



TRIPE: A MOST EXCELLENT DISH





'Any Tripe or Neats Feet or Calves Feet...', plate 3 from Twelve Cries of London, 1760, by Paul Sandby. (© Museum of London.)





TRIPE

A MOST EXCELLENT DISH

Marjory Houlihan

with two supplementary essays

The Decline of Tripe

by Roy Shipperbottom

and

Elder: 'A Good Udder to Dinner'

by Lynda Brown



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© 1987, 1988, 1995, 2011 their several contributions, Marjory Houlihan, the estate of the late Roy Shipperbottom, Lynda Brown.

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Hot Tripe
For Cold Days.

Easy on Digestion
Easy on the Purse!

Buy only where
you see the **OVAL RED SIGN**

A showcard issued by United Cattle Products Ltd in the 1940s.





THE DECLINE OF TRIPE

There were 260 specialist tripe shops in Manchester in 1906: in 1994 there are none. In 1924 there were ten tripe works in the area belonging to members of United Cattle Products Ltd. and, additionally, some independent tripe dressers: seventy years later tripe dressers no longer operate in the city or in the county of Greater Manchester. Parry Scraggs of Liverpool say that thirty years ago there were nine tripe dressers in Liverpool and there are now only nine in England, Scotland and Wales. There are certainly only nine members of The National Association of Tripe Dressers, three in Yorkshire and others in Leicester, North Devon, Brighton, Newark, Liverpool and Perth. There are non-members in Stockton, South Shields and Padiham, Lancashire.

Tripe is part of the stomach of an animal, usually an ox, cleansed and made fit for eating. After the animal is slaughtered the stomachs are removed and go into a special room to be cleaned with spray rods. EEC conditions for the approval of meat plants insist that further treatment of the stomachs must take place in a separate unit. The cleaned paunches, which are chilled and may be frozen, are bought by tripe dressers whose function is to remove membranes which envelop the stomach and then boil the tripe. After cooking, the tripe is bleached and trimmed or dressed. These operations are simple, a certain skill with a scrubbing brush was once necessary to remove a membrane and leave behind fat. This prevented weight loss and was then preferred by customers but it is difficult to understand why some





boys were formally apprenticed to the trade unless it was cheap labour. Within living memory the equipment of the tripery or tripe works consisted of metal tanks filled with scalding hot water, a table on which to scrub and scrape the tripe and tubs filled with weak bleach. The equipment today consists of a large washing machine drum with vanes revolving in hot water which removes the mucous membrane from one side of the stomach. The stomach is then placed in a 'Parmentière', sometimes known as the 'carborundum' which describes the abrasive interior which removes the visceral membrane and fat. As the name indicates, the 'Parmentière' was designed to remove potato skins. The tripe is further cleaned and inspected and finally cooked at about 50–60°C, after which it is bleached in a very dilute peroxide in a tank or 'beck' and, finally, rinsed. A 'beck' is also the name for a small stream and just as the 'Parmentière' replaces an early method for abrading the membrane with a rough stone, so the survival of the word 'beck' continues the advice given in the *Book of Hunting* of 1586, 'The tung, the brains, the paunch and the neck. When they be washed be well with the water of the beck.' (Halliwell, *Dictionary of Archaic Words*, 1850).

Cattle have four stomachs; the paunch or rumen which provides seam tripe and the reticulum which is smaller and yields the preferred honeycomb tripe. The difficult-to-clean omasum or Bible bag is often used for pet food. The abomasum or black tripe is sometimes known as manifold except in Ashton-under-Lyne and district where it is called what must be one of the ugliest names for a food... slut. 'Slutty' is a Lancashire dialect word for dirty; the same tripe in Burnley is known as 'ladies tripe'. The terms for various parts of tripe vary from town to town. The tripe dresser also prepares 'Wezand' or weasand, sometimes known as bellrope; it is the oesophagus, a ringed tube which is boiled, slit lengthways and flattened.

Tripe dressers also de-hair, skin and boil cowheels and collect the neatsfoot oil and other operations considered to be offensive both to modern sensitivities and the Public Health Act of 1875





which imposed a duty on councils to impose a system of hygiene on the trade.

A modern works has stainless steel tables and tanks, stainless screens and extractors, and one can only enter by wading through a disinfectant footbath. The enforcement of strict hygiene regulations by the inspectorate insisting on expensive equipment has discouraged some tripe dressers who, complaining that they could not afford it or that the returns would not cover the cost, have gone out of business. But in the past it has been a prosperous trade for some and as Marjory Houlihan has shown in *A Most Excellent Dish! Tales of the Lancashire Tripe Trade*, some tripe families became prominent in politics and property. She also prepared a Bolton Tripe Map indicating the distribution of 76 tripe shops in 1911 – they are now all closed and her long list of Lancashire tripe dressers and dealers in 1924 would today be limited to two tripe dressers and a few dealers who operate on a franchise basis as distributors to butchers' shops and market stalls.

Restaurants specializing in serving tripe dishes and other offal existed in every Lancashire town. The various families, in addition to operating tripe works, had developed a number of shops as outlets. They also often had behind the shop a café or restaurant where tripe and cowheel dishes were always on the menu. Hills had a prominent restaurant in Manchester, above Marks and Spencer, and Vose's of Bolton opened, in 1917, a restaurant in Wigan, seating 300, with panelled walls, palm trees and a ladies orchestra, and called it the Tripe de Luxe Restaurant and Tea Room. When a number of tripe firms in the 1920s combined together to form United Cattle Products Ltd the number of restaurants increased and every Lancashire town had at least one UCP shop and restaurant with the red oval sign proclaiming Purity and Quality. The Pall Mall Restaurant opened in Manchester in 1964 in a new building with a banquetting suite, self-service restaurant and a shop front on the principal shopping street.





UCP had 70 restaurants and shops and two processing plants. They advertised, had point-of-sale material for the retailers they supplied and recipe leaflets and books including, *Ninety-nine Ways of Cooking UCP Tripe and Cowheel* compiled by Florence B. Jack, Cookery Editor of *Good Housekeeping* (1924) which had sections on Baked and Stuffed Tripe, Curries and Savouries, Fried Dishes, Pies and Hot Pots, Stews and Fricassees, Soups and the inevitable Invalid Dishes, for tripe was well known to have body-building material, and was 'suitable for brain workers and people of weak digestion.' It was emphasized that the 5 or 6 hours needed to cook unprepared tripe was now not necessary – 'the purchaser can buy in confidence, knowing that it is ready for immediate consumption, cold, can be served up with the minimum of trouble and that as a hot meal it can be produced in a very short space of time.' No need of the five hours of the Roman Apicius with that text's tripe and cinnamon-nutmeg sauce, or the untimed but lengthy Georgian recipes of William Gelleroy, Hannah Glasse or Elizabeth Raffald. Here was instant food – convenience food which the working women of the cotton mills and factories with one hour to get home from the mill, feed a family and return to work, used as a variation from the ready-made baked herring, cooked meat or fish and chips. The UCP continued to trade profitably and in 1968 they made £209,000 and paid a 15 per cent dividend. Two years later there was a takeover and assets were sold; after another takeover, a much diminished company remained which sold the site of its processing plant. The company now has no tripe works, shops or restaurants. Its passing was also a big loss to the companies that supplied them with the 5,000 lb of black puddings that they sold weekly.

Despite the collapse of this tripe empire, Lancashire is still the principal market for tripe, the two Yorkshire dressers tell me that it is their most important market. Heys of Dewsbury opened a tripe stall in Bolton market, Lancashire, in 1989 which sold 1,000 lb of tripe on three market days a week. However,





impending renovations to the market compelled them to sell the stall. At Ashton market tripe stall in July 1994, on a fine hot day (tripe weather), there were never less than eight people waiting to buy but none of them was young; they were people who might, when younger, after the cinema or theatre, have bought tripe pieces on a skewer to eat on the way home. The tripe trade says that the decline is due to the general trend against eating meat and the rise of alternative convenience foods: burgers, fish fingers, fried chicken and pizza. The movement to shopping at supermarkets has also had its effect; many supermarkets are unwilling to deal in tripe, which needs packing, and there is little or no demand for it in some areas. It is also now an unfamiliar product which lacks support advertising. The catering industry tends not to use it because it is unfashionable, although it only needs the attention of a few innovative chefs to make a change; pig's trotters have in recent years been rediscovered by prominent chefs but it has made little difference to the market; a trotter only costs 10p. *The Caterer and Hotelkeeper* has featured tripe and chefs have invented attractive presentations. Dressers discuss ways of adding value to the food and remember Robinsons of Hull who canned tripe and onions and sold them to Harrods or the enterprising Sutcliffe of Wigan who sold tripe to Nigeria and tripe rods or double seam to Japan; but they ceased trading. The tripe trade longs for outlets like the *patsansithika* of Greece – simple restaurants serving only tripe soup from early morning until very late at night, or the Portuguese restaurants specializing in tripe. And they yearn for someone to prepare and market *Tripes à la mode de Caen*, or the *Saupiquet* of France, and *Tripes Catalan* too and have them on every supermarket shelf. But they have the problems of every family business including succession. Who will carry on the trade? Who will buy the business if there is one to sell? Is anyone interested in a hands-on job which is far from being attractive?

To cap it all, tripe has a language and image problem for tripe also means rubbish and nonsense. The cold lily-whiteness





of tripe, well-seasoned, every honeycomb doused in vinegar and served with salad that was once so popular in hot weather is regarded by some as a white slithery mess. It is detested by many who have not tried it. It is associated with north of England nostalgia, flat caps, clogs, poverty, grit and grime. It is comic, it is used as the stereotype meal of plays and films set in the north by those who are unaware that tripe was a popular dish in the Victorian supper-houses of London, or Pepys' 'most excellent dish of tripes' covered in mustard, or the lip-smacking stew of tripe and cowheel described by Dickens in his *Old Curiosity Shop*.

It is interesting that Manchester, once the centre of the tripe trade and now lacking a tripe dresser or tripe shop or restaurant, is still serving tripe, in Chinese restaurants, as *dim sum*. Unbleached tripe, light tan in colour and supplied by a Chinese tripe dealer, it is served steamed or braised in spice and garlic sauces. It is, almost exclusively, ordered by the Chinese customers.

Roy Shipperbottom, 1995

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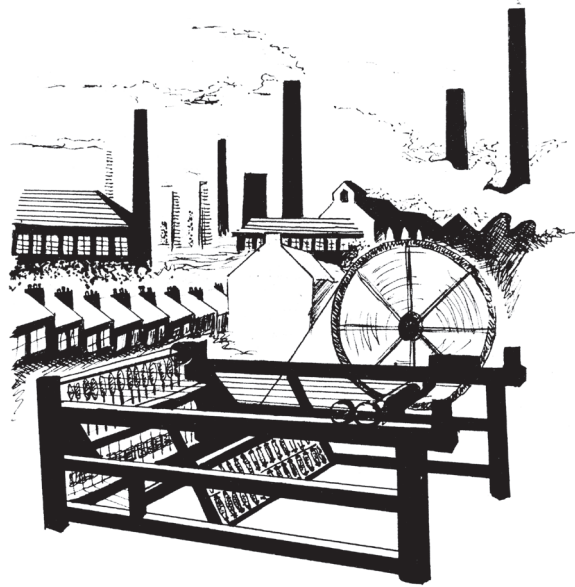




A MOST EXCELLENT DISH!
TALES OF THE LANCASHIRE
TRIPE TRADE

MARJORY HOULIHAN







WHERE HAVE ALL THE TRIPE SHOPS GONE?

I little thought, as I chatted to an old neighbour, just what our conversation would lead to. We talked about Mrs Dean's early life in Bolton, and all the changes that had taken place in the town. 'When I were a girl, mi mother kept a tripe shop up Halliwell, an that's summat y'never see these days.'

'That's true,' I replied. We went on to discuss other matters, and I forgot her earlier comment.

Later that evening, however, remembering our conversation, the thought struck me with some force – you never DO see tripe shops nowadays! As if to reinforce the germ of an idea, among the next day's post was a newsletter from the Local History Study Group, and at the meeting which followed I put forward the subject of tripe as a possible project which might be of local interest.

One thing led quickly to another. I contacted the *Bolton Evening News*, and thanks to the kindness of the Editor my appeal for information was published a week later. That night the phone hardly stopped ringing; it seemed that nearly all Bolton was anxious to tell me about tripe! By the end of the evening it was obvious that the project had aroused a great deal of interest, and that therefore it was a subject well worth looking into.





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BBC Radio Manchester, Bill Evans, Mr F. Smith, Fred Laycock, Bill Davies, and many other Boltonians too numerous to mention individually, for their memories, loan of photographs, drawings and other material. Last but not least, my husband Peter, for his tolerance and understanding in putting up with hastily cooked meals, bad temper and absent-mindedness on my part, all of which he has had to suffer during the time it took to research and compile this book.

Marjory Houlihan, Bolton, 1988





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CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS TRIPE?

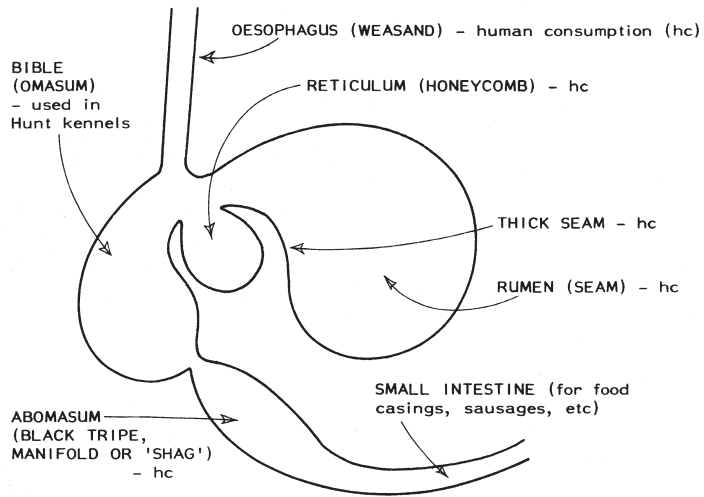
According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word tripe comes from the Old French *tripe* or *trippe*, meaning the entrails of an animal, and the principal meaning is the first or second stomach of a ruminant, especially of the ox, prepared as food. (Formerly the word could also refer to the entrails of swine or fish.)

An ox's stomach is very large, occupying three-quarters of the abdominal cavity. It consists of *four* parts; the rumen, reticulum, omasum and abomasum, the last-named having a mucous membrane and popularly termed the 'true' stomach.

An ox weighing between 700 and 800 lb will produce about 15 lb of tripe, although tripes can vary from 14 to 30 lb in weight, depending on the age and breed of the animal. The rumen, or paunch, is the largest part of the tripe, and is known as seam. The walls of the reticulum, or second stomach, are covered with branched ridges, giving it a honeycomb appearance, which gives this part its name. Leaf tripe is so-called because of the membrane of leaf-like folds of the abomasum; this has a high fat content. Another part of the animal, the oesophagus or food pipe, is also classed as tripe, and is known as weasand. All these parts pass through the same cleaning and preparation processes.

Tripes from other animals are also considered edible. Sheep's tripes, for example, are used in the preparation of *pieds et paquets à la Marseillaise* and *petarram*, two delicacies from the south and south-west of France. The use of the first stomach





The four chambers of a cow's stomach, and other parts dealt with by tripe dressers.

of beef is well known in dishes such as the famous *tripes à la mode de Caen* and *gras-double à la Lyonnaise*, two other French specialities. Finally, of course, the intestines of pigs have long been used to enclose sausages.

EARLY HISTORY

The origins of tripe dressing are lost in the mists of time. It has a known history of over 2,000 years, having been esteemed by both the Greeks and the Romans. Athenaeus praised it; Homer, the father of Greek poetry, noted the excellence of the tripe prepared in honour of Achilles; Thomas Muffet (in his *Health's Improvement*, edited after his death by Christopher Bennet in 1655) declared that, 'The taste of Tripes did seem so delicate to the Romans, that they often killed oxen for the Tripes' sake.'

It was said that William the Conqueror enjoyed tripe accompanied by Neustrian apple juice. However, it is unlikely





that the cooks of the Middle Ages were adept in the preparation of tasty, well-seasoned dishes!

The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites numerous early references to tripe. It is mentioned by Langland in *Piers Plowman*, by Caxton and, of course, by Shakespeare, whose character Grumio enquires, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, 'How say you to a fat tripe – finely broiled?' In 1541 Sir Thomas Elyot gave a description of 'the inwards of beastes, as trypes and chytterlynges'. (Chitterlings are the smaller intestines of the beast, prepared for eating by frying or boiling.)

In 1662 Samuel Pepys wrote, 'Dined with my wife upon a most excellent dish of tripe of my own directing – covered with mustard – of which I made a great meal.' A year or so later he again records, 'Home to dinner on tripes.'

Arbuthnot's *Harmony in Uproar* begs 'To invite you to eat a Tripe-soup and Fricassey of Sheep's Trotters.' Oliver Goldsmith praised the dish, as did Charles Dickens. In *Barnaby Rudge*, one of the characters was regaled with 'a steaming supper of boiled tripe and onions, to which meal he did ample justice.' It has been said that King Edward VII was also fond of a dish of tripe.

The word 'tripe' was sometimes used in a derogatory sense, when applied to a person. 'Tripe-cheeks', for example, described someone with coarse, blowsy cheeks. Shakespeare, in *Henry V*, wrote, 'Thou damned Tripe-visag'd Rascall.'

A 'Tripe-wife' was a female tripe dresser, not always of respectable character. 'Was not thy mother a notorious tripewife?' demands Brome, in his *City Wit*.

Trotters and cowheels are also mentioned in the literature of the past. Mayhew, in *London Labour and the London Poor*, wrote, 'For supper there is a sandwich, a meat pudding or a trotter.' Cowheel, stewed so as to form a jelly, is recommended by Muffet: 'A tender cowheel is counted restorative.' John Wesley advised in his *Primitive Physic* of 1747: 'Take a cowheel from the Tripe-house, ready drest.'

The word 'tripe' has been used to describe things with a





supposed resemblance to tripe. ‘Tripe-velvet’ or ‘Tripe de Velours’ was an imitation of wool or thread, mock velvet, velveteen or fustian. A 1714 book of rates records: ‘Eighty tripes of velvet, per piece of 10 Ells, 3s od.’

Rock-tripe or *tripe de roche* was an appellation given to various edible lichens in Canada which afforded a slightly nutritious but bitter and purgative food, as described by Alexander Henry in his *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories*, published in 1809.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Tripe has played its part in making the north and midlands the workshops of Britain. As the cotton trade grew in importance, mill hands did not have enough time or energy to cook meals in their homes during the week and tripe therefore became the ideal food – cheap but nourishing.

Tripe dressing was an acquired skill. In the Archives Department of Manchester Public Libraries there is a copy of an apprenticeship indenture (dated 27 January 1831), binding one Joseph Newton of Manchester, ‘a poor child of fourteen years’, to James Lane, tripe dresser, also of Manchester.

Memorandum to wit. **WE**, two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the County of Lancaster, acting for the Division of Manchester, in the said County, do hereby certify, that we have enquired into the propriety of binding Joseph Newton a poor child of the age of fourteen years, belonging to the Township of Manchester in the said Division, Apprentice to James Lane in the County of Lancaster to James Lane whose circumstances and character we have also inquired, and having had regard to the means of communication between such places, we find that the said James Lane resides and has his place of business, within a reasonable distance from the place to which the said Joseph Newton belongs. We do therefore order and declare, that the said James Lane is a fit person to whom the said Joseph Newton may be properly bound as Apprentice, and that the Overseers of the Poor of the Township of Manchester are at liberty to bind the said Joseph Newton Apprentice accordingly.

Given under our Hands, this Twenty seven day of January 1831

W. Wright
J. Fred. John

The magistrates' certificate that was attached to Joseph Newton's apprenticeship indenture.





To soufe Pigs Feet and Ears.

CLEAN your Pigs Feet and Ears, and boil them 'till they are tender, then split the Feet, and put them into Salt and Water with the Ears; when you use them, dry them well with a Cloth, and dip them in Batter made of Flour and Eggs, fry them a good Brown, and fend them up with good melted Butter.

To soufe Tripe.

WHEN your Tripe is boiled, put it into Salt and Water, change the Salt and Water every Day 'till you use it, dip it in Batter, and fry it as the Pigs Feet and Ears, or boil it in fresh Salt and Water, with an Onion sliced, and a few Sprigs of Parsley, and fend melted Butter for Sauce.

To make Calves Foot Jelly.

PUT a Gang of Calfs Feet well cleaned into a Pan, with six Quarts of Water, and let them

boil gently 'till reduced to two Quarts, then take out the Feet, scum off the Fat clean, and clear your Jelly from the Sediment, beat the whites of five Eggs to a Froth, then add one Pint of Lisbon, Madeira, or any pale made Wine, if you chuse it, then squeeze in the Juice of three Lemons; when your Stock is boiling, take three Spoonfuls of it, and keep stirring it with your Wine and Eggs to keep it from curdling, then add a little more Stock, and fill keep stirring it, and then put it in the Pan, and sweeten it with Loaf Sugar to your Taste, a Glafs of French Brandy will keep the Jelly from turning blue in frothy Air, put in the outer Rind of two Lemons, and let it boil one Minute all together, and pour it into a Flannel Bag, and let it run into a Baton, and keep pouring it back gently into the Bag 'till it runs clear and bright, then fet your Glafses under the Bag, and cover it left Duyl gets in.—If you would have the Jelly for a Fish Pond, Transparent Pudding, or Hen's Nest, to be turned out of the Mould, boil half a Pound of linglafs in a Pint of Water, 'till reduced to one Quarrer, and put it into the Stock before its refined.

From Elizabeth Raffald's The Experienced English Housekeeper, published in Manchester in 1769. (Courtesy of Chetham's Library)

However, it must be stated that conditions under which tripe dressing was carried out in the early nineteenth century were sometimes primitive, to say the least. There were instances of tripe boiling being carried out in the kitchens and back yards of terraced cottages and other small premises hardly deserving the name 'works'.

J.P. Kay, in his book *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes*, describes conditions that he found in some tripe houses of that period (1832). In a district of Manchester known as Irish Town, foul-smelling manufactories were situated side-by-side with dwelling houses.

The Irk, black with the refuse of Dye-works erected upon its banks, receives ... drainage from the gas-works and filth of the most pernicious character, from bone-works, tanneries, size manufactories, etc.

On the other side of the river by Ducie Bridge,

other tanneries, size manufactories and tripe houses occur. A series of courts occupies the other side, to which access is obtained by means of narrow, covered entries from Long Millgate.





In one of these courts (Allen's) were houses chiefly inhabited by silk and cotton weavers and winders, and each house contained in general three or four families.

An adjoining court (Barrett's), separated from Allen's Court only by a low wall, contained, besides a pigsty,

a tripe manufactory in a low cottage, which was in a state of loathsome filth. Portions of animal matter were decaying in it, and one of the inner rooms was converted into a kennel and contained a litter of puppies. In the same court, on the opposite side, is a tan-yard, where skins are prepared ... in open pits, and here also is a cat-gut manufactory. The offensive odour which arises from these areas cannot be conceived. Offal was allowed to accumulate with the grossest neglect of decency and disregard to the health of the surrounding inhabitants.

Needless to say, the physical hazards consequent on living and working in such conditions are not difficult to imagine. A match-seller, seized with cholera on a Sunday, was dead by the following Wednesday, and not being buried until the Friday, five other cases of cholera were diagnosed on the day of his funeral. The next day seven more cases occurred, the day after two more – these were nearly all fatal. There occurred others too, in spite of tardy efforts of the Board of Health to cleanse the area by fumigation and whitewashing all habitations of the courts.

The Public Health Act of 1875 designated the business of a tripe boiler (along with blood boiler, bone boiler, tallow melter and others) an offensive trade, and as such it had to be regulated by local or urban sanitary districts (later urban and rural district councils). In 1877 Kearsley Urban Sanitary District published a set of byelaws for tripe boilers, requiring them, at the close of every working day, to scrub down or otherwise cleanse all floors, walls and working surfaces; all refuse was to be collected and disposed of; the premises were to be kept in good repair, and, possibly the most important from the point of view of





PIG AND WHISTLE,
OLD ESTABLISHED
BEEF STEAK, TRIPE, & CHOP HOUSE,
COVENT GARDEN,
Leading from Chapel-street to Water-street,
LIVERPOOL.

GEOURGE WATSON takes leave very respectfully to return his sincere thanks to his Friends and the Public, for their kind patronage since his entering upon the above House; and begs to assure them that no exertions on his part shall be wanting to secure a continuance of their favours.

Gentlemen visiting Liverpool on business or pleasure, will find the "PIG AND WHISTLE" a convenient house to Dine at. Beef Steaks, Chops, Cutlets, and Tripe, served up in the first style, at moderate charges.

Wines and Spirits of the Best Quality.
 Private Rooms, and Dinners dressed on the shortest notice.
Good well-vent Beds.

An advertisement from 1832.

the inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, 'Every tripe-boiler shall adopt the best practicable means of rendering innocuous all vapours emitted during the process of boiling...'

In addition, the entire building had to be hot lime-washed four times a year. The failure to observe all, or indeed any, of the bylaws made the offender liable to a fine of £5 or more – a not inconsiderable sum in the year 1877!

Local newspapers sometimes carried reports of court proceedings against erring tripe boilers. For example, at the turn of the century a Bolton man was brought before the local magistrates for causing 'an obnoxious smell from a coal-fired boiler in Back Derby Street, to boil cows' belly, therefore causing a public nuisance.'

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In recent history the aim of most tripe dressers has been to ensure that a much-liked and nourishing food be prepared, cooked and served by up-to-date methods and upon hygienic principles, and sold at a price within the reach of everyone.

In 1909 proposals were made to bring a measure of unity into the trade. J.S. Hill, the head of an established Manchester firm, interested a group of like-minded tripe dressers in pledging themselves to improve the status of the trade, which was by this time receiving commendation from the medical profession,





John Sherlock's tripe shop on Tatton Street, Salford, in the 1920s.

dieticians and other food authorities. This co-operation worked to everyone's advantage and from these beginnings the UCP came into being in 1920.

For many years tripe shops had provided tables and chairs at which customers could eat a meal; sometimes there was a separate small dining-room behind the shop. One such 'supper bar' was to be found at Vose's tripe shop on Churchgate in Bolton.

With the emergence of larger companies, specially planned and fitted-out restaurants opened and were well-patronized by the public. One of the first of these new purpose-built eating places was in Burnley, opened by Mr Hill himself. Eventually, bright, clean and attractive shops appeared in most Lancashire towns, serving well-cooked meals in pleasant surroundings. The following delightful description of one such building comes from the *Wigan Observer* of 7 April 1917:





NEW CAFÉ FOR WIGAN

The Tripe de Luxe Restaurant and Tea Room, which Messrs Vose and Son have opened at 8 Market Street, Wigan, was opened for business last Wednesday, after being thrown open for an informal inspection by the public, on Monday. The elaborate character of the appointments of the new café attracted attention ... and the announcement that the Borough Magistrates had granted the new establishment a music licence for a permanent ladies' orchestra of three performers, also served to stimulate public interest.

On passing through the street door into a small vestibule with marble counters, which serves as a front shop, visitors at once pass on to the front dining-room, a spacious, well lighted and handsomely decorated apartment, on the floor of which stand the white-clothed tables and the seating, accommodation of the chamber being about 300.

This room, which is called the general restaurant... has panelled walls with oak divisions. The furniture is of the Early English style, combining dignity and beauty. At the rear is the servery, where all utensils used are treated with hot, sterilized water, none of the vessels being actually handled in the process.

Lavatory accommodation is also provided on the most scientific lines. A handsome stairway, modelled on the manner of the eighteenth century, gives access to the Tea Room on the first floor, and it is in this apartment that the ladies' orchestra dispenses music. Daintily placed palms and other patches of greenery give a cool relief to the general colourings of the apartment, which are quite tasteful and effective, being of a delicate pink relieved with enrichments in old ivory. Taking all the decorations together, there is a splendid sense of openness and harmony about the whole establishment, together with an old world charm, delicacy and refinement. Messrs Vose and Son, to whose enterprise Wigan owes this interesting addition to its catering attractions, are noted purveyors, and the arrangements for supplying their future customers with the highest class bill





of fare could not be excelled. The structural arrangements have been excellently carried out by Messrs Waring and Gillow of Manchester, and the entire premises ... fitted with electric light.

Regrettably, this elegant establishment was closed down a few years ago.

The tripe trade flourished up to and during the First World War, but then came the slump and the great depression. Lancashire's industrial output slowed down and unemployment became a grim reality to many.

By 1920 it was realized by the tripe dressers of Manchester and district that a number of separate firms could not be operated as efficiently or as economically as one large concern, which would have obvious advantages in buying and in the co-ordination of supply to retail shops. All these separate interests were therefore amalgamated and this consolidation was the beginning of the food production and distribution combine now known as the UCP (United Cattle Products).

Depression hung like a cloud over the Lancashire towns in the 1920s and 1930s. Trade everywhere was bad but, partly through judicious advertising and partly because of the continuing cheapness of the products, tripe and cowheel remained popular sources of nourishment.

A perusal of trade directories for this period shows how widespread tripe shops were. For example, the 1923 directory gives 21 names in Burnley; the Preston directory for 1926-7 lists 35; Stockport had over 50 listed and in 1925 there were 16 tripe dealers in Wigan. Bolton's directory for 1922 lists over 40 tripe dealers, several with more than one shop, and ten years later there were only slightly fewer.

