

Audit ale - a short history

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One occasionally comes across items at auctions or specialist breweriana sales which give a glimpse of an almost forgotten traditional special brew. 'Audit ale' has remained something of an enigma as most easily-accessible information is scant, and that which is offered in print is often generalised, erroneous or misleading at best, with typical descriptions offering a 'Betjemanesque' nostalgia containing anecdotal accounts with little or no analysis or referencing as in, for example, H.A. Monckton's, *A History of English Ale and Beer*.¹ Further, the *Encyclopaedia of Beer* edited by Christine P. Rhodes in 1997 declares that 'Audit ale is a special brew originally served to students at English colleges when grades were announced following an oral examination.'² This simply was not the case, (refer definition p.2). Even Hutchinson's *Encyclopaedia* definition is erroneous as it states that audit ale is specifically an Oxford brew, 'a special strong ale used at certain Oxford colleges on audit day',² and was served at most colleges, and certainly at Cambridge. Ironically another source maintain's a contrary viewpoint, in that

audit ale is essentially a Cambridge brew, 'Audit Ale ... is the famous brew of Trinity College, Cambridge'.³ Misleading notions of the constituency of audit ale also abound, from 'a mixture of standard ale with the addition of a small amount of port' to 'classic pale ale' - both of which are completely erroneous.⁴

The aim of this article is to attempt to trace the history of this special brew from its origins in medieval seigniorial, craft guild and religious matters, and famed usage within the Oxbridge colleges, up to modern times where it later became synonymous with potent drink and was much imitated in the form of bottled 'barley wine'.⁵ The production of audit ale will also be discussed as fortunately, contemporary documentary evidence survives, and finally its role in literature will also be examined.

Audit Ale

The *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam*, a dictionary of academic and colloquial terms used at the University of Cambridge gives the preface thus:

ALE. Cambridge has long been celebrated for its Ale: we have ourselves quaffed no

* This article has undergone peer review.

small quantity of this inspiring beverage and remember the rapturous exclamation of a celebrated classic on receiving some dozens of Audit stout, All hail to the Ale, it sheds a halo around my head.⁶

This dictionary, further noted:

AUDIT. In the University of Cambridge, England, a meeting of the master and fellows to examine or audit the College accounts. This is succeeded by a feast, on which occasion is broached the very best ale, for which reason ale of this character is called 'audit ale'.⁷

The colleges have been long noted for their potent 'Audit ales' especially brewed for the Feasts held on the annual audit of accounts from at least the mid fourteenth century, and was a brewing tradition that lasted well into the twentieth century.⁸ To commemorate this state of affairs, the Cambridge Folk Museum currently has on permanent display a bottle of Jesus College Audit Ale associated with this now long-forgotten practice.

As can be seen from the above description, the 'Audit' was the official annual inspection of the accounts drawn up at the end of a financial year, celebrated in some colleges by an audit feast and, very commonly the consumption of specially brewed audit ale. It was also the occasion at which formerly, a *dividena*⁹ was declared.

As the Oxbridge colleges were more or less self-governing institutions who had

to keep strict control over their own financial expenditure and income and thus kept excellent accounts from their establishment.¹⁰ As the colleges' main source of income was derived from endowed land and property which was leased to tenants, it seems inevitable that an annual audit was carried out, celebrated with an audit feast. This can be illustrated at Oxford University from an early date: Even by 1248 there is mention of the two Proctors who were the ancestors of the University Chest Office, rendering income and expenditure accounts, (before the Vice-Chancellor's Office held responsibility for them). Their Land Agent would collect the rents from the University farms on or near Lady Day, traveling round on horseback to visit, and if successful in collecting the rent, would treat the tenants in some local hostelry.¹¹ The Proctors themselves would spend as much as 10 per cent of the total collected rents on the annual audit feast which lasted three days!¹² Today, the Proctors' Dinners are much more modest, although perhaps the University has an event somewhat similar to the audit feast known as the Tenants' Dinner.¹³

In the Oxbridge colleges, the annual Audit Feast along with the Founder's Day Feast was amongst the two most important events in the college social calendar. The Audit Day usually held in late January or early February at the end of the then fiscal year, was also the occasion when the College's tenants paid their annual rents. Most tenants brought along a gift as a goodwill gesture, (later,

almost always specifically incorporated into the contract!) which was usually in the form of poultry, fish or the like. One finds a typical example in that of a brew-house leased by Emmanuel College, Cambridge:

Lease to Edward Miller of Cambridge, inn-holder, of a brewhouse at the rear of the College with its equipment for 11 years from Michellmas 1676 with annual rent £28 & 2 capons at each Audit.¹⁴

Following the receipt of their rental dues, the college offered the tenant a strong, potent alcoholic beer drink to conclude business.¹⁵ (The 'audit ale' being the same which would be later served at the college's Audit Feast). This practice was not unusual, for concluding business transactions over beer became the norm in England. Beer was clearly consumed because it was safe to drink as well as nutritious, however there were other desirable qualities associated with the staple drink, for beer acted as an important social lubricant used to conduct commerce.¹⁶ A Frenchman visiting a Cambridge college clergyman in 1672 commented on the necessity to drink, 'two or three pots of beer during our parley; for no kind of business is transacted in England without the interaction of pots of beer'.¹⁷

Festivals and Feasts

The practice of celebrating a feast at the audit has its roots in early medieval

society: Before the Reformation, the English year was a calendar of feasts, festivals, and holy days (hence the modern term of holidays). Four of these holy days, spaced comparatively evenly throughout the year, were marked for such things as the collection of rents and the paying of feudal tributes, and when fairs were usually held.¹⁸ These four were Lady Day¹⁹ (25th March, the Feast of the Annunciation), Midsummer Day (24th June, the Feast of St. John the Baptist), Michaelmas (29 September, the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel), and Christmas (25th December, of course, the Feast of the Nativity of Christ).

In modern Festival feasts days: 25th December, Christmas Day is where the 'Feast of the Nativity of Christ' is still very celebrated. In Hilaire Belloc's novel of travel, *The Four Men*, (1912) the title characters supposedly represent different facets of the author's personality. One of the four improvises a playful song at Christmas, *Lines for a Christmas Card* which includes the verse;

May all good fellows²⁰ that here agree
Drink Audit Ale in heaven with me,²¹
And may all my enemies go to hell!
Noel! Noel! Noel! Noel!
May all my enemies go to hell!
Noel! Noel!

Through these lines, Hilaire Belloc fully encapsulates the esprit de Noël.²² His *Lines for a Christmas Card* are meant in a jovial and light-hearted spirit (although

it should be noted that it was seen by many critics as fairly gauche and ill-conceived, even to the point of being regarded as somewhat offensive).

Audit Feasts were not merely celebrated within the Oxbridge colleges as described in the *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam*,²³ but nationwide, for example, when the feudal landlord received an annual income from tenanted farmers. As events such as the collection of fees and taxes and the giving of feudal tribute tend towards the dour, often a feudal lord would arrange a specific meeting and have a special ale brewed for these occasions. This would ensure a certain amount of merriment among the common folk once their tribute had been paid and the seigniorial burden lifted. This too, tended to be called 'audit ale', since it was drank around the time of the audit of accounts.²⁴

In some manors the dues were arranged to form a complete outfit for the consumption of the lord's household. The manors of the Abbey of Ramsey²⁵ (Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire) were bound to render amongst general foods, 24 gallons of beer, 48 gallons of malt, and more pertinently 24 gallons of audit ale.²⁶ From the above, evidence appears to indicate (no doubt for sound pragmatic reasons) that audit ale was often supplied by one or more of the same tenants in the first instance in part payment for their rent.²⁷ This practice was continued well up to the late nineteenth century in country situations and was naturally alluded to in popular fiction. Lord Lytton, the Victorian

playwright and politician, novel, *What Will He Do with It*, (1858) he perfectly sets the scene of the collection of tenants' rents and the subsequent country audit feast.²⁸ Evidently, from the extract below, 'Mr. Fairthorn's punch' was used as the special audit ale.²⁹

Then the rustic gossips went on to talk of the rent-day which was at hand of the audit feast, which, according to immemorial custom,³⁰ was given at the old Manor-house on that same rent-day supposed that Mr. Fairthorn would preside that the Squire himself would not appear made some incidental observations on their respective rents and wheat-crops-remarked that they should have a good moonlight for their ride back from the audit feast - cautioned each other, laughing, not to drink too much of Mr. Fairthorn's punch.

A similar instance is apparent from Thomas Love Peacock, the English satirist and author, and close friend and contemporary of the poet, Shelley. His satirical romance, *Crotchet Castle*, published in 1831, makes mention of Rev. Dr. Folliott, who complains that the provisions for the audit feast had been consumed prior to the event, inclusive of the audit ale which had been 'drunk up'.³¹

The audit feast as one of the annual gatherings between landowner and tenants, became almost synonymous with country living, and was often used by authors to convey this. Eleanor Farjeon, the English author of children's stories and plays, poetry, biography, history and satire who wrote *Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard*

(1921). This book, set in Sussex, include descriptions of real village country life, where 'Old Gillman filled two of the mugs, ... And they toasted each other in good Audit Ale' presumably at the country squire/landlord's annual audit feast.³² Likewise, Angela Thirkell, was an English novelist who set most of her works in Anthony Trollope's Bassetshire, his fictional English county - gives mention of audit ale in her novel *What Did It Mean?*.³³

Technological developments in agricultural mechanisation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries required large, enclosed fields in order to be workable. This led to a series of government acts, culminating finally in the General Inclosure Act of 1801.³⁴ Enclosure or inclosure (the latter is used in legal documents and place names) is the term used in England and Wales for the process by which arable farming in open field systems was ended. It is also applied to the process by which some commons (a piece of land owned by one person, but over which other people could exercise certain traditional rights, such as allowing their livestock to graze upon it), were fenced (*enclosed*) and *deeded* or *entitled* to one or more private owners, who would then enjoy the possession and fruits of the land to the exclusion of all others. The process of enclosure was sometimes accompanied by force, resistance, and bloodshed and remains among the most controversial areas of agricultural and economic history in England. As E.P. Thompson points out, 'In agriculture the years between

1760 and 1820 are the years of wholesale enclosure in which, in village after village, common rights are lost'.³⁵

The audit feast can therefore also be seen as a forum between landowner (or landlord's agent) and tenant, where both parties met up annually to discuss the year's agricultural issues. The passage below reproduced from 'Tenant-Right', *The Law Review and Quarterly Journal of British and Foreign Jurisprudence* of 1850, being a typical example where there may be seen an element of distrust on both parties.

To test this, let us imagine farmer Andrews laying before the landlord's agent, at the rent day, a claim for so many rods of drainage ... in Clay Meadow, and the statement being an impudent falsehood, would it not be very natural for the agent to say at the audit feast to the other tenants, 'Andrews tells me he has been doing some drainage in Clay Meadow, that was so wet. It will do a great deal of good'.³⁶

George Gordon, 6th Baron Byron, English poet, although known predominantly as a leading figure in Romanticism, also held many political agendas and it is in this context that he alluded to audit ale in his late satirical poem *the Age of Bronze* in connection with home politics of Landed Interest and tenants, associated with the 'agricultural revolution' and issues over 'Enclosure' prevalent throughout this the period.³⁷

But where is now the goodly audit ale?
The purse-proud tenant, never known to fail?

The farm which never yet was left on hand?
The marsh reclaim'd to most improving land?
The impatient hope of the expiring lease?
The doubling rental? What an evil's peace!
In vain the prize excites the ploughman's skill
In vain the Commons pass their patriot Bill;
The Landed Interest (you may understand
The phrase much better leaving out the Land)
The land self-interest groans from shore to
shore,
for fear that plenty should attain the poor.
Up, up again, ye rents! exalt your notes,
Or else the ministry will lose their votes,
And patriotism, so delicately nice,
Her loaves will lower to the market price.

Ecclesiastical

Throughout the early middle ages, the Church, and great monastic institutions accumulated great wealth through land ownership endowments, which similarly to colleges, as landlord, these estates had to be managed financially. One often finds a dedicated audit room³⁸ in an abbey or cathedral where this wealth was managed on a daily basis and accounts kept in order. Therefore it comes as little surprise that there are numerous references to annual audits followed by a feast and audit ale served for the occasion. The audit feast was often regarded as the regular high (social) point of the year, for example, the Audit Feast held at Rochester Cathedral in November 1571 is known to have cost the extravagant sum of £8.2s.9½d. in expenses.³⁹ Unsurprisingly, the Audit Feast was normally celebrated on a dedicated

Saint's Day. For example, certain Cistercian abbeys each year, prepared for Audit Day, on the Feast of St. Lambert, (17th September), after the close of the chapter general.⁴⁰

Likewise there are also references to audit ale from the Augustinian Abbey of Haughmond in Shropshire, which shows that an ordinance for the office of Prior, issued by the abbot in 1439, and confirmed by the Bishop, allowed the prior to have 'for his recreation' a chamber under the dormitory next to the parlour.⁴¹ The ordinance additionally stated that the prior was also to have the use of all the jewels and ornaments reserved for the chapel of St. Andrew and the Prior's chamber, but was to pay 16d. for the pittance of the convent when they celebrated the obit of William Shrewsbury and 8d. to provide audit ale for the Abbot when he supervised the audit of the Prior's as well plate.⁴² Reference has also been made in connection when the dean and chapter of Worcester Cathedral found 'the church in debte and the fabricke much in decay' in 1635, and agreed to reduce the expenses of the audit feast accordingly.⁴³

Another ecclesiastical example from Ely cathedral in Cambridgeshire, where parts of the out buildings were used as a brewhouse (near the great gateway known as Ely Porta). The entrance, with a large and a small arch, is flanked by rooms, formerly a porter's lodge, on the south, was converted into a brewhouse. This was used for the brewing of chapter

and audit ale by the verger, William Southby, up to Dean Goodwin's time (1858 - 69)⁴⁴ - how long prior to Goodwin's time audit ale was brewed is not known,⁴⁵ however as the upper floors were in monastic times given over to the offices for manorial business - the convenience for distributing audit ale would surely have been considered.

Ales

Other early associations are also apparent: Although the English year was a calendar of feasts, festivals, and holy days, they were not, the only seasonal occasions when beer was used. There were 'Ales' which were used primarily for fundraising - such as 'leet-ale' for when the manorial court, or court-leet, convened, and there was Whitsun-ale for Whitsuntide, and there were church-ales which went towards the upkeep of the parish church and alms for the poor, and within the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, the appropriately named *college-ales* were prevalent, used to raise funds to supplement the up-keep and maintenance of college buildings in the past.⁴⁶ With regard to Church-Ales, a point in case can be seen set in the gallery of the tower arch of St. Agnes, Cawston in Norfolk where an inscription reads:

God spede the plow and send us ale corn
enow oor purpose for to make: At crow of cok
of the plowlete of Sygate: Be mery and glade
wat good ale yis work mad.⁴⁷

This relates to a fundraising celebration held by a guild, in this case the Plough Guild of Sygate, in a parish village nearby.

Trade Guilds

Other societies who practiced feasts were the trade guilds, who historically celebrated two annual occasions, the main meeting and the auditing of accounts from the thirteenth to around the mid eighteenth century. Despite occasional attempts to reduce spending on entertainment, company celebrations remained an important mode of urban sociability until at least the mid eighteenth century. Although some members were urging financial restraint, they only succeeded in moderating expenditure on company festivities (including the annual Audit Feast), because many members wished to continue to enjoy frequent association with their guild. For example, from the late seventeenth century there were also attempts within some trade companies to severely limit expenditure of the main guild celebration. In 1690, for example, the warden of the Newcastle Hostmen⁴⁸ banned 'festivals and treats'. In 1702 the Newcastle Barber Surgeons decided they would limit the expense of their audit dinners to fifteen shillings per annum. In 1716 the Barber Surgeons took the more drastic step of announcing that no money whatsoever should be spent on an 'auditing feast'.⁴⁹

In both these guilds, however, the majority of members were still sufficiently

committed to the customary annual guild celebrations to ensure that these attempts to economise failed to curtail spending. The Newcastle Hostmen, for example, flouted their ban on guild feasting a year after it was agreed. From 1691 to 1720s the company continued to celebrate its two annual occasions, the main meeting and the auditing of accounts (i.e. audit feast). The Newcastle Barber Surgeons guild only obeyed their order against guild celebrations for three years, and in 1728 the guild's Audit Feast cost the princely sum of £2.2s.0d.⁵⁰ Similarly, with the Durham Mercers Company during the 1680s, the accounts show that in at least five of the years when such a restraining order was passed, a feast was still held.⁵¹ The Newcastle Shipwrights were still enjoying celebrations in the 1750s.⁵² Another guild, the Parish Clerks Company of London audit feast was held on Twelfth Night (6th January - 12 days after Xmas Day).⁵³

However, the Guild system was not to last and eventually went into decline. The writing on the wall seems to be when the guild system of the City of London decayed during the seventeenth century. (And naturally with it, their audit feasts) Despite its advantages for agricultural and artisan producers, the guild became a target of much criticism towards the end of the 1700s and the beginning of the 1800s. They were believed to oppose free trade and hinder technological innovation, technology transfer and business development. With the end of the trade Guilds themselves, this natu-

rally and coincidentally ended the need for Guild audit feasts.

The Cambridge Audit Feast

Within the Oxbridge colleges, the annual Audit Feast was usually held on the audit day in late January or early February at the end of the then fiscal year, after the college had carried out its annual audit of accounts and settled its financial affairs. It was also the occasion at which formerly, a dividend was declared.⁵⁴

At what precise date, a specially brewed potent ale was initially used at the Audit Feast is not known,⁵⁵ however, records from at least the late sixteenth century at Queens' College, Cambridge indicate that such a drink was specifically served. Certainly by 1580 onwards at the College, strong or 'double' ale (the best quality and strength available) was used at their 'Audit' Feast.

It will be apparent that these especially potent drinks were not specifically called 'audit ales' in college accounts but more precisely very strong and best quality available ale served at the Audit Feast.⁵⁶ At the annual Feast audit ale was served along with other beers of lesser diminishing strength and some wine. Whilst records indicate that Queens' College certainly brewed their own Strong and Small beers for the Audit Feast as it evident from the accounts that they purchased the extra strong 'double Bere' from commercial brewers in the town.⁵⁷

February 1580:

'Item. to Fegon⁵⁸ for a kilderkin of doble beere leafte out off the audit' - £0.4.0.⁵⁹
'to ye Brewer for 2 H[ogsheads]. of double bere and one H. of strong bere left out in John Boyks accoumpts for ye Audit' - £0.30.6.⁶⁰

At the Audit Feast, there was a seniority structure in operation whereby the Fellows drank the stronger beers; however, it seems apparent that the undergraduates did at least get a taste of the strong ale even if it was purely in the form of a toast passing the loving cup.⁶¹ The beer for the Feast of 1586 show that double the amount of 'strong beer' to that of 'small beer' was ordered showing it was a special occasion when even the undergraduates would be able to consume strong, quality ale.

January 1586:

'Item paide for stronge beere to the audit 2: hogsheads' - £0.24.0.
'Item one hogshhead of common beare for the audit' - £0.6.0.⁶²

The Feast was evidently a luxurious occasion, with an extravagance centred on food as well as the audit ale, as the accounts reveal:

Audit January 1598:

'given to my lord Lincoln's men for bringing a Swan & redd deare' - £0.2.6.
'to Mr Middlton his man for bringing a calfe to the Audite' - £0.12.0.
'Spent at the Audite in bred beare & meate' - £15.2.6.⁶³

'for Cates,⁶⁴ Bread, Beere, Wine & Halfe a Boare for ye Audit' - £14.1.5.⁶⁵

Further evidence endorses that the Feast carried a certain degree of ceremony comes down to us in an entry from Queens' College in a bill for '2 Drummers at the Audit' at a cost of 2s.6d.⁶⁶

However, it appears that this ratio gradually diminished considerably over time. For the Audit Feast of 1625, only one third of 'strong beer' was ordered in comparison to 'small beer'. This could possibly relate to a temporary cost-cutting exercise on expenses, or due to the rise in malt and fuel as strong beer cost at least twice as much to produce than small beer.⁶⁷

January 1624:

'4 hogshheads of ordinarie beere and 2 of stronge' - £3.10.0.

January 1625:

'For 2 Hogghsh. Stronge & 6 ordinarie beare' - £4.5.5.

By the nineteenth century it is apparent at the Cambridge colleges at least, that audit ale was strictly for use at the High Table, that is, for the consumption of the Master, Fellows and their guests only. Whilst visiting Cambridge during 1823, Nathaniel Wheaton A.M., Rector of Christ Church, Hartford received an invitation to be present at the 'Feast of the Audit' at Trinity College.; fortunately, he kept a journal of his experience which is reproduced below giving an excellent

insight into the ceremonial proceedings:

At the proper hour, we waited on the master of Trinity, and accompanied him to the college hall, to partake of the 'Feast of the Audit'. The professors, fellows, tutors, and fellow-commoners, were seated around an elevated table at the head of the hall. A long grace in Latin was read from a printed tablet, by the master and vice-master, during which, the servitors were bringing in the dishes, and the conversation went on without interruption, and the same ceremony was repeated after dinner. Whatever it might be in point of fact, it had but little the appearance of being a religious rite, and the blessing must have been inaudible to most of the guests. The dinner, which consisted of two courses, was excellent, and the 'college ale' deserved all the commendation it is accustomed to receive. Two customs, said to be of feudal origin, may be mentioned, to show the popular regard for the usages of former days. After the cloth has been removed, a richly embossed silver urn, of the capacity of a gallon,⁶⁸ is filled with college ale, and 'Trinity College' is drunk from it by all the guests of the upper table, standing. The enormous goblet commences its journey from the master, and makes its way by a zig-zag course to the bottom, - each one pronouncing the venerated name as he wets his lips with the beverage. This is followed by a capacious salver of plate, replenished with rose-water, from which each guest dips a spoonful into his wine glass, and wets his fingers and lips, using the table-cloth for a napkin, which never appears a second time on the table.⁶⁹

A similar ceremonial tradition is still

enacted to this day at the Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge Audit Feast,⁷⁰ where dress is very formal: black tie with academic gown for the Master, Fellows and Guests. The 'loving cup', a large double-handled goblet, is passed down the High Table. Three people stand up at a time. The person in the middle is handed the cup by the person to their right. They bow to the person on either side of them, before reciting a tribute in latin "In piam memoriam Fundatricis nostrae" (translated 'In pious memory of our Foundress' (Lady Frances, Countess of Sussex in 1596) before drinking. After bowing once more, the goblet is passed to the person on their left and so on and so forth.⁷¹

October Ale

Audit ale was traditionally brewed in October.⁷² This strong 'October ale' was so called because October was considered by most brewers to be the best brewing month; there were optimum weather conditions and the new season's malt would still be fresh. It was widely believed that beer kept better from an October rather than a March brew, as newly-brewed ale was more susceptible to warm weather; once it was three months old, it was slightly more tolerant of higher temperatures.⁷³ This is not to say that strong ale was not brewed in March. Some brewers preferred the spring, and March beer is frequently mentioned by seventeenth-century writers. Gervase Markham's recipe described in

1615, stated that 'the best March beere' required 'two quarters of malt to a hogshead of beer, plus a peck of pease, half a peck of wheat and half a peck of oats', all ground together and mixed into the malt before mashing.⁷⁴ Evidence for the brewing of March beer can be found in the brewhouse records at Trinity and King's Colleges at Cambridge.⁷⁵ However as March beer was brewed with the intention of consumption within a few months, it would not have been used for the college audit feast which was held earlier in the year. This fact was perfectly demonstrated by Richard Harris Barham illustrated in his novel, *A Lay of St. Dunstan*: 'For I've said 'twas in June, and so late in the year the 'Trinity Audit Ale' is not come-at-able, as I've found to my great grief when dining at that table'.⁷⁶

Thomas Poole's recipe for strong October ale needed twenty-four bushels of the very best malt to two hogsheads of strong ale, or a ratio of almost eight bushels to one barrel - this recipe also made two hogshead of common ale afterwards and every bushel of malt needed half a pound of hops.⁷⁷ Poole's recipe noted that, if it was intended to keep the beer more than one year,⁷⁸ one or two pounds of new hops should be added to each hogshead; the new hops should be mixed with some of the boiled hops and added to the cask; the old hops helped the new to sink. This beer would be perfect in three years but would keep well for up to twelve.⁷⁹ There was a long-standing tradition of snobbery assigned to old ale, presumably because to make

it very strong, more ingredients time and fuel were used, therefore making the cost considerably higher.⁸⁰ Even by the 1580s, William Harrison recorded that the beer drunk at noblemen's tables was usually a year old, or even two.⁸¹

After racking, October ale was to be 'left quiet' in the cask until the following spring, by which time it had probably 'fined' itself.⁸² At this time, as the air temperature rose, it would start to ferment again, in which case the vent hole had to be opened and left open all summer. The secondary fermentation usually stopped a week before Michaelmas. By this time the beer would be, 'very fine, strong, mellow, well-tasted, and wholesome'.⁸³ It could be drunk either from the cask or bottled, though it was usual to drink two-thirds from the cask and then bottle the remainder when one year old. The bottles should then be left to stand another year.⁸⁴

The Chancellor Ale of Queen's College, Oxford

Although the recipes for several October ales are available in several brewing manuals, we are extremely fortunate to have precise information regarding the *modus operandi* for brewing 'Chancellor Ale' used at formal Feasts in the College.⁸⁵ The brewing process was explained by J.F. Hunt, brewer of 56 years service to Queen's College Oxford, using technology, methodology and equipment that had not changed funda-

mentally in over four hundred years.⁸⁶ He explained the operation in 1927, shortly before the brewery's closure, to H. Lloyd Hind, himself a much respected professional brewing biochemist and brewing author at the time.⁸⁷

Once a year, in October,⁸⁸ a brew of 2½ barrels was made.⁸⁹ It was made in the customary way, except that the liquor run off from the first mash was used as the liquor for the second mash, which was also given a fresh charge of malt. This was produced from the first worts from the mash tun using 50 bushels of malt, and boiled for three hours with 20 lb of hops, which were afterwards reboiled with College ale (itself a potent 6.6% ABV). It was fermented in a small vessel and afterwards transferred into the cellar casks, from which it was later run into the upright cask, a 'Butt' (Fig.1), to be kept for a year before it was broached,⁹⁰ eventu-

ally giving a very high alcoholic strength of 10.71% ABV.⁹¹

Moving on briefly to the production of (October) Audit Ale at Cambridge. By the 1670s, four types of alcoholic drink were brewed (and consumed) at Trinity College, namely, 'March' beer, 'Audit' ale, 'Strong' beer and Small beer.⁹² The 'Audit' beer produced was casked for at least a year before being consumed. Only 3.7% of production was devoted to brewing the specialist Audit ale, as it was intended to be consumed by the Fellows of the College only.⁹³

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge also produced an extremely potent ale known as 'Strong'⁹⁴ which sold at the very high price of £2.4s.0d.⁹⁵ per barrel within the College - little wonder that the College gained the reputation as being 'known for its ale and little else'.⁹⁶



*Figure 1. Beer Cellar at Queen's College, Oxford. The upright cask for storing Chancellor Ale is visible in the top right-hand corner. (H. Lloyd Hind, *Brewers' Journal* (15 Nov., 1927), p. 592)*

Note: the above cited examples were not a regular occurrence, for most Oxbridge colleges purchased their audit ale from commercial brewers in preference to producing it themselves.⁹⁷ The special ale served at the Audit Feast in the Oxbridge colleges was rarely brewed by them. There were numerous reasons for this: Firstly, not all colleges actually owned their own breweries, so for those, all beer had to be purchased. However, even the colleges who had brewing facilities available and who brewed their own strong and table beers usually purchased their special ale used at the audit from local brewers - there were several good

pragmatic and economic reasons for this: Due to the ale being double fermented, specialist brewers and techniques were needed to produce it, especially with problems arising from temperature control and contamination in its production. As it also used additional ingredients (normally double or even triple amounts of malt and hops than used in table beer) it would prove extremely expensive if the brew process went wrong. Further, as audit ale was stored for at least a year or often several, before being broached, extra space would need to be provided that may not have been available and as the contents were expensive, the audit ale would need to be kept very secure.⁹⁸ Thus the colleges lifted this burden of responsibility by purchasing from local specialist breweries. For example, Queens' College at Cambridge, brewed their own 'strong' and 'small beers' but not the very potent ale used at the Audit Feast,⁹⁹ however Trinity College did brew their own strong and small beers, as well as March and Audit ale until 1880 when the brewhouse closed.¹⁰⁰

Descriptions of Audit Ale

A description of the flavour, strength and resulting physiological effects and symptoms associated with consuming audit ale are fortunately available from numerous authors: During the 1927 investigation of Queen's College brewhouse operation, H. Lloyd Hind also had the opportunity to taste the College's ale; 'The Chancellor ale examined was three years old and in

bottle. Its flavour, though acid, was wonderfully vinous and pleasant, the acidity being hidden by the buffering colloids of the beer. It was further described as 'bright and threw a deposit of secondary yeast, with scarcely any bacteria' ... 'The Chancellor Ale was bright and poured like Port wine'.¹⁰¹ This is in line with Pamela Sambrook's research where she describes that in the eighteenth century, very strong drink such as October ale was always highly hopped, being bright, bitter and medium to pale in colour.¹⁰²

Further references to Audit Ale are available. When Richard Grant White,¹⁰³ the American author and Shakespearean scholar, was visiting England in the early 1880s he was invited to luncheon by one of his friends at his rooms in Trinity College, Cambridge. This was the first time Grant had tasted the famed 'Trinity audit ale' of which he was most complementary, and left us an excellent account of the drink at that time. He found that, 'such a product of malt and hops had never passed my lips before', further describing its qualities through the use of numerous similes;

It was mighty ... as smooth as oil, sweet as milk, clear as amber, and strong as brandy ... as clear as crystal and had a mingled richness and delicacy of flavour as superior to that of the best brewage I had ever before as that of Chateau Yquem is to ordinary Sauterne.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, the audit ale brewed at All Souls College, Oxford was, 'as soft as barley-water but of great strength'.¹⁰⁵

Spiced Audit Ale

Audit ale was normally consumed on its own, however, at some Cambridge colleges at least, was occasionally mixed with spices to produce Cup, Bishop and Cardinal. Dr Ebenezer Cobham Brewer (1810-1897), compiler of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*,¹⁰⁶ recalled when he was up at Trinity Hall, Cambridge,¹⁰⁷ reading for a degree in Law in 1832-6:

When I was at college, *Cup* was spiced audit ale; *Bishop* was 'cup' with wine (properly claret or burgundy) added; *Cardinal* was 'cup' with brandy added. All were served with a hedgehog [i.e. a whole lemon or orange bristling with cloves] floating in the midst. Each guest had his own glass or cup filled by a ladle from the common bowl (a large silver one).

The Strong Ale Phenomenon and Ale Glasses

There was a long-standing tradition of snobbery assigned to old ale, presumably because to make it very strong, more ingredients, time and fuel were used, therefore making the cost considerably higher - thus making affordable to only the rich.¹⁰⁸ As early as the 1580s, William Harrison recorded that the beer drunk at noblemen's tables was usually a year old, or even two.¹⁰⁹ However, the consumption of ale at the dinner table of the wealthy became extremely popular in the early years of the eighteenth century, when there developed a fashion for

extremely strong ale. As a result of the Methuen Treaty of 1705, duty on French claret and champagne was much higher than on Portuguese wines - with the result that the former became even rarer luxuries than before. The less refined Portuguese wines were less palatable to many; the gap in the market being filled in part by a new fashion for extremely strong ale.¹¹⁰ Throughout this time and later, England was periodically at war with France and it was often seen the duty of the population, usually from the upper classes, to drink ale rather than Claret as a patriotic gesture.

A new elegant design of drinking vessel was also developed to accompany the potent ale. Consuming an ale with an alcoholic strength of up to 11% ABV by the pint would of course result in the drinker becoming extremely drunk very quickly. Therefore, ale glasses became slender and petite, with a capacity of three or four fluid ounces and were often decorated with wheel-engravings of twisting hops and ears of barley to denote their contents (Fig. 2).¹¹¹ The fashion for this powerful drink was perhaps one of the reasons why many private brewhouses were built in the eighteenth century, especially in country houses, as proposed by Sambrook.¹¹² This may well have provided the impetus for Corpus Christi College at Cambridge to build a new brewhouse; the College were providing not only weaker beers for the staple needs of their members, but also for the production of a prestigious drink to replace wine or claret for Fellows

and their guests.¹¹³ Point of note: within the Oxbridge colleges, small silver goblets tended to be the preferred drinking vessel for audit ale informally.¹¹⁴ At the Audit Feast, however, ceremonial tradition dictated that the drink was passed around from the double-handled silver 'loving cup'.¹¹⁵



Figure 2. Dwarf Ale Glass wrythen fluted c. 1750: height = 110mm dia = 60mm. Note: the relevant inscription of hops and barley indicating its usage (from author's personal collection).

Audit Ale mentioned in Verse and Modern Literature

Needless to say, with the pervasive consumption of strong beer at such a high profile institution as Cambridge University, it attracted the attention of many social commentators, who had much to proclaim on the subject. Jonathan Swift, the famed author of *Gulliver's Travels* gently lam-

pooned that 'more than one or two persons of high rank declare they could learn nothing more at Oxford or Cambridge than to drink ale'.¹¹⁶

The reputation of extremely strong beer in the colleges seems to be the inspiration for much prose too, amongst its own members. An early example and possibly one of the most famous ale songs appeared in 1566. The attributed author of the Elizabethan farce *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, originally written for the entertainment of students at Cambridge, was John Still, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, 1577-1593, and later Bishop of Bath and Wells.¹¹⁷

The Ale Song from *Gammer Gurton's Needle* from Act ii follows thus:

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
I stuff my skyn so full within
Of jolly good ale and olde.

Refrain

Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foote and hande go colde;
But, Belly, God send thee good Ale enoughe,
Whether it be newe or olde.
I am so wrapped, and thoroughly lapped of
jolly good ale and old!¹¹⁸

The reference to 'jolly good ale and olde' may quite possibly relate to Trinity audit ale or its predecessor at the College.¹¹⁹

Other prose from Cambridge colleges¹²⁰ regarding very strong ale which was used on special Festive occasions (including the audit feast), comes to us from St John's College. Written under the pseudonym of 'Omega', and no doubt penned by a college undergraduate, the ode below appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and later in *The Eagle*, the College's own journal.¹²¹ Originally written in Latin, the transcript below derives from *The John Bull Magazine and Literary Recorder* of 1824.¹²²

Sapphic Verses in Praise of Johnian Ale

To the Draught of Ceres¹²³

To the Butler of St John's

Butler, bring me the stuff to quell sad cares! -
May the draught of Ceres be before me
to relieve my heart of grim depression.

Hasten tame this thirst
With this (now my sweetheart's away) lift up
my grieving heart¹²⁴ - alas,
Ceres' drink is a gift three times medicinal for
my cares.

Hurray! You smile! And may he lift up the
golden nectar as he hurries,
And like a river flowing the beaker's froth
rushes like cunning tar on the lips.

You see how the shining liquid gleams like an
enviable vice
The companion goes merrily, who shares the
fun with which
Venus and Cupid spike their darts.

Oh you feast which provides enjoyment,
Goddess who deserves the worship of all.
You, bountiful Ceres, give sweet relief to me
when I'm in love.¹²⁵

When I drink these noble juices I'll envy no
Italians,
When I drink these juices neither will I envy
the prestige of French grapes.

When I grunt, lurking in the Johnian sty,
and write with thirsty lips -
May I drink these juices and lift cups friendly
to the Muses.

'OMEGA'

The above poem merits further analysis for there are many poignant points mentioned within; it indicates a reasonable description of *Johnian Ale*,¹²⁶ a strong ale served especially at the Audit Feast, brewed at the period. Phrases such as 'the golden nectar', 'sweet relief' and 'cunning tar' merit further analysis. The term, 'nectar' may be a play on words equating the beer to 'Ambrosia' or the 'Nectar of the Gods' but almost certainly refer to the very sweet taste of the beer. This would be consistent with all strong beers of 8% ABV and above in strength, often described as 'barley wines' in modern parlance. In order to achieve a high level of alcohol the brew needs to contain a much greater percentage of sugars (maltose), for it is these sugars that are converted into alcohols by the yeast in the brewing process. Hence all very strong ales have a sweet overtone in

flavour. High sugar content often means that the ale has a higher viscosity than weaker ales, thus the author's description of 'cunning tar' being used, though a slight exaggeration makes a valid point.¹²⁷ Finally, he makes reference to the 'Johnian Ale' being held in high regard than all other drinks, by describing it as 'Noble juice' and being superior to wine from Italy and France, in the lines, 'I'll envy no Italians when I drink these juices neither will I envy the prestige of French grapes'.

The association with swine (i.e. grunt, sty) in the last verse of the poem alludes to the fact that members of St John's College, Cambridge held the epithet of 'Johnian Hogs', a title which still remains to this day. The allusion to swine may also be reasoned as a parody or pun, for pigs were often caricatured in sketches as drunkards and it was also extremely common for swine to be housed next to the brewhouse because a natural by-product of brewing were the spent barley/hops, known as 'draff' or simply as 'Grains' in the college account books.¹²⁸ These provided an excellent source of nourishment and were especially used to fatten-up pigs quickly or for a winter food-stuff and supplement.

Aside from prose, the ale used at the audit feast was often praised as subject of comment in general literature: Edward Marlborough FitzGerald (1809-1883) the English writer and poet¹²⁹ who was a contemporary of former Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson at Trinity College,

Cambridge, wrote to him later in life enquiring how he might obtain Trinity audit ale he being an alumnus of the College who still might have connections there.¹³⁰

Trinity ale's fame may well have been brought to the fore by John Bickerdyke, the author of the Victorian classic, *The Curiosities of Ale and Beer*, when he gave high praise indeed: 'Trinity Audit is as Superior to All Other Mortal Brews as 'Chateaux Lafitte' is to 'Vin Ordinaire'.¹³¹

A relative of Wyn W.R. Williams M.A. of Emmanuel College was at Cambridge University (Trinity College), before him, commented that 'Audit Ale was the beverage he loved best', and adorned it with high praise indeed as 'any additional honour could be conferred upon the far-famed beer'.¹³²

We are also assured that Lord Macaulay,¹³³ the nineteenth-century historian, poet and Whig politician, held audit ale in high esteem for in a request of 1852 he wrote 'I should be much obliged to you for that excellent audit ale', and further commented on his meal and drink with fervour, 'the dinner was well cooked; the audit ale perfect', with the greater complement toward the ale.¹³⁴

Charles Le Grice the recipient of such a gift and evidently thought highly of it, using such descriptions as 'this draught to ecstasy' in his self evidently titled work, *Sonnet On Receiving A Present of Trinity Audit Ale*.¹³⁵

In Richard Harris Barham's, *A Lay of St. Dunstan*,¹³⁶ there is obvious disappointment for the drinker as they exclaim,

To be sure the best beer
Of all did not appear
For I've said 'twas in June, and so late in the
year
The 'Trinity Audit Ale' is not come-at-able,
As I've found to my great grief when dining at
that table.

J.M.F. Wright arrived at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1817, a mathematics scholar and later, author. He was amongst the first-class and other prizemen competing for a Fellowship and was literally given a taste of things to come by being allowed to drink audit ale. In his biography, he recalls 'This use of the word "thirst" made me drink an extra bumper of 'Audit' that very day at dinner' and described it as the 'amber-flowing audit'.¹³⁷

Potency of Audit Ale

That the beer was often praised can be gleaned from the above comments, its popularity was also no doubt due to its exclusivity and unusually high alcoholic strength which was also often remarked upon.

At Queen's College, Oxford, the 'Chancellor Ale', was so potent that the Dean would only grant an order for a pint of this liquor, and this was the largest quantity ever allowed at a time, and com-

mented further that it was 'so strong that two wineglassfuls will intoxicate most people'.¹³⁸

At Cambridge, in 1861, another Trinity alumnus, Sir George Trevelyan, (father of G.M. Trevelyan, long-serving Master and historian of that same college) wrote *Horace at the University of Athens*, a topical parody drama in verse, originally written for acting at the famous 'A.D.C.'. One line describes the perfidious qualities of his Trinity Audit Ale, 'Though you be treacherous as audit', whereby the drinker should under no circumstances underestimate its strength, to their peril.

William Vernon Harcourt,¹³⁹ whilst Professor of International Law, wrote a letter from Trinity College, Cambridge in 1871 to Mary Anne Disraeli, Viscountess Beaconsfield and with it he sent her a supply of the celebrated Trinity 'audit ale'.¹⁴⁰ He had previously told her in conversation of the wonderful qualities of this beverage, and promised to send her a sample, though due to its strength, he doubted whether 'any but a Cambridge man could drink it with impunity'.¹⁴¹ Little wonder the ale was also described 'as strong as brandy' by a college guest.¹⁴² Afterwards, Disraeli told him that she had had such an affinity for 'Trinity audit' that 'a glass of this ale was almost the last thing that passed her lips before she died'.¹⁴³

Returning to Oxford, Henry William MacRosty, later President of the Royal Statistical Society (1940-41), described

Professor Francis Edgeworth, the highly influential figure in the development of neo-classical economics and Fellow of All Souls College, 'with a quaint humour as in pressing on his guest the audit ale of his College with warnings of its potency'.¹⁴⁴

Symptoms

Aside from the initial euphoric feeling from intoxication, there also came the negative aspects associated with such a potent drink and its unpleasant physical side-effects and symptoms on the body which also was also much remarked upon. Again from All Souls College, Oxford, the war poet Robert Graves, recalls in his autobiography, the unfortunate incident of 'a prince who once came down to Oxford to open a new museum and lunched at the College before the ceremony; apparently the mildness of the audit ale deceived him - he took it for lager - and had to be taken back to the station in a cab with the blinds drawn'.¹⁴⁵

When Wyn W.R. Williams, M.A. of Emmanuel College, Cambridge visited a rich relative during the Long Vacation of 1854, he recorded his, 'first intimate acquaintance with thy Audit Ale', having 'never tasted it' in print. He drank several glasses until 'the bottle of Audit Ale perfectly empty'. However, regrettably, he not being use to the potency, suffered hallucinations and believed his night-light candle was talking to him! - When he attempted to extinguish the candle whilst

smoking his cigar, he believed the candle answered "Don't snuff me, snuff yourself, or that beastly, thing in your mouth". Unsurprisingly he had an extremely restless night's sleep and the next morning suffered from a major hangover and 'looked to-day as if he had been cut out of a dead horse, and was only fit for soda-water and sorrow'.¹⁴⁶

Even into the twentieth-century, the late Sir Richard Doll, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University 1969-79, and distinguished medical epidemiologist, enjoyed explaining how in 1931, had it not been for three pints of Trinity Audit Ale, (at 8% ABV) on the night before the last paper in the Open Scholarship, he might have been a Mathematician.¹⁴⁷ However, he failed the exam and switched to a career in Medicine.¹⁴⁸ He quipped in later life, 'The beer I had that night was the best drink I ever had'.¹⁴⁹

Trinity College Fellows' Audit Ale Allowance

By far the most famous of audit ales was that of Trinity College, Cambridge. This was partly as a consequence of it being named specifically 'Audit Ale' from an early date, (as opposed to 'Chancellor Ale' or 'Strong Ale' et cetera used at the Audit Feast).¹⁵⁰ Aside from Trinity College being one of the largest and most prominent of the colleges at Cambridge, a further explanation relates to the fact that from the early nineteenth

century, Fellows of the College were given as an additional privilege of their status, an allowance of six dozen bottles a year.¹⁵¹ Many gave part of this entitlement of 'Trinity Audit Ale' to close friends and family as an informal but extremely prestigious gift at Christmas time. This had the effect of giving Trinity Audit much wider prominence outside the college environs than any other college audit ale, in a time before audit ales were produced commercially. This entitlement remained in existence from 1817-1890 until the closure of the College's own brewhouse.¹⁵² Throughout this period, one finds this was often remarked upon in Trinity Fellows' diaries and other recipients of this prized Ale.¹⁵³

Lord Macaulay, the nineteenth-century Whig politician, as a Fellow held many privileges at Trinity College, Cambridge including the audit ale allowance. His biographer, George Otto Trevelyan, wrote of aspirations concerning a Fellowship at Trinity himself, 'I might eventually hope to reach a position which would give me three hundred pounds a year, a stable for my horse, *six dozen of audit ale every Christmas*, a loaf and two pats of butter every morning, and a good dinner for nothing'.¹⁵⁴ Later, in 1831, Lord Macaulay delighted in recalling the time when, after cheering on the fierce debate for twelve or fifteen hours together, he would walk home by daylight to his chambers, and make his supper on a cheese which was a present from one of his Wiltshire constituents, and 'a glass of the audit ale which reminded him that he was still a Fellow of Trinity'.¹⁵⁵

There are numerous other examples to be found which reveal the gift of audit ale was received: In a letter dated 7th January 1829, Thomas Turton, bishop of Ely, thanked William Whewell (then a Fellow, and later Master of Trinity from 1841) for the 'Trinity Audit Ale'.¹⁵⁶

Through the lines below, from his *Lines for a Christmas Card*,¹⁵⁷ the author, Hilaire Belloc fully encapsulated the *esprit de Noël*.

May all good fellows that here agree
Drink Audit Ale in heaven with me,¹⁵⁸
And may all my enemies go to hell!
Noel! Noel! Noel! Noel!
May all my enemies go to hell!
Noel! Noel!

These may well have been inspired after receiving a bottle of audit ale at Christmas from a generous Trinity Fellow, and also has association with audit being drank on Festive occasions.

Further, the Trinity Fellow, Sir Francis Galton, F.R.S., in October 1840 revealed that, 'matters which gave him inexpressible delight' were that he 'could once again order audit ale and dine by right at the Fellows' table'.¹⁵⁹ However, in another letter, he also disclosed an apology for the non-arrival of this most welcome gift at Christmas, which was eagerly anticipated: 'I have ordered 3 dozen [bottles] of audit ale ..., but am afraid it will not be ready for Xmas'.¹⁶⁰

In fact, another Trinity man, the Reverend Charles Le Grice actually went to the

trouble of writing dedicated verse on the subject, so apparent was his delight on taking delivery of it on Christmas 1846.

Sonnet On Receiving A Present of Trinity Audit Ale

One drop I seek not from the sparkling spring
Of Helicon, since, from the cloister'd hoard
Of Trinity, full in my cup is poured
The mantling Audit - Friendship's Offering.
Fancy! I woo thee not, thou magic Queen;
Since, waken'd by this draught to ecstasy,
Rapt mem'ry shews to the unclouded eye
Life's early drama, with each by-gone scene.
A world not of the world:- the gay-throng'd hall
Light with bright faces;-and the shady grove,
Where they of College-heart, deep musing, rove;
The social converse, 'till the Vesper bell;-
The Student's nook, chamber of anxious fears;-
Enough, enough, - my cup is dew'd with
tears.¹⁶¹

On a curious but none less interesting endnote, there was even a court case, contesting the will of a somewhat senile, long-served Fellow of Trinity College who mistakenly thought when he was always drinking his privileged Trinity Audit Ale, long into his retirement. Even when he was served with common table beer by his family, he would apparently reply, 'this is very good ale, this is our audit ale, we get it from Trinity College, Cambridge'.¹⁶²

Synonymy

Trinity Audit Ale seems to have become so famous amongst certain literary circles

during the mid-late nineteenth century that it appears to have become synonymous with college life itself - one often finds, for example, that where there is mention of the College, this is often accompanied by a corresponding mention of its famous ale too. Thus, almost inevitably, the enigmatic drink also found its way into other popular fact and fiction. One finds, Trinity audit ale is mentioned in a popular novel of 1911. *The New Machiavelli*, written by the famous author H.G. Wells, whilst the main character visits Trinity College, 'the highlights of the picture came chiefly as reflections from his chequered blue mugs full of audit ale', and Wells further sets the scene: 'We sat on oak chairs, except the four or five who crowded on a capacious settle, we drank a lot of beer and were often fuddled, and occasionally quite drunk ...'¹⁶³

In Frederic William Farrar's novel, *Julian Home: a tale of college life* (Edinburgh, 1860), though a work of fiction, is most certainly based on first-hand experience as Farrar was an alumnus of Trinity College, Cambridge.¹⁶⁴ In the above work, he describes the Audit Feast, 'from the goose on the table, and the audit ale which was circling in the loving cup ... that it was a feast.'

Similarly, a *jeu d'esprit* or light humorous work entitled the *The Vision of St Brahamus* was extensively circulated among the undergraduates at Cambridge following a debate at the Union Society in 1844, and though not the main subject of the skit, nevertheless makes allusion to

the potent brew - the author being a Trinity man of course.¹⁶⁵

He took a little Audit ale
For his poor stomach's sake;
He sat him[self] down in his arm-chair,
And strove to keep awake.

Likewise, when the classic English actor O.B. Clarence, recounted visiting his brother in wartime Cambridge, he observed that breakfasts at that time were 'the chief form of hospitality' ... 'where beer was served - 'possibly' Trinity Audit'.¹⁶⁶

It seems that consuming the potent Trinity audit ale almost became a defining characteristic of a well-rounded Cambridge University scholar! Indeed, William Vernon Harcourt, the politician and Professor of International Law¹⁶⁷ doubted whether 'any but a Cambridge man could drink it with impunity'.¹⁶⁸

This perception can be further supported by Wyn W.R. Williams, when up at Cambridge as a freshman of Emmanuel College. He later recollected the time when a distant relative of his with whom he was staying, offered him audit ale as a night-cap, stating, 'He would order a bottle [of audit ale] to be sent to my room that night, and if I did not sleep soundly with such head-gear, 'I was undeserving of the name of *Cantab*'.¹⁶⁹

Similarly, in much fictional writing where the theme is centred of Oxford University college life, the reader often will come

across mention of 'audit ale' at some point. For example, the novelist Graham Greene, in his short story *When Greek meets Greek*,¹⁷⁰ which is set in the fictional Oxford college of *St Ambrose*. He introduces the main character, who makes numerous references to the potent brew, through such lines as 'Mr Fennick ... raising his glass of audit ale' and 'Mr Fennick who had fortified himself for the journey with a good deal of audit ale'.¹⁷¹ This used by Greene, to no doubt to give the story setting an air of authenticity.

Audit Ale: the Archetype of Englishness

As ale and beer was the staple alcoholic beverage for centuries, audit ale seems to have also been used by some writers to define it as the best example of what is archetypal English. The influential English journalist and author, G.K. Chesterton, in *The New Jerusalem* published in 1920, gave his views on Islamism following a trip to the Holy Land. Whilst describing the very best of European cuisine, he alluded to 'French cookery, Italian confectionery', and more pertinent to this article 'English audit ale'.

Cambridge Bottled Audit Ales

Audit ale was originally supplied to the Cambridge colleges by some colleges, themselves, or specialist commercial brewers on draught initially in barrels or hogsheads.¹⁷² After the First World War

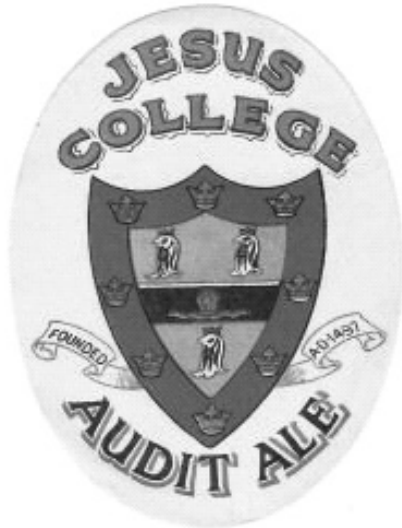
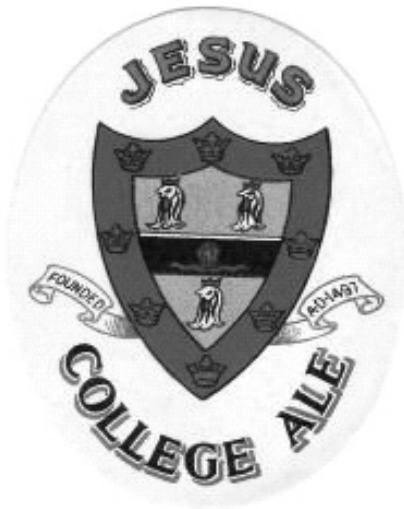
many Cambridge colleges were being supplied not with draught, but bottled audit ale.¹⁷³ Whether bottled audit ale was supplied to the colleges prior to that date is uncertain as evidence is scant. However, what is certain is that from 1817 Trinity College audit ale were providing bottled audit ale to its Fellows as detailed in an account book is in existence in Trinity College Archives.¹⁷⁴

During the early 1920s, E. Lacon and Co. of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (or more familiarly known simply as Lacon's) won the contract to supply audit ale to the Cambridge colleges. From existing bottle evidence, it is known that they supplied Clare College,¹⁷⁵ St Catharine's, St. John's, Trinity¹⁷⁶ and Trinity Hall¹⁷⁷ as well as Jesus College for whom they also supplied a 'College Ale'.¹⁷⁸

In 1926 the Steward of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, also revived the old practice of having its own Audit Ale specially brewed for the College (by Lacon's). He was soon able to report that the fame of this brew had spread far beyond Cambridge and among other places it was stocked in cask and bottle at the Carlton Club in London.¹⁷⁹

Another Cambridge brewer, Bailey & Tebbutt Ltd is also known to have supplied St. John's and Jesus Colleges with audit ales during this time.¹⁸⁰

During the latter years of the 1920s¹⁸¹ and through to the following decade Dale's Brewery Ltd of Cambridge¹⁸² supplied Trinity College Audit Ale as bottles are known to be in existence up to 1934.¹⁸³ Lacon's also continued to Jesus College in the 1930s.



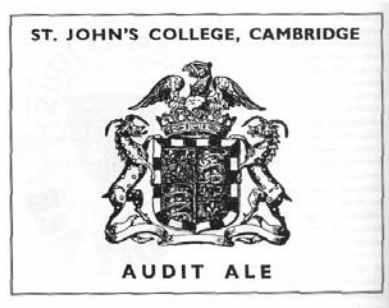
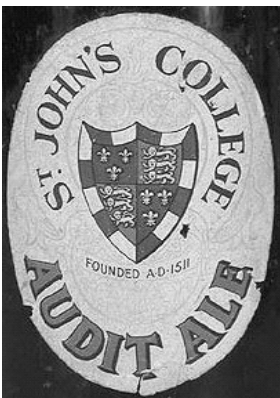


Note: the above bottle labels are photocopies of the originals which were printed in colour (refer St John's College Audit Ale label below)

Just prior to the Second World War, 'Trinity Audit Ale', bottled by Lacon's at 8% ABV, in Champagne quarts with special labels, was also exported to New York by an enterprising Cambridge graduate in 1937, just four years after Prohibition had ended, and the market

rife for a legal, powerful, high quality beer. It was advertised and marketed through mail order with characteristic American hyperbole of the period, including a somewhat potted history of audit ale, much of which was completely erroneous:

The Trinity Audit Ale Association, Ltd. of this city invites Cambridge and Oxford men in the U.S. to participate in the American quota of



the Trinity Audit Ale, a brew which has been swigged at Trinity College for some six hundred years. Among the 'Lord Patrons of the Ale' are the Duke of Windsor and the Archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁸⁴

The ale was very much marketed on its exclusivity;

TRINITY AUDIT ALE will remain a Private Brew here just as it is in Cambridge - sold by invitation and not available in public bars or stores. To get this brew, you either have to be a Cambridge or an Oxford man or be nominated by one. The price is fifteen dollars for a case of twelve bottles.¹⁸⁵

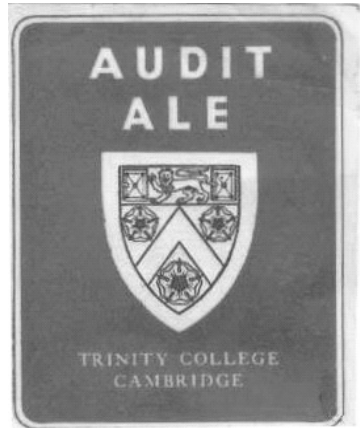
The advertisement was further endorsed by Edward Taplin, Esq, of Great Yarmouth,



Trinity 'Audit' Ale bottled in 1934 by Dale's Brewery, Cambridge (author's personal collection).

'Leading Authority on Audit Ale' - he being the head brewer of Lacon's brewery during this period.¹⁸⁶ However, this enterprise was short-lived, perhaps due of its purchasing exclusivity and its high expense. At a time when standard bottled beer was 4d (less than 2p) a pint in the UK on average, 'Trinity Audit Ale' sold at almost 10s. a pint. Even a premium beer cannot command such a premium price, despite taking into account the costs of importing it.

Later, during the 1950s, Dale's Brewery is also known to have supplied Pembroke College with bottled audit ale. Similarly, the Suffolk brewers Greene King¹⁸⁷ served Trinity College.¹⁸⁸ Another local brewery, Wells & Winch of Biggleswade are also known to have supplied St



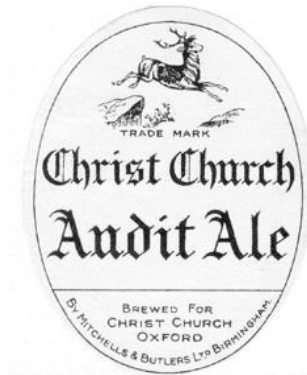
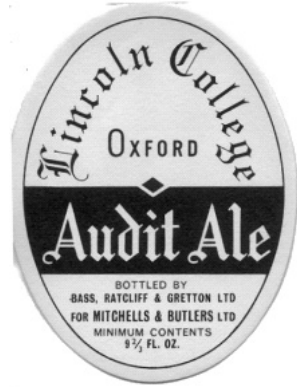
John's College with Audit Ale at this period. Contemporaneously, Hudson's Pampisford Brewery also brewed audits for Trinity, St. John's and King's Colleges throughout the fifties at various times. Greene King also provided audit ale to Trinity, late as 1965 for their annual Audit Feast anniversary at the College foundation.¹⁸⁹

Oxford College Bottled Audit Ales

The now defunct Morrell's Oxford brewery,¹⁹⁰ traded with many of the local colleges for well over a century and their close links were apparent with such brands as Oxford Blue, Graduate and Varsity. Before the turn of the nineteenth century they are also known to have supplied many Oxford colleges with audit ale on draught. In fact, the brewery had another connection with audit ale in that Morrell's head brewer was the last to brew the famous Chancellor Ale just prior to the

Second World War, in the ancient brew-house of Queen's College.¹⁹¹

As at the Cambridge colleges, some Oxford University colleges, too, were supplied with bottled audit ale. Owing to their location they were supplied by another commercial brewery, that of Mitchell's and Butlers'.¹⁹² During the 1960s, bottles and labels are in existence for Audit Ale for Christ Church College, Magdalen, Exeter, New College, Trinity, and Wadham College, all produced at their Cape Hill Brewery, Smethwick, Birmingham which show evidence of this trade. At the period they also provided, not an 'Audit Ale', but an 'Old Ale' for All Souls College, Oxford.¹⁹³ However, the audit ale produced for University and Lincoln College was bottled (and possibly brewed?) at Burton-on-Trent, by Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton Ltd following Mitchell's and Butlers' merger in 1961, as apparent from the bottle label (refer Fig below).¹⁹⁴



Oxon labels, individually endorsed for different colleges, (not a generic label) and some have college coats of arm inline with the Cambridge University bottles, though different suppliers.



Commercial bottled 'Audit Ales'

By the 1950s, the college audit ales had long-gained the reputation of being synonymous with very potent drink and many commercial brewers imitated these to produce varieties of their own which were aimed not at the colleges, but primarily available for general public consumption. It must also be remembered that by this time there was very little market within the Cambridge colleges as many had stopped serving audit ale or even cancelled the Audit Feast altogether.¹⁹⁵ It is apparent that they were brewed by those who had previously supplied the Cambridge colleges, such as Dales, Lacon's and Greene King.¹⁹⁶ Dale's Brewery for example, produced 'Cambridge Audit Ale' for general consumption 1951-54.¹⁹⁷

E. Lacon of Great Yarmouth, who had previously supplied many the Cambridge colleges since the nineteen-twenties,¹⁹⁸ also brewed their 'Audit Ale' in 6 fluid

ounce 'nip' crown-top bottles, for public consumption up to the late 1960s.¹⁹⁹ Lacon's also produced a 'Special Audit Ale' in larger, corked and wired champagne style one pint bottles, in limited quantities²⁰⁰ (refer Figs opposite).

Similarly, other existing breweriana used by the Suffolk brewers Greene King²⁰¹ from this period, in the form of beer labels and beer-mats, show evidence that they produced a strong bottled 'Audit Ale'.

The connection with their former college clients is also apparent on the labelling seen below, with depicts Queens' College 'Mathematical Bridge', a major iconic symbol of Cambridge University.

On a further note of interest, in 1961, the Suffolk-based Greene King merged with brewers Wells & Winch of Biggleswade, becoming 'Greene King (Biggleswade)' in 1963, thus providing an ante-date for the



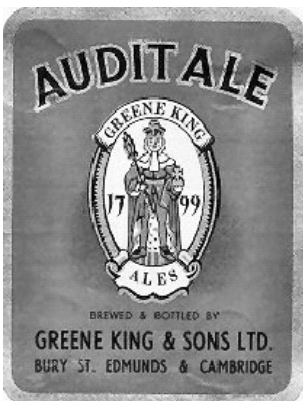


label bottom right.²⁰² It is apparent that this was also a period of transition in the company's marketing strategy by re-branding the bottled potent brew from 'Audit Ale' into 'Audit Barley Wine' by 1980.²⁰³

Elsewhere, from the 1950s, the Black Eagle Brewery in Westerham (Kent),²⁰⁴ who made many award-winning ales for the London market,²⁰⁵ produced on a small scale, bottled audit ale, at a time when there were but three breweries in

England producing this potent brew.²⁰⁶ Similar to the production at Trinity and Queen's colleges, the audit ale was matured in casks for one month then in bottles for nine.²⁰⁷

Westerham audit ale is known to have had some extremely eminent customers, for it was supplied to Clarence House for the beginning of the oyster season.²⁰⁸ According to receipts held in the Churchill Archives, Westerham ales including audit were being delivered locally to Chartwell





Manor, the residence of Sir Winston Churchill, a mere three miles from the brewery.²⁰⁹ Whether it was ordered specifically for Sir Winston himself is not known, however, he certainly was well known for his imbibing, especially at mealtimes (for example, A.L. Rowse's description of his lunchtime visit to Chartwell).²¹⁰ After a lifetime of drinking Churchill is known to have concluded that 'I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has taken out of me'.²¹¹

Other commercial breweries such as Charrington and Co. Ltd of the Anchor Brewery, Mile End, London, also produced their 'Toby Audit Ale'. Evidently brewed in small batches, it seems its main function was to present to factory workers on special occasions such as retirement. The bottle below is believed to date from around 1957.

Another former brewery, Friary Meux, also attempted to gain a share of the select niche market for a beer of an extremely high alcoholic content. Breweriana, including beer bottle labels, beer mats along with ale jugs,²¹² to further advertise the brand are in existence and must date from the early nineteen-sixties (1961-64), when the company traded under that name.²¹³

Much earlier, the brewers, R.W. Borley, of Shaftesbury, Dorset are almost unique in that they were producing commercially audit ale for consumption to the general public at an early date, albeit on a small



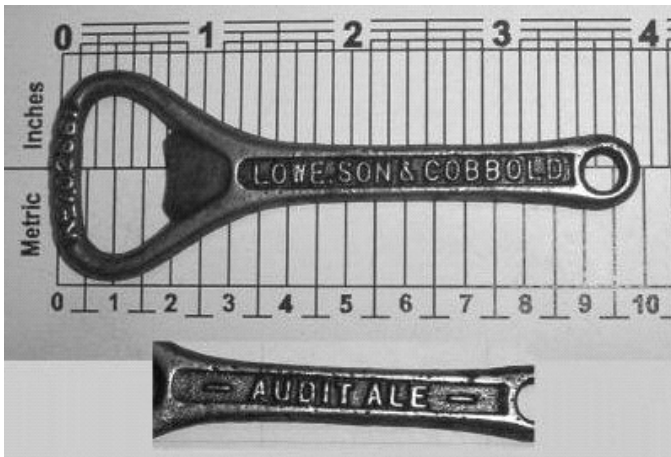


scale and limited to the customers of the nearby, Grosvenor Hotel.²¹⁴ This was during the 1920s, at a time when the Great Yarmouth brewers, Lacon's, produced bottled audit ale that was exclusively for consumption within the Cambridge colleges.

Finally, although no breweriana in the form of bottles or their corresponding labels are extant, one frequently comes across beer bottle openers at specialist auctions, made for the former Stamford, Lincolnshire brewers of Lowe, Son & Cobbold Ltd. These are inscribed with the brewers name on the obverse side, and more pertinently 'audit ale' on the reverse side, thereby suggesting the purpose was indeed to remove the metal crown caps from the bottles of the above-mentioned potent drink which they must have produced. The Registered Number on the bottle opener below (RE 702661) dates to late 1923.²¹⁵

Conclusion

From at least the thirteenth century until well into the twentieth, audit ale was used at the Audit Feast, celebrated at the



annual audit of accounts, where the highest quality food was served, complemented with suitably quality, high strength ale.²¹⁶ Although best known in connection with the Oxbridge colleges, especially Trinity College, Cambridge, the celebration of the Audit Feast can be traced from numerous origins. The Christian Year was originally divided in religious festivals or Feasts which were celebrated with food and drink.²¹⁷ As at the colleges (whose wealth came from tenants²¹⁸ rents from endowed lands), the annual audit of the accounts (followed by an audit feast with suitable accompaniment of audit ale) was carried out elsewhere, with similar circumstances such as on monastic, and great estates associated with feudal societies and seigniorial obligation. It was not unusual to chose a special ale on such occasions, as beer was often used to conclude business transactions (especially within the environment of the alehouse), and Ales, festivals involving the profits from beer sales used to raise funds for building maintenance, audit ale was also drank at the audit feast at one of the two essential annual celebrations associated with medieval trade guilds. The potent ale used at the audit feasts was almost certainly connected with the 'Ale Glass' phenomenon, conducted by patriotic gentry during the eighteenth century and later.

As a consequence of the decline of monastic estates, guilds and break-up of the great landed manorial estates of the gentry in general, it seems that only the

Oxbridge colleges still consumed audit ale at their Feasts. By 1914 the author and journalist, G.K. Chesterton thought Audit Ale along with Mead as 'mere curiosities'.²¹⁹ Following the closure of their brewhouses, the Oxbridge colleges, during the 1920-30s were supplied briefly with audit ale in bottled form by commercial breweries (of which many survive) for this small niche market.²²⁰ Audit Ale may therefore also be seen as the precursor to the modern extremely potent 'old ales' and 'coronation ales' brewed and bottled for special celebrations.²²¹ By 1950s, only three English breweries still made audit ale.²²² Nevertheless, during the 1960s, there was a revival of 'audit ale' whose name had become synonymous with strong ale, and was successfully marketed by a number of large commercial breweries, as 'audit' and later as 'barley wine' for public consumption.²²³ However, it is doubtful if these later versions of bottled audit ale produced commercially bared much resemblance to their original college namesakes.

The bottles of audit ale produced for the colleges during the 1920-30s, which were produced in dark green, quart or wine/champagne bottles with wired on or waxed corks, with labels with crests embossed to individual named colleges²²⁴ (and often dated by vintage),²²⁵ contrasted considerably to the later commercial versions dating from the 1950s onwards that were produced in nip or half-pint bottles, with crown metal caps and containing generic, anonymous labels.

For reasons primary of economy,²²⁶ all but a handful of colleges still celebrate the Audit Feast.²²⁷ Amongst those remaining are Churchill College,²²⁸ Trinity,²²⁹ Sidney Sussex and Jesus College in Cambridge,²³⁰ and even though this Feast is still celebrated with a high degree of formality and ceremony afforded to such a tradition, alas the prized audit ale is no longer served.²³¹

However, on an extremely positive end-note, the Blackfriars Brewery recently revived Audit Ale for the 2007 Great Yarmouth Beer Festival using the original Lacon's recipe at a potent 8% ABV!²³²

This article is intended in no way to be a systematic or exhaustive search on the subject of 'Audit Ales', however if it will stimulate further research and interest its purpose will have been fulfilled.

Appendix

Known Audit Ale bottles & labels in existence (in alphabetical order):²³³

BAILEY & TEBBUTT LTD (Cambridge, Cambs.)
St. John's College Audit Ale 1920s
Jesus College Audit Ale 1920s

BASS, RATCLIFF & GRETTON (Burton - on - Trent) 1960s
Audit Ale for All Souls College 1960s
Audit Ale for Brasenose College
Audit Ale for Christ Church College
Audit Ale for Lincoln College
Audit Ale for Magdalen College

Audit Ale for New College
Audit Ale for Nuffield College
Audit Ale for Oriel College
Audit Ale for Queen's College
Audit Ale for Trinity College
Audit Ale for University College
Audit Ale for Wadham College
Audit Ale for Balliol College 1960s

BLACK EAGLE BREWERY (Westerham, Kent)
Westerham Audit Ale 1950s

R.W. BORLEY. (Shaftesbury, Dorset)
Audit Ale 1920s

CHARRINGTON & CO LTD (London)
Toby Audit Ale 1957

DALES BREWERY LTD. (Cambridge, Cambs.)
Audit Ale 1927
Audit Ale, Trinity College 1930s
Trinity College Audit Ale 1932
Pembroke College Audit Ale 1950s

FRIARY MEUX (London & Guildford, Surrey)
Friary Audit Ale 1961-4

GREENE KING & CO LTD. (Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk)
Audit Ale for Trinity College 1950s
Audit Ale 1960s
Audit Barley Wine 1960s
Trinity College Audit Ale 1965
Audit Ale for Lord Rothschild 1984

HUDSON'S PAMPISFORD BREWERY (Pampisford, Cambs.)
Trinity College Audit Ale 1950s
St. John's College Audit Ale 1950s
King's College Audit Ale 1950s

E. LACON & CO. LTD (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk)

Clare College Audit Ale 1920s
Clare College, College Ale 1920s
Corpus Christi Audit Ale 1920s
Jesus College Ale 1920s
Jesus College Audit Ale 1920s
St Catherine's College Audit Ale 1920s
St Johns College Audit Ale 1920s
Trinity Audit Ale 1920s
Trinity College Audit Ale 1920s
Trinity Hall Audit Ale 1920s
Audit Ale, Trinity College 1928
Jesus College Ale 1930s
Audit Ale 1966
Special Audit Ale 1967

LOWE, SON & COBBOLD LTD (Stamford, Lincs.)

Audit Ale 1920s

MITCHELLS & BUTLERS LTD. (Smethwick, Birmingham)

Audit Ale for Christ Church College 1960s
Audit Ale for Exeter College 1960s
Audit Ale for Magdalen College 1960s
Audit Ale for New College 1960s
Audit Ale for Trinity College
Old Ale for All Souls College, Oxford 1960s
Audit Ale for Wadham College

WELLS & WINCH LTD. (Biggleswade, Beds.)

St Johns College Cambridge Audit Ale 1950s

Notes and references

1. Monckton, H.A. (1966) *A History of English Ale and Beer*. Bodley Head: London; see also Corran, H.S. (1975) *History of Brewing*. David and Charles: Newton Abbot. Mike Peterson's short article naturally covers only bottled ale, 'Audit Ales in England - Bottled Beer for the intelligentsia' in *What's Bottling* (2000). Whilst Ian Peaty gives little attention in his publication, *You brew good ale; a history of small scale brewing* (1997) Sutton: Stroud.
2. McKay, M. (ed.) (2005) *Hutchinson Encyclopaedia* Hodder Arnold: London.
3. www.wander.com.au/the+beer+buffs+bible.htm
4. <http://www.brewplus.com/forum>, 'Recipe for Mysterious "Audit Ale" from Trinity College, England?' 'They tended to be a mixture of standard ale with the addition of a small amount of port'.
5. See Greene King 'audit barley wine' beer mat for example, p. 43.
6. A Brace of Cantabs [Pseudonym] (1824) *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam: or, New University Guide to the Academical Customs, and Colloquial, or Cant terms Peculiar to the University of Cambridge. Observing Wherein it Differs from Oxford*. John Hearne: London; 'Audit stout' was in common parlance at the time for what one calls 'Audit Ale' today; Note, not to be confused with the earlier edition of A Pembrochian [Pseudonym] (1803) *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam: or, A Dictionary of Terms, Academical and Colloquial, or Cant, which are used at the University of Cambridge*. Thomas Maiden: London, in which where 'audit ale' does not appear.
7. *ibid.*; Also cited in Hall, B.H. (1856) A

Collection of College Words and Customs.

John Bartlett: Cambridge. p. 14.

8. The official inspection of the accounts drawn up at the end of a financial year, celebrated in colleges by an audit feast and, very commonly the consumption of specially brewed audit ale. Queens' College, Cambridge Archives, QCA: QC bk.4 January 1565 - 'Item. For Spens for beere at ye audit'- £0.11s.8d.; Many colleges were supplied up to 1950s with custom made bottled 'Audit Audit' by local breweries such as Dale's and Lacon's.

9. Dividend - in former times, a subdivision of the college's excess income, paid to each Fellow at the end of each year, to supplement his stipend. In fact even the dividend was made up primarily of profits from 'internal economy' such as from ale and bread sold in the college, with ale significantly higher. refer. John A.R. Compton-Davey, 'Brewing in the Cambridge Colleges 1550-1750', PhD thesis, (in progress) University of Cambridge, whose research from Magdalene College illustrates this fact.

10. See King's Hall accounts for example; Cobban, A.B. (2005) *The King's Hall Within the University of Cambridge in the Later Middle Ages*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

11. refer also fn. 18

12. During the fifteenth century; Pantin, W.A. (1972) *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives*. Oxford: O.U.P.

13. *ibid*; see also King's College Cambridge Archives KCAR/5/4/1/1 - Tenants' Dinner of 1905.

14. Emmanuel College, Cambridge Archive: Box 1/F1 30 Oct 1676: Similarly, a lease to James Day, gent., of a tenement for 40 years from Michaelmas 1784 at an annual rent of

20s and one very good fat rabbit at 'audit time' - Corpus Christi College Cambridge Archives, GBR/2938/CCCC09/12/27.

15. It seems that the tenants preferred it to any wine that could be given them; Richard Grant White, 'Cambridge Ale', *New York Times*, 22 Aug 1880

16. Many business transactions were often discussed in the alehouse which was the meeting place of many trades that is apparent from the subject of many alehouse ballads - e.g. How Mault doth deal with Every One, *Pepys Ballads*, vol.i, f.472

17. French, R.V. (1884) *Nineteen Centuries of Drink in England: A History*. National Temperance Publications: London. p. 224, quoting Jorevin de Rochefort, *Antiquarian Repertory* (1672), iv, p. 607.

18. Feast - An annual religious festival, often a saint's day, on which fairs were also usually held, <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/glossary.html>

19. With the advent of Protestantism-and most especially the Puritan variant thereof-feasts, seasons, and other joviality generally became frowned-upon. Still, remnants of the feasts and seasons remained. Lady Day was the first day of the year in the British Empire until 1752, when the Gregorian calendar was finally adopted. Similarly, the fiscal year in the United Kingdom begins on April 6, because that day in the Gregorian calendar corresponds to Lady Day in the old Julian calendar.

20. The inclusion of 'goodfellows' might imply an allusion to an Ale house ballad where 'good fellowship' i.e. good companionship was a common theme.

21. He would have been aware of 'Audit ale' as he was a graduate at Balliol College,

Oxford c.1895.

22. This may also have been inspired after receiving a bottle of audit ale as Christmas gift usually to be used over the Christmas period when Trinity Fellows visited family and friends. refer p.31 Trinity College Fellows' Audit Ale Allowance.

23. refer fn.6

24. The comparisons with College tenants are also apparent here.

25. A great flourishing Benedictine abbey for over 500 years until 1539 when the Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII.

26. Vinogradoff, P. (1924) 'Feudalism', *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 3. Cambridge: C.U.P. pp. 458-484.

27. Or at least the basic ingredients for brewing, either barley or malt. This also had parallels within the Oxbridge Colleges from the late medieval period. In 1576 an Act (Stat. 18 Eliz. c. 6) had been passed to grant what became known as 'Rent Malt' or 'Corn Rent', whereby tenants were bound to pay the equivalent of one third of their annual rent to the College in a quantity of malt or wheat.

28. This can be correlated to the seigniorial customs associated with the Abbey of Ramsey in P. Vinogradoff, op. cit., pp. 458-484.

29. Bulwer-Lytton, E. (1858) *What Will He Do with It. ?*: London, vol. x, p. 278: As a former undergraduate of Trinity College, and Trinity Hall at Cambridge he would thus have been well-acquainted with the audit feast in college.

30. Refer also fn.6

31. Peacock, T.L. (1831) *Crotchet Castle*. T. Hookham: London, chap.17; refer also Mitchell, L.G. (2005) *The Whig World: 1760-1837*. Continuum International: London. p.161.

32. Farjeon, E. (1921) *Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard*. Collins: London; Eleanor Farjeon (February 13, 1881 - June 5, 1965)

33. Thirkell, A.M. (1954) *What Did It Mean?* (Hamish Hamilton: London. p. 7; Angela Margaret Thirkell (January 30, 1890 - January 29, 1961).

34. Chambers, J.D. & Mingay, G.E. (1982) *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1850*. Batsford: London.

35. Thompson, E.P. (1991) *The Making of the English Working Class*. Victor Gollancz: London; On the other hand, revisionist historians have argued that this is an oversimplification, unsupported by the facts. 'We should be careful not to ascribe to (enclosure) developments that were the consequence of a much broader and more complex process of historical change'. 'The impact of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure has been grossly exaggerated' Chambers, J.D. & Mingay, G.E. op.cit.

36. Hein, W.S. et. al. (1850) 'Tenant-Right', *The Law Review and Quarterly Journal of British and Foreign Jurisprudence*, vol. xi, p.193.

37. Lord Byron, *Age of Bronze*. Published in April 1823. As an alumnus of Trinity College, Cambridge he would also have been well acquainted with audit ale.

38. Audit Room, an appendage to a cathedral, for the transaction of its business.

39. Welsby, P.A. & Yates, N. (1996) *Faith and Fabric: A History of Rochester Cathedral, 604-1994*. Boydell & Brewer: London. p. 71.

40. King, P. (1977) 'Materials for a Financial History of the Cistercian Order to 1486', *Historical Research* 50 (121), pp. 20-29; French, K.L. (1998) *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer), pp. 399-

425; Similarly, during the mid nineteenth century, aside from the Audit Feast itself, it seems All-Saints Day was also celebrated with audit ale at Trinity College, Cambridge. Farrar, F.W. (1860) *Julian Home: a tale of college life*. A & C Black: Edinburgh.

41. 'Houses of Augustinian canons: Abbey of Haughmond', *A History of the County of Shropshire: Victoria County History*, Volume 2 (1973), pp. 62-70.

42. Dugdale, W. (1846) *Monasticon Anglicanum*, (eds.) Caley, J., Ellis, H. and Bandinel, B., ?: London. 8 vols., vol. vi, f.112.

43. Lehmborg, S.E. (1996) *Cathedrals Under Siege: Cathedrals in English Society, 1600-1700*. Penn State Press: University Park. p. 2

44. see also letter dated 07 January 1829, Thomas Turton, Bishop of Ely, thanked William Whewell (then a Fellow, and later Master of Trinity from 1841) for the 'Trinity Audit Ale', Trinity College Library Cambridge: GBR/0016/Add.Ms.a.213/166.

45. Goodwin, *Ely Gossip*, 1880, p. 5; 'City of Ely: Monastic buildings and palace', *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Victoria County History Volume 4: City of Ely; Ely, N. and S. Witchford and Wisbech Hundreds* (2002), pp. 77-82.

46. Interestingly, the etymology of the word 'bridal' comes not from the -al suffix English developed up from Latin, but rather from the Old English brýd-ealo: bride-ale or wedding-ale.

47. i.e. God speed the plough, And give us good ale enow ... Be merry and glade, With good ale was this work made.

48. The hostmen of Newcastle controlled much of the mining and transport of coal.

49. Gregory, J. & Berry, H.M. (2004)

Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830. Ashgate: London. pp. 64-5.

50. Dendy, F.W. (ed.) (1901) *Extracts From The Records Of The Company Of Hostmen of Newcastle - Upon-Tyne*. Surtees Society, 105, pp. liiii, 145.

51. Gregory, J. & Berry, H.M. (2004) op. cit. p. 65.

52. *ibid.*

53. Hutton, R. (1996) *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain*. Oxford: O.U.P. p. 111; Other Parish Guilds concerning female members are also known to have held audit feasts, refer French, K.L. (1998) 'Maidens' Lights and Wives' Stores: Women's Parish Guilds in Late Medieval England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 29, No. 2 (Summer), pp. 399-425.

54. Dividend - in former times, a subdivision of the college's excess income, paid to each Fellow at the end of each year, to supplement his stipend. In fact even the dividend was made up primarily of profits of internal economy' such as from Beer and bread sold in the college with beer significantly higher; refer John Compton-Davey op. cit. whose research from Magdalene College clearly illustrates this fact.

55. Probably from the onset.

56. Queen's College, Oxford also produced a very potent ale in their own brewhouse, for use at the Audit Feast, which was named 'Chancellor's Ale', in honour of a former alumnus. Other colleges at Oxford such as at Merton College produced 'Archdeacon' for their Audit Feast. The exception being at Trinity College, Cambridge where a specifically named 'Audit Ale' was brewed and consumed.

57. There were many pragmatic reasons for this, refer p.19.

58. The College Bursar at this period.

59. Kilderkin = 18 gallons or half a barrel; Queens' College Cambridge Archives (QCA): Journale QC. bk.4.

60. Hogshhead = 54 gallons or one and a half barrels; QCA: Journale bk.5 June 1604 -. The 'strong bere' was ordered because the college brewhouse was being refurbished, and not operative at this time.

61. 'the audit ale which was circling in the loving cup that it was a feast', Farrar, F.W. (1860) op. cit.

62. Queens' College, Cambridge Archives QCA: Journale QC bk.4.

63. *ibid.*

64. Provisions or victuals bought (as distinguished from, and usually more delicate than those of home production)

65. Feb 1604 (bill for January) QCA: bk.5; for a modern example see Corpus Christi College Audit Dinner 22 January 1913, where the menu reveals that caviar was the starter, Bury, op.cit., p.128.

66. QCA: Journale QC. bk 6 January 1696

67. refer fn 80

68. At the Audit Dinner attended in 1831 by Samuel Wilberforce, afterwards Bishop, his diary entry recorded that: 'A good Audit Dinner: 23 people drank 11 bottles of wine, 28 quarts of beer, 2-1/2 of spirits, and 12 bowls of punch; and would have drunk twice as much if not restrained. None, we hope, drunk!', Samuel Wilberforce (7 September 1805 - 19 July 1873) was an English bishop in the Church of England, third son of William Wilberforce; Johnson, W.S. (ed.) (2004) *George William Russell, Collections and Recollections*. ? London.

69. Robert Walsh (ed.) (1830) 'Weaton's Travels in England', *The American Quarterly Review*, vol. vii, March and June. p. 355.

70. Held on 01 December 2007.

71. The Ceremony of Drinking from the Loving Cup goes back to the assassination of King Edward the Martyr at Corfe Castle in 978. The 17 year old Edward was invited by his stepmother Elfrida to drink from a two-handled cup, leaving him defenceless as her men stabbed him to death. Elfrida's son Ethelred known to History as Ethelred the Unready, thereby ascended to the throne of England. Ever since, ceremonial drinking has been accompanied by an elaborate ritual of precaution. The Person about to drink bows to his neighbour and the latter removes the cover of the cup with his right hand (the dagger hand). At the same time the drinking guest is guarded against attack from behind by his other neighbour, who stands facing away from the drinker until his friend has handed on the cup; Another tradition unique to the Oxbridge colleges which is centred around ale, is the 'Sconce' - a drinking forfeit imposed after a breach of table etiquette at Hall.

72. Refer also Thomas Love Peacock, *Crotchet Castle*, (London, 1831) chap 17 where the 'old October' intended for the audit feast had been 'drunk up';

73. October Ale would have 6 months of optimum ambient temperature, whereas March Ale only 3. March beer as the name implies was a double strength beer brewed at a certain time of the year, and for the above reason was produced for consumption within a few months.

74. Markham, G. (1623) *The English Huswife*. Lackson: ? p. 123.

75. Trinity College Cambridge Archives: Pandoxators' Book 3 - 'March' beer was valued at 18s. per barrel, twice that of standard beer; 1673 - King's College Cambridge Archives: Audit Book 1667 - 1677, p. 313.

76. 'A Lay of St. Dunstan' (1837) is part of the Ingoldsby Legends, a collection of myths, legends, ghost stories and poetry supposedly written by Thomas Ingoldsby of Tappington Manor, which is actually a pen-name of Richard Harris Barham, who entered Brasenose College, Oxford in 1807, and thus well aware of audit ale. Brasenose was also famous for its 'Ale verses'.

77. Poole, T. (1783) *A Treatise on Strong Beer, Ale etc., Fully Explained the Art of Brewing*. ? : London. p. 55.

78. As was also the case at Queen's College, Oxford.

79. *ibid*.

80. This also throws light on the high-status demographic make-up of the Oxbridge Colleges at this period.

81. Harrison, W. [1587] (1877 - 81) *Description of England in Shakespeare's Youth*. ed. Furnivall, F.J.N. Trubner: London, ii, p. 150; see also Ale Glasses p. 22.

82. i.e. 'left quiet' - undisturbed; 'fined' - cleared;. Watkins, G. (1760) *Compleat English Brewer*, ? : London. p. 108.

83. *ibid*.

84. *ibid*; This was the case with Trinity College's Audit ale in Cambridge. Refer also fn.92.

85. Including the Audit Feast and to celebrate such special occasions as a sporting 'Blue' being awarded.

86. Brewing began at Queen's College Oxford, 28 October 1690 (Bursars' Book 1689-90) and the same original basic brewing

equipment was used until its demise in 1939; Lloyd Hind, H. (1927) 'Brewing at Queen's College, Oxford: An Ancient Craft', *Brewers' Journal*, 15 November, pp. 591-92.

87. Lloyd Hind, H. (1934) *Brewing Science and Practice*, 2 vols. Chapman & Hall: London.

88. Dale's Trinity audit label states 'October 1934' time of bottling because it was October ale

89. Their strong October ale was named Chancellor Ale in honour of a former alumnus of the College who attained that high office within the University.

90. Elsewhere a figure of two years is used, 'Chancellor Ale - made from 16 bushels of malt to the barrel kept in oak bell-shaped casks, and it is never tapped until it is two years old' ref ?

91. ABV. - alcohol by volume; The original strengths of the beers in the 1927 analytical report are given in 'Alcohol by Weight' (ABW) which is no longer used, except in the United States. Therefore to gain a modern comparison of alcoholic strength, a conversion to Alcohol by Volume (ABV) has been calculated (one must divide by the density of alcohol which is 0.794.). Therefore correlated figures give the alcoholic strength of the Chancellor Ale as 10.71% ABV (Chancellor Ale is shown as 8.46 (ABW) /0.79 = 10.71% ABV).

Mr J. F. Hunt, Queen's College Head Brewer, described the process in Lloyd Hind, H. (1927) 'Brewing at Queen's College, Oxford: An Ancient Craft', *Brewers' Journal*, November 15, pp.591-92; A 'Butt' had a capacity of 108 gallons, that is equivalent to 2 hogsheads or 3 barrels.

92. Trinity College Cambridge Archives, *Pandoxators' Book 2* 1679

93. *ibid*; Total beer production for 179 was 921 barrels *per annum* which included 34 barrels of Audit Ale.

94. As opposed to 'Ale' which sold at £1 13s. per barrel (equivalent to others college's 'Strong', and 'Beer' (table beer)

95. Trinity College charged 18s. per barrel for theirs; Although economies of scale and subsidies must be taken into consideration as Trinity College brewhouse had a much greater annual production; *ibid.*, this extra strength drink was only produced and consumed between 1714 - 1737.

96. 'A Trinity-man' [J.M.F. Wright]. (1827) *Alma mater, or, Seven years at the University of Cambridge*. Black, Young and Young: London. p. 109.

97. Additionally, not all colleges celebrated the Audit Feast *per se* (for example, Emmanuel College, Cambridge) and hence had no use for audit ale.

98. Brewhouse inventories and accounts always contain locks and keys. i.e. Trinity College paid 1s. 6d 'for a key for the Brewhouse Gate' TCA: *Pandoxators' Book 1*, Shelf 8: 1681 - Extraordinaryes of the Brewhouse.

99. refer Queens' College Cambridge, *Journale*, (monthly expenses).QC Books 1 - 8, 1484 - 1835.

100. Brewing actually ceased in Trinity College, Cambridge c. 1880 when it was considered not to be economically viable anymore to continue following the new Beer Act .In 1880 Gladstone's Beer Act replaced the duty on malt by a tax on beer, which also applied to privately brewed beer, on the basis of the rateable value of the premises occupied. Premises with a rateable value of over £15, paid 6 shillings plus a duty on the beer

produced which was levied at the same rate as commercial beer, making large-scale domestic brewing of beer totally unprofitable. Therefore, by the turn of the twentieth century all Cambridge colleges were being supplied with beer, including audit ale, from commercial brewers as none any longer had their own brewing facilities.

101. Lloyd Hind, H. (1927) 'Brewing at Queen's College, Oxford: An Ancient Craft', *Brewers' Journal*, 15 November. pp. 591-92.

102. Sambrook, P. (1996) *Country House Brewing*. Hambledon Continuum: London. p. 114.

103. Richard Grant White (1822 - 1885) born in New York, Shakespearean scholar and author.

104. White, R.G. (1880) 'Cambridge Ale', *New York Times*. 22 August.

105. Graves, R. (1929) *Good-Bye to All That: An Autobiography*. Jonathan Cape: London. p. 369; refer also description of 'Johnian Ale' p. 26.

106. Dr Ebenezer Cobham Brewer (1810 - 1897), compiler of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, or more simply as *Brewer's*, a Victorian reference work of 1898.

107. As Trinity Hall never owned a brewhouse of their own, it is probable that they procured a quality of audit ale from nearby Trinity College, with whom they had close connections.

108. Also throws light on the demographic structure - the high status society of Oxbridge members at this period.

109. Harrison, W. [1587] (1877-81) *op. cit.* ii, p.150.

110. refer fn 108

111. These are still often mistaken for wine glasses amongst antique dealers.

112. Sambrook, P. (1996) *op. cit.* p. 198.

113. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge who 'fitted up' their brewhouse in 1714, produced an extremely potent 'Ale' from 1714 - 1737 which cost twice the price of 'Strong' ale. (Corpus Christi College Brewhouse Account 1714 - 1792) This was an unusual time to build a new brewhouse as the University population had been steadily falling for some years. In fact other college brewhouses, such as Emmanuel and Jesus College, even closed down their operation at this period.

114. As Robert Graves, the famous WWI war-poet recalled on his visits to T.E. Lawrence (of 'Arabia' fame) who was elected to a seven-year Research Fellowship at All Souls' College, Oxon in 1919; 'he used always to send his scout for a silver goblet of audit ale for him', Graves, R. (1929) *op. cit.* p. 369.

115. refer pp. 14 - 15

116. Swift, J. (1906) 'An Essay On Modern Education', *Gulliver's Travels and Other Works by Jonathan Swift*. Morley, H. (ed.), E.P. Dutton: New York. pp. 363 - 70; This was not only confined to Cambridge for he is also known to have commented on the overindulgent drinking customs after a dinner at the house of Lord Smart, French, R.V. (1884) *Nineteen Centuries of Drink in England: A History*. National Temperance Publication Depot: London. pp. 263 - 4.

117. This play has recently been also attributed to William Stevenson of Christ's College, Cambridge c. 1562.

118. Farmer, J.S. (ed.) (1906) *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, (c.1562). Gibbings & Co Early English Drama Society: London.

119. John Still as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge would also have been well

acquainted with the extra potent audit ale. He was also described as 'Lord of the Audit' in an export advertisement for Trinity Audit Ale in 1937, refer p. 38. For further information on college brew houses refer J. A. R. Compton-Davey, 'Brewing in the Cambridge Colleges 1550-1750' PhD thesis (in progress), University of Cambridge.

120. Oxford University also had a similar tradition; the Brasenose Ale Verses being a typical example. On Shrove Tuesday, the College Butler annually recited verses written by junior members in Hall, in honour of the Brasenose Ale, a special brew. The verses often contained topical references to current events and members of College in residence.

121. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1786, p. 251; *The Eagle*, 22, (1908), p. 118 (translated from the original Latin).

122. *The John Bull Magazine and Literary Recorder*, vol.1 (London, 1824), pp.102 - 3.

123. In Roman mythology, Ceres was the goddess of agriculture, of corn and crops.

124. He is drinking to relieve the pain of being absent from his loved one.

125. *ibid.* One must remember that at the time that the poem was composed, Cambridge University was essentially an all-male environment.

126. Johnian - member of St John's College, Cambridge.

127. refer also to description of similar potent ales, p. 21.

128. 'Grains' are mentioned in Queens' College, Cambridge Brewhouse Accounts from 1710 onwards - UA QC242 a, b, c; A 'hog yard' was also situated inside the brewhouse yard at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, ECA: Box1/F1.

129. Best known as the poet of the first and

most famous English translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

130. Bell, L. (1920) 'Swinburne's Beer', *New York Times*, 23 November.

131. The author of *The Curiosities of Ale and Beer*, one of the two most significant anthologies of beer lore ever written. This benchmark work was first published in 1889. John Bickerdyke was, in fact, the pen name of three individuals who assembled a staggering collection of songs, poems, literature and lore of beer. Charles Cook, J.G. Fennel, and an unknown English cleric collaborated to produce this work, last reprinted in 1965.

132. Williams, W.W.R. (1854) 'Audit Ale', in *Ainsworth's Magazine: A Miscellany of Romance, General Literature, & Art*, vol. xxv, Hugh Cunningham: London. pp. 226 - 29.

133. Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, (1800 - 1859).

134. Trevelyan, G.O. (1876) *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*. Longmans, Green, and Co.: London.

135. Sonnet On Receiving A Present of Trinity Audit Ale, reproduced in Kellet, E.E. (1911) *A Book of Cambridge Verse*. Cambridge: C.U.P. p. 223; The original may be viewed in the British Library, system number 002118438, shelfmark 11647,e,1.(169).

136. 'A Lay of St. Dunstan' (1837) is part of the Ingoldsby Legends

137. 'A Trinity-man' [J.M.F. Wright]. (1827) *op. cit.* vol.1, p. 109 ('A Trinity-man' was the pseudonym of John Martin Frederick Wright); *Alma Mater*, vol 2 , p.26; In fact, in this volume, Trinity audit ale is alluded to numerous times. He was also the commentator of the slight at Corpus Christi College see p. 19.

138. 'College Ale' - *New York Times*, 25 January 1891; at 10.71 ABV this can be well

believed.

139. William Vernon Harcourt, 1827 - 1904 (politician), was appointed Whewell Professor of International Law at the University of Cambridge in 1869. (as a Fellow of Trinity College, he was thus entitled to 6 dozen bottles of audit ale per year.)

140. Wife of Benjamin Disraeli, the Prime-Minister to Queen Victoria.

141. Refer also fn. 168.

142. White, R.G. (1880) *op. cit.*

143. Sykes, J. (2003) *Mary Anne Disraeli Or the Story of Viscountess Beaconsfield*. Kessinger: London. p. 226.

144. Francis Ysidro Edgeworth (1845 - 1926) Professor of Political Economy and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. Henry William Macrosty, review author of *John Maynard Keynes, Essays in Biography* (London, 1933), in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 96, No. 3. (1933), p. 514; see also Robert Graves contemporary account fn. 145 below.

145. Graves, R. (1929) *op. cit.*, p. 369.

146. Williams, W.W.R. (1854) *op. cit.*, pp. 226 - 29.

147. Produced at this time at Dale's Brewery Ltd of Cambridge; refer fig.4, p. 38.

148. Trinity could only offer him an 'Exhibition' rather than an esteemed 'Scholarship' and was so taken aback that he decided to study Medicine at King' College London instead, *Daily Telegraph*, 25 July 2005.

149. Obituary column, *Daily Telegraph* 25 July 2005.

150. From at least 1690s - TCA: *Pandoxators' Book* 3 1690-91.

151. i.e. 72 quart bottles, which equates to half a barrel or one kilderkin.

152. There is a specific Audit Ale account book covering the years 1817 - 1870 in Trinity College, Cambridge Archives.

153. refer also John Mitchell Kemble (1807 - 1857), English scholar and historian, educated at Trinity College, and thus well acquainted with its traditions, when he alluded to 'have an Audit ale of their own, as well as our worthy Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge' Kemble, J. M. (1849) *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth Till the Period of the Norman Conquest*. Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans: London. p. 316.

154. Trevelyan, G.O. (1876) *op. cit.* Vol. I, 1818 - 24, chapter 1 biography.

155. From 1830 - 32 Macaulay as a Member of Parliament; George Otto Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (London, 1876) - he was nephew of Macaulay; Father of George Macaulay Trevelyan - Master of Trinity College Cambridge (1940 - 51).

156. Trinity College Library Cambridge: GBR/0016/Add.Ms.a.213/166; See also 'Mr Waddington has sent Trinity audit ale', Jane and Penelope Monk to Charles James Monk, Christmas 01 January 1848 - Charles James Monk papers - GBR/0016/Monk - Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

157. Taken from Belloc's novel of travel, *The Four Men*. (1912) Thomas Nelson and Sons: London.

158. He would have been aware of 'Audit audit' as he was an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford.

159. Pearson, K. (1914 - 1930) *The life, letters and labours of Francis Galton*, 3 Vols. Cambridge: C.U.P., Vol 1, Chapter V, p. 140; He was Charles Darwin's half-cousin.

Although an undergraduate at Trinity in his youth, he was not elected to a Fellowship of Trinity College, Cambridge until aged 80 in 1902.

160. *ibid.* p.145.

161. Le Grice, Charles Valentine, 'Sonnet on receiving a present of Trinity Audit Ale' 1847, reproduced in Kellet, E.E. (1911) *op. cit.* p. 223; The original may be viewed in the British Library, system number 002118438, shelfmark 11647,e,1.(169).

162. Shelford, L. (1833) *A Practical Treatise on the Law Concerning Lunatics, Idiots, and Persons of Unsound Minds*. S. Sweet and Stevens & Sons: London. p. 644; Rev. H. H., formerly a Fellow of Trinity College, a supposed lunatic. Leonard Shelford was a member of the Middle Temple Barrister at Law.

163. Wells, H.G. (1911) *The New Machiavelli*. John Lane The Bodley Head: London. p. 70.

164. Further confirmation can be found in the frontispiece of this book which was actually dedicated to three of his contemporaries at Trinity.

165. As Clement Mansfield Ingleby noted 'It is hardly necessary to say that this skit was composed by a Trinity man'; Martim de Albuquerque (ed.), 'Cambridge Jeux D'esprit', *Notes and Queries: A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc*, vol. xii, (1855), p. 52.

166. Clarence, O.B. (1999) 'Touring the Provinces in Wartime', *Theatrical Adventures*. refer http://hilton.org.uk/obc.phtml?c=touring_the_provinces_in_wartime

167. See ref. 139.

168. Sykes, J. (2003) *op. cit.* p. 226; refer

also fn. 141.

169. Williams, W.W.R. (1854) *op. cit.* pp. 226 - 29.

170. Greene, G. (1941) 'When Greek meets Greek'. *The Illustrated London News Magazine*, Christmas Number (November).

171. *ibid.*

172. By 1890 the Star Brewery Co. Ltd of Newmarket Road, Cambridge produced a 'Star Audit Ale' which was probably supplied to the colleges for their Feasts. It may have also been supplied by members of the Pegg family, who were brewers (W. E. Pegg, Bene't Street Brewery, Cambridge) and butlers to Peterhouse and claimed in their adverts that they brewed for the College including audit ale. Similarly at Oxford, it is known that Morrell's of Oxford produced a large amount of draught audit ales for the Oxford colleges, but no bottles are known to exist.

173. I am indebted to Mike Peterson's excellent database of bottled beers of the Commemorative Bottled Beer Collectors List and the Association for British Brewery Collectables (<http://www.abbccllist.info/>)

174. Trinity College, Cambridge Archives, Audit Ale Book 1817-1870; As a Fellow of Trinity College, a privilege was the allowance of six dozen quart bottles (1 hogshead); The ale was brewed in the College brewhouse, however it is doubtful if they actually bottled it. This would have been carried out by a local brewery.

175. They also supplied 'College Ale' to Clare College during this period.

176. Trinity College's brewhouse had ceased operated c. 1890.

177. Walter Besant, the novelist and historian also makes early mention of 'the Audit ale,

old and strong', whilst describing one of the types of beer served at Christ's College in the 1850s when he was an undergraduate, (1902) *Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant*. Hutchinson & Co.: London.

178. A bottle of Jesus Audit Ale supplied by Lacon's is currently on display in Cambridge Folk Museum. At this time they also supplied 'College Ale' to Jesus College. Earlier, we are also informed that at a cricket match in 1888, between Cambridge University v C.I. Thornton's England XI, lobsters were served at breakfast, 'washed down with Jesus audit ale', Woods, S.M.J. (1925) *My Reminiscences*. Chapman and Hall: London. Whether this was in bottled form it is not known.

179. *op.cit.* Bury, p. 150; No doubt upon the recommendation of a former Cambridge scholar who was also a member of the Club. The Carlton is the oldest of all the Conservative Private clubs.

180. Panton Brewery, Panton Street, Cambridge.

181. Bottles from 1927 and 1928 are known to exist in collections.

182. Gwydir Street, Cambridge; Although no longer in existence, the wrought iron sign displaying 'Dale's Brewery' remains fixed to the roof of the building, indicating its earlier use.

183. Examples from 1927, 1928, 1932 and 1934 are known. All had the same design label which varied only with the year and the colour of the label. This would suggest that bottles were probably produced for every year at least from 1927 to 1934, and probably for longer. (pers.comm. Mike Peterson).

184. see publicity leaflet below.

185. 12 champagne pints \$9.00 (£5.35), 24 champagne pints \$17.00 (£10.12), 12 cham-

pagne quarts \$15.00 (£8.93), 6 champagne quarts and 6 pints \$12.00 (£7.15); White, E.B. (1937) *The New Yorker*, April 10, p. 13.

186. *ibid.* 'Trinity Audit is perfectly reliable from a keeping point of view. However long it is kept, neither the condition nor the flavour will alter'.

187. Greene King & Sons. Ltd , Westgate Brewery, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

188. Possibly honouring the previous commitments of breweries such as Bailey & Tebbutt who earlier provided college audits and whom were taken over by Greene King.

189. Again possibly honouring Wells & Winch who supplied colleges (e.g. St John's) in turn, merged with the Suffolk brewers Greene King in 1961.

190. Closed in 1998, *The Publican* 18 June 2002.

191. refer also p. 18.

192. Cape Hill Brewery, Smethwick, Birmingham.

193. Up to the closure of the brewery in the early 1920s 'Audit ale was brewed in the college; it was as soft as barley-water but of great strength.' Robert Graves, *op.cit.* p. 369; During this period, Professor Francis Edgeworth, economist, often gave warnings of the audit ale's potency to his guests at his College; Maynard Keynes, J. (1933) *Essays in Biography*. Macmillan: London.

194. The bottled Audit Ale of University College may even have been sipped by none other than former U.S.A. President William Jefferson 'Bill' Clinton III, whilst studying on a Rhodes scholarship during the late 1960s, recalled by a contemporary friend of his at the College - whether he 'inhaled' or 'swallowed' is not known!, *Old Fettesian*, Number 48, January, 2005.

195. e.g. at Corpus Christi College; The impetus for later, producing audit ale may well have been in celebration of their past college ties, and to give the surrounding Cambridge townsfolk a flavour of the 'elusive' drink which no doubt many had heard of, but not actually tasted. It must be remembered that many of the Cambridge town population were employed as staff within the colleges.

196. It is doubtful if the later versions of bottled audit ale produced commercially bore much resemblance to their college namesakes.

197. Note the distinctive label logo which featured the main gate frontage of Trinity College whom Dale's supplied during late 1920s and early 1930s. Other evidence on the label is the use of the University and Cambridge City Council crests belying the Brewery's connections.

198. refer p.37

199. Only ceasing production during the Second World War Years; A Lacon's Audit Ale nip was also produced for the 1953 Coronation, with a Coronation foil, but otherwise identical to the normal issue.

200. I would like to acknowledge Mike Peterson for the following illustrations of audit ale labels; Trinity Hall, St Catherine's College, Lincoln College Audit Ale and Lacon's Special Audit and Dale's Audit Ale bottles listed above.

201. of Bury St Edmunds.

202. The 'Biggleswade' title being dropped in 1990 and brewery finally closed in 1997; Thus can be seen as continuing the tradition of Wells & Winch's brewery at Biggleswade who earlier supplied audit ale to St Johns College in the 1950s; Greene King also produced a special audit ale for Lord Rothschild

in 1984; refer also Hellewell, C.E. (1984) 'The Hickleton Brew' (unpublished memoirs) p. 15 for a special ale of 10.25 ABV brewed specifically Lord Unwin, son of Lord Halifax.

203. Evolving, eventually, to the plain, 'Barley Wine' label, dropping the 'audit' description completely. The biggest-selling Barley Wine for years was Whitbread's 10.9% Gold Label, which is still available in bottles and cans. Bass's No 1 Barley Wine (10.5%) is occasionally brewed in Burton-on-Trent, stored in cask for 12 months and made available to CAMRA beer festivals.

204. The Black Eagle Brewery owed by Bushell Watkins & Smith closed in 1965, and is now licensed as the 'Westerham Brewing Company'.

205. Such was the success of The Black Eagle Brewery that in 1881 a branch line from Sevenoaks to Westerham was constructed to carry beer to and from London. By the turn of the century the brewery was the largest employer in Westerham.

206. This is further supported by a Canadian infantryman, who returned to post-war England to revisit the area where he was formerly stationed during WW II; Mowat, F. (2006) *Aftermath: Travels in a Post-War World*. Stackpole: London. p. 19.

207. *ibid.*

208. Possibly for the personal consumption of the late Queen Mother who was in residence at the time?

209. *Finest Hour* 81:9 Winter 1992 - 3. A quarterly publication published by The Churchill Centre.

210. *ibid.*

211. *ibid.*

212. Produced by Wade Potteries Limited, Burslem, Stoke - on - Trent. In 1989 Wade

Potteries PLC was renamed Wade Ceramics Limited (after being acquired by Beauford PLC).

213. Meux's Brewery Co Ltd of Tottenham Court Road in 1914 were taken over by Friary, Holroyd and Healy's Brewery Ltd of Guildford in 1961 to form Friary Meux Ltd which fell to Ind Coope in 1964.

214. The principal coaching inn in Shaftesbury since the eighteenth century.

215. Thus dating the opener between 1923 and 1951 when the brewery ceased trading (1895-1951).

216. Brewed in October and kept for at least a year, this superior strength, quality, taste and its physiological effects on the human body were often alluded to literature. An alternative reason proposed for the use of high strength ale at the Audit Feast, especially in the Oxbridge colleges, relates to them being essentially very competitive all-male societies till well into the twentieth century, where being able to consume potent ale might be perceived as show of manliness, Shepard, A.J. (2003) *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*. O.U.P.: Oxford.

217. e.g. Easter and Christmas (Feast of the Nativity).

218. Tenants were given a drink of audit ale after paying their annual rent.

219. Chesterton, G.K. (1914) *The Flying Inn*. Methuen: London. Chapter XVII.

220. Trinity Audit Ale was also an instant success when exported to New York by a Cambridge graduate in 1937.

221. Greene King & Co. Ltd brewed 'Coronation Ale' in 1937 and 1953. Lacon's Audit Ale was also produced in nips with crown caps to celebrate the 1953 Coronation, with a special 'Coronation' motif foil covering

the crown cap.

222. Mowat, F. (2006) *ibid.* p. 19.

223. Additionally supplied many of the Oxford colleges at this period; I am indebted and thank Mike Peterson for the Complete Commemorative Bottle Collectors List, produced by the Association for British Brewery Collectables.

224. This was later imitated on Dale's and Greene King bottles. See

225. As apparent on Dale's Trinity Audit c 1927 - 34, which display the relevant 'October' bottling date.

226. e.g. at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge Audit Feast had been discontinued since 1931 (Bury, p. 163); It was seen by many as an outmoded, extravagant, expensive, anachronistic feast; Selwyn College, Cambridge no longer celebrate an Audit Feast which is believed to have given up during the 1970s (pers. comm. Professor J.S. Morrill, Selwyn College, Cambridge). However, early evidence may be seen, for an Audit Feast menu dated 24 November 1936 survives in St John's Library, Cambridge/Constable/4/15 - Papers of William George Constable.

227. This effected colleges' servants and tenants. Before 1908, it appears to have been the practice for the College to give its servants a supper after the Audit Feast. This in turn was discontinued in 1914, each servant receiving in placed of the dinner 4s. worth of food (e.g. chicken and plum pudding) from the College kitchen. (Bury p. 131; Corpus Christi College, Cambridge Chapter Book 13 January 1914; The audit dinner was replaced

at some colleges with a Tenants Dinner such as King's, and Provost's at Oxford.

228. It is one of the two key Feasts of the College and naturally a Formal event. At Churchill College Audit Feast the Master raises a toast, first to 'The Queen' and then to 'Sir Winston.' However this remains somewhat of a paradox, as Churchill College was only founded in 1960, therefore are they attempting to become part of the 'old established University' by reintroducing an old tradition?

229. Trinity College Cambridge Archives /Add.Ms.a /438 - Menu of the Audit Feast - 11 December 1992.

230. Senior Bursar of Jesus College Cambridge, in 2006 'A consequence of this has been the regular call by successive bursars for economies: whereby the annual 'Audit Feast has been a popular target' <http://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/college/history/estates.html> Stephen Barton, 2007.

231. Churchill enigma, Churchill College, Cambridge still holds an annual Audit Feast on last day of November each year. It is one of the two key Feasts of the College and naturally a Formal event by invitation only from the Master.

232. Held throughout the Bank Holiday weekend 25 - 8 May 2007; Given to Blackfriars owner Bill Russell by 84 year old Terry Glasheen who worked for more than 30 years at Lacon's; 'Revival of Audit Ale', *Great Yarmouth Mercury*, 19 April 2007.

233. Collated from the 'Millennium Bottles List' of the Association of Bottled Beer Collectors edited by Richard Lilley.