

Oldfield, S.J. and Day, D. (2009) *Manchester Pedestrianism 1840-1880: A Collective Biography of 'Sporting Publicans'*. University of Sussex and University of Brighton Research Centre in Memory, Narrative and History, Memories, Narratives and Histories Postgraduate Conference, Tuesday 2 June at Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research, University of Brighton.

Public houses in England throughout the nineteenth century provided many men with an alternative environment to the workplace. In particular, as the countryside and fields became developed, 'foot-racing' or pedestrianism became a public house affair with publicans becoming promoters and persuading individuals to compete near their facilities. The symbiotic relationship between entrepreneurial sportsmen and public houses has long been noted and there are abundant examples in the literature of individuals who combined their sporting activities with the role of licensee. However, these biographies are often sketchy in nature and there is a clear need for more comprehensive collective biographical studies of these men. A compilation of in-depth biographies, a methodology called prosopography, would help tease out their common characteristics, such as gender, class, education, personal interests, and religious beliefs. This paper uses the prosopographical approach, to produce a collective biography, "carefully gathered biographical data on a group of individuals with common characteristics, and to contextualise historical processes in a specific environment, of a mid 19th Century Manchester publican with a strong involvement in local pedestrianism. An initial group of five publicans has been investigated and it is clear that while there are commonalities with respect to their sporting backgrounds, age, class and family, there are also differences, notably with respect to their sporting roles within Manchester pedestrian circles.

Bibliography

- Barnes, T.D. (1983). Late Roman prosopography: between Theodosius and Justinian. *Phoenix*, 37, 248-270.
- Collins, T. & Vamplew, W. (2002). *Mud, sweat and beers: a cultural history of sport and alcohol*. Oxford: Berg.
- Denzin, N.K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Erard, C. & Bancel, N. (2007). Prosopographical analysis of sports elites: overview and evaluation of a seminal study. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 24, 67-79.
- Keats-Rohan, K.S.B. (2007). *Prosopography approaches and applications: A handbook*. Linacre College, Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research.
- Poulsen, A.L. (2004). Female physical education teachers in Copenhagen, 1900-1940: a collective biography. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 21, 16-33.
- Shephard, A.J. (1992). Biography and mentalité history: discovering a relationship. *Fukuoka University Review of Commercial Sciences*, 49, 495-509.
- Smythe, D. (2000). Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire. In M. Deegan and H. Short (Eds.), *Digital resources for the humanities* (pp. 75-81). London: Office for Humanities Communication.
- Stone, L. (1971). Prosopography. *Daedalus*, 100, 46-79.
- Stone, L. (1987). *The past and the present revisited*. London: Routledge.
- Verboven, K., Carlier, M. & Dumolyn, J. (2007). A short manual to the art of prosopography. In K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Ed.), *Prosopography approaches and applications: a handbook* (pp. 35-70). Linacre College, Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research.