Catering and Hospitality Trade Press Periodicals: Their Emergence, Their Memories, Their Preservation

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Abstract

In Victorian England, cultural, industrial, technological, and financial flows led to two industries being subject to processes of professionalisation: catering and hospitality, and the independent press. As such, a new form of media emerged, the trade press, which catered for those working in the catering and hospitality industry. This press content documents not only the industry's operations, but also the aspirations and attitudes of employees, their employers, and other key stakeholders. This allows for us to glimpse into past lifeworlds and extract forgotten memories. We are able to witness how ethnoscapes characterised the trade, but also led to integration conflicts. Hence, uniting, while segregating those involved in the rise of restaurant dining with varying consequences. Nationalistic voices clash with cosmopolitan ideals in the pages of these periodicals. Yet, these sources remain underutilised, while endowing historicity. The reasons for this may be because of issues with archival cataloguing and the scale of this material, as Shattock and Wolff (1982) have suggested. To add to this, I propose that this is due to the exigent nature of locating appropriate titles, which are often hardcopy, and the limited scholarship published on the topic of working with such sources. Accordingly, this paper seeks to not only supply details of these periodicals and their value, but calls for their preservation, via digitalisation, so that those interested in the history of food, now and in the future, might engage with and learn from these rich resources.

Keywords

Catering; hospitality; trade press periodicals; journalism; professionalism; Victorian; Edwardian; London; immigration; nationalism.

Past research that I have undertaken has focused on the catering and hospitality industry in the Victorian and Edwardian eras in London, and how professionalisation changed the way labour was managed and its products were consumed. Trade press periodicals enabled me to glimpse past lifeworlds and engage with voices from the period. Yet, these sources appear to be underutilised, difficult to work with, and are not always well maintained. This paper therefore seeks to not only supply details of these periodicals and their value but calls for their preservation

via digitalisation. It begins with a brief historical contextual overview, before giving a more detailed account of the trade press. A case study, which employs such sources, with the aim of showcasing their worth, then provides an account of how ethnoscapes led to integration conflicts. Appendix 1 supports this section by detailing the materials that have been used. Lastly, I turn to making a case for the conservation of these periodicals, so that those who are interested in the history of food, now and in the future, might engage with and learn from them.

Historical Contextual Overview

In late nineteenth-century England, restaurant dining was becoming a norm for the upper class. Prior to this, their meals, which were typically prepared by private chefs, were customarily consumed in the home environment. Yet Victorian England was changing and with it the way that people dined. One pivotal change was in transportation infrastructures, which enabled people, and therefore cultures and finances, to cross borders with more ease and efficiency than ever before. Key to this was a rapid rise in industrialisation, which also enabled both the launch of grand hotels and restaurants to cater for the newly acquired tastes of the wealthy and the rise of independent publishing as an industry in England.

After the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, "Victorian culture was dominated by an ever-expanding world of print" (King and Plunkett 2004, 1).[1] "A tremendous increase in the volume of books, newspapers and periodicals was matched by a corresponding development of the first mass reading public" (King and Plunkett 2004, 1). The newly established independent publishing industry, as opposed to one that was regulated by the state, opened the way for contemporary publications and writing styles.

In parallel with this new way of dining, early authors and journalists began writing for their new audiences about food and those who prepared and served it. Articles on food, dining etiquette, and restaurant operations became commonplace in English newspapers, which also showcased a new type of subjective journalism, known today as the "restaurant review." Non-fiction books, too, dedicated pages to this different way of dining. The trade press, commonly referred to today as the "business-to-business (B2B) press" (McKay 2013, 29), also started offering a platform to those working in the hospitality industry, and it is these publications that this paper will focus on and that I hope might be preserved.

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[1] These taxes were composed of taxes on newspapers (stamp duty), taxes on advertising, and taxes on paper. They were "first raised in 1712 but maintained for one hundred and fifty years" and served "to make pamphlets and newspapers too expensive for the majority of people" (Chalaby 1994, 142).

The Early Trade Press

Authors writing on the topic of news media and journalism in the Victorian and Edwardian eras have tended to focus specifically on "newspapers" in the modern sense of the term, i.e., a printed publication that contains "news" on a broad variety of topics. However, "newspapers" in the Victorian and Edwardian periods also filled specific niches and were published as weekly or monthly periodicals.[2] There are very few academic sources that document this, which can make it difficult to know where and how to find them. In their edited volume on the Victorian periodical press, Vann and VanArsdel (1994) remarked that while there was a mass of periodicals published in the period, people seldom use them or write about them. Shattock and Wolff, in their volume on the same topic, suggested that this could be down to the "sheer bulk and range of the Victorian press" and the "inadequacy of most existing reference works, the uncertainties of cataloguing, and the vague but all-too-familiar feeling that there are literally millions of serial articles out there" (Shattock and Wolff 1982, xiii).

The development of press material, published for specific audiences, had a history virtually identical to the more general newspapers (Mansey 2022).[3] They too flourished after the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, and advancements in technology. The electric telegraph system and developments in transportation played a vital role. New technology brought them news on their niche topics from other parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and from Europe and beyond, and this emphasis on cross-cultural content enabled them to sell their publications in other countries. The expense of utilising this new technology also appears to have benefited some periodicals but hindered others. Lastly, in the trade press periodicals that appealed to those working or interested in the catering and hospitality industry, the editors and writers experimented with the inclusion of different thematic material, writing styles, and ways of presenting content.

To explore the development of a press that catered for special interests, and to provide a concrete example of trade press content, I now turn to an article in *The Hotel Review*. Published in the March 1886 edition, the article was entitled "Catering and Journalism" and provided a description of the trade press' expansion. The reason that the journal was publishing such content, which would normally have been out of place in a publication with such a specific topical focus, was because the journal was now being published "distinct from, though still associated with, the *Tourist and*

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[2] Many of the trade press periodicals that I have consulted clearly stated that they were "Registered with the G.P.O. as a Newspaper." "G.P.O." stands for General Post Office, and newspapers had to be registered in order for them to be circulated using the Post Office's services.

[3] For a detailed history of the Victorian and Edwardian general newspaper press in Britain, see Chalaby, 1994; Chalaby, 1998; Curran and Seaton, [1981] 2018; King and Plunkett, 2004; and Williams, [1998] 2006.

Traveller," which was another journal (*The Hotel Review* 1886, 8). Thus, *The Hotel Review* "suggests a few general remarks on the relations between catering – to take the hotel, restaurant, food and refreshment-contracting trades as a whole – and journalism" (*The Hotel Review* 1886, 8).

As put by the author: "In these go-ahead days there is hardly a trade under the sun that has not its representative organ in the press, or, sometimes several competing organs" (*The Hotel Review* 1886, 8).[4] Regardless of where you were in the United Kingdom and what trade you followed, there was likely to be a publication that appealed to you. These journals, which were normally published in London, had become incredibly diverse and served almost every trade from "outfitting" to "equestrian care."[5] As *The Hotel Review* told their readers:

> For a long time the hotel and catering interest, as distinguished from the purely beer-shop and public house element, had no paper it could call its own. Nor did it seem particularly anxious to have one. It was content to jog along unaided and unprotected […] But it woke up gradually, as other trades have done, to the inevitable and unavoidable necessity of having journalistic representation; one evidence of this being the fact that it is no longer indifferent to the advocacy and assistance of *The Hotel Review* (*The Hotel Review* 1886, 8).

A theme that emerges in both the above extract and in Vann and VanArsdel's (1994) edited volume is that of "professionalism." There was a "sense of emergent professionalism throughout the nineteenth century in nearly all walks of life" (Vann and VanArsdel 1994, 5). It is argued that this increase of an emphasis on professionalism was largely due to rapid industrial and technological change, the rise in bureaucratic capitalist processes, and increased competition in the (labour) market, which meant that older industries were becoming different and new industries were emerging. As such, in the midst of change, people were looking to distinguish themselves as possessing cultural capital in their chosen vocation, and the trade press offered to aid them with this. Furthermore, it also promised to be a "guide, philosopher and friend" (*The Hotel Review* 1886, 8).

These journals were seldom written by a few individuals intent on producing a text capable of linear communication. They contained a multitude of voices and actively encouraged reader engagement. Thus, in their pages we not only see factual information concerning the industry and its operations, but also the aspirations,

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[4] As posited by Gregory: "Authorial anonymity was a common – if controversial – practice in both the daily papers and the monthly press in the Victorian period" (Gregory 2003, 89), and this practice clearly continued into the Edwardian era. Hence, articles are frequently unattributed or footed by a pseudonym.

[5] For example, *Horse and Hound* was first published on 29th March 1884 (*Horse and Hound* 2005) and *The Drapers' Record* was first published on 6th August 1887 (Musgrave 2022). *Horse and Hound,* and *The Drapers' Record,* which was renamed, *Drapers,* are still London-based and producing copy.

attitudes and opinions of employees, their employers, and other key stakeholders. These journals sought not only to guide their readers through the newly emerging industry's tribulations, but to contemplate impactful changes to it, and to sustain and divide its employee relations.

Case Study: Ethnoscapes and Integration Conflicts

Prior to making the case for the preservation of these periodicals, I wish to explore some forgotten memories in more detail to illustrate how we might better understand the worth of the trade press. To this end, I have specifically selected to discuss an unexpected finding from consulting a range of trade press journals from the periods of interest. That is, the integration conflicts taking place in the industry caused by ethnoscapes, i.e., the flows of people and subsequently cultures that move across the globe, with a specific focus on restaurant employees and management.

As previously noted, travel played a significant part in enabling the high-end dining scene to flourish in Britain. It has been well established in the literature that the restaurant was a French invention, and that movement enabled this culinary culture to be sampled and disseminated.[6] As explained by Mennell, the nineteenth century "saw the full establishment of a French international culinary hegemony, not merely over England but over much of the rest of Europe and, by the end of the century, North America too" (Mennell [1985] 1996, 134). London, perceived to be full of opportunity and wealth (Bailey 2011), attracted both foreigners and English nationals for both labour and leisure purposes. Hoteliers prospered by building or buying hotels by rail stations in order to cater for those using the new network. Building these substantial establishments and rail networks took time and it was not until the mid-Victorian period that London could boast of some, albeit few, grand hotels. Yet, by the latter period of the nineteenth century, the capital was dotted with these locations. As put by an author in the *The Hotel World* periodical:

> We can therefore congratulate ourselves […] we think that there are few continental cities that can show such an array of hotels as we can, bearing in mind such grand edifices as the "Langham," the "Westminster Palace," the "Grosvenor," the "Midland," the "Grand," the "Charing Cross," the "Cannon Street," and the "Euston" (*The Hotel World* 1883, 6).

The greater number of London's hotel owners and managers, in the periods of interest, were not English. As evidenced by survey data collected by Anderson, "drawn from contemporary publications as well as the [1889, 1901 and 1911] censuses […] the majority of senior managers were German, French, Italian, or Swiss" (Anderson 2019, 183). "Part of the explanation for this European dominance was

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[6] See, for example, Spang (2000; 2018).

practical" (Anderson 2019, 184). Most senior hoteliers employed fellow non-natives for the same reasons that they themselves had become successful owners and managers. That is, they had multilingual abilities, broad skill sets, and high levels of training. Anderson (2019) has also posited that cosmopolitan experience and connections gained by non-English owners and management were important for the reputation of the establishments that they were responsible for.

Assael's (2018) own trade press analysis has indicated that by 1885 there were approximately 7,000 German waiters in London, as well as 4,500 other foreign waiting staff, of which the Swiss were considered to be the second largest European grouping, and that by 1891, 2,000 Italians were employed in the capital as chefs or waiters. In light of census record evaluation, she estimated that this would mean that 25 per cent of all Germans and 40 per cent of all Italians living in London "were engaged in the trade" (Assael 2018, 159-160). Kershen has emphasised the role that Italians had on the industry:

> It is clear that, by 1911, Italian immigrants in London were heavily engaged in the food and catering trades. In London alone there were 1,600 Italian waiters, 900 chefs, 1,400 bakers and confectioners and 500 café and restaurant owners (Kershen 2003, 141).

Chefs were also largely non-natives. As highlighted in *The Hotel World*, French chefs were prized in the capital: "There is not, we verily believe, a single London hotel of any pretensions whatever, that does not possess its accomplished and esteemed French *chef*" (*The Hotel World*, emphasis in original, 1883, 4).[7] If one were to eat French food, it was seen to be fitting that a Frenchman were to prepare it. Although there was, as the author of the article agreed, nothing that should make a Frenchman any better at cooking French food than the next person, it concluded that they simply were. In another article published in *The Chef*, the same sentiment regarding French chefs' culinary superiority was expressed:

> People who may still entertain a doubt as to whether cookery should command a recognised position among the refined arts [should visit Paris] [...] Our French friends have long held the foremost place in this particular line (*Daily Telegraph*, cited in *The Chef* 1896, 11).

Trade press periodicals reflected such European diversity in the catering and hospitality sector. For example, *The London Hotel and Restaurant Employés Gazette*, while carrying an English/French title, was almost exclusively published in German in the 1890s, and *Cheflike* contained articles that were printed trilingually, in German, French, and English, that is, any single edition contained articles published in all three languages. Nationality-specific organisations were also established or

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[7] The word "chef" appears italicised because the author is making a point of stressing the difference between a chef and a cook.

held branches in London, such as The French Culinary Society of London, The Italian Hotel and Restaurants Employee's Benevolent Association, and The German Waiters' Union.

While these immigrant communities attempted to integrate into London's catering and hospitality industry, many trade press journals documented the rivalries and conflicts that arose. For example, a gentleman using the pseudonym "White Cap" wrote to *The Chef* to outline that chefs' positions in society "might be greatly improved, were it not for petty jealousies, racial and otherwise, and unfair competition with one another" (*The Chef* 1895, 6). Another person, using the pseudonym "A Looker-On," made a similar point: "National jealousies […] are rife among [chefs], and can never be eradicated. A Frenchman will not go out of his way to help a German, and an Italian will do nothing to befriend a Swiss" (*The Chef* 1896, 6). Hoteliers, too, were accused of ethnic nepotism. A waiter's letter to this point was reprinted in *The Restaurant*:

> May I give you my opinion on why there are so many foreigners holding situations in English hotels and restaurants – where we would expect to see Englishmen? […] After twenty years' experience, I can assure you that the only reason of so many foreigners being employed in hotels and restaurants is that the men who first started or modernized them were foreigners themselves; they push forward their own countrymen. It stands the reason that a manager will not recommend a Britisher for promotion when he can get a man from his own native land […] if you ask a Swiss, Italian or French manager which men he prefers as restaurant waiters, he will tell you that the men of his own nationality are the best (*Evening News*, reprinted in *The Restaurant* 1909, 70).

It was commonplace for waiters to state their nationality when looking for a job, while also outlining their language proficiencies. "Wanted places" listings in the trade press content, as well as those in other media formats, typically read akin to those that were displayed in the segment of *Our Own Circular* that specifically devoted its pages to aiding waiters in finding work:

> Waiter, French, speaks English, age 19, wants situation in Hotel or Boarding House, good references […] Austrian, 26, in hotel or restaurant, speaks French, English and German […] Austrian, 20, speaks French, German and English […] Italian, age 20, wants employment, good references, speaks English (*Our Own Circular* 1898, 4).

The ability to be multilingual was certainly something sought after in the industry in London. As a letter to *The Restaurant* put it: "Foreigners are among the best customers of London restaurants, and often require to be spoken to in their own tongue" (*The Restaurant* 1909, 6). This, among other things, served to cause a tension between those that could speak more than one language and those that could not. The career, it added, "calls for linguistic attainments which are rarely, if

ever, found among Englishmen of social grade from which waiters are drawn" (*The Restaurant* 1909, 6).

The natives working or seeking work in the industry felt threatened, and alongside organisations for immigrants in London, those specifically for Britishers were formed. Such groups actively sought to end the employment of foreign workers. Take for example the Loyal British Waiters' Society, which described itself as "Loyal and Patriotic" and "ha[d] for its main object the displacement of the foreigner and re-installing the Britisher" (*The Restaurateur*, capitalisation in original, 1912, 18). This sentiment was shared by the City and National Waiters' Labour Bureau. As their president put it:

> Foreigners […] must not be allowed to imagine that they had a prescriptive right to come to England, learn their business here, and then drive our own people out of employment, and force them upon the rates, if not into the workhouse itself (*Daily Telegraph* 1905, 7).

The English Hotel, Club, Restaurant, and Tavern Servants' Union provides another such example. As spoken by the Union's temporary chairman: "Now, sir, you want to know why we will not admit foreigners into our union. It is because we cannot trust them. We have too often experienced their untrustworthiness" (*Pall Mall Gazette* 1889, 7).

These unions of nationals represented a struggle for power and status that was perceived to have been lost or stolen. The lengthening chains of interdependence that brought the practice of restaurant dining across the Channel, foreign food, and immigrants to the English capital allowed for conflict, specifically, "integration conflicts" (Elias [1974] 2008, 136). "[R]ather than marking a progressive march towards increasing social harmony and emancipation" these new practices and people increased "conflict and violence as certain groups gain[ed] status at the expense of others" (Dunning and Hughes 2020, 275). One need only read *The Restaurateur*, the official organ of the Loyal British Waiters' Society, to see memories that display a bigoted intolerance of non-native workers. Yet, while they may have been preferred, memories of the struggles that immigrants faced are also outlined in the trade press' pages. For example, one German (ex-)waiter and trade activist, Paul Vogel, acted as a "representative of immigrant workers" (Mungovan 2013, 31), and was a victim of xenophobia. *The Waiters' Record* details Vogel's own words, while other articles showcase the passion that he had for improving the industry for all.

The Value of the Trade Press

These voices from the past grant an insight into the newly cosmopolitanised catering and hospitality industry in England. But, whatever we might think of them, these

voices are underutilised and under preserved. Returning to the point made by Shattock and Wolff (1982), issues with cataloguing and the sheer scale of this material have played a part, not helped by the damaged caused to archives by the pandemic and a series of funding cuts. Yet, so has accessibility, or lack thereof. Identifying appropriate material in trade press periodicals or, indeed, identifying the trade press titles, is an intensely time-consuming task.

When I first began my search for these periodicals, Mennell's *All Manners of Food* provided a starting point, as he had named some of the "principal publications" issued by the "catering trade press" (Mennell [1985] 1996, 181). Some of the other publications I found through a process of trial and error, by searching key terms in digital archives, ordering items, and hoping for the best when I sat down to read them. Travel costs and time also bar people from the privilege of accessing these volumes. Furthermore, they have to be read and not all articles published in these trade periodicals have titles. You simply have to skim through the hardcopy text manually.

There are pros to sitting down and spending so much time becoming invested in a text and not relying on search query optimisation, as I largely have done when working with British Newspaper Archive content. There is an immersion to working with the periods: meeting people in their pages, some for only a single short segment, but some, such as Vogel, with whom I would become quite familiar. These people did not merely leave behind traces, they made me emotional in the present. I laughed; wanted to cry; empathised; and raged as I read the pages of these periodicals. The memories that they left behind have enabled me to make my own memories.

That said, sometimes the cons outweigh the pros, which is why I wish to advocate for the maintenance and digitalisation of these periodicals, some of which have already been lost to time. I have multiple memories of my own, where I have sat in the reading rooms of archives and felt utter sadness as the volumes disintegrated as I turned pages. It was history disintegrating before my eyes. Why was I being allowed to work with such fragile texts? It is true that the archival sector does need more funding, and that cataloguing and digitalisation is highly time consuming. However, my fear is that if these journals are not preserved then someone else might not get the opportunity to engage with them. These are truly rich and dynamic resources, but their pages will not last forever.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to achieve multiple tasks. It began with a contextual overview that identified numerous changes in the Victorian era with a specific emphasis on the catering and hospitality and press industries. This section also sought to introduce the trade press, before giving a more detailed account of this form of

media. *The Hotel Review* was used to document the parallel rise of professionalism in both journalism and catering. Further trade press content was considered when addressing ethnoscapes and integration conflict in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By way of this case study, voices from the past were brought into the present in order to highlight the use of the trade literature. Lastly, my own reflections on the difficulties, but also the rewards, of working with this material were provided. Ultimately, I hope that it can, indeed, be preserved, so that future generations can also have the privilege of engaging with it.

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[8] Copies of this journal had been collated. Page numbering therefore reflects those provided in the collated edition, and not those provided in the original publications.

Appendix 1: Relevant Trade Press Periodicals and Publishing Information

Table 1: Source - author.

Title of Publication	Title Hereafter	Frequency of Publication	(Publisher and) Publishing Offices
The Chef: A Journal for Cooks, Caterers, and Hotel Keepers, which in 1896 was rebranded as *The Chef and Connoisseur: A Journal for the Hotel World, the Caterers and the Epicure*	*The Chef*	Weekly (every Friday for Saturday)	18 New Bridge Street, London and then 12 Soho Square, London
Cheflike: Official Organ of the International Chef's Society	*Cheflike*	Monthly	84 Charlotte Street, London
The Hotel Review and Catering and Food Trades' Gazette: A Journal for Hotel-Men, Restaurateurs, Refreshment Contractors, Store Keepers, and All Engaged in the Catering and Food Trades	*The Hotel Review*	Monthly	76 Imperial Building, Ludgate Circus, London
The Hotel World: A Weekly International Record of Hotel and other News	*The Hotel World*	Weekly	C. L. Marsh and Co., 4 Agar Street, Strand, London
The London Hotel and Restaurant Employés Gazette	*The London Hotel and Restaurant Employés Gazette*	Weekly	36 Clipston Street, London
Our Own Circular (An advertising medium rather than a journal)	*Our Own Circular*	Variable – as often as 7 times per month	The Standard Printing Press Co., 3 George Street, St. Peter's Square, Hammersmith, London
The Restaurant: The Only Journal Exclusively Devoted to the Restaurant Trade, which in 1912 was rebranded as *The Restaurant and Hotel Review*	*The Restaurant*	Monthly	Maxwell House, Arundel Street, Strand, London
The Restaurateur: The Official Organ of the Loyal British Waiters' Society and School of Instruction	*The Restaurateur*	Monthly	20 Devereux Court, Strand, London
The Waiters' Record: The Organ of the Amalgamated Waiters' Society	*The Waiters' Record*	Monthly	4 Clarendon Street, Pimlico, London