

**THE IMPACT OF QUADRUPEDS IN  
HANOVERIAN LONDON**

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## ABSTRACT

In his classic study, *Man and the Natural World*, Keith Thomas assumed and asserted that by 1800 the inhabitants of English cities, and particularly London, had become largely alienated from animal life.<sup>1</sup> This study challenges this assumption by exploring the scale and impact of quadruped mammalian life in London during the period, 1714–1837. My research represents a deliberate shift in historical enquiry away from debates centred on the rise of kindness and humanitarianism, and towards the integration of animals into wider urban historiographies and a demonstration of how their presence shaped urban existence.

My central aim is to highlight the power of animals to make profound and far-reaching changes in society, and specifically in the British metropolis. Much recent historiography has given particular attention to human cruelty to animals. Yet, the tendency to consider human-animal histories solely as narratives of abuse threatens not just to over-simplify complex phenomena but also to seriously underestimate the role of animals in society. I seek to redress this imbalance by re-asserting the significance of animal technologies and by placing animals at the centre of eighteenth-century urban, social and cultural histories. I begin by considering the scale and contribution of cattle and horses to the social and commercial life of the metropolis as well as their impact on the construction and use of the built environment. I then turn to the disruptive influence of animals and the challenge of ‘commanding’ the recalcitrant beast, by examining the problem of the ‘over-drove’ ox and of equine traffic accidents.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (2nd edn, Harmondsworth, 1984).

# CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS & ILLUSTRATIONS	<i>page</i>	4
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS		8
INTRODUCTION		9
I. PRODUCTION & COMMERCE: THE URBAN BEAST AT WORK		15
i.    Smithfield Livestock		16
ii.   The Horse		40
iii.  Impact on the Built Environment		72
II. COMMANDING THE RECALCITRANT BEAST		97
i.    The 'Over-Drove' Ox		104
ii.   Equine Traffic Accidents		131
CONCLUSION		157
BIBLIOGRAPHY		160

## MAPS, PLATES, FIGURES & TABLES

### MAPS

1	Plan of London around 1300 indicating situation of Smithfield market	<i>page</i> 25
2	Wencesclas Hollar and others, <i>Map of London</i> (after 1688), indicating situation of Smithfield market	26
3	John Rocque's <i>Plan of London</i> (1746) indicating the main drovers routes into Smithfield.	26 & 110
4	John Rocque's <i>Plan of London</i> (1746) showing Smithfield, Hatton Gardens and the principle metropolitan markets to which livestock were driven.	27
5	John Rocque's <i>Plan of London</i> (1746) showing section of the Grosvenor Estate.	79
6	<i>Richard Horwood's Map of London</i> (3rd edn, 1813): detail indicating the location of No.4 Grosvenor Square.	80
7	Richard Horwood's <i>Map of London</i> (3rd edn, 1813), detail of the Cavendish-Harley Estate.	91
8	Peter Potter's <i>Plan of the Parish of St Marylebone</i> (2nd edn, 1832): detail showing the key mews developments serving Portland Place, Harley Street and Wimpole Street on the Cavendish-Harley Estate.	92
9	A Plan of the New Road from Paddington to Islington, London Magazine, 1756.	116

### PLATES

1	William Hogarth, <i>O the Roast Beef of Old England</i> (' <i>The Gate of Calais</i> ') (Oil on canvas, 1748) [detail]. Tate.	<i>page</i> 30
2	James Gilray, <i>French Liberty, British Slavery</i> (Etching with Hand Colouring, London, 1792). Fitzwilliam Museum	32
3	James Gilray, <i>Fat Cattle</i> (Hand-coloured engraving, London, 1802).	32
4	<i>The Newbus Ox</i> , engraved by William Ward after Thomas Weaver (colour mezzotint, 1812). Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading.	32



- 5 George Garrard, *A Holderness Cow* (Oil on Canvas, 1798). Private Collection. 32
- 6 *Old Smithfield Market*, after Pugin and Rowlandson, engraved by Buck (Hand-coloured aquatint, London, 1811). Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading. 35
- 7 Trade Card for Robert Stone, Nightman and Rubbish Carter (1745). London Metropolitan Archives, Prints and Drawings. 46
- 8 Trade Card for Robert Stone, Nightman and Rubbish Carter (c.1750). London Metropolitan Archives, Prints and Drawings. 46
- 9 William Henry Toms after Hubert François Gravelot, *A Perspective View of the Engine, now made use of for Driving the Piles of the New Bridge at Westminster* (engraving, 1738). The Royal Society. 48
- 10 *The High Mettled Racer. By the Late Charles Dibdin* (1831); 'Blind, old, lean, and feeble, he tugs round a mill'. Wood engraving by G. W. Bonner from a design by Robert Cruikshank. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. 53
- 11 Anon, *The horse wheel of a Brewery* (engraving, 1763). B. Spiller, 'The Georgian Brewery', *Architectural Review*, 122 (1957), pp.314. 53
- 12 George Garrard, *View of the East End of Whitbread's Brewery in Chiswell St* (Painted engraving, London 1792). 56
- 13 George Stubbs, *Hambletonian* (Oil on canvas, c.1800). Mount Stewart, The Londonderry Collection (National Trust). 56
- 14 *Old Brown aged 35, a Dray-Horse in a Brewery Yard* by John Nost Sartorius (Oil on canvas, 1798). Private Collection. 58
- 15 *Pirate and Outlaw* after J.C. Zeitter, engraved by J.Egan (c.1818). Lawes Agricultural Trust, Rothamsted Experimental Station. 59
- 16 George Scharf the elder, *Draymen and Horse* (drawing, c.1820–30). Bridgeman Art Library / Private Collection. 60
- 17 *Truman Hanbury Buxton & Co Brewery* (Mezzotint, published by J. Moore, 1842). 65
- 18 *Photograph of Young's Brewery Yard* (1896). H. Osborn, *Britain's Oldest Brewery: The Story Behind Young's of Wandsworth* (Guildford, 1999), p.148. 65
- 19 Plan of Thrale's Anchor Brewery, 1774 (not to scale) based on LMA, ACC/2305/01/834, 'Thrale's Estate, 1774.' 75
- 20 A coach waits outside a house in Portland Place, Robert and James Adam, c.1777-80, View from Thomas Malton, *A Picturesque Tour*, vol.1 (1792), plate 88. 77

21	Sutton Nicholl, <i>View of Grosvenor Square</i> (engraving, 1754) [detail].	80
22	Ground & first floor plan of coach house and stables at Derby House, 26 Grosvenor Square (1773– 74) from Robert & James Adam, <i>The Works in Architecture</i> , vol. 2 (1779), plate I.	81
23	William Hogarth, <i>The Second Stage of Cruelty</i> (Etching & engraving, London, 1 <sup>st</sup> February, 1751). The Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester.	99
24	Thomas Rowlandson, <i>Miseries of London [traffic]</i> (Hand-coloured etching, London, 1 February, 1807). Lewis Walpole Collection.	100
25	James Gilray, <i>Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion -or- Forcible Reasons for Negotiating a Regicide Peace</i> (London, 1796). British Museum, London.	101
26	George Woodward, <i>Miseries of Human Life</i> (engraving, c.1800). London Metropolitan Archives, Satirical Prints Collection.	101
27	View of Soho Square from <i>The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics</i> , printed for R. Ackermann, vol. 8 (1812), plate 22.	116
28	Thomas Rowlandson, <i>The Overdrove Ox</i> (Hand-coloured engraving, London 1790). London Metropolitan Archives, Satirical Prints Collection.	122
29	Anon, <i>The Horse America Throwing his Master</i> (Etching, Westminster, 1779). Library of Congress, Washington.	138

## FIGURE

1	Population of London compared with head of livestock brought to Smithfield Market, 1700– 1831.	<i>page</i> 39
2	Truman Brewery Horse Stock (1790– 1813).	67
3	Courage Barclay & Simonds Horse Stock, Sept 1827– April 1839.	69
4	Dray Delivery Destinations from the White Hart Brewery, Chiswell Street in 1800.	70

**TABLES**

1	Sheep and Black Cattle brought for sale to Smithfield market, 1732– 94.	<i>page</i>	38
2	Smithfield Livestock per head of population, 1700– 1831.		39
3	Truman Brewery Dray- and Mill-Horse Stock, 1759– 1780 & 1790– 1813.		66
4	Barrelage and Number of Dray-Horses employed by the eight largest breweries in London, 1780-1805.		67
5	Orders Placed for Steam Engines by London’s Breweries.		68
6	Average six-monthly stock of dray-horses at Courage, Barclay and Simonds Brewery, September 1827– April 1839.		69
7	Dray Delivery Destinations from the White Hart Brewery, Chiswell Street in 1800.		70
8	List of workers at Courage, Barclay & Simonds Brewery (CBS).		71
9	Ratio of mews units : houses in key streets on Cavendish-Harley Estate (north of Queen Ann Street).		93
10	Newspaper adverts for rent & sale of properties with coach houses & stables (1775– 90).		94
11	Coach and horse capacity in mews serving Cavendish-Harley Estate, North of Queen Ann Street (1775– 1790).		95
12	List of taxable servants at Grosvenor Square, 4 May 1782.		95
13	Approximate Density of Equine Servants living and working in Mews on the Cavendish-Harley Estate, North of Queen Ann Street (1775– 90).		96
14	‘Over-drove’ ox accidents reported by London’s newspapers, January 1750– December 1769.		129
15	Geographical breakdown of fatal & near fatal bullock attacks reported in London newspapers, January 1760– December 1769.		130
16	Vehicle type and basic summary of cause of death recorded for Coroners Records of City of London and Southwark, 1790– 1830.		155
17	Accidents involving carts, drays and waggons reported by London’s newspapers, January 1740– December 1769.		156



## INTRODUCTION

*A City Full of People*, the title of Peter Earle's survey of London, 1650– 1750, and a phrase borrowed from Daniel Defoe, neatly summarises the intense human activity so often associated with the rise of the British metropolis.<sup>2</sup> The city's national and global significance has been widely discussed in terms of the size of its population, which rose from 575,000 in 1700 to 900,000 in 1801 and 1,595,000 in 1831.<sup>3</sup> For good reason, the daily hustle and bustle of these people continues to fascinate historians. Yet, traditional studies have tended to depict the urban environment as overwhelmingly, and sometimes even exclusively, human. Beyond passing reference, animals have rarely made their presence felt, to the extent that a recent volume of the *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, covering the period 1540 – 1840, is almost entirely bereft of horses, sheep, cattle, pigs, dogs or any other animal convergence.<sup>4</sup>

To compound matters, Keith Thomas's classic *Man and the Natural World*, went so far as to argue that by 1800, urban communities had become alienated from nature.<sup>5</sup> Thomas asserted that a 'new sentiment' towards animals, already prevalent by 1800, was 'closely linked to the growth of towns and the emergence of an industrial order in which animals become increasingly marginal in the processes of production.'<sup>6</sup> As by far the largest urban hub in England, London represented the most advanced model for these perceived developments. Here, above all, Thomas identified 'well-to-do townsmen, remote from the agricultural process and inclined to think of animals as pets rather than as working livestock.'<sup>7</sup> The primary aim of this study is to test what appear to be misleading and unsubstantiated assumptions in Thomas's hypothesis and, at the same time, to challenge conventional urban historiographies by exploring Hanoverian London as a human-animal hybrid, a 'city of beasts' as well as the 'city full of people.'<sup>8</sup> Yet, as I will show throughout this study, the urban beast did not just occupy the city; it underpinned its architectural, social, economic and cultural development in startling and fundamental ways.

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Defoe, *History of the Plague in London* (1722; reprinted, 2008), p.34; Peter Earle, *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London, 1650 – 1750* (London, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> E.A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy', *Past & Present*, 37 (1967), p.44; 1730s – 1790s: J. Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670-1830* (Cambridge, 2006), p.179; 1801, 1821, 1831: L.D. Schwarz, *London in the Age of Industrialisation* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.125-8. T. Barker, 'London: A Unique Megalopolis?' in T. Barker & A. Sutcliffe (eds.), *Megalopolis: The Giant City in History* (Basingstoke, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, vol.2: 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (2nd edn, Harmondsworth, 1984), p.243.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.181.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p. 182.

<sup>8</sup> P. Earle, *A City Full of People*.

Since *Man and the Natural World*, several studies have questioned the idea that animals were ‘peripheral’ in nineteenth-century London. Diana Donald has asserted that they were ‘ubiquitous ... absorbed into its working economy and patterns of consumption in a variety of species and purposes so complex it would fill a volume.’<sup>9</sup> Yet, in reassessing the relationship between animals and English society, recent literature has tended to focus on issues of animal cruelty and the rise of humanitarianism.<sup>10</sup> Their central aim has been to show, in contrast to what Thomas believed, that ‘it was not philosophical distance from sites of cruelty, but painful proximity to them which prompted Londoners’ protests.’<sup>11</sup> Thus, Harriet Ritvo has argued

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the English would have been surprised to hear themselves praised for special kindness to animals. They were surrounded by evidence to the contrary ... the streets of London were crowded with horses and dogs that served as draft animals and beasts of burden, in addition, passers-by often encountered herds of cattle and sheep ... Many of these animals were obviously exhausted or in pain...Those who deplored the mistreatment of animals agreed that the English were especially inclined to inflict it.<sup>12</sup>

While this approach has an important role to play, the tendency to consider human-animal histories solely as narratives of abuse threatens not just to over-simplify complex phenomena but also to seriously under-estimate the multi-faceted role of animals in society. While, for instance, several historians have discussed the ill-treatment of horses, there has been little analysis of the scale of equine traffic, its impact on the construction and use of metropolitan space or the challenges of commanding equine behaviour. This study represents a deliberate shift in historical enquiry away from debates centred on the rise of kindness, humanitarianism and animal welfare legislation, towards the integration of animals into wider urban historiographies and a demonstration of how the presence of animals shaped urban existence.

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<sup>9</sup> D. Donald, “‘Beastly Sights’: the treatment of animals as a moral theme in representations of London c.1820-1850’ in D. Arnold (ed.), *The Metropolis and its Image: Constructing Identities for London, c.1750-1950* (Oxford, 1999), p.49; H. Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800* (London, 1998), p.13, has argued that ‘during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries animals continued to be a highly visible aspect of British life.’

<sup>10</sup> R. Caras, *A Perfect Harmony: The Intertwining Lives of Animals and Humans Throughout History* (New York, 1996); D. Donald, “‘Beastly Sights’”; E. Fudge, *Animal* (London, 2002); E. Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Houndmills, 2002); L. Kalof, *Looking at Animals in Human History* (London, 2007); H. Kean, *Animal Rights*; D. Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights* (Cambridge & New York, 2003); H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Donald, “‘Beastly Sights’”, p.50.

<sup>12</sup> Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, p.125-6.

Traditional urban histories appear to have considered the presence of animals as incongruous with the key manifestations of London's success in this period: thriving commerce, grand architectural developments and the fashionable lifestyles of polite society. Where animals have appeared in urban histories, they have tended to represent generic case studies of nuisance. Because eighteenth-century topographers were so concerned with aesthetics, sites of production and commerce, in which animals were prevalent, were regularly condemned as filthy and disorderly with little consideration for their utility or productivity. In making use of topographical evidence, some historians appear to have become fixated by the grotesque and chaotic extremes of urban life. While such an approach has useful applications, it also threatens to make light of complex and sophisticated activities, including those underpinned by animals. Recently, Emily Cockayne has sought to show how people living in England between 1600–1770 'were made to feel uncomfortable' by the 'noise, appearance, behaviour, proximity and odours' of other beings, and included in her text several toe-curling appearances by the urban beast.<sup>13</sup> Cockayne acknowledges that she is only highlighting the 'worst parts' of urban life, but such a one-sided approach threatens to caricature London's streets as out of control and to downplay both the positive contribution made by animals and the complexity of human-animal relationships.<sup>14</sup>

The absence of animals from histories of the eighteenth-century metropolis also reflects the dominance of what David Edgerton has termed 'innovation-centric' accounts of man's technological progress. This he defines as 'the assumption that the new is much superior to older methods' and that 'failure to move from one to the other is to be explained by "conservatism", not to mention stupidity or ignorance.'<sup>15</sup> This dissertation reasserts the significance of animal technologies and the power of animals to make profound and far-reaching changes in society. Since the 1970s, a growing number of historians have begun to reassess the role played by animals in the early modern period and the industrial age. Much of this work has focussed on the prevalence of horses, highlighting major advances in their breeding and marketing from the 1500s. Thus, Joan Thirsk and Peter Edwards have argued that by 1700, 'the horse-keeping business,' in England 'had become everyman's business, rooted in

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<sup>13</sup> E. Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise and Stench in England 1600-1770* (New Haven & London, 2007), p.1. Cockayne describes pigs as 'notorious mobile street nuisances', examines the negative impact of barking and biting dogs, accidents involving horses and the stench of livestock dung, p.107, p.148, pp.166-68, pp.170-72, pp.192-93 & p.213.

<sup>14</sup> Cockayne, *Hubbub*, p.1.

<sup>15</sup> D. Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old. Technology and global history since 1900* (London, 2006), p.9; F.M.L. Thompson, *Victorian England: the horse drawn society* (Inaugural Lecture, Bedford College, University of London, 1970).

a ‘highly differentiated pattern of demand and supply.’<sup>16</sup> Karen Raber and Treva Tucker have argued that in early modern Europe, horses were

the literal and figurative vehicles for the transmission of goods, people, and ideas ... They functioned both as a kind of technology in and of themselves ... Horses served man at all levels of society: they pulled both carts and carriages; they carried farmers to market and noblemen into battle; they plodded across poor fields and pranced in equestrian ballets.<sup>17</sup>

Others have shown that horses played a crucial role in the expansion and modernisation of European and American cities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>18</sup> Edgerton has asserted that ‘twentieth-century horsepower was not a left-over from a pre-mechanical era; the gigantic horse-drawn metropolis of 1900 was new.’<sup>19</sup> McShane and Tarr assert that ‘Humans could not have built nor lived in the giant, wealth-generating metropolises that emerged in... [the nineteenth] century without horses.’<sup>20</sup> These studies have rightly sought to redress the almost exclusive analysis of industrialisation from ‘the viewpoint of mechanisation’. Because historians have focussed so heavily on the triumph of the steam engine, they have tended to ignore the contribution of the ‘living’, ‘oat-fuelled’ machine.<sup>21</sup> I will, therefore, apply Edgerton’s ‘use-centred’ approach to look beyond novelty and assess technologies which continued to function alongside new ones.<sup>22</sup> I argue that animals lie at the heart of this essential reassessment of modernity.

Recent studies of North America have shown how one can give a historical role to quadrupeds. Virginia DeJohn Anderson has placed livestock at the heart of the colonisation and transformation of early America. Taking account of ‘myriad encounters’, she argues that ‘animals not only produced changes in the land but also in the hearts and minds and behaviour of the peoples who dealt with them ... sometimes mundane decisions about how to feed pigs or

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<sup>16</sup> J. Thirsk, *Horses in early modern England: for Service, for Pleasure, for Power*, The Stenton Lecture, 1977 (University of Reading, 1978), pp.24-8; D. Landry, *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture* (Baltimore, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> ‘Introduction’ in K. Raber & T.J. Tucker (eds), *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline and Identity in the Early Modern World* (Houndmills & New York, 2005), p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*, p.9; McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*.

<sup>19</sup> Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> C. McShane & J.Tarr, *The Horse in the City: Living Machines in the 19th Century* (Baltimore, 2007), p.1.

<sup>21</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.14; Thompson, *Victorian England: the horse drawn society*, p.19 & p.13, argues that horse numbers only peaked in Britain in 1902 and that ‘without carriages and carts, the railways would have been like stranded whales, giants unable to use their strength’; Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*, p.33, asserts that horsepower in the United States only peaked in 1915, with more than twenty-one million horses working on American farms.

<sup>22</sup> Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*.



whether or not to build a fence also could affect the course of history.’<sup>23</sup> Clay McShane and Joel Tarr have urged that horses be viewed as ‘living machines’, without which ‘humans could not have built nor lived in the giant, wealth-generating metropolises’ that emerged in the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup> They have even suggested that ‘horses were urbanising more rapidly than people in the third quarter of the nineteenth century’ and that ‘the constant presence of living, breathing, defecating, and sometimes dying animals was a constant reminder of nature, even in cities, the most artificial of environments.’<sup>25</sup>

I will show that animals have a crucial role to play in the historiography of eighteenth-century London and cities more generally. In this study, for the first time, non-human life takes centre stage in the major themes of eighteenth-century urban history: commerce, trade and industry, polite society and the consumer revolution, urban expansion and improvement, social tension, crime and disorder. My research draws on a wealth of source material, including maps and architectural plans, newspapers, paintings and prints, personal papers as well as commercial, legal and parliamentary records. Traditional analyses of animal-human relations in England have tended to rely heavily on philosophical, religious and theoretical literature, much of which viewed the activities of town from a distance and compared urban life unfavourably with a sentimental view of the countryside.<sup>26</sup> Instead, I will highlight a wide range of evidence generated by those who had first-hand experience of the urban beast, including those who employed or worked with animals and those who sought to regulate their presence within the metropolis.

In the first section, I will examine the ways in which domestic livestock and horses, underpinned London’s dominance in the business of production, commerce and politeness. In each case, I will assess the size of these animal groups, the precise nature of their contribution and their social and cultural visibility. I will show that contrary to Keith Thomas’s assertion, these animals were more prevalent in 1800 than before, that Londoners were more exposed to their presence and that the success of the city was increasingly dependent on their contribution. In exchange for their services, however, these animals placed heavy demands on the built environment and infrastructures of human care. Focussing on the remarkable innovation of the West End mews, I will examine how architecture and social organisation were moulded around the needs of the urban beast. By tracking these animals through the streets, alleyways and

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<sup>23</sup> V. DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: how domestic animals transformed early America* (Oxford & New York, 2004), p.5 & p.7.

<sup>24</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.1.

<sup>25</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.16 & p.181.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*; Fudge, *Animal*; Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*; Kean, *Animal Rights*; Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights*; Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.

factories of the city, it is possible to observe a wide spectrum of metropolitan contexts, many of which challenge traditional perceptions of eighteenth-century London.

In the second section, I will examine the problematic presence of animals and the challenge of 'commanding' the recalcitrant beast in the metropolitan environment. Focussing on the 'over-drove' ox and the equine traffic accident, I will consider the complex interplay between animal and human behaviour in the busy streets of the capital. At the same time, I will discuss the wider historiographical implications of animal disorder in the context of debates about eighteenth-century urban improvement, law and order, and tensions between polite and plebeian society. In particular, I hope to provide answers to the following questions: In what ways did urban stimuli provoke animals to turn wild and what level of disruption did horses and cattle cause? How did contemporary society view and respond to accidents involving animals? To what extent were these incidents part of the social and cultural visibility of the urban beast? How did the city attempt to regulate against these incidents and how did these measures affect their human guardians?

## CHAPTER 1:

### PRODUCTION & COMMERCE: THE URBAN BEAST AT WORK

There has been a strong tendency for the socio-economic history of London to emphasise the new and the polite at the expense of the traditional and the productive.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the Industrial Revolution has been described as ‘a storm that passed over London and broke elsewhere.’<sup>28</sup> Guided by the labour of London’s quadrupeds, however, I will consider the city as a hub of production, focussing on two commodity groups which underpinned her expansion and prosperity: food and drink.<sup>29</sup> I begin with Smithfield’s gargantuan trade in ‘meat on the hoof’ before moving onto brewing, a leading metropolitan industry which relied heavily on equine engines and haulage. We then venture into the West End, not to admire the grand facades of polite space, but to look behind them into a thriving equine world: the mews. These seemingly prosaic alleyways, the hidden infrastructure of polite stabling, reveal the phenomenal impact of the urban beast on the built environment. Instead of discussing the labour of animals in terms of exploitation and cruelty, this study is thus concerned with the contribution of the urban beast to London’s evolving modernity. In exchange for this labour, as I will show, these animals proved themselves insatiable consumers of urban space and human care.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997); J. Styles & A. Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven, 2006); A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, 2009); D. Cruickshank & N. Burton, *Life in the Georgian City* (London & New York, 1990).

<sup>28</sup> J. L. Hammond quoted in P. Johnson, ‘Economic Development and Industrial Dynamism in Victorian London,’ *London Journal*, 21:1 (1996), p.27. London’s role in the Industrial Revolution has been similarly downplayed by F. Braudel, *Civilisation and Capitalism, 15th-Century-18th-Century, 2: The Wheels of Commerce* (1979); M.D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (2nd edn, London, 1930); T.S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution 1760-1830* (Oxford, 1948); I.J. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (Folkestone, 1979); G.S. Jones, *Outcast London* (Oxford, 1971); L.D. Schwartz, *London in the Age of Industrialisation* (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> David Barnett has identified ‘London’s great food and drink manufacturing industries’ which necessitated ‘very high levels of capitalisation’ as compelling evidence of London’s central role in the Industrial Revolution; D. Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution* (London & New York, 1998), pp.40-49.

<sup>30</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*.

## (I) SMITHFIELD CATTLE

In this section, I begin by quantifying London's unparalleled demand for meat in the eighteenth century and the commercial importance of livestock in the capital. Secondly, I consider how the livestock trade's metropolitan identity was emphasised by the social and cultural visibility of thousands of cattle traversing its streets. Keith Thomas asserted that by 1800 'well-to-do townsmen' were 'inclined to think of animals as pets rather than working livestock' and that only those 'directly involved' in husbandry staved off this urban isolation.<sup>31</sup> Smithfield, the largest live animal market in the world until 1855, is entirely absent from Thomas's analysis. Yet, as I will show, London's trade in meat on the hoof ensured that sheep and cattle persistently encroached on the lives of not just Smithfield graziers, drovers, salesmen and butchers, but of all Londoners. Indeed, in the last decade, a number of historians have argued that large urban centres in Britain and North America were entangled with and transformed by the natural world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Cronon has described the stockyards of nineteenth-century Chicago as the 'great institution where western nature met the Chicago market.'<sup>32</sup> Colin Smith has observed that 'Prior to the railway age', London's markets 'represented some of the most prominent and colourful points of interface between city and country.'<sup>33</sup> This interface was most powerful in the case of Smithfield, because unlike the marketing of fruit, vegetables, hay and straw, the goods sold here were alive. Nature continued to live, breathe, eat and walk within the city. As Ian Maclachlan has argued, 'London was coping with the greatest volume of animal food ... of any city in history ... no other urban area had ever handled such large volumes of livestock in the heart of the city.'<sup>34</sup>

Previous analysis of Smithfield Market has taken place almost exclusively within agricultural histories, discussing agricultural prices and rates of production.<sup>35</sup> Its significance as a site of modern marketing and commerce has received remarkably little attention, 'as if provisioning the

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<sup>31</sup> K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (1984), p.182; Smithfield Market closed on 11 June 1855 and its suburban replacement, the Metropolitan Cattle Market, opened in Holloway two days later, ending nine centuries of livestock trading on the former site. K. Bonser, *The Drovers* (London & Basingstoke, 1970), pp.220-224; S. Roberts, *The Story of Islington* (1975); Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182.

<sup>32</sup> W. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York & London, 1991), p.207.

<sup>33</sup> C. Smith, 'The wholesale and retail markets of London, 1660 – 1840', *EcHR*, 55:1(2002), p.31; L. Mitchell, 'The development of urban retailing, 1700-1815,' in P. Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English provincial towns, 1600-1800* (1984), pp.259-83; F.J. Fisher, 'The development of the London food market,' *EcHR*, 5 (1935), pp.46-64.

<sup>34</sup> I. Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance: the persistence of private slaughterhouses in nineteenth-century London', *Urban History*, 32:2 (2007), p.229.

<sup>35</sup> G. E. Mingay (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 6: 1750-1850 (Cambridge, 1989), pp.150-59 & pp.243-257.

metropolitan masses could be taken for granted'.<sup>36</sup> Yet, Smithfield was undoubtedly one of the most successful and influential centres of commerce in the Hanoverian age. Consumption studies have said a great deal about the manufacture, import and marketing of expensive commodities, particularly durables and semi-durables.<sup>37</sup> Relatively little attention, however, has been given to the consumption of 'food, especially staples.' Yet, as Sara Pennell rightly observes, historians 'must now also accommodate the ways in which domestic goods entered the non-elite household and which were not entirely novel.'<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the venues which historians have traditionally associated with polite consumption have tended to be 'exclusive shopping areas... such as the Royal Exchange and St James'. But the polite consumers of the West End were just as reliant on commodities sold at markets – many of which were strategically constructed in their neighbourhoods – as they were upon the elite shops of goldsmiths and drapers.<sup>39</sup> Among the many domestic goods which demand greater attention, meat is one of the most important, particularly in the metropolitan context. Beef, lamb and to a lesser extent pork were commodities devoured in huge quantities not just by the resident aristocracy and gentry, but also by the middling and lower orders of London society. Their uses were rooted in "'conspicuous" consumption ... but also routinized consumption' and therefore, illuminate 'varieties of consuming available to a large section of the population.'<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, while livestock were bred and reared in the countryside, the urban transit, marketing and slaughter of these animals meant that lamb chops and beef steaks became, and were perceived to be, metropolitan as well as rural products. The Smithfield livestock trade was one of the most important developing hubs of consumption culture in eighteenth-century Britain.

By the mid-nineteenth century, fascination with the scale of metropolitan meat consumption had inspired numerous attempts to calculate its progress over the previous century. One 1815 topographical study recorded that 25,100,000 stone of meat was annually consumed in London and its neighbourhood. Dividing these immense sums among a population of 818,129, John Nightingale concluded that 245 pounds of meat, worth £8'3s, were consumed per capita.<sup>41</sup> In

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<sup>36</sup> C. Smith, 'The wholesale and retail markets of London', p.31.

<sup>37</sup> J. Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *Past & Present*, 168 (2000), pp.124-69; M. Berg, 'From imitation to invention: creating commodities in eighteenth-century Britain', *EcHR*, 55:1 (2002), pp.1-30. M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> S. Pennell, 'The Material Culture of Food in Early Modern England, c.1650-1750', in S. Tarlow & S. West, *Familiar Pasts? Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain 1650-1860* (London, 1999), pp.37-39; See M. Berg, 'From Imitation to invention', (2002), pp.1-30.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, 'The wholesale and retail markets of London', p.36; C. Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of Design History*, 8:3 (1995), pp.157-176.

<sup>40</sup> S. Pennell, 'Consumption and Consumerism in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 42:2 (1999), p.561.

<sup>41</sup> J. Nightingale, *London and Middlesex*, vol. 3 (1815), p.476. When weighing beef, 8 pounds made a stone. The suggested population size of 818,129 in 1811 represents a somewhat conservative estimate.

1856, another survey suggested that annual meat consumption in London had increased from 70 pounds per capita in 1750 to over 122 pounds per capita by 1850.<sup>42</sup> While these figures should be treated with caution, they reflect a very real and dramatic increase in per capita consumption of meat and an equally impressive expansion in the trade of Smithfield market. In 1725, a total of 76,531 cattle (bulls, oxen and cows) were sold. By 1786, the annual average had risen by 41 per cent to 108,075.<sup>43</sup> As much as any other growth commodity, meat epitomised the unique intensity of metropolitan consumption. As Richard Perren has argued, ‘it would be hard to over-stress the importance of the urban market’ in the ‘demand for farm output.’ Yet, unlike other British cities, London’s demands far out-weighed the scale of its population.<sup>44</sup> As the focal point of Britain’s political, financial, legal and entertainment activity, the metropolis housed ‘a larger proportion of wealthy consumers than any other city’. There was thus a ready demand for high-quality agricultural produce ‘on a scale not found elsewhere’. Not only did Londoners consume greater quantities of beef than people in other parts of the country, they also paid higher prices for better cuts from ‘more highly finished cattle’.<sup>45</sup> As well as serving London’s huge civilian demand for meat, Smithfield supplied the navy’s victualling depots in the south-east. The navy’s main processing centre and ‘cutting house’ were located at Deptford, with smaller establishments at Chatham, Dover, Portsmouth, and Plymouth. During times of war, the quantities of meat ordered by the navy were huge. In October 1746, a minute of the Naval Victualling Board recorded that it required contractors to supply 1,600 cattle at Deptford by the middle of the following month.<sup>46</sup> In 1828, a ‘grazier and salesman’ of thirty-five years experience recalled that ‘in times of war’, ‘a great buyer of cattle’ had ‘bought 5 or 600 Lincolnshire Cattle a week to be driven through the City to supply the Navy.’<sup>47</sup>

The financial significance of the Smithfield livestock trade, both on a metropolitan and imperial scale, was extraordinary. By 1809, the value of the market was thought to be £5,000,000, by

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Wrigley and Schofield suggest a population of 1,009,546 in 1811, in which case per capita consumption of meat would have been 198 pounds.

<sup>42</sup> G. Dodd, *The Food of London* (London, 1856), pp.249-50.

<sup>43</sup> ‘The Clerk of the Market’s Account for the Year 1725’ in William Maitland, *The History and Survey of London From its Foundation to the Present Time*, vol. 2 (1760), p.756; J.C. Curwen, *Hints on Agricultural Subjects and on the Best Means of Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes* (2nd edn, 1809), p.131.

<sup>44</sup> R. Perren, ‘Markets and Marketing’ in Mingay (ed.), *The Agrarian History*, 6, p.192

<sup>45</sup> Perren, ‘Markets and Marketing’, p.193.

<sup>46</sup> Mingay (ed.), *The Agrarian History*, 6, pp.245-6.

<sup>47</sup> This dropped considerably in peacetime and in 1828, fewer than fifty droves were being sent per week. LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, ‘Second Report from the Select Committee on the State of Smithfield Market’ (1828), pp.95-7. See also N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London, 1996), pp.70-86.

which time a single market day could generate £100,000 of sales.<sup>48</sup> By 1815, its annual value had risen to £6,680,000; growth continued apace over the next four decades.<sup>49</sup> The value of the metropolitan meat trade dwarfed that of many other “boom” markets which have been emphasised by historians, including tea and sugar, among other exotic imports.<sup>50</sup> The total annual value of imports to Britain in the mid-1780s was calculated at £16,279,419. At this time, the value of meat sold in the capital was double that of England’s total sugar consumption (£2 ½ million).<sup>51</sup> The relatively new markets for chinaware, wool, cotton, rum, tea, coffee and cocoa were impressive but no match for London’s ancient trade in meat on the hoof. By at least the mid-eighteenth century, London had developed a highly sophisticated carcass economy based on advanced commercial practices. In 1813, it was observed that the ‘Landed and Grazing Interest expect their remittances to be forwarded by Post the same Day the Stock is sold’. Such swift money transfers were only possible because of Smithfield’s proximity to bankers in the City and the postal carriers operating from Bishopsgate, Aldersgate and Holborn. The efficiency of this characteristically metropolitan commercial relationship goes some way to explain why, for almost a century, defenders of Smithfield were able to crush calls to remove the trade to a suburban location (to be discussed in a later section).<sup>52</sup>

The monetary value of the trade to London was not clearly defined and this study does not attempt to make such a calculation. However, the ways in which the metropolis, as opposed to rural farmers and landowners, profited from the trade are crucial to understanding the development of the market and the animal economy of the capital. The Corporation of London extracted considerable revenue from the trade, firstly by levying tolls on beasts as they approached Smithfield. By the late 1720s, tolls of 2d per score of sheep and 20d per score of oxen were being collected at Holborn, Fleet Street, Smithfield ‘Barrs’ and Aldersgate.<sup>53</sup> These tolls were increased over the course of the century. By 1813, it was being proposed that individual bullocks and each score of sheep should be tolled at sixpence. Additional rates were then extracted by the clerk of the market on every animal taking a place there. By the late 1820s,

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<sup>48</sup> *The Universal Magazine*, vol.11 (1809), p.75; D. Hughson, *London*, vol.4 (1809), p.597; LMA, CLA/016/AD/01/003 ‘Substance of Smithfield Market Bill now before Parliament...for enlarging and improving Market-Place...’ (1813).

<sup>49</sup> Rev. J. Nightingale, *London and Middlesex*, vol.3 (1815), p.476; J. Bell, *A System of Geography*, vol.3 (1832), p.102; by 1832, the value of the meat trade had risen to £8,500,000.

<sup>50</sup> J. Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800* (New York, 1997); S.W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York, 1985); J. De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> Adam Anderson, *An Historical & Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce*, vol.4 (1787), p.604; Sir John Sinclair, *The History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire*, Part 3 (1790), p. 187.

<sup>52</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/01/003, ‘Substance of Smithfield Market Bill now before Parliament...for enlarging and improving Market-Place...’ (1813).

<sup>53</sup> LMA, CLA/016/FN/01/007, ‘Rough Weekly Account: tolls collected’, 2 Sept 1727- 28 Sept 1728. A ‘score’ consisted of 20 animals.

these market dues were set at 2d for individual cattle tied to the rails and 1d for those standing free, which were known as ‘off droves’. Sheep were charged at 1s per score.<sup>54</sup> In 1777, ‘sheep pennis’ generated £1,730 and cattle ‘ties’ and ‘pennis’ a further £150. By 1815, these figures had roughly doubled to £3,270 and £348 respectively.<sup>55</sup> Over the course of the eighteenth century, Smithfield Market became an increasingly important revenue stream for the Corporation of London. It also supported a powerful, if loosely connected, group of businessmen ‘intimately connected with the existence of a Live Stock Market’ in the area. Among those most reliant on the trade were Smithfield’s many innkeepers who kept ‘the large accommodation necessary for the people who attend the market.’<sup>56</sup> The high value of cattle, and particularly bullocks (worth up to £10 in the 1750s) also encouraged widespread criminal activity. The Old Bailey Proceedings reveal that cattle and sheep were frequently stolen, some being impudently driven to the City pound at Green Yard where the thief could expect a reward for bringing in strays. In more serious cases, offenders hurried to a slaughterhouse to turn their incriminating evidence into unidentifiable cuts of meat.<sup>57</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century, Smithfield’s agricultural activities had extended over much of the week, with specialised market days for different livestock and arable produce. Mondays and Fridays served bullocks, sheep, lambs, calves and hogs. On Friday afternoon, there was also a market for ‘ordinary horses’ and asses. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays were for the sale of hay and straw.<sup>58</sup> Sheep, of which there were generally seven times more than cattle, were by far the most numerous of the animals brought to market. Lambs, calves and hogs were sold in smaller, but still very considerable numbers.<sup>59</sup> This study is primarily concerned with sheep and cattle as these were the largest, most valuable and most prevalent creatures to take part in London’s livestock trade. **Table 1** shows that the number of animals brought to market increased considerably over the eighteenth century. Between 1732–40 and 1786–94, the average annual number of sheep rose by 25.3% and cattle by 20.5%.<sup>60</sup> Yet, the expansion of the trade

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<sup>54</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, ‘Second Report from the Select Committee on the State of Smithfield Market’, 1828, p.146.

<sup>55</sup> LMA, CLA/016/FN/01/04, ‘Dues Collected at Smithfield Market’, 1777- 1817.

<sup>56</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, ‘Second Report... Committee on the State of Smithfield Market’, 1828, Introduction & p.71.

<sup>57</sup> OBSP, t17560528-27 (28 May 1756). In 1728, Edward Bromfield was fined 5 marks for stealing ten cows and a bull, which he drove to the ‘City Pound’ at Green Yard and ‘received a Sum of Money, in proportion to the Quantity he brought. OBSP, t17280228-26 (28 February 1728); In 1789, William Moss was sentenced to death for stealing ‘two live heifers’ worth £6 and driving them from a field in Edmonton to Smithfield Market, where they were later found by the owner ‘tied up to the rails.’ OBSP, t17891209-6 (9 December 1789). Statutes in the 1740s made the theft of cattle, sheep and oxen capital offences, Public Act 14 Geo II, c6 s.2 (1741); 14 Geo II, c.34 (1742).

<sup>58</sup> J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), p.409.

<sup>59</sup> J. Bell, *A System of Geography*, vol.3 (1832), p.102, reported that 20,020 pigs and 24,609 calves were sold at Smithfield in 1822 compared to 149,885 beasts and 1,507,096 sheep.

<sup>60</sup> Table 1 presents and compares two data sets published by the John Middleton and Stephen Theodore Janssen. Their data sets were the most widely repeated by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century studies of



was far from smooth. Growth was significantly hampered by cattle plague (rinderpest), the most serious and prolonged outbreak of which ‘ravaged the country’s herds between 1745 and 1768’. Over half a million head of cattle is estimated to have been lost to the disease in the years 1745–58 alone.<sup>61</sup> The two sets of data reported by Stephen Theodore Janssen and John Middleton indicate that the disease had a profound impact on Smithfield’s operations. Compared with the previous decade, trade in the 1740s shrank by around 1–2% for cattle and 11–13% for sheep. The 1750s saw an impressive recovery for sheep (11–18%) but the cattle trade only returned to solid growth (10–11%) in the 1760s. Both trades enjoyed sustained growth through the 1770s and 1780s, slowing slightly in the late 1780s and 1790s, before accelerating in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.

In 1803, the Duke of Bedford informed parliament that between 1790–95 and 1805–13, average annual sales of sheep and cattle had increased by 200,000 and 30,000 respectively.<sup>62</sup> This would suggest a rate of growth double what Middleton suggested for 1768–76 and 1789–94. As Bedford was leading calls for the expansion of the market place to reduce overcrowding, his figures should be treated with caution. Nonetheless, the trade’s growth in this period was undoubtedly remarkable. By 1809, the number of sheep and lambs annually slaughtered in the capital surpassed one million.<sup>63</sup> In 1822, Smithfield was processing an astonishing 1.7 million animals a year, each transported on the hoof through the city.<sup>64</sup> The number of livestock brought annually to market now exceeded the resident human population of the metropolis, by hundreds of thousands. **Table 2** and **Fig. 1** compare the combined total of sheep and cattle brought annually to Smithfield market with London’s population between 1700 and 1831. They illustrate that the presence of livestock increased with urbanisation rather than declining as

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the trade. Janssen’s data, compiled in the early 1770s, runs from 1731–70 and Middleton’s, compiled in the late 1790s, from 1732–94. There are significant variations between them (Janssen’s figures are higher than Middleton’s), but they reflect similar fluctuations. The two men were surveying the trade almost thirty years apart and are likely to have used different sources. It is possible therefore, that Janssen had access to more reliable figures for the earlier period than Middleton. The men certainly came from different walks of life which may also have contributed to their differing interpretations. Middleton was an expert on agriculture while Janssen was a man of trade. Middleton was a land surveyor, agricultural writer and a ‘Corresponding Member of the Board of Agriculture’. He divided his time between his farm in Merton and house in Lambeth and had considerable access to agricultural records as well as the opinions of farmers and Smithfield salesmen. Janssen had been a Director of the East India Company and a Lord Mayor of London. J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), pp.409–11; Guildhall Closed Access Broadside 30.74, S.T Janssen, ‘A Table Shewing the Number of Sheep and Black Cattle brought to Smithfield Market for the last 40 years’, undated. For more on Janssen see J. Innes, *Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2009), p.161.

<sup>61</sup> Mingay (ed.), *The Agrarian History*, 6, p.943; J. Broad, ‘Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England’, *AHR*, 32:2 (1983), pp.114; L. Wilkinson, *Animals and Disease: An Introduction to the History of Comparative Medicine* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.35–65.

<sup>62</sup> *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Times*, vol. 26 (1812), p.399.

<sup>63</sup> D. Hughson, *London*, vol. 6 (1809).

<sup>64</sup> 1,507,096 sheep; 149,885 cattle; 24,609 calves and 20,020 pigs; J. Bell, *A System of Geography*, vol.3 (1832), p.102.

Keith Thomas suggests.<sup>65</sup> In the 1730s, the number of animals per head of population was approximately 1.02. By 1809–11, this ratio had increased to 1.11 and by 1821–22, to 1.33. Cattle sales at Smithfield only reached their peak of 277,000 in 1853, just two years before the market was removed. Until that day, London's trade in meat on the hoof far exceeded that of Chicago, the giant city of 13 railroads and 'the gateway of the American West'. One nineteenth-century visitor to Chicago's inner-city stockyards celebrated their 'astounding dimensions' and in 1861, 177,000 head of cattle were driven through the city's streets. That London handled a hundred thousand more emphasises the exceptional economic significance of the Smithfield trade.<sup>66</sup>

Having discussed the scale of Smithfield's business, it is important to understand its daily operations. By 1827–28, the average weekly number of animals brought to market (split between the two market days) was said to be around 2,995 cattle and 28,500 sheep.<sup>67</sup> While I have not found weekly estimates for the mid-eighteenth century, by comparing annual figures it seems plausible that approximately 1,500 cattle and 11,500 sheep were brought to market each week.<sup>68</sup> The size of the market would, however, have varied considerably from week to week and from season to season. When demand for meat was at its highest, the convergence of beasts could swell dramatically. This was most evident during Christmas week, known as 'the great market'. By the 1840s, the festive period could draw several thousand additional animals to market.<sup>69</sup> Over the course of the year, the number of animals brought to market on Monday also appears to have been substantially higher than on Friday. In 1828, the cutting butchers described the 'great disproportion...which arises from the inconvenience of purchasing Cattle on Friday to kill immediately for Saturday's Sale ... which being universal to the trade, draws of course that great supply on Monday's.'<sup>70</sup> This imbalance in the weekly market days appears to have been

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182.

<sup>66</sup> I. Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance', *Urban History*, 32:2 (2007), p.228 & p.234. G. Dodd, *The Food of London* (1856), pp.249-50, suggests that cattle throughput increased by 34 per cent between 1828 and 1844. For Chicago, see Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*.

<sup>67</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report...on the state of Smithfield' (1828), appendix, evidence provided by the Chamberlain's Office.

<sup>68</sup> I have compared the average annual number of animals brought to market in 1750-58 (Middleton) with the figure for 1832 (J. Bell). This comparison suggests an approximate increase of 98% for cattle and 141% for sheep. To estimate the weekly figure for the 1750s, I have applied this rate of increase to the weekly figures for 1827-8 suggested by the 'Second Report...on the state of Smithfield' (1828); J. Bell, *A System of Geography*, vol. 3 (1832), p.102; J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798) pp.409-11.

<sup>69</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report...on the state of Smithfield' (1828), p.62; P. Cunningham, *Hand Book of London* (1849), p.167; in addition to this, a quarter of a million pigs were sold every year.

<sup>70</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/011, 'Substance of the Cutting Butcher's Petition...for an alteration of Smithfield Market from Friday to Thursday,' 20 Dec 1796; the preference for buying animals on Mondays meant that butchers had to keep their purchases alive until Thursday or Friday morning.

firmly established by the start of the nineteenth century, adding to the pressures encountered by the trade and the city, discussed below.

Keith Thomas suggested that by 1800, Londoners had become ‘remote from the agricultural process and inclined to think of animals as pets.’<sup>71</sup> Yet, the Smithfield trade ensured that residents of the metropolis were regularly in contact with living farmyard animals. Thus, while their relationship with livestock was not the same as that had by farmers and country folk, it was certainly not one of separation. The market’s inner-city location meant that thousands of sheep and cattle had to be driven back and forth across the metropolis, literally filling her streets with animal life twice a week, every week. Unlike the activities of Billingsgate, the world’s largest fish market, meat on the hoof was acutely visible far beyond its point of sale. Located just outside the square mile of the City, Smithfield had been in use as a suburban cattle market since 950AD. In 1300, the market was little more than a stone’s throw from the City walls but set in open countryside (**Map 1**). By 1700, the market had been gradually enveloped by urban expansion and lay at the heart of a densely built and heavily populated commercial hub (**Map 2**).<sup>72</sup> Animals continued to be slaughtered in the metropolis almost half a century after Paris had removed its abattoirs to the suburbs.<sup>73</sup>

The logistics of the Smithfield trade maximised London’s exposure to animal traffic. The night before market, cattle and sheep were collected from suburban pens encircling the metropolis (Islington in the North; Holloway and Mile End in the East; Knightsbridge and Paddington in the West and Newington in the South). From these outposts, scattered droves began to close in on the heart of the city until they became a dense swarm.<sup>74</sup> **Map 3** shows the principal routes taken by the drovers. Coming from the West, the most common approach before the construction of the Paddington to Islington ‘New Road’ in 1756 (discussed below), led from

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182.

<sup>72</sup> The site was granted to the City of London by Charles I in 1638; Maclachlan, ‘A bloody offal nuisance’, p.231.

<sup>73</sup> By the early thirteenth century, Paris’ cattle were purchased at Sceaux (six miles to the south of the city) and Poissy (almost fifteen miles to the West). In 1416, Charles VI banned the driving of livestock through the streets of Paris and ordered four new slaughterhouses to be constructed in the suburbs. They were gradually enveloped by urban expansion and by the end of the eighteenth century, Paris was experiencing some of the same problems as London. In 1809, however, Napoleon banned the use of inner-city slaughterhouses and ordered the construction of five new sites in the suburbs. G. B. Whittaker, *The History of Paris from the earliest period to the present day* (1827), pp.23-5; S. Watts, ‘Boucherie et hygiène a Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,’ *Révue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 51:3 (2004); S. Watts, *Meat Matters: Butchers, Politics, and Market Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Rochester, 2006); D. Brantz, ‘Slaughter in the City: The Establishment of Public Abattoirs in Paris and Berlin, 1780-1914,’ (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2003); R. Horowitz, J.M. Pilcher & S. Watts, ‘Meat for the Multitudes: Market Culture in Paris, New York City, and Mexico City over the Long Nineteenth Century,’ *American Historical Review*, 109:4 (2004), pp.1055-1083.

<sup>74</sup> P.E. Jones, *The Butchers of London: a history of the Worshipful Company of Butchers of the City of London* (London, 1976), p.103; D. Hughson, *London*, vol.6 (1809), p.598.

Oxford Street to Holborn, effectively bisecting the city. Drovers from the north came via Highgate and Angel, before heading into the City along St John's Street. By the early 1700s Highgate and Islington had become important staging posts for drovers and developed distinctive bovine cultures as a result. Islington farmers profited by offering temporary grazing, particularly for cows which were about to calve or in lactation.<sup>75</sup> Inns, including the *Gate House Tavern* in Highgate, which displayed a pair of bullock's horns over its doorway, and the *Pied Bull*, at the Angel were imbued with droving folklore and occupational pride.<sup>76</sup> Drovers from Kent, Surrey and Sussex were required to cross London Bridge before steering their herds through the narrow and winding streets of the City. As these immense droves converged on the narrow approach roads to Smithfield, the area became a swirling sea of animal life. In 1828, a resident of Finsbury Square recalled that 'from eleven till four o'clock in the morning there is one uninterrupted scene of noise and confusion' and that by midnight, the area was 'in an uproar with Drovers'.<sup>77</sup>

On arrival at Smithfield, sheep were guided into pens principally in the centre and north western corner of the market. By the 1820s, these were said to contain about 2,000 animals. A large number of cattle, over a thousand by the end of the eighteenth century, were fastened to 600 yards of rails, opposite St Bartholomew's Hospital.<sup>78</sup> A similar number were allowed to 'stand off', untied but closely packed together, with their heads facing the centre of the market. These 'off-droves' were principally found in the area nearest to Smithfield Barrs.<sup>79</sup> Once sold, drovers led some animals directly to Smithfield's slaughter-house district, comprising an array of 'typically small facilities ... owned and operated by independent butchers and located behind or beneath a retail meat shop.'<sup>80</sup> Of the remaining animals, a large number were driven across the city to other markets where local butchers operated still more urban slaughter houses. For these animals, the first transit point was Hatton Garden 'being a wide, quiet, street' where cattle were divided up.<sup>81</sup> Two markets, Brook's and the Fleet, were close by but as **Map 4** indicates six other sites were located between a mile and two miles away through a dense network of commercial and residential streets. These began with Clare Market, to the south of Lincoln's Inn Fields and Bloomsbury Market, between Great Russell Street and High Holborn. Other animals were driven into Soho to supply Newport and Carnaby Markets. The furthest driven

<sup>75</sup> S. Roberts, *The Story of Islington* (1975), p.175.

<sup>76</sup> Roberts, *The Story of Islington*, p.55.

<sup>77</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report... on the State of Smithfield Market', 19 July 1828, p.155.

<sup>78</sup> J. Nightingale, *London and Middlesex*, vol.3 (1815), p.479. In the eighteenth century, Smithfield market covered four and a half acres, growing to six and a quarter acres in 1834.

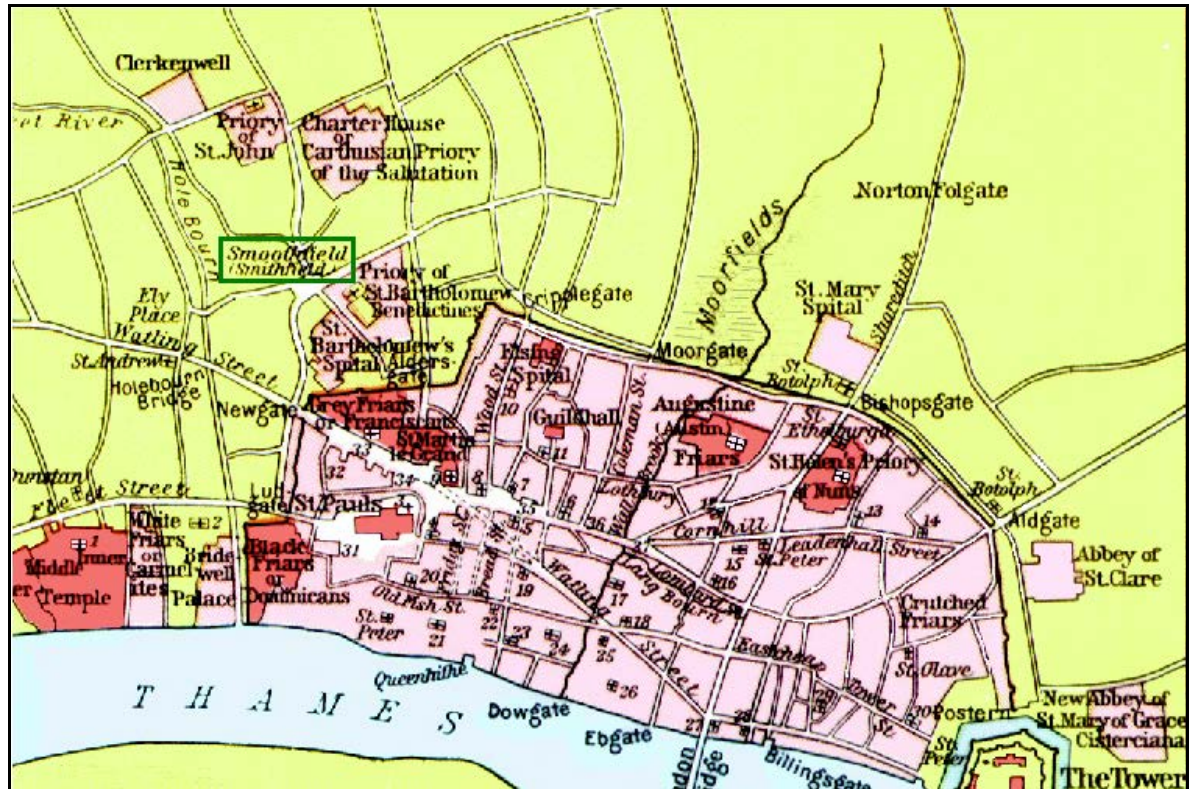
<sup>79</sup> Dr Andrew Wynter, 'The London Commissariat', *The Quarterly Review* (1854), p. 95; LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report from the Select Committee on the State of Smithfield Market' (1828), p.46 & p.138.

<sup>80</sup> Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance', p.227.

<sup>81</sup> Hughson, *London*, vol. 6 (1809), p.598.

beasts were those intended for Grosvenor, St James's and Shepherd's markets to the far south-west.<sup>82</sup> As Maclachlan observes, 'no other urban area' had ever slaughtered its livestock 'at such a broadly dispersed spatial scale.'<sup>83</sup>

**Map 1:** Plan of London around 1300 indicating situation of Smithfield market.<sup>84</sup>



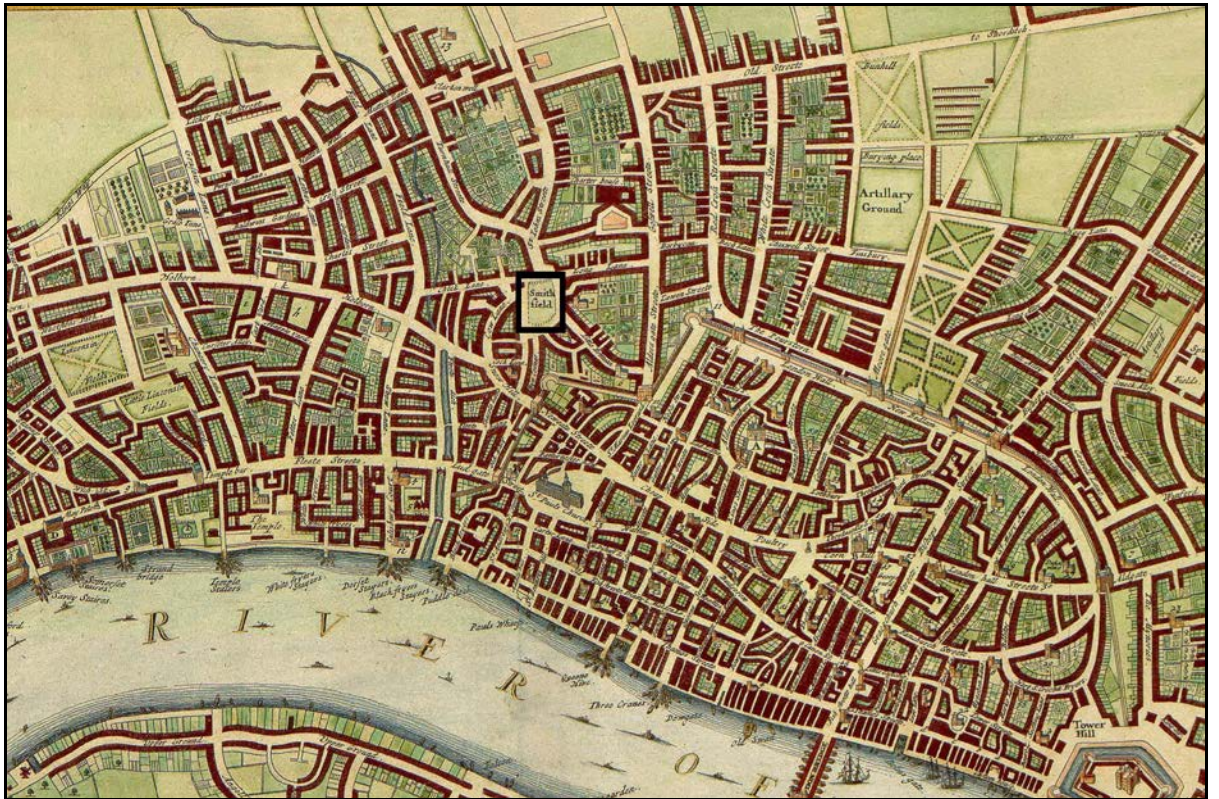
<sup>82</sup> Hughson, *London*, p.599.

<sup>83</sup> Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance', p.229.

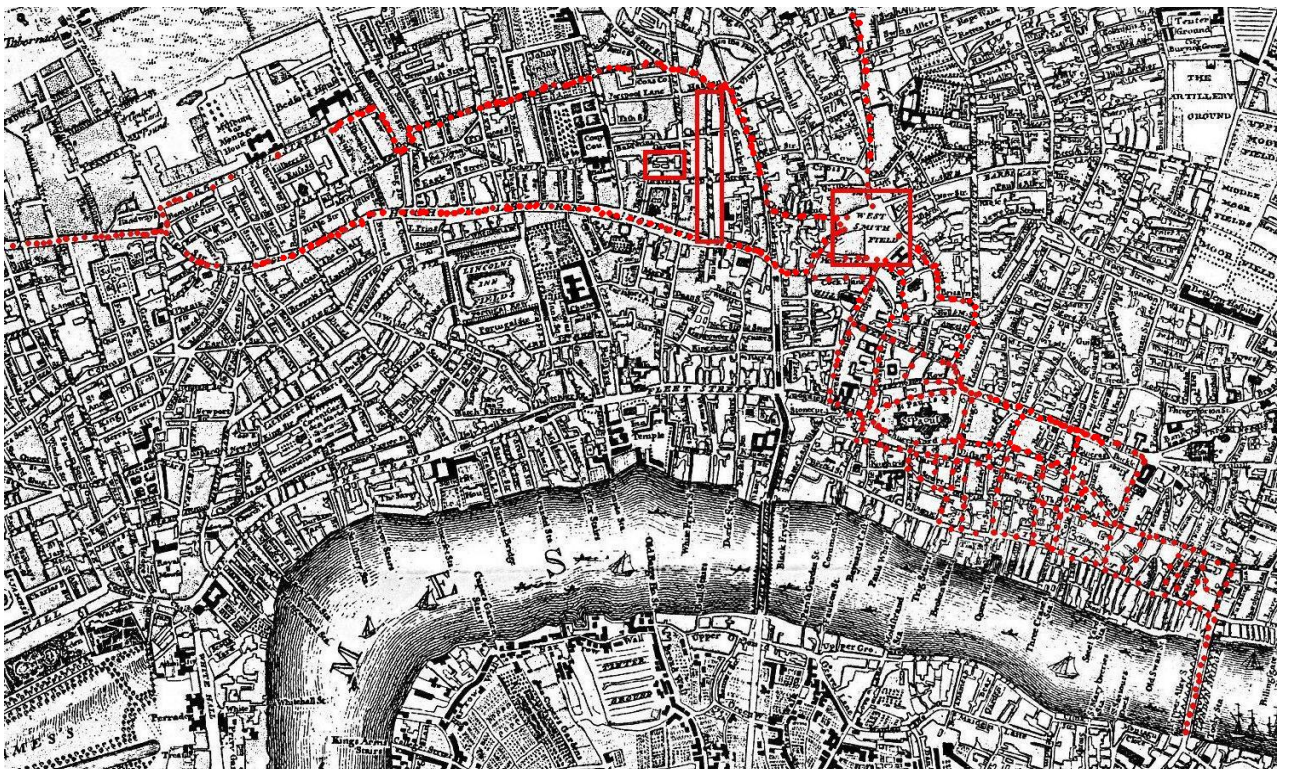
<sup>84</sup> W.R. Shepperd, *Historical Atlas* (1911), p.75.



**Map 2:** Wenceslas Hollar & others, *Map of London* (after 1688), indicating situation of Smithfield Market.



**Map 3:** John Rocque's *Plan of London* (1746), indicating the main drovers routes into Smithfield.





**Map 4:** John Rocque, *Plan of London* (1746), showing Smithfield (far right), Hatton Gardens and the principle metropolitan markets to which livestock were driven.



The impact of live animals on the metropolitan environment was increased by the way in which the trade sought to keep a perishable product fresh for as long as possible. Before refrigeration, London relied on meat entering the city ‘on the hoof’ and, after sale, on local butchers being able to store meat as a living package. ‘This was especially important in the summer months when fresh meat would spoil quickly if it had to be transported over any distance. In June, fresh beef or mutton could not be transported more than 25 miles by road before spoilage set in.’<sup>85</sup> Animals were commonly incarcerated in slaughterhouses but by the final quarter of the seventeenth century, butchers were already hiring grazing grounds, particularly on the eastern fringes of the metropolis, to cope with larger stocks. Some successful butchers became ‘graziers in a big way, holding stock far beyond the needs of a shop.’ When Richard Hodgkins, a previous Master of the Company of Butchers died in 1680, he held leases of large areas of pasture at Barking, West Ham, Plaistow and Woolwich.<sup>86</sup> In 1828, another butcher, Valentine Rutter described how most of the men in his trade rested sheep ‘to improve the meat.’ After buying animals from Smithfield, he ‘took them to a “shed”, a space sixty feet square directly opposite the Charter-House Wall in Goswell Street. From there he took them to a plot, his

<sup>85</sup> G. Dodd, *The Food of London* (1856), pp.249-50.

<sup>86</sup> Jones, *The Butchers of London*, p.101.

'field' in the Artillery Ground.'<sup>87</sup> As has already been suggested, butchers often preferred to buy from Smithfield on Monday and keep their animals alive until Thursday or Friday morning, before selling their meat on Saturday. As a result, the urban life-spans of cattle and sheep were extended, if only for a few days. The visibility of livestock in London was thus considerably higher than it would have been had the animals been slaughtered immediately after sale. Not only did these animals live in the city for longer, they were also more likely to make additional journeys across the city. En route to slaughter, it would not have been uncommon for animals to make four separate journeys through the metropolis, for instance: from a suburban holding pen at Paddington to Smithfield market; to a butcher's 'shed' nearby; to a suburban grazing ground in Woolwich; and finally to a slaughterhouse abutting Clare Market.

There can be no doubt that the scale, geography and organisation of the trade made cattle and sheep highly visible features of the city. As I will discuss below, condemnation and controversy were important aspects of their public reception. The process of driving large and unruly animals through the largest city in Europe ensured that visions of bovine chaos, in particular, were engrained in the minds of Londoners. Smithfield thus attained a 'level of notoriety' far greater than any other British cattle market 'deplored in the nineteenth century.'<sup>88</sup> However, Smithfield market has too often been viewed as a case study of nuisance, a threat to public health and an example of animal cruelty.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, innovation-centric interpretations have cast Smithfield as a centre of archaic activity, rooted in medieval precedent. Modernity, it has been suggested, arrived only with the ascendancy of dead-meat transported by rail in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>90</sup> Yet, as Miles Ogborn has argued, there are 'many ways in which modernity's spaces are produced' and eighteenth-century London displayed a 'variegated topography of modernity' which included 'ambiguous' spaces.<sup>91</sup> Thus, while the market exemplified nuisance and cruelty on the one hand, Smithfield livestock were also totemic symbols of pride in the nation's agricultural improvement and the commercial success of the capital. As late as the 1830s, Smithfield Market was proudly referred to as the 'greatest' livestock market in Europe and an 'acre of solid beef'.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report from the Select Committee on the State of Smithfield Market' (1828), pp.171-2.

<sup>88</sup> Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance', p.231.

<sup>89</sup> Diana Donald has identified Smithfield as a clear example of the way in which the 'painful proximity' of Londoners to 'sites of cruelty', not 'philosophical distance' as Keith Thomas suggested, prompted their growing compassion for animals. Donald, "Beastly Sights" in Arnold (ed.), *The Metropolis and its Image*, p.50; Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.

<sup>90</sup> Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*; Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance'.

<sup>91</sup> Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, p.21 & 236.

<sup>92</sup> Z. Allen, *Sketches of the State of the Useful Arts... Or the Practical Tourist*, vol. 2 (1833), p.297; James Elmes, *A Topographical Dictionary of London and its Environs* (1831), p.370.



By the end of the eighteenth century, information charting the fortunes of Smithfield market was widely published in both urban and agricultural surveys. Representing far more than raw economic data, this reflected the cultural importance of the livestock trade and the considerable patriotic pride invested in agricultural improvement. In 1798, Middleton commented on his market figures:

It may be seen, that the supply has been advancing with some degree of regularity... And as it is a matter of general notoriety, that the cattle and sheep of England have also been ... progressively increasing in their individual weight owing partly to the attention paid of late years to the improvement of the breed, and partly to their being much better fed.<sup>93</sup>

The exceptional economic importance of the trade also appears to have encouraged an impressive agricultural awareness among London's residents. Gertrude Savile (1697–1758) epitomised the kind of 'well-to-do' town-dweller which Keith Thomas claimed was 'inclined to think of animals as pets rather than working livestock.'<sup>94</sup> And yet Gertrude's journal entries for the 1740s and 1750s show that she was acutely aware of, and concerned by, the threat posed by cattle plague in this period. In March 1746, she lamented that 'The mortality amongst Cows [is] continuing. Any cows or cow calves are forbid to be kill'd (for eating), for 4 Years from Ladyday next.'<sup>95</sup> In December 1750, she wrote, 'The distemper among the cattle still reigns violently, and is got again about London ... A new Order of Council ... forbid[s] the driving any Cows, or Calves above 2 miles after the 14<sup>th</sup> of next month.'<sup>96</sup> Gertrude's anxiety at the return of the disease suggests that Londoners were not alienated from the wider agricultural world, but closely engaged in it.<sup>97</sup> It was, after all, from London, where the concentration of Britain's livestock was highest, that cattle plague spread 'to cover most of the country.'<sup>98</sup> This agricultural awareness could only have increased as the livestock trade continued to expand. Until Smithfield closed in 1855, London life remained central to a national livestock infrastructure and culture.

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<sup>93</sup> J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), p.412.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182. Gertrude was the daughter of a rector and spent most of her life in London's West End. A. Savile (ed.), *Secret Comment, The Diaries of Gertrude Savile, 1721-1759*, Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire Record Series, vol. 41 (Nottingham, 1997).

<sup>95</sup> Gertrude Savile, *Diaries*, p.258 & p.270.

<sup>96</sup> Gertrude Savile, *Diaries*, p. 290.

<sup>97</sup> J. Broad, 'Cattle Plague in Eighteenth-Century England', *AHR*, 32:2 (1983), p.105.

<sup>98</sup> This outbreak of cattle plague is thought to have begun in the coastal marshes of Essex but the region's long-established involvement in the Smithfield veal trade brought the infected animals to London. L. Wilkinson, *Animals and Disease: An Introduction to the History of Comparative Medicine* (Cambridge, 1992); Broad, 'Cattle Plague', *AHR*, 32:2, p.105.

Furthermore, by the middle of the eighteenth century, meat and particularly beef had become potent symbols of English patriotism, in what Ben Rogers has termed ‘England’s bovine symbolic network.’<sup>99</sup> In popular culture, literature, theatre and art, the quality and quantity of the nation’s beef-steaks were celebrated as evidence of commercial success and liberty. The ballad “The Roast Beef of England”, a two-verse air by Henry Fielding for his play *The Grub Street Opera*, steadily grew in popularity and verses after 1731. It began by proclaiming:

*When mighty Roast Beef was the Englishman's food,  
It ennobled our brains and enriched our blood.  
Our soldiers were brave and our courtiers were good  
Oh! the Roast Beef of old England,  
And old English Roast Beef!*<sup>100</sup>



**Plate 1:** William Hogarth, *O the Roast Beef of Old England* ('*The Gate of Calais*') (Oil on canvas, 1748) [detail].

These words harked back to a bygone age but William Hogarth would soon depict beef as a product of renewed national pride. The artist’s *O the Roast Beef of Old England*, 1748 (**Plate 1**), depicted a ‘glistening joint’ of English sirloin being carried through the French port. Malnourished Frenchmen cower in awe of its succulent proportions. The painting brought new potency to the notion of beef as a patriotic weapon against the French, creating a device which would be repeated throughout the second half of the century. In 1759, Theodosius Forest wrote

<sup>99</sup> B. Rogers, *Beef and Liberty: Roast Beef, John Bull and the English Patriots* (London, 2003), p.167.

<sup>100</sup> O. Baldwin & T. Wilson, ‘250 Years of Roast Beef’, *The Musical Times* (April 1985), pp.203-7. The most significant alterations and additions were made by the composer Richard Leveridge, after which it became customary for theatre audiences to sing the ballad before and after new plays.

a Cantata inspired by the painting, to be performed at the Haymarket Theatre. In it, he gave voice to the French soldier shown strolling towards the meat:

*A sacré Dieu! Vat do I see yonder?  
Dat looks so tempting, red and white?  
Begar I see it is de roast Beef from Londre.  
Oh grant me one letel Bite.*<sup>101</sup>

From the 1760s, satirists and caricaturists often made use of beef and bullock iconography when portraying the English epitome, John Bull. Among his various human and animal guises, he commonly appeared as a bull-man hybrid or a fully-fledged bullock.<sup>102</sup> In human form, John Bull was also strongly associated with the consumption of roast beef. ‘Again and again he is shown gorging on beef, plum pudding and ale.’<sup>103</sup> During the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, James Gilray juxtaposed the image of a portly John Bull feasting on beef with that of a puny Frenchman nibbling on raw garlic, stewing snails and sipping thin soup. Yet scenes such as *French Liberty, British Slavery* (**Plate 2**) not only proclaimed the gastronomic good fortune of John Bull, they also recognised the importance of British self-sufficiency in times of war. As Harriet Ritvo has argued, when the nation was potentially vulnerable to blockade, ‘meat was a particularly valuable commodity in international competition, because the ability of especially urban industrial workers to buy it was an index of British commercial prowess, and because, according to popular belief, it was the consumption of red meat that distinguished brave and brawny soldiers from puny, snivelling Frenchmen.’<sup>104</sup> While poking fun at the Duke’s of Bedford’s expanding girth, Gilray’s *Fat Cattle*, 1802 (**Plate 3**) celebrates the nation’s craze for agricultural improvement at a time when meat was seen to be feeding the nation’s defence.

Beef’s powerful patriotic associations have regularly been discussed in relation to classic rural activities including agricultural shows and sheep shearing competitions, such as that held at Woburn Abbey, where ‘ordinary farmers and citizens were expressing patriotic pride...[and] admiring the power and extravagance of the magnates who bred prize cattle.’<sup>105</sup> Livestock

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<sup>101</sup> ‘The Roast Beef of Old England. A Cantata. Taken from the Celebrated Print of the Ingenious Mr Hogarth’ in *The Bull-Finch. Being a choice collection of the newest and most favourite English songs...sung at the public theatres and gardens* (1760), pp.99-103.

<sup>102</sup> M. Taylor, ‘John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England c.1712-1929’, *Past & Present*, 134 (1992), pp.93-128.

<sup>103</sup> Rogers, *Beef and Liberty*, p.153.

<sup>104</sup> Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, p.390.

<sup>105</sup> Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*, p.47; R. Broglio, ‘The Best Machine for Converting Herbage into Money’: Romantic Cattle Culture’, in T.S. Wagner & N. Hassan, *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth*

portraiture, which became increasingly fashionable in the second half of the century, has also tended to dominate analysis of the ways in which livestock were celebrated. As shown in **Plates 4 & 5**, cattle and sheep were generally portrayed in idyllic rural settings, often being admired by landowners or tended to by farm workers.<sup>106</sup> Rarely, however, have historians acknowledged that livestock were also celebrated in metropolitan settings.

**Left: Plate 2:** James Gilray, *French Liberty, British Slavery* (London, 1792); **Right: Plate 3:** James Gilray, *Fat Cattle* (London, 1802).



**Plate 4 (left)** *The Newbus Ox*, engraved by William Ward after Thomas Weaver (colour mezzotint, 1812). **Plate 5 (right)** George Garrard, *A Holderness Cow* (Oil on Canvas, 1798).



*Century: Narratives of Consumption, 1700-1900* (Lanham, MD, 2007), pp. 35-48; Rogers, *Beef and Liberty*; E. Moncrieff, S. Joseph & I. Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits* (Woodbridge, 1996).

<sup>106</sup> Moncrieff, Joseph & Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*.

Yet, in many ways London led the patriotic celebration of England's agricultural achievements and lay at the heart of the nation's beef cult. Its great artist, William Hogarth, had grown up in the vicinity of Smithfield and in later life attended the city's 'Sublime Society of Beefsteaks', a club dedicated to bovine patriotism. As Ben Rogers has noted, mutton and beef were identified as much as the food of the urban artisan and trader as that of the yeoman farmer.<sup>107</sup> The scale of London's consumption of meat lay at the heart of its proud identification with the nation's livestock. This culture was expressed on many levels in metropolitan society and in a myriad of venues. These included the Smithfield Club, a prestigious agricultural society established in 1798. Concerned to encourage the 'improvement of the stock of the country', the club held its first show in a yard in the vicinity of Smithfield before moving to more commodious locations in subsequent years.<sup>108</sup> The city's chop houses and meat-serving taverns catered for a still broader spectrum of Londoners to express their love of beef. Samuel Johnson considered the quality of meat served in the metropolis as one of its great advantages. Over the course of half a century, he became a hearty consumer and dedicated promoter of London's carcase culture. In 1778, he boasted that he could write the definitive cookery book based on 'the niceness of his palate' and his ability to find 'a good dinner' in the city. He proclaimed 'you cannot make bad meat good, I would tell what is the best butcher's meat, the best beef, the best pieces.' Johnson delighted in the capital's eateries and 'formed a club that met every Tuesday evening at the King's Head, a famous beef-steak house in Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row.' His 'favourite dainties', it was said, included 'a veal pie with plums and sugar, or the outside cut of a salt buttock of beef.'<sup>109</sup> At the Tower of London and St James' Palace, the 'beef-eaters' lived up to their name and London's beef cult by consuming huge rations of meat. As late as 1813, the thirty yeomen on duty at St. James' claimed 'twenty-four pounds of beef a day, along with eighteen pounds of mutton [and] sixteen pounds of veal.'<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, over the century, Smithfield market became one of the curiosities of London. Visited by residents and tourists alike, the site also inspired several paintings and engravings (see **Plate 6**). Recognised as the 'greatest market for black cattle' in Europe,<sup>111</sup> Smithfield was a dual monument to the success of metropolitan commerce and the agricultural improvement of the nation. As Colin Smith has noted, 'visitors who sought an impression of the extent of London's demand for, and supply of food, naturally gravitated to its great markets.'<sup>112</sup> John Middleton said that 'any person, possessing ... any desire of looking at a great variety of live

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<sup>107</sup> Rogers, *Beef and Liberty*, p.15.

<sup>108</sup> E.J. Powell, *History of the Smithfield Club from 1798-1900* (London, 1902).

<sup>109</sup> J. Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (Wordsworth edn, 2008), p.204, p.362, pp.663-64, p.885.

<sup>110</sup> Rogers, *Beef and Liberty*, pp.17-18.

<sup>111</sup> James Elmes, *A Topographical Dictionary of London and its Environs* (1831), p.370;

<sup>112</sup> Smith, 'The wholesale and retail markets of London', *EcHR*, 55:1, p.33.

stock, cannot perhaps spend a few hours more satisfactorily, than in examining the market at Smithfield.’<sup>113</sup> First-time visitors were startled by the extent of the market and the unfathomable mass of beasts contained within. In 1833, the topographical writer Zachariah Allen noted that:

Among the curiosities of London, Smithfield Market, when crowded with cattle on a market-day, is worthy of a short walk. Here you behold collected in a little square of about two acres in extent, the beef which is required for the supply of a numerous population. So closely are the droves wedged together, side by side, that their red backs and white horns appear like the surface of an agitated pond, ever undulating and in motion; and a person apparently might walk over their backs as over a pavement. You may suppose with truth that you have before you an area of an acre of solid beef.<sup>114</sup>

Crucially, Smithfield provided a striking visual representation of the scale of metropolitan meat consumption, a phenomenon which increasingly fascinated commentators over the second half of the century.<sup>115</sup> In the 1790s, an agricultural survey of Britain observed that the fattened cattle of Galloway were driven ‘to supply the amazing consumption of the capital.’<sup>116</sup> Economic and agricultural writers observed that the force of the metropolitan market for foodstuffs, and not least for meat, far exceeded the size of its population. In 1784, Arthur Young wrote

At first sight, it may seem that the same people dispersed would carry with them their markets and their demands: but this is not the case. It is the union to a spot, the concentration of wealth that is alone powerful to give that impulsive motion that is felt at the very extremities. Such a city as Bristol can form communications by road or navigation to a distance of a few miles: It is a vast capital only that can extend them to the extremity of a kingdom.<sup>117</sup>

A visit to Smithfield Market provided the most dramatic evidence of London’s astonishing reach over national resources. Here could be seen sheep and cattle from every corner of the British Isles, from Cornwall and Kent to Wales and the Highlands of Scotland.

Yet, visitors were even more fascinated by the innovation of these animals, particularly their monumental size and fat-laden bulk. As well as being a major commercial hub, Smithfield was

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<sup>113</sup> J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), p.413.

<sup>114</sup> Z. Allen, *Sketches of the State of the Useful Arts...Or the Practical Tourist*, vol. 2 (1833), p.297.

<sup>115</sup> J. Innes, ‘Power and happiness: empirical social enquiry in Britain, from ‘political arithmetic’ to ‘moral statistics’ in Innes, *Social Problems and Social Policies* (2009), pp.109-79.

<sup>116</sup> G. Culley, *Observations on Live Stock* (1794), p.61.

<sup>117</sup> A. Young, *Annals of Agriculture*, vol.2 (1784), pp.420-1.



a show-case of modernity, a living gallery of agricultural improvement exhibiting revolutionary new breeds of cattle and sheep. While improved livestock have been cited as achievements of the agricultural revolution, their meat represents an important example of product innovation.<sup>118</sup> Following the experiments of the Leicestershire farmer Robert Bakewell in the 1760s, Smithfield began to receive new kinds of animal food resulting from new methods of stockbreeding, irrigation, fertilisation and crop-rotation. While these advances did not necessarily increase the quality of meat sold at Smithfield, they dramatically increased its availability as beasts steadily piled on fat and tissue.<sup>119</sup> In 1760, it was observed with some patriotic exaggeration, perhaps, that ‘if the large dimensions’ of the cattle and sheep sold in Smithfield ‘were examined into, their carcasses would be found to weigh above a third more than those of the same species in most other countries.’<sup>120</sup>

**Plate 6:** *Old Smithfield Market*, after Pugin and Rowlandson, engraved by Buck (1811).



<sup>118</sup> Eighteenth-century product innovation has received considerable attention in recent years but the historiography has focussed largely on expensive manufactured goods. M. Berg, ‘From imitation to invention: creating commodities in eighteenth-century Britain’, *EcHR*, 55:1 (2002); J. Styles, ‘Product Innovation in Early Modern London’, *Past & Present*, 168 (2000), pp.124-169.

<sup>119</sup> Bakewell’s success soon gained the attention of landowners and farmers who gradually introduced his techniques and developed new breeds across the country. The primary purpose of Bakewell’s approach was to create animals that would ‘produce the most flesh on the least fodder in the shortest possible time.’ As critics sometimes complained, the fat content of the ‘improved meat’ was extremely high. Moncrief, Joseph & Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, p.168.

<sup>120</sup> W. Maitland, *The History and Survey of London*, vol. 2 (1760), p.757; B.A. Holderness, ‘Prices, Productivity and Output’, in Mingay (ed.), *The Agrarian History*, 6, p.154. There is much conflicting evidence surrounding carcass weights. Holderness has convincingly argued that an ‘increase of about one-fifth’ is a reasonable assumption for period 1750-1800.

While livestock improvement took place in the countryside, the metropolis played a crucial role in promoting, judging and even directing its progress. Breeds which failed to impress at Smithfield were soon ousted by those producing meat ‘more acceptable to the London market.’<sup>121</sup> Above all, livestock were judged according to desirability in the metropolis. In 1764, a popular magazine commented

It is well known, that this metropolis is the great mart of the British empire; whatever is good, whatever is rare, is brought here as to a certain and good market. The best oxen which our grazing counties produce, are always reserved for the consumption of London ... such is the inclination of the country people to send their goods up to London for sale.<sup>122</sup>

In 1794, a description of herds from the south-west of Scotland asserted that ‘few or no cattle sell so high [in Smithfield], they being such nice cutters-up.’ The author noted, ‘it is no uncommon thing in this refined market, to see one of these little bullocks outsell a coarse Lincolnshire ox, tho’ the latter be heavier by several stones.’<sup>123</sup> The butchers and salesmen of Smithfield were considered Britain’s premier judges of carcass quality. In 1795, the Bath and West of England Society refrained from judging the value and quality of different carcasses because, it conceded, ‘the most satisfactory intelligence on these heads may be obtained in Smithfield market.’<sup>124</sup> The reputation of provincial suppliers relied to a remarkable extent on the approbation of the metropolis, often hundreds of miles away. Daniel Defoe noted that the black cattle of South Devon were ‘fattened fit for Smithfield’ and sold to ‘the Londoners, who have not so good Beef from any other Part of the Kingdom.’<sup>125</sup> Thus Londoners were not only aware of the nation’s agriculture, they were perfectly placed to judge and guide its progress.

This evidence shows that prior to 1855, the location, scale and organisation of the metropolitan livestock trade made it impossible to live in London without encountering its activities. These animals were prominent social actors in the daily life of the metropolis. They rooted themselves in urban culture and became effective agents for the dissemination of agricultural awareness, bringing the nation’s farms to the capital’s streets. Smithfield finally closed as a livestock market on 11 June 1855. Two days later, the Metropolitan Cattle Market opened for business. Removed to Islington’s Copenhagen Fields, the city’s livestock trade became a suburban

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<sup>121</sup> Moncrief, Joseph & Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, p.184.

<sup>122</sup> *The Beauties of all the Magazines Selected, For the Year 1764*, vol.3 (1764), p.358.

<sup>123</sup> G. Culley, *Observations on Live Stock* (1794), pp.61-2.

<sup>124</sup> *Letters and Papers on Agriculture, Planting &c. selecting from the Correspondence of the Bath and West of England Society*, vol.7 (1795), p.226.

<sup>125</sup> D. Defoe, *A Tour Thro’ The Whole Island of Great Britain*, (1724-26; Penguin Classics edn, Harmondsworth, 2005), p.255.



operation for the first time in more than 200 years. As Ian Maclachlan has noted, the removal of the market was a reflection of wider changes to the structure of London's meat supply. The arrival of rail in the 1830s began to erode the 'proportion of meat supplied on the hoof compared with the amount ... country killed' so that by the early 1850s three-quarters of the meat sold at Newgate Market (the largest dead meat market in the metropolis) was killed outside of London.<sup>126</sup> The closure of Smithfield, just two years after recording its highest ever annual sales, marked a dramatic shift in the city's relationship with the agricultural process.<sup>127</sup> Keith Thomas suggested that urban alienation from livestock set in well before 1800. Yet, as I have shown, this process could not have begun before 1855. Only then did these highly familiar animals begin to fade from the urban landscape.<sup>128</sup>

Recent commentary has often suggested that modern Western societies have become detached from the animals they eat. But when and how did this process begin? In his recent study of Chicago, William Cronon described the opening of the New Unified Stockyard in 1865 as being a crucial turning-point in the city's alienation from the natural world. 'In a world of ranches, packing plants, and refrigerator cars', he argues, most of 'the constant reminders of the relationships that sustained one's own life...vanished from easy view.' Once meat was being transported into Chicago by rail from hundreds and thousands of miles away, meat seemed 'less a product of first nature and more a product of human artifice.'<sup>129</sup> Prior to 1855, London's relationship with its meat supply was entirely different. As the Smithfield trade expanded in the eighteenth century, her residents were becoming more, not less, familiar with the sights, sounds and smells of cattle and sheep. These animals shared the streets with a rapidly expanding convergence of horses upon which an astonishing array of metropolitan activities depended. It is to this thriving equine world that we now turn.

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<sup>126</sup> Maclachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance', p.237.

<sup>127</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182.

<sup>128</sup> Roberts, *The Story of Islington*, p.179, notes that 'the inauguration of the new market did not totally eliminate the sight of cattle and sheep being driven through London. Livestock purchased in Islington but destined for slaughter on the south bank still made its last journey on foot.'

<sup>129</sup> Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp.255-6.

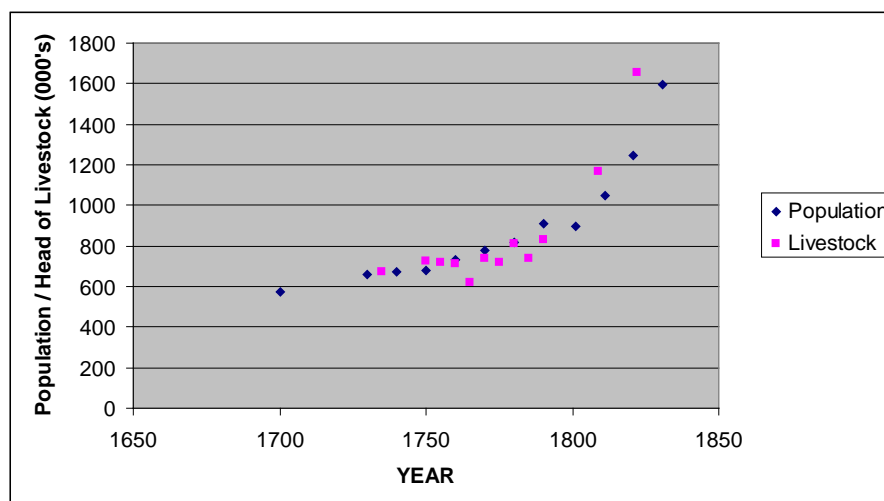
**APPENDIX****Table 1:** Sheep and Black Cattle brought for sale to Smithfield market, 1732– 1794.<sup>130</sup>

	SHEEP				BLACK CATTLE			
	Middleton	% increase/ decrease	Janssen	% increase/ decrease	Middleton	% increase/ decrease	Janssen	% increase/ decrease
1732-40	564,650		595,069		83,906		96,412	
1741-49	559,891	-0.8	583,622	-1.9	74,194	-11.6	83,779	-13.1
1750-58	623,091	11.3	689,209	18.1	75,351	1.6	83,073	-0.8
1759-1767	615,328	-1.2	677,098	-1.8	83,432	10.7	91,302	10.0%
<b>Difference between 1732-40 &amp; 1759-67</b>	<b>50,678</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>82,029</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>-474</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>-5110</b>	<b>-5.3</b>
1768-1776	627,805	2.0			89,362	7.1		
1777-1785	687,588	9.5			99,285	11.1		
1786 – 1794	707,456	2.9			101,075	1.8		
<b>Difference between 1768-76 &amp; 1786-94</b>	<b>79,651</b>	<b>12.7</b>			<b>11,713</b>	<b>13.1</b>		
<b>Difference between 1732-40 &amp; 1786-94</b>	<b>142,806</b>	<b>25.3</b>			<b>17,169</b>	<b>20.5</b>		

<sup>130</sup> J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (London, 1798) pp.409-11; S.T Janssen, 'A Table Shewing the Number of Sheep and Black Cattle brought to Smithfield Market for the last 40 years', Guildhall Closed Access Broadside 30.74.

**Table 2: Smithfield Livestock per head of population, 1700–1831.**

	Head of Livestock (Cattle & Sheep) <sup>131</sup>	Population of London <sup>132</sup>	Livestock per head of population
1700	—	575,000	
1730s	674,864 (1735)	660,000	1.02
1740s		670,000	
1750s	727,105 (1750) 721,390 (1755)	680,000	1.07 1.06
1760s	710,804 (1760) 618,630 (1765)	730,000	0.97 0.85
1770s	735,980 (1770) 717,531 (1775)	780,000	0.94 0.92
1780s	809,233 (1780) 740,527 (1785)	820,000	0.99 0.90
1790s	833,368 (1790)	910,000	0.92
1801	—	900,000	
1809-11	1,170,463 (1809)	1,050,000 (1811)	1.11
1821-22	1,656,981 (1822)	1,247,000 (1821)	1.33
1831	—	1,595,000 (1831)	

**Fig.1: Population of London / Head of livestock brought to Smithfield Market, 1700-1831.**

<sup>131</sup> Livestock data for 1735-1790 from J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), pp.409-411; 1809 data from D. Hughson, *London; Being an Accurate History and Description of the British Metropolis*, Vol. VI (1809); 1822 data from J. Bell, *A System of Geography*, Vol.3 (1832), p.102.

<sup>132</sup> Population data: 1700: E.A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy', *Past & Present*, Vol.37 (1967), p.44; 1730s – 1790s: J. Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London, 1670-1830* (Cambridge, 2006), p.179; 1801, 1821, 1831: L.D. Schwarz, *London in the Age of Industrialisation* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.125-8.

## (II) THE METROPOLITAN HORSE

Keith Thomas acknowledged that ‘working-animals of every kind were extensively used during the first century and a half of industrialisation. Horses, donkeys, even dogs, were employed in woollen mills, breweries, coal mines and railway shunting-yards.’<sup>133</sup> Yet, he argued, the eighteenth century witnessed the steady disappearance of these animals from British production and commerce. While noting that ‘Horses did not disappear from the streets until the 1920s’, Thomas suggests that

long before that, most people were working in industries powered by non-animal means. The shift to other sources of industrial power was accelerated by the introduction of steam and the greater employment of water power at the end of the eighteenth century; and the urban isolation from animals in which the new feelings were generated dates from even earlier.<sup>134</sup>

In reaching this assessment, however, Thomas relied heavily on certain kinds of source material, particularly philosophical, religious and Romantic literature, much of which was ‘haunted ... with rural ideas of England’ and tended to view cities from afar.<sup>135</sup> By contrast, as I will show, a wealth of evidence created by those who employed horses or who sought to regulate their presence in the capital reveals that horses played an increasing role in the social and economic life of the capital. As John Berger has argued: ‘although... nostalgia towards animals was an eighteenth-century invention, countless productive inventions were still necessary – the railway, electricity, the conveyor belt, the canning industry, the motor car, chemical fertilisers – before animals could be marginalised.’ Only during the twentieth century, he notes, with the triumph of the combustion engine were draught animals finally displaced.<sup>136</sup> As this section will show, Thomas perceived a decline in equine utility almost two centuries before it actually took place.

Previous studies have concentrated on equine technologies in the period 1500–1700 or in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when horse power reached its zenith.<sup>137</sup> Yet, in the

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<sup>133</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp.181-2; Thompson, *Victorian England: The Horse Drawn Society*.

<sup>134</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp.181-2.

<sup>135</sup> B. Alexander (ed.), *The Journal of William Beckford in Portugal and Spain 1787-1788* (1954), pp.99-100 cited in Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.14.

<sup>136</sup> J. Berger, ‘Vanishing Animals’, *New Society*, 39 (31 March 1977), p.664.

<sup>137</sup> Thirsk, *Horses in early modern England*, p.23 & p.28; P. Edwards, *Horse & Man in Early Modern England* (2007). Thirsk and Edwards argue that the period 1500-1700 witnessed dramatic growth and differentiation in the market for horse, growing interest in breeding and expanding employment of horses

eighteenth century, horses came to underpin the growth and success of the largest city in Europe. In this period, the metropolitan horse became omnipresent. In 1815, it was estimated that the number of horses annually employed in London, Westminster, and Middlesex was ‘generally about 31,000.’<sup>138</sup> While the available source material makes testing such estimates highly problematic, we can glean some idea of the number of animals working in individual sectors such as the hackney carriage, stage coach, waggon and cart trades, the brewing industry and on behalf of private carriage owners. The combined scale of these sectors suggest that there were considerably more than 31,000 horses working in the metropolis by 1815.

Eighteenth-century London was by far the busiest passenger transport hub in the country and by the end of the century a sprawling equine labour force underpinned an array of metropolitan and long-distance travel operations. While most Londoners continued to walk through her streets, a growing elite hired or purchased vehicles. As Peter Borsay has observed, ‘the demands of personal mobility’ thus increased dramatically over the century.<sup>139</sup> In 1739, it was estimated that there were already 2,484 private coaches in London, ‘compressed into the relatively small part of the city considered fashionable.’<sup>140</sup> By 1754, the metropolis contained 4,255 of England’s 9,000 four-wheeled carriages and an additional 2,909 two-wheelers. By comparison, a major provincial city like York could muster only 116 and 214 respectively.<sup>141</sup> F.M.L. Thompson suggested that by 1810 there were as many as 15,000 carriages, representing a six-fold increase over 71 years. Over the next thirty years, he suggests that this growth accelerated so that by 1840, there were 40,000 carriages in the capital.<sup>142</sup> However accurate Thompson’s estimates, there can be no doubt that private carriage use had expanded dramatically and involved tens of thousands of horses by the turn of the nineteenth century. Evidence for the Cavendish-Harley estate in Marylebone, to be discussed in more detail below, suggests that the average mews unit could accommodate 5.9 horses and 2.3 coaches (**Table 10**). If we apply this ratio to Thompson’s 1810 carriage estimate, the number of polite equipages in London required as many as 40,000 horses.

Acquiring and running a coach and horses was a potentially ruinous undertaking for even the very wealthy. Yet, while appearing to many to epitomise luxury, the equipage played a vital role

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throughout society. Thirsk concludes that by 1700, ‘the horse-keeping business...had become everyman’s business.’ Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*; McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*.

<sup>138</sup> J. Nightingale, *London and Middlesex*, vol. 3 (1815), p.476

<sup>139</sup> P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance* (Oxford, 1989), p.66

<sup>140</sup> G. Worsley, *The English Stable* (New Haven & London, 2004), p.102

<sup>141</sup> P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (1989), pp.343-4; T. Barker & D. Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport, 1700-1990* (Cambridge, 1995), p.60; In 1762, ‘one third of the twenty thousand or so carriages paying duty were based in London’, PRO, CUST 48/17, p.413 cited by P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.407.

<sup>142</sup> Thompson, *Victorian England: The Horse Drawn Society*, p.16

in polite society.<sup>143</sup> To use McShane and Tarr's term, these were 'living machines', enabling the kind of personal mobility and theatre of display upon which polite sociability depended.<sup>144</sup> As Peter Borsay has argued, 'one of the most commendable activities a gentleman could engage in ... was simply that of meeting and mixing with his fellow human beings' and the metropolis provided all the necessary 'cultural facilities ... specifically designed, in their organisation and ethos, to promote sociability.'<sup>145</sup> Previous studies of sociability have often examined the use of polite venues but few have discussed how the polite were able to reach them.<sup>146</sup> Without the horse-drawn coach, the pursuit of politeness in London would have been severely handicapped. The 'season' provided a hectic schedule of plays, operas, assemblies, balls and routs at venues which were spread across the West End and beyond. As the metropolis expanded so did the distances between venues. Vauxhall and Ranelagh gardens, key elements of the Season in the second half of the century, demanded a five to six mile round trip for residents of the West End. One could take a boat or barge from St James' and sail up the river but only in fine weather.<sup>147</sup> Despite the increasing nuisance of traffic jams (see below), the private carriage remained the most practical and respectable way to reach London's fashionable venues.<sup>148</sup> The equipage also underpinned the reciprocal acts of hosting and visiting upon which sociability depended. As Susan Whyman has observed, 'it was not enough to visit on foot; it was more fashionable if done in a carriage ... the coach embodied the spirit of the town and made ... visits polite.'<sup>149</sup> Without the carriage horse, the elite would have been marooned from its own company.

The private carriage was the transportation of London's super rich. Moneyed individuals who could not afford an equipage often hitched a lift or borrowed the vehicle of a wealthier friend. Perhaps more commonly, however, they rented transportation by the journey or the day.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors* (2009), p.124, argues that men were particularly vulnerable to the ostentatious pleasure of maintaining a fine equipage; S. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: the cultural worlds of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999); J. Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore & London, 1977); N. McKendrick, J. Brewer & J.H. Plumb (eds), *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (Bloomington, IN, 1982), pp.318-20; M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>144</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*.

<sup>145</sup> Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*, pp.267-8.

<sup>146</sup> An important exception, but focussing on the pre-Georgian age, being Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England*.

<sup>147</sup> In the 1740s Horace Walpole enjoyed just such a journey with 'French horns attending' his illustrious party.' L.B. Seeley (ed.), *Horace Walpole and His World: Select Passages from His Letters* (1st edn, London, 1895; reprinted, Whitefish, 2005), pp.50-51.

<sup>148</sup> C. Yonge (ed.), *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol.2 (1890), 'Walpole to George Montagu, esq, Arlington St, 11 May 1769'. The traffic problems resulting from the *Ridotto* at Vauxhall is similarly described by the *Gazetteer*, 15 May 1769, which estimated 10,000 people were in attendance.

<sup>149</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England*, p.100.

<sup>150</sup> For detail on carriage sharing, see Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England* and Fanny Burney, *Evelina*, (Oxford, 2008). Travelling by hackney carriage lacked much of the dignity of the private carriage. In *Evelina*, Madame Duval prepared to leave Ranelagh in a hackney cab but after taking her place 'screamed and jumped hastily out, declaring she was wet through all her clothes. Indeed, upon

Much of this demand, also generated by visitors to the city, was absorbed by the city's hackney coaches, light four-wheeled vehicles drawn by two horses.<sup>151</sup> Between 1654 and 1771, the number of licensed coaches gradually increased from three hundred to one thousand, by which time the trade would have involved around two thousand horses.<sup>152</sup> Over the century, a sophisticated network of hackney coach stands sprang up across the city, mapping out 'new, commercially generated topographies' reliant on the horse.<sup>153</sup> London was also at the heart of the nation's stage-coach infrastructure. This included short-stages to the city's many satellite villages and towns, services which 'grew considerably from the mid-eighteenth century.' By 1825 there were '600 short-stages making about 1,800 journeys a day to and from the City and West End', representing about one-fifth of all the stage coaches in the entire country at this time.<sup>154</sup> The eighteenth century also witnessed a huge expansion in long-stage operations. 'Accompanied by drastic reductions in journey times,' this growth steadily enabled passengers to travel between London and the rest of the country faster than men on horseback.<sup>155</sup> Both forms of coaching service represented a productive sideline for London's innkeepers, men already in the business of providing extensive stabling, food and accommodation.<sup>156</sup> By the end of the century, the trade was 'utterly dominated' by partnerships of such men.<sup>157</sup> The numbers of horses involved were tremendous. By the 1830s, Chaplin of London, one of the largest concerns in a trade increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few major innkeepers, owned 1,800 horses, working 60 coaches.<sup>158</sup> Each of these equine activities deserves attention because, as David Barnett has argued, 'an efficient transport system for moving both passengers and freight is an essential part of the economic infrastructure for any industrial economy.'<sup>159</sup>

Furthermore, the majority of metropolitan trades depended directly or indirectly on the haulage of powerful draught horses. Since the 1980s, several historians have reasserted the importance of Britain's roads prior to the railway age, arguing that far greater volumes of goods were

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examination, the coach was found to be in a dismal condition...and the rain had...made its way into the carriage.' Fanny Burney, *Evelina*, (2008), p.61.

<sup>151</sup> T. May, *Gondolas and growlers: the history of the London horse cab* (Stroud, 1995). Until 1833, hackney coach proprietors enjoyed a legal monopoly over short-distance traffic within the Bills of Mortality. The two-wheeled cabriolet, introduced to London in 1823, was drawn by a single horse.

<sup>152</sup> M. Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder: London Streets and Hackney Coaches, c. 1640 – c.1740' in T. Hitchcock and H. Shore (eds.), *The Streets of London from the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (2003), p.41.

<sup>153</sup> Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder', p.49.

<sup>154</sup> Barker & Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport*, p.59; T.C. Barker & M. Robbins, *A History of London Transport*, vol.1 (London, 1963), p.4.

<sup>155</sup> D.H. Aldcroft & M.J. Freeman, *Transport in the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1983), p.54.

<sup>156</sup> One of the largest London coaching inns, the Bull and Mouth is said to have had underground stabling for at least 400 horses; A. Everitt (ed.), *Perspectives in English Urban History* (London, 1973), p.101.

<sup>157</sup> Barker & Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport*, p.58.

<sup>158</sup> Barker & Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport*, p.58.

<sup>159</sup> D. Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution* (London & New York, 1998), p.183.

carried by horse-drawn vehicles than previously suggested.<sup>160</sup> The expansion of commerce, the creation of new goods and evolving consumer tastes ‘created enormous internal and external demands for transport by waggon, cart, van, and packhorse.’<sup>161</sup> The unparalleled scale of London’s equine labour force reflected the dominance of the metropolis and its port in the manufacture, processing and distributing of commodities.<sup>162</sup> As early as 1637, the city was at the very heart of a national network of waggon carrying services, the extent of their operations trebling between 1681 and 1838.<sup>163</sup> By the 1730s, waggons had largely replaced packhorses, many drawn by teams of six or eight horses. A century later, about a thousand such waggons traversed the metropolis every week.<sup>164</sup> They were the city’s juggernauts, weighing as much as a ton and a half and carrying about four, but sometimes six tons of goods.<sup>165</sup> Waggon horses were, therefore, highly prized commercial machines. While seventeenth-century packhorses rarely exceeded fifteen hands, by the early nineteenth century, waggon proprietors were investing in giant horses from the Midlands, measuring sixteen to seventeen hands.<sup>166</sup> A waggoner’s team must have cut an imposing metropolitan presence as their iron-clad hoofs thundered down on the paving stones. Since the early twentieth century, the shire-type horse has become an iconic symbol of a bye-gone rustic age. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, these animals were familiar features of London’s bustling urban terrain and played a crucial role in its success. As Gerhold has argued ‘above all, London carriers served London and its port’, they assisted in the feeding of the city, in strengthening its wholesaling function, in enlarging the hinterland of its port, in supplying its industries with raw materials, in ‘providing

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<sup>160</sup> D. Gerhold, *Road Transport Before the Railways: Russell’s London Flying Waggons* (Cambridge, 1993), p.1; J. Chartres, ‘Road Carrying in England in the seventeenth century: myth and reality’, *EcHR*, 2:30 (1977), pp.73-94; J. Chartres & G. Turnbull, ‘Road Transport’, in Aldcroft & Freeman (eds.), *Transport in the Industrial Revolution* (1983), pp.64-99; Barker & Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport*. C. Wilson, *England’s apprenticeship 1603-1763* (London, 1965); W.G. Hoskins, *Industry, trade and people in Exeter 1688-1800* (Manchester, 1935); H. J. Dyos & D. H. Aldcroft, *British transport: an economic survey from the seventeenth century to twentieth* (Harmondsworth, 1974 edn).

<sup>161</sup> J. Chartres, ‘The Eighteenth-Century English Inn: A Transient ‘Golden Age?’’, in B. Kumin & B Ann Tlusty (eds.) *The World of the Tavern* (Aldershot, 2002), p.205.

<sup>162</sup> Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*.

<sup>163</sup> Dorian Gerhold’s assessment that there was a ‘three-fold’ expansion in this period contrasts sharply with Chartres and Turnbull’s earlier suggestion of a 10-fold increase. Both sets of figures were based on studies of Directory lists of carriers, ‘an extremely treacherous source’. Gerhold has convincingly shown that Chartres and Turnbull failed to discount ‘double or multiple entries’ while developing a far more reliable methodology. Gerhold’s ‘three-fold’ increase appears to represent a reliable assessment. D. Gerhold, ‘The Growth of the London Carrying trade, 1681-1838’, *EcHR*, 41:3 (1988), pp.392-410; J. Chartres, ‘Road Carrying in England’, *EcHR*, 2:30 (1977), pp.73-94; J. Chartres & G. Turnbull, ‘Road Transport’ in Aldcroft & Freeman (eds.), *Transport in the Industrial Revolution*, pp.64-99.

<sup>164</sup> Gerhold, *Road Transport Before the Railways*, p.1.

<sup>165</sup> Gerhold, *Road Transport Before the Railways*, p.3.

<sup>166</sup> This bulk was partly needed to prevent animals being ‘thrown off their feet when drawing heavy loads across uneven surfaces but more importantly, stronger animals provided greater work for a given amount of provender. Typical waggon horses were bred in Leicestershire, sold at eighteenth months to graziers in the Midlands, sold again at two to arable farmers or dealers in the western counties, where they were broken into harness and worked until the age of five or six. The animals were then sold, often in London, the largest of them going to the carriers and the brewers; Gerhold, *Road Transport Before the Railways*, p.31 & p.134



it with manufactures cheaper than could have been produced in the city itself', in 'distributing the produce of London's own industries' and in 'maintaining London's role as a financial centre'.<sup>167</sup> At every stage, horses provided the haulage.

Within the city, smaller and more manoeuvrable vehicles were also needed to transfer goods between its wharfs, warehouses, markets, shops, houses, night pits and construction sites. When the weight of goods exceeded the capabilities of a porter, wheelbarrow or ass, a two-wheeled cart was called into action. These vehicles were driven by one or two horses and legally entitled to carry loads of up to one ton, rising to twenty-five hundredweights in 1757.<sup>168</sup> There were two main categories of cart: those licensed for hire and those privately employed by tradesmen. The history of licensed carts in London goes back to the early sixteenth century, when forty 'cars' were officially allowed to ply for hire. This figure gradually increased until an Act of Common Council in 1654 established a limit of 420, which remained in place throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>169</sup> Licensed carmen enjoyed the 'exclusive privilege of acting for hire in the City'. Much of their business came from the Port of London wharves, where they collected freight for delivery to the City's warehouses. When trade flourished, carts overwhelmed the area around Thames Street, prompting repeated complaints from residents.<sup>170</sup> As well as enabling trade, however, horse-drawn carts provided a crucial daily service for residents of the city, distributing huge quantities of essential foodstuffs and fuel.<sup>171</sup>

In addition to the licensed trade, a wide range of tradesmen relied on privately owned carts and horses. In 1795, a London newspaper advertised the 'entire stock in trade' of a bankrupt carpenter which included 'two good cart horses.'<sup>172</sup> With new construction sites springing up across the city, building trades depended on cart horses to transport huge quantities of brick, stone and timber. Another advertisement, for the sale of a timber merchant's stock included 'six excellent draught horses, two carts, two timber carriages, harness, and other effects.' The sale was recommended to 'merchants, builders, and others.'<sup>173</sup> Similar advertisements reveal the

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<sup>167</sup> Gerhold, *Road Transport Before the Railways*, p.125 & p.223. In addition to road carrying, from the early nineteenth century, horses began to power thriving 'fly-boat' services on newly-built canals connecting London to the rest of the country. Regent's Canal opened on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1820 and horse-drawn cargoes continued to use it until 1956, [www.canalmuseum.org.uk/history](http://www.canalmuseum.org.uk/history). In the 1820s, the major carrying firm, Pickfords, was employing 4,000 horses to transport goods along canals between London and Birmingham, Thompson, *Victorian England: the horse drawn society*, p.13.

<sup>168</sup> E. Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen of London* (2nd edn, London 1982), p.106; Public Act, 30 Geo II, c.22.

<sup>169</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.18 & p.50.

<sup>170</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, pp.98-103.

<sup>171</sup> By the 1640s, London was already importing more than 150,000 tons of coal and every sack 'had to be carted from the riverside wharves.' Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.39.

<sup>172</sup> *Morning Post & Fashionable World*, 24 April 1795.

<sup>173</sup> *Oracle & Daily Advertiser*, 24 July 1800.

equine arrangements of other diverse trades. In 1787, a ‘tallow-melter’ in Soho offered ‘two Carts and a Draught Horse’ for sale. Three years later, ‘a strong draught horse and town cart’ featured in the stock of a deceased ‘Grocer and Tea-Dealer’ in Newgate Street.<sup>174</sup> Cart horses were also engaged in the crucial activity of waste disposal in the metropolis, moving nightsoil and other urban detritus to the outskirts of the city. The 1754 trade card of the ‘Tallow-Chandler’ William Lewis added that he ‘Keepeth Carts and Horses for Carriages of Sand, Gravel, Slop, Rubbish, &c.’<sup>175</sup> Cards (**Plates 7 & 8**) printed for the ‘nightman and rubbish carter’ Robert Stone depict a single-horse vehicle adapted for removing nightsoil and a three-horse cart loaded with barrels.

**(Left): Plate 7: Trade Card for Robert Stone, Nightman and Rubbish Carter (1745); (Right): Plate 8: ditto (c.1750) [Details].**<sup>176</sup>



However, the contribution of London’s horses extended far beyond transportation. Equine power underpinned metropolitan industry on a massive scale. These animals powered horse-mills and other machinery for myriad trades upon which the commercial success of the city, and nation, depended. As McShane and Tarr have noted, the ‘horse-power machine’ succeeded in multiple forms by converting the ‘linear, ambulatory, slightly rhythmic gait of animal ... to the rotary motion required by machinery.’ Thus, the monotonous plodding of the urban horse ‘powered mills ... raised and pumped water, sawed wood, drove hoisting devices and construction equipment’.<sup>177</sup> Such work often represented the final phase in an animal’s working life and historians of animal-cruelty have referred to their labours as ‘the most shaming instance

<sup>174</sup> *World*, 22 March 1787; *World*, 13 April 1790. See also *Oracle & Daily Advertiser*, 10 April 1799, for the theft of a stove-grate maker’s ‘valuable draft horse’ in Clerkenwell.

<sup>175</sup> Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection, cited in Cockayne, *Hubbub*, p.185.

<sup>176</sup> Both LMA, Prints and Drawings Collection.

<sup>177</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.2.

of the mercenary callousness of the age.’<sup>178</sup> In focussing on the suffering of animals, however, such studies have neglected the value of animal labour and its importance to society. Recently, this abuse-centred approach has been challenged by McShane and Tarr, who have argued that ‘horses, too, benefited from the new human ecology. Their populations boomed, and the urban horse, although probably working harder than his rural counterpart, was undoubtedly better fed, better housed, and protected from cruelty ... the urban horse was also larger and longer lived than were farm animals. Thus the relationship was symbiotic.’<sup>179</sup>

Equine power underpinned crucial metropolitan services including, from at least the start of the eighteenth century, pumping water. Detailed accounts for the Clink Waterworks in Southwark suggest that at least five animals, including mill-horses, were employed there in the early 1700s. The high frequency of visits made by the farrier, often several per month, to treat harness wounds reveal the heavy and intensive labour provided by these horses.<sup>180</sup> By the 1750s, the Bank-End Waterworks in Southwark were using a ‘Horse-Machine for raising Thames Water’, while the New River Company, which supplied an estimated ‘thirty thousand’ properties, used equine ‘engines for boring’ the ground to lay pipes.<sup>181</sup> Engineers relied on horse teams to power giant machinery in some of London’s most ambitious construction projects. In 1738, a pioneering pile-driving horse engine, invented by the watch-maker James Vauloue, lay the foundations for Westminster Bridge. **Plate 9**, a detailed scientific engraving, celebrates this ingenious piece of engineering. ‘By the horses going round’, it explains, ‘the great Rope is wound about the Drum & the Ram is drawn up till the Tongs come between the inclin’d Planes: where they are opened & the Ram is discharg’d’. In order to maximise power and efficiency, the machine had to operate in harmony with the movement of its horses. For this reason, Vauloue designed the ‘great wheel’ to incorporate a mechanism to ‘prevent the horses from falling ‘when the Ram is discharged’.<sup>182</sup> As well as providing a vital power source, therefore, horses were key players in the ‘process of scientific enquiry’ which underpinned ‘all aspects’ of one of the most influential metropolitan projects of the eighteenth century.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Donald, ‘Beastly Sights’, p.55.

<sup>179</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.1.

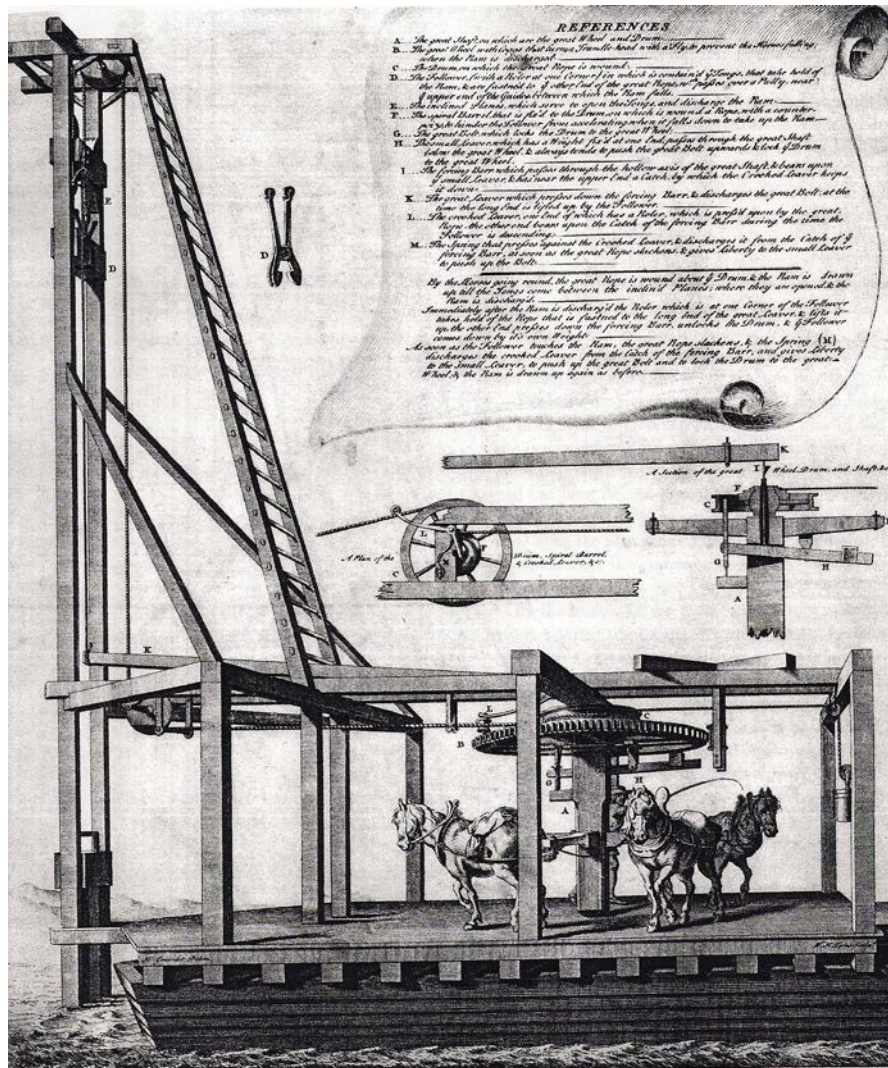
<sup>180</sup> TNA C5/240/16, ‘Foxley et al v. John Read et al.’ Payments were made for ‘oyntment’ and ‘dressing’ for the ‘horses shoulders’, common treatments for injuries incurred by repetitive straining against a harness.

<sup>181</sup> W. Maitland, *The History of London*, vol.2 (1756), p1264 and p.1269.

<sup>182</sup> William Henry Tomes after Hubert Francois Gravelot, *A Perspective View of the Engine, now made use of for Driving the Piles of the New Bridge at Westminster*, 1738. The Royal Society.

<sup>183</sup> A.F. O’Byrne, ‘Composing Westminster Bridge: Public Improvement and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century London’ in M.E. Novak (ed.), *The Age of Projects* (Toronto, 2008), p.244.

**Plate 9: William Henry Toms after Hubert François Gravelot. *A Perspective View of the Engine, now made use of for Driving the Piles of the New Bridge at Westminster, 1738.***



Having provided a brief overview of equine labour in the metropolis, I wish to examine a specific case study of equine-dependent industrial production and distribution: brewing. When Samuel Johnson was asked in 1781 what the Anchor Brewery in Southwark might be worth, he declared: “We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.”<sup>184</sup> The brewing industry has been described as ‘the largest scale’ operation in London’s food and drink manufacturing sector which was itself a crucial element of London’s industrial activity.<sup>185</sup> The scale and sophistication of London’s brewing industry increased dramatically in the second half of the eighteenth century. This growth

<sup>184</sup> J. Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (2008), p.796.

<sup>185</sup> Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.41.

reflected both an expanding metropolitan market for beer and major advances in large-scale brewing methods, notably the emergence of ‘a modern structure of production, with its attendant developments in marketing and distribution’, ‘the innovations of porter brewing’ and impressive ‘mechanical innovation.’ As Peter Mathias asserted, it was not until the nineteenth century, that the great London breweries were ‘eclipsed in size and capital’ by other industrial concerns in the ‘country at large.’<sup>186</sup>

Between the 1720s and 1790s, the total number of breweries in London fluctuated between 140 and 180, declining in the second half of the century as the biggest operations began to dominate the market.<sup>187</sup> In 1748, Sir William and Felix Calvert each brewed 50,000 barrels for the first time, after which London’s elite circle of brewers began to dramatically increase their production. Samuel Whitbread began to increase production sharply from the 1760s and with John Calvert, was the first to achieve 100,000 barrels. By 1796, Whitbread extended his dominance to reach 200,000 barrels, only to be overtaken again in 1815, when Southwark’s Anchor Brewery, now owned by Courage, Barclay & Simonds (hereafter, CBS), hit 300,000.<sup>188</sup> In his study of the brewing industry, Mathias often referred to the important role played by horses, asserting that ‘the number of dray- and mill-horses on a brewer’s inventory provides a far better indication of the ‘extent of their trade’ than ‘equivalent valuations of fixed plant and equipment.’<sup>189</sup> Building on Mathias’ observations, I will examine more closely the ways in which horses underpinned the industry’s dramatic modernisation and success. Most historians have accredited mass-production brewing to the adoption of the steam engine. I will challenge this innovation-centric assumption by showing that the brewing revolution relied on the horse long before the arrival of steam. Furthermore, when the new engines stirred into action, the need for equine labour was re-negotiated but never diminished.

The extant source material offers a patchy indication of the number of horses employed by London’s breweries, from which it is impossible to make precise industry-wide calculations. The most complete record appears in the Truman rest books (1741–1814, with a gap from 1780–90). As shown in **Table 3 and Fig.2**, after 1775 the brewery consistently recorded the number of dray- and mill-horses in its service.<sup>190</sup> Unfortunately no such record survives for

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<sup>186</sup> P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England 1700-1830* (Cambridge, 1959), p.27.

<sup>187</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.23; By 1748, the 12 largest firms accounted for 42 per cent of London’s production. This rose to 55 per cent by 1776, to 78 per cent by 1815 and to 85 per cent by 1830. Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.42.

<sup>188</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.25 & p.551.

<sup>189</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.79.

<sup>190</sup> LMA, B/THB/B/3-11, Truman Brewery Rest Books, 1759-1780 & 1790-1813. Prior to 1775, the brewery only recorded the combined value of its dray and mill horses.

Truman's competitors.<sup>191</sup> Using annual production data, Mathias proposed a series of convincing ratios for the number of dray-horses required for different levels of distribution capability. He calculated that a trade of between 60–100 thousand barrels would require 50–60 horses, rising to 80–90 for 200 thousand barrels and 150 for 300 thousand barrels. Using the higher figure in each case, I have calculated the approximate number of dray-horses employed by the eight largest breweries at five year intervals from 1780–1805 (**Table 4**).<sup>192</sup> These companies would have needed approximately 278 animals in 1780 and 371 in 1805, an increase of 33.5%. The Truman rest books suggest a ratio of mill- to dray-horses of around 1: 3 in 1780 and 1: 4.5 in 1805, for reasons which I will discuss below. We can, therefore, assume that in 1780 the same breweries employed approximately 95 mill-horses, falling to 84 in 1805. This would amount to total stocks of 373 horses, rising to 455. Considering that the total number of brewers in the Bills of Mortality fluctuated between 140 and 160 in this period – most of whom ran much smaller operations than those discussed above – it is conceivable that as many as a thousand horses were employed by metropolitan brewers.<sup>193</sup> To appreciate the degree to which horses underpinned the brewing industry, let us now examine their labour in more detail, commencing with the production process and the mill-horse.

As noted above, traditional studies of the industrial revolution have focussed overwhelmingly on the contribution of the steam engine. In particular, those who have downplayed London's role as an industrial and manufacturing centre have argued that the capital failed to embrace steam power and thus remained 'traditional in technology.' Conversely, David Barnett has cited the swift adoption of steam by London's brewers as evidence of the city's industrial importance.<sup>194</sup> Yet, both sides of this historiography imply that horses were an outdated and insignificant technology. In a recent architectural study of breweries, Lynn Pearson asserted that the

transition from the brewhouse – a distinctive, albeit small-scale structure – to the brewery, as an industrial building type, occurred during the early years of the eighteenth century. This transformation was powered by two factors: the availability of a mass

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<sup>191</sup> A rare surviving stable book compiled by the horsekeepers of CBS provides a weekly stock-take of the company's drays from Sept 1827-April 1839 (See Table 6 & Fig.3). This offers invaluable information but its limited chronological reach makes extrapolation difficult. LMA, ACC/2305/1/1300, Courage, Barclay & Simonds Stable Book, Sept 1827 – April 1839.

<sup>192</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.79 and p.551, Table 43. Mathias used data from brewery records and parliamentary papers to ascertain annual barrelage.

<sup>193</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.22.

<sup>194</sup> J. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Folkestone, 1979), p.2; G.S. Jones, *Outcast London* (Oxford, 1971), pp.19-21. Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.35. Roy Porter has also asserted that 'the capital hardly lagged in technology and innovation...As late as 1850 London's manufacturing output was still unrivalled in Britain.' R. Porter, *London: A Social History* (1994), p.187.



market for beer ... and by power itself in the form of the steam engine ... The new breweries quickly became major users of steam power.<sup>195</sup>

Brewing was, indeed, one of the first metropolitan industries to take up steam but none of its engines were installed before 1784 and two of the city's largest concerns, Truman and Meux-Read, continued to rely on horse-mills for a quarter of a century after this date. Prior to 1784, the mechanical components of all large-scale metropolitan breweries were powered by mill-horses. Nor was steam's triumph over the mill-horse immediate. As late as 1807, five major brewers were still without a steam engine and continued to rely on their horse-wheels. It was only in 1820, when J. Elliot's Pimlico-based brewery converted, that the trade truly dispensed with its horse-engines (see **Table 5**).

Despite its long-standing utility, the mill-horse has been almost entirely omitted from the history of metropolitan brewing, offering little glamour to compete with the fanfare of steam. Mill-horses were, as Mathias observes, 'old broken creatures capable only of infinite plodding under the eye of the boy sitting on the 'spur' at the centre of the wheel' Often blind and in the twilight of their working lives, these animals were seldom purchased for more than £5 each, marking a sharp contrast with their dray counterparts, which fetched ten times this amount. In 1766, Truman valued his entire set of five mill-horses at only £7.10s.<sup>196</sup> Mill-horses were almost permanently hidden from public view. The 'mill-house' in which they plodded was enclosed and removed from the glistening vats which attracted visitors. And yet mill-horses drove the major transformation in large-scale brewing practice during the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1744, the brewer William Ellis described two major innovations in pumping systems, both of which relied on the power of the mill-horse. 'Formerly', he wrote:

water-pumps...were work'd [by men]...But the present Contrivance works both these Pumps with more Expedition by a single Horse put into the Malt-mill, and that in as true a Manner as any Men whatsoever; which saves great Part of a Man's Wages ... [Another] Improvement is by the Wort-pump. This used to be work'd with a long Iron-handle as the Water Pump was, but is now likewise supplied by the Horse-mill in the same Manner ... and will with great Expedition throw up the Worts out of the Underback into the Copper.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> L. Pearson, *British Breweries: An Architectural History* (London, 1999), p.27.

<sup>196</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.82 & p.79.

<sup>197</sup> William Ellis, *The London and Country Brewer* (1744), pp.180-1. 'Wort' is the sweet liquid produced by the malt-mashing process in brewing. The 'wort-pump' performed the crucial role of extracting the liquid wort from the 'Mash Tun' into another vessel, the 'Copper', to be boiled with hops. The 'Underback' is a small open-topped vessel that allows the brewer to control the flow from the Mash Tun and to check the colour of the Wort.

In 1770, George Watkins described the same advances. By means of mill-horses powering multiple mechanical processes, he argued, the small-scale, artisan brew-house could be transformed into a sophisticated modern brewery. ‘The labour of grinding is to be done by a horse; and the same creature, by good contrivance, may raise the water by the pumps, and convey the wort out of the receiver into the copper, by such another machine: thus vast labour may be saved.’<sup>198</sup> It has largely been forgotten that nearly half a century before the arrival of the steam engine, London’s major breweries were ‘highly mechanised already.’ Their main mechanical requirements involved ‘steady milling and pumping over long periods at reasonable speeds.’ The mill-horse was ‘eminently suited to the operations of a rotative engine’ which underpinned these processes.<sup>199</sup> By increasing efficiency and cutting human labour, the mill-horse reduced costs and enabled dramatic expansion in production in the half-century before steam.

On the rare occasions when mill-horses have been discussed by historians, they have tended to be viewed as case studies of abuse. As such, the brewery has appeared to be little more than a staging post in a life of cruelty generally beginning on a farm and ending in a knacker’s yard. Such views echo some Georgian commentary. In 1785, a moralising song entitled ‘The High Mettled’ racer played out this narrative on the London stage, lamenting the pitiful decline of a used-up race horse. It became famous across the country and ‘quickly transmuted into graphic imagery’.<sup>200</sup> **Plate 10**, an engraving after Robert Cruickshank from 1831 depicts the forlorn ex-racer, now ‘Blind, old, lean, and feeble’ tugging round a mill. At the doorway, a corpulent businessman watches on as the beast sacrifices its last breath for his profit. Yet, other strands of eighteenth-century discourse, including the literature of science and engineering, actively celebrated the contribution of equine labour. **Plate 11**, a detailed engraving published in 1763, depicts a team of mill-horses working the engine of a large-scale brewery in the 1760s. Here the animals are treated without sentiment, but celebrated as the power source underpinning a sophisticated mechanical process akin to the pile-driving machine discussed earlier.

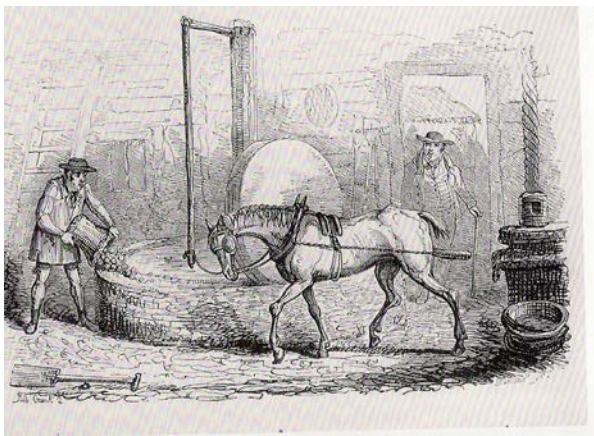
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<sup>198</sup> G. Watkins, *The complete English brewer; or, the whole art and mystery of brewing* (2nd edn, 1770), p.100.

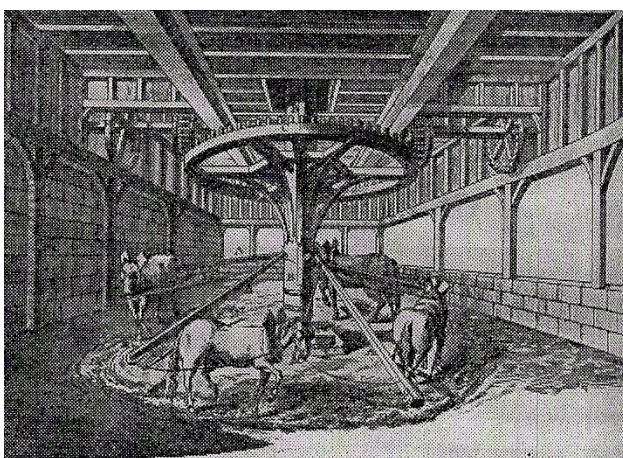
<sup>199</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.80.

<sup>200</sup> Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain*, p.219.





**Plate 10:** *The High Mettled Racer.* By the *Late Charles Dibdin*, 1831; ‘Blind, old, lean, and feeble, he tugs round a mill’. Wood engraving by G. W. Bonner from a design by Robert Cruikshank.



**Plate 11:** *The horse wheel of a Brewery* (1763).

However, the mill-horse was a technological victim of its own success. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the numbers of mill-horses employed by breweries increased substantially, so that by 1780, a large concern had to keep more than twenty. ‘The labour of the pumps and mills (where by this time there were two or more pairs of mill-stones) had gradually increased to the point where the single horse which worked the mill at the beginning of the century had been replaced by four working together in shifts.’<sup>201</sup> While mill-horses were far less expensive than dray-horses, the cost of maintaining them was just as great and ‘both were more expensive than a labourer or a junior clerk.’ Just like the dray-horses, these animals ceaselessly demanded food, straw and stables equipped with men to look after them. While they served the mechanical needs of the brewery more than adequately, they also brought ‘the inconveniencies of short-shift working, fatigues, early death and replacement.’<sup>202</sup> As horses represented such a dominant expense, further expansion requiring financial as well as mechanical efficiency, prompted the need to replace mill-horses with a less costly alternative. Yet, the Boulton & Watt engine was of no use to brewers until 1782, when its original pumping capability was adapted for the turning

<sup>201</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.80.

<sup>202</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.82.

of machinery. Until then, brewers had no alternative to the horse wheel. ‘To have taken a steam-engine for pumping alone would have been of little benefit, so long as they were forced to keep the mill-horses and the horse-wheel for grinding malt.’<sup>203</sup> Once the new engine was available, several London brewers were swift to enter discussions and to place orders. Ease of installation varied between sites, but the transition for most appears to have been remarkably smooth because ‘the large brewery could receive an engine and put it directly to the wheel of its existing horse-mill.’<sup>204</sup> In March 1786, one of Whitbread’s assistants, Joseph Delafield, wrote to his brother, describing the financial benefits brought by the company’s steam engine which had been installed the previous summer:

Our wheel you may remember, required 6 horses to turn it, but we ordered our engine the power of ten, and the work it does we think is equal to fourteen horses, for we grind with all four mills about 40 quarters an hour ... We put aside by it full 24 horses, which to keep up and feed did not cost less per annum than £40 a head. The expense of erection was about £1,000. It consumes only a bushel of coals an hour.<sup>205</sup>

Knowing now that steam revolutionised the brewing industry, we should not assume that brewers found the decision to exchange their mill-horses an easy one to make.<sup>206</sup> Their correspondence often suggests an anxious awareness of the risks involved. Barclay-Perkins was the first company to enquire about the Boulton & Watt engine but hesitated before placing an order. As a result, they were overtaken by Goodwyn, Whitbread and Felix Calvert, men ‘more easily convinced that their heavy machinery ... could be more quickly and cheaply powered by the engine than by relays of horses.’<sup>207</sup> Yet, even Goodwyn, the first to install, retained some of his mill-horses, perhaps fearing that the new technology might let him down. In July 1784, he wrote to Boulton & Watt

I have parted from one half of my Mill Horses already, & in hopes that you my Engineer, will render them all needless ... I am deliberating on the sale of the remainder but shall probably keep two or three until we are perfect masters of the conduct of our new works.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.82.

<sup>204</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.81.

<sup>205</sup> J. Delafield, 6 June 1787, cited in Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.93.

<sup>206</sup> McShane and Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.165, complain that ‘all historical writing about the new steam engine, especially in its stationary applications, seems to assume the inevitability of its triumph. Yet the reality was that the adoption of steam as a power source in cities was relatively slow.’

<sup>207</sup> B. Spiller, ‘The Georgian Brewery’, *Architectural Review*, 122, p.321.

<sup>208</sup> Boulton & Watt Collection: letter of 7 July 1784 cited in Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.81.

Despite being London's fifth largest brewery in 1790, Truman's Black Eagle delayed placing an order until December 1807. Rest books covering this transition period suggest that even after installation the company was reluctant to dispense with its animals altogether. Truman's mill-horse stock reached its peak of twenty-four in 1801. The company's steam engine was ordered six years later and like Goodwyn, Truman anticipated its success by scaling down from ten to five animals. The engine was presumably installed by the time of the 1808 summer rest period, by which time all but three mill-horses had been sold. However, by the rest of 1810, the company had acquired new mill-horses, returning to a total of seven. Only in 1811, three years after installation, did the brewery finally dispense with its mill-horses and rely entirely on steam. This was the situation for London's largest and most progressive breweries yet they only represented around a quarter of the companies operating in the early nineteenth century. 'Few brewers thought seriously about an engine until their annual production was well over 20,000 barrels' and in 1805, over one hundred sites were without steam engines and continuing to rely on mill-horses.<sup>209</sup> By no means did the triumph of steam over the mill-horse mark the end of equine utility in metropolitan brewing. As steam boosted production, brewers needed to expand their distribution capabilities more than ever before. It is to the brewer's dray-horse that we now turn.

In the 1790s, George Garrard (b. London, 1760; d., London, 1826), an artist best known for his livestock portraiture, completed a dramatic depiction of London's most important brewery, Samuel Whitbread's White Hart on Chiswell Street (**see Plate 12**).<sup>210</sup> As Garrard's most loyal patron, Whitbread may have placed the original commission for the painting. The brewery is represented as a hive of industrious activity, with black smoke bellowing from a series of chimneys. In the centre-ground, a brewery worker rolls a hogshead across the yard, another carries a timber frame out of view and a group of draymen pause between deliveries. Yet, the painting is dominated not by men, nor machinery, but by a gigantic horse backing its way into the shafts of a dray. Dwarfing the men around him, this animal combines supreme strength with an intelligent understanding of its role. The animal's coat shimmers with good health, akin to a

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<sup>209</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.81; J. Farey, *A Treatise on the Steam Engine* (1827) cited in Barnett, London, *Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, pp.35-36. In other metropolitan industries, including tobacco and whiting manufacturers, horse mills were still being used in the 1820s. Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.49 & p.93.

<sup>210</sup> Garrard served his apprenticeship with Sawrey Gilpin (1733–1807), the noted animal painter, and became a student at the Royal Academy Schools, London, in 1778. Sir Joshua Reynolds purchased his *View of a Brew-House Yard* from the Academy exhibition of 1784 to encourage his career. Guided by his patron, Samuel Whitbread, he began to expand his artistic range and by 1800 was attempting to gain recognition as a sculptor of animal and human form. Yet, he failed to attain full membership of the Royal Academy because, according to Joseph Nollekens, he remained 'a jack-of-all-trades', refusing to specialise in one field. S. Deuchar 'George Garrard', [www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com) (accessed, 3/8/2010); S. Deuchar (ed.), *Paintings, Politics & Porter: Samuel Whitbread and British Art* (Exhibition Catalogue, Museum of London, 1984).

Stubbsian bay race horse (**Plate 13**), and its white legs brilliantly contrast their sooty industrial surroundings. This is an animal of prestige, valued by its owner just as the aristocracy esteemed their thoroughbred champions.

**Plate 12:** George Garrard, *View of the East End of Whitbread's Brewery in Chiswell St (1792).*



**Plate 13:** George Stubbs, *Hambletonian (c.1800).*



Several other grand paintings of the brewing industry acknowledge the prestige of dray-horses. In Dean Wolstenholme's (1757–1837) *Hour Glass Brewery* (1821), a giant white horse belonging to Felix Calvert takes centre stage.<sup>211</sup> Yet these depictions have been largely overlooked by studies of the period, including Diana Donald's *Picturing Animals in Britain*. Donald instead juxtaposes the magnificence of Stubbs's racing thoroughbreds with George Cruickshank's *The Knacker's Yard*, 1830–31, an image exposing sickening abuse against draught horses. Donald juxtaposes these animals as the horses of 'prosperity' and 'adversity'.<sup>212</sup> Clearly, Garrard's image of Whitbread's powerful, graceful and seemingly healthy animal fits neither category. It represents a distinctive and alternative strand in the visual culture of the eighteenth-century horse. As a recent study of farm animal portraiture has argued, 'British heavy horses were the most desirable in the world' and like race horses and prize livestock they were bred with great interest and enthusiasm.<sup>213</sup> In addition to their leading presence in brewery landscapes, individual dray-horses inspired admiring portraits by artists better known for their depictions of racehorses and aristocratic hunting scenes. In 1798, John Nost Sartorius (b. London, 1759; d. 1828) painted a veteran dray-horse known to its owners as *Old Brown* (**Plate 14**), which despite its impressive 35 years, is depicted with the strength, elegance and pride of a thoroughbred hunter.<sup>214</sup> The horse appears without its harness, free from the trappings of its working life. Yet, its achievements are proudly symbolised by the four barrels arranged in a tranquil corner of the brewer's yard. Another painting by, and print after, John Christian Zeitter (b. Germany, c.1798; d. London, 1862) (**Plate 15**), capture the power and prestige of a pair of more youthful animals at work.<sup>215</sup> Owned by Reid's Griffin brewhouse, the heroically named 'Pirate' and 'Outlaw' prepare to haul up barrels with their tails swishing and muscles bulging.

In recording the tremendous size and strength of these animals, it appears that these artists were true to life. London brewers invested huge sums for the very best draught horses. Their value increased from approximately £16 in the middle of the century to £40 after 1800, exceeding that of many fine carriage horses.<sup>216</sup> In 1789, a hackney coachman valued his horses at £20 each,

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<sup>211</sup> D. Alexander, 'Richard Reeve', [www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com) (accessed, 3/8/2010); See also G. Garrard, *Loading the Drays at Whitbread Brewery, Chiswell Street*, 1792. Both this painting and his *View of the East End of Whitbread's Brewery*, 1792, were reproduced as prints in the 1790s.

<sup>212</sup> Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain*, pp.199-232.

<sup>213</sup> Moncrieff, Joseph & Joseph, *Farm Animal Portraits*, p.253.

<sup>214</sup> S. Deuchar, 'Sartorius', [www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com) (accessed 3/8/2010); E. Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain, 1530-1790* (Harmondsworth, 1978), p.297; S. Mitchell, *The Dictionary of Equestrian Artists* (Woodbridge, 1985).

<sup>215</sup> W. Gilbey, Sir W. Gilbey, F. Babbage, *Animal Painters of England from the Year 1650: A Brief History of their Lives and Works* (2nd edn, 1911), vol.3, p.313; Zeitter's death at 64 years of age was reported in *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review* (1862), p.114, simply stating that he was a Member of the Society of British Artists.

<sup>216</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.79.



while a standard saddle horse fetched between £8– £10.<sup>217</sup> The qualities looked for in a dray-horse were no less specific than in a race horse. William Youatt said they ‘should have a broad breast, and thick and upright shoulders ... a low forehead, deep and round barrel, loins broad and high, ample quarters, thick fore-arms and thighs, short legs, round hoofs broad at the heels, and soles not too flat.’<sup>218</sup> The agricultural writer John Middleton, observed that the ‘draught-horses in the possession of the brewers and distillers, are, as to strength and figure, scarcely to be equalled.’<sup>219</sup> They were ‘the strong dray-horses’ whose size and skill ‘amazed visitors to London’<sup>220</sup> long into the nineteenth century. Not only were dray-horses ‘the best symbol of large-scale brewing ... apart from the giant vat,’ they represented the strength and ambition of metropolitan industry and commerce itself.<sup>221</sup> As a result, the dray-horse in the street doubled as a potent mobile marketing tool. As Mathias asserted, ‘As the porter breweries developed, a proper sense of pride, which afforded the semi-conscious publicity of a pre-advertising age, made their beasts the finest working horses in London.’<sup>222</sup> These animals prove that there were two important strands of spectacle relating to the draught horse in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: visions of cruelty on the one hand and advertising on four legs on the other. By focussing on the former, current historiography has rarely considered positive spectacles of working animals. Commentators were aware of the shameful owners of wretched, overworked animals but they also celebrated the beauty and utility of the hard-worked but well-maintained dray-horse.



**Plate 14:** *Old Brown aged 35, a Dray-Horse in a Brewery Yard* by John Nost Sartorius (Oil on Canvas, 1798).

<sup>217</sup> www.oldbaileyonline.org; OBSP, t17890114-49 (14 January 1789); OBSP, t17290827-43 (27 August 1729); Smithfield bullocks were generally valued between £8 and £10, while heifers fetched £3-6.

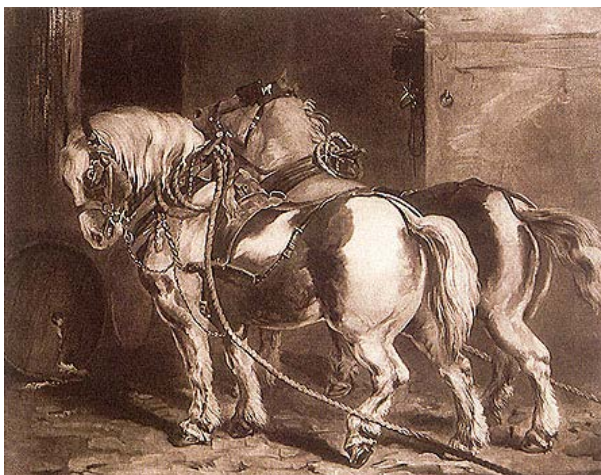
<sup>218</sup> William Youatt, *The Horse* (1831), p101.

<sup>219</sup> J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), p.360.

<sup>220</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.79.

<sup>221</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.78.

<sup>222</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p. 78.



**Plate 15:** *Pirate and Outlaw* after J.C. Zeitter, engraved by J. Egan (c.1818).

The striking physical attributes of the dray-horse reflected the demands of the industry's distribution process. Whether alone or working in pairs, these horses were responsible for hauling a vehicle loaded with three butts of beer, weighing one and a half tons, between the brewery and its customers for twelve hours a day and sometimes longer.<sup>223</sup> The intensity of the work, the unforgiving nature of the vehicle and challenging metropolitan conditions demanded a special kind of strength and durability. William Youatt observed that 'over the badly-paved streets of the metropolis, and with the immense loads they often have behind them, great bulk and weight are necessary to stand the inevitable battering and shaking. Weight must be opposed by weight, of the horse would sometimes be quite thrown off his legs.'<sup>224</sup>

On reaching a victualler, one horse would be removed from the dray to help lower the butts into the cellar and to raise up empties by ropes fixed to its harness. As well as requiring brute strength, these procedures demanded considerable intelligence from the animal, as suggested by an observer in 1868:

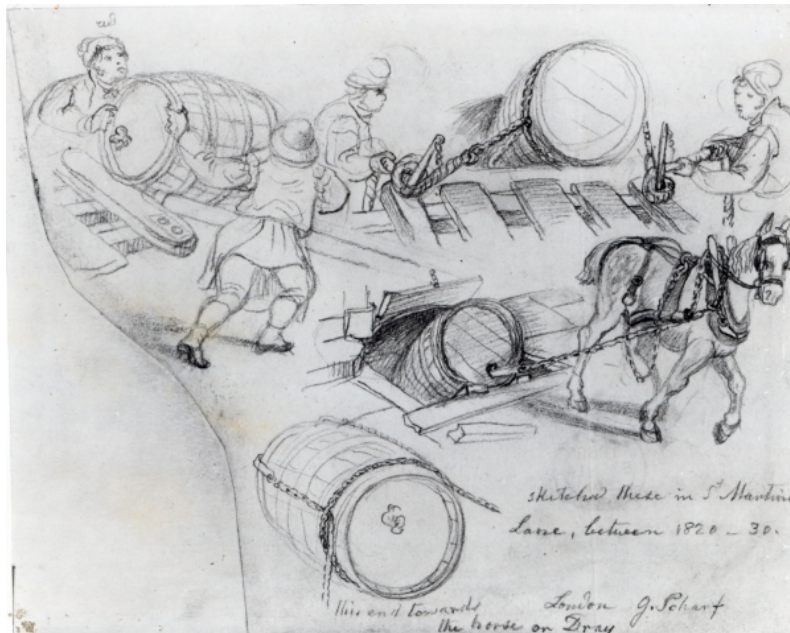
I have been over most of the globe; I have seen many of its wonders; but the greatest I ever saw was in London. I saw a brewers team lowering some butts of beer. The horse that performed this office, without any signal, raised the butts, and returned and lowered the rope: not a word or sign escaped the man at the top of the hole, who only waited to perform his part as methodically as his four footed mate did his. The cellaring finished, the horse took his place by the team ... The man ... then walked away; the team followed. Not one word passed, not even a motion of the whip.<sup>225</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.78.

<sup>224</sup> William Youatt, *The Horse* (1831), p.100

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in K. Chivers, *The Shire Horse: A History of the Breed, the Society and the Men* (London, 1976), p.92.

George Scharf the elder's (1788–1860) dynamic illustrations (**Plate 16**) of the butt-raising process emphasise the extent to which the efficiency and reliability of the distribution process relied on the power and skill of these horses.<sup>226</sup> As the animal hauls, the draymen are free to arrange their hooks, ropes and ramps to complete the operation and prepare for their next appointment.



**Plate 16:** George Scharf the elder, *Draymen and Horse* (drawing, c.1820-30).

The dray-horse's work increased dramatically over the eighteenth century. In 1760, the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted that 'At the beginning of King William's reign beer was mostly fetched from the brewhouse by the customers themselves, and paid for in ready money: so that the brewer entertained but few servants [and] few horses.'<sup>227</sup> As demand accelerated, the breweries had to deliver increasing quantities of beer to a growing number of customers over a rapidly expanding area. As Mathias observes, 'when beer had to be supplied to large numbers of publicans within a radius of a few miles, a regular system of supply ... had to be evolved to do it. Such a pattern had become set at latest by the 1740's and so remained. The publican would receive monthly deliveries from the brewery, giving a receipt slip to the drayman (or the Abroad Cooper) who brought it.'<sup>228</sup> A list of Whitbread's customers in 1800 reveals that horses setting out from the White Hart Brewery in Chiswell Street delivered to almost 400 victuallers

<sup>226</sup> George Scharf was born in Bavaria and settled in London in 1816. A large collection of his work 'which consists mainly of watercolours and sketches of topographical subjects and everyday life during the Regency and Victorian periods, is held in the British Museum.' V. Vaughan, 'Sir George Scharf', [www.oxfordartonline.com](http://www.oxfordartonline.com) (accessed 3/8/2010).

<sup>227</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 30 (1760), pp.527-9.

<sup>228</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.105.



scattered across the metropolis from Paddington in the West (approx 6.5 km away) to Woolwich in the East (approx 12 km), and from Finchley in the North (approx 13km) to Peckham in the South (approx 5.5km).<sup>229</sup> Using Whitbread's list, I have been able to plot the geographical spread of the journeys made by his horses at this time. The results shown in **Table 7 & Fig.4**, indicate that by 1800, the greatest proportion of customers (32%) were located in Holborn and the City, at a relatively short distance (0.5 km – 1.5 km) from the brewery. Yet the remaining 267 customers (68%) were located more than 1.5 km from the brewery. As David Barnett has observed, the fact that London's 'outermost districts' remained just 'within the daily reach of a dray' was an important advantage for the industry.<sup>230</sup> However, mass distribution meant long and intensive working hours for dray teams. A visitor to London in the early nineteenth century suggested that by this time, dray-horses belonging to a major brewery like CBS were 'often sixteen hours in harness out of the twenty-four'.<sup>231</sup>

In exchange for their labour, however, these animals placed heavy demands on the financial resources of the brewer and the energy and expertise of his workmen. While dray-horses were among the most powerful and hardy of their species in the city, they remained vulnerable to disease and injury. Because brewers were so dependant on the efficiency of their distribution process, they spent huge sums on feeding, treating, grooming and equipping their animals. In 1764, Daniel Chase, a brewer in Hackney told the Old Bailey that his stables were never locked up 'because we are fetching the horses out almost all hours of the night.'<sup>232</sup> The feeding requirements of horses, combined with relentless delivery schedules, meant that metropolitan breweries had to be twenty-four hour equine processing zones. London's major brewing concerns each employed teams of dedicated 'horse keepers' and draymen. As shown in **Table 8**, in the 1790s approximately one third of the total workforce at CBS dealt directly with horses, a ratio likely to have been typical among its competitors. In the 1790s, Alexander McLeay described the painstaking care which dray-horses demanded from these men. The brewers' stables, he observed

are daily cleaned and littered, by men whose business it is to attend them night and day ... they pay the greatest attention to their being and they are well littered at all seasons; for they consider it as highly necessary that the animals should be kept as warm as possible in the stable, after having been heated by the hard work they are usually kept to out of doors ... I believe the health of the dray-horses depends as much on such

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<sup>229</sup> LMA, 4453/B/12/002, 'Whitbread Rest Book' (1800), pp.1-19.

<sup>230</sup> Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.42.

<sup>231</sup> Louis Simond, *Journal of a Tour*, vol.1 (1817), pp.182-4.

<sup>232</sup> OBSP, t17640607-49 (7 June 1764).

treatment as on their food ... They are ... well rubbed down after they come in from work. The racks are always kept full of hay, so that the horses have as much as they can eat. They get corn (oats) before they go to work in the morning, and again about half an hour after they come in from work, but not sooner.<sup>233</sup>

Commercial efficiency demanded a sophisticated horse-keeping regime and careful record keeping. It is likely that all of London's major brewers kept a 'stable book' of the kind which survives for CBS for 1827–39.<sup>234</sup> Here, the company's horse keepers recorded, on a weekly basis, the number of sick or lame animals, deaths, total stock and additional notes. In an average week in 1828, the brewery had a stock of 126 horses, of which six (5%) had to be rested for reasons of sickness or lameness.<sup>235</sup> When Louis Simond visited these stables a few years earlier he was impressed to find that none of the 100 dray-horses were sick and saw this as testament to their superior care.<sup>236</sup> However, with so many animals stabled in close proximity, the rapid spread of disease posed a grave threat. In a particularly bad week in December 1827, CBS workmen found three horses dead.<sup>237</sup> With so much of their capital invested in these animals and their income so reliant on their services, brewers made huge efforts to avert the ravages of infection. By the 1790s, Whitbread maintained at least two large 'farrier's shops' on-site and trade ledgers for the mid-eighteenth century reveal that he spent large sums on medicine and farriery equipment.<sup>238</sup> Infirmaries, like that found at Thrale's Anchor, are likely to have been a feature of all major brewery yards in London in the second half of the century. Thrale's was located in a sheltered wing off the main stable complex which jutted out into Globe Alley. A plan of the stable yard, dated 1774 (**Plate 19**), indicates that large gates were used to seal off the area from neighbouring dray- and mill-horse stables, a further measure against the spread of disease.<sup>239</sup>

Dray-horse numbers grew substantially in the steam age. The rest books for Trumans show that in 1811, when the company's final mill-horses departed, its stock of dray-horses rose to a five-year high of sixty (see **Table 3 & Fig. 2**).<sup>240</sup> In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, CBS became the largest brewing concern in London. The company installed its first engine in 1786,

<sup>233</sup> J. Middleton, *View of the Agriculture of Middlesex* (1798), pp.364-5.

<sup>234</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/1/1300, 'Stable Book for Courage, Barclay & Simonds' (Sept 1827-April 1839)

<sup>235</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/1/1300, 'Stable Book', the brewery suffered nine or ten horses out of action on seven occasions in 1828. It was not uncommon for as many as nine horses to be rested through sickness or lameness. Eight horses died in 1828 and a further seven in 1829.

<sup>236</sup> Louis Simond, *Journal of a Tour*, vol.1 (1817), pp182-4.

<sup>237</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/1/1300, 'Stable Book', cause of death was not noted in this instance.

<sup>238</sup> Spiller, 'The Georgian Brewery', p.321; Whitbread Trade ledger, 1746-52 cited in Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.79.

<sup>239</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/01/834, 'A Plan of Thrale's Estate, 1774'.

<sup>240</sup> LMA, B/THB/B/3-11, Truman Brewery Rest Books, 1759-1780 & 1790-1813.

followed by another, three-times its power, in 1832. The CBS stable book indicates that this second engine enabled a major surge in production which dramatically increased distribution requirements. In the five years prior to installation, the average dray-horse stock was 113. In the subsequent five years, this figure rose by more than a quarter to 143, followed a few months later by a sudden and much larger leap. Between January and April 1839, an additional thirty drays-horses arrived, an increase of more than a fifth in less than four months. Either production had suddenly overtaken distribution levels or, more likely, the owners were planning ahead for even more ambitious growth.<sup>241</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, therefore, the accelerating expansion of London's breweries continued to rely on dray-horses. A print depicting heavy dray traffic outside the Truman brewery in 1842 (**Plate 17**), and a photograph of Young's Brewery in Wandsworth in 1896 (**Plate 18**), emphasise that well into the age of steam, these major industrialists were as dependant on horses as they had been in the mid-eighteenth century. These images highlight the remarkable extent to which dray-horses dominated the visual spectacle of brewing throughout the Industrial Revolution. Far from symbolising a romantic bye-gone age, these animals were four-legged advertising for a flourishing modernity. This role even extended to a form of 'industrial tourism' as metropolitan breweries became must-see curiosities in the late eighteenth century. As guides, brewers presented their stables and engine rooms with the same pride and, as the following accounts show, visitors understood and shared in this celebration of the equine.

In May 1787, *the London Chronicle* reported that George III and Queen Charlotte had visited Whitbread's brewery:

The steam-engine ... took up above half an hour ... The machinery, so well used by Mr. Whitbread, has saved much animal labour. But there remains much labour that cannot be saved. This particularly impressed the King; for he saw 200 men and 80 horses all in their places. The horse-keeper, yielding to the harmless vanity of office, said he would shew his Majesty "the highest horse among his subjects"... [the King] accurately guessed the height of his horse which was really remarkable, no less than 17 hands three inches – and replied, on his muscle not being proportioned to his bone!<sup>242</sup>

At the turn of the century, Marc-August Pictet, described a visit to the Meux brewery:

I am still amazed by the things I saw there. In the main building, a steam-engine, of the power of 28 horses, does all the necessary work of the various procedures of the art of

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<sup>241</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/1/1300, Courage, Barclay & Simonds Stable Book, Sept 1827– April 1839.

<sup>242</sup> *London Chronicle*, 26 May 1787.

brewing ... and fifty-eight magnificent horses, each worth £50, are employed to carry the beer throughout London and her environs.<sup>243</sup>

On 4 June 1831, Truman's hosted a special visit of politicians led by the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister, Lord Grey. The guests were first shown the brewery's steam engine, before taking dinner. Later in the evening, one of the partners, Buxton, records that he 'took them to the stables to see the horses.' Despite knowing little of horses, the Lord Chancellor 'selected one of the best of them, and pointed out his merits. Someone proposed that he should get on his back and ride him round the yard; which he seemed willing to do.'<sup>244</sup>

Metropolitan brewing clearly demonstrates the remarkable extent to which horses underpinned London's often underestimated role as 'the largest single business and industrial centre ... of the world's first modern industrial economy.'<sup>245</sup> Furthermore, the increasing utility of equine labour well into the industrial age emphasises that this age-old technology complemented, and was promoted by, the radical new technology of steam.<sup>246</sup> Employed across a plethora of metropolitan trades and services, the contribution of horses was vast. Yet, as I will now argue, in exchange for these endeavours, the urban beast placed heavy demands on the built environment, persistently shaping architectural infrastructures and social organisation around their needs.

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<sup>243</sup> Marc-Auguste Pictet, *Voyage de Trois Mois, en Angleterre, en Écosse et en Irlande* (1802), pp.305-6, translated from the French.

<sup>244</sup> Hanbury, Buxton & Company Limited, *Trumans the Brewers 1666-1966* (1966), p.35.

<sup>245</sup> Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.1.

<sup>246</sup> Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*.

**Plate 17:** *Truman Hanbury Buxton & Co Brewery* (Mezzotint, published by J. Moore, 1842).



**Plate 18:** Photograph of Young's Brewery Yard (1896).



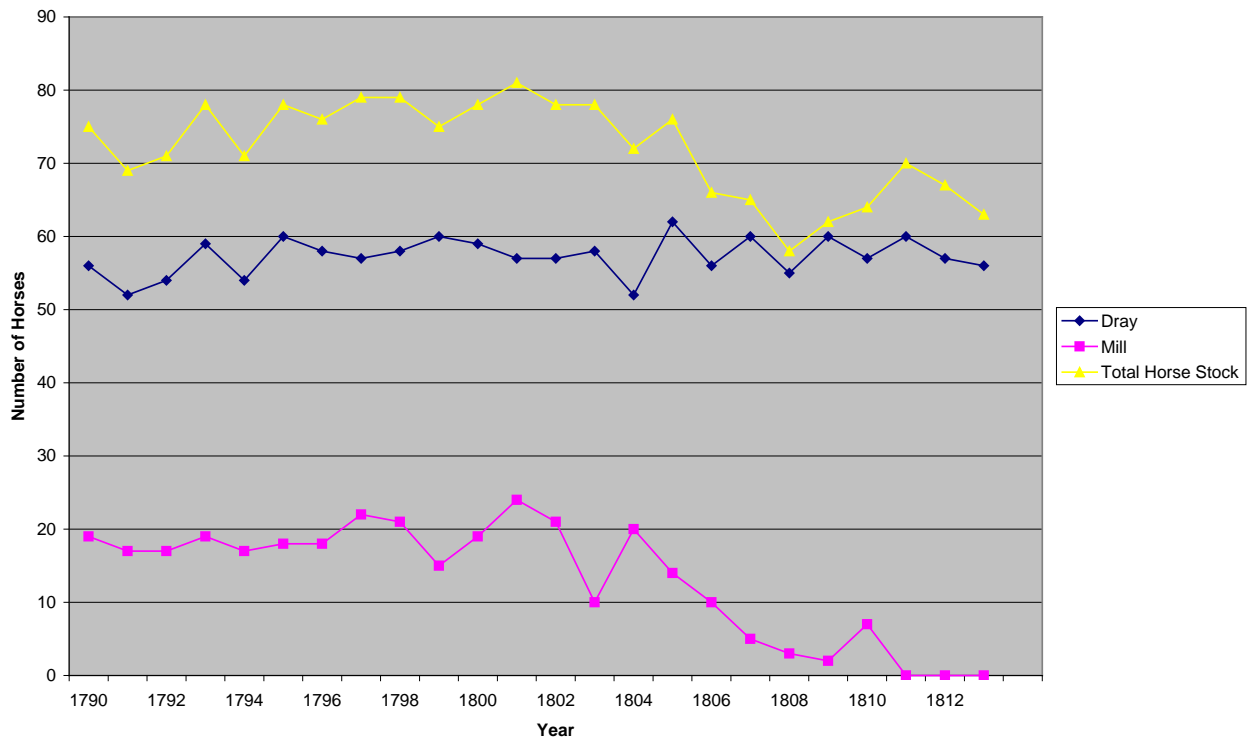
## **APPENDIX**

**Table 3** Truman Brewery Dray- and Mill-Horse Stock, 1759 – 1780; 1790 – 1813.<sup>247</sup>

	<b>DRAY - HORSES</b>	<b>MILL - HORSES</b>	<b>TOTAL HORSE STOCK</b>
1759			
1760			
1761			
1762			75
1763			
1764			80
1765			81
1766	85	5	90
1767	86	4	90
1768			
1769			77
1770			78
1771			78
1772			79
1773			76
1774			
1775	60	18	78
1776	59	21	80
1777	58	17	75
1778	60	18	78
1779	55	17	72
1780	50	17	67
1790	56	19	75
1791	52	17	69
1792	54	17	71
1793	59	19	78
1794	54	17	71
1795	60	18	78
1796	58	18	76
1797	57	22	79
1798	58	21	79
1799	60	15	75
1800	59	19	78
1801	57	24	81
1802	57	21	78
1803	58	10	78
1804	52	20	72
1805	62	14	76
1806	56	10	66
1807	60	5	65
1808	55	3	58
1809	60	2	62
1810	57	7	64
1811	60	0 +	70
1812	57	0 +	67
1813	56	0 +	63

+ Includes horses listed as 'carravan'.

<sup>247</sup> LMA, B/THB/B/3-11, Truman Brewery Rest Books, 1759-1780 & 1790-1813.

**Fig. 2: Truman Brewery Horse Stock (1790 – 1813).****Table 4: Barrelage & No. of Dray-Horses employed by eight largest London breweries, 1780-1805.**<sup>248</sup>

YR	Thrale-Barclay Perkins (i)		Whitbread (ii)		Truman (iii)		Sir W. Calvert / Felix Calvert (iv)		John Calvert (v)		Meux-Ried (vi)		Hammond-Gyfford Shum-Combe-Delafield (vii)		Parsons-Goodwyn-Hoare (viii)		Total Barrelage (1,000 barrels)	Total Dray-Horses (est)
	1000 Barrels (B)	Dray-Horses (D) (Est)	B	D	B	D	B	D	B	D	B	D	B	D	B	D		
1780	65.5	33	96.6	48	80.7	40	79.1	40	92.0	46	20.4	10	80.2	40	41.8	21	556.3	278
1785	100.7	50	137.8	69	111.2	56	100.7	50	134.8	67	57.3	29	101.4	51	62.0	31	805.9	403
1790	126.7	63	175.0	88	93.7	47	57.9	29	144.0	72	48.7	24	100.2	50	60.5	30	806.7	403
1795	122.3	61	159.0	80	99.1	50	56.6	28	83.5	42	121.5	61	101.8	51	70.5	35	814.3	408
1800	105.9	53	137.0	69	101.6	51	44.4	22	82.5	41	134.5	67	110.6	55	70.7	35	787.2	393
1805	152.5	76	103.6	52	126.4	63	46.2	23	46.2	23	136.7	68	85.7	43	46.2	23	743.5	371

(i) Anchor Brewery, Deadman's Place, Southwark

(ii) White Hart Brewery, Chiswell Street

(iii) Black Eagle Brewery, Spitalfields

(iv) Hour Glass Brewhouse, Upper Thames Street

(v) Peacock Brewhouse, Whitecross Street

(vi) Griffin Brewhouse, Liquorpond Street (Clerkenwell Road)

(vii) Woodyard Brewhouse, Castle Street, on the north side of Long Acre

(viii) Red Lion Brewhouse, St Katherine's, Lower East Smithfield

<sup>248</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.79 & p.551. Mathias used data from brewery records and parliamentary papers to ascertain annual barrelage.

**Table 5: Orders Placed for Steam Engines by London's Breweries.**<sup>249</sup>

<b>Date Ordered</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Brewery</b>	<b>Horse Power of Engine</b>
May 1784	H. Goodwyn	St Katherine's London	4
June 1784	S. Whitbread	Chiswell St, London	10 (enlarged 1814 to 20)
Oct 1785	Felix Calvert	Thames Street	10
May 1786	Thrale (Barclay)	Southwark	10
March 1787	J. Calvert	Whitecross Street	10 (engine destroyed 1789)
April 1787	Gyfford	Long Acre	10 (enlarged 1798 to 20 & 1817 to 26)
April 1789	Stephenson	Bainbridge St, St Giles	8
March 1792	G. Combrune	Golden Lane	4
June 1793	Cox, King	City Road	12
April 1796	Clowes	Stoney Lane, Southwark	10
Aug 1797	Charrington	Mile End	8
Nov 1805	Brown & Parry	Golden Lane	36
Dec 1807	Truman	Spitalfields	14 (enlarged 1824 to 30)
July 1809	Meux-Reid	Liquorpond St	32
July 1810	H. Meux	St. Giles	20
March 1815	J. Taylor	Limehouse	14
Dec 1819	J. Elliot	Pimlico	20

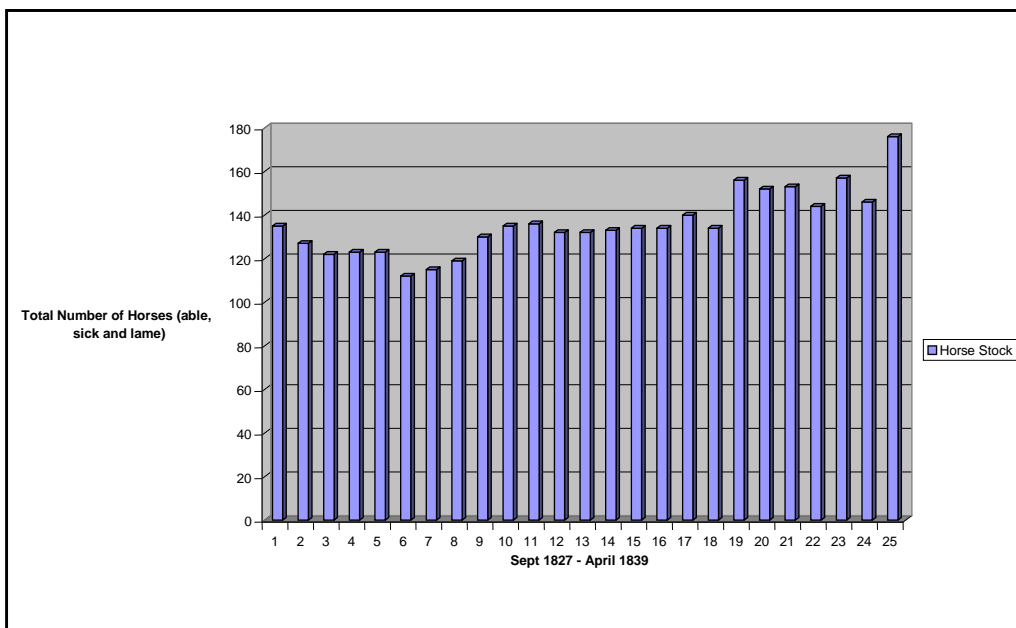
<sup>249</sup> Data from Mathias, *The Brewing Industry*, p.85; installation would normally take place a few months after ordering.



**Table 6:** Average six-monthly stock of dray-horses at Courage, Barclay and Simonds Brewery, September 1827 – April 1839.<sup>250</sup>

Month/Yr	Horse Stock
Sept 1827	135
Jan 1828	127
July 1828	122
Jan 1829	123
July 1829	123
Jan 1830	112
July 1830	115
Jan 1831	119
July 1831	130
Jan 1832	135
July 1832	136
Jan 1833	132
July 1833	132
Jan 1834	133
July 1834	134
Jan 1835	134
July 1835	140
Jan 1836	134
July 1836	156
Jan 1837	152
July 1837	153
Jan 1838	144
July 1838	157
Jan 1839	146
Apr 1839	176

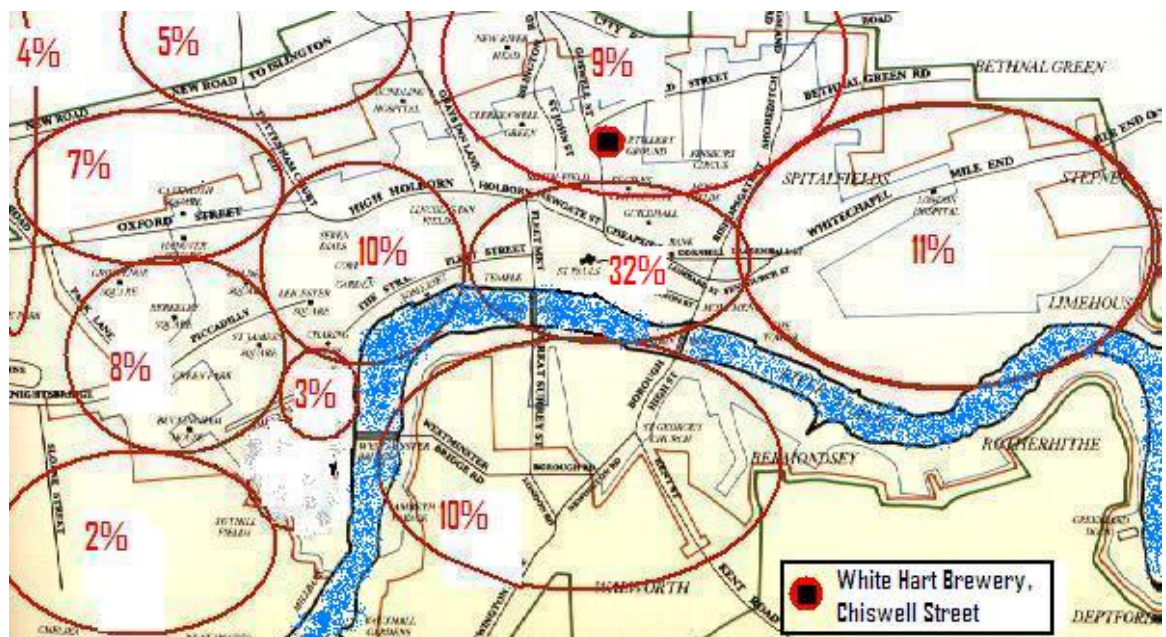
**Fig.3:** Courage Barclay & Simonds Horse Stock, Sept 1827 – April 1839.



<sup>250</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/1/1300, 'Courage, Barclay & Simonds Stable Book, Sept 1827 – April 1839', comprising a weekly stock-take of horses, with comments on health, in the company's stables.

**Table 7:** Dray Delivery Destinations from the White Hart Brewery, Chiswell Street in 1800.<sup>251</sup>

Area of the Metropolis	Victuallers Delivered to	% of Total Victuallers Delivered to
The City & Holborn	126	32%
East of the City	42	11%
South of the River	39	10%
North of the City	36	9%
St James' and Piccadilly	33	8%
Inner West End	39	10%
Marylebone	26	7%
North of the New Road	19	5%
West	14	4%
Westminster	12	3%
South West	7	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Fig.4:** Dray Delivery Destinations from the White Hart Brewery, Chiswell Street in 1800.

<sup>251</sup> LMA, 4453/B/12/002, 'Whitbread Rest Book' (1800), pp.1-19.

**Table 8:** List of workers at Courage, Barclay & Simonds Brewery (CBS), 1797.<sup>252</sup>

<b>January</b>	<b>1791</b>	<b>1792</b>	<b>1793</b>	<b>1794</b>	<b>1795</b>	<b>1796</b>	<b>1797</b>
Stokers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Moving Coopers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Coopers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Yeastmen	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Stage Men	12	12	12	12	13	12	10
Spare Men	14	16	23	25	30	30	29
Horse Keepers	7	10	12	12	12	11	12
Millers Men	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Draymen	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
<b>Total Equine Workers</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Total Workforce</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>% of Workforce working with horses</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>32%</b>

<sup>252</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/01/0176/4, 'Note in Courage, Barclay & Simonds Rest Book, 1797'; this is the same 'enigmatic paper' referred to by Peter Mathias, *The Brewing Industry* (1959), p.36.

### (III) IMPACT ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Historians have often cited the architectural expansion of Georgian London as a manifestation of powerful human forces: population growth, migration, consumption culture, aesthetics and taste, land ownership and ‘social human labour.’<sup>253</sup> Overwhelmingly, therefore, the metropolitan built environment has been viewed as a response to human needs. Animals have largely been denied a role in this process. In their recent study of nineteenth-century North American cities, however, McShane and Tarr have highlighted the extent to which horses forced ‘cities to build new infrastructure around their needs’, underpinning everything from ‘residences’ and ‘warehouses’ to ‘stables’ and ‘wide streets paved with stone blocks and street rails’ specially ‘shaped to facilitate movement.’ Because, they argue, ‘so much of the urban built environment’ was shaped by equine needs, these animals should be thought of ‘as consumers of these features.’<sup>254</sup> In this section, I will argue that these processes can be seen in eighteenth-century London, where a massive convergence of horses and livestock dictated the terms of urban expansion on an unprecedented scale. Furthermore, I will show that stabling and other architectural responses to animal technologies were crucial ‘spaces of modernity’ in the eighteenth-century metropolis.<sup>255</sup> I begin with a brief overview of some of the architectural features moulded by animals involved in industry and commerce, followed by a more detailed case study of West End mews.

By 1750, the expansion of animal traffic in the metropolis had become a major impetus for wider and better laid out roads, as well as new bridges across the Thames and ‘substantial improvements in the road network radiating outwards from London’.<sup>256</sup> Yet, the most dramatic response to the growing problem of animal congestion was the construction in 1756–61 of ‘the world’s first planned by-pass.’<sup>257</sup> In July 1755, the trustees for the Islington Turnpike resolved to lay a plan for ‘cutting a new road’ through the fields as far North as the Tottenham Court,

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<sup>253</sup> J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (London, 1945). M. Reed, ‘The Transformation of urban space 1700-1840’ in P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, vol.2: 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.615-640; D. J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New Haven & London, 1964); E. McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and Design of the City 1600-1720* (Manchester & New York, 1999); Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*; R. Porter, *London: A Social History*; Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, pp.12-22; R. Stewart, *The Town House in Georgian London* (New Haven & London, 2009); L. Clarke, *Building Capitalism* (London & New York, 1992), p.10.

<sup>254</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.18, p.35 & p.178.

<sup>255</sup> Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, p.236; Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*.

<sup>256</sup> Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.17; W. Albert, *The Turnpike Road System in England, 1663-1840* (Cambridge, 1972); Barker & Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport, 1700-1900*.

<sup>257</sup> Barnett, *London, Hub of the Industrial Revolution*, p.17.

linking Paddington to Islington.<sup>258</sup> Above all, this major construction project was targeted at commercial traffic, particularly heavy waggons, and Smithfield livestock, which as I have shown, were numerous.<sup>259</sup> This New Road would provide a custom-made, heavy-duty route for drovers and waggoners enabling access to Smithfield, the City and Holborn without traversing central London and obstructing her internal arteries. The road would be forty feet wide and unpaved, thus avoiding the breaking up of paving stones, a nuisance which plagued the inner-city area.<sup>260</sup> The New Road bill was enacted on 30 April 1756 and work began immediately, continuing ‘at a great rate’ until its completion that September.<sup>261</sup> The completed road represented one of the largest infrastructure projects in a new age of metropolitan improvement. As I will discuss in a later section, it sought not only to provide drovers and waggoners with the space they needed to manoeuvre their animals, but also to reduce the disruption which they caused in existing crowded streets.

Once the waggon horse had completed its journey into the metropolis, its need for stabling and refuelling had a profound impact on the shape of the built environment. The city boasted the largest number of carrier and coaching inns anywhere in the country, around two hundred by the early eighteenth century. They were mostly located on the outskirts of the City, notably on Aldersgate Street and Bishopsgate with certain streets specialising in services to different regions, ‘akin to the main line railway stations of the mid-nineteenth century.’<sup>262</sup> Recent analyses of inns have highlighted their multiple uses as sites for the transaction of business, the hosting of entertainments and human accommodation.<sup>263</sup> Yet, above all else, inns were designed around the needs of horses and their vehicles, providing the essential infrastructure needed to keep them secure, to feed and water them and to carry out necessary maintenance. The space needed for horses to manoeuvre large vehicles meant that a roomy yard lay at the heart of an inn’s architectural blueprint, along with a substantial arch leading onto the street. The stabling capacity of inns varied considerably depending on their size and whether they served freight or passenger traffic. The Bell Inn on Friday Street, which served the dominant West Country carrying firm, Russell and Co., offered stabling for sixteen horses in the early nineteenth

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<sup>258</sup> F.H.W. Sheppard, *Local Government in St Marylebone, 1688-1835* (London, 1958), pp.94-101; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 31 July 1755; K. Bonser, *The Drovers* (London & Basingstoke, 1970), p.216.

<sup>259</sup> The cost of the project was ‘computed’ at £8,000. *Gazetteer & London Daily Advertiser*, 10 May 1756. ‘For just one part of the road, built between 1756 and 1757, 100,000 cartloads of gravel were estimated to be required’. L. Clark, *Building Capitalism*, p.94.

<sup>260</sup> William Thornton, *A New, Complete and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (1784), p.327.

<sup>261</sup> Public Act, 29 Geo II, c.88; *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 13 August 1756; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 18 September 1756.

<sup>262</sup> J.A. Chartres, ‘The Eighteenth-Century English Inn: A Transient ‘Golden Age?’ in B. Kumin & B. Ann Flusty (eds.) *The World of the Tavern* (Aldershot, 2002), pp.208-9.

<sup>263</sup> Chartres, ‘The Eighteenth-Century English Inn’; J.A. Chartres, ‘The Capital’s Provincial Eyes: London’s Inns in the Early Eighteenth Century’, *London Journal*, 3 (1977), pp.24-39.

century. However, the average is likely to have been considerably higher than this, perhaps exceeding forty.<sup>264</sup> One of the largest London coaching inns, the Bull and Mouth is thought to 'have had underground stabling for no fewer than 400 horses.'<sup>265</sup>

Yet, nowhere was the way horses shaped commercial architecture more dramatic than in London's major brewery yards. It has often been noted that leading brewers were 'handsome patrons of architecture'. In the second half of the eighteenth century, major construction projects were undertaken to introduce giant vats and other modern utensils, each geared to increase production and efficiency.<sup>266</sup> Just as pressing, however, was the need accommodate expanding ranks of valuable dray-horses.<sup>267</sup> Late eighteenth-century architectural plans for Whitbread's and Thrale's indicate the impressive size and sophistication of the equine infrastructures which accompanied thirty years of commercial growth. The largest stable block at Whitbread's measured approximately 125 feet x 25 feet, providing high quality accommodation for approximately eighty dray-horses.<sup>268</sup> Visiting in 1823, the diarist Thomas Creevey observed

A stable brilliantly illuminated, containing ninety horses worth 50 or 60 guineas apiece upon average, is a sight to be seen nowhere but in this 'tight little island.' The beauty and amiability of the horses was quite affecting.<sup>269</sup>

The particularly detailed Anchor plan (**Plate 19**) shows that the brewery constructed seventy individual dray-horse stalls, evidence of the individualised care which these animals

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<sup>264</sup> It seems probable that London's average would have at least equalled Bristol's (41.6) and exceeded that of smaller towns, such as Malborough (21.8), Hertford (20.8) and Bath (14.0). PRO, WO/30/49 cited in J. A. Chartres, 'The Eighteenth-Century English Inn', p.212. This data comes from a survey conducted by the War Office in 1756. The surviving evidence includes the number of inns in northern and eastern Wiltshire, western Berkshire and Oxfordshire, and part of Gloucestershire. These surveys also recorded the beds and stable spaces provided. Unfortunately, the surviving data does not cover London.

<sup>265</sup> A. Everitt, *Perspectives in English Urban History* (London, 1973), p.101.

<sup>266</sup> Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.253; Spiller, 'The Georgian Brewery', p.311; The change in scale of London's brewery buildings probably began at the Anchor in Southwark in 1700 when Edmund Halsey built a new brewhouse costing £3546. Samuel Whitbread began to enlarge his White Hart Brewery in Chiswell Street in 1750, Truman's Black Eagle site underwent 'steady enlargement from around a 1800' with a vat house being erected in 1805, a new brewhouse in 1820. L. Pearson, *British Breweries: An Architectural History* (London, 1999), pp.27-34.

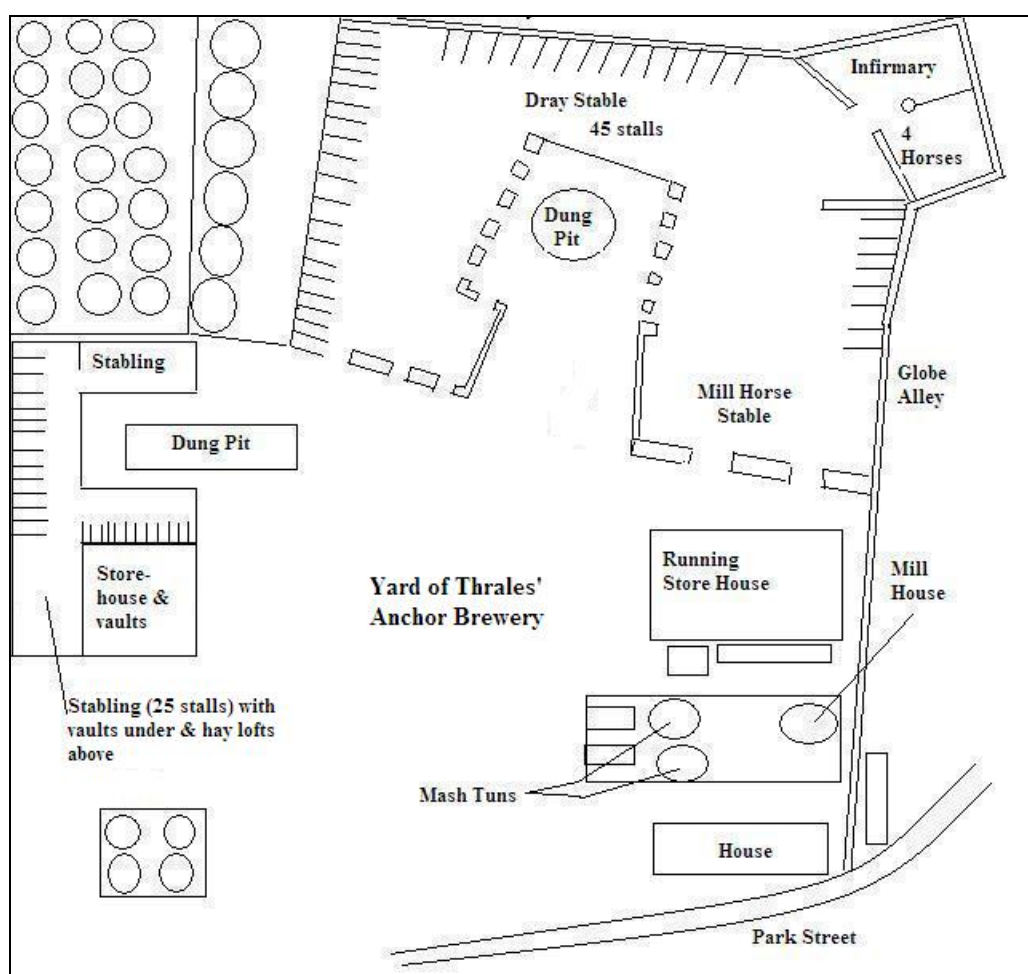
<sup>267</sup> Spiller, 'The Georgian Brewery', p.311.

<sup>268</sup> LMA, 4453/B/12/002, Whitbread Rest Book, 1800. By the late 1790s, Whitbread was insuring three separate stable blocks, the 'Great Stable & East Building at £1,200, the 'Mill Stable' combined with other buildings and a 'Stable next [to the] Gateway' for £300. Spiller, 'The Georgian Brewery', p.321.

<sup>269</sup> Cited in Whitbread & Co, *Whitbread's Brewery* (London, 1951), p.38. Thomas Creevey was a friend of Samuel Whitbread II. By 1823, the company had developed first-floor stables with a ramp leading up from the brewery yard. Creevey underestimated the capacity of these new stables, which could in fact accommodate 160 animals.

demanded.<sup>270</sup> The largest stable block formed a quadrangle around a large dung pit, with forty-five stalls for dray-horses and an adjoining wing for the mill-horses. An infirmary with capacity for an additional four horses was located in the north-east corner of the complex. A second block, at the west of the brewery consisted of ‘stabling with vaults under & haylofts above’ providing twenty-five stalls for dray-horses, with a second dung pit.<sup>271</sup>

**Plate 19:** Plan of Thrale’s Anchor Brewery, 1774 (not to scale).<sup>272</sup>



<sup>270</sup> LMA, COL/CCS/PL/02/464, ‘Rough plan of premises on the West side of Grub Street and South side of Chiswell street adjoining Mr Whitbread’s Brewhouse’ (undated); LMA, ACC/2305/01/834, Plan of Thrale’s Estate, 1774. The less valuable mill horses were accommodated in informal, mixed stabling.

<sup>271</sup> CBS improved the Anchor Brewery’s equine arrangements again in 1780, investing £2,000 in new stables. Truman’s Black Eagle Brewery added new stables from 1831-1836. LMA, ACC/2305/1/159/1, Courage, Barclays & Simonds Rest Book, 1780; Pearson, *British Breweries*, p.34.

<sup>272</sup> LMA, ACC/2305/01/834, Plan of Thrale’s Estate, 1774.

Each of these urban features emphasises that the evolution of London's built environment in the eighteenth century was not solely the product of human social relations. To examine this phenomenon further, we must turn to the area described by Roy Porter as 'an innovation in urban living' - the fashionable West End.<sup>273</sup> Here, horses engaged in the business of politeness exercised a powerful influence over the construction and organisation of entire streets and estates. Mews were an ingenious solution to the private stabling needs of London's wealthiest residents. More than this, however, they provide striking evidence that equine care demanded an integrated architectural and social infrastructure. Because the fine carriage horse required constant supervision and care, mews were designed not just for the accommodation of these animals but for their human guardians too. This human-animal nexus underpinned every aspect of mews construction and operation. An analysis of London's golden age of mews thus reveals the remarkable degree to which horses drew on metropolitan resources.

The spread of West End mews in this period was startling. The street index accompanying John Rocque's *Survey* of 1746 recorded a total of twenty-nine 'mewse'. By 1813, this had grown to 117 in Richard Horwood's map, a four-fold increase in sixty years.<sup>274</sup> By the end of the century, it was impossible to walk more than a hundred yards in the West End without coming across a mews.<sup>275</sup> Yet, astonishingly, they are almost entirely absent from histories of the period.<sup>276</sup> Coaches and coach-horses were expensive assets requiring 'careful housing' and together they significantly increased 'the scale of stable accommodation required by a wealthy London house'.<sup>277</sup> The challenge faced by metropolitan architects was where to locate them given that the terrace offered neither a forecourt nor gaps between the individual properties. 'The solution was the mews, without which the terraced house could never have supplanted the hôtel as the common London residence of the English upper classes.'<sup>278</sup> In this alone, mews proved to be

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<sup>273</sup> Porter, *London: A Social History*, p.145.

<sup>274</sup> John Rocque, *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark* (1746); Richard Horwood, *Map of London* (3rd edn, 1813).

<sup>275</sup> The scale and sophistication of London's mews infrastructure was unparalleled in the rest of the country. In no other British city 'did provision for stabling play so large a role in town planning...because other cities were not only smaller, but held proportionately fewer horses and carriages. G. Worsley, *The British Stable* (New Haven & London, 2004) p.102.

<sup>276</sup> The only extensive assessment of mews appears in Worsley, *The British Stable*, yet this tends to present them as static architectural spaces rather than sites alive with animals and workmen. Despite surveying the West End in detail, John Summerson never referred to mews. More recently, Dan Cruickshank and Neil Burton's analysis of everyday life in the Georgian town house made just one fleeting reference to mews in a survey of town gardens. Here, the mews is subsumed into a range of 'architectural features' which were located at the bottom of the garden. Summerson, *Georgian London*; D. Cruickshank & N. Burton, *Life in the Georgian City* (1990), p.197.

<sup>277</sup> Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.105.

<sup>278</sup> Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.105. For an analysis of Dublin's substantial mews infrastructure, see R. McManus, 'Windows on a hidden world: urban and social evolution as seen from the mews', *Irish Geography*, 37:1 (2004), pp.37-59; R. Stewart, *The Town House in Georgian London* (2009), p.116. As



important ‘spaces of modernity.’<sup>279</sup> Situated at the rear of the terrace, they comprised a modest two-storey building for horses and coaches connected to the main residential building by a garden or yard but accessed from the street by a separate alley. The basic mews layout featured a stable on one side of the ground floor, and a double-doored coach house on the other. Above, the first floor was divided between a hay loft and basic living quarters for the coachman.<sup>280</sup> The major advantage of this system was that it kept the house and stables attached but ‘the noise, sight and smell of horses and their dung’ in a secluded purpose-built service street.<sup>281</sup> **Plate 20**, a grand view of Portland Place published in 1792, depicts an elegant two-horse coach standing outside the residence of its passengers. The well-maintained beasts, vehicle and coachman provide an immediate symbol of the wealth and gentility of Portland Place and its residents. Visible to the rear of the coach is the side-street leading to a mews which is out of sight and out of mind.<sup>282</sup> This was the great achievement of polite metropolitan stabling.



**Plate 20:** A coach waits outside a house in Portland Place, Robert and James Adam, c.1777–80, View from Thomas Malton, *A Picturesque Tour*, vol.1, 1792, plate 88.

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Stewart observes, in London, unlike in Paris, ‘most of those who owned a coach chose not to live in a hotel but in a terrace house.’

<sup>279</sup> Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*.

<sup>280</sup> The horse and coach capacity of mews units varied significantly depending on their size and design. In the eighteenth century, coach houses grew considerably deeper, often allowing accommodation for two or more coaches with ‘four or more stalls placed at right angles to the party wall.’ Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.117.

<sup>281</sup> Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.112.

<sup>282</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, p.104, notes that the sight of fine coach horses was an important gauge of a street’s status. When John Verney married in 1680 ‘he automatically bought a carriage’ and ‘as he searched for a house...counted the number of coaches per street.’

One of the first areas of the West End to perfect such large-scale mews provision was the Grosvenor Estate. Its commodious one hundred acres and unified structure of land ownership allowed its surveyor, Thomas Barlow, to ‘plan on a lavish scale’ from the 1720s. Crucially, the estate responded to the need ‘to facilitate the horse age’ by introducing wider and straighter thoroughfares which gave carriages sufficient space to manoeuvre.<sup>283</sup> This also created an ordered grid of streets, making it convenient to ‘discreetly contain stables behind the houses.’<sup>284</sup> All of the Grosvenor estate building plots were designed to be ‘long and narrow to provide a house, garden or yard and mews house.’<sup>285</sup> As shown in John Rocque’s map of 1746 (**Map 5**), the square and its major surrounding streets were served by a substantial network of mews complexes, offering stables and coach-houses of various sizes and arrangements. The largest - Reeves, Adams, Mount Row and Grosvenor - were located to the South of the square, below Grosvenor Street.

At No.4 Grosvenor Square (**Map 6**), Charles Watson-Wentworth, the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (1730–82) maintained one the largest mews units on the estate. During his residency between 1751 and 1782, he epitomised the crucial relationship between aristocratic lifestyles and the West End carriage horse. A leading Whig politician, twice Prime Minister and among the richest men in the country, Rockingham also embodied eighteenth-century horse culture.<sup>286</sup> He was an influential horse breeder, race-horse owner, huntsman and the most important early patron of the horse painter George Stubbs.<sup>287</sup> By 1782, the artist’s *Horse and Lion*, 1762, had taken pride of place at No.4, a symbol of the importance of horses in Rockingham’s metropolitan lifestyle. The Wentworth-Woodhouse Muniments provide a

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<sup>283</sup> Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London*, 39, pp.11-12, Thomas Barlow received his official appointment as estate surveyor on 10 August 1720. As Ruth McManus has argued, the ascendancy of mews was closely linked to the kind of ‘land ownership and development structures’ which underpinned West End estates. As suburban land ownership was concentrated in the hands of relatively few families, the great aristocratic landlords ‘owned areas large enough to allow planning on a substantial scale, without being restricted either by financial concerns or by government interference.’ Had the land been divided into individually-owned plots, an orchestrated layout of stables serving multiple properties would have been virtually inconceivable. R. McManus, ‘Windows on a hidden world’, p.37.

<sup>284</sup> McManus, ‘Windows on a hidden world’, p.40.

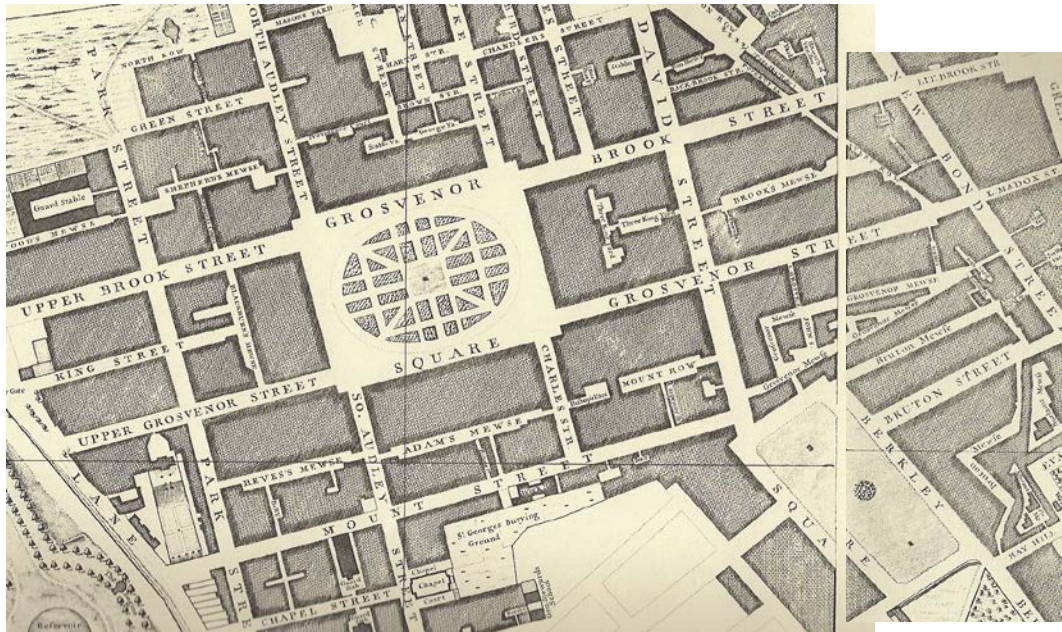
<sup>285</sup> Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.110.

<sup>286</sup> Rockingham received an annual income of £40,000 a year, held lands in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Ireland and a magnificent house at No.4 Grosvenor Square. When Rockingham first took office as First Lord of the Treasury in 1765, aged just thirty-four, he was widely derided as a figure ‘only known to the public by his passion for horse-races’ and one of those ‘called from the Stud to the State, and transformed miraculously out of Jockies into Ministers.’ As Paul Langford asserts, ‘the Turf had never been better represented in a Cabinet than in Rockingham’s first administration.’ G.F.R. Barker (ed.), *Horace Walpole’s Memoirs of the Reign of King George III*, vol.2 (1894), p.140, cited in P. Langford, *The First Rockingham Administration, 1765-1766* (Oxford, 1973), p.16.

<sup>287</sup> Stubb’s masterpiece *Whistlejacket* (c.1762) depicted Rockingham’s star race horses and hung at the family’s Yorkshire estate, Wentworth-Woodhouse. R. Blake, *George Stubbs and the Wide Creation: Animals, People and Places in the Life of George Stubbs, 1724-1806* (London, 2005).

detailed record of the Second Marquis' equine arrangements, both in Yorkshire and the metropolis.<sup>288</sup>

**Map 5:** John Rocque, *Plan of the Cities of London, 1746*, showing section of the Grosvenor Estate.



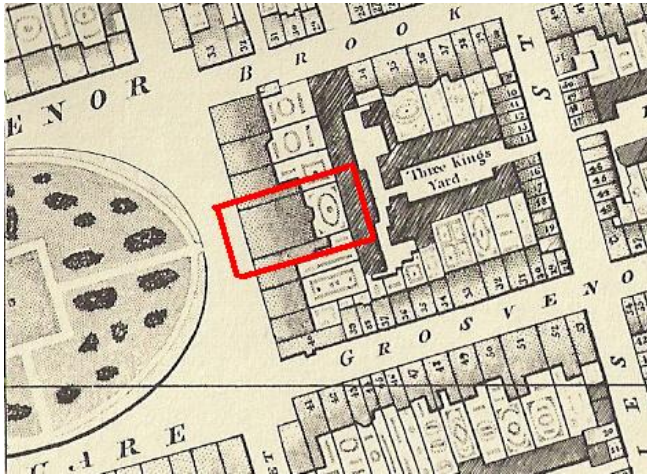
Between 1755 and 1782, the number of horses kept at Wentworth, the family's country seat, increased from twenty to ninety-seven, by which time these animals occupied one of the most impressive stable complexes in the country.<sup>289</sup> When in London, these animals benefited from the same exceptional standards in accommodation and care. Their master's coach house and stables were located directly behind his property in *Three King's Yard*, a 'T-shaped' mews complex, accessed from Davies Street. The section of the yard adjoining the rear gardens of the houses is clearly visible in Sutton Nicholl's *View of Grosvenor Square*, (**Plate 21**), published in 1754.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>288</sup> Held by Sheffield Archives, hereafter SA.

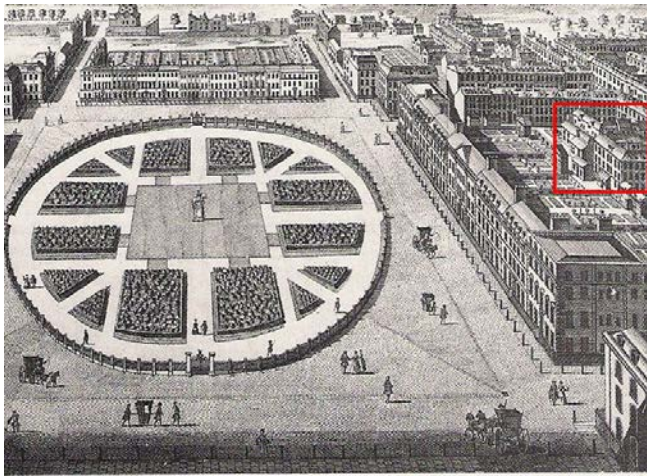
<sup>289</sup> SA, WWM/R/2A/33, 'List of horses and Stable Staff', 1755; SA, WWM/A/1228, Inventory & appraisement, 1782-84, pp.24-7, 'Particulars of horses and carriages &c late the property of the Marquis of Rockingham deceased as valued by Mr. Tattershall', 1-2 Aug 1782. Wentworth's gigantic new stables were completed in 1766. Arthur Young, *A Six Months Tour through the North of England* (2nd edn, 1771, reprinted New York, 1967), p.293-4. In addition, the Marquis kept impressive facilities at Swinton and Newmarket for his race horses.

<sup>290</sup> Cruickshank & Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, p.195.





**Map 6:** Detail of Richard Horwood's *Map of London* (3rd edn, 1813), indicating the location of No.4 Grosvenor Square.



**Plate 21:** Detail of Sutton Nicholl's *View of Grosvenor Square*, 1754. Three Kings Yard is framed.

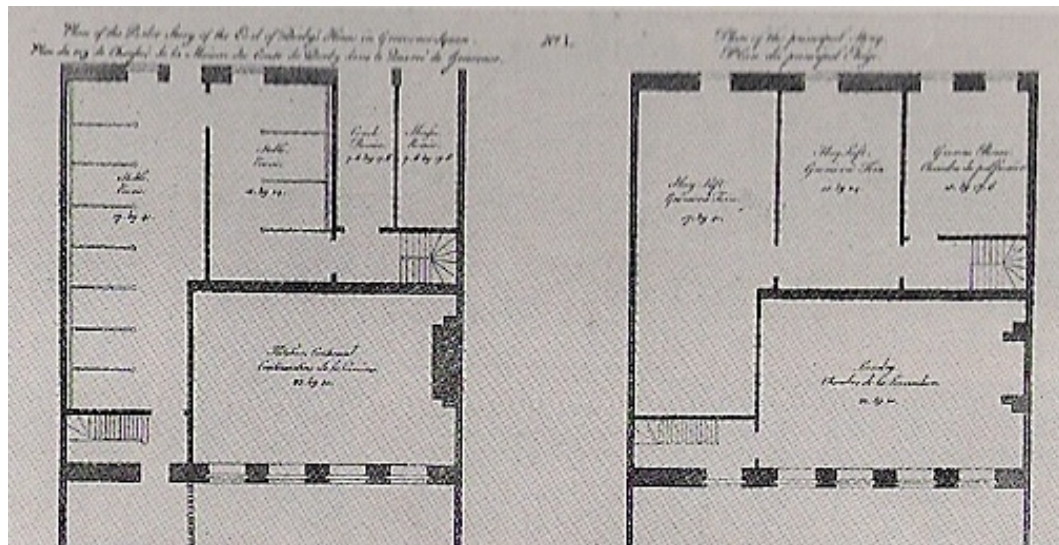
According to an inventory of 1782, the house benefited from 'roomy Stabling for twenty four Horses' and 'Standing for four Carriages', an arrangement exceeding that of most other properties in the West End.<sup>291</sup> A floor plan (**Plate 22**) of Derby House at 26 Grosvenor Square shows the impressive layout of a more modest mews intended for eleven horses and two carriages.<sup>292</sup> Mews were sophisticated equine maintenance zones, requiring a dazzling array of custom-made fixtures and fittings to secure the animals, to store and transfer their provender and water, and to remove their waste. A large-scale operation like Rockingham's thus required 'Bailes, Rings, Chains ... Racks and Mangers ... Two Corn Binns ... a Crane to the Hay loft Door, a Lead water trough to convey the wast[e] water into the Stable yard ... [a] Cistern in the Stables.'<sup>293</sup> As I will discuss below, these devices were used by large teams of mews-based servants.

<sup>291</sup> SA, WWM/A/1228, Inventory & appraisal, 26 August 1782, p.52.

<sup>292</sup> Worsley, *The British Stable*, pp.116-7; British Library, Add. MSS 22267 f.69; Rockingham's arrangements exceeded the detached stables of some London hotels. When the 4th Earl of Chesterfield moved to Chesterfield House in 1748-9, he had room for three coaches and just eleven horses.

<sup>293</sup> Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London*, 39, p.197, fixtures agreed for the Earl of Chesterfield's Mews behind 45 Grosvenor Square in 1733.

**Plate 22:** Ground & first floor plan of coach house and stables at Derby House, 26 Grosvenor Square, 1773-4, from Robert & James Adam, *The Works in Architecture*, vol. 2, 1779, 1, plate I.



While impressive, the Grosvenor Estate's mews provision remained irregular and, in places, insufficient. By the final quarter of the century, considerable sections of its mews were being used for purposes other than private stabling, including builders' yards and workshops for various non-equine trades. In some areas of the estate, including Brook Street and Grosvenor Street, the supply of stabling appears to have exceeded demand at certain times.<sup>294</sup> Yet, elsewhere, properties suffered from a lack of convenient stabling. In 1763, the surveyor Henry Bridgeman viewed Lady Carpenter's house in Grosvenor Square for the baronet, Sir William Lee. He promptly rejected it, there being 'no Stables, and the Offices very bad in general.'<sup>295</sup> By the 1770s, new developments in the West End were placing equine needs at the heart of a more sophisticated and consistent blue-print for fashionable urban living, as increasing numbers of the lesser nobility and gentry brought private equipages to the capital. For those colonising fashionable parts of Marylebone such as the Cavendish-Harley Estate, the horse-drawn carriage had become a crucial practical requirement of polite metropolitan living. Here, the terrace house was designed and utilised, above all else, as a base from which to pursue sociability. As seen above, because this culture demanded such high standards of personal mobility, the construction of the new West End had to prioritise the needs of the carriage horse more than ever before. The growing importance of mews stabling is reflected by levels of carriage ownership in different

<sup>294</sup> Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London*, 40, p.84. By 1790, Brook's Mews contained sheds for storing timber and a saw pit, owned by John Armstrong, a carpenter and builder. However, these buildings were later replaced by coach-houses and stables in the first half of the nineteenth century. From 1784-1800, a tailor, Louis Bazalgette, kept a workshop over the coach-house and stables of No.22 Brook's Mews.

<sup>295</sup> Buckinghamshire Record Office, Hartwell papers, *D/LE/DI/44*, 'Henry Bridgeman to Sir William Lee' (13 July 1763) cited in Stewart, *The Town House in Georgian London*, p.73.

parts of the West End over the century. In 1727/28, one person kept a coach for every fifteen houses in Westminster. In the more fashionable St George's, Hanover Square, a coach was kept for every 4.3 houses at this time.<sup>296</sup> Giles Worsley suggested that by 1800 some areas of the West End were approaching the point when virtually every house had access to a private coach house and stable.<sup>297</sup> He did not specify precisely where this occurred but it is possible, with reference to maps, to prove that certain areas were fast approaching this milestone. The Cavendish-Harley Estate is an important example.<sup>298</sup>

Both Richard Horwood's turn-of-the-century survey (**Map 7**) and Peter Potter's more detailed *Plan of the Parish of St Marylebone* (**Map 8**), completed just over a decade later, show the prevalence, scale and sophisticated layout of mews servicing the area. Their number in each complex can be calculated by counting the blocks in Potter's *Plan*. This data is presented in **Table 9**.<sup>299</sup> Among the largest complexes were Weymouth Mews and Devonshire Mews East, two H-shaped developments, which served sections of Portland Place, Harley Street and Upper Harley Street. Each provided thirty-five units. To the west, Wimpole Mews, Devonshire Mews South and Devonshire Mews West were arranged along straight stable yards and comprised between twenty-three and thirty-nine units. The smallest mews were those built at the start of the post-1763 building boom, just north of Queen Anne Street. They included Mansfield Mews, serving just five properties, and North Harley Mews and Marylebone Mews, each containing ten units.<sup>300</sup> By dividing the number of mews units by the number of residential properties on corresponding street sections, I have calculated the ratio of houses to coach-house / stables.

The final column of **Table 9** indicates that by the early 1800s, two streets offered comprehensive stabling and vehicle accommodation for its residents: Upper Wimpole Street (1: 1) and Upper Harley Street (1: 1.05). Devonshire Place was close behind (1: 0.90). The most advanced streets were those constructed in the final quarter of the century, the estate's later phase of construction. Harley Street offered the lowest provision (1: 0.63) because its southern third (bordering Queen Anne Street) belonged to the earlier, 1760s phase of construction when

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<sup>296</sup> Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p.388ff.

<sup>297</sup> Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.119.

<sup>298</sup> The development of the Cavendish-Harley estate took place in two marked chronological phases in 'waves of building activity stirred and halted by economic fluctuations and the fortunes of war.' Cavendish Square and the area leading north up to Queen Anne Street began to take shape at the end of Anne's reign (1702-14). Construction slowed dramatically in the 1730s, 40s and 50s, as war repeatedly hampered economic conditions. As Summerson noted, 'The North-West estates continued to resist further expansion till after the Seven Years' War' in 1763. The next three decades witnessed the estate's most sustained and intensive phase of construction, progressing northwards from Queen Anne Street to the fringes of Marylebone fields. Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity*, p.34; Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.94.

<sup>299</sup> Peter Potter, *Plan of the Parish of St Marylebone* (2nd edn, 1821).

<sup>300</sup> For the full list of mews serving Portland Place, Harley Street and Wimpole Street, North of Queen Anne Street, see Table 9.

specifications for stabling appear to have been less ambitious. The evidence indicates that equine infrastructures were prioritised with increasing vigour over the second half of the century. By the end of this period, estate-wide provision was 1: 0.82, showing the remarkable extent to which equine demands moulded the newly fashionable West End. Rate books for Portland Place, Harley Street and Wimpole Street at this time show that the estate attracted residents from the highest reaches of society, including dukes and baronets, foreign ambassadors, successful merchants, former plantation owners, MPs and senior army officers.<sup>301</sup> When choosing a West End property, these elite house-hunters had to make a series of ‘articulate choices’ based on ‘strategic decision making.’<sup>302</sup> Architectural guides first recommended properties ‘in some open airy street, contiguous to some square’ with good access to public places.<sup>303</sup> The Cavendish-Harley Estate fulfilled each of these criteria but its particular appeal owed much to its superior equine arrangements.<sup>304</sup> When newspaper advertisements were placed for ‘Wanted’ properties, stabling ranked highly among their specifications. In the late 1780s, the *World* newspaper published two enquiries for

A House to Rent ... elegantly furnished or unfurnished, fit for the reception of a large family, with double coach-house, and stabling for not less than four horses; the situation preferred will be the neighbourhood of Cavendish or Portman Square, but particularly Wimpole or Harley Street.<sup>305</sup>

A House, to Rent or Purchase, with three good rooms on a floor, accommodation for fifteen or sixteen servants, stabling for six horses, kitchen, and laundry out of the house. A square, or Portland Place, would be preferred.<sup>306</sup>

Some advertisements even promoted stabling over domestic stipulations.<sup>307</sup> In 1776 an advertisement for a house in Welbeck Street boasted ‘standing for three carriages [and] stabling

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<sup>301</sup> WCA, *St Marylebone Rate Books, 1777-1778*.

<sup>302</sup> H. Greig, ‘Leading the Fashion: The Material Culture of London’s Beau Monde’ in J. Styles & A. Vickery (eds) *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (2006), p.299. Recent literature on elite consumption has questioned the idea that the gentry and aristocracy tended to be spontaneous and profligate in their spending. Instead Helen Berry has described the gentry’s behaviour as exhibiting ‘prudent luxury.’ H. Berry, ‘Prudent Luxury: The Metropolitan Tastes of Judith Baker, Durham Gentlewoman’ in R. Sweet & P. Lane (eds), *Women and Urban Life in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Aldershot, 2003), pp.131-156; A. Vickery, “Neat and Not Too Showey”: Words and Wallpaper in Regency England’ in Styles & Vickery, *Gender, Taste and Material Culture* (New Haven, 2006), pp.201-225.

<sup>303</sup> Thomas Skaife, *A Key to Civil Architecture; or, The Universal British Builder* (1774), p.31.

<sup>304</sup> To the north, the estate bordered Marylebone Fields, offering an unbroken view of the Hampstead Hills; the south, Cavendish Square provided a grand focal point. While less central than St. James’s and the Grosvenor Estate, the area offered convenient access to Parliament and the polite diversions of the West End.

<sup>305</sup> *World*, 21 May 1788.

<sup>306</sup> *World*, 3 June 1789.

for five horses' before mentioning the property's 'two good rooms and a dressing-room on each floor'.<sup>308</sup> Because elite house-hunters valued their private equipages so highly, it was clearly in the best interests of aristocratic landlords to promote the accommodation of horses to the forefront of their developments, to build high-quality mews and to ensure that they were well maintained. Landlords regained ownership of houses when their first lease expired. As a result, his prime concern was to attract high-class tenants who would 'maintain ... or raise the tone, and hence the value of the estate'.<sup>309</sup> Mews thus represented an important investment in the future profitability of an estate.

To learn more about the Cavendish-Harley estate's mews infrastructures, I surveyed advertisements placed in London's newspapers between 1775 and 1790.<sup>310</sup> **Table 10** provides a summary of key details including the property's location, its owner, coach-house capacity and stable capacity.<sup>311</sup> At least twelve of the eighteen mews serving this section of the Cavendish-Harley estate are represented here.<sup>312</sup> As shown in **Table 11**, the data shows that horse stalls offered by individual mews units ranged from four to eight, with an average of 5.9, a median of six and a mode of five. Each unit's capacity for coaches ranged from two to three, with an average of 2.3 and a median and mode of two. The superior size of the Marquess of Rockingham's arrangements in Grosvenor Square indicates the extreme wealth and unusual scale of equipages maintained by the upper nobility. Smaller mews units on the Cavendish-Harley estate gave its broader social elite precisely the kind of equine display and mobility needed to succeed in the *beau monde*.

Traditionally, studies of the metropolis have depicted the West End as an area almost exclusively occupied by the social elite. Only in the last decade have historians begun to acknowledge the many domestic servants who lived and worked alongside these wealthy

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<sup>307</sup> Stewart, *The Town House in Georgian London*, p.43 & pp.116-7, argues that instead of seeking to distinguish themselves by the sheer size of their property, house hunters increasingly desired a residence which was 'streamlined as a London base.'

<sup>308</sup> *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 24 May 1776.

<sup>309</sup> Cruickshank & Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, p.111.

<sup>310</sup> Using the word search facility provided by the online 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century Burney Collection of Newspapers (Gale Cengage Learning).

<sup>311</sup> Potter, *Plan of the Parish of St Marylebone* (1821). In cross referencing street numbers with Potter's map, I have taken into account the street re-numberings which took place in Harley Street, Upper Harley Street and Portland Place in the 1770s and 1780s. Wimpole Street was never re-numbered and retains its original ordering. No advertisements provide the name of the mews complex serving the property on sale. However, house numbers and specific descriptions of location make it possible to identify them. Where advertisements did not provide sufficient location detail, I have suggested the small number of mews which could have served the property.

<sup>312</sup> See Tables 9, 10 & 11.



residents.<sup>313</sup> Despite their prevalence, however, the horses and equine servants who occupied the area's mews have continued to evade detailed attention.<sup>314</sup> However, the West End clearly contained a thriving equine world. The incessant coming and going of horse-drawn coaches was intrinsic to its landscape. And behind every grand façade, many more horses were being fed, rested and groomed out of sight. By applying the average mews unit capacities for horses (5.9) and coaches (2.3) across the Cavendish-Harley estate, it is possible to calculate the approximate volume of animals and vehicles which this modest area of the metropolis could have accommodated.<sup>315</sup> As shown in **Table 11**, a neighbourhood of less than three hundred elite homes provided accommodation for around 1,782 horses and 695 coaches.

The impact of so many horses in such a compact area must have been tremendous, not least in terms of the large servant population needed to care for them. To complete the onerous work of feeding, watering, mucking out and repairing horses and their mechanical extensions, polite residents had to employ teams of specialised equine servants. It has been estimated that if a high class family used their coach three times a day, they would have needed to employ at least two coachmen and two grooms.<sup>316</sup> As well as accommodating horses and vehicles, therefore, mews were conceived and adapted to house a large community of servants. Coachmen (sometimes with their families), grooms and stable boys lived in basic quarters above the stable and coach-house. A mews complex as extensive as the Marquis of Rockingham's required a large retinue of such equine servants. The memoranda books and correspondence of Rockingham's butlers reveals the impressive size and expense of his staff after thirty years in residence. In 1781, five equine servants were due annual wages: the Second Coachman, two postillions and two grooms.<sup>317</sup> By the following summer, the team had grown to nine, including two coachmen, three postillions, three grooms and a stable boy. Listed by name and position in **Table 12**, these mews-based employees made up almost forty per cent of the permanent staff at No.4 Grosvenor Square in May 1782. Mews complexes provided employment and accommodation for vast numbers of workmen. Across an area like the Grosvenor or Cavendish-Harley estate, the equine servicing world could comprise hundreds of men. Using data mentioned above, I have calculated the approximate servant populations of individual mews on the Cavendish-Harley

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<sup>313</sup> B. Hill, *Servants: English Domesticity in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1996); C. Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge, 2009). T. Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (Harlow, 2000); J.J. Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956).

<sup>314</sup> For the most detailed previous consideration of equine servants, see in Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750*.

<sup>315</sup> See Table 11.

<sup>316</sup> F. Huggett, *Carriages at Eight: Horse Drawn Society in Victorian & Edwardian Times* (New York, 1980), cited in B. Rosen & W. Zuckermann, *The Mews of London* (Exeter, 1982), p.25.

<sup>317</sup> SA, WWM/A/1296, 'Isaac Charlton's London household disbursements', 19 July 1781. Their total wages amounted to £147' 19s.

Estate (**Table 13**). Using a conservative estimate that two equine servants were needed to maintain an equipage containing six animals (the average for each mews unit), the estate's 1,782 horses would have required the labour of nearly 600 men. By the end of the eighteenth century, therefore, the total population of equine servants in the West End, stretching from Bloomsbury to Kensington, would have been in the thousands.

If, as Carolyn Steedman rightly demands, we are to consider the minutiae of the maid's working day to understand her life, then equine servants deserve a similar reappraisal. Steedman points out that in the sphere of housewifery 'the basket, the carrots, the pins and brass mushrooms, the dirty clouts, all have their wants: they tell the worker what needs doing to them.'<sup>318</sup> In the world of the mews, the horse was no less demanding, creating distinctive social arrangements and work cultures around its needs. To be a coachman or groom meant more than owning an occupational label, it involved a unique set of skills and behaviours, working routines, living conditions, master-servant dynamics, wider social interactions and aspirations.<sup>319</sup> As high-maintenance living machines, carriage horses placed heavy demands on human labour.<sup>320</sup> Equine biology necessitated particularly high levels of supervision which also led to prolonged working hours. The cecal digestive system of horses makes their small stomachs and intestines 'prone to twisting and blocking', known as 'colic'. To avoid this, the animals require 'careful supervision of several feedings a day and a large volume of water.'<sup>321</sup> As a result, coachmen and grooms began their working day perhaps three hours before maids, cooks or footmen began to stir within the household.<sup>322</sup> In his study of Victorian mews, Frank Huggett suggests that work usually started 'at 5am in the summer and 6am in the winter, so that the head coachman, after having a late breakfast at 10 am could report at the big house to receive the orders of the day.'<sup>323</sup> West End stable regimes are likely to have taken their lead from the King's Mews in Charing Cross, a sprawling agglomeration of stable complexes containing thirty-eight coach houses and more than 200 horse stalls.<sup>324</sup> The King's saddle horses were cared for by nine grooms, one for

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<sup>318</sup> Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p.353.

<sup>319</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750*, pp.167-177.

<sup>320</sup> SA, WWM/A/1278, 'Inventory of Grosvenor Square', 5 June 1751, lists the manual tools used in a busy London stable: 'Four...lanterns, 8 pails, 4 forks, 2 shovels...'

<sup>321</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse and the City*, pp.127.

<sup>322</sup> In 1780, Archenholz noted that domestics were still asleep at 8am. At 11am, Goede observed that the only signs of life came from 'a groom here or there.' Christian August Gottlieb Goede, *The Stranger in England* (1807); Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz, *A Picture of England* (1789) cited in Cruickshank & Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, pp.23-4. According to Sophie von la Roche, maids in the West End 'seldom open their eyes before eight o'clock', *Sophie in London* (1786, trans., London, 1933), p.89.

<sup>323</sup> F. Huggett, *Carriages at Eight* cited in Rosen & Zuckermann, *The Mews of London*, p.25. Late night sociability also meant coachmen had to fetch their masters when other servants were asleep. In 1818, the Earl of Denbigh's coachman brought 'his Lordship home' at two o'clock in the morning, put his coach and horses away and began work again less than four hours later. OBSP, *t18180909-23* (9 Sept 1818).

<sup>324</sup> Huggett, *Carriages at Eight* cited in Rosen & Zuckermann, *The Mews of London*, p.25, even in the Victorian era, 'high class coachmen' continued to model 'themselves on the pattern of the Royal Mews,

every three animals. His Majesty's thirty coach horses were divided into three teams, each supervised by an experienced coachman with grooms and stable helpers beneath him.<sup>325</sup>

The importance of equine display and mobility meant that polite society had to invest considerable trust in mews-based servants. Because of this, the horse granted coachmen and grooms a remarkable degree of power and autonomy. Recently, Tim Meldrum and Carolyn Steedman have disputed Sara Maza's assertions that eighteenth-century servants were caught in a social limbo between their masters and the wider world and that they lacked autonomy. Meldrum has argued that 'most domestic servants, for most of the time were engaged in too much interaction with others who lived in their households and many beyond it ... for them to be in any way aloof or withdrawn.'<sup>326</sup> Focussing on female domestics, Steedman has identified widespread instances of 'servant agency' and rebellion within the household.<sup>327</sup> Yet, as Meldrum suggests, these characteristics were particularly pronounced among equine servants.<sup>328</sup> There were three main reasons for this: firstly, the prized status of elite horses and the social value of equine skills; secondly, the location of mews culture in a wider equine world; and finally, the access which equine servants gained to their masters and mistresses.

Mimi Hellman has suggested that in the eighteenth century, objects could become powerful social actors, capable of empowering those who mastered their use. While Hellman examines the uses of furniture in venues of polite sociability, this notion can be extended to horses. As living objects, these animals greatly empowered those entrusted with their care.<sup>329</sup> Because horses demanded the co-habitation of their guardians, equine servants spent much of their day detached and hidden from the main residence and thus from their master's view.<sup>330</sup> Some historians have argued that spatial separation from employers harmed the prospects of domestic

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where an almost military discipline was maintained.' RAW, 'Precedence Book', 1760-1805, pp.87-8, 'A List of their Majestys' officers and servants who occupy Houses in the mews at Charing Cross by virtue of their places', 1769. Rebuilt by William Kent in 1732 on the current site of the National Gallery, the Royal Mews comprised several interlinked mews complexes including the 'Great Stables', the Green Mews and the Dunghill Mews. RAW, 'Precedence Book', 1760-1805, pp.65-7, 'An Account of all the Stables in his Majesty's Mews at Charing Cross and by whom they were occupied in the year 1766'; pp.68-9, 'A List of all the Coach Houses in his Majestys Mews and of the persons by whom they are occupied in the year 1768.'

<sup>325</sup> RAW, *Precedence Book*, 1760-1805, pp. 65-67, 'An Account of all the Stables in his Majesty's Mews at Charing Cross and by whom they were occupied in the year 1766.'

<sup>326</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p.124; S. Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: the Uses of Loyalty* (Princeton, 1983), pp.109-10, 131, 134.

<sup>327</sup> Steedman, *Labours Lost*, pp.8-9.

<sup>328</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, pp.174-182.

<sup>329</sup> M. Hellman, 'Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 32:4 (1999), pp.415-445; McShane & Tarr, *The Horse and the City*.

<sup>330</sup> Many mews units were only 20 yards from the main residence but only a small minority appear to have had direct access. I have only been able to find three references to such access in the Old Bailey Proceedings which provide some of the most detailed descriptions of mews arrangements. OBSP, t18140420-69 (20 April 1814); OBSP, t18160403 (3 April 1816).

servants.<sup>331</sup> This does not necessarily seem to have been the case for coachmen and grooms. By evading the close supervision of the household, these men were freer to engage in a wider range of cultures, social interactions and transactions. While partially isolated from the household, mews were fully integrated in a bustling equine service world of victuallers, blacksmiths, farriers, corn chandlers, coach-makers, saddlers, hostlers, hackney coachmen and other mews servants. In the mid-nineteenth century, ‘one dweller in a large West End mews’ calculated that ‘100 different street-traders resorted thither daily’.<sup>332</sup> A survey of the Grosvenor Estate in the 1790s described 142 householders as being involved in ‘transport’, of which thirty were stable-keepers, twenty-seven coachmen and twenty-three coach-makers. The remaining sixty-two performed a wide range of equine service trades, including smiths, farriers, wheelwrights, saddlers, horse-dealers and coach-brokers.<sup>333</sup> Omitted from the survey, however, were the numerous coachmen, postillions, grooms and stable boys who lived above their master’s coach-house but were not householders. As well as providing an aristocratic service, therefore, mews contributed to a unique equine culture which involved distinctive social types, routines and interactions.

As voracious consumers of expensive commodities and as valuable objects in their own right, carriage horses underpinned a lucrative strand of metropolitan commerce. Opportunistic coachmen and grooms were, therefore, often tempted to exploit their access to these animals. Private enterprise appears to have been widespread in West End mews and even among the King’s servants. In 1769, the Clerk of the Royal Mews recorded that ‘several great abuses have been practiced ... by some of the Livery and others; such as buying and selling, keeping & letting of Horses, & horses & Chaises; & buying and selling Harness, Carriages &c by which means the Mews has been made a kind of Trading Place to the great Dishonour of the King.’<sup>334</sup> These activities were promptly banned ‘upon pain of suspension or discharge from the King’s service’ but twenty years later men continued to use their privileged access to horses to supplement their income, both within and outside the rules. In 1789, the King’s Yeoman Rider complained ‘it appears to me to be incompatible with my situation in the King’s service to use

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<sup>331</sup> Maza, *Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France*.

<sup>332</sup> H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, vol. 1 (1861), p.400, p.503, p.55, p.425 & p.49. Among those in regular contact with Rockingham’s men were suppliers of provender and Edward Snape, a successful farrier and entrepreneur based in Grosvenor Mews. SA, WWM/A/1391/b, ‘Discharges of Cash by Samuel Dutoit’, 1766-67; SA, WWM/A/1300, ‘Weekly Abstract, tradesmens bills on house and stables, London’, 1775-82.

<sup>333</sup> Sheppard (ed.) *Survey of London*, 39, p.88.

<sup>334</sup> RAW, Precedence Book, 1760-1805, ‘Orders relative to abuses that have been practiced within the mews’, 13 June 1769, p.89.

the means of increasing my income, which those beneath me ... have done, and can do, with Propriety; such as buying and selling Horses, and breaking Horses for Gentleman.’<sup>335</sup>

When equine servants transgressed, they could rely on their horses to be silent accomplices.<sup>336</sup> Jonathan Swift’s *Directions to Servants* (1731) identified several ways for coachmen and grooms to exploit their employers by playing on this advantage

If you find any gentleman fond of one of your horses, and willing to give you a consideration beside the price; persuade your master to sell him, because he is so vicious that you cannot undertake to drive with him and is foundered into the bargain.<sup>337</sup>

In 1787, a West End coachman told the Old Bailey that he could easily earn 5s from a prospective horse buyer if he could persuade his master to sell for a lower price.<sup>338</sup> As interpreters of equine needs, it was possible for coachmen and grooms to swindle and deceive their employers, to evade work and to pursue bootleg profits. With horses unable to testify against lazy servants, hard work could be feigned. Swift advised idle mews workers to go to the alehouse ‘with an old bridle, girth, or stirrup-leather ... dangling in your hands as if you came from the sadler’s where you were getting the same mended.’<sup>339</sup> Knowledge of equine welfare, in particular, gave servants considerable power when negotiating their position in relation to the household. Whether out of compassion or concern for expensive investments, the majority of carriage owners took the wellbeing of their horses very seriously. To safeguard these interests, they relied heavily on the judgment of their coachmen and grooms. If carefully manipulated, this information could be used to hoodwink employers and extract personal gains. Swift advised errant coachmen: ‘when you are in no humour to drive [or ride], tell your master, that the horses have got a cold; that they want shoeing; that rain does them hurt, and roughens their coat.’<sup>340</sup> Worse still, grooms might be tempted to sabotage an animal by leaving one of his ‘fore-shoes

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<sup>335</sup> RAW, Precedence Book, 1760-1805, ‘Mr. Smith’s Letter to David Parker Esq., King’s Mews’, 30 April 1789, p.235-6.

<sup>336</sup> Mews did not evade aristocratic inspection altogether. In 1816, a postillion to Lord Roseberry told the Old Bailey that his master’s stables in South Portland Mews were connected to the house by a ‘thoroughfare’ meaning ‘his Lordship can go from the house into the stables without going into the street.’ OBSP, t18160403 (3 April 1816). Not all equine servants transgressed without capture. In 1787, the Earl of Lonsdale’s coachman was caught smuggling some of his master’s hay out of Hays’s Mews, Berkley Square. In the dock, he described his loyal service of five years but was transported for five years. OBSP, t17870418-68 (18 April 1787).

<sup>337</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (1st edn, 1745; London, 2003), p.47.

<sup>338</sup> OBSP, t17870418-68 (18 April 1787).

<sup>339</sup> Swift, *Directions to Servants*, p.51.

<sup>340</sup> Swift, *Directions to Servants*, p.46.

loose in the morning; or contrive that the saddle may pinch the beast in his withers; or keep him without corn all night and morning, so that he may tire on the road.’<sup>341</sup>

While for much of the day, carriage horses kept mews servants away from the household, once the coach was called for, it brought them within close proximity to their employers when other domestics were out of the picture. As enablers of mobility, horses gave coachmen, in particular, valuable knowledge of the whereabouts and activities of their masters and mistresses. Giving evidence in the separation case of Lady Savile, her former coachman described her as a ‘dutiful and obedient wide’ and a ‘constant churchwoman ... which he knows by being coachman and driving her to church.’<sup>342</sup> As Meldrum has suggested, ‘relations between master and manservant could be especially warm, particularly when the master was relatively young’. This was still more the case when men shared an interest in horses.<sup>343</sup> In forging these relationships, equine work could also expose coachmen to the salacious transgressions of their employers, turning them into privileged witnesses and trusted allies.<sup>344</sup> Richard Kennedy, coachman to an esquire and his wife ‘took full advantage of his situation by accepting all the bribes, pecuniary, alcoholic and culinary, from his mistress’s lover or his steward, while getting all the necessary information into his hands to make impregnable his trusted position with his master, to whom he related all.’<sup>345</sup>

Finally, as Peter Earle has observed, ‘knowledge of horses’ gave equine servants considerable autonomy to progress their careers. Caring for, and learning from, the horses of gentlemen, coachmen and grooms were able to emerge from service with the skills needed to set out as hackney coachmen and stable-keepers.<sup>346</sup> Tim Meldrum cites this as an important example of servants developing ‘transferable skills’ for these men ‘were storing up not just savings but the capital of skills for a life beyond service’ and they had ‘ample opportunity to build up contacts with victuallers and innkeepers’ who might later offer them employment.<sup>347</sup>

The West End mews provides compelling evidence that horses not only generated large-scale architectural infrastructures but moulded entire communities and work cultures around their

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<sup>341</sup> Swift, *Directions to Servants*, p.51; M.H. McKay, ‘The Rise of a Medical Specialty: The Medicalisation of Equine Care, c.1680-c.1800’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2009).

<sup>342</sup> LMA, DL/C/271f.198, London Consistory Court Hearing, John Cotton, 11 February 1736.

<sup>343</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p.96.

<sup>344</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p.175.

<sup>345</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p.175.

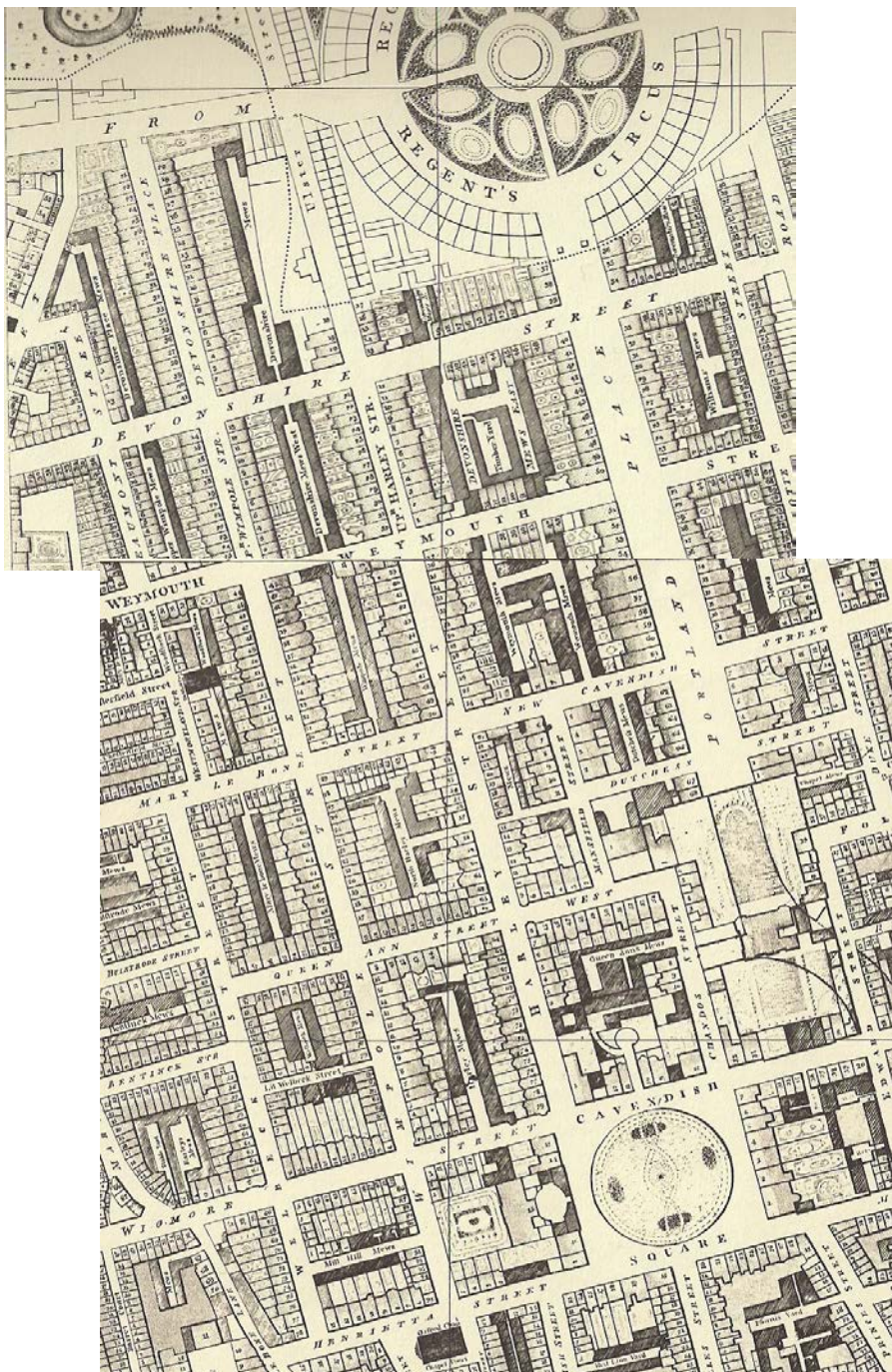
<sup>346</sup> Steedman, *Labours Lost*, pp.8-9; P. Earle, *A City Full of People*, p.85.

<sup>347</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p.176. In 1729, William Black, once coachman to a lord, was living at a public house, driving a hackney coach and ‘being a servant to the victualler ‘in watering and looking after his horses’; LMA, DL/C/266f.142, London Consistory Court Hearing, William Black, 9 June 1729.



needs. I have shown that in exchange for their extraordinary service to metropolitan society, horses placed heavy demands on urban space and human labour. While proving themselves to be voracious consumers, the animals which I have described so far have seemed passive and obedient social actors. Yet, their impact was far more complex than this. In the next section, I will consider the alter ego of the cooperative animal – the wild and recalcitrant beast – and the challenge of commanding this troublesome behaviour in the metropolitan environment.

**Map 7:** Detail of the Cavendish–Harley Estate from Richard Horwood’s *Map of London* (3rd edn, 1813).





**Map 8:** Detail from Peter Potter's *Plan of the Parish of St Marylebone* (2nd edn, 1832) showing the key mews developments serving Portland Place, Harley Street and Wimpole Street on the Cavendish-Harley Estate.



## **APPENDIX**

**Table 9: Ratio of mews units : houses in key streets on Cavendish-Harley Estate (north of Queen Ann Street).<sup>348</sup>**

	<b>No. of Residential properties</b>	<b>Mews Complexes (with approx no. of stable units serving street)</b>	<b>Total no. of Mews Units serving street</b>	<b>Ratio of Residential Properties : Mews Units</b>
<b>Harley St</b>	57	N. Harley (10) Mansfield (0) Wimpole (12) Weymouth (14)	36	1 : 0.63
<b>Portland Place</b>	68	Duchess (5) Weymouth (14) Charlotte St (5) Devonshire East (16) Williams (9) Devonshire Row (3)	52	1 : 0.76
<b>Wimpole St</b>	55	N. Harley (10) Marylebone (10) Westmoreland (6) Woodstock (5) Wimpole (12)	43	1 : 0.78
<b>Devonshire Place</b>	41	Devonshire Place (16) Devonshire West (18)	37	1 : 0.90
<b>Upper Wimpole</b>	26	Upper Wimpole (8) Devonshire South (13)	26	1 : 1
<b>Upper Harley St</b>	40	Devonshire South (12) Devonshire East (19) Devonshire West (8) Devonshire North (5)	42	1 : 1.05
	<b>Total Houses: 287</b>		<b>Total Mews Units: 236</b>	<b>Ratio of Houses to Mews Units across the C-H estate 1 : 0.82</b>

<sup>348</sup> Calculated using Peter Potter's Plan of the Parish of St Marylebone (2nd edn, 1821).

**Table 10:** Newspaper adverts for rent & sale of properties with coach houses & stables (1775 – 1790).

Street (west or east side) & No. by 1790	Date	Owner (Source, Date)	Mews	Coach capacity	Horse capacity	Newspaper
Portland Place (corner of New Cavendish St), No.8 or No.61	11/2/ 1778	If No. 8 - Rev William Rose for Ambassador (Rate book, 1808) If No.61 - Theodore Henry Broadhead (Rate book, 1808)	Charlotte  <u>OR</u> Weymouth	2	6	Morning Post
Mansfield St, Portland Place	31/5/1783	Sir Edward Dering, Bart (Morning Post, 1783)	Mansfield or Duchess	2	6	Morning Post
Portland Place (NE corner of Weymouth St), No.22	8/12/ 1783	Robert Sparks Esq (Rate book, 1808)	Williams	2	5	Gazetteer
Portland Place, No.10 (East side)	26 /12/ 1785	John Musters, Esq (Rate books, 1785); 'A Man of Fashion' (Morning Post, 1785)	Charlotte	2	5	Morning Post
Portland Place (West side, corner of Weymouth St, No.51	27 /6 / 1786	William Mitchell Esq (Rate book, 1808)	Weymouth	3	8	Morning Post
Portland Place (Centre, East side), No.17	20 /5/ 1789	Robert Butler, Esq (World, 1789)	Charlotte	2	5	World
Portland Place (East side), No.35	19 /1/ 1790	Duke of Orleans (World, 1790)	Devonshire Row	3	8	World
Upper Harley Street (West Side)	29 /10/ 1779	"A Nobleman" (1779); 'Earl of Rochford' (Rate books, 1777)	Devonshire South <u>OR</u> Devonshire West	2	5	Morning Post
Lower Harley St (West side)	6 / 4/ 1781	Unknown	North Harley or Harley	2	6	Gazetteer
Upper Harley (East side)	27 / 4/ 1784	'A Foreign Ambassador' (Gazetteer, 1784)	Devonshire E. <u>OR</u> Devonshire North	Unknown	6	Gazetteer
Harley (West side)	13 /11/ 1786	A Nobleman (Morning Post, 1786)	Harley <u>OR</u> North Harley or Wimpole	2	7	Morning Post
Harley (West side), No.46	8 / 7/ 1784	The Earl of Newburgh on lease to William Godfrey (Morning Post, 1784)	Wimpole	3	8	Morning Post
Harley (West side), No.43	18/2/ 1790	'John Prybus Esq' (Rate book, 1777)	Wimpole	3	8	World
Devonshire Place (East side), No.2	27/1/ 1791	Unknown	Devonshire West	Unknown	4	World
Devonshire Place	31/12/ 1790	Unknown	Devonshire West <u>OR</u> Dev. Place	Unknown	4	World
Upper Wimpole (East side), No.10	18 /12/ 1790	Unknown	Devonshire South	2	5	World
Wimpole (best part)	8 / 9/ 1788	Unknown	Marylebone or N. Harley <u>or</u> Westmoreland, Wimpole	Unknown	6	Morning Post
Wimpole (West side)	12 /3/ 1787	William Lutwyche Esq	Marylebone or Westmoreland or	Unknown	5	Gazetteer
				<b>Average: 2.3</b> <b>Median: 2</b> <b>Mode: 2</b>	<b>Average: 5.9</b> <b>Median: 6</b> <b>Mode: 5</b>	

**Table 11:** Coach and horse capacity in mews serving Cavendish-Harley Estate, North of Queen Ann Street (1775 – 1790).<sup>349</sup>

	No. of Coach Houses in Mews	Average Coach Capacity of Coach Houses (estate average) *	Approximate Coach Capacity of Mews  (No. of Coach Houses x Average Coach Capacity)	No. of stables in Mews	Average Horse Capacity of Stable  (Number. of stalls based on estate average )	Approximate Horse Capacity of Mews  (No. of Stables x Average Horse Capacity)
Duchess	9	2.3	20.7	9	5.9	53.1
Weymouth	35	2.3	80.5	35	5.9	206.5
Charlotte St	8	2.3	18.4	8	5.9	47.2
Devonshire East	35	2.3	80.5	35	5.9	206.5
Williams	24	2.3	55.2	24	5.9	141.6
Devonshire Row	8	2.3	18.4	8	5.9	47.2
North Harley	22	2.3	50.6	22	5.9	129.8
Mansfield	5	2.3	11.5	5	5.9	29.5
Wimpole	23	2.3	52.9	23	5.9	135.7
Devonshire West	39	2.3	89.7	39	5.9	230.1
Devonshire North	5	2.3	11.5	5	5.9	29.5
Marylebone	23	2.3	52.9	23	5.9	135.7
Westmoreland	6	2.3	13.8	6	5.9	35.4
Woodstock	6	2.3	13.8	6	5.9	35.4
Clarkes Mews	5	2.3	11.5	5	5.9	29.5
Upper Wimpole	8	2.3	18.4	8	5.9	47.2
Devonshire South	25	2.3	57.5	25	5.9	147.5
Devonshire Place	16	2.3	36.8	16	5.9	94.4
<b>Cavendish-Harley Estate (North of Queen Ann St)</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>694.6</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>1781.8</b>

**Table 12:** List of taxable servants at Grosvenor Square, 4 May 1782.<sup>350</sup>

Equine Staff		Non-Equine Staff	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
Hamlet Yates	Coachman	Thomas Woodhead	Footman
George Ellard	Second Coachman	John Saby	Footman
William Clark	Postillion	Robert Needham	Footman
William Fido	Postillion	Joseph Lee	Footman
John Street	Postillion	Remus Stansfield	Footman
Henry Powell	Groom	Romulus Wimbleton	Footman
John Guest	Groom	Mr John Heck	Valet de Chambre
William Harrison	Groom	Charles Crabb	Valet de Chambre
William Bailey	Stable Boy	Eustache Crabb	Clerk of Kitchen
		John Seaven	Cook
		Isaac Charlton	Butler
		Joseph South	Under Butler
		John Oxley	Waiter
		Thomas Hankin	Porter

<sup>349</sup> For calculation of averages, see Table 10.

<sup>350</sup> SA, WWM/A/1296, 'List of Servants liable to be taxed according to an Act of Parliament' (4 May 1782).

**Table 13: Approximate Density of Equine Servants living and working in Mews on the Cavendish-Harley Estate, North of Queen Ann Street (1775 – 1790).**

	<b>Approximate Horse Capacity of Mews</b>  (No. of Stables x Average Horse Capacity)	<b>Approximate Number of Equine servants (coachmen and grooms) in each Mews</b>  (Based on 2 servants caring for six horses in each mews unit; figures rounded up to form a complete servant)
Duchess	53.1	18
Weymouth	206.5	69
Charlotte St	47.2	16
Devonshire East	206.5	69
Williams	141.6	47
Devonshire Row	47.2	16
North Harley	129.8	43
Mansfield	29.5	10
Wimpole	135.7	45
Devonshire West	230.1	77
Devonshire North	29.5	10
Marylebone	135.7	45
Westmoreland	35.4	12
Woodstock	35.4	12
Clarkes Mews	29.5	10
Upper Wimpole	47.2	16
Devonshire South	147.5	49
Devonshire Place	94.4	31
<b>Cavendish-Harley Estate (North of Queen Ann St)</b>	<b>1781.8</b>	<b>595</b>

## CHAPTER 2:

### COMMANDING THE RECALCITRANT BEAST

As I have shown above, livestock and horses played a crucial role in the social and commercial life of the metropolis. Yet, these animals had a paradoxical influence, both enabling and threatening London's progress as a city of the Enlightenment. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the urban beast was increasingly identified as an intolerable nuisance and a serious threat to urban improvement. All too frequently, the streets of London appeared to descend into scenes of animal-orchestrated chaos. In October 1820, the *London Chronicle* reported that

A bullock having escaped from a slaughter-house in Whitechapel, ran down the Minories, followed by several hundred persons, whose attempts to stop it only tended to make it the more outrageous; in its course it upset several poor women who sat with their stalls in the streets, some of whom were much injured. The enraged animal, in running through a court in Rosemary-lane ... came in contact with a horse drawing a cart, against which it ran with such violence as to plunge both its horns into the horse's belly, and lacerated it in such a manner as to expose its entrails: a porter, heavily laden, was killed on the spot, by being jammed between the cart and a house, in consequence of the horse's making a sudden plunge backwards, in order to disengage himself from the horns of the bullock.<sup>351</sup>

Such incidents appeared to play out man's failure to tame nature and emphasised the dramatic repercussions this could have in the crowded metropolitan environment. William Hogarth's *Second Stage of Cruelty*, 1751 (**Plate 23**) has often been discussed in relation to the rise of sensibility and the anti-cruelty movement in Britain.<sup>352</sup> The artist himself certainly hoped to correct in some measure 'that barbarous treatment of animals, the very sight of which renders the streets of our metropolis so distressing to every feeling mind.'<sup>353</sup> Yet, this focus on animal welfare, and the behaviour of men rather than animals, has obscured other important dimensions

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<sup>351</sup> *London Chronicle*, 18 October 1820.

<sup>352</sup> D. Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain 1750-1850* (2007), pp.199-200; D. Donald, "Beastly Sights" in D. Arnold (ed.), *The Metropolis and its Image* (1999), p.59; D. Arnold (ed.), *The Metropolis and its Image* (1999), p.3.

<sup>353</sup> John Bowyer Nichols, *Anecdotes of William Hogarth, Written by Himself: with Essays on His Life and Genius*, (1833), pp.64-5.

of Hogarth's work.<sup>354</sup> When viewed as a streetscape, what startles is the intensity and disruptive impact of animal traffic. In the foreground, a horse collapses causing its coach to topple into the road. Determined to retain his fare, the coachman urges the animal to stand by whipping at its head, only adding to the chaos. Spooked by the mêlée, a flock of sheep infuriates its drover who proceeds to beat one of them to death. In the middle of the street, an out of control dray threatens to crush a child while, in the distance, a heavily laden mule wanders into oncoming traffic. Thus, despite the violent attempts of men to regain control, these animals pose a serious threat to the order of the metropolis. As if to underline nature's victory over human rationality and control, a defiant bullock tosses a Londoner high into the air.

As a popular comic device, animal nuisance had a powerful influence on metropolitan and English culture in the second half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with horses and bullocks taking a leading role. In Thomas Rowlandson's *Miseries of London [traffic]*, 1807 (**Plate 24**), startled horses send a street into ludicrous disarray, providing an opportunity for gentle social satire. Carriages clash, pedestrians tumble, baskets spill and the air thickens with shrieks and bellows. For Rowlandson, this kind of disruptive behaviour 'catapult[ed] people into a betrayal of their unveneered and common humanity' resulting in 'a moment for high comical observation.'<sup>355</sup> Similarly, in *The Overdrove Ox*, 1809 (**Plate 28**), Rowlandson depicts a large bullock terrorizing a group of well-dressed individuals taking the air on London Bridge. Fleeing for their lives, they fall into an undignified, writhing heap, just as a stage-coach topples over. These images show that undesirable interactions with animals could inspire amusement as well as concern. As Vic Gatrell has suggested, 'the moment when chaos descends' in Rowlandson's narrative, 'is no time for pity, alarm or moralising'.<sup>356</sup> However, comedic reference to animal nuisance could also carry serious socio-political meanings. This was particularly evident during the French Wars, when the unruly urban beast came to symbolise the dreaded effects of invasion and anarchy in the metropolis. For this purpose, James Gilray placed a rampaging bullock at the heart of his dystopian vision of mob rule, *Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion*, 1796 (**Plate 25**). Disorderly animals were also a major feature of debates surrounding urban improvement in the mid-eighteenth century, and it is to this relationship that we now turn.

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<sup>354</sup> In the *First Stage*, unwatched children develop a taste for brutality by torturing small animals. In the *Second Stage*, this behaviour hardens into working men abusing larger animals, including horses, cattle and sheep. This cruelty reaches its state of perfect in the *Third Stage* when the anti-hero of the series, Tom Nero, callously murders a young woman.

<sup>355</sup> V. Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London, 2006), p.45.

<sup>356</sup> Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, p.45.



**Plate 23: William Hogarth, *The Second Stage of Cruelty*, London, 1751.**









**Plate 25:** James Gilray, *Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion* (1796).



**Plate 26:** George Woodward, *Miseries of Human Life* (c.1800).



In 1714, Bernard Mandeville had accused those wishing the streets to be cleaner and more orderly of caring only for their ‘own Cloathes and private Conveniency’ because ‘what offends them is the result of the Plenty, great Traffick and Opulency of that mighty City ... the multitudes of Horses and other Cattle ... the carts, Coaches and more heavy carriages that are perpetually wearing and breaking the Pavement of them.’<sup>357</sup> He concluded that ‘it is impossible London should be more cleanly before it is less flourishing ... dirty streets are a necessary Evil inseparable from the Felicity of London.’<sup>358</sup> Yet by the mid-eighteenth century, campaigners for urban improvement were strongly refuting this view, arguing that ‘the more trade you have, surely the more capable you are of taking care of your police.’<sup>359</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb often downplayed the street improvements achieved by London’s parish authorities in the 1700s, highlighting the crippling effects of corruption, competing jurisdictions, part-time amateurism and general incompetence.<sup>360</sup> More recently, however, historians have identified significant advances in policing, lighting and paving in this period.<sup>361</sup> These studies have tended to focus on two important aspects of improvement: firstly, the fabric of the street, including paving, lighting and removing obstructions; and secondly, the reform of the Nightwatch. Examining the latter, Elaine Reynolds has argued that ‘the more systematic attention paid to the problems of street policing’ indicated by vestry and watch committee minutes suggests ‘a system of local administration that was capable of adapting to the increasing burdens of urban government in dynamic and thoughtful ways.’<sup>362</sup>

Comparatively little attention, however, has been given to the policing of animal traffic. John Beattie has partly attributed the expansion of metropolitan policing to rising street traffic, but discusses this more in terms of the impact of vehicles and people than of animals.<sup>363</sup> The Webbs rightly acknowledged that metropolitan improvement legislation introduced an ‘elaborate series of prohibitions ... concerned with the regulation of personal conduct and the suppression of

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<sup>357</sup> Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (3rd edn, 1724), no pagination.

<sup>358</sup> Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, no pagination.

<sup>359</sup> Jonas Hanway, *A Letter to Mr John Spranger on his excellent proposal for paving, cleansing and lighting the streets of Westminster, and the Parishes in Middlesex* (1754), p.6; The term ‘police’ had a much wider usage in the eighteenth century than it does today. Closely related to the word ‘polished’, it referred to the ‘maintenance of a civil order, a civilised society, and a refining process. Police was the practical, consensual expression of a society’s social arrangements, mores, and beliefs.’ D. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, 1989), p.6.

<sup>360</sup> S. & B. Webb, *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act: Part I: The Parish and the County*, (London, 1906), p.289.

<sup>361</sup> R. Sweet, *The English Town, 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow, 1999), pp.75-114; J.M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1986), pp.68-72.

<sup>362</sup> E. Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies: the night watch and police reform in metropolitan London, 1720-1830* (Basingstoke, 1998), p.36; J.J. Tobias, *Crime and Police in England, 1700-1900* (London, 1979), p.25, emphasises that many of the major advances in policing associated with the nineteenth century were ‘foreshadowed on a smaller scale in the eighteenth century.’

<sup>363</sup> J.M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660-1750* (Oxford, 2001), pp.124-5.

nuisances.’<sup>364</sup> The urban beast still has a great deal to contribute to this debate. This chapter examines the scale and nature of the threat posed firstly by Smithfield cattle and then by equine traffic. In each case, I will discuss how metropolitan society attempted to command the behaviour of the urban beast. In doing so, I will analyse the complex relationship between these animals and their human guardians: the Smithfield drovers, hackney coachmen, carters and draymen. These individuals were united by shared work cultures and bodily regimes in which the behaviour of animals played a dominant role. In particular, I aim to build on the work of Joel Tarr and Clay McShane, who have highlighted the power and complexity of the human-animal nexus in nineteenth-century cities.<sup>365</sup> We begin by joining the Smithfield drover and encountering the dangerous horned cattle under his command.

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<sup>364</sup> S. & B. Webb, *English Local Government*: 4 (1922), p.317.

<sup>365</sup> C. McShane & J. Tarr, *The Horse in the City* (2007), in particular, pp.31-54. See also V. DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire* (2004) and M. Jenner, ‘Circulation and Disorder: London Streets and Hackney Coaches, c. 1640 – c.1740’ in T. Hitchcock and H. Shore (eds.), *The Streets of London from the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (2003).



## (I) THE ‘OVER-DROVE’ OX

By the 1760s the inner-city location of Smithfield Market was becoming a matter of mounting concern, particularly among urban improvers. In 1766, John Gwynn complained that its present situation ‘was manifestly never intended by our forefathers.’<sup>366</sup> Gwynn was among the first to call for the removal of the market to semi-rural Islington, but fifty years later there was no sign that this lucrative and deep-rooted institution could be moved. In 1798, the humanitarian John Lawrence lamented that ‘even were the whole Court of Aldermen to be tossed by horned cattle, their united influence would not be able to so carry such a measure, as the removal of Smithfield Market. A man might as well have the modesty to ask for Universal Suffrage, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade.’<sup>367</sup> Despite growing criticism, the Corporation of London rejected repeated calls to remove the trade until the early 1850s. This handling of the Smithfield question might, at first, appear to add weight to Paul Langford’s identification of the City’s ‘unyielding narrow-mindedness and commercialism’ in the face of reform.<sup>368</sup> Yet, such an interpretation threatens to downplay the huge significance of the livestock trade in the commercial life of the metropolis, as I discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>369</sup>

By 1809, criticism of the trade was beginning to focus on the inadequacy of the Smithfield site itself, leading to repeated calls for its expansion. That year, the salesmen, butchers, graziers and drovers of Smithfield sent a plea to the Privy Council for the Board of Trade stating that

the ancient Market Place...is much too small to contain the live Cattle necessary for the supply of the immensely increased ... population of the metropolis and its environs ... the Cattle often bruise and lame, and sometimes trample upon and kill each other, by being confined, for hours together, in a crowded state.<sup>370</sup>

While these problems were discussed in the second half of the eighteenth century, of far more concern was the nuisance caused by livestock, and particularly large horned cattle, as they were driven through the streets. As suppliers of meat on the hoof, drovers negotiated some of the busiest thoroughfares in the metropolis, jostling for space with horse traffic, pedestrians and

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<sup>366</sup> John Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved* (1766), p.18.

<sup>367</sup> John Lawrence, ‘Treatise on Horses and On the Moral Duties of Man towards the Brute Creation’, extract published in *The Sporting Magazine or Monthly Calendar...For October* (1798), p.258; The Smithfield Market Removal Act was passed in 1852, forty-five years after the abolition of the slave trade.

<sup>368</sup> P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p.428; R. Porter, *London: A Social History* (London, 1994), p.233-4.

<sup>369</sup> C. Smith, ‘The wholesale and retail markets of London, 1660-1840’ *EcHR*, 55:1 (2002), p.41.

<sup>370</sup> *The Universal Magazine* (1809), p.75.

many other obstacles. As we have seen, on the two weekly market days, it would have been practically impossible to travel along London's streets, by foot or by carriage, without hearing, seeing, smelling or touching cattle. The situation intensified over the period because urbanisation not only fuelled the expansion of the trade, as discussed above, but also 'choked the available spaces' needed to drive animals through the city.<sup>371</sup> By the end of the century, the trade was a major source of nuisance and scandal. In the 1760s, the *Middlesex Journal* prayed for the day when 'men and women would be able to walk the streets without terror from beasts on market days.'<sup>372</sup> Yet, almost a century would pass until these prayers were finally answered.

Metropolitan newspapers reveal that by the 1750s, cattle-related accidents were occurring across the city. 'Mad' or 'over-drove' bullocks, as they were frequently described, could cause massive destruction to property if they entered through doorways, crashed against glazed shop fronts or charged carriages. They also posed a major threat to human life, tossing, goring and trampling passers-by. With the extant source material, it is impossible to calculate the total number of deaths caused by cattle in this period. While the Weekly Bills of Mortality did report casualties under the category 'Gored by Ox', they also used more generic categories which might have concealed bullock-related accidents, such as: 'found dead', 'died of a wound', 'fractured skull', 'broken leg' or 'killed by a fall.' Bills for the thirty years between 1740 and 1770 list only one "Gored by ox" death.<sup>373</sup> Yet, the actual death toll in this period must have been considerably higher. In the 1760s alone, newspapers reported eighteen deaths from oxen and a further twenty-six cases in which the victim was said to have been 'carried off for dead' or 'without hope of recovery' or their 'life was despaired of.' Broken ribs and limbs, fractured skulls, severe bruising and puncture wounds caused by horns were also regularly reported. These injuries would often have been terminal or threaten to disable their victims for life. Coroners' inquests might help to clarify the scale of fatalities but the records survive as a patchwork with far too many gaps.<sup>374</sup> Given this situation, it would be impossible to calculate with any accuracy the number of deaths caused by cattle at any point in the 1700s, and not least in the mid-eighteenth century, for which there is very little data.

London's newspapers provide the most valuable body of evidence for this study. They form a relatively stable source for analysis because four titles spanned the entire twenty-year period

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<sup>371</sup> Donald, "Beastly Sights", p.49.

<sup>372</sup> *Middlesex Journal*, 25 November 1769.

<sup>373</sup> *Penny London Post*, 14 November 1744; *A Collection of the yearly bills of mortality, from 1657 to 1758 inclusive* (1759).

<sup>374</sup> Substantial records for the City of London and Southwark survive with many gaps from 1788 (LMA, CLA, 041/IQ/02); Middlesex East district in isolation for 1747 and then with many gaps from 1777 (LMA, MJ/SP/C/E); Middlesex West District is covered with many gaps from 1753 (LMA, MJ/SP/C/W).



under examination, 1750–69, with a further eight covering a minimum of six years within it.<sup>375</sup> This continuity offers the chance to observe the development of patterns in reporting on the problem of the ‘over-drove’ ox over the period, both within and between titles. In the hope of gaining a better idea of accident frequency, I conducted a survey of press reports from January 1740–December 1769, using the digitised Burney Collection to search for the following keywords: ‘gored’, ‘tossed’ and ‘killed’ cross-referenced with ‘ox’ and ‘bullock’.<sup>376</sup> **Table 14** reveals almost no reports of bullock accidents in the 1740s, an average of 2.4 reports per annum from 1750–63, and a dramatic six-fold increase to fifteen in the years 1764–69. This period coincided with the first phase of strong recovery for the livestock trade following the cattle plague of 1745–68. Yet, as indicated above, the number of cattle entering the metropolis only increased by 10–11% in the 1760s (**Table 1**). Expansion of the trade cannot, therefore, account for the 600% surge in accident reports at this time. Editorial decision-making must have been a major factor. As several historians have noted, newspaper reporting of accidents, as of crime, ‘was not primarily determined by the actual incidence’ of these phenomena.<sup>377</sup> There were always far too many crimes and tragic accidents for newspapers to include them all. Responding to the pressures of newsworthiness and saleability, editors constantly manipulated the ‘relative levels of different types’ of incident.<sup>378</sup>

Why then, were accidents more likely to be reported in the 1760s than they were in the 1740s and 1750s? There are several possible explanations. War was one of the most powerful influences on editorial content. During major conflict periods, other kinds of reporting, including crime and justice, were cut back to make additional space for battle updates and comment.<sup>379</sup> The fact that three major military endeavours took place in the 1740s and 1750s goes some way to explaining why bullock accidents were so under-reported in these years. In contrast, the period 1764–69 was far more peaceful. It seems likely, therefore, that London’s newspapers may have focussed greater attention on accident reports to help fill column inches at this time. Yet, the situation was more complex than this. Several historians have shown that public anxiety over crime and disorder rose substantially in post-war époques, a phenomenon

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<sup>375</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, 1731-1796; *Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 1754-1764; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 1764-1796; *General Evening Post*, 1735-1800; *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, 1762-1797; *London Chronicle*, 1757-1800; *London Evening Post*, 1727-1799; *Public Advertiser*, 1752-1793; *Public Ledger*, 1761-1798; *Read’s Weekly Journal*, 1730-1761; *St James’s Chronicle*, 1761-1800; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 1746-1800.

<sup>376</sup> 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century Burney Collection of Newspapers (Gale Cengage Learning).

<sup>377</sup> E. Snell, ‘Discourses of criminality in the eighteenth century press’, *Continuity and Change*, 22:1 (2007), p.16.

<sup>378</sup> Snell, ‘Discourses of criminality’, p.27.

<sup>379</sup> Snell, ‘Discourses of criminality’, p.25. The War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48), the Seven Years War (1754–63) and the Third Carnatic War (1758–63).

which was also fuelled by growing newspaper readership.<sup>380</sup> To some extent such perceptions reflected a genuine increase in domestic strife as discharged soldiers returned to a crowded labour market.<sup>381</sup> Peter King and Nicholas Rogers have, however, also emphasised that newspapers could have a significant impact on public perceptions of crime as a problem.<sup>382</sup> It is conceivable, therefore, that growing public pressure for reform, reflected in and fuelled by newspapers, encouraged the authorities to clamp down on offenders and to introduce new legislation.<sup>383</sup> Yet, in the 1760s, the interest in cattle accidents was intertwined with another major development: street improvement debate. After the peace of 1763, as the Webbs observed, ‘there sets in everywhere a demand for improvements of one kind or another, among which the betterment of town conditions finds a place.’<sup>384</sup> To further this debate, I have found compelling evidence to suggest that newspapers both responded to and fuelled public campaigns for the better policing of the streets and particularly to redress the grave nuisance of live cattle. At the same time, this material reveals the over-drove ox as a highly influential social actor in mid-eighteenth-century urban improvement.<sup>385</sup> With this in mind, we rejoin the Smithfield drovers in the crowded streets of the metropolis.

To assess how the trade impeded the life of the metropolis and its residents, it is important to understand how their locations and schedules overlapped. As discussed above, cattle were driven to Smithfield late in the evening and early in the morning prior to market. While most of the city’s residents would have been safely indoors – the average Londoner went to bed around 11:00 P.M.<sup>386</sup> – a considerable number of night-roaming ‘Whores and Pick-Pockets’, ‘Thieves, Drunkards’ and ‘foolish Tradesmen’ would have been exposed to the incoming droves, guided only by torch-light. By mid-morning, large numbers of livestock would have been emerging from Smithfield, travelling west to retail markets across the city. By then, the streets would have thronged with thousands of workmen, servants and tradesmen going about their business. The

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<sup>380</sup> Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, p.164; Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies*, pp.29-30.

<sup>381</sup> Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies*, p.30; Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London*, p.42, points out that military forces were ‘always demobilised rapidly and in London this increased competition in the labour market just as war-stimulated work was coming to an end.’ Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, p.164, has shown that levels of criminal prosecutions and executions increased at these times.

<sup>382</sup> P. King, ‘Newspaper reporting and attitudes to crime and justice in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century London’, *Continuity and Change*, 22:1 (2007), pp.73-112; N. Rogers, ‘Confronting the crime wave: the debate over social reform and regulation, 1749-1753’ in L. Davison et al (ed.), *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: the response to social and economic problems in England, 1689-1750* (Stroud & New York, 1992), pp.77-98.

<sup>383</sup> Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, p.164.

<sup>384</sup> Webb, *English Local Government*: 4, p.242.

<sup>385</sup> Public Act, 2 Geo. III, c.21; Public Act, 4 Geo. III, c.39; Public Act, 6 Geo. III, c.26; Public Act, 8 Geo. III, c.21.

<sup>386</sup> H.J. Voth, ‘Time and Work in Eighteenth-Century London’, *Journal of Economic History* (1998), p.33.

average Londoner rose shortly after 6:00 A.M. and began work shortly before 7 A.M.<sup>387</sup> As cattle traffic reached its peak, therefore, the majority of people at risk were the lower orders of society. Other than the drovers themselves, the most commonly reported victims were those most closely associated with street-life: hawkers, tradesmen and youths. Only a minority of cases reported by metropolitan newspapers involved 'well-dressed' individuals, residents whose privileged lifestyles protected them from much of the danger.<sup>388</sup> The polite spent considerably less time walking through the streets than the lower orders and were much less likely to be out of doors in the busy morning droving period. Wealthy merchants tended to spend their mornings indoors working on their accounts while the gentry and aristocracy took late breakfasts, rarely leaving their homes much before midday. However, the scale of the trade meant that even wealthy Londoners were exposed to considerable risk. Many animals were still at large in the early hours of the afternoon, precisely when merchants were entering the Exchange.<sup>389</sup> By this time too, polite residents were beginning to make their visits in the West End or heading to shops in the Exchange, Holborn, St James's and the Strand. These areas were all located along the major droving routes which connected Smithfield to London's westerly markets. To gain a better understanding of the geography of this bovine threat, I made further use of newspaper reports which usually recorded the location of bullock accidents in the form of individual street names, parishes or key landmarks. Focussing on the 1760s, I have mapped out the location of incidents in this period. The results, shown in **Table 15**, suggest that the worst affected areas, after Smithfield itself, were Holborn and the City, London's busiest commercial districts. It is possible that the reporting of incidents in Holborn and the City was disproportionately high because, as Nicholas Rogers has suggested, newspapers often sought to emphasise threats posed to their affluent readers, many of whom were likely to have homes or business interests in Holborn and the City.<sup>390</sup> Yet, proximity to Smithfield and the prevalence of major drovers'

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<sup>387</sup> Voth, 'Time and Work in Eighteenth-Century London' (1998), pp.32-33. Voth uses witness statements from the Old Bailey Proceedings to plot changes in working patterns over the eighteenth-century. See also Voth, *Time and Work in England, 1750-1830* (Oxford, 2000).; LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report...' 19 July 1828, p.220;

<sup>388</sup> Newspapers appeared to prioritise the most shocking, bloodthirsty and tragic accidents over the social rank of their victims. Women, particularly when pregnant, children and the elderly provided the most newsworthy casualties. *St James's Chronicle*, 11 June 1763, reported that several people had been tossed by an ox but focussed on 'a Woman big with Child, who, unfortunately falling upon the Rails, was killed on the spot.' The deaths of workmen also gained editorial priority if they left behind a large family, or if their role in the accident had been particularly heroic or the nature of their death particularly gruesome. *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17 August 1761, lamented the death of 'a poor man...in Rothehithe... leaving a wife and four young children.'

<sup>389</sup> John Strype describes merchants working on their accounts in the morning 'after which...they go abroad about their business to the Custom-House, the Bank, the Exchange, etc.,' John Stowe, *Survey of London*, 1598, corrected by John Strype 1720 (1754 edn) cited in L.Picard, *Dr Johnson's London* (2000), p.200. Grosley noted that bankers and merchants rose late and went to the coffee house around ten where they spent another hour before returning home 'or meet people about business.' M. Grosley, *A Tour to London*, vol.1 (1772), pp.117-119.

<sup>390</sup> Rogers, 'Confronting the crime wave', p.81.

routes in these areas is likely to have encouraged a higher accident rate than a more outlying parish might experience (see **Map 3**).

The City's vulnerability was undoubtedly heightened by the intensity of its commercial activity. The alleys surrounding the Royal Exchange contained, as the improver, Jonas Hanway, observed, not only the Bank, but 'all the public buildings which relate to our commercial connections'.<sup>391</sup> The Exchange stood at the centre of a complex financial system which relied on an 'ease ... and above all speed of communication'.<sup>392</sup> In the discourse of mid-eighteenth-century improvement, good order was inseparably linked to the progress of trade and commerce. As a result, from the 1750s, any instances of mischief which appeared to threaten this crucial metropolitan activity, whether caused by beggars, hawkers, hackney coachmen or livestock, were condemned with increasing vigour. Because of the level of disruption they could cause, 'over-drove' cattle represented an intolerable nuisance to the City's financiers and an anathema to the good 'police' of the metropolis. During the 1760s, London's newspapers reported four incidents when bullocks caused havoc in and around the Royal Exchange, each rudely interrupting business and sending gentlemen running for their lives.<sup>393</sup> After the first incident in May 1761, the *Annual Register* recalled that 'the people on the Royal Exchange were much alarmed by the appearance of a cow ... at the fourth gate, and (though the beast did not run in upon [the] change) great confusion ensued; some losing hats and wigs, and some their shoes, while others lay upon the ground in heaps, with their limbs bruised.'<sup>394</sup> The next day, the City's Court of Common Council responded by passing a motion urging the mayor and other magistrates 'to exert their authority to suppress this growing evil so contrary to the police of the metropolis, and the security of its inhabitants.'<sup>395</sup> Keen to deflect criticism, the Common Council resolutely blamed the incident on the 'careless' drivers. However, these incidents resulted from a fierce clash of simultaneous activities. In 1828, a resident of the City noted

It is perhaps well known to every body that Monday is a great day of business in the City; there is a greater influx of individuals in the City on that day, and it is precisely on that morning that the large droves of cattle are driving backwards and forwards and as a

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<sup>391</sup> Jonas Hanway, *A Letter to Mr. John Spranger* (1754), p.53.

<sup>392</sup> D. Keene, 'The Setting of the Royal Exchange: Continuity and Change in the Financial District of the City of London, 1300-1871' in A. Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (London, 1997), p.260.

<sup>393</sup> *Annual Register*, May 1761; *Evening Post*, 13 May 1763; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 27 May 1764; *St James's Chronicle*, 12 May 1769.

<sup>394</sup> *Annual Register*, vol. 4 (1761), p.106.

<sup>395</sup> *Annual Register*, vol. 4 (1761), p.106.

physician I can speak with certainty to the point, that on Monday the City is almost impassable from the cattle.<sup>396</sup>

Voth has shown that in the 1750s, Monday was still widely taken as a day off work in London but this practice ‘declined rapidly during the second half of the eighteenth century and ... had all but disappeared’ by 1800. As a result of this major shift in working patterns, Londoners were increasingly likely to be at work in the street, precisely when Smithfield’s main cattle droving period was in progress. This situation exacerbated the threat posed by the ‘over-drove’ ox.<sup>397</sup>

**Map 3:** John Rocque’s *Map of London* (1746), showing drovers routes to Smithfield Market passing through Hoborn and the City of London.



<sup>396</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, ‘Second Report...on the State of Smithfield Market’, 19 July 1828, p.155.

<sup>397</sup> Voth, ‘Time and Work in Eighteenth-Century London’, p.36.

In Holborn, the recalcitrant bullock threatened a prosperous commercial and residential area. As well as being central to London's waggon services, it accommodated major markets, key legal services at Lincoln's and Gray's Inns and an array of fashionable shops and grand houses. And yet, Holborn was also a major transit point for cattle travelling to and from Smithfield Market. Newspaper reports reveal the dangers involved when these activities collided. In July 1765, the *Lloyd's Evening Post* reported a 'quarrel' in Holborn between a Hackney Coachman and two drovers, who had a flock of sheep under their care. 'The Coachmen drove over one of the sheep, and broke its leg ... one of the drovers struck at the coachman with a large stick, who returned the blow with the butt-end of his whip, which hitting the man on the right temple, he fell down.' The coachman drove off 'furiously' and the drover later died in hospital.<sup>398</sup> A month later, the same newspaper reported that 'an over-drove bullock ... run into the shop of Mr Jackson, Salesman, in Holborn, and was removed from thence with great difficulty, after breaking the glass of the back parlour to pieces, and doing other considerable damage.'<sup>399</sup> Among the witnesses called to give evidence on the state of the trade in 1828 were several shop keepers furious at the damage caused by cattle to their trade. They each complained that cattle regularly chased people into their shop, smashed their front windows or barged into the property. A tea-dealer and wine merchant in Ludgate Hill stated that 'there hardly happens a single market-day but people are driven into my shop by alarm.' A 'furnishing ironmonger' at the corner of the Old Bailey complained that 'Monday last we had one beast put his head through the window; we are obliged to have a person at the door to keep them off.' He added that 'fewer customers come to the shop on Monday; the ladies would not come to the shop if there was a crowd of bullocks.'<sup>400</sup>

These testimonies emphasise that the disruption caused by 'over-drove' bullocks to London's elegant shops represented a serious attack on elite lifestyles. Helen Berry and Claire Walsh have shown that shopping was 'a sophisticated cultural activity' in which the shop and the consumer were expected to display 'polite conduct.'<sup>401</sup> To satisfy the nation's most wealthy and refined customers, London's shops had to display good taste, flatter with genteel service and maintain good order. By the early eighteenth century, shops on Ludgate Hill were already likened to 'perfectly gilded theatres and their assistants described as 'the sweetest, fairest, nicest, dished-out creatures.'<sup>402</sup> Smithfield cattle were not just incongruous in this setting; they undermined the

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<sup>398</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 19 July 1765.

<sup>399</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 19 August 1765.

<sup>400</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, 'Second Report...on the State of Smithfield Market' (1828), p.106 & preface.

<sup>401</sup> C. Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London', *Journal of Design History*, 8:3 (1995), p.157; H. Berry, 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England', *TRHS*, 6:12 (2002), p.379.

<sup>402</sup> Berry, 'Polite Consumption', p.384 & p.388.



entire philosophy upon which polite consumer culture was founded. When these animals crashed against a shop window or worse still, entered an establishment, they destroyed not only the fabric of the shop but the theatre of shopping itself. Above all, erratic bovine behaviour disrupted the strict rules of access which exclusive shops sought to maintain. In 1828, an upholsterer and cabinet maker on Ludgate Hill noted that every other week ‘we have not less than five or six ladies coming in the shop to avoid the cattle.’<sup>403</sup> Some of these ladies may have been well-dressed potential customers but in the *mêlée*, less welcome characters might also cross their threshold. When bullocks forced passers-by to bundle into shops for refuge, they tore up what Helen Berry describes as the ‘unwritten, though widely understood, rules about who could enter these eighteenth-century theatres of consumption.’<sup>404</sup> The bellowing, thrashing, stampeding bullock showed no respect for such subtle rules of conduct.

The visibility of these incidents is emphasised by the emergence of the classic English expression: ‘like a bull in a china shop’. The earliest example cited by The *Oxford English Dictionary* dates from 1841 but it had emerged more than fifty years prior to this in London’s newspapers.<sup>405</sup> In August 1793, three years before James Gilray’s *Promis’d Horrors of the French Invasion* (**Plate 25**), the *St James’s Chronicle* trialled the iconography of the rampaging bullock to symbolise the brutality of French revolutionaries. The article reported that

from their ignorant and phrenetical destruction of all the monuments of taste and art in their degraded kingdom, the beauty and the utility of which they are at present totally incapable of comprehending, have been, not unaptly, compared to a *mad Bull in a china shop*.<sup>406</sup>

By 1808, the expression appears to have entered common parlance. That year, Joseph Grimaldi performed a comic song at Sadler’s Wells entitled ‘A Bull in a China Shop.’<sup>407</sup> Ten years later, a comic poem appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* proclaiming

*I’ve heard of a Bull in a china shop,  
Of Bull’s, too, I’ve heard that wou’d range,  
But no four-legged Bull did e’er pop  
Before into the Royal Exchange.*<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, ‘Second Report...on the State of Smithfield Market’ (1828), p.144

<sup>404</sup> Berry, ‘Polite Consumption’, p.384.

<sup>405</sup> OED cites Captain Frederick Marryat, *Jacob Faithful* (1841), chapter 15. A search on the ECCO database reveals no earlier usage of this phrase than that in newspapers.

<sup>406</sup> *St James’s Chronicle*, 20 August 1793.

<sup>407</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 25 July 1808.



By early 1830, a shop on the Strand was using the expression to advertise a brand of boot polish

*A Bull once sedately a China Shop enter'd  
 And none to eject the strange visitor ventur'd,  
 'Till one of the shopmen a bright Boot display'd  
 In Jet that from so, the Strand, was array'd,  
 And shone like a Mirror. The Bull gaz'd apace,  
 And follow'd the Boot that reflected his face.  
 As backwards the shopman retreated by route,  
 That drew the charm'd Bull from the China-shop out.  
 A crowd cheer'd the feat, commendations not lacking  
 Of Warren's attractively brilliant JET BLACKING!<sup>409</sup>*

As well as threatening polite shopping areas, it was not usual for cattle to bring havoc to the doorsteps of the elite in the fashionable West End. As shown in **Table 15**, after the City and Holborn, this was the next most seriously affected area of the metropolis. This situation owed much to the proximity of Oxford Road, the major cattle droving route for animals entering the city from the west. In the 1750s, the area retained a semi-rural appearance, with construction sites springing up on the fringes of fields. After 1713, renewed economic confidence fuelled major building projects orientated along Oxford Road, including Hanover Square and the Burlington Estate.<sup>410</sup> Five years later work began on Grosvenor Square, featuring several grand houses around a formal garden by William Kent.<sup>411</sup> The aesthetic success of an estate depended on its architectural order and critics could be scathing when the 'composition' of a façade appeared to have been compromised.<sup>412</sup> Yet, the uniformity which architects desired was often thwarted by competing personal and commercial interests.<sup>413</sup> The piecemeal nature of the West End's construction meant that squares 'did not always fit neatly together' and were often separated by patches of undeveloped wasteland.<sup>414</sup> In 1771 James 'Athenian' Stuart complained that four watch houses in Red Lion Square still overlooked a 'wilderness of rubbish and rank

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<sup>408</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 23 December 1818.

<sup>409</sup> *The Examiner*, 3 January 1830.

<sup>410</sup> J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (1945), p.83, describes these as 'the best type of West End town-house of about 1720'.

<sup>411</sup> Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.87.

<sup>412</sup> Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.87; J. Ralph, *A Critical Review of the Public Buildings, statues and ornaments in, and about London and Westminster* (1734), p.109, Ralph complained that the South and West sides of Grosvenor Square were 'little better than a collection of whims, and frolics in building, without anything like order or beauty.'

<sup>413</sup> Summerson, *Georgian London*, p.87.

<sup>414</sup> D. Arnold, 'Rationality, Safety and Power: the street planning of later Georgian London', *The Georgian Group Journal*, 5 (1995), p.42.

grass.’<sup>415</sup> This was the evolving landscape which cattle drovers encountered as they took West End short-cuts on their journeys to and from Smithfield.

Despite these shortcomings, by the mid-eighteenth century, the West End was well established as the fashionable part of town and was clearly determined to make ambitious improvements. Increasingly, therefore, residents angrily condemned the intrusion of livestock as an intolerable threat to the police of their neighbourhoods. Just as it seemed natural for these animals to be seen in a field or in Smithfield market, they appeared ludicrously out of place in somewhere like Hanover Square. An infamous attempt to create a pastoral effect by grazing sheep on Cavendish Square highlighted this incongruity. Soon after their arrival, the flock developed ‘sooty faces’, ‘meagre carcasses’ and a nervous disposition caused by passing carriages.<sup>416</sup> A concerted campaign to banish cattle droves from the area emerged in the mid-1750s, at the same time as Spranger, Hanway and Massie were calling for widespread street improvements.<sup>417</sup> Massie even included the ‘driving of live bullocks’ among his list of ‘Nuisances ... by all means, to be remedy’d.’<sup>418</sup> It is revealing that this specific campaign achieved a practical solution, the Paddington to Islington New Road, discussed above, six years before the first Westminster Paving Act came into force.<sup>419</sup> When the bill went to the House of Lords in the spring of 1756, a flurry of petitions were delivered in its favour. Among them, was a combined plea from the residents of Saint George Hanover Square, St James Westminster, Saint Ann Soho, Paddington and Saint Marylebone. Its 255 petitioners asserted that the New Road would not only aid the drovers but ‘prevent the frequent Accidents and Obstructions that happen by Conveying [cattle] two miles or upwards through the paved streets.’<sup>420</sup> Enthusiastic support also came from the residents of the parishes of Saint Andrews Holborn, Saint Georges Bloomsbury and Saint Giles’s in the Fields who were particularly determined to defend the commercial interests of Holborn’s waggon services. The obstructions caused by the great number of animals being ‘constantly drove through Holborn’ were, they said, ‘a great hindrance’ to ‘Trade and the Dispatch so essential thereto.’<sup>421</sup> They also lamented the many accidents endured by Holborn’s residents and road users, caused by ‘oxen frequently running wild about the streets ... and doing

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<sup>415</sup> James Stuart, *Critical Observations on the buildings and improvements of London* (1771), pp.7-8.

<sup>416</sup> Stuart, *Critical Observations*, p.8.

<sup>417</sup> Jonas Hanway, *A letter to Mr. John Spranger* (1754); Joseph Massie, *An Essay on the Many Advantages* (1754).

<sup>418</sup> Massie, *An Essay on the Many Advantages...*, pp.12-15.

<sup>419</sup> R. Porter, ‘The Urban and the Rustic in Enlightenment London’ in M. Teich, R. Porter & B. Gustafsson (eds), *Nature and Society in Historical Context* (Cambridge, 1996), p.180.

<sup>420</sup> PAL, HL/PO/JO/10/3/250/5; I have not yet been able to find a reference to these petitions in the vestry records of the West End parishes. City of Westminster Archives, Westminster vestry minutes, various (microfilm).

<sup>421</sup> PAL, HL/PO/JO/10/3/250/4.

Mischiefs in the Neighbourhood.’<sup>422</sup> The rapid progress of the campaign highlights the seriousness of the perceived threat but also the ability of bovine disruption to unite the often disparate interests of polite society and trade.

Once open, however, the New Road did not fulfil the ambitions of its petitioners. It became clear after 1756 that neither the West End nor Holborn were freed from the mischief of cattle droving. This was partly due to the refusal of some drovers to give up their tried and tested routes. In 1809, one topographer claimed that while some drovers coming from the West used the New Road, ‘the largest portion’ continued to ‘go all along Oxford Street, and then divide’ some passing through Holborn and others through Bloomsbury.’<sup>423</sup> When he asked the drovers why they continued to use ‘the old narrow’ streets rather than the New Road, they admitted that they were ‘accustomed to drive the cattle in that direction, and had not looked for any other.’<sup>424</sup> In addition to force of habit, however, drovers may have been avoiding the New Road because it forced them to travel further. **Map 9**, a plan in which the New Road is marked by the line ABC, suggests that a diagonal short-cut through Bloomsbury and Holborn to St John’s Street was half a mile more direct than the new bypass.<sup>425</sup>

There was, however, a more important reason why the New Road could not solve the problem of cattle passing through the West End. While some droves could be diverted out of the metropolis en route to Smithfield, once sold these animals had to travel through the city’s streets to reach markets in the west and south-west (see **Map 4**). The New Road provided no alternative to this journey. After 1756, as before, the geography of London’s meat trade ensured that bullocks would continue to threaten the security of the West End and that accidents would continue. A decade after the opening of the New Road, the *Public Advertiser* reported that as an ox ‘was going to St James’s Market’ from Smithfield in the morning, the animal ‘ran violently down St Giles’s, and so much hurt and tossed Mrs Hubert ... that her Recovery is doubtful.’<sup>426</sup> As late as 1812, a view of Soho Square (**Plate 27**) depicted a drover attempting to control two large horned bullocks and a flock of sheep. In the background, the passengers of an elegant carriage are forced to wait as the animals clear the area. In 1764, it was reported that in the same

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<sup>422</sup> PAL, HL/PO/JO/10/3/250/4.

<sup>423</sup> David Hughson, *London; being an accurate history and description of the British Metropolis and its neighbourhood*, 6 (1809), p.598.

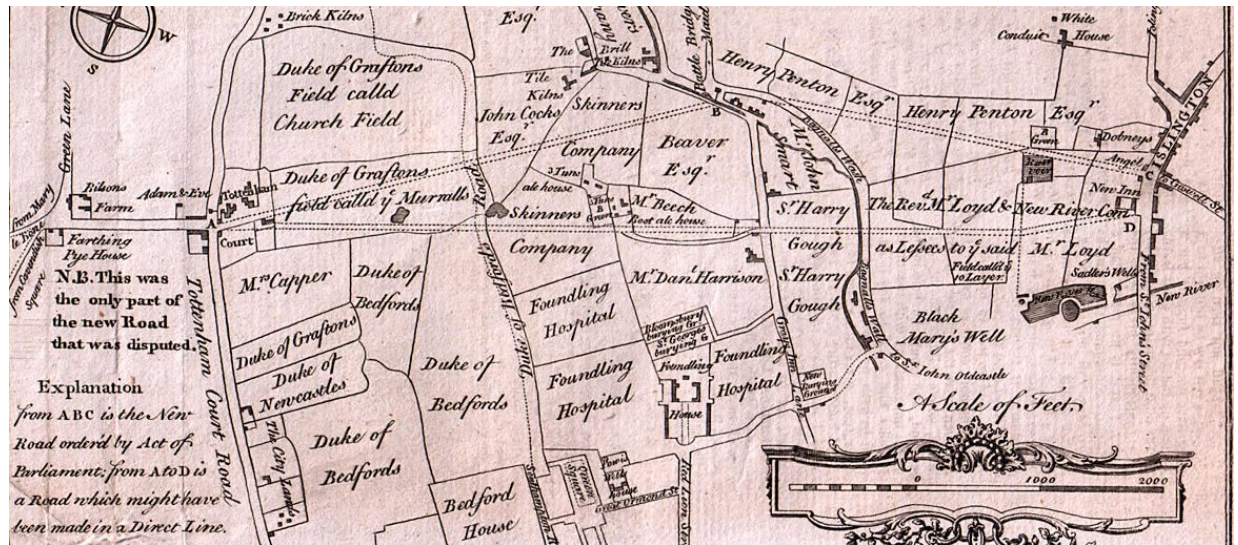
<sup>424</sup> Hughson, *London: being an accurate history*, 6, p.600.

<sup>425</sup> The line marked AD on the plan represents the location of the New Road as it was originally intended, running in a straight line from Paddington to Islington, which would have saved around 500 feet. This plan was, however, crushed by the Duke of Bedford who alleged that the dust ‘raised by traffic would diminish the value of his pasture land and be a nuisance to the inhabitants of Great Russell Street and Southampton Row.’ He also complained that if houses were built along the road, the view from Bloomsbury would be obstructed. F. Sheppard, *Local Government in St Marylebone, 1688-1835*, London, 1958, pp.95-6.

<sup>426</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 11 November 1766.

area, a bullock 'went into a House ... and got into the Parlour where the Family were at Dinner, and threw down the Table ... after which he turned about, and went quietly out of the House.'<sup>427</sup> Two years later, in the even more genteel surroundings of Cavendish Square, a livery servant to a Gentleman 'was so terribly gored near his Master's house ... that he died in a few hours after.'<sup>428</sup>

**Map 9:** *A Plan of the New Road from Paddington to Islington, London Magazine, 1756.*



**Plate 27:** *View of Soho Square from The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics, printed for R. Ackermann, vol. 8, 1812, plate 22.*



<sup>427</sup> *St James' Chronicle*, 4 September 1764.

<sup>428</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17 February 1766.

In response to continuing criticism of the trade, the authorities introduced a series of barriers in the City. In September 1764, after incidents at the Exchange, Fleet Market and Cow-Cross, the *Lloyd's Evening Post* reported that 'bars and gates have been erected in several courts, alleys, and other avenues, in the several streets and lanes leading and contiguous to West-Smithfield.'<sup>429</sup> The extent and arrangement of these barriers remains unclear but they do not seem to have remedied the situation to any significant degree. Regular accidents were reported throughout the autumn and escalated in the first few months of 1765.<sup>430</sup> In addition to describing accidents at this time, London's newspapers published several colourful editorials and letters railing against the Court of Common Council. By far the most elaborate and powerful of these appeared in the *London Chronicle* in June 1765, constituting a remarkable futuristic history of the livestock trade, set in 1975. Presented as an historical fact-sheet, the article assumes that its twentieth-century readers will struggle to believe that an inner-city livestock market ever existed. Its readers are reminded that the polite residential development, Smithfield Square, was completed in 1870 and proceeds as follows:

**Q. Was it not before that a market for live cattle?**

A. Yes: The stupidity and cruelty of our ancestors continued it as such for several years although the nuisance thereof was daily increasing, from the encrease of buildings in this metropolis, from the reign of Elizabeth First.

**Q. How came it at last to be improved in the elegant manner in which we now see it?**

A. About the year 1787, a Common Councilman (whose lady and child coming through Cheapside one market day were unfortunately and miserably gored to death by an over-drove ox) made a motion next Court day to remove that nuisance, which had caused so many shocks to humanity. At that court he produced a list, wherein it appeared, from the daily papers for fifty years back, that in that period only, the damages from the horned cattle being driven through the streets in day time were as follows:-

Gored to death, men 407, women and children 904 ...men, women and children, wounded, maimed, and rendered shocking spectacles, 1073. All which mischiefs he observed were horrible remembrances of the cruel stupidity and inattention of the former magistracy of London to the safety and welfare of their fellow citizens.

**Q. This shocking account doubtless occasioned the immediate removal of the market?**

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<sup>429</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 27 May 1764; *St James's Chronicle*, 13 July 1764; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 12 September 1764.

<sup>430</sup> *London Chronicle*, 12 October 1764; *Gazetteer*, 7 January 1765; *Public Advertiser*, 14 January 1765; *Gazetteer*, 18 January 1765.



A. Not for that time; for a number of interested occupiers, lessees, and officers, who took on themselves the specious pretence of being opposers of innovations, carried against the motion....but the laws against drovers were indeed put a little more in force.

**Q. But how happened the alteration at last?**

A. From the following accident, which is thus related upon the brass plate in the portico of Guildhall: “*For the perpetual remembrance of the dreadful calamity which happened July 17, A.D.1858, in the Guildhall of this city, when a Court of Aldermen and Common Council being assembled to present an address to his Majesty, Frederick the First, the hall being on that occasion fuller than was ever known...a large contract of live oxen passing from Smithfield market to the Victualling office, the beasts (being enraged by the ferocity of the dogs, and the cruelty of the drovers, and meeting with a great stop of coaches near Queen-Street) ran furiously up King’s Street into Guildhall, before the doors could be shut, and, O horrible to relate! in a few minutes the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, seven Aldermen, the Recorder, one of the Sheriffs, twenty three Common-Councilmen, and five officers of the Court were killed upon the spot, and fifty-three members of the Court so terribly gored, that above half of them died the next day...*”

This terrible accident being represented to his Majesty that very evening, he, out of his paternal and unexampled goodness, the very next session of parliament gave up for ever that part of Hyde-Park near Kensington where the beast market is now kept, and the slaughter-houses erected; by which noble gift the lives of thousands have been since preserved (as cattle are now never driven through the streets of this metropolis).<sup>431</sup>

While full of dark humour, the article uses the iconography of the ‘over-drove’ ox to launch a serious attack on the governance of eighteenth-century London. Commentators often mused that the authorities would only take serious action if they became victims themselves. Later that year, the *Gazetteer* proclaimed ‘when some of the city rulers or their families are killed by over-drove cattle, it may then be expected that an adequate remedy for this intolerable nuisance will be adopted.’<sup>432</sup> In 1798, the humanitarian John Lawrence would lament that ‘even were the whole Court of Aldermen to be tossed by horned cattle, their united influence would not be able to so carry such a measure, as the removal of Smithfield Market.’<sup>433</sup> The *London Chronicle*’s polemicist put this theory to the test by staging just such a massacre. The list of slain men commemorated on the Guildhall plaque (the mayor, aldermen, recorder, sheriff and common-

<sup>431</sup> *London Chronicle*, 27 June 1765.

<sup>432</sup> *Gazetteer*, 12 November 1765.

<sup>433</sup> John Lawrence, ‘Treatise on Horses and On the Moral Duties of Man towards the Brute Creation’, extract published in *The Sporting Magazine or Monthly Calendar* (1798), p.258; The Smithfield Market Removal Act was passed in 1852, forty-five years after the abolition of the slave trade.

councilmen) doubled as a roll call of blame for ‘cruel stupidity and inattention’. By protecting the commercial interests of ‘occupiers, lessees, and officers’, men who opposed reform, the Corporation is accused of turning its back on ‘the safety and welfare of their fellow citizens.’ In 1858, they paid with their own blood. The article casts the ‘over-drove’ bullock as a matter of national concern, worthy of the attention of both parliament and the monarchy. Symbolically, the bullock’s route of destruction included ‘Queen-Street’ and ‘King’s Street’, thus defiling the honour of the royal family as well as the safety of their subjects. Repeatedly betrayed by the authorities, the people of London are saved in their darkest hour by the King, who through his ‘paternal and unexampled goodness’ gives over his own land to move the market out of town. When viewed alongside the vast body of newspaper accident reports which I have identified, the existence of this startling document emphasises the degree to which Smithfield cattle had become engrained in the psychology of London by the end of the eighteenth century.

During the second half of the century, several ‘practical schemes’ were devised by concerned correspondents to deal with what was becoming a catastrophic situation.<sup>434</sup> As most fatalities were caused by horned bullocks, one proposed that ‘as soon as a beast is sold in Smithfield, let a proper person be appointed to saw off the horns, and give them to the buyer.’<sup>435</sup> The most common proposal was to restrict the hours in which cattle could be driven out of Smithfield after sale in the morning. In 1765, a correspondent proposed that all ‘Beasts [be] out of Smithfield by Ten in the Morning in Winter, and Nine in Summer.’<sup>436</sup> Under this system, cattle would reach the slaughterhouses before vehicles and pedestrians overran the streets. Another correspondent went further still, suggesting that cattle should only be driven at night, an idea which the *Gazetteer* feared would be ‘impracticable’.<sup>437</sup> Yet, such was the importance of the trade in animals for London’s economy that any proposals which threatened to suffocate its growth gained little ground.

The most repeated demands, however, were those directed against the Smithfield drovers, the men who commanded these animals. Throughout the 1750s and 1760s, newspapers repeatedly criticised the authorities for allowing careless and malicious drovers to escape justice and demanded better policing and harsher sanctions. The drovers became infamous in the public imagination for brutal cruelty and a complete contempt for the safety of their fellow citizens. London’s newspapers mockingly labelled them the ‘Smithfield gentry’ and condemned them as ‘rascals’ and ‘two-legged brutes.’<sup>438</sup> The last of these epithets inferred that the drover’s close

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<sup>434</sup> *Gazetteer*, 17 November 1764.

<sup>435</sup> *Gazetteer*, 17 September 1765.

<sup>436</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 17 April 1765.

<sup>437</sup> *Gazetteer*, 17 November 1765.

<sup>438</sup> *St James’s Chronicle*, 17 October 1761; *Public Advertiser*, 17 April 1765.



proximity to cattle made him similarly dim-witted, wild and brutish, as if man and beast had become a united enemy. John Lawrence described their conduct as ‘an immemorial disgrace upon the character of the people of this country.’<sup>439</sup> The vast majority of newspaper accident reports described the cattle involved in accidents as ‘over-drove’, immediately implying that drovers, through ‘carelessness or bad conduct,’ were solely to blame when their animals ran wild in the streets.<sup>440</sup> This attitude reveals a great deal about the way that eighteenth-century society responded to accidents, and specifically how responsibility was judged. As Roy Porter has argued, ‘Enlightenment optimism held that hazards lay within human power. Accidents could be avoided or damage limitation put in hand.’<sup>441</sup> This impetus to identify a human scapegoat was heightened by the widely held moral philosophy that the misbehaviour of animals ‘advertised their owners’ failure to maintain control’.<sup>442</sup>

In 1774, after years of public outcry against the ‘Smithfield gentry’, Parliament finally passed an *Act to Prevent the Mischiefs that arise from driving Cattle within the Cities of London and Westminster*. The legislation gave constables the power to arrest drovers suspected of ‘negligence, or ill usage’ in the driving of cattle which resulted in ‘any mischief’. Drovers found guilty faced fines of between five and twenty shillings. The Act also entitled the Court of the City of London to frame and set down their own regulations for the driving of livestock and thereby impose fines of between ten and forty shillings.<sup>443</sup> In September 1775, one such offender was charged at the Guildhall ‘according to act of parliament’ for driving an ox ‘through several streets of the city ... to the great terror of foot passengers.’<sup>444</sup> Those seeking to convict drovers cited both negligence and the use of brutal but ineffective methods to control their animals. Like Hogarth’s *Second Stage of Cruelty*, several ‘humane’ newspaper correspondents suggested that drovers exposed their animals to extreme and needless violence. In 1761, a group of drovers was condemned for chasing after a heifer in Fleet Market and ‘according to their usual Humanity, beat one of the poor Beast’s Eyes out.’<sup>445</sup> A correspondent for the *Gazetteer* in 1764 went as far as to propose the complete prohibition of ‘sticks, whips, and other weapons’ to foster more civilised droving techniques.<sup>446</sup> The use of bull-terriers to intimidate the animals was also strongly criticised. By barking and nipping at their heels, the dogs were, it was alleged, often responsible for driving cattle ‘mad’ in the first place. In March 1765, a ‘widow gentlewoman’ was fatally tossed by an ‘over-drove ox, in pursuit of which were

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<sup>439</sup> John Lawrence, ‘Treatise on horses’ in *The Sporting Magazine or Monthly Calendar* (1798), p.257.

<sup>440</sup> *Gazetteer*, 10 November 1764.

<sup>441</sup> R. Porter, ‘Accidents in the Eighteenth century’ in R. Cooter and B. Luckin (eds), *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (1997), p.97.

<sup>442</sup> DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, p.96.

<sup>443</sup> Public Act 21 Geo III, c.67.

<sup>444</sup> *Morning Post*, 13 September 1775.

<sup>445</sup> *St James’ Chronicle*, 17 October 1761.

<sup>446</sup> *Gazetteer*, 17 November 1764.

three butchers dogs.’<sup>447</sup> Similar scenes are recorded in two satirical caricatures by George Woodward and Thomas Rowlandson. In Woodward’s *Miseries of Human Life* (c.1800) (**Plate 26**), a gentleman is about to be gored by a bullock which has been enraged by a bull-terrier. In Rowlandson’s *The Overdrove Ox* (1790) (**Plate 28**), a trail of carnage on London Bridge begins with a bullock pursued by a large pack of dogs and drovers clutching clubs.

These criticisms were, however, cultural judgements reached by men with little or no experience of droving or animal husbandry. It was widely acknowledged by farmers, salesmen, graziers, butchers and drovers that considerable force was necessary to move and control cattle, both in the countryside and the city. In 1828, an experienced Smithfield salesman told a parliamentary committee that the extreme difficulty of moving cattle through a crowded area made ‘a certain violence necessary to be used.’<sup>448</sup> This argument found a degree of sympathy in some quarters. For instance, during the Old Bailey trial of two drovers accused of manslaughter when their animal ran wild in 1786, the judge reminded his jury that ‘to the nature of their business some indulgence should be given; men like them fall into habits of unnecessary severity, very often without much malignity of heart.’<sup>449</sup> Here, however, it was again implied that the minds of men who worked closely and constantly with animals underwent a process of brutalisation. Society wished the drovers to command animal behaviour, but in doing so they were seen to be corrupted by it. Keith Thomas argued that it was increasing distance that brought about changes in attitudes and behaviours towards animals in cities.<sup>450</sup> In fact, the psychology of many Londoners was moulded by the intensity of certain human-animal nexuses, of which cattle droving is an important example.

Drawing on a wider confidence in man’s ability to tame nature, metropolitan society placed high expectations on drovers to be able to read the intentions of their animals and to manage their behaviour accordingly. Too often, it was said, drovers relied on brute force to manoeuvre their animals rather than encouraging their cooperation. In the 1786 trial, a witness lamented that such men, ‘very often trust too much to their dexterity.’<sup>451</sup> The defendants, Plato and Parker, should not, he argued, have separated the beast from its herd to take it to a nearby yard, a risky manoeuvre to which the animal felt ‘a natural aversion’.<sup>452</sup> When accompanied by other animals in a close-knit group, bullocks could be commanded fairly safely but once they found themselves alone and exposed, the smallest noise or movement could cause them to bolt without

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<sup>447</sup> *London Chronicle*, 23 March 1765.

<sup>448</sup> LMA, CLA/016/AD/02/006, ‘Second Report...on the State of Smithfield Market’ (1828), p.44

<sup>449</sup> OBSP, t17861025-37 (25 October 1786).

<sup>450</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, pp.181-2.

<sup>451</sup> OBSP, t17861025-37 (25 October 1786).

<sup>452</sup> John Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved* (1766), p.19.

hope of restraint.<sup>453</sup> Instead, it was argued, the drovers should have taken ‘some others with it’ and refrained from pricking it, which only served to enrage the animal further. Plato defended his actions saying that he had observed the animal’s behaviour closely, had brought it ‘out very quiet’ with two other animals and while ‘the rest of the drovers might force it, and prick it’ he did not.<sup>454</sup>

**Plate 28:** Thomas Rowlandson, *The Overdrove Ox*, London, 1790.



Contrary to their scandalous reputations, many drovers commanded years and even decades of experience and demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of animal behaviour. Between field, market and slaughterhouse, two or three country and London drovers might take charge of an animal and it appears that professional observations were routinely shared between these men at different stages of the journey. In the 1786 trial, the two London drovers were accused of proceeding into the open street ‘well knowing the said bullock was wild and mischievous.’ Yet, it emerged that while Plato (the London drover) had been told ‘the bullock was wild ... in Lincolnshire’ where it ‘ran at a country drover,’ since arriving in London it had been ‘pretty well’ and ‘came very well along with the rest of the beasts.’ The witness who submitted this information, also a drover, added that he ‘had a bullock yesterday ... as mad as a March hare

<sup>453</sup> Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved*, p.19.

<sup>454</sup> OBSP, t17861025-37 (25 October 1786).

almost ... we always tell a butcher when he is wild.'<sup>455</sup> Despite society's insistence on human responsibility, drovers knew that no amount of experience could protect against the erratic tendencies of the wild bullock. When animals bolted or swung their horns, drovers and butchers were often the first to suffer. In December 1789, the *London Chronicle* reported that a 'butcher' had become the third member of his family in one generation to be killed by the same breed of bullock.<sup>456</sup> In such instances, newspapers offered a degree of sympathy for once vilified men. In 1757, the *London Evening Post* lamented that as one of the drovers was untying an ox 'fastened to a Rail in Smithfield Market, it gave a sudden toss with its head, and jabb'd its horn into the drover's eye, by which means the poor man's eye dropped out of his head.' In 1767, 'an ancient Drover' was gored 'so terribly' that he died before reaching hospital, after endeavouring to free his animal from Red Lion Court.<sup>457</sup>

While excessive brutality, negligence and deliberate mischief may have contributed to some accidents, it seems that drovers were often blamed unfairly. The degree to which these men wilfully or negligently 'over-drove' their cattle was, it seems, greatly exaggerated as part of the wider discourse of urban improvement and government. As I will discuss further below, as men drawn from the lower orders of society, drovers were obvious scapegoats for incidents of bovine disorder. Yet, it could not have been in the interests of drovers to lose control of a bullock, which might result in a fatal injury to them, the risk of being arrested or the inconvenience of hamstringing the beast in the street and carting it to a slaughter house.<sup>458</sup> There can be little doubt that as the population, trade and traffic of the metropolis expanded, the work of drovers became increasingly hazardous. From the 1750s, they repeatedly voiced their concerns, presenting clear evidence for the worsening conditions in which they were expected to command their animals. In their petition of 1756 in favour of the New Road, they complained that because of the great rise in vehicles, they had 'sustained many losses' with animals being lamed or killed. In 1809, they told David Hughson that cattle were regularly maimed 'by the drays, and also by the wagons and carts' which were increasing in Bloomsbury.<sup>459</sup> As I will discuss below in relation to horses, the hectic urban environment increased the likelihood of animals taking fright. In the 1786 trial, it was claimed by one witness that the bullock only ran wild after being spooked by 'the carts and coaches [which] made such a noise' in St John's Street.<sup>460</sup> The drovers repeatedly

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<sup>455</sup> OBSP, t17861025-37 (25 October 1786).

<sup>456</sup> *London Evening Post*, 7 May 1757; *Public Advertiser*, 6 March 1767; *London Chronicle*, 26 December 1789.

<sup>457</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 7 March 1767.

<sup>458</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 15 September 1766.

<sup>459</sup> PAL, HL/PO/JO/10/3/250/14; Hughson, *London; being an accurate history*, 6, p.600.

<sup>460</sup> OBSP, t17861025-37 (25 October 1786).

warned the authorities that even with ‘the utmost care’ they could not now prevent their animals ‘running wild, terrifying and often killing ... the passengers in the streets.’<sup>461</sup>

So far, this section has focussed on the close relationship between the recalcitrant bullock and the actions of one occupational group. Yet, the Smithfield drovers were certainly not the only men to interact with these animals. The cultural and social visibility of the urban bullock was such that by the 1750s, a large section of the lower orders of metropolitan society had assumed a kind of informal ownership over the city’s livestock, and particularly its horned cattle. Legislative developments, court proceedings and newspaper reports reveal that many ordinary Londoners, with no involvement in the Smithfield trade, had close contact with these animals and regularly made sport with them.<sup>462</sup> In his recent analysis of the City’s summary courts, Drew Gray found that of the 582 prosecutions for street related regulatory offences recorded between 1784–96, fifty-seven (9.7%) were for the abuse or chasing of cattle. Considering, as Gray acknowledges, that most offenders ‘usually escaped prosecution’, this data suggests that bovine trouble-making was a perpetual feature of daily life in the City.<sup>463</sup> As well as having important implications for the study of urban improvement, the powerful role played by Smithfield cattle in plebeian culture contradicts Keith Thomas’s assertion that apart from ‘those directly involved in working with animals’ the rest of urban society was isolated from livestock by 1800.<sup>464</sup> At its most pervasive, mischievous cattle interaction entailed casual goading of animals as they passed through the streets. Drovers often complained that passers-by deliberately startled their animals with loud noises or sudden movements, prodded them with sticks or pelted them with stones. In the trial of 1786, one of the accused drovers claimed that three bakers had ‘rattled their pails’ at the animal, ‘making game of him.’ A witness recalled seeing another non-drover ‘daring the bullock’ by ‘waving his hat backwards and forwards.’<sup>465</sup> Far from appearing disconcerted by these dangerous animals, these men’s behaviour suggests that the lower orders were familiar and confident around them.

While pranks were often innocuous, this culture of bovine tomfoolery had the potential to spark major disruption in the city’s streets and even cause fatal accidents. It is revealing that when the *Act to Prevent Mischiefs that Arise from Driving Cattle...* was passed in 1774, it referred only to the prosecution of drovers. Yet when the Act was replaced in 1781, an additional clause enacted

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<sup>461</sup> PAL, HL/PO/JO/10/3/250/14.

<sup>462</sup> In the first half of the eighteenth century, it was not uncommon for individuals to be found sleeping in Smithfield’s sheep pens trying to gain some warmth from the animals. T. Hitchcock, *Down and Out in Eighteenth-Century London* (2nd edn, Hambledon & London, 2007), p.38.

<sup>463</sup> D. Gray, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations: the summary courts of the City of London in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2009), p.118.

<sup>464</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182.

<sup>465</sup> OBSP, t17861025-37 (25 October 1786).

that anyone who ‘shall pelt with Stones, Brickbats, or by any other Means drive or hunt away, or shall set any Dog or Dogs at any Ox, Heifer, Cow, Steer, or other Cattle, without the consent of the owner’ should be arrested and fined.<sup>466</sup> It is significant that the new legislation appeared less than a year after the Gordon Riots of June 1780.<sup>467</sup> In the aftermath of the shocking mob violence which swept the city, disorderly behaviour of all kinds appears to have come under increasing scrutiny. The new legislation sought, above all, to eliminate the baiting and hunting of bullocks in the metropolis, sports which had enjoyed a remarkable resurgence since the Restoration. To their plebeian participants, these activities provided ‘sport, a way to bring excitement and danger to everyday life, an opportunity for demonstrations of bravado.’<sup>468</sup> Yet, for those seeking to improve the order and security of the metropolis, they recast the urban bullock as a weapon wielded by the worst elements of society.

The bull bait was the most dramatic, disruptive and scandalous of London’s blood sports and attracted raucous crowds. Tied to a stake in the ground, the bullock was set upon by dogs and forced to defend itself by spearing or tossing them with its horns. If permitted, the bull-terriers would tear into the underbelly of the animal, resulting in an extraordinarily blood-thirsty spectacle.<sup>469</sup> The sport often relied on butchers and drovers to supply the animals as well as managing the baits and wagers. In the mid-eighteenth century, this involvement is likely to have contributed to the increasing castigation of drovers by polite society.<sup>470</sup> By the early 1760s, when the sport began to come under serious attack from the authorities, it was closely associated with disorderly persons, vagrants and criminals and appeared to present a serious threat to the order of the city. In October 1762 Justice Saunders Welch had to break up a crowd of more than two thousand ‘in the vacant ground behind Great Russell Street’ in fashionable Bloomsbury and was ‘obliged to take their bull and dogs away.’<sup>471</sup> In 1769, the *Independent Chronicle* reported that a young butcher had been gored to death when a bull ‘broke loose from the stake’ around the same area.<sup>472</sup> As well as sabotaging the improvement of public space, baited bullocks appeared to champion the aggression and disorder of the mob, much as James Gilray envisaged in his *Promis’d Horrors of the French Invasion*, 1796 (**Plate 25**). Here, a bullock is shown charging down St James’ Street ahead of a blood-thirsty troop of revolutionaries. As the animal defiantly tosses a well-dressed gentleman outside Brookes’ club,

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<sup>466</sup> Public Act, 21 Geo III c.66, 67; CLA/015/AD/02/032, Warrants for payments to constables and others for the apprehension and prosecution of persons, not being employed to drive cattle, for the ‘hunting away’ of bullocks, October - December 1789.

<sup>467</sup> Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, p.163.

<sup>468</sup> Grey, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations*, p.140.

<sup>469</sup> E. Griffin, *England’s Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005); E. Griffin, *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (New Haven & London, 2007), pp.144-147.

<sup>470</sup> *London Chronicle*, 19 October 1762.

<sup>471</sup> Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, p.163.

<sup>472</sup> *Independent Chronicle*, 1 November 1769.



a guillotine sees to the nation's political elite. On the other side of the road, yet more troops file into White's Club, marching through a trail of blood and severed heads.

While highly disruptive, baiting events could only be organised sporadically and involved considerable organisation. By the mid-1770s, the sport was in retreat and the last major incident reported by London's newspapers was that of 1769. This represented a significant success for nascent metropolitan policing but the extinction of bull baiting was in many ways overshadowed by the increasing disruption caused by bullock hunting, a considerably more common activity which defied its objectors well into the early nineteenth century. Largely overlooked by historians until Drew Gray's recent study, a wealth of source material shows that bullock hunting expanded in the eighteenth century.<sup>473</sup> An anonymous writer described Hogarth's vignette of the sport in 1751 (**Plate 23**) as 'the hunting of a Bullock through the streets by a rabble of boys, and dirty fellows, till the creature maddens with rage, and in its fury tosses every one that is so unhappy to come in its way.'<sup>474</sup> However, by far the most detailed description of bullock hunting emerges in the recollections of Francis Place (1771–1854) who began compiling his autobiography in the 1820s.<sup>475</sup> By then a respectable man of leisure, Place grew up among the small shopkeepers and artisans near the Strand. His autobiography was intended as an instructive tale to 'show how a man could rise to wisdom and prosperity from an unpropitious background.'<sup>476</sup> Place wrote extensively on the deplorable moral conditions of the eighteenth century and celebrated the rise of a newly respectable Victorian society. Yet, his attitudes to the dissolute days of the past are ambivalent. As Mary Thale has argued, his writings often reveal 'his pull towards the improper pleasures of his childhood ... Place was not quite so wholesome and disinterested as he thought.'<sup>477</sup> As a Victorian gentleman, and social reformer, he condemned bullock hunting as epitomising the wicked manners of the previous century. Such occasions, he complained

used to collect the greatest of blackguards, thieves and miscreants of all kinds together. Its cruelty was atrocious, it led to every species of vice and crime, and proves how very low were peoples notions of morality, and how barbarous their dispositions.<sup>478</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Gray, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations*.

<sup>474</sup> Anon, 'A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth's six prints lately published, viz. Gin-Lane, Beer-Street, and the Four Stages of Cruelty' (1751), p.37, cited by Gray, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations* (2009), p.138.

<sup>475</sup> M. Thale (ed.), *The Autobiography of Francis Place, 1771-1854* (Cambridge, 1972); Place compiled his autobiography drawing on earlier writings from the turn of the nineteenth-century.

<sup>476</sup> Thale (ed.), *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, xix.

<sup>477</sup> Thale (ed.), *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, xxvi.

<sup>478</sup> *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, p.70.

Yet, Place made little effort to conceal that he was also, ‘exceedingly delighted with this sport’, when he joined a bull-hunting gang in his school-holidays. On market days, he recalled

a number of men and boys used to assemble at the ends of the streets leading into the market and when a drove of bullocks came along, they fixed their attention on a light long horned one, these being the most skittish and the best runners, they then divided themselves into two parties, one on each side of the drove watching an opportunity to separate the bullock from the drove.

Revealingly, this reformed bullock hunter emphasised that in most cases the drovers acted responsibly and were innocents under siege. Furthermore, he noted that the precautions taken by drovers to control their animals had the unfortunate effect of attracting the attention of the bullock hunters, so that ‘no sooner had such a drove left the market than a scene of noise and confusion scarcely to be equalled commenced.’<sup>479</sup> The gang, he goes on to tell us, even came armed with their own drovers’ sticks fitted with a sharp nail to provoke maximum reaction from the animals. Walking alongside the herd, the hunters took turns in ‘menacing the drovers and frightening the bullocks ... hallowing, and whistling through their fingers.’ In some instances, the gangs would distract the drovers by ‘flourishing their sticks’ and pretending to start a fight or sometimes ‘actually produced a fight.’ The timing and location of the attack was carefully chosen to cause maximum chaos, ‘generally where two streets crossed.’ The most skittish animal was then separated from the herd and pursued by the entire gang. Place emphasises that the drover was helpless as ‘from the moment the bullock started it was utterly useless to attempt to recover him.’<sup>480</sup> Hunts could last well over an hour, until the beast was too exhausted to run further when he could at last be secured.

Place acknowledges, in a surprisingly casual, even callous manner, that bullock chasing often resulted in human injury and that innocent passers-by faced far greater risks than the hunters themselves. He observed: ‘I never saw any one of the bullock hunters receive any injury from the bullock - I have seen other people knocked down by the animals and one or two tossed. Many were ... injured and now and then one was killed.’<sup>481</sup> Place’s participation in the bullock hunts of the 1780s, as he observed himself, was part of the sport’s later glory years and it seems likely that, in parallel with the growth of the livestock trade itself, these hunts were larger and better orchestrated than at any previous time. The speed and confusion of the chase is likely to have made it extremely difficult to police these activities. Yet, while it seems likely that the

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<sup>479</sup> *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, p.69.

<sup>480</sup> *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, p.69.

<sup>481</sup> *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, p.70.

majority of bullock hunters evaded arrest, by the last quarter of the century the City magistracy was sufficiently concerned to make regular prosecutions at its Guildhall and Mansion House justice rooms. However, the relative leniency of the punishments handed out by these summary courts may help to explain why the sport remained so popular and survived for so long. In the fifty-seven cases identified by Gray during the period 1784–96, twenty six (50.9%) offenders received fines, seventeen (33.3%) were discharged, two (3.9%) were reprimanded and just three (5.8%) were imprisoned.<sup>482</sup> By contrast, statutes passed in the 1740s made the act of stealing cattle (1741) and sheep and oxen (1742) capital offences, punishable by transportation or death.<sup>483</sup> The Old Bailey passed no fewer than thirty-five death sentences for cattle theft in the period up to 1800. In 1756, John Burroughs was condemned for stealing a large bullock worth £10 and taking it directly to a slaughterhouse where he desired the butcher to ‘kill it directly [and] to cleave it down. Suspicions were raised by the absence of a ‘country mark’ on the animal’s rump and the thief was soon carried to justice Fielding.<sup>484</sup> While steadily diminishing, reports of bullock hunts continued to appear in London’s newspapers at least into the 1820s and the sport may have survived in more modest form until the trade was finally removed in 1855.<sup>485</sup> Gray argues that ‘the demands of commerce and of urban living necessitated a much tighter control of urban space in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ... Ultimately this left no place for raucous displays of plebeian culture.’<sup>486</sup> While this is true to some extent, the remarkable persistence of bullock hunting throughout the eighteenth century, despite widespread public outcry, targeted legislation and a growing police presence, emphasises the remarkable extent to which these animals were part of the plebeian life of the metropolis.

Smithfield’s location and extraordinary commercial significance repeatedly dissuaded the Corporation of London and Parliament from removing it to a semi-rural location, despite huge disruption to a city undergoing widespread improvement, a mounting death toll and intense public opposition propagated by London’s newspapers. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was clear to all but the fiercest defenders of Smithfield Market that the removal of the trade was the only remedy for what had become a national disgrace. Yet, far from disappearing, the number of cattle passing through the streets of the metropolis continued to rise for a further fifty

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<sup>482</sup> Gray, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations*, p.141.

<sup>483</sup> Public Act 14 Geo II, c6 s.2 (1741); 14 Geo II, c.34 (1742). Both statutes provided a £10 reward for informers after a felony conviction. V.S. Balch-Lindsay, *An Orderly Metropolis: The Evolution of Criminal Justice in London, 1750-1830* (Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, Texas Tech University, 1998), p.43; P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1992), p.204. Linebaugh observes that Dick Turpin, hanged in 1739, began his criminal career by stealing cattle in the Plaistow marshes. In early life, Turpin was educated in the Smithfield trade, being a son to an Essex farmer and apprenticed to a Whitechapel butcher.

<sup>484</sup> OBSP, t17560528-27 (28 May 1756); J.M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England* (1986), pp.170-72.

<sup>485</sup> *The Times*, 25 September 1822 cited in Gray, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations*, p.142.

<sup>486</sup> Gray, *Crime Prosecution and Social Relations*, p.147.

years. Perhaps no other animal in eighteenth-century London was as controversial as Smithfield cattle. Despite various attempts to protect the city from their disruption, bullocks refused to be tamed. Their outrageous behaviour, often provoked by human activity, led to the vilification of their guardians, the drovers, and appeared to epitomise the huge obstacles facing the progress of the city. At the same time, bovine disorder was an important element of plebeian sub-culture, to the extent that the human-animal nexus often appeared to unite the threat of mob unrest with the spectre of the rampaging bullock.

## **APPENDIX**

**Table 14:** ‘Over-drove ox’ accidents reported by London’s newspapers, Jan 1750– Dec 1769.

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of ‘over-drove’ ox accidents reported by London’s newspapers</b>
1740	0
1741	0
1742	0
1743	0
1744	0
1745	0
1746	2
1747	0
1748	1
1749	2
<b>Average per annum (1740-1749)</b>	<b>0.5</b>
1750	1
1751	0
1752	2
1753	0
1754	0
1755	1
1756	1
1757	2
1758	3
1759	1
1760	5
1761	9
1762	5
1763	3
<b>Average per annum (1755-1763)</b>	<b>2.4</b>
1764	15
1765	29
1766	11
1767	14
1768	7
1769	14
<b>Average per annum (1764 – 1769)</b>	<b>15</b>

**Table 15: Geographical breakdown of fatal & near fatal bullock attacks reported in London newspapers, January 1760 – December 1769.**

<b>Location of incident</b>	<b>No. of newspaper reports Jan 1760 - Dec 1769</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Holborn & Bloomsbury	20	18%
Smithfield	18	16.30%
The City	18	16.30%
Oxford Road and Piccadilly	10	9%
Houndsditch, Whitechapel & the Tower	8	7.20%
Fleet St and Charing Cross	7	6.60%
Southwark and Borough	7	6.60%
Newgate	6	5.40%
St Giles'	6	5.40%
Clerkenwell and Islington	5	4.50%
Shoreditch	2	1.80%
St James'	1	0.90%
Westminster	1	0.90%
Paddington	1	0.90%

## (II) EQUINE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

As historians have often observed, the obedient horse played a crucial role in the cultural, political and philosophical discourse of early modern Europe. Command over equine behaviour had important ideological ramifications, particularly for the elite. As Donna Landry has argued, ‘to ride a horse well was to possess the virtues necessary for social authority and even political rule. Commanding a horse required both technical skills and an ability to reason with a creature that embodied the passions but showed signs of being capable of a degree of reason’.<sup>487</sup> Horsemanship itself became an increasingly important expression of upper class gentility in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Raber and Tucker have argued, it was considered that ‘as one trained oneself, so one was able to train one’s horse.’<sup>488</sup> Thus, above all, the *haute école* emphasised the importance of control and discipline, ‘the triumph of the rational over the irrational’.<sup>489</sup> Supported by a flurry of polite equine manuals and the construction of riding-houses, horsemanship enjoyed an impressive renaissance in eighteenth-century England.<sup>490</sup> Yet, principles of horsemanship and attitudes towards horses changed dramatically in this period. As Raber and Tucker have asserted, in sixteenth century Europe, the training of horses in the movements of the manège was achieved by the trainer’s forceful and often brutal ‘domination of the horse.’ In the seventeenth century, while the rider’s aim continued to be to ‘master his horse’s wilful nature ... and to achieve its complete obedience and submission to his dictates’, there emerged ‘more refined and sympathetic methods’ for achieving this. By the eighteenth century, however, this battle between the ‘rider’s essentially rational wishes and the horse’s essentially irrational nature has resolved itself into something more closely resembling a cooperative partnership between two reasonable creatures.’<sup>491</sup>

By 1800, distinctly British ideals of horsemanship had emerged, straying from the rigid strictures of *haute école* towards a more ‘unconstrained’ modern style of riding which emphasised ‘gentlemanly ease’.<sup>492</sup> Yet the display of ‘ease’ associated with the so-called ‘English hunting seat’ continued to rely on discipline and control. Man’s command over brute creation remained its underpinning ideology. Polite equine manuals, such as Richard Berenger’s

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<sup>487</sup> D. Landry, *Noble Brutes* (Baltimore, 2009), p.16.

<sup>488</sup> K. Raber & T.J. Tucker (eds), *The Culture of the Horse* (Houndmills & New York, 2005), p18.

<sup>489</sup> Raber & Tucker (eds), *The Culture of the Horse*, p.18.

<sup>490</sup> This fashion began with a string of military riding-houses in London. Worsley, *The British Stable* (2004), pp. 160-181, notes that between 1750-1780, fourteen private riding houses were built in Britain, together with a number of public riding houses, compared to just three new private riding houses built between 1660-1750.

<sup>491</sup> Raber & Tucker (eds), *The Culture of the Horse*, p.14.

<sup>492</sup> Charles Hughes, *The Compleat Horseman; Or, The Art of Riding Made Easy* (1772), pp.7-9 & p. 14; see also Donald, *Picturing Animals in Britain*, p.210.



popular *History and Art of Horsemanship*, 1771, offered detailed advice on how to ‘reduce’ horses to obedience. Berenger argued that even the most hot-headed and ill-disciplined of animals could be tamed, firstly by identifying ‘from whence the different sorts of defences and rebellion ... proceed’ and then correcting any faults ‘with design ... method and order.’<sup>493</sup> Yet Berenger’s lessons were played out in peaceful rural estates and riding houses not in the busy streets of the metropolis. Here, equine disorder threatened to undermine man’s harmonious relationship with the horse.

In eighteenth-century London, horses were widely associated with scenes of mayhem, ranging from chaotic traffic jams to hair-raising high-speed crashes and fatal accidents. At these times, horses appeared to defy any semblance of human control and posed a serious threat to the order and security of the ‘modern’, enlightened city. This section is concerned with the recalcitrant horse and the social challenge of commanding equine traffic in the metropolitan environment. F.M.L. Thompson memorably observed that: ‘HORSES ARE HARD WORK ... The behaviour of horse traffic is unpredictable, its control of direction erratic and its road discipline poor.’<sup>494</sup> In the context of a heavily populated urban environment, these characteristics made the horse a potentially calamitous social actor. Spooked and run-away horses could cause massive destruction to property, jeopardise their own safety or, still more seriously, endanger the lives of their riders, passengers and passers-by.

The nature and extent of surviving source material makes it impossible to ascertain the precise scale of accidents involving equine traffic during the eighteenth century. The depositions before coroners’ inquests provide a useful but patchy record for assessing the frequency of deaths and their various causes. Substantial records for the City of London, Southwark and the Middlesex East district survive only from the last quarter of the century with Middlesex West covered with many gaps from mid-century.<sup>495</sup> Given this scarcity of material, it would be fruitless to attempt a calculation of the number of deaths occasioned by equine traffic for the whole of the eighteenth century. However, the combined evidence of newspaper reports and coroners’ records suggests that in the second half of the century serious injuries and fatalities occurred on a very regular basis, perhaps as frequently as one per week.<sup>496</sup> The CLA’s index of the surviving coroner’s records of the City, Southwark and Middlesex lists the date of inquisitions, the names of victims and a one-line summary of their cause of death. By surveying well-documented sample periods covered by this index, it is possible to glean some idea of the frequency of

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<sup>493</sup> Richard Berenger, *The History and Art of Horsemanship*, vol.2 (1771), pp. 19-20 & p.65.

<sup>494</sup> Thompson, *Victorian England: the horse drawn society* (London, 1970), p.3 & p.12.

<sup>495</sup> Substantial records for the City of London and Southwark survive with many gaps from 1788 (LMA, CLA/041/IQ/02); Middlesex East district in isolation for 1747 and then with many gaps from 1777 (LMA, MJ/SP/C/E); Middlesex West District with many gaps from 1753 (LMA, MJ/SP/C/W).

<sup>496</sup> J. Landers, *Death and the Metropolis* (2006), p.179.

deaths at these times. For instance, records for the City and Southwark between 1796- 99 include twenty-five deaths caused by waggons, carts and drays alone, equating to one such fatality being investigated every two months.<sup>497</sup>

Importantly, coroner's depositions provide additional information relating to cause of death in equine accidents. These details were recorded largely for the purposes of *deodand*, a survival from early English law and only abolished in 1846.<sup>498</sup> Under this law, any chattel deemed by a coroner's jury to have caused a death was considered *deodand* and, therefore, to be "given to God".<sup>499</sup> In theory the object or animal was to be given to the Church or some pious foundation but long before the eighteenth century, this had become the exception. Instead 'the value of the object or animal was assessed, and the sum then became a forfeiture or fine' which was usually paid to the Exchequer. When the value of the 'death-dealing object' had been paid off it was 'no longer *deodand* and was again suitable for normal use.'<sup>500</sup> It has often been assumed that *deodand* had become defunct until a short-lived revival in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the coroners' records for eighteenth-century London confirm J.J. Finklestein's conviction that this was not the case.<sup>501</sup> For the purposes of *deodand*, London's coroners had to differentiate carefully between the death-dealing role of horses and vehicles. For instance, when a child was run over by a dray in Aldgate in 1785, the Middlesex coroner identified 'the said Near wheel' as the cause of death and recorded its value at 20s, which the owner would then pay as a fine.<sup>502</sup> However, when a carter was thrown by his shaft horse in 1781 and subsequently crushed under the wheel of the cart he was driving, the coroner identified both the 'said shaft horse and near wheel of the said cart' as the cause of death. Consequently, the coroner valued both the horse and the wheel for the purposes of compensation.<sup>503</sup> If the carter had been sitting on his vehicle when the horse bucked and caused him to fall, the animal would not have been judged *deodand*.

The exacerbation of London's traffic problems in the eighteenth century may, it seems, have forced an adaptation in this ancient law to deal with the complexities of modern times. In early English law, objects did not need to be capable of motion to become *deodand*.<sup>504</sup> Yet, by the late eighteenth century this principle had been eroded. I have found numerous cases in which victims were crushed against walls and street furniture but these objects were never valued for

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<sup>497</sup> LMA, CLA / 041 / IQ / 02, index file held by LMA.

<sup>498</sup> J.J. Finklestein, 'The Ox that Gored', *TAPS*, 71:2, (1981), pp.73-81.

<sup>499</sup> The term *Deodand* is derived from the Latin, *deo dandum*, meaning "given to God".

<sup>500</sup> Finklestein, 'The Ox that Gored', p.73.

<sup>501</sup> Finklestein, 'The Ox that Gored', p.74.

<sup>502</sup> LMA, MJ / SP/C / E / 0360.

<sup>503</sup> LMA, MJ / SP/C / E / 0016.

<sup>504</sup> Finklestein, 'The Ox that Gored', p.76.

*deodand*, only the vehicles and horses which had been in motion.<sup>505</sup> It seems plausible that this legal development was necessitated by the growing frequency and complexity of accidents. To consider walls and posts as potential death-dealing objects in a densely built metropolitan environment must have become untenable. By 1765, *deodand* had evolved specifically to decide the culpability of men commanding horse-drawn vehicles. A report in the *Lloyd's Evening Post* reveals that during an inquest into the death of a French baker killed by a dray

upon strict examination of the witnesses, it appeared that the Drayman was wholly blameless, and that the man was accidentally killed, by running between a post and the dray, which jammed his body in so terrible a manner, as to occasion his death ... Under these favourable circumstances the Jury valued the dray, which otherwise would have been forfeited, only at one shilling.<sup>506</sup>

To deal with the growing problem of equine traffic accidents, therefore, metropolitan society adapted *Deodand* to work in tandem with other forms of regulatory legislation, which I will discuss below. The continuation of *deodand* also meant that coroners had to record details about accidents which may otherwise have been glossed over. This evidence does, however, demand a degree of caution. The coroner's inquest relied heavily on witness accounts, which may not always have been accurate or honest.<sup>507</sup> As traffic accidents often took place near the home or work place of victims, many witnesses would have known them and their recollection of chaotic events may have been compromised. Nonetheless, coroners' depositions remain instructive.<sup>508</sup> In most cases, the 'cause of death summaries' included in the CLA's index name the type of vehicle involved - 'waggon', 'cart', 'dray', 'carriage', 'coach' 'chaise' or 'chariot' - and describe one of five categories of accident - 'struck by', 'thrown from', 'fell from', 'run over by wheels of', 'crushed between vehicle and a wall or post'. **Table 16** presents the frequency of different kinds of fatal equine accident recorded during the period, 1790– 1830.<sup>509</sup> This data suggests that commercial carrying vehicles (waggons, carts and drays) were responsible for over half (58%) of recorded fatalities involving horse-drawn vehicles. Of these accidents, the overwhelming majority of deaths (73.5%) resulted from being run over by the wheels of the vehicle. Waggons and carts appear to have caused considerably more deaths than drays. This

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<sup>505</sup> CLA, 041/IQ/02/006/52, City of London and Southwark Coroners.

<sup>506</sup> *Lloyds Evening Post*, 6 December 1765.

<sup>507</sup> N.Z. Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, 1990); I.A. Burney, *Bodies of Evidence: Medicine and the Politics of the English Inquest, 1830-1926* (Baltimore, 2000).

<sup>508</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p.91.

<sup>509</sup> LMA, CLA /041 / IQ / 02.

may have been because these vehicles were more numerous and, in the case of waggons, because they were larger and heavier than drays.<sup>510</sup>

Coroners' records do not, however, reveal the full complexity of vehicle accident causation. For the purposes of *deodand*, the coroner generally only recorded sufficient detail to identify the death-dealing object. As a result, we are not told why the shaft horse threw his carter in 1781. Consequently, we do not know if the accident happened because the horse was young and 'hot-headed' or whether the carter was inexperienced or negligent. Neither are we told if another stimulus or third party triggered the accident by startling the horse, perhaps another vehicle coming too close, the rattling a wheelbarrow, a flash of lightning or a disruptive pedestrian. To understand the full complexity of these accidents, it is necessary to cross-reference a range of material, including proceedings of the Old Bailey, coroners' reports, newspapers, personal narratives and visual sources. It is to these triggers of equine accidents that we now turn.

Accidents involving horses were particularly disconcerting because they appeared to involve not just man-made factors, but seemingly uncontrollable 'natural' causes.<sup>511</sup> The erratic tendencies of horses were widely discussed in the eighteenth century. London newspapers often blamed accidents on animals being 'hot headed' or 'taking fright', behaviour which seemed to place men and women at the mercy of unpredictable natural forces. Newspaper reports identified a wide range of triggers for erratic equine behaviour. Many were common to countryside and city. For instance, in 1761 a horse 'being stung by some flies' kicked out and broke a Gentleman's leg in Whitehall. In 1764, horses drawing a gentleman's carriage in Gray's Inn took fright at 'loud claps of thunder' and trampled one of his servants.<sup>512</sup> Other stimuli were more characteristically urban or even exclusively metropolitan. The density of London's population, the intensity of its wheeled traffic and the cacophony of hundreds of trades made this a uniquely risk-prone environment for the exposure of animals. As McShane and Tarr observe

The evolutionary track taken by horses provided shyness and speed as defence mechanisms. Horses scare easily, and their reflex is to run away ... Even a flying piece

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<sup>510</sup> By the early nineteenth century, waggons weighed approximately two tons and carried maximum loads of between three and four tons. Drays carried loads of up to one and a half tons. Licensed carts carried up to one ton, rising to 25 hundredweights in 1757. D. Gerhold, *Road Transport Before the Railways: Russell's London Flying Waggons* (1993), p.55; P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry* (1959), p.78; Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.106; Public Act, 30 Geo II, c.22.

<sup>511</sup> R. Cooter and B. Luckin (eds), *Accidents in History: Injuries, Fatalities and Social Relations* (Amsterdam, 1997), p.3.

<sup>512</sup> *St James' Chronicle*, 20 June 1761; *London Evening Post*, 16 June 1764.

of paper can scare a horse, especially since their instinct is to watch the scenery to the side ... rather than the road.<sup>513</sup>

In 1757, a Gentleman was thrown into a ditch by a horse which took fright at a passing hay cart. On another occasion, the fore-horse of a cart 'took fright at something being hastily thrown out of a house' in Shoreditch and the wheels of the cart crushed a child to death.<sup>514</sup> The constant stream of sights and sounds associated with the metropolitan environment meant that animals needed constant supervision until they were stabled or otherwise secured. When such precautions were not taken, horses could bolt into the path of other road users.

Such equine unpredictability jarred uncomfortably with deep-rooted notions of upper class gentility. The philosophy of aristocratic horsemanship and agricultural management boldly proclaimed man's authority over brute creation. Equine accidents were thus unnervingly democratic in nature: members of the fashionable elite seemed just as exposed to the dangers of equine traffic as their social inferiors. During the eighteenth century, riding to take the air in London's parks and suburbs became an increasingly important expression of metropolitan gentility. Inspired by a new 'spirit of enterprise' associated with the English hunting seat, some of its participants, predominately men, were known to seek out 'adventure and even danger' in their equine activities.<sup>515</sup> Whether they were at fault or not, wealthy gentlemen were often involved in hair-raising accidents in and around the metropolis. In 1754, the *Whitehall Evening Post* lamented that 'Mr Brudnal, a young Gentleman of Fortune, was riding for the Air on the Barnet Road, his horse took fright at a carriage, threw him, and he died on the spot.'<sup>516</sup> In 1772, the beau monde was shocked to hear about Lord Aylesford's 'great escape' when the horses drawing his cabriolet 'ran away with him' in Hyde Park. 'Escaping pits and trees', the horses 'at last overturn'd him upon a heap of flints which cut his face near the eye.'<sup>517</sup>

In a previous section, I suggested that the private equipage underpinned polite sociability, both in terms of its visual culture and its practical need for mobility. However, the fine carriage horse also had the paradoxical effect of threatening the order of public space. The vestry minutes of fashionable St James, Piccadilly show that by the 1750s, the widespread use of carriages to attend church was causing serious congestion which encouraged undignified skirmishes

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<sup>513</sup> C. McShane & J. Tarr, *The Horse in the City* (2007), p.54.

<sup>514</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 31 December 1757; *London Chronicle*, 10 July 1764.

<sup>515</sup> Raber & Tucker (eds), *The Culture of the Horse*, p.341.

<sup>516</sup> *Whitehall Evening Post*, 19 March 1754.

<sup>517</sup> Lady Llandover (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delaney*, 2:1 (London, 1862), p.435, 'Mrs Boscawen to Mrs Delaney, Audley Street, 20 June 1772.'

between drivers.<sup>518</sup> Well attended diversions could cause widespread disruption particularly when impractical architecture left coachmen little or no space to manoeuvre their vehicles or regain control over skittish animals. Despite several modifications to its Jacobean structure, Northumberland House continued to invite serious traffic problems in the 1760s.<sup>519</sup> Friedrich Kielmandsegg complained that ‘the inconvenience of getting away is a very great drawback, the courtyard being too small for the quantity of carriages ... and every-body has to come in and go out by the one gateway ... consequently many people had to wait until two or three o’clock before they could get away.’<sup>520</sup> Equine traffic heading to and from venues such as Vauxhall and Ranelagh created chronic bottlenecks, causing chaos across large parts of the city. In 1769, ‘the tide and torrent of coaches’ encountered by Horace Walpole ruined a half-guinea *ridotto al fresco* at Vauxhall. Setting out from Warwick House in St James’ at eight in the evening, his coach was stuck on Westminster Bridge for an hour and a half. ‘We then alighted and after scrambling under bellies of horses, through wheels, and over posts and rails, we reached the gardens, where were already many thousand persons.’ Matters were little better on his return journey ‘for we found three strings of coaches all along the road, who did not move half a foot in half-an-hour.’<sup>521</sup>

The good humour with which polite society often accepted the inconvenience of equine traffic was perhaps an indication of its growing familiarity. To battle through a great sea of carriages, tediously delayed and uncomfortably jolted was perceived as a salutary act in the pursuit of pleasure and polite interaction. This philosophy lies at the heart of Rowlandson’s *Miseries of London [traffic]* (1808), (**Plate 24**), which as Vic Gatrell suggests turns ‘congested streets into a subject of ironic but also pleasurable vexation’.<sup>522</sup> Following his ordeal, Walpole himself prophesied that a still greater ‘mob’ would turn out at Ranelagh the following day ‘for the greater the folly and imposition the greater is the crowd.’<sup>523</sup> Some visitors were even pleasantly surprised by the good order kept by coachmen on such testing occasions. Grosley witnessed a tremendous crowd at Ranelagh in 1765 and paid tribute to the four hundred coaches which stood in lines along the coachway ‘always ready at the first word, without either guards or

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<sup>518</sup> WCA, STJ/D/1/8/1761, St James’s, Piccadilly Vestry Minute Book, 2 June 1756.

<sup>519</sup> According to Worsley, *The British Stable*, p.105, it was not until 1749 that the Duke of Northumberland managed to create a continuous stable yard by acquiring land beside the house. Prior to this the ‘demands of the garden meant that there was no room for adjoining stables’. In the eighteenth century, a *hôtel* lacking adjoining stables was considered increasingly out of keeping with modern requirements.

<sup>520</sup> Countess Kielmandsegg (trans.), *Diary of a Journey to England in the years 1761-1762* (1902), p.147.

<sup>521</sup> C. Yonge (ed.), *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. 2 (1890) ‘Walpole to George Montagu, esq, Arlington St, 11 May 1769’. The traffic problems resulting from the *Ridotto* at Vauxhall is similarly described by the *Gazetteer* on 15 May 1769, which estimated 10,000 people were in attendance.

<sup>522</sup> V. Gatrell, *City of Laughter* (2006), p.47.

<sup>523</sup> *Letters of Horace Walpole*, 2, ‘Walpole to George Montagu, 11 May 1769.’



directors to keep them to order.’<sup>524</sup> Nonetheless, this absence of policing suggests that if the behaviour of hundreds of horses, and their keepers, had spiralled out of control, the elite may have been exposed to an unmanageable threat.

(Plate 29) Anon, *The Horse America Throwing his Master*, Westminster 1779.



As London’s polite residents made increasingly frequent journeys by carriage and chaise, so the equine risks they exposed themselves to were multiplied. Accidents involving elegant coaches emphasised the ability of horses to transform an expression of polite sociability into a scene of mayhem and tragedy involving wild animals, mangled coaches and bloodied passengers. In 1762, the *Lloyd’s Evening Post* reported that as ‘the Hon. Mr Medlycott and Capt. Walpole were on their return from Ranelagh in a chariot the horses took fright, by which accident the chariot was overturned. Captain Walpole was cut in the throat with the chariot glass, and the footman was so terribly bruised that he was immediately carried to Hyde Park Hospital.’<sup>525</sup> Not even the royal family could feel completely secure from this equine threat. In June 1763, the *London Evening Post* reported that ‘as his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was returning from airing in Hyde-Park, one of the wheel horses took fright, and got his leg over the pole of the coach; which set the horse a plunging, so as to greatly endanger the overturning of the carriage.’ Luckily for the Prince, a Grenadier managed to extract him from the carriage and

<sup>524</sup> Thomas Nugent (trans), M. Grosley, *A Tour to London*, vol.1 (1772), p.68; Such a large number of coaches was quite possible in the mid-eighteenth century. *Daily Advertiser*, 18 May 1743, reported that at least 2,500 people came to an even attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales. *Whitehall Evening Post*, 18 July 1758, recorded a crowd of ‘upwards of 3,000’.

<sup>525</sup> *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, 19 April 1762.

avert ‘the imminent danger’.<sup>526</sup> The image of horses unsettling the nation’s elite and particularly its royal family carried tremendous political resonance. Three years into the American Revolutionary War, an anonymous caricaturist depicted a helpless George III being thrown from a powerful stallion in *The Horse America, Throwing his Master*, 1779 (**Plate 29**). The recalcitrant horse, bucking and kicking his rider, provided a powerful metaphor for rebellion in much the same way as the ‘mad bullock’ would come to symbolise mob violence in the 1790s (**Plate 25**).

The close relationship between polite carriage owners and their animals meant that when a wild-eyed horse endangered their life, a personal betrayal was often felt. After Lord Aylesford’s aforementioned ‘great escape’ in Hyde Park, a confidant of the family, Mrs Boscawen, noted ‘I think the Duchess of Portland will not hear this article without exclaiming: “I hate those Whiskys!” In less fortunate circumstances, an unforeseen death could have a catastrophic dynastic impact on an aristocratic family. Mrs Boscawen ‘tremble[d] to think of such a *père de famille* having such a hair-bredth [e]scape.’<sup>527</sup> Yet, while the elite were prepared to extend blame to equine behaviour when they were at the reins, accidents involving the plebeian guardians of equine traffic were treated very differently. Wherever possible, incidents involving hackney carriages, carts, drays and waggons were attributed to the ‘inattention, ignorance or presumption’ of the men who commanded them. Like the Smithfield drovers, these individuals were increasingly vilified by polite society, parliament, the metropolitan authorities and London’s newspapers.<sup>528</sup> In particular, hackney coachmen, carmen and draymen were contemptuously referred to as ‘Brutes in human shape’ and ‘daring villains’. As an equine occupational group and social type, they were collectively condemned for showing contempt for the safety of their fellow citizens and for acting with the lofty arrogance of ‘Lords of the Road’.<sup>529</sup> Like the term ‘Smithfield gentry’, such epithets implied that men abused authority derived from a human-animal nexus to challenge the dominant social hierarchy.

Bonded by their demanding work culture, hackney coachmen and carmen certainly formed bullish fraternities and often appeared to bully other road users. From the late seventeenth century, hackney coachmen were increasingly perceived as a threat to the civility of the metropolis, their alleged transgressions ranging from theft and defrauding passengers to blasphemy and physical abuse. By obstructing thoroughfares and refusing to give way to

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<sup>526</sup> *London Evening Post*, 9 June 1763.

<sup>527</sup> Lady Llandover (ed.), *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delaney*, 2:1 (London, 1862), p.435, ‘Mrs Boscawen t Mrs Delaney, Audley Street, 20 June 1772.’

<sup>528</sup> R. Porter, ‘Accidents in the Eighteenth century’, in Cooter and Luckin (eds), *Accidents in History*, p.97; Newton Bosworth, *The Accidents of Human Life; With hints for their Prevention, Or the Removal of their Consequences* (1813), iv.

<sup>529</sup> *Common Sense*, 14 April 1739; *London Daily Advertiser*, 6 February 1752.

persons of quality, they failed to respect ‘the deferential choreography that was supposed to govern London’s traffic.’<sup>530</sup> Still more seriously, they were accused of ‘riding furiously’, chasing fares, deliberately clashing with other vehicles, and most damningly, running into and sometimes over pedestrians. As Mark Jenner has suggested ‘the equestrian spatial practices of the hackney coachman were profoundly disruptive of the order of the streets.’<sup>531</sup> In 1754, Jonas Hanway insisted that gentlemen ought to feel safe to walk along London’s streets in contrast to Paris where, he complained, ‘few people of distinction ever walk’ for fear of ‘being run over by every careless or imperious coachman’.<sup>532</sup> Nearly a decade later, however, a London ‘ambulator’ lamented in the *Gazetteer* that hackney coachmen continued to ‘endanger the limbs of the people by driving along with their chairs, and crying out just as they are upon you, “buy your leave”, when perhaps the person has not timely notice to get out of their way.’ The author concluded that these men were more like brutes than their horses because the equine species would ‘of their own accord ... give the way.’<sup>533</sup>

Not infrequently, coachman appeared to treat the street as their own recreational space, racing for wagers or simply making mischief. In October 1770, James Tompion was convicted for manslaughter after driving alongside another hackney carriage ‘as fast as they could’, whereby the pole of his coach threw a man down and the wheels passed over him.<sup>534</sup> Commentators were tempted to attribute this kind of reckless behaviour to an innate malice in the coachman’s nature which led him to abuse his horses and other road users. In 1737, *The Man of Manners* satirically claimed

there are hardly half a hundred Hackney Coachmen within the Bills of Mortality, but what would with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction, drive over the most innocent Person whom they never knew, or receiv’d any injury from, provided they could do it conveniently and safely, that is, within the verge of the law.<sup>535</sup>

This characterisation was well established, therefore, when Hogarth cast his anti-hero, Tom Nero, as a hackney coachman in the *Second Stage of Cruelty*, 1751 (**Plate 23**). Shown viciously whipping his horse, Nero’s cruelty appears to harden before our eyes, readying him for worse offences against society.

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<sup>530</sup> M. Jenner, ‘Circulation and Disorder’ in T. Hitchcock & H. Stone (eds), *The Streets of London* (2003), pp.44-5.

<sup>531</sup> Jenner, ‘Circulation and Disorder’, pp.43-4.

<sup>532</sup> Jonas Hanway, *A Letter to Mr John Spranger* (1754), p.22.

<sup>533</sup> *Gazetteer*, 13 October 1763.

<sup>534</sup> OBSP, t17701024-52 (24 October 1770).

<sup>535</sup> Erasmus Jones, *The Man of Manners or, Plebeian Polish’d* (1737), pp.43-4.

As early as the 1690s, London's carmen had developed an unsavoury reputation to rival that of the hackney coachmen. In 1690, the Court of Aldermen observed that

Their employment requires stout bodyes and naturally renders their minds unthinking and unheeding, rough and sturdy, untractable and ungovernable by themselves or by one another or without great difficulty by their Superiores; hence proceed frequent Brawles and Quarrells amongst themselves, which though they have authority from the City as a ffellowship to redresse amongst themselves yet they have not skills or temper to doe it, much lesse to prevent great rudeness not onely in words but hurts and mischiefes to the persons and Coaches of a Tradesmen and Gentry Citizens and Strangers passing in and through the Streets of London.<sup>536</sup>

Such attacks appeared to blur the distinction between plebeian workmen and the animals under their charge. Carmen were frequently described as lumbering, hot-headed and recalcitrant, characteristics which seemed symptomatic of their constant exposure to equine behaviour. While this brutish reputation was propagated for political reasons, it was also fed by the actions of errant individuals.<sup>537</sup> Above all, carmen and their occupational cousins, the draymen, were condemned for 'driving furiously' (with excessive speed) and for sitting on the shafts of their vehicles rather than leading their horses on foot, as the law demanded. In the *Second Stage of Cruelty*, 1751 (**Plate 23**), Hogarth depicted a two-horse dray about to crush a small child playing in the street. Asleep and perched on the side of his vehicle, the drayman allows his horses to draw the wheels into the child's path. As I will discuss below, the artist's inclusion of this vignette was far more journalistic than historians have previously acknowledged. Three years earlier, the *Old England* newspaper had reported a similar but even more shocking real-life incident in which a boy and girl

being at play, were run over by a Dray; one of the wheels went over the Girl's body, by which the blood gushed out of her mouth and nostrils, and left her for dead; the other went over the boy's leg ... this was occasioned by the Carelessness of the Brewer's Servant riding on the Dray.<sup>538</sup>

By 1700, it had become common practice for carmen and draymen to sit on the shafts of their vehicles when travelling through the metropolis rather than exert themselves by walking with

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<sup>536</sup> 'Reasons why the Carmen should not be Incorporated', 16 September 1690, cited in E. Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen* (1982), p.74.

<sup>537</sup> Particularly by those opposing the incorporation of the Fraternity of Carmen. Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*.

<sup>538</sup> *Old England*, 16 July 1748.

their horses.<sup>539</sup> Yet this position made it almost impossible to bring their animals to a sudden halt or to steer them away from obstacles in the street. Furthermore, when seated fifteen feet behind their horses' heads, drivers were less able to see approaching pedestrians or small children.<sup>540</sup> In September 1767, a letter to the *Public Advertiser* lamented that 'among the many accidents which I read of ... none I think are so common as Men, Women and Children being run over by carts and drays ... oweing entirely to the Carelessness and Laziness of those Fellows.'<sup>541</sup>

Like the hackney coachmen, these men were also condemned for travelling at excessive speeds. When fully-loaded, goods vehicles were capable of travelling at little more than walking pace. Yet, carmen were frequently seen driving empty vehicles and ignoring legislation which called for them to reduce the number of horses in their team after unloading. In two separate trials at the Old Bailey in 1721, the drivers of empty carts were found guilty of manslaughter after running over pedestrians at high speeds. Both convictions relied on eye witness confirmation that the drivers had retained a full team.<sup>542</sup> When travelling along narrow streets and turning corners, excessive speed contributed to vehicles coming too close to buildings, posts, gateways and other forms of street furniture. In such instances, pedestrians could be fatally crushed. In 1732, several witnesses testified that a 'furiously' driven cart had collided with another vehicle and its 'hinder part' struck a woman 'on the stomach, and squeezed her against a great post.' Despite their evidence, the carman was acquitted of manslaughter.<sup>543</sup>

From the seventeenth century, the problem of carts and cart-horses being left unattended attracted persistent criticism.<sup>544</sup> In 1687, the inhabitants of Thames Street complained that the 'Carmen, knowing that they must load in their turnes, leave their horses and Carts in the Streetes, and noebody to looke after them, whilst themselves lye in Ale-houses and not to be found, by means whereof the Streetes are pestered with Carts and lere horses.'<sup>545</sup> Partly to discourage this malpractice, turn-keeping in the streets was abolished by Act of Common Council in 1694 and, despite constant protests by the carmen, remained so throughout the

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<sup>539</sup> When vehicles were drawn by a single horse or several horses arranged in single file, two shafts were attached to either side of the rearmost animal, known as the 'wheel horse'.

<sup>540</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.40, notes that nineteenth-century films of horse traffic show that drivers tended to stare 'straight ahead (the strong point of human vision), leaving happenings to the side of horses, who have better peripheral vision.'

<sup>541</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 11 September 1767.

<sup>542</sup> OBSP, t17210712-23 (12 July 1721); OBSP, t17211011-44 (11 October 1721).

<sup>543</sup> OBSP, t17321011-33 (11 October 1732).

<sup>544</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.103.

<sup>545</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, pp.100-1. 'Lere', a variation on the adjective 'Leer' was used to describe a horse running 'loose, away', as well as a 'loose... dissolute, profligate drunkard. Charles Richardson, *A New Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford, 1839).

eighteenth century.<sup>546</sup> Nonetheless, the nuisance of unattended horse-drawn vehicles continued. In 1764, the *Public Advertiser* complained that a two-horse dray had been left fastened to a post on the south side of Westminster Bridge ‘so that if the Horses ... had taken fright, several persons might have been run over ... the leaving of dray horses thus loose, without any body by them, is a very dangerous thing, anywhere, but vastly so in so great a thoroughfare.’<sup>547</sup>

Despite the frequent vilification of carmen and draymen, it was widely acknowledged that ‘training horses for city life’ demanded considerable skill and experience. As McShane and Tarr have noted ‘Smooth handling was vital, since abrupt starts and stops could damage freight and passengers ... Poor driving could [also] weaken and even permanently injure horses’ legs.’<sup>548</sup> Controlling two horses was even more challenging than a single animal because

if one slacked, the other was overworked. Also, the outside horse worked harder in turns and was especially prone to shying or running away ... The reins had to be held firmly enough to give the horses a sense of control but not so tightly as to make the horses insensitive to changes in pressure.<sup>549</sup>

Thus, in eighteenth-century London, it was assumed that the head coachmen of a private equipage should ‘be between thirty and forty years of age.’ Before then, he would be too ‘lacking in authority.’<sup>550</sup> Inexperience was seen to exacerbate the risks posed by equine traffic and by the 1750s there were a growing concern that unprepared young ‘lads’ were being entrusted to command teams of horses in the metropolis, with dangerous consequences. In 1760, John Fielding sent the *Public Advertiser* ‘extracts from some penal Laws calculated to preserve Good-Order in the Streets of the Metropolis.’ In response to one of these, he observed that

If brewers, carmen, hackney men, brickmakers, &c who are constantly hiring fresh servants from the Country, who are strangers to these laws, would print these extracts, and give them to every new servant, it might be the means of preserving their cattle and carriages from injuries, and prevent the servants from subjecting themselves to the penalties of the said statutes.<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>546</sup> In 1757, the City Magistrates permitted ‘cars employed on wharf, crane, and tackle work’ to re-introduce turn-keeping in the immediate vicinity of the Port of London, but not in the streets of the metropolis. Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.103.

<sup>547</sup> *St James’ Chronicle*, 8 February 1763; *Public Advertiser*, 6 October 1764.

<sup>548</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.54 & p.40

<sup>549</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.40.

<sup>550</sup> F. Huggett, *Carriages at Eight* (1980), p.58.

<sup>551</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 4 October 1760.

Yet, the problem of inexperienced carmen appears to have been exacerbated by the authorities. After 1757, the City's Magistrates reduced the age limit for drivers of horse-drawn vehicles from eighteen to sixteen.<sup>552</sup> This action may have reflected the evolving nature of London's labour market. As Spence has argued, the city's age structure became 'markedly skewed toward youth, and consequently we can assume that a large proportion of the London work-force would have possessed a relatively limited stock of skill and experience.'<sup>553</sup> It is plausible that the growth of the commercial carrying sector became increasingly reliant on a younger workforce. Yet, insufficient training, physical immaturity, youthful recklessness and unfamiliarity with the dynamics of the city put 'young lads', their horses and other road users in serious danger. In 1747, the *General Evening Post* reported 'a Melancholy Accident' in Old Street, in which 'A Youth about eighteen Years of Age, Son to a Clerk of a Brewhouse ... sitting on a Dray and over-reaching himself to fetch a Blow at the Team, pitched forwards under the Wheel, which running over his Temples killed him on the spot.' The report concluded that he had only taken control of the vehicle 'two or three Minutes before the Accident happened.'<sup>554</sup>

While the shortcomings of coachmen, carmen and draymen undoubtedly exacerbated the risks posed by equine traffic, we have to consider the evolving metropolitan environment in which they were working. The expansion of London's commercial activity meant that the tempo, as well as the volume, of horse-drawn traffic was intensifying. Newspapers often observed that accidents were caused by men driving 'in a hurry' to secure business. In 1761, the *St James's Chronicle* reported that a 'young lad' crossing the street in Bishopsgate had been crushed between the wheels of two carts, one of which was hurrying 'to get first to a House in the neighbourhood' where he had been called.<sup>555</sup> This time-conscious behaviour reflected the commercial pressures faced by hackney coachmen and commercial carrying operations as the century progressed. As Dorian Gerhold has pointed out in relation to flying waggons, commercial success depended on speed and reliability, as well as respectability and the size of the overall operation.<sup>556</sup> There was a similar financial incentive for hackney coachmen to travel at speed. In June 1768, a tin-plate worker was run down as two hackney coachmen drove 'furiously' along 'Bishopsgate-street' attempting to beat the other to a fare.<sup>557</sup> As Trevor May has argued, the coachman's existence was financially precarious and often 'a hand-to-mouth

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<sup>552</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.106; this age-limit was still in place in when the *London Companion* (1773), p.103, stated that owners of carts could be fined twenty shillings if 'any person under the Age of 16' was convicted.

<sup>553</sup> C. Spence, 'Accidentally killed by a cart: Workplace, hazard, and risk in late seventeenth-century London', *European Review of History*, 3:1 (1996), p.10.

<sup>554</sup> *General Evening Post*, 8 September 1747.

<sup>555</sup> *St James's Chronicle*, 30 April 1761.

<sup>556</sup> Gerhold, *Road Transport before the Railways*, p.167.

<sup>557</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 1 June 1768.



affair.’ The system of payment likely to have been in operation in the second half of the century required coachmen to ‘bring in a certain sum each day’ or proprietors would ‘dismiss him if he drastically or consistently fell below this.’<sup>558</sup> Such harsh terms of employment suggest that to some extent, the aggressive conduct of these men was rooted in the financial necessity of chasing down fares, outdoing rival coachmen and defending their access to business by forcing other forms of equine traffic out of their way. As Jenner has suggested, the pressure to maximise journeys to build income meant hackney coachmen ‘needed assertive, even aggressive, physical skills in order to move their horses and their carriage effectively through crowded city streets.’<sup>559</sup> Like the Smithfield drovers, hackney coachmen were known for their powerful physiques and prowess in the boxing ring.<sup>560</sup> Francis Place recalled that his brother, who drove a coach in the 1780s, was ‘possessed of great muscular powers for his height.’<sup>561</sup> A careful observer of London’s horse traffic, Place surely recognised how far coachmen depended on their strength to survive in the challenging urban environment.

The susceptibility of coachmen to bouts of road rage clearly reflected the pressure of commanding horses in congested metropolitan streets. On one front, they faced obstructions caused by rising numbers of slow moving commercial carrying vehicles. The size and bulk of carts and waggons allowed their drivers to bully coachmen for best road position and to cause serious damage if they made contact. In 1731, the Old Bailey found a coachman guilty of manslaughter after punching the driver of a cart which had run against the wheel of his coach. The incident took place in Cornhill, one of the busiest thoroughfares in the metropolis. Fearing his wheel was broken the coachman angrily accosted the carman who responded abusively. Punches were thrown by both men until the coachman delivered the final fatal blow.<sup>562</sup> This case indicates that as the daily hustle and bustle of the metropolis intensified, hackney coachmen were forced to fight for survival in various ways and against equine workmen who faced similar pressures. As conditions in the street became more dangerous, they often found themselves in situations which forced rules to be broken to preserve their own life and limb, a predicament which found some sympathy in the courts. In 1736, a carter was acquitted of manslaughter despite leaving his horse’s head because he was forced to do so ‘or I should have

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<sup>558</sup> T. May, *Gondolas and Growlers: The History of the London Horse Cab* (Stroud, 1995), pp.10-11. The agreements made between proprietors and coachmen are not altogether clear. In 1830, an Inspector of Hackney Coaches claimed that ‘the old practice’ was to pay drivers between 10s and half a guinea a week. However, at the same Select Committee report quoted a hackney coachman recalling that fixed wages had proved impossible because drivers dishonestly held back money, which led to the adoption of the new system. Parliamentary Papers, vol.10 (1830), ‘Report from the Select Committee on the Hackney Coach Office’.

<sup>559</sup> Jenner, ‘Circulation and Disorder’, p.44.

<sup>560</sup> *London Evening Post*, 3 February 1739; *Middlesex Journal*, 20 October 1772; *General Evening Post*, 31 October 1786; *Gazetteer*, 4 December 1788.

<sup>561</sup> Thale (ed.), *The Autobiography of Francis Place, 1771-1854*, p.84.

<sup>562</sup> OBSP, t17311208-23 (8 December 1731).

been squeezed myself' by an oncoming dray.<sup>563</sup> While the newspapers repeatedly attributed driving from the shafts to laziness, this habit must also have been motivated by a desire to avoid being injured as a pedestrian. In 1745, it was lamented that a carman, walking alongside his cart through Bishopsgate, 'his Foot slipping, fell under the Cart, which broke one of his Ribs, and was so miserably bruised that his Life is despair'd of.'<sup>564</sup>

Coachmen and carmen were commended by some foreign visitors who were amazed by the civility of London's streets compared to the situation in other European cities. Visiting in 1762, the Frenchman Pierre-Jean Grosley described metropolitan coachmen as

good-natured and humane ... from the great care which they take to prevent the frays almost ungovernable, amidst the eternal passing and repassing of carriages in the most frequented streets, some of which are exceeding narrow ... the great care of the coachmen and Carmen to avoid them...their readiness to turn aside ... to lend each other a hand ... prevents this confusion from degenerating into one of those bloody frays which so often happen at Paris.<sup>565</sup>

Grosley's conclusions should, however, be treated with caution, considering his limited exposure to London street-life and anglophile sentiments. Having survived a night-time walk along some backstreets, he naively proclaimed 'London is the only great city in Europe where neither murders nor assassinations happen.'<sup>566</sup> His impression of the city's equine traffic would have been disputed by many well-to-do Londoners.

Metropolitan street culture clearly exacerbated the difficulties faced by horse-drawn vehicles, as well as the dangers they posed. Despite the installation of posts and raised pavements in some areas, many streets remained poorly demarcated both physically and in the minds of pedestrians. The street remained an incongruously multi-purpose space, used both for informal business and recreation. Hawkers operated throughout the city but particularly where traffic was busiest in areas such as Cheapside and Fleet Street. They were considered a major nuisance and more closely associated with beasts of burden than with pedestrians. Banned from using the sidewalk, they were forced to cry their goods in the treacherous path of oncoming vehicles.<sup>567</sup> This kind of

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<sup>563</sup> OBSP, t17360505-61 (5 May 1736).

<sup>564</sup> *St James's Evening Post*, 15 June 1745.

<sup>565</sup> M. Grosley, *A Tour to London*, vol.1 (trans, 1772), p.68.

<sup>566</sup> Grosley, *A Tour to London*, p.67.

<sup>567</sup> P. Earle, *A City full of People* (1994), pp.144-5; In 1711, a presentment to the Cornhill Wardmote complained that 'there are almost daily great numbers of men, women and children [who] frequent the end of Castle Alley in Cornhill...to hawk and cry newspapers and pamphlets, who are very troublesome

irregular behaviour could easily make horses take fright with potentially disastrous consequences. Like London's cattle droves, horses were exposed to widespread disruption caused by passers-by. In many incidences, stimuli were created accidentally as in 1762, when a gentleman's servant died after his horse bolted at 'some boys throwing snow-balls at one another in Lambeth-Marsh.'<sup>568</sup> Yet, interference also took the form of more deliberate acts of mischief and malice. Horses were frequently teased, struck and whipped by strangers. Youths and drunks were among the worst offenders. In 1761, some boys threw a hissing firework at a horse in Old Street causing it to run off and overturn its chaise.'<sup>569</sup> In some cases, animals were able to dispense their own swift justice as in 1764, when a horse being whipped by a mischievous teenager 'reared up and kicked out his brains.'<sup>570</sup>

The prevalence of accidents involving children emphasises the degree to which the street remained an open play-ground and the ease with which youngsters came into contact with horses.<sup>571</sup> The boy about to be crushed in Hogarth's *Second Stage of Cruelty* dies in an effort to retrieve his hoop whilst playing in the street. In 1778, the Old Bailey heard that a child was killed while lying on the footpath near Drury Lane with its head 'over the kirb stones, playing with its finger.' A witness recalled that the cart way was so narrow that 'there is bare room for the carriages to pass' and even though the driver was correctly guiding his horses he could not stop the vehicle in time.<sup>572</sup> Such incidents show that London's human-animal nexuses involved all kinds of resident, including children, contrary to what Keith Thomas asserted.<sup>573</sup> Donna Andrew has shown that philanthropic concern over infant deaths grew significantly in the mid-eighteenth century and has suggested that 'each infant life lost in London's back alleys meant the death of a potential colonist, consumer, or tamer of England's new territory.'<sup>574</sup> Considering the regularity with which London's newspapers reported infant traffic accidents, it seems plausible that such concerns fed into wider street improvement debate. However, society continued to blame accidents on the guardians of equine traffic rather than on the parents who allowed their children to play in the streets. Penelope Corfield has argued that the challenge of walking in the streets of London 'produced a certain alertness and smartness in its

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to the shopkeepers thereabouts and to the Gentlemen who frequent the Exchange.' GL, MS 4069/2, vol. 1, (fol.215r).

<sup>568</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 12 March 1762.

<sup>569</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 22 June 1761.

<sup>570</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 16 April 1764.

<sup>571</sup> McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*, p.169.

<sup>572</sup> OBSP, t17780603-45 (3 June 1778).

<sup>573</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, p.182.

<sup>574</sup> D.T. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police* (1989), p.104.

population.’<sup>575</sup> The frequency of equine traffic accidents in this period suggests that many lessons were still to be learned.

Having discussed the threat posed by equine traffic, I now wish to consider the ways in which the metropolis sought to regulate it. As I have already suggested, social and cultural blame for accidents focussed heavily on the plebeian guardians of equine traffic. After the restoration and increasingly by the middle of the eighteenth century, this tendency was reflected in and re-enforced by developments in policing and traffic legislation. Parliament, the City Magistracy and the parishes of Westminster made repeated attempts to regulate equine traffic, to free the streets from vehicle obstruction, to protect buildings and pavements from vehicle damage and to improve the security of pedestrians. In the 1750s and 1760s, these concerns developed a new impetus as part of major campaigns to improve London’s streets. In criticising eighteenth-century Improvement Commissions, Sidney and Beatrice Webb complained that their work was not undertaken to improve public health but to secure ‘greater protection for life and property, and primarily ... the greater comfort and convenience in passing along the streets.’<sup>576</sup> Yet, in highlighting this neglect of public health issues, the Webbs downplayed the significance of efforts to police equine traffic in this period.<sup>577</sup>

The growing impulse to regulate the guardians of equine traffic reflected both their importance to the order of London’s streets and the potential threat they posed to the progress of the civilised metropolis. Jenner has shown that hackney coachmen played a crucial role in this debate, arguing that after the Restoration, the hackney coach trade became one of ‘the most regulated sections of the early modern economy’.<sup>578</sup> Carmen and draymen have received considerably less attention, however, so I will focus primarily on their experience. Firstly, it is important to understand that developments in the eighteenth century were rooted in a long history of traffic regulation in the city. Detailed rules for commercial carrying vehicles had emerged by the end of Elizabeth I’s reign. In 1586, an Act of Common Council ruled that no carter was to ‘ryde or drive his horse or trot in the street’ and must ‘leade him by the Coller.’<sup>579</sup> By the seventeenth century, a detailed code of conduct had evolved to govern the behaviour of carmen. They were to lead their horses with a halter not more than a yard long, stand at their heads when stationary and never break into a trot. It was also made illegal to ‘make an empty

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<sup>575</sup> P. Corfield, ‘Walking the City Streets: The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Urban History*, 16:2 (1990), p.140.

<sup>576</sup> S. & B. Webb, *English Local Government*: 4 (1922), p.274.

<sup>577</sup> Sweet, *The English Town, 1680-1840*, pp.80-1; J.M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London, 1660-1750* (2001), pp.124-26.

<sup>578</sup> Jenner, ‘Circulation and Disorder’, p.47 & p.42; Jenner points out that between 1660 and 1740 alone, Parliament received twenty proposals for regulating hackney coachmen.

<sup>579</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, pp.25-6.

cart go faster than a loaded one', to use 'more than one horse, except for pulling laden carts up the hills from the riverside' or to leave 'horses and cars unattended'.<sup>580</sup> By the end of the 1600s, the enforcement of these rules was encouraging new forms of proto-street policing. After 1617, the Company of Woodmongers was ordered to appoint three officers to watch the activities of carmen near the Tower and on London Bridge and two more to supervise car stands.<sup>581</sup> Between 1668 and 1757, the governors of Christ's Hospital kept 'several persons constantly to attend in the Streets' to apprehend carmen and held regular committees to levy fines.<sup>582</sup> After 1680, the Fellowship of Carmen itself dispatched two 'Assistants' to 'Walk the streets weekly in rotation and endeavour to prevent all misbehaviour of the Carmen and likewise of all little boys, not bound, going with any Horse and Cart.' According to Eric Bennett, 'this personal supervision of the streets' continued throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>583</sup>

Over the course of the 1700s, the growth of the city and escalating disruption caused by equine traffic stimulated a significant upsurge in legislative action, culminating in the street improvement campaigns of the 1750s and 1760s. The century began with relatively modest action, reiterating previous rules. In 1715, parliament outlawed the practice of driving commercial carrying vehicles without having 'some other Person or Persons on foot to guide or conduct' from the horse's head. By this malpractice, it was repeated, 'aged and other Persons, and Children, are frequently maimed, wounded and killed.'<sup>584</sup> By the middle of the century, the volume of traffic on London's streets had risen substantially and the nuisance caused by horse-drawn vehicles appeared to represent a greater threat than ever before to London's progress. Like the 'over-drove' ox, the equine accident became a focal point of metropolitan improvement debate in the 1750s and 1760s. This process involved multi-layered discourse between parliament, the Magistracy and parish vestries as well as the city's newspapers and their affluent readers on how to bring order to the streets. By the 1760s, the Westminster and City Paving Acts were taking important steps to improve traffic circulation by removing obstructions, including unattended vehicles.<sup>585</sup> Increasingly, elevated pavements and bollards were introduced on major thoroughfares to protect pedestrians and property from equine traffic.<sup>586</sup> The paving commissioners also assumed new powers to regulate the behaviour of horse-drawn vehicles and

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<sup>580</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.84.

<sup>581</sup> In 1654, a further Act of Common Council called for an extra six officers to patrol the streets, Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.39 & p.50.

<sup>582</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.75, 83.

<sup>583</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.93.

<sup>584</sup> Public Act, 1 Geo II, Stat.2, c.52.

<sup>585</sup> Westminster Paving Acts: 2 Geo III, c.21 (1762); 3 Geo III, c.23 (1763); 4 Geo III, c.39 (1764); 5 Geo III, c.50 (1765); 6 Geo III, c.54 (1766); City of London Paving Acts: 6 Geo III, c.26 (1766); 8 Geo III, c.21 (1768).

<sup>586</sup> Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder', p.43. Jonas Hanway believed these 'posts' to be unique to London and 'an excellent security to the foot passenger,' *A Letter to Mr John Spranger* (1754), pp.20-21.

apprehend felonious drivers. From 1762, parish officers in Westminster were able to seize the vehicles and horses of anyone who ‘may occasion any annoyance, nuisance, or obstruction whatever.’<sup>587</sup> When the Act was amended the following year, an additional clause was added to punish those who drove any vehicle ‘on any of the foot pavements’ of Westminster.<sup>588</sup> As well as seeking to protect the architectural fabric of the metropolis, such regulations were aimed at preventing accidents involving horse-drawn vehicles and prosecuting men for dangerous driving. These developments appear to have been linked to a subtle, but significant ‘strengthening of the view’ in the second half of the eighteenth century, ‘that men ought to be held more accountable for actions that led to serious injuries and deaths, even when they did not intend them.’<sup>589</sup>

From the late 1740s and throughout the 1750s and 1760s, debate surrounding the equine accident was energetically played out in London’s newspapers in what represented a concerted journalistic campaign to promote street improvement. Following the same technique used for ‘over-drove’ ox, I surveyed the Burney Collection for reports relating to accidents involving commercial carrying vehicles in the mid-eighteenth century. The data, presented in **Table 17**, indicates that between 1740–48, an average of just 3.6 accidents were reported annually. Yet, in the four years, 1749–52, this figure rose almost five-fold to sixteen. Average annual reporting then declined to 8.9 in the period 1749–52 before rising again to 12.5 in 1753–63. As I suggested in relation to the ‘over-drove’ ox, the prevalence of accident reports in London’s newspapers was determined to a considerable extent by the ebb and flow of battle reporting between 1740 and 1769.<sup>590</sup> However, well-documented legislative and cultural developments in the period 1748–52 indicate another explanation for the dramatic increase in newspaper reporting of cart and dray accidents at this time.

In 1750, Parliament passed a new Public Act ‘for the more effectual preventing of mischiefs occasioned by ... drivers riding upon carts, drays, carrs, and waggons’ in the metropolis without some person on foot to guide the horses.<sup>591</sup> The legislation emerged during a ‘period of extreme anxiety’ about crime and disorder in the capital which ‘rose to such a level of panic by 1750 and 1751’ that an unprecedented parliamentary committee was established to examine its causes and

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<sup>587</sup> Public Act, 2 Geo III, c.21.

<sup>588</sup> Public Act, 4 Geo III, c.39.

<sup>589</sup> Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, p.89.

<sup>590</sup> E. Snell, ‘Discourses of criminality’, p.16. Twice as many commercial carrying accidents were reported in the peace-time period of 1764–69 as in the conflict period of 1755–63. This rate of increase is considerably lower than that for ‘over-drove ox’ accidents, which saw a five-fold rise, possibly because cart accidents were far more commonly reported in the 1750s than bullock accidents. As a result, newspapers may have decided to restrict additional reporting to avoid excessive repetition.

<sup>591</sup> Public Act, 24 Geo II, c.43.

action to be taken.<sup>592</sup> In the months which followed the 1750 legislation, Henry Fielding, Chief Westminster Magistrate, unveiled his *Enquiry into the Late Increase of Robbers*, his major aim being to engage ‘private citizens in the tracking and arrest of offenders’ including dangerous drivers.<sup>593</sup> A month later, in February 1751, his friend, William Hogarth, published *The Second Stage of Cruelty*, depicting a drayman committing precisely the crime condemned by the new Act.<sup>594</sup> Historians have tended to view Hogarth’s dray vignette as a general representation of cruelty and carelessness.<sup>595</sup> Yet, as Ronald Paulson has asserted, the *Four Stages of Cruelty* mirrored Fielding’s *Enquiry* in what would be their final collaboration.<sup>596</sup> By the time Hogarth’s print was in circulation, Fielding was already using the new traffic legislation to prosecute draymen and carmen. On 15 June 1751, the *London Daily Advertiser* congratulated ‘Magistrate Fielding’ on convicting ‘no less than nine persons for riding on the shafts’ of their carts without anyone guiding the horse.<sup>597</sup> There seems little reasonable doubt that Hogarth and Fielding were well aware of the progress of the 1750 legislation and of one another’s activities. It was in this context, that London’s newspapers dramatically increased their reporting of dray and cart accidents. During the two years preceding the Act, this coverage was aimed at promoting legislative action by identifying both the frequency of incidents and the inadequacy of existing policing. The earliest indication of this appeared in the autumn of 1748 when the *London Evening Post* called it ‘remarkable’ that a woman was ‘the second person run over by the same drayman within a year past.’<sup>598</sup> A few months later, another report blamed the death of an oyster woman on ‘the Villainy of the Driver: He was called to several times, but being sat on the Shafts, could not stop the Horses.’<sup>599</sup>

In the two years which followed the passing of the Act, the same newspapers appeared to be evaluating its success and encouraging the public to help enforce the law. Reports celebrated convictions, expressed frustration when offenders evaded arrest and encouraged readers to be more vigilant in their surveillance of the streets. In April 1751, the *London Daily Advertiser* was pleased to report that ‘two Draymen, who were riding on the Shafts of their Dray in Holborn, were taken from thence by the Populace ... and carried before a Magistrate, the fore Horse

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<sup>592</sup> Beattie, *Policing and Punishment*, p.420.

<sup>593</sup> Beattie, *Policing and Punishment*, p.420.

<sup>594</sup> H. Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Late Increase of Robbers, &c. with some Proposals for Remedying this Growing Evil* (1751).

<sup>595</sup> R. Paulson, *Hogarth’s Graphic Works* (3rd edn, London, 1989), pp.149-50; R. Paulson, *Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times*, vol.2 (New Haven & London, 1971).

<sup>596</sup> R. Paulson, *The Life of Henry Fielding: A Critical Biography* (Oxford & Malden, 2000), p.271 & p.276, one of the most significant achievements of the Fielding-Hogarth collaboration was the passage of the Gin Act of 1751, which dramatically reduced the annual consumption of gin in England.

<sup>597</sup> *London Daily Advertiser*, 15 June 1751.

<sup>598</sup> *London Evening Post*, 1 September 1748.

<sup>599</sup> *Old England*, 19 November 1748.



having thrown down a Boy who was crossing the way.’<sup>600</sup> Soon after, the *London Daily Advertiser* congratulated Fielding on convicting nine men for riding from the shafts.<sup>601</sup> Yet in February 1752, after the death of another child, the same title implored

every man who sees these daring Villains sitting on their shafts or in their carts, and driving without any person to hold and guide the hindmost horse, to stop and secure them, in order to their being properly punished as the Law directs.<sup>602</sup>

In June 1752, the *General Advertiser* triumphantly announced that Justice Thomas Lediard had convicted three men ‘for riding on the shafts of their carts, contrary to the Act of Parliament ... [and] they were obliged to pay the penalty of 20s. each.’<sup>603</sup> In the 1750s, London’s newspapers not only encouraged their readers to report errant drivers but to seize them. In its rallying cry of February 1752, the *London Daily Advertiser* emphasised that ‘any person has a right to stop such offenders, and carry them before the next Magistrate, or to take the Number of their carts, and give information accordingly’.<sup>604</sup> This remarkable journalistic behaviour suggests that by the mid-eighteenth century, newspapers may have played a far more complex and important role in society than even Nicholas Rogers, Peter King and Esther Snell have previously suggested.<sup>605</sup> Above all, however, this evidence reveals the remarkable degree to which horse-drawn vehicles were seen to threaten the progress of the metropolis.

In 1757, the authorities again sought to increase surveillance of equine traffic. Parliament ordered that all waggons, carts and drays must bare the name of their owner and an identification number.<sup>606</sup> The licensing and marking of carts was well-established by the end of Elizabeth’s reign and by the late-seventeenth century vehicles were fitted with a brass number plate and branded as proof of licence.<sup>607</sup> Yet, the new legislation was remarkable because it compelled all commercial carrying vehicles to register their details with the Commissioners of the Hackney Coach Office for the first time, thus centralising London’s horse-drawn traffic into a single regulatory machine. It also gave Magistrates the right to lay down their own by-laws and to exact penalties. These fines were to be levied by the Justices of the Peace and ‘divided

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<sup>600</sup> *London Daily Advertiser*, 24 April 1751.

<sup>601</sup> *London Daily Advertiser*, 15 June 1751.

<sup>602</sup> *London Daily Advertiser*, 6 February 1752.

<sup>603</sup> *General Advertiser*, 13 June 1752.

<sup>604</sup> *London Daily Advertiser*, 15 June 1751.

<sup>605</sup> King, ‘Newspaper reporting and attitudes to crime and justice’, pp.73-112; Rogers, ‘Confronting the crime wave’, pp.77-98; Snell, ‘Discourses of criminality’, pp.13-47.

<sup>606</sup> Public Act, 30 Geo II, c.22.

<sup>607</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.20.

equally between the informer and the poor of the parish in which the offence had occurred.’<sup>608</sup> The Act not only made the machinery of surveillance more efficient but promoted the reporting of dangerous driving, public action which Hogarth had endorsed in the *Second Stage of Cruelty* (**Plate 23**). In the shadows of Tom Nero’s hackney carriage, a young man can be seen noting down his licence plate number in an attempt to bring justice and order back to the streets of London. By the end of the 1750s, the process of apprehending and punishing the drivers of carts, drays and hackney coaches had taken significant steps forward. The growing disruption caused by horse-drawn traffic can be seen as a significant spur to advances in policing in this period. Yet, these achievements were very far from complete and the problem of equine traffic accidents remained a serious threat throughout the second half of the century. Hackney coachmen, carmen and draymen regularly defied attempts to regulate and punish their behaviour, exposing deep limitations in the policing of the metropolis. London’s newspapers continued to complain of drivers escaping arrest, as in 1765, when the *Public Advertiser* reported that

two draymen ... were riding on the shafts of their Drays thro’ Kennington-lane contrary to Act of Parliament’ when ‘one of the Beadles of Lambeth passing by, reproved them for not taking care of their Fore-horses, and on his threatening to have them convicted, they beat him in a very cruel manner, and went off without meeting with any punishment.’<sup>609</sup>

Critical reporting of this kind reflected a general tendency among newspapers to emphasise ‘first the inadequacies of the criminal justice system and secondly societal disunity regarding the fighting of crime.’<sup>610</sup> It would be misleading, therefore, to infer from this evidence how successfully the law was being enforced. While the Lambeth beadle failed to apprehend the draymen, his presence and efforts to do so suggest that parish authorities were taking determined action to regulate horse-drawn traffic as an integral part of their street improvement strategies. In the parish of St James’s beadles were called to ‘attend every Lord’s Day at the Church and Chappels of the Parish, Viz: four at the Church, and one at each chapel to prevent any disturbances happening there from Coaches and Chairs ... and take the numbers of such Hackney Coaches and Chairs as shall oppose them, that they may be prosecuted for such offences.’<sup>611</sup> In elite parishes, the policing of equine traffic was strictly hierarchical and the guidelines given to St James’s beadles clearly prioritised the convenience and security of private

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<sup>608</sup> Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen*, p.106.

<sup>609</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 2 October 1765.

<sup>610</sup> Snell, ‘Discourses of criminality’, p.33.

<sup>611</sup> WCA, STJ/D/1/8/1761, St James’s, Piccadilly Vestry Minute Book, 2 June 1756.

carriage owners. In turn, other vehicles were forced to observe a strict code of ‘deferential choreography.’<sup>612</sup> Both cases suggest that London’s parish authorities may have been considerably more capable of developing ‘dynamic and thoughtful ways’ of policing their wards than the Webbs acknowledged.<sup>613</sup>

At the same time, the draymen’s angry response in Lambeth is another indication that the guardians of equine traffic felt increasingly victimised in this period. It was widely acknowledged that these men required considerable skill and experience to command their horse-drawn vehicles. As well as being amazed by the size of dray-horses, onlookers considered their guardians ‘a race apart’. Consequently, they developed a ‘proper sense of pride ... in the world of plebeian aristocracy’.<sup>614</sup> Yet, by the mid-eighteenth century these men faced vitriolic criticism and regulatory harassment which increasingly questioned their conduct and abilities. Thus, in 1797, when the hackney coach proprietors feared the ‘Office of Police’ might take over from the Hackney Coach Board, they complained: ‘[they] always treated us like Criminals [and] with much rigour and hostility have fined us beyond our ability and beyond all reason.’<sup>615</sup> The evidence provided by the Old Bailey proceedings, coroners’ depositions and newspaper reports suggests that plebeian drivers of horse-drawn vehicles had considerable responsibility for the accidents which scarred the streets of eighteenth-century London. Yet, they also had good reason to feel they were scapegoats for incidents beyond their control.

Equine accidents reflected the impossibility of taming horses to live and work harmoniously in such an incongruous environment. No amount of regulation or policing could resolve this fundamental discord between the horse and the urban environment. Like cattle, therefore, horses represented a major obstacle to eighteenth-century improvement, their recalcitrant behaviour constantly threatening the order of the street and the safety of pedestrians and other road users. The determination to regulate equine traffic throughout the eighteenth century reveals the powerful underlying tension, running through London’s diverse human-animal nexuses, between untamed nature and the expectations of rational society. Above all, these findings highlight the startling significance of non-human, animal agency in the metropolitan environment.<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>612</sup> Jenner, ‘Circulation and Disorder’, p.44.

<sup>613</sup> Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies*, p.36.

<sup>614</sup> Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England*, pp.78-9.

<sup>615</sup> PRO, T1 / 795.

<sup>616</sup> DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*; McShane & Tarr, *The Horse in the City*.

**APPENDIX****Table 16: Vehicle type and basic summary of cause of death recorded for Coroners Records of City of London and Southwark, 1790-1830.<sup>617</sup>**

	Waggon	Cart	Dray	Carriage or Coach	Chaise or chariot	Vehicle not specified	Total
<b>Thrown from</b>	0	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2 (1.4%)</b>
<b>Fell from ... (including those who then fell under wheels of own vehicle)</b>	3	5	0	2	0	0	<b>10 (7.0%)</b>
<b>Run over by wheels of</b>	23	33	5	21	1	32	<b>115 (80.4%)</b>
<b>Crushed between wall or post by</b>	3	7	0	0	0	0	<b>10 (7%)</b>
<b>Struck by</b>	0	4	0	1	1	0	<b>6 (4.2%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29 (20.3%)</b>	<b>50 (35.0%)</b>	<b>5 (3.5%)</b>	<b>24 (16.7%)</b>	<b>3 (2.1%)</b>	<b>32 (22.4%)</b>	<b>143 (100%)</b>

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<sup>617</sup> CLA / 041 / IQ / 02, index file held by LMA.

**Table 17:** Accidents involving carts, drays and waggons reported by London's newspapers, January 1740 - December 1769.

Year	Cart accidents reported	Dray Accidents reported	Waggon Accidents reported	Total Commercial Carrier Accidents reported
1740	3	0	0	3
1741	2	0	0	2
1742	0	0	0	0
1743	3	0	0	3
1744	2	0	0	2
1745	1	1	2	4
1746	5	0	1	6
1747	6	0	0	6
1748	2	4	0	6
<b>Average per annum (1740 - 1748)</b>				<b>3.6</b>
1749	9	9	0	18
1750	6	5	0	11
1751	19	1	1	20
1752	14	1	0	15
<b>Average per annum (1749-1752)</b>				<b>16.0</b>
1753	5	2	0	7
1754	5	0	0	5
1755	4	2	1	7
1756	4	4	1	9
1757	6	5	0	11
1758	7	2	1	10
1759	9	2	0	11
1760	7	3	1	11
1761	12	3	0	15
1762	5	1	0	6
1763	5	1	0	6
<b>Average per annum (1753-1763)</b>				<b>8.9</b>
1764	15	1	1	17
1765	16	5	0	21
1766	6	0	0	6
1767	11	1	0	12
1768	11	3	0	14
1769	5	0	0	5
<b>Average per annum (1764 – 1769)</b>	<b>11</b>			<b>12.5</b>

## CONCLUSION

The evidence presented above shows that by 1800, thousands of horses and livestock were at large in the British metropolis, contributing to and intruding upon every aspect of its daily life. Far from being isolated from nature, as Keith Thomas suggests, Londoners were engaged in increasingly diverse and complex human-animal nexuses which underpinned the dynamics of the city to a remarkable extent. Contemporary discourse on all matters of urban life continually referred to these animals, leaving a wealth of evidence for historians to examine their pervasive influence. I have shown that the multi-faceted role played by the metropolitan beast demands a fundamental shift in historical enquiry away from debates centred on the rise of kindness and humanitarianism, towards the integration of animals into wider urban historiographies and a demonstration of how the presence of animals shaped urban existence. For several decades, as DeJohn Anderson notes, 'environmental historians have taken animals seriously as agents of historical change.'<sup>618</sup> Yet, there has been a lingering tendency to view cities as being somehow divorced from this process, as if they were produced only by human endeavour and social relations. Such an approach threatens to exaggerate the artificial characteristics of cities and to downplay their complex relationship with the natural world. Furthermore, the category of the social has rarely acknowledged the extent of human interaction with animals in the eighteenth-century metropolis. This dissertation thus highlights a pressing methodological need for historians to move towards a more environmental history of London, and other cities, which considers the agency and impact of people and animals together.

As well as having important ramifications for the social and the urban, this approach challenges traditional notions of modernity, in which the non-human has too often been marginalised. Crucially, this study has sought to reintegrate animal technologies into histories of modernity. I have shown that the expansion and success of London in this period would not have been possible without horses to power its production, to distribute its goods and to provide mobility for its residents. The rise of metropolitan brewing provides an emphatic demonstration that the age-old utility of equine power complemented, and was itself promoted by, the radical innovation of steam. Moreover, the urban beast reveals that modernity was produced in diverse spaces, many of which have been overlooked or discounted by traditional studies. Smithfield market has tended to be viewed from the perspective of its eventual demise and considered as an archaic obstacle to modernity. Yet, I have shown that eighteenth-century Smithfield was an important metropolitan showcase of agricultural and commercial progress. The power of

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<sup>618</sup> DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, p.4.

animals to shape modernity was clear to see in the construction of the metropolis itself. Horses and livestock placed such high demands on public space that they exercised a dramatic influence on London's built environment, from street widening and bridge construction to brewery yards and polite estates. At the same time, their constant need for human care created distinctive occupational types and set the rhythms of daily life for thousands of Londoners.

Animal agency proved itself to be independent of, and often opposed to, the expectations of human rationality. The alter ego of the co-operative working animal, the rampaging bullock and the wild-eyed horse, frequently defied Enlightenment conviction in human authority over nature. At its most destructive and antagonistic, the recalcitrant beast posed a major threat to the order of the metropolis, both as a source of accidents and as an object of plebeian sport. In its myriad interactions, the urban beast often appeared to unsettle social hierarchies, empowering men from the lower orders who were entrusted with their care and good behaviour. Thus, to adapt Virginia DeJohn Anderson's poignant phrase, animals not only produced changes in the fabric of the city but also in the 'hearts and minds and behaviour of the peoples who dealt with them.'<sup>619</sup>

By examining the activities of the urban beast, historians can gain remarkable access to previously unseen, and overlooked, aspects of the eighteenth-century metropolis. These animals undoubtedly expose far greater diversity in London's geographies, not to mention its social and cultural life, than has previously been acknowledged. The capital has primarily been viewed as a centre of politeness, dominated by the West End, but the brewer's horse highlights the city's crucial role as a hub of production and distribution. Analysis of Smithfield Market reveals that while agricultural improvement was rooted in the countryside, it was the formidable power of London's demand for meat on the hoof that directed its progress. In the fashionable West End, the carriage horse leads us into a sprawling equine service world, upon which polite sociability itself depended.

This study has focussed primarily on horses and cattle, species which were ubiquitous and enormously influential in the metropolitan context. Yet, animal London comprised a far broader spectrum of life than I have been able to discuss here. As Donald has observed, the 'variety of species and purposes' in the capital was so 'complex it would fill a volume.'<sup>620</sup> A comprehensive ecological survey of this kind is necessary, however, if we are to understand how this great city developed. A key challenge for this project would be to examine how London's unique demand for agricultural produce impacted upon its relationship with nature.

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<sup>619</sup> DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, p.5.

<sup>620</sup> Donald, "Beastly Sights", p.49.



The Smithfield livestock trade represents just one element of this. While the cattle and sheep which this enterprise brought to London tended only to remain there for short periods, large numbers of dairy cows and urban swine were permanently housed in the city. As some historians have noted, these animals provided an important service, turning waste products generated by brewing and distilling into food.<sup>621</sup> Intriguingly, this kind of inner-city husbandry appears to blur the boundary between notions of rural agriculture and urban industry, in ways which demand closer examination. At the same time, this research would reveal further human-animal nexuses, each enhancing our knowledge of metropolitan contexts.

Recent work has shown the remarkable extent to which British and imperial histories were intertwined with exotic products such as tea, porcelain and calico.<sup>622</sup> One could develop a similar kind of analysis for two- and four-legged animals. By the end of the eighteenth century, no visit to London was complete without seeing the capital's menageries of exotic beasts, particularly those displayed at the Tower of London and Exeter 'Change.<sup>623</sup> By revealing the influence of these animals on natural philosophy, fine art, anatomy and natural history, the eighteenth-century menagerie may begin to challenge the Victorian zoo's historiographical dominance.<sup>624</sup> The influence of animals as agents of urban nuisance also demands far greater attention. On a daily basis, horses and livestock undermined the improvement of the metropolis by contaminating its streets with noise, dung, foul stench and the threat of disease.<sup>625</sup> As indicated by Hogarth's streetscapes, dogs were ubiquitous features of the eighteenth-century city and, like the 'over-drove' ox they too created forms of disorder which underscored tensions between polite society and the lower orders. The impact of rodents and other pests, arguably the largest animal group in the city, is perhaps worthy of a volume all to itself.<sup>626</sup>

The urban beast underpinned the life of eighteenth-century London in ways that this study has only begun to reveal. The full extent of this profound animal influence remains to be explored.

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<sup>621</sup> R. Perren, 'Markets and Marketing' in Mingay (ed.), *The Agrarian History*, 6 (1989), pp.255; C. Breeze 'Feeding Methods' in *The Agrarian History*, p.357; P. Mathias, *The Brewing Industry* (1959), p.42.

<sup>622</sup> J.E. Willis, 'European consumption and Asian production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in J. Brewer and R. Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993), pp.133-147; J. Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800* (1997); S.W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985); J. De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (2008); M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2005).

<sup>623</sup> D. Hahn, *The Tower Menagerie* (London, 2003).

<sup>624</sup> R.J. Hoage & W. A. Deiss (eds), *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore & London, 1996); H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate* (1987), pp.205-253; N. Rothfels, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore & London, 2002).

<sup>625</sup> E. Cockayne, *Hubbub* (2007), p.148 & p.213; R. Malcolmson & S. Mistoris, *The English Pig: A History* (London & Rio Grande, 1998);

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