

***“GIVING DIRECTIONS TO THE TOWN”:
THE EARLY TOWN DIRECTORIES¹***

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This essay was published by Penelope J. Corfield, with Serena Kelly,
in *Urban History Yearbook 1984* (1984), pp. 22-34:
with acknowledgement to the Economic & Social Research Council for funding the
original research.

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An associated article, entitled
‘Urban Specialization and Inter-Dependence:
Business Leaders and Town Gentry in Early Industrial Britain’ is forthcoming in
Urban History.

***He gives Directions to the Town,
To cry it up, or run it down ...***

[Jonathan Swift, 1733]

Swift's poetic jibe was aimed at the ever-friendless literary critic;² but there were many others who shared in the polymorphic business of 'giving directions' to the unwieldy town. Some very literally so: the makers of the early *Directories* provided names, addresses, and occupations of leading urban residents, plus staple information about transport services, posts, banks and miscellaneous local offices. Itemising and classifying a complex urbanity took a certain confidence. 'I have taken upon me the arduous Task of compiling a Complete Guide, for the easy finding out of every inhabitant of the least Consequence ...', asserted Elizabeth Raffald, publishing the *Manchester Directory* in 1772, while confessing the difficulties of the task. Not everyone may have been convinced by her computation that the significant citizens numbered only 1,500 men and women, in a growing conurbation of over 30,000 residents.³ But that was not the point. A Directory offered immediacy rather than complete accuracy or comprehension.

Most compilers were careful not to claim too much. 'Errors and Deficiencies must unavoidably appear in every Work of this Kind, from the extreme Difficulty of procuring Information in some Things, and the fluctuating Variety of Others', as *A Directory of Sheffield* explained firmly in 1787.⁴ (See Figure 1: *Sheffield Directory* titlepage, below) Many compilations made a caveat of this sort, and indicated a willingness to accept corrections and additions for future editions.⁵

As a genre, therefore, Directories triumphed over some obvious pitfalls. Yet the very reality of those problems constituted a justification for publication. In other words, the greater the difficulties in compiling detailed information about the town, the greater was the potential

consumer demand for some published guidance. And the Directories, which were published as commercial ventures, clearly did sell.⁶

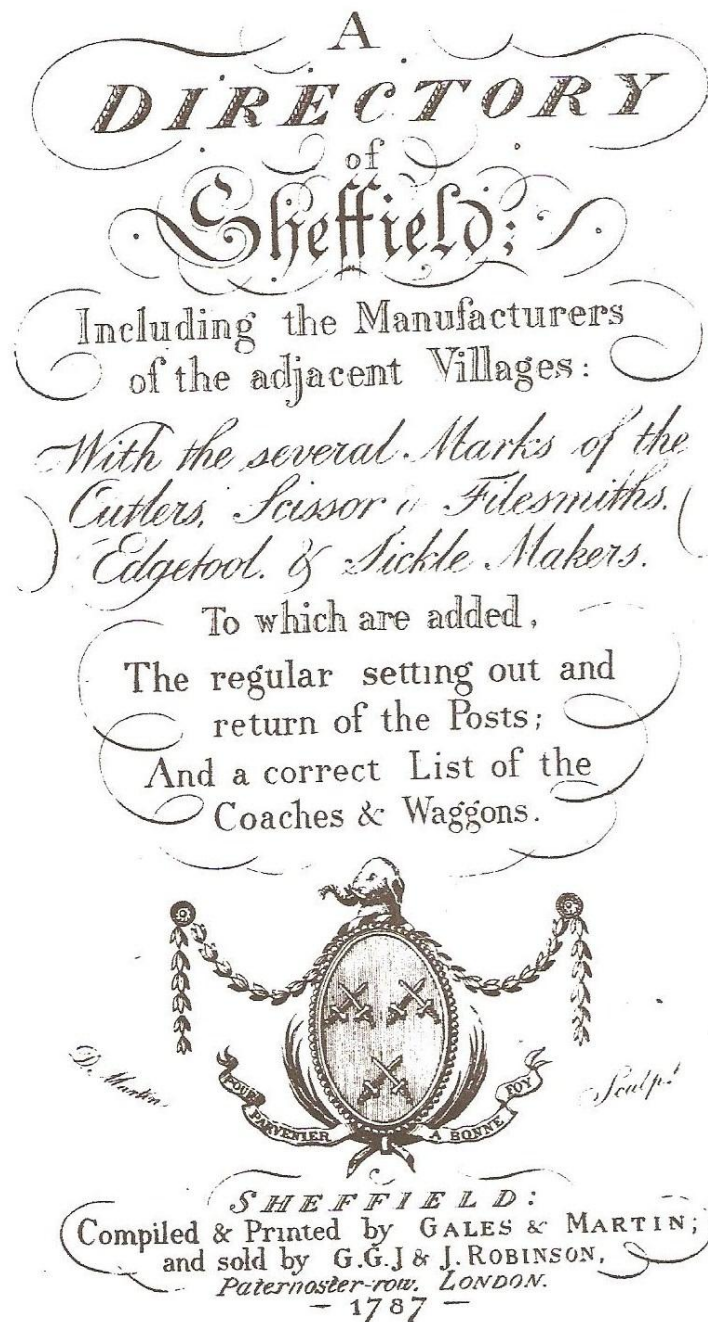


Figure 1. Title page from *A Directory of Sheffield* of 1787, which was published by Joseph Gales, a printer and bookseller, a leading local radical in the 1790s, and David Martin, an engraver; they also founded a Sheffield newspaper in the same year.

They were intended not as censuses of final record, but as immediate handbooks and research tools. Their underlying message was one of reassurance. The town could be rendered intelligible, decipherable and

finite, however mysterious, inchoate and vast it might outwardly appear.

Many early Directory compilers were also advocates and celebrants, as well as chroniclers, of urban society. And, if in general their productions were straightforward and lacking in irony, they certainly displayed a fresh and almost pioneering enthusiasm for their subjects - in contrast with the more standardised and impersonal Directories that followed later, in the nineteenth century. Some early works were published in tandem with local histories and guidebooks, another corpus of literature that was not prone to doubt or uncertainty. The compiler of the *Chester Guide ... (and) Directory* of 1782,⁷ for example, was happy that the city 'merits the Notice of the Man of Taste, claims the Attention of the Antiquary, and courts the Admiration of the Stranger'. The *Staffordshire General and Commercial Directory* for 1818 admired the 'population, opulence, and knowledge' of the Pottery towns, which 'present a scene of animation truly interesting to the patriotic observer'.⁸ While even more superbly confident was J. Bisset's *Poetic Survey round Birmingham ... Accompanied by a Magnificent Directory* of 1800. This provided a verse 'Ramble of the Gods through Birmingham', and expressed the hope, still in verse, that the volume would attract a world-wide readership.⁹ The book trade set its targets high.

One factor in the development of these publications in eighteenth-century Britain was undoubtedly, therefore, a growth in the size, numbers, and importance of towns. The utility of a printed list of local inhabitants became increasingly apparent. A multiplying range of possible names and addresses to recall, a growing variety of possible contacts to identify, an expanding diversity of occupational specialisms to classify, all made assistance welcome. Naturally enough, these printed handbooks only augmented, and certainly did not supersede, personal records and word-of-mouth communications. After all, numerous large towns continued to

exist without the benefit of Directories, just as they had all so existed in earlier periods. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London, for example, had expanded into an urban region of close on half a million inhabitants, before its first printed listing was published in 1677.¹⁰ Yet once established, Directories were readily acknowledged as useful adjuncts and accompaniments to town life. A little over a century later, so had expectations changed, Thomas Minshull declared, with promotional zeal, that he ‘almost blushed’ to discover that Shrewsbury (then with no more than 12,000 inhabitants) lacked a directory, before himself proceeding to supply one in 1786.¹¹

An important market was provided by the urban commercial communities, for whom these were business handbooks. The first metropolitan listing itself was devised for the City interest, as its full title proclaimed: *A Collection of the Names of the Merchants, Living in and about the City of London, very Useful and Necessary*.¹² Another early London Directory was aimed at ‘Directors of Companies, Persons in Public Business, Merchants, and Other Eminent Traders’ in the Cities of London and Westminster, as well as the Borough of Southwark; and the compiler explained simply that its purpose was to save ‘a good deal of Trouble, Expense, and Loss of Time in the Dispatch of Affairs’.¹³ Many provincial publications in the eighteenth century similarly included commercial users among their targets. Gore’s *Liverpool Directory* of 1766 offered ‘An Alphabetical List of the Merchants, Tradesmen, and Principal Inhabitants’,¹⁴ while Sketchley’s 1775 *Bristol Directory* itemised ‘Merchants, Tradesmen, Manufacturers, Captains of Ships, Custom House and Excise Officers’, as well as ‘every other Person of Note’.¹⁵ Some of these publications also recorded invaluable additional information about the functioning of the local economy. The 1787 *Directory of Sheffield* (see Figure 2) contained graphic reproductions of the manufacturers’

individual trademarks, displaying the variety of words and symbols used for identification of the city's metalwares.

44 A D I R E C T O R Y

TABLE KNIVES, in general.

B ARNES Thomas, Smithfield -	LOVE
Beet John, Norfolk-street .	CIRCLE
Beet Widow, and Sons, Broad-lane .	BEET
Burkinshaw Francis, Silver-street .	MIZZEN
Bramhall James, Porto Bello .	BEST
Brightmore John, Cross Field .	STEEL
Bright Lydia, Holles Croft . . .	CITY
Brittain, Wilkinson, and Brownell, Arundel-street . . .	CHEAPSIDE
Brittain Benjamin, Hawley Croft .	✠
Broomhead, Hinchcliffe, and Co. Brinfworth's Orchard . . .	GB VRAI
Broomhead and Ward, Eyre-street .	FRANCE
Butler Stephen, Townhead Well .	EXCELLENT
Carlton John, Far-gate . . .	PRIVATEER
Carnell Joseph, Westbar-green .	BROOMHEAD
Cawton Joshua, and Sons, Snig-hill .	☞
Colley and Brady, Burgefs-street . .	BAKU
Crooks John, Smithfield . . .	P
Dickinson Thomas, Furnace-hill .	PLANT
Dunn William, and Co. Grindle-gate .	ARMIS
Emerson	☉ CAW
	TON
	WALDO
	OCOLOS
	OPHIR
	✠
	RIR
	W
	DUNN

Figure 2. Page 44. 'Table Knives in General', from *Sheffield's Directory* of 1787. Sheffield firms and individual businesses, including some owned by women, had their own distinctive cutlers' marks. These marks, officially allocated by the Cutlers' Company (before 1814), were 'of great value to their possessors, being taken as a guarantee of the excellence of the goods impressed therewith.'

Business users, therefore, constituted a core of custom, in Britain, and also on the continental mainland. The earliest printed Directory in France was published in 1691 for the Parisian retail trade.¹⁶

With their essentially local focus, the urban Directories were complemented by the parallel evolution of specialist listings, which were compiled on a national basis. The professions were among the earliest occupational groups to generate such records. In production at least from the 1730s was the *Attorney and Solicitor's Companion: Or, Compleat Affidavit-Man*;¹⁷ the first *Medical Register* followed in 1779;¹⁸ and the *Clerical Guide: Or Ecclesiastical Directory*, a forerunner of Crockford's, was first published in 1817.¹⁹ These printed volumes gradually gained in status over time, as did the official printed *Army and Navy Lists*, in production annually from the late seventeenth century. A range of specialist trades also followed suit, with their own listings, in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Probably the first of these was the printers' and booksellers' *Vade Mecum* of 1785, with London and provincial references.²⁰ And among the most appealing, in the nineteenth century, was the *Bill-Posters' Directory* of 1888, complete with its advertisements for a revolutionary new waterproof glue.²¹

Travellers and visitors were identified as another major source of custom for urban Directories. The first experience of being alone in a strange town, amidst busy and indifferent strangers, was often disconcerting. Again, Directories supplemented, rather than superseded, personal enquiry and private advice. Newcomers could get directions from many sources: often from passers-by, and particularly from shopkeepers and innkeepers,²² as well as from the coaching and transport fraternity. Louis Simond recorded that experience in London in 1810: 'I ... felt uneasy and helpless in the middle of an immense town, of which I did not know a single street'. His solution: 'A hackney coach seemed the

readiest way to extricate myself, and I took one'.²³ Other travellers came armed with letters of introduction, whether to friends or family, or to contacts made through church, chapel, business, politics, or social networks. But in all these circumstances, printed handbooks could assist in the process of orientation, and ease the awkwardness of unfamiliarity. The *Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport Directory* of 1830 was loftily confident of this role:

*Of the utility of a general Directory to Towns of magnitude and vast Populations, it is presumed, there can be no dissent. By its light, the community at large are made known in their various avocations, while the stranger and the visitor can readily find, by its guidance, the residences of all; thereby obviating that unpleasantness so often arising from irksome enquiries, and erroneous directions.*²⁴

Furthermore, the *Gloucester New Guide ... (and) Directory* of 1802 slyly suggested that, as an additional bonus, a survey of its pages would relieve the traveller of 'that *taedium*, which usually accompanies a temporary residence at the hotel'.²⁵ And, as it happens, Disraeli's *Coningsby*, on his cultural odyssey through Manchester in 1844, spent an evening there in his hotel 'having just finished his well-earned dinner, and relaxing his mind ... in a fresh research into the *Manchester Guide*'.²⁶ The growth of the tourist trade in this way generated its own literature and travellers their own travelling conventions.

There were also social implications to inclusion in a town directory, although practice here was by no means consistent. Many complications included a number of people who were declared notable by their local status. In some cases, these were people who are known from other sources to have had a gainful occupation, but who were generally identified by a prefix, such as 'Mr' or 'Dr'. Others were people of status but without employment, including rentiers, people of independent means, and those who had retired from business. The pointedly-entitled *Norwich*

Directory: Or, Gentlemen and Tradesmen's Assistant of 1783 designated approximately 25% of all entries as people of status, either in addition to, or instead of, a recorded occupation, while the *Liverpool Directory* of 1766 contained only 39 Gentleman and Esquires out of over 1,200 local traders.²⁷

Inclusion in these sources was often taken as a sign of social status, but equally compilation could be pretty rough-and-ready, and it cannot be assumed that all local bigwigs were correctly identified. The 'town gentry' in a collective sense were, however, confident in asserting their claims; and many early directory compilers dwelt upon the status both of their informants and of their intended customers.²⁸ Gradually, too, there evolved specialist 'social' directories, although their numbers were never as great as the specialist trade handbooks. Among the first 'social' lists were Boyle's *Court and Country Guide, and Town Visiting Directories*, starting in the 1790s; and a number of London volumes included 'court' and 'trade' entries in separate sections. The apogee of this genre was a *Kensington Directory* of 1863, listing those 'whose vocation in life does not debar them from admission to our West End Clubs'.²⁹ In general, however, the most notable aspect of the early publications was their eclecticism, listing together tradesmen, merchants, town grandees and other 'persons of note'.

Above all, the Directories stood testimony - at a very modest end of the spectrum - to the notable eighteenth-century impulsion to classify and to catalogue. It was a fruitful conjunction of an evolving print technology, and a commensurate cultural confidence. Standardised reference books embodied the principle of accessible information: things not known directly could always be looked up. Samuel Johnson was characteristically brisk on that point. 'Knowledge is of two kinds', he asserted in 1775. 'We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we

can find information upon it'.³⁰ The expanding corpus of specialist knowledge both demanded and encouraged such storage and recall systems. Eighteenth-century Directories therefore consorted with a growing variety and number of other standard works of reference: timetables, maps, guidebooks, calendars, almanacs, yearbooks, catalogues, official lists, and biographical lists of 'who's who'. And, while not themselves intellectually testing fare, the Directories were poor relations of those great monuments to the eighteenth-century classification of knowledge: the alphabetical dictionaries,³¹ encyclopaedias,³² and philosophical handbooks.³³

Collectively, these works constituted the reference volumes that formed the matrix of modern information systems, just as they also established the core of any library collection. By 1833 Charles Lamb was naming them wryly 'books that were not books'; and he included Directories in his own list of volumes that 'no gentleman's library should be without'.³⁴

One indication of the arrival of the genre was its acquisition of its own specialist name. Some early works, with the title of Directory, were not what later came to be understood by that term. Nicholas Culpeper's much-reprinted *Directory for Midwives* of 1651 was, for example, not a listing but a handbook to conception, pregnancy, and birth.³⁵ Similarly, Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory* of 1673 (a stout volume) did not contain names and addresses of the faithful, but was a theological manual.³⁶ And the anonymous *Directory for the Female Sex* of 1684 was not a guide to ladies of the town, but a verse homily on appropriate behaviour for Christian womanhood.³⁷

Conversely, in the eighteenth century, some early Directories did not use that name, but were described as 'lists', 'guides', and 'memoranda'. Harris's *List of Covent Garden Ladies ... for the Year 1788* was a spoof

Directory and annotated guidebook to the names (lightly concealed), addresses, characteristics, and (but not invariably) the prices, of some fashionable London prostitutes.³⁸ Less mettlesome, the *Merchants' Miscellany and Travellers' Complete Compendium* of 1785 was a Directory for the county of Bedfordshire; the *Exeter Pocket Journal* of 1807 a Directory for the Exeter and West Country 'gentleman and tradesman'.³⁹ In the long run, however, a standard terminology became established. By the early nineteenth century, the modern name was in common use; and most urban directories now took that title.

The diffusion of these volumes was initially sluggish. Lee's pioneer London listing of 1677 did not find an immediate successor, although John Houghton published some occupational information in the 1690s.⁴⁰ In 1734, however, Kent's *London Directory* was successfully established, based on a list compiled initially in 1732, but revised in fresh editions annually thereafter. Gradually, the number of metropolitan Directories began to multiply, and their range to diversify. Thomas Mortimer's *Universal Director: Or, the Nobleman and Gentleman's True Guide to the ... Liberal and Polite Arts and Sciences; and of the Mechanic Arts, Manufactures and Trades, established in London and Westminster* of 1763 attempted an encyclopaedic coverage and addressed itself to patrons of art, as well as to 'gentlemen, merchants, and country shopkeepers', although in fact (unlike Kent's staid volumes) it ran to only one edition.⁴¹

In 1752, Peter Wilson's first Directory for Dublin was published, as a supplement to a work already in annual publication from 1733 onwards, the *Gentleman and Citizen's Almanack*.⁴² And in the 1760s, some English provincial towns gained their own listings. The first of many was probably the *Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Walsall Directory* of 1763, which was advertised by the enterprising James Sketchley in that year.⁴³ Once

successfully established, it too went into annual editions. Others followed. In Scotland, a first volume for Edinburgh with its suburbs was published in 1774; the first volume for Glasgow and its environs, in 1784.⁴⁴ In England and Wales, the momentum quickened noticeably, as the fashion spread in the 1780s and particularly the 1790s. The figures in Table 1 (below) indicate the general picture of the numbers and chronology of new Directories, coming into print for the first time. As a fugitive genre, not all such publications have survived or yet been traced in the historical record;⁴⁵ so that the figures may be liable to some revision in detail.⁴⁶

Table 1: New directories in England and Wales, by date of first edition

	Metropolis ¹	Town ²	County ³	National ⁴
1731–40	2			
1741–50	2			
1751–60				
1761–70	3	3		
1771–80	3	7		
1781–90	5	13	4	3
1791–1800	11	26		1
1801–10	2	20	3	1
1811–20	6	21	5	2
1821–30	8	36	9	
	42	126	21	7

Notes:

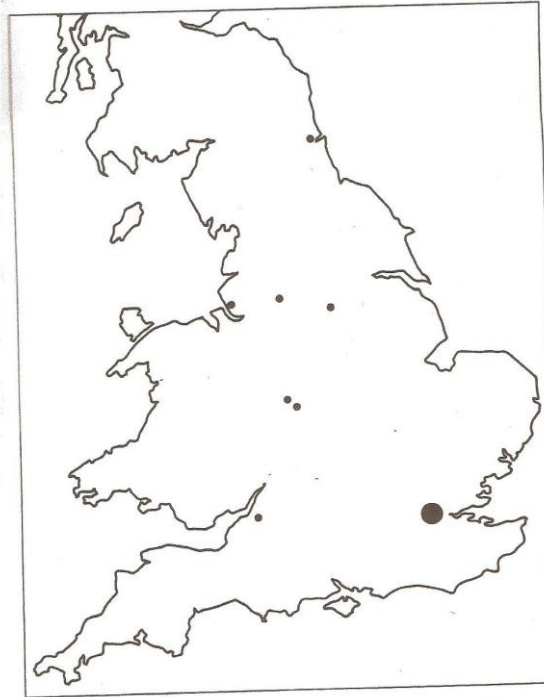
1. Includes all directories for London or parts of London, plus local extracts from the national directories published separately.
2. Counts directories individually, although some covered more than one town, and includes local extracts from national directories, when published separately.
3. Most county directories included a large number of urban occupations.
4. National directories have been tabulated by date of first edition, but most ran to several volumes issued over a number of years.

Sources: C. W. F. Goss (ed.), *The London Directories, 1677–1855* (1932); J. Norton (ed.), *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales, excluding London, published before 1856* (Royal Historical Society publication, 1950).

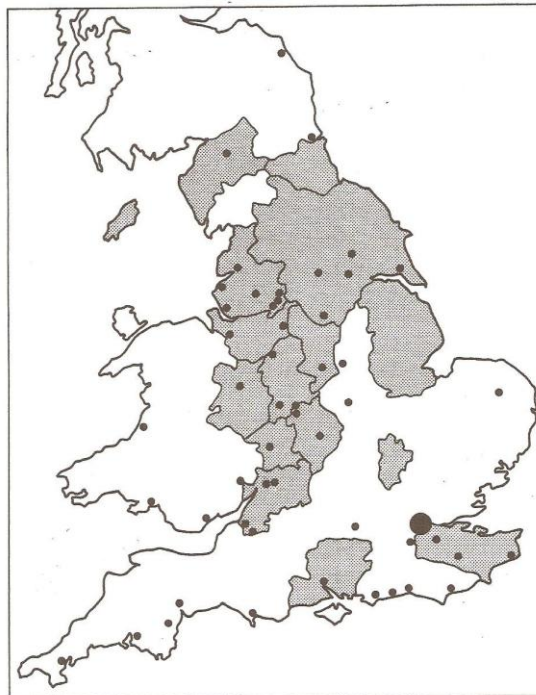
County directories were also first produced in the 1780s, although they did not achieve the same initial success as did the urban volumes. Their contents were rather sketchy, in comparison with the meatier town Directories; and it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the standardised county compilations became well established.⁴⁷ Nation-wide

surveys were also published for the first time in the 1780s. William Bailey's *General Directory of England and Wales* (1781-7), which ran to five volumes, then came under competitive challenge from P. Barfoot and J. Wilkes' *Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce, and Manufacture* (1790-8), which ran to five volumes and three supplements, all republished in a variety of fresh editions within the first decade of publication.⁴⁸ Although intriguing in their scope and ambition, the first national directories were, however, very uneven in their coverage, depending as they did upon diversely-effective local informants - plus a certain amount of direct plagiarism of previously published works.

In geographical terms, the spread of Directories can be identified as both generally extensive but also with particular locational concentrations. In other words, these publications were not generated simply by the existence of a town, or by its size, but depended on specific local determinants.⁴⁹ Large places that did not have their own Directories before 1830 (that is, within the first hundred years of regular publications) included some of the major dockyard towns (Chatham, Portsmouth), a number of textile centres (Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield), numerous established country capitals (Durham, Canterbury, Lewes, Lincoln, Winchester) as well as the two university cities. Conversely, Maps 1 and 2 show that Directories were particularly notable in the large international ports; the industrial towns of the West Midlands and south Lancashire; and the resorts, especially those of the south coast of England. Much depended upon an effective consumer demand, for example the requirements of holiday-makers in the resorts and spas. So the nature of the local economy was one key determinant. Those industrial centres, that contained many small masters and a variety of business enterprises, were also particularly favourable to the production of these handbooks: the metalware towns (Birmingham, Sheffield) being prominent examples.



Map 1. Towns and counties in England and Wales with local directories, 1731–80.



Map 2. Towns and counties in England and Wales with local directories, 1781–1830.

Some motivation, too, was provided by an element of competitive emulation; and some by the initiative of individual Directory compilers. As already noted, it was the printer Thomas Minshull's determination that provided such a resource for Shrewsbury; and he had moved there from Chester, where a local printer, who later became Mayor, had published a successful *Guide ... (and) Directory* in 1781.⁵⁰

Of course, publishers proposed but purchasers disposed. The success of local Directories varied quite markedly: some ran to many editions, other to only few or one. Table 2 (below) ranks towns by number of local Directories produced, counting every edition separately (although frequency of new editions and reissues are also elusive in identification).⁵¹

*Table 2: Towns and counties ranked by number of local directories (all editions) 1731–1830**

Town	Total (all editions)	Total (all directories)	County	Total (all editions)	Total (all directories)
Bristol	40	7			
Birmingham	37	12			
Liverpool	34	7			
Manchester	23	9			
Bath	10	4			
Hull	10	3			
Chester	9	3			
Leeds	9	5			
Newcastle upon Tyne	8	5			
Exeter	7	2			
Sheffield	7	6			
Brighton	6	4			
Norwich	5	3	Lancashire	5	2
Nottingham	5	4	Yorkshire	5	2
Plymouth	5	5			
Worcester	5	1			
Shrewsbury	4	2	Cheshire	4	1
Cardiff	3	2	Hampshire	3	2
Leicester	3	3			
Pottery towns	3	2			
Weymouth	3	3			
Carlisle	2	2	Cumberland	2	2
Cheltenham	2	1	Kent	2	2
Falmouth	2	2	Lincolnshire	2	1
Leamington Spa	2	1	Staffordshire	2	1
Macclesfield	2	2			
Richmond	2	1			
Southampton	2	1			
Swansea	2	2			
Aberystwyth	1	1	Bedfordshire	1	1
Berwick on Tweed	1	1	Derbyshire	1	1
Bolton	1	1	Durham	1	1
Bromley	1	1	Gloucestershire	1	1
Chichester	1	1	Isle of Man	1	1
Derby	1	1	Shropshire	1	1
Dover	1	1	Warwickshire	1	1
Gloucester	1	1	Worcestershire	1	1
Hastings	1	1			
Newton Abbot	1	1			
Preston	1	1			
Reading	1	1			
Rochdale	1	1			
Ross-on-Wye	1	1			
Selby	1	1			
Southport	1	1			
Tunbridge Wells	1	1			
Walsall	1	1			
Wolverhampton	1	1			
Worthing	1	1			
York	1	1			
51 towns	274 edns.	126 dir.	16 counties	33 edns.	21 dir.

*Source: As table 1.

From that perspective, the importance of Directories for the largest international ports and for the ‘regional’ industrial capitals becomes apparent: among England’s provincial towns, Bristol, Birmingham, and Liverpool clearly head the list, with Manchester following in fourth place. With time, most places were in fact served by either a local or a county listing; and some smaller towns were included with larger neighbours and have not therefore been noted separately. But, if number of editions and number of independent publications are taken into account, Birmingham, the first in the field in 1763, emerges as still in 1830 the pre-eminent ‘Directory capital’ of England and Wales.

These volumes therefore constituted an intriguing index to urbanism in the years 1730 to 1830, just as did subsequently the fashion for reprinting the ‘first’ town Directories, often in full facsimile edition, in the later nineteenth century. That their compilers saw themselves as contributing to the utility and good functioning of town life was often apparent in their prefatory remarks. The *Norwich Directory* of 1783 furthermore included a list of ‘Hints for Improvement’ of the city, explaining cheerfully: ‘The present publication has not only the merit of being highly useful to the mercantile and curious of this day, but may hereafter be remembered as having tended to the ease and ornament of posterity.’⁵²

Street listings do, of course, contain a wealth of information for the topography and growth of the urban environment; and the location of different commercial and industrial occupational groups. The very publication of directories also hastened the process, accelerating in the later eighteenth century, by which street names were standardised and houses given numbers.

Some compilers themselves made these attributions, to clarify their lists; while William Whitehead’s *Newcastle Directory* of 1778 adopted a

compromise, whereby houses were designated with ‘h’, ‘m’, or ‘f’ to indicate ‘head’, ‘middle’ or ‘foot’ of the street.⁵³

Between them, Directories contained in embryo a nation-wide gazetteer to the transport, postal, and related services that were advertised in towns; and this aspect of these publications invites closer survey.⁵⁴ They also command attention for their central corpus of information relating to urban occupations. Having accepted that Directories were not censuses, they can be studied, not for what they might have been, but for what they were. In other words, it is instructive to know which occupations and status designations were listed for the local ‘inhabitants of consequence’, as well as noting which occupations did not appear. They also recorded much detail about multiple employments, the existence and identification of firms, and the economic activity of women, often unrecorded in other sources in this period. Much depended upon the method of compilation: lists collected by direct survey were usually much more comprehensive than those that depended upon second-hand reports, or individual responses to local advertisements.⁵⁵

Directories also yield additional information, if compared with other contemporary occupational listings, where those survive. For example, over 700 individual freemen identified themselves in the Norwich parliamentary *Poll Book* for 1784 as worsted weavers, the city’s staple occupational group; yet none of them appeared in the city’s 1783 *Directory*, nor were others given that designation,⁵⁶ confirming both that the latter source recorded the commercial and industrial elite rather than the rank-and-file of the workforce; and, conversely, that the electorate in Norwich, one of the few ‘popular’ constituencies in the country, was indeed not confined to an oligarchy of commercial power or social status.

Rather as early telephone Directories, with all their faults and inaccuracies, yield information about the initial growth and scale of the

telephone system - and have also become subjects for modern reprints⁵⁷ - so the town Directories, warts included, constitute a relevant source for the study of towns and their networks.⁵⁸ That their contents need scrupulous assessment is undoubted. The classification of occupations certainly needs careful evaluation.⁵⁹ There are well-known distinctions to be made between how individuals regard themselves and how they may be (variously) viewed by others.⁶⁰ The even more complex question of whether and how social class can be derived from occupational labels needs an even more cautious scrutiny.⁶¹

Yet amidst all the problems, the early town Directories offer some guidance. Far from perfect, they placed their subjects firmly within the eighteenth-century reference grid: 'on the record' for all readers to consult.

GUIDE TO SIXTEEN DIRECTORIES, 1772-87

DATE	PLACE	ENTRIES	SOURCE
1772	Manchester	1,505	E. Raffald, <i>The Manchester Directory for 1772</i> (London and Manchester, 1772)
1773	Edinburgh	3,011	<i>Williamson's Directory for the City of Edinburgh</i> (Edinburgh, 1773)
1774	Liverpool	2,535	<i>Gore's Liverpool Directory for the Year 1774</i> (Liverpool, 1774)
1774	London (City, Westminster, Southwark)	5,548	<i>Kent's Directory for the Year 1774, [for] the Cities of London and Westminster and the Borough of Southwark</i> (42 nd edn., 1774)
1775	Bristol	4,075	<i>Sketchley's Bristol Directory: 1775</i> (Bristol, 1775), repr. ed. B. Little (Bath, 1971)
1778	Newcastle upon Tyne	1,413	Whitehead's <i>Newcastle Directory for 1778</i> (Newcastle, 1778); repr. ed. J.R. Boyle, as <i>The First Newcastle Directory</i> (1869)
1780	Birmingham	2,088	Pearson and Rollason, <i>The Birmingham ... Directory</i> (Birmingham, 1780; re-issued 1781)
1783	Norwich	1,594	W. Chare, <i>The Norwich Directory: Or, Gentleman and Tradesman's Assistant</i> (Norwich, 1783)
1784	Dublin	5,315	<i>Wilson's Dublin Directory for the Year 1784</i> (Dublin, 1784)
1784	Glasgow	1,702	<i>Tait's Directory for the City of Glasgow, 1783-4</i> (Glasgow, 1784)
1784	Portsmouth	336	From J. Sadler, <i>The Hampshire Directory</i> (Winchester, 1784), pp. 99-113
1784	Southampton	253	From J. Sadler, <i>The Hampshire Directory</i> (Winchester, 1784), pp. 144-54
1784	Winchester	308	From J. Sadler, <i>The Hampshire Directory</i> (Winchester, 1784), pp. 28-42
1786	Shrewsbury	589	T. Minshull, <i>The Shrewsbury Guide and Salopian Directory</i> (Shrewsbury, 1786)
1787	Bath	393	From W. Bailey, <i>The Bristol and Bath Directory</i> (Bristol, 1787)
1787	Sheffield	1,103	Gales and Martin, <i>A Directory of Sheffield</i> (Sheffield, 1787); repr. ed. S.O. Addy (1889)

Sources:

For locations, see C.W.F. Goss (ed.), *The London Directories, 1677-1855* (1932); and J. Norton (ed.), *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales, excluding London, Published before 1856* (Royal Historical Society, 1950).

ENDNOTES

¹ Written in conjunction with an ESRC-funded project, 'Urban Occupations in Britain in the Early Industrial Revolution', with grateful acknowledge for the Council's support. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the help of Jim Dyos in the early planning stages, who gave his characteristic response of bounding enthusiasm, allied to a practical caution and shrewd advice.

² J. Swift, 'On Poetry' (1733) in H. Davis (ed.), *Poetical Works* (1967), p. 576.

³ E. Raffald (ed.), *The Manchester Directory for the Year 1772* (reprint of first edn., 1889), p. x. And see C.M. Law, 'Some Notes on the Urban Population of England and Wales in the Eighteenth Century', *Local Historian*, 10 (1972), p. 24.

⁴ [Gales and Martin], *A Directory of Sheffield, Published ... in 1787* (facsimile reprint, 1889), preface, p. iv.

⁵ The *Sheffield Directory*, for example, announced an open register for additions and corrections, to be kept for general inspection in J. Gales's shop: *ibid.*, p. iv. A number of early directory compilers kept registry offices, as commercial employment agencies and clearing houses for news and general information: see the invaluable introduction to J. Norton (ed.), *Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales, excluding London, Published before 1856* (Royal Historical Society, 1950), esp. pp. 4-5.

⁶ Directory compilers were conscious of the need to keep costs low, and some early volumes sold for as little as 1s. Norton gives prices, where available: see *ibid.*, *passim*.

⁷ [P. Broster], *The Chester Guide: ... to which is added a Directory* (1782 edn), p. 2. Many of these authors were liberal borrowers from other works. The 1782 Directory named Thomas Pennant's *Tour through Wales* as source for the account of Chester, while W. Cowdroy's *Directory and Guide for the City and County of Chester* (1789) embroidered some phrases from the earlier Directory without acknowledgement (see e.g., p. 2). For plagiarism, and pirated editions, see also Norton, *Guide*, pp. 22-4.

⁸ W. Parson and T. Bradshaw (eds), *Staffordshire General and Commercial Directory for 1818* (1818), Vol. 1, p. xxix.

⁹ J. Bisset (ed.), *A Poetic Survey round Birmingham ... Accompanied by a Magnificent Directory* (1800), pp. 21-36, 61-2.

¹⁰ S. Lee (ed.), *The Little London Directory of 1677, ... Reprinted from the Original* (1863), unpaginated. For the context and evolution of London listings, see the helpful analysis in C.W.F. Goss (ed.), *The London Directories, 1677-1855: A Bibliography with Notes on their Origin and Development* (1932), esp. pp. 11-16. Registry offices and commercial advertisement lists were available in London from the early seventeenth century: see Norton, *Guide*, p. 3, and M.D. George, 'The Early History of Registry Offices', *Economic History*, 1 (1929), pp. 570-90.

¹¹ Norton, *Guide*, p. 6, citing T. Minshull's preface to *The Shrewsbury Guide and Salopian Directory* (1786). For Shrewsbury's population, see Law, 'Some Notes', p. 25.

¹² Lee, *Little London Directory*, titlepage.

¹³ H. Kent (ed.), *The Directory* (1736), titlepage and p. 3. This was a slim volume of 49 pages, on sale for only sixpence.

¹⁴ G.T. and I. Shaw (eds.), *Liverpool's First Directory: A Reprint of the Names and Addresses from Gore's Directory for 1766* (1907), titlepage.

¹⁵ J. Sketchley (ed.), *Bristol Directory* (1775), titlepage.

¹⁶ Norton, *Guide*, pp. 1-2, notes the first known continental Directory as *Les adresses*

de la ville de Paris (1691), as an extension of printed advertising lists relating to the retail trade, a genre of publication known since the later sixteenth century.

¹⁷ Lists of professional men had been compiled by John Houghton in the 1690s (Norton, *Guide*, p. 3) but the venture was not repeated for some decades. The *Affidavit-Man* had run to at least a fourth edition by 1740, and was followed later by Browne's *General Law List* (1777 *et seq.*), 12 vols; and by J. Hughes, *The New Law List* (1798; 1802), 5 vols; subsequently the *Law List* (annually from 1841).

¹⁸ The *Medical Register* was published in 1779, 1780, and 1783; Bath also had lists of medical men in the 1770s, some 20 years before its first Directory: Norton, *Guide*, p. 10. The *London and Provincial Medical Directory*, which subsequently became the *Medical Directory and General Medical Register*, was first published in 1848, as a conflation of already established London and provincial lists.

¹⁹ The *Clerical Guide* was first published by F.C. and J. Rivington in 1817; the *Clerical Directory*, which eventually became *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, followed from 1858 and annually thereafter.

²⁰ J. Pendred (ed.), *The Earliest Directory of the Book Trade, 1785* (Supplement to the Bibliographical Society's Transactions, 14, 1955).

²¹ Anon., *Bill-Posters' Directory for 1888: A Complete Guide for Advertisers* (1888), p. 169. It gives a town-by-town list of bill-posters, many of whom were also town criers; and itemises local newspapers and public halls. See *ibid.*, p. 157 for Ramm and Sons' advertisement for the 'Waterproof Sticker'.

²² Some early Directory compilers came from these occupations. Elizabeth Raffald, for example, had been a shopkeeper, inn-keeper, and coffee-house proprietor. Others included local printers or publishers, as well as registry office-keepers, and house- and insurance-agents: see Norton, *Guide*, pp. 19-20.

²³ L. Simond, *An American in Regency England: The Journal of a Tour in 1810-11*, ed. C. Hibbert (1968), p. 26.

²⁴ R. Brindley (ed.), *Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport Directory* (1830), p. v.

²⁵ Anon., *The Gloucester New Guide ... together with a Directory* (1802), p. vii.

²⁶ B. Disraeli, *Coningsby: Or, the New Generation*, ed. S.M. Smith (1982), p. 137. The editor suggests that the *Guide* may possibly have been Pigot's *General and Classified Directory of Manchester* (1832).

²⁷ W. Chase (ed.), *Norwich Directory: Or, Gentlemen and Tradesmen's Assistant* (1783) and Shaw, *Liverpool's First Directory*.

²⁸ Norton, *Guide*, pp. 10-11.

²⁹ See P. Boyle's *Court and Country Guide, and Town Visiting Directory* (1792 and annually thereafter), and for the *Kensington Directory*, see Norton, *Guide*, p. 11. (It has not, however, proved possible to trace the original; it is not Simpson's *Kensington and Hammersmith Directory and Court Guide* of that date.)

³⁰ R.W. Chapman (ed.), *Boswell: Life of Johnson* (1976), p. 627.

³¹ Dictionaries and word lists have long histories; but their number expanded considerably with the invention of printing, one of Caxton's early productions being a French-English vocabulary for travellers (1480). The first standard modern language dictionary was produced in Italy in 1612; a large crop of others followed. In eighteenth-century England, N. Bailey's *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721) was widely used; and S. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) attained the greatest fame.

³² Important early works of synthesis (and controversy) were philosophical encyclopaedias by Louis Moreri (1674) and Pierre Bayle (1697), while more generalised in their contents were J. Harris (ed.), *The Lexicon Technicum: Or, an*

Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences (1704) and E. Chambers (ed.), *Cyclopaedia: Or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1728; and later expanded, 1739-52). Most celebrated of eighteenth-century productions, out of a growing number and variety, was the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des metiers, par une société des gens de lettres* (Paris, 1751-80), 35 Vols, which evolved from an initial decision to translate and update Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* of 1728. Also influential was the collaborative venture, edited by J.H. Zedler and others, the *Grosses Vollständiges Universal Lexicon* (Halle and Leipzig, 1732-50), 64 Vols.

³³ These defined key words and concepts. A number were published in Latin in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Probably the first modern language volume was J.G. Walch (ed.), *Philosophisches Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1726); others followed in French, English, Italian, and Russian, in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the most notable being Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif* (Geneva, under false imprint of Londres, 1765). See also R. Collison, *Encyclopaedias: Their History throughout the Ages* (1964); and Macmillan's *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (1967), Vol. 6, pp. 170-83.

³⁴ C. Lamb, 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading', in *Last Essays of Elia* (1833; re-issued 1875), p. 18: 'In this catalogue of books which are no books - *biblia a-biblia* - I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Almanacks, ... Statutes at Large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without"'.

³⁵ N. Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives: Or, a Guide for Women in their Conception, Bearing and Suckling their Children* (1651 and many later edns).

³⁶ R. Baxter, *A Christian Directory: Or, a Sum of Practical Theology and Cases of Conscience, directing Christians how to use their Knowledge and Faith* (1673).

³⁷ Anon., *A Directory for the Female Sex: Being a Father's Advice to his Daughter* (1684), s.s.fol.

³⁸ *Harris's List of Covent Garden Ladies: Or, Man of Pleasure's Kalender for the Year 1788* (1788) listed 92 ladies, promising (p. 14) 'to suit every constitution, and every pocket, every whim and fancy that the most extravagant sensualist can desire'. Other lists of this kind have been preserved in the Place Papers in the British Library, including extracts from the *Rangers' Magazine* (published in London in the 1790s).

³⁹ Norton, *Guide*, pp. 68, 82.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁴¹ T. Mortimer, (ed.), *Universal Director: Or, the Nobleman and Gentleman's True Guide ...* (1763), pp. vi-vii.

⁴² E. Evans (ed.), *Historical and Bibliographical Account of Almanacs, Directories, ... Published in Ireland from the Sixteenth Century* (Dublin, 1897; facsimile ed., 1976), pp. 124-5.

⁴³ Norton, *Guide*, p. 183, suggests that Sketchley had been influenced by Mortimer's *Universal Director* of the same year. Sketchley was a printer, bookseller, auctioneer, estate agent, pawnbroker and registry-office keeper; he and his family were also involved in the production of Directories for Bristol and Sheffield.

⁴⁴ Williamson's *Directory for the City of Edinburgh, Canongate, Leith and Suburbs* (Edinburgh, 1774); J. Tait (ed.), *Directory for the City of Glasgow, ...* (Glasgow, 1784).

⁴⁵ Both Norton (*Guide*, p. 15, n. 2) and Goss (*London Directories*, p. 33) accepted that they may have missed some of the more ephemeral productions; and current research may well establish a higher total in due course. Some works were also difficult to

classify, as on the margins between histories and directories; but Goss and Norton's attributions have been followed here.

⁴⁶ There are additional problems in computing totals, particularly where sections of larger (county, national) directories were also published separately for local markets: for example, the *Bristol and Bath Directory of 1787*, of which a rare copy survives in Avon County Reference Library, Bristol, is a portion of Bailey's *General Directory of England and Wales*. These have, however, been noted as separate publications, when so appearing.

⁴⁷ Pigot's *Commercial Directory for 1814-15* covered 30 manufacturing towns in the north of England and was added to annually, but did not complete its survey of the British Isles for some years (Norton, *Guide*, pp. 43-58); W. White's series of *County Directories* dated from 1826, although some individual volumes had been produced earlier (ibid., pp. 65-7); and Kelly's county series of *Post Office Directories* began only in 1845 (ibid., pp. 61-5).

⁴⁸ Norton, *Guide*, pp. 30-9.

⁴⁹ Very much the same point has been noted with reference to the production of local newspapers and town histories in the eighteenth century: see G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-40* (1962) and idem, *A Handlist of English Provincial Newspapers and Periodicals, 1700-40* (1952). See also P. Clark, 'Visions of the Urban Community: Antiquarians and the English City before 1800' in D. Fraser and A. Sutcliffe (eds), *The Pursuit of Urban History* (1983), pp. 105-24; and R. Sweet, 'Provincial Culture and Urban Histories in England and Ireland during the Long Eighteenth Century', in P. Borsay and J. Lindsay (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland: Change, Convergence and Divergence* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 223-39.

⁵⁰ Norton, *Guide*, pp. 71, 162.

⁵¹ The publishing history of these volumes was often very complicated, and it is difficult to trace all editions: for example, sometimes publishers referred to earlier volumes, of which no record has otherwise survived. The figures in Table 2 follow Norton, *Guide*, but again are liable to revision in the light of subsequent research.

⁵² Chase, *Norwich Directory*, pp. iii-vi, esp. iii.

⁵³ J.R. Boyle (ed.), *The First Newcastle Directory, 1778* (facsimile reprint, 1889).

⁵⁴ For use of national directories to reconstruct transport networks in the early nineteenth century, see *inter alia* P. Bagwell, *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (1974), pp. 44, 46, 56; and for a comparable exercise for the seventeenth century, J. Chartres, 'Road Carrying in the Seventeenth Century: Myth and Reality', *Economic History Review*, 2 ser. 30 (1977), pp. 73-94.

⁵⁵ Norton, *Guide*, pp. 16-22, has a helpful survey of methods of compilation.

⁵⁶ Comparison of names and occupations in Chase, *Norwich Directory*, with those in Anon., *The Poll for Members of Parliament for the City of Norwich, ... April 1784* (1784).

⁵⁷ D.S. Thomas (ed.), *Three Victorian Telephone Directories* (1970).

⁵⁸ Attention has been drawn to the potential and pitfalls of directories by several contributors to the *Local Historian*: see esp. D. Page, 'Commercial Directories and Market Towns', ibid., 11 (1974), pp. 85-9; E. P. Duggan, 'Industrialisation and the Development of Urban Business Communities: Research Problems, Sources, and Techniques', ibid., 11 (1975), pp. 457-65; P. Wilde, 'The Use of Business Directories in Comparing the Industrial Structure of Towns: An Example from the South-West Pennines', ibid., 12 (1976), pp. 22-6; G. Shaw, 'The Content and Reliability of Nineteenth-Century Trade Directories', ibid., 13 (1978), pp. 205-9; G. Timmins,

'Measuring Industrial Growth from Trade Directories', *ibid.*, 13 (1979), pp. 349-52; and C.W. Chilton, 'The Universal British Directory: A Warning', *ibid.*, 15 (1982), 144-6. A report on 'Occupations and Status in Eighteenth-Century Town Directories' by Serena Kelly (unpublished Conference ppr, Easter 1983) and results of research into Directories are also available on request from P.J. Corfield, Royal Holloway, University of London.

⁵⁹ There are problems in classifying occupations, when a full job description is available; even more so, when only the occupational label is given. Many employments straddled the retail/manufacturing boundaries, as has long been known: there was a celebrated exchange between Charles Booth and William Ogle in 1886 over the census classification of such occupations, citing the hatters, who could be makers or vendors of hats or both: see C. Booth, 'Occupations of the People of the United Kingdom, 1801-81', *Journal of the (Royal) Statistical Society*, 13 (1886), pp. 314-435, and debate, pp. 436-44. Many, though not all, historians of nineteenth-century occupations follow the helpful updating and reworking of Booth's data by W.A. Armstrong, 'The Use of Information about Occupation, Part 2: An Industrial Classification, 1841-91', in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (1972), pp. 226-310. For sundry classifications of data from earlier periods, see J. Patten, 'Urban Occupations in Pre-Industrial England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, n.s. 2 (1977), pp. 296-313; P. Lindert, 'English Occupations, 1670-1811', *Journal of Economic History*, 40 (1980), pp. 685-712; and M.B. Katz, 'Occupational Classification in History', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3 (1972), pp. 70-80.

⁶⁰ Two pioneering studies were J. Hall and D.C. Jones, 'Social Grading of Occupations', *British Journal of Sociology*, 1 (1950), pp. 31-55, finding some social consensus on grading; and M. Young and P. Willmott, 'Social Grading by Manual Workers', *British Journal of Sociology*, 7 (1956), pp. 337-45, finding that manual workers tended to raise the relative status of manual work.

⁶¹ Matters for debate include the definitions of classes, their number and social boundaries, and the identification of rankings from very generalised occupational labels (such as 'weaver' or 'farmer'). For a threefold grouping of eighteenth-century occupations into an 'elite', 'middling sort', and 'lesser sort', see J.A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters, and Straights* (Princeton, 1982), *passim*, esp. pp. 321-2. And for a five-fold classification of nineteenth-century data, see W.A. Armstrong, 'The Use of Information about Occupation, Part 1: A Basis for Social Stratification' in Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society*, pp. 198-225.