British, Bengal, Burton, and Beer: George Hodgson and the Development of India Pale Ale

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ir Henry Cotton understated. As soldiers in the
Indian Civil Service in the late nineteenth century,
Cotton and his fellow expatriates had to contend with the
sweltering climate of the subcontinent, a shocking contrast
for their temperate native England. In his memoirs, he describes
circling “under a blazing sun and in the teeth of a fiery wind.”
Fortunately for those stricken by torrid temperatures and a
languishing for familiar comforts, like Cotton, the British East India
Company shipped a solution to both problems: beer. According to
legend, George Hodgson of East London’s Bow Brewery
developed the only beer that could survive the trip across the sea
by purposefully increasing the hops levels in his brew to balance
its shelf life. Once the shipments arrived, “India Pale Ale”
famous throughout the region for its dry and refreshing taste,
and soon every beer drinker in India knew Hodgson’s name.

This story, which appears regularly on modern beer
packaging, is more complex. Hodgson did not send the
first beer shipments to India, nor was he a visionary
who designed his product specifically to last the voyage. By the late
1700s, a coffee drink could find an imported pint of London beer,
but this brassy, viscous, and semi-sweet libation suited
cold weather better than oppressive tropical humidity. Luckily,
Hodgson offered his alternative. His beer, which contained extra
hops, managed quickly from the ship’s movement and the
changing ambient temperatures. With its distinct flavor
and appearance, IPA became the drink of choice for thirsty
expatriates and free dominating the overseas markets for forty
years. Hodgson’s India Ale eventually lost in following when rival
brewers from the town of Burton-on-Trent created their
own versions of the drink and cut a new deal with the East
India Company. Within a decade, the Burton exports eclipsed
Bow’s, and India Pale Ale developed into a fixture of the English
brewing tradition at home and abroad. By raising the rise of
India Pale Ale from Britain to Bengal and back, we can see how,
through a lucky break, George Hodgson managed to influence
commerce, industry, and society across the globe.

Industry, Technology, and Trade in Hodgson’s England

In the eighteenth century was well on its way to transforming
the brewing industry in the British Isles, mainly because of
the ongoing rise of industrialization. With a growing economy
caused by the Industrial Revolution, British citizens could
diversify their occupations beyond subsistence trades like
farming. For those that did remain in agriculture, developments
like the seed drill and mechanized reaper made the process
more efficient.1 Capturing costs can be difficult, for farmers,
including those growing the barley that brewers needed for
their beer, could generate a surplus of available raw materials. A
rising population combined with the effects of Parliament’s
Endorsement led to a shortage of available land for small farmers,
which pushed many of them into industry.2

Furthermore, the British Industrial Revolution laid the
groundwork for developing breweries through the growth of
new technologies that facilitated beer production. The greatest
mechanized contribution to the establishment of `attractive English
breweries arrived in James Watt’s steam engine. This new power
source simplified the labor-intensive components of the brewing
process. Without this, the brewers could not have generated
enough profit to support the sustained growth of the trade.

Alongside the steam engine, brewers integrated innovations
into their available set of tools. While Avicenna and Galileo
had developed temperature-measuring devices centuries earlier,
cumbersome size and impracticality made thermometers
impractical for beer production until the technology had matured around 1760.3 Another revolution in brewing technology, the
saccharometer, provided a means for measuring the amount of
sugar dissolved in a sample of beer and gave brewers a precise
crystal chemical makeup of their product. British brewer David Booth
extended the device’s virus in his 1852 brewing treatise by
declaring, “The utility of such an instrument is at once evident;
you can maintain a regular strength of liquor, which
otherwise was a matter of change, for the same quantity of
malt does not always produce the same amount of saccharine.”4

Thus, the saccharimeter eliminated irregularities and ensured
uniform quality in the brewing process. Brewers like Hodgson
used this standardization to deliver the exact flavor that their
faithful customers expected in every sip. As Roberts put it, “it
may be emasculated, without hypocrisy, since the introduction
of the thermometer and hydrometer, [i.e. saccharometer],
the art of brewing has ceased to be a mere mechanical operation….
It has, in fact, risen to the rank of an art.”5

With new technology in hand, British brewers stood poised to
flourish in the nineteenth century. Increasing globalization and international trade fostered a climate favorable to rising big brewing. The British East
India Company, founded in 1600, provided a newfound link
between Europe and Asia, which allowed for both an increased
worldwide flow of trade, and the exploitation of new
exotic goods and a movement of English wool and linen to the east. By
the mid 1800s, the Company had evolved from a simple trading
organization into the main regional governing body. A rising
tide of Englishmen filled major outposts at Bombay, Madras,
and Calcutta. The opportunity to make one’s fortune appeared
to many on the cusp of entering a new social status, in spite of
dangerous long voyages and foreign tropical diseases.6

The booming English population in the area and the increased
sea trade spread the demand for British goods. As a result, the
socio-economic conditions in India by 1800 were perfectly
suited to turn the beverage into slaves to support a new iconic
drink.

The Prevalence of Porter

By the time George Hodgson was born, the brewing industry
was under the influence of British social culture and
domestic commerce. Thirty workers loved her beer, which stood
as a point of English pride for those who made and consumed
them. Most late eighteenth century brewers focused their efforts
on dark, rich, and hearty “porter,” which brewer Frederick
Accom referred to as “the most perfect of all kinds of malt
beverages.” Making a good porter required soft water, dark-roasted
malt, and, sometimes, a small amount of elderberry juice.7

Consequently, the surrounding water supply’s low mineral
content and brisk climate allow the natural ingredients
made London perfectly suited to porter production. Until IPA,
crafty Englishmen at home and overseas favored porter
as their drink of choice. Contrary to modern six-pack
beer, British merchants and soldiers in India already had plenty
of options to slake their thirst, including high-quality porter,
before Hodgson’s first eastbound shipments of India Ale. Like
most print, the prior centuries of other necessary ingredients
made numerous beverage advertisements aimed at piquing consumer
interest; one popular ad described a combination of foreign
licorice and exotic local flavors. “With the enormous
area across the Empire, shippers imported beverages from around
the world, including Caribbean rum or gin from Britain. Wine,
especially Madeira, also had a large following among expatriates,
and as the advertisement in Figure 1 demonstrates. Similarly,
in his 1810 East India Vice-Moor, Thomas Williamson pointed
out that upon arrival in India, one should avoid excursions,
and “take care never to avoid more than four to five glasses of the best
Madeira.”8 Eventually, the wine trade into India grew to the point where the
government had to appoint officers to oversee their stock.

The prevalence of alternative alcoholic options at first
appears to suggest that beer was unavailable in eighteenth-
century India. Brewing historian Peter Mathias declares that,
“Only the strongest malt liquor brewed would stand any chance
of survival in the long journey through the tropics.”9

However, this is untrue. In fact, the East India Company shipped
more and more domestic products, including beer, to satisfy the
 cravings of the growing overseas settlers’ community.10 As early as
1784, before Hodgson’s shipments, the Calcutta Gazette
advertised “London Porter, and Pale Ale, light and excellent.”11

Williamson mentioned that on the voyage from Britain, “The
ordinary beverage is table beer, or perhaps porter…sometimes,
indeed, the whole crew are supplied with one to two quarts
daughter as a hydration source with a built-in antiseptic. Though certainly not
“clean” by today’s standards, the alcohol at least kept disease at
bay until sailors could find fresh liquids at the next port. While the
available selection may have been limited, plenty of beer
clearly reached India where British settlers hearty enjoyed it, as shown in Figure 2.

If those living in Britain already had access to beer,
then what drove George Hodgson to enter the existing market?
Fortune was on his side in many ways. First, his brewery in
Bow happened to lie nearby the East India Company docks on
the Lea River. In search of a new beer supplier, the Company
considered Hodgson as a convenient choice.12 Modern legend
explains how he added extra hops to some batches of beer to
survive a trip to India. At first glance, this seems like a reasonable
collection. However, brewers recognized the preservative qualities of hops as early as the Middle Ages, and

M A D E I R A W I N E S ,  W A R A N T E D  H A S T  I M P O U R T E D.

D URING our visit to the County of Public, they have a very Genuine
Genuine Madeira Wine, which they can recommend to their Friends and
County, as the Undermentioned
Continent, and for their Consumption.

MODERATE PRICES.

Pickled Lard, Preserved Vegetables, etc.
for Flour, Nine years Old, per Pigs, 700
Lard Parisis, smothered in Salt, and
Secreto, in the Strong double Horse.
Peppers, per Doverall and Co. — 7 50
Dried Fruits, from the Islands of Madeira.
Melons, per Cwt. — 7 75
Dried Fruits, from the Islands of Madeira.
Honeysuckle, in the strongest
280
For beeswax, per lb. — 5 75
The above are Fairly priced, per lb., and
Honey, per lb. — 2 50
They have also Raised, per lb.,
and Half Cheeks of the MADEIRA WINE, at Much Less.
For the above articles, per lb., — 8 25
Diss.

Figure 1. Advertisement for Madeira, demonstrating availability of alcoholic beverages in the Indian settlement, as published in the Calcutta Gazette, 15 February, 1817.
is an interesting phenomenon where the beer is a substitute for water in hot climates. It is often referred to as the "Beverage of Life" for its hydrating properties. Historically, beer has been used in various forms to treat ailments ranging from skin conditions to digestive issues. In modern times, the trend of drinking beer instead of water during extreme heat has continued, with some even arguing it is more beneficial than regular water.

In conclusion, the practice of drinking beer as a replacement for water in hot climates is a fascinating aspect of human behavior. It highlights the adaptability and ingenuity of people in finding solutions to the challenges posed by their environment. Whether it's a matter of tradition, necessity, or simply personal preference, the act of drinking beer in hot weather has been a part of human history and culture for centuries.
any drinker knows the odor of spoiled ale. Period recipes for India Ale feature specific lists of the types of hops to use and the elevated amounts to include in each batch. One account suggests that, “seldom less than twenty-two bbs [of hops] will suffice.” In contrast, recipes for porter only required twelve to fourteen pounds for the same amount of finished product.8 While evidence suggests Hodgson’s India Ale differed from other beers of the time only through increased hop levels, irreproachable proof of beer’s availability in the East Indies before Hodgson reiterates the idea that hops was required for preservation.

How could Hodgson have been so successful when British senders already had access to alcoholic beverages? The answer lies not exclusively in hops, but in the use combined with the voyage. According to brewing historian Martyn Cornell, “the slow regular temperature changes and the rocking the beer received in its oak casks as the East Indiamen ploughed the waves had a magical maturing effect. By the time the beer arrived...it was as ripe a beer six times its age that had shambered unmoving in an English cellar. The ex-patriate British loved it.”9 While his beer sloshed in the holds of ships sailing through gradual weather shifts, its flavor evolved in a way that Porter’s could not. But David Booth commented on the need for agitation of IPA for flavor development by asserting that casks should be rolled at least once every day. Clearly, brewers did recognize the importance of temperature shifts and gentle motion to the quality of India Pale Ale. Nevertheless, nothing suggested that Hodgson himself had any idea of this when his initial shipments to India. Simply put, he was extremely lucky.

”And amid the constellations did the star of Hodgson rise”

Around 1800, Hodgson’s business with the East India Company took off, making his name synonymous with beer in India. To foster the partnership, Hodgson regularly gave company ships a long credit period of sometimes up to eighteen months. Also, fortunately for Hodgson, outbound shipping charges to India were substantially lower. This commercial imbiance combined with his British East India Company relationships let Hodgson ship his beer for minimal cost, which, in turn, allowed him to flood the foreign market. Around this time, the ales in the Calazate Guppi shifted from featuring generic porters and ales to almost exclusively Hodgson beers. In the summer of 1822, the paper mentioned the arrival of the vessel Sir David Stuart, which carried onboard, “Hodgson’s warranted prime picked pale ale of the genuine October brewing, warranted fully equal, if not superior, to any ever before received in the Settlement.”10 The dominance of his India Ale even led one Indian newspaper to extol its virtues through verse, depicting it as the drink of choice even among thegeois.

“Take away this damny tart,” said the King of Gods and Men, “Never at Olympic site let each Truth he served again.” Tartar shook the Limits of Bactria, pale grew his painted brow, and already in his maraud’s felt his Jove’s tremendous sway. When a brawler’s start show less - ’Tis my friend (It’s bad, for you never saw in India, that you know not Hodgson’s ale.”11

By this time, George Hodgson had made a fortunante and transferred control of the Bow Brewery to his sons Mark and Frederick. With their product firmly entrenched in the British-Indian culture, the Hoddons set out to further increase their revenue. In the early 1820s, they phased out the Company middlemen and took control of all aspects of the export business themselves, with disastrous results. Tнят noted the problems with the new approach by stating that, “The pressing calls of 1821 for an increased supply, let Hodgson, of London, to enlarge his brewery, and induced some to enter into arrangements for monopolising the market...this...ended in severe losses to all concerned.”12 Confident that no one could match their product, the Hodgsons raised prices and stopped offering long-term credit to shippers, insisting on immediate cash payments.13 They hooked India-bound vessels themselves, infuriating the Company. When others tried to capitalize on the Bow Brewery’s prestige by sending their own beer afloat among the men on the various ships. This could overwhelm and undersell all newcomers. That is, until angry merchants convinced brewers from Burton-on-Trent to take a shot at the India Ale giant.

Why Burton Was Built on Trent

Like Hodgson’s fortune spot near the East India docks, the town of Burton-on-Trent benefited from lucky surroundings. Its location on the river Trent allowed easy access to shipping lanes that connected to the world via the port at Hull. More important to the brewing industry, however, was the unique local water supply that provided Burton’s “nirv őgan ésu.”14 Burton’s from nearby mountains contained high amounts of gypsum. This increased hardness made Burton water perfectly suited to producing higher quality and clearer pale ales.15 Only when making paler beers did Burtonians realize the water’s full potential. Local author William Molyneux vocalized this epiphany in his 1809 discussion of his town’s “history, water, and breweries,” where he described, “those remarkable supplies of water to which tradition at least assigns the ecclesiastical origins, and from which modern science determines the commercial importance and the flourishing condition of the town of Burton-on-Trent.”16 Although it was not initially recognized as such, Burton’s water was wet gold. Even before discovering the importance of its water, the town had an established brewing tradition. In fact, the Abbott of Burton’s Weston Abbey leased land from the town for his monks’ brewing purposes as far back as 1295 CE.17 This original facility expanded into many others by the sixteenth century. However, these expanded breweries met much less success in their attempts to produce Burton’s ales because they had different water sources. Thus, until the rise of India Ale, London brewers controlled England’s beer markets.18 Yet, with its history of brewing, Burton stood to challenge the capital for domestic brewing dominance.

Of the many companies comprising the Burton brewing industry before the advent of India Pale Ale, two firms played a critical role in the town’s history because of their size and longevity. The leader of the first, Michael Bass of Bass, Radcliff, and Gieron pioneered techniques in brand management and marketing after IPAs arrival. In 1876, he established his company’s distinctive red triangle logo, Britain’s oldest registered trademark and still the symbol of Bass today. The owner of the second firm, Benjamin Wilson, built critical relationships with merchants headed north to ship his beer. These contacts, in turn, promoted the growth of Burton’s pre-IPA commerce. Wilson’s heir, Samuel Allsopp, also shipped porter across England before commandeering Hodgson’s recipe, but the India Pale Ale made boosted his brewery to the forefront of the British industry.19 Before this could occur, though, something needed to unset Hodgson, the reigning king of IPA. This turning point that started the revolution lay not in India, but in Russia.

With its connection to Hull via the Trent, Burton brewers could easily ship their beer to the Baltic Sea, a port-ruling region that accounted for most of the town’s export market, shown in Figure 3. The Russians loved British beer to the point where William Molyneux proclaimed, “both Peter the Great and Empress Catharine are said to have been immediately fond of the beverage, which was then high-coloured and sweet, and over remarkable strength – qualities which appeared especially suited to the Russian temperament.”20 However, due to the Napoleonic Wars severing trading connections with the Baltic and the Russian government’s increase of import tariffs in 1822, the economic feasibility of ‘selling “Pica Burtonski” in the Baltic region quickly evaporated.21 This market loss, combined with the 1823 reduction on malt duty, led to a surplus of beer in Burton.22 The Hodgsons’ alteration of their East India Company shipping contacts opened the door for Burton Brewers to redirect their efforts from their former northern trade to more eastern destinations for their extra product.

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According to Martyn Cornell, at the initial meeting between Campbell Marronbanks, a representative of the East India Company, and Samuel Allsopp, the shipper convinced the brewer that entering the Indian market would allow him to improve upon his former Baltic business. Furthermore, the shipper complained that, “We are all now dependent on Hodgson, who has given offence to most of our merchants in India.”23 At the Company’s behest, Allsopp’s brewmaster, Job Goodhead, breasted the first incarnation of the Burton IPA in a teapot in 1822.24 Upon scaling up the recipe, Allsopp sent his initial shipment overseas, where it sold rapidly and in Caleutta despite a cost that was twenty percent higher than Hodgson’s.25 Shortly thereafter, the Hodgson’s luck soured. The existing production facilities and brewing experience in Burton allowed the city’s breweries to begin shipments of their own India Pale Ale immediately. When

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“Take away this clammy tart, and the King of Gods and Men, Never at Olympic table in each Truth he served again.”

Taste shocked the limits of Bacchus, pale gave his painted brow, And already in his manner felt his Jove’s tremendous was. When a bright star struck down, “Here’s my tragedy! It’s bad. For you never touch in India, that you not know Hodgson’s ale.”

“Bring it!” quoth the Cloud Captain, and the wine-god brought the brew. But even clarets are like water to the glorious stuff that is here. Then satirists drink and reach, existing with his lightning eye, And amid the constellations did the star of Hodgson rise.

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Figure 2. English soldiers enjoying a happy group liration. Rich settlers like these were the most common consumers of beer in India, including Hodgson’s. Published in Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians. (London Faber and Faber, 1971).30

Figure 3. Map of Benjamin Wilson’s shipments to the Baltic region, as published in Colin C. Owen, Burton upon Trent: The Development of Industry. (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1978.)
the Hodgens resorted to their standby tactic of flooding the streets and underselling their rivals; they could no longer keep up with the competition arriving from Burton-on-Trent. This became a major turning point in the beer shipping relationship between Britain and India; the Hodgens monopoly fell apart, the available products diversified, and overall market volume shot up. Though some fluctuation did occur, beer shipments to Calcutta increased from 1830-1840 because of Burton’s entry to the Indian market, as shown comparatively in Figure 4. Beer producers and consumers alike noted the magnitude of the Burton-India trade as soon as it began. Tizard commented, “The beers now most in demand, and which command the highest quotations are those of Messrs. Aloe and Son, Bass and Co., and Ind and Smith, especially the former on account of the superior lightness and brilliancy of their shipments.”32 Burton brewers also discovered an additional measure to maintain their IPAs shelf life even after the beer reached its destination. By boiling their product longer than domestic porters, they could substantially increase the lifespan of their product.33 Later, the sea voyage simply smoothed out any rough flavors created by the extensive boiling. While many praised the Burton brewers for their quality alternative product, the Hodgens refused to surrender control of the Indian beer market. In fact, thirty expatriates commented on their enjoyment of both products. After his description of the group of women eagerly consuming Hodgens’ Pale Ale, George Jemson continued to explain how he also, “Watched a lady after dinner put away six quarts of Aheppe without moving from her chair.”34 Along the same lines, Sir Henry Cotton discussed the use of Burton beer as a means of combating the weather. He remarked in his memoirs how, “at 11 a.m. when I write [the IPA] Bass’s bottle beer was reigned supreme. Hodgen’s Pale Ale had had its day… I can remember the twelve-bottle men who could get through twelve quart bottles of Bass at a sitting.”35 However, Hodgon had lost his stronghold on the Indian market and his business suffered accordingly. Burton brewers were simply more equipped to produce a beer that could flourish in India. Since the city had been brewing well before the arrival of

IPA, local brewers were all second-generation owners of their businesses; they had learned the trade, in 1839 Burton brewers from Burton-on-Trent saw the construction of the new Birmingham to Derby Line, which ran next to the major breweries, including Bass and Aheppe, to supply the area to the main English overland beer shipping routes for the first time.36 This allowed Burton beer to easily reach all of Britain and, with the number of shipping launches being of ideal capacity, their beer was of ideal overland and rail capacity, as shown in Figure 5. Burton’s name had become so synonymous with India Pale Ale that Hodgen was almost forgotten. Only thirty years after Burton’s entry to the trade, the public already recognized its complete dominance, sometimes not even crediting George Hodgen with the creation of the original recipe. Historian R.G. Wilson points out that, “After the mid-1820s,… Burton’s leading brewers drove a far more vigorous campaign to move their trade and produced far superior pale bitter ale to those litherote brewed in the capital.”37 Another historian, Colin Owen, goes even further and declares that by 1840 Burton had “secured almost complete control” over the Indian market. Hodgen had finally met his match.

IPA’s Impact at Home and Abroad

Once Hodgen had developed India Pale Ale and the Burton brewers had subsequently co-opted the market for it, the international trade boomed, influencing the lives of people across the British Empire. Beyond the direct benefits of having a more refreshing thirst quencher widely available in the tropical Indian heat, the IPA had also a significant impact on many river settlers. Once the beer arrived, consumers immediately sought ways to chill it. One account describes how locals soaked the bottles in the river water in the summer months, which became cool enough to chill them.38 An alternative, and probably safer, method appeared in the 1830s, when Frederic Tuxford, a Burton entrepreneur, discovered a means of sending New England ice to warmer climates and made his first Indian shipment to Calcutta in 1833.39 Hodgen’s beer helped to create a market for ice in India itself, which, in turn, contributed to the growth of Burton. Thus, complementary goods required by the growing pale ale brewing industry worked in favor of the similarly rising numbers of glass-makers in Industrial Britain.

In addition to its driving economic causes, the Hodgen-sparked rise of IPA in Europe also reflected social changes while also making its own influential marks on British society. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the British middle class saw their income rise with increasing industrialization and availability of factory jobs. With the extra money, English citizens could afford the new industrial products, including more expensive alcoholic beverages. Though IPA from Burton-on-Trent via railroad regularly sold, at first, for twice the cost of the same volume of London porter, the middle class could now support such an industry. Consequently, Burton IPA evolved into a recognizable status mark for the newly well-to-do.40 Without the expensive beer quality necessary for its production, the IPA trade could not have survived. Additionally, the more regulated daily lives of factory workers gave them a strict schedule. Factory workers worn down by their dangerous, repetitive, and monotonous jobs could afford the extra fees IPA demanded at the same time after work for their evening pint. Not only did these social gatherings happen like Burton could easily adapt the network to meet their changing needs and use the ale they experienced, in 1839 Burton brewers from Burton-on-Trent saw the construction of the new Birmingham to Derby Line, which ran next to the major breweries, including Bass and Aheppe, to supply the area to the main English overland beer shipping routes for the first time.36 This allowed Burton beer to easily reach all of Britain and, with the number of shipping launches being of ideal capacity, their beer was of ideal overland and rail capacity, as shown in Figure 5. Burton’s name had become so synonymous with India Pale Ale that Hodgen was almost forgotten. Only thirty years after Burton’s entry to the trade, the public already recognized its complete dominance, sometimes not even crediting George Hodgen with the creation of the original recipe. Historian R.G. Wilson points out that, “After the mid-1820s,… Burton’s leading brewers drove a far more vigorous campaign to move their trade and produced far superior pale bitter ale to those litherote brewed in the capital.”37 Another historian, Colin Owen, goes even further and declares that by 1840 Burton had “secured almost complete control” over the Indian market. Hodgen had finally met his match.

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### Figure 4: Calcutta Beer Imports in Various Packaging. Statistic from Wilkins. “An Inquiry into the Influence of Brewing Illustrated” (London: printed by the author, 1846).
IPA, local brewers were all second-generation owners of their businesses. As the ale experienced, in 1839 Burton-on-Trent saw the
construction of the new Birmingham to Derby Line, which ran near to the major breweries, including Bass and
Astor. Burton-on-Trent had once been ideal for growing barley, as
shown in Figure 5. Burton’s name had become synonymous with
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brewing in Burton. Thus, complementary goods required by
the growing pale ale brewing industry worked in favor of the
similarly rising numbers of glass-makers in Industrial Britain.
In addition to its driving economic causes, the Hodgson-
sparked rise of IPA in England also reflected social changes
while also making its own influential marks on British
diets. As an edged English beer, the IPA helped
indigenous populations gain a larger share of the
domestic food supply at the expense of
income rose with increasing industrialization and availability
of factory jobs. With the extra money, English citizens could
afford to buy more beer, including more expensive
alcoholic beverages. Though IPA from Burton-on-Trent via railroad
regularly sold at, for twice the cost of the same volume
of London porter, the middle class could now support
such an industry. Consequently, Burton IPA evolved into a
recognizable status mark for the newly well-to-do.6 Without
the import duties, the domestic demand for IPA trade could
not have survived. Additionally, the more regulated daily
lives of factory workers gave them a strict schedule. Factory workers
worn down by their dangerous, repetitive, and monotonous jobs
needed all the cultural outlets and solace that the IPA could
provide after work for their evening pint. Not only did these social gatherings happen
because of the regularity of industrial life, they also provided
a form of escapism and pain reduction for those in taxing
and hazardous new occupations.7 Moreover, the increase in industrial jobs required
larger labor forces.8 To meet the demand for factory employees, migrant workers
moved from the countryside into the cities. With a large number of people suddenly thrust into an unfamiliar and often
squalid living situation, drinking alcohol, IPA included, as a means of combating frustration and fear became a part of life.9

The development of IPA had important ramifications for Britain as a whole, but what about for the denizens of
Burton itself? As the local beer gained notoriety, other brewers rushed to establish their own facilities there, as much for
cultural recognition as for enhanced quality and output. To exemplify this phenomenon, Charrington and Co., one of the
top five London brewers of ale and table beer in 1820, combined with
Steward Head of Stratford in 1872 to become Charrington, Head, and
Co, now of Burton-upon-Trent.10 Like others that followed suit,
Charrington used the new location in Burton to ride the coat tails of the prospering industry.11 The growth of the brewing
business, combined with the crush of outside brewers looking to capitalize on the turnpike’s success, caused a shortage of
available space and labor. Breweries had to choose between
barley; and hop farmers planted their fields in whatever
strange shapes that could maximize agricultural production for brewers who constantly needed raw materials.12 The
breweries also required such a large workforce that they actually had to
import migrant laborers from East Anglia to meet growing
demand, causing Burton’s influence on the region to stretch far beyond
the city limits.13 Others were no less envied by the success of the local beer. Paradoxically, Burton’s “extreme industrial
specialization” actually generated diversity in other areas by creating a local building, coal, and building materials market.14
Brewers could not do their jobs without maltsters to provide raw
materials, cooperers to build shipping containers, or mechanics to maintain steam power to the brewing facilities. Trades without
a direct relation to brewing still prospered by using resources
brought to the city by its breweries. This practice began even before the rise of India Pale Ale and local materials
maximized on Benjamin William’s contacts in the Baltic to create a
market for their cloth.15 After IPA took off in Britain and

Figure 6: Overall Burton Beer Output, based on data from C.C. Owen, The Development of Industry in Burton on Trent, (Phillimore & Co: Chichester, 1978).

Table: Burton Beer Production, 1831-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Burton Beer Production (casks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>4,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>5,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>6,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History

Statistics from City of Burton on Trent 1831-1900. The Exclusive Brewing Industry (London: printed by the author, 1846).
around the world, this type of relationship continued to flourish, causing a boom for Burton's entrepreneurs in a wide range of occupations.

IPA Today
Clearly, without George Hodgson’s inadvertent creation of a nineteenth-century international phenomenon, brewing in England would not have evolved into the major industry that it became. It still survives today, as modern large-scale breweries continue to carry on the traditions of the Hodgson and the Burton brewers. Though modern drinkers have forgotten the name of Hodgson, the brewing techniques that he helped to shape still prosper. Perhaps James Herbert put it best in his exuberant admonition that:

There is no beverage so wholesome and invigorating as beer, nor any so generally palatable. It may, indeed, be justly considered as our national drink, and therefore to give a good genuine article, brewed from the very best materials, is the right way for the tradesman to sustain his reputation and give satisfaction to his customers.*

In the end, this is the goal that all brewers, in Hodgson’s day and in ours, seek to attain.

Author’s Note
My personal interest in this topic stems from a previous job in making packaging for a small microbrewery. By hand, I knew the secrets behind Hodgson’s alleged innovation in beer preservation techniques well. It was only through research for this paper though that I understood to determine the story’s veracity, which, as the historical record is rather misogynous in modern folklore.

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71. Owen, 98.
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73. Owen, 98.
74. Herbert, James, The Art of Brewing India Pils. Ale and craft beer, stout and mild ales, porter and stout (1972), 57.