then at once bound down again slightly with a 'hoop' of wood nailed across - which can be easily undone for sampling or bulking (ie mixing etc).

The men are ordinary labourers.

They take on only young men who can pick it up in a week.

For the first week a man will not earn more than 18/- though he is actually given 24/-. After that he knows his business or does not.

The sharper men were put to coopering the others to trolley work.

The best sort of man ought to be able to make up a chest in 10 minutes from the hold tea, which had already been crushed into bits by travelling etc.

'Box-knocker' is the name given to the less skilled Cooper who can only just handle a hammer.

'Coddy' is the technical name for a 'gangers' men are searched on leaving the wharf at 12.30 for dinner.

None seem to eat their food on the premises. They live in Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Peckham so the head of one dept. said.

O.H. Smith took me round the other depts. & shewed the vaults for Australian Butter. This is now the great competitor with Danish & Brittany butters at this time of the year it is preferred as against stored butter in Europe. They had received 3,000 !! tons of butter in a fortnight from Australia & New Zealand this X mas. The greater part was from Australia.

He said the development of this trade was prodigious. They had bought Cotton's wharf a year back for the purpose.

Tues January 29th. 1895. S. H. J.

Interview with Mr F. Paine. Lath render, Lath & Lath wood merchant. 29 at the Mild may Radical club. Stoke Newington Green. N.

Mr Paine's business address is 27 Arola Street Shacklewell. E.

Laths are made from 'Lath wood' which is really red pine from Russia (best because with less sap.) & used to do so from Sweden & Dantzig. Dantzig wood was crooked so that it's importation dropped off. Swedish wood is good but is now imported as ready made laths instead of as raw material. Laths are used to be covered over with plaster work, both as ceilings & as partitions: & tiles in church work when double laths (is double thickness single laths go 5 to the inch)

Most foreign laths are sawn & are therefore less strong than rent wood. Rent wood breaking power (5 to an inch - nails 13 inch apart) would be 56 lbs as against 28 lbs for sawn laths.

Laths are used for strawberry punnets: every one is supposed to, but not all can make them The punnets themselves are made always at Brentford. A few are also made for gardening sticks: but ofcourse the principal use is in the Building.

It is not a large trade, & not 1000 within 12 miles of London. composed of men such as lime, timber, & slate merchants who are not themselves renders, in the best of the trade there would be ~~an~~ small master lath renders, employing as the propation of 1 master to 5 men (Himself he employs 10 to 16 men & is the largest in London)

It is a piecework trade, & time is exceptional. No regular prices ~~lists~~ are used, owing to the great difference in the wood ~~used~~. If a man knows the wood to be good he will often take under Society prices, for he will knows that his weekly takings ~~would~~ be more this way than if he took indifferent wood at the Society Rate The Society price list does not recognize any difference between good & bad wood. The Society

however endeavoured to raise rates ½, but which has not been effective.

1. The wood is first piled, & then drawn lots for, & when drawn the man must work it up be it bad or good.

2. It is then sawn into different lengths (2ft 6. 2ft 8 3ft 6 & 4ft)

3 He then brakes it out into bolts about 1 inch wide & 2 inch thick. & then takes them to his 'brake' where he makes or 'felts' them down into laths with the iron, after which he lays them in, counts them, ties them up into bundles. & is paid by the number of ft (laid lenghtwise) he gets out of them. Every lathe render has a iron on his left thumb 1st & 2nd joints from splitting up the laths.

Fast worker could make 4s 0d } all making the same
Medium " 3s 0d } number of hours 8-30
Slow old man 2s 0d } to 8 at night.

some come in at 9 or 10. These amounts take 10 hours work to earn. Damn badly paid & ought to be more if it were not for foreign competition

Foreman work at the same rates, but are permanent hands

Fifty-four hours is a full week. Permanent hands go home to dinner & tea, live near their work, & have breakfast before they come: quite ⅓ would be odd men with irregular work. Summer is the busy time & Winter the slack. The majority hold no stock for no reason, but they don't, probably there is very little capital in this line.

It takes 5 years to learn the trade. Son works with Father until 21. Registered indentures for 5 or 7 years for a boy put to a man, & no one who is not a relation of a lath render can come into the business, unless apprenticed to a master lath render. it is very much a Father to son trade.

Trade is getting less every year & free trade will kill them. Foreign lath answers the purpose, & very few apprentices are taken on now. Fathers now drive them (i.e. nail them up)

Foreign laths are straighter than English & contain 500 ft as against 300 ft of wood in the English Bundles.

3. The venders are the poorest class, very few have regular work whilst the many have long periods out of work owing to the importation of foreign manufactured laths, whilst the latter is able to fix the foreign laths thus giving him an advantage over the render.

There is no special district where the lathrenders live (as in the case of some trades) they are scattered in all directions so that it would not be just to name north, south, east & west.

4. Men do not work in gangs, each man completes his work of making laths throughout.

I shall be pleased to explain anything you do not thoroughly understand.

Yours faithfully.

(sigd) J. Paine.

Lath render: Secretary of Society. Born in the Blackfriars Road. Brooks a lath render to the 5th generation all Londoners.

Apprenticed with his father for 5 years. As a rule no premium paid. Apprenticeship general for 5 or 7 years. 5 years long enough to learn 7 the maximum. Necessary to learn qualities of timber, when they are fit for working & how to work them etc etc.

Kind of laths.

(1) single width 1 inch. thickness should be 6 to the inch. they generally run 5 or 6.

(2) lath & a half is one inch wide & 4 to the inch

(3) Double laths 3/4 inch in width & 3 to the inch

(4) Basket laths sold to punnet makers for strawberry baskets etc. The best of the wood is required for this.

Men. The bench at which the lathrenders work is called a breake (& brake)

Works for Brick & Sand, lime & cement merchants Sets Rd. Chelsea. The firm as customary sells timber only in the form of laths.

Was once out of work for 32 weeks 7 years ago. When working at Eastwood for Sd (lime & cement merchants) a big firm. been with them 4½ years the lath renders started their union as a branch of the gas workers. Was asked to take office & advised by firm to have nothing to do with it, as he would not keep his place if he did. Said he would consult the 'Missus' who at that time was nearing her confinement. Did so, thought it over & at last decided "I am going to get the sack" Kept to the Union & was dismissed Had a year of hard times & is now foreman at the firm near Eastwoods.

Much shifting in the trade ~~usually~~ generally. In an average reckons men are out 4 months in the year, but for some time there has been plenty of work.

All piecework, would abolish piecework if possible. (Vide printed table.)

Timber merchants used to have nearly the whole of the trade of lathmaking. They used to sell the laths direct

to

to the plasterers who did the lathing. Now there are about 36 full price lath-making firms nearly half of whom are lime & cement merchants the rest are either timber merchants or lath renders & nothing else.

Hours Average 66 hours a week. This own firm 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. less 1 hr 20 min Saturdays from 7 to 1 less ½ hr Total 63½ hrs.

Overtime? No.!!!!!

Estimates common average weekly earnings now at 31/-. 9 men at Gribes a few weeks ago earned £13. in a digging week of 66 hours & next week just over £12 between them. The 9 included 4 quick men the rest average. Puts weekly average of the average render at not more than 17/- or 18/-

Busy & Slack seasons Winter the dullest time. Wood is then generally wet, & if the left hand is cold it is useless. Riga wood difficult to work as it sops up the wet. Could only earn 24/- a week last winter.

winter. But main cause of variation the general effects acting on the building trade.

Previously when the plasterers did the lathing they did outside work in the summer & inside in the winter & consequently the winter was then the busiest time for the renders. This was about 20 years ago.

Trade Unions There have been several Unions among lath renders. All previous ones have gone under. The previous Society was founded October 89. became a branch of the Gasworkers in 1890. broke up July 92 starting afresh on present separate basis in the same month. Brooks always opposed joining the gasworkers. Motive assigned was to secure greater strength behind but there was no real connection. Brooks suggested the Dockers for choice, but wished neither. Says the step was taken under ill advice. The Gasworkers were left because they would give no assistance. The 10/- a week dispute pay had been the attraction but when the renders wanted

wanted to make a move the executive of the G.W. refused giving no reason that only 70. out of 300 lath renders. (Brooks estimates total at something over 250) were on the books. But it was & is impossible to get majority of renders in the Union as the greater number are in the East End & wont join & work at lower prices.

Number of Union July '92 - 9 - Ditto May '93 114 of whom 107 are financial - no members in East London. Has tried to get them several times but they seem to be contented with their lot. Has no good word for them. Subscription to Union 3d. Friendly Society Benefits none. Reserve about £20.

Competition Foreign lathes 'our curse' Says they are inferior in quality being more brittle & cut against the grain but they are straighter than the English laths & easier for the latter to work Says lath rending in Sweden holds the same place as an employment as

firewood cutting in an English workhouse the Swedish unemployed are put to it. 5 years ago it looked as though there would be no lath-bending in England The first step taken against the foreign laths was in connection with a contract of Brass's at Aldershot Barracks. Their use was contrary to the contract & was fought. since then the demand for English laths has steadily increased Says that an Englishman took lath-bending tools out with him to Russia about 25 years ago & thus began the making of & led to the importation of the foreign laths.

Friendly Society Is a member only of a slate club.
Specialization None, but says of East Londoners that they cannot compete with the West & South London render [This would seem to be from want of skill rather than from difference in kind of work.]

The Lathers Now have a Society of their own - started about 6 months ago. They want

want to get on to the Federation but "they never will" They have about 50 members Antagonism between the renders & plasterers on the one hand & the lathers on the other very keen.

It seems to be explained (1) by the plasterers wishing to get back the lathers work (2) from the lathers being willing to work & perhaps even preferring the foreign laths & (3) from their habit & apparent willingness to take on jobs at piece rates.

Two renders can keep 3 lathers at work but many of the latter are now out of work Thinks there are over 3 lathers to 1 render in London. No apprentices among the renders now. Brooks seemed to take the credit of this particularly to the union & was glad as keeping down supply. but with revival of the rending industry expects to see apprentices again. Says that anybody can drive the laths is the lathers' work. Two requisits (1) to be able to measure up the work (2) to be quick. These can be learnt

learnt in ~~two~~ or three or four months. The lathers say they can earn 5/- a week more on the foreign laths & therefore they prefer them. "But I have practically wiped them out of existence in London" This made possible through the cooperation of the plasterers. The lathers must go then the plasterers will do the driving. Brooks hopes that the renders will eventually become a branch of the operative plasterers, who will refuse to cover both foreign laths & laths driven by others. Says that lathers exist nowhere now except in London, that they are little a nothing more than labourers & will have to become labourers again. Some might become plasterers' labourers of whom an extra number would be needed, but admits that it is difficult to see what is to happen to the lathers.

But it is diamond cut diamond, & they will have to go. Some will perhaps have a chance to become renders if the demand increases.

Character.

Character. The renders are a steady set of men. but "when I was a nipper they were a nobby lot" The East Londoner is "a beer gobbling fellow" And so are the lathers. if possible a little worse than the East London renders. The latter work very long hours & earn 7½ & sometimes 1ᵖ less than in other parts of London.

Machinery Has been tried. but not been successful

New Processes. Slabs & iron laths not having an important effect. Does not think they will.

Health. The healthiest trade in existence. It exercises all the muscles.

Sub letting No sub-letting in the rending, but the common practice for the lathers. Tribe of. employ 1 lather whom "I call a sweater" Brooks a teetotaller. Lives now in 3 rooms in dwellings That in which I was, was comfortable with sofa, carpet etc. During the evening the wife brought in a bottle of Hops Ale which he seems generally to have in the evening. The wife earns nothing. 3 children, eldest 10. buried five. Brooks aged 37.