

Pulling's Gin –a (draft) brief history

Gerald Dawe 22 April 2013

Introduction

This summary, which looks at Pullings gin alongside his cider and wine merchant interests, has been made possible by looking at a modest portion of the records available in the Cider Museum archive. It is work in progress, below is only an extract of the archive, there is far more than this and it does not include the many bank books and buyers books that a colleague is currently cataloguing.

Dates given (i.e. 1878, 1902) refer to actual documents examined in the Pulling archives at the Cider Museum. Quotes (i.e. “ “ or ‘ ‘) are excerpts from the actual documents.

No conclusion has been given at the end, since this is very much work still in progress, and in need of integration.

To make gin, the raw spirit (roughly equivalent to vodka) has to be bought in, then it has to be 'rectified', meaning to either increase or reduce the alcohol percentage. There is evidence of Mr Pulling buying in spirits from large 'wholesale' distilleries (Watneys Wandsworth Distillery, Marrowbone Lane Distillery, Dublin), and evidence for the operation of his own distillery, from as early as 1842 until at least 1902 (see below). Typically, large 'wholesale' distilleries may have supplied 50-60 smaller regional distillers, Pullings being one of them. The diversion of spirit from 'wholesale' distillers for military emergencies (specifically, for use in munitions manufacture) must have made costs of obtaining it, very variable at times. However, the quick manufacture of gin, by the addition of Juniper and other botanicals, must have also given this spirit an advantage over others (e.g. whisky, brandy) which needed to be matured for much longer.

Mr Pulling and Mr Rootes: Personal

Mr William Pulling was succeeded by Mr Rootes in the business.

Early political involvement in **1832**, is signified by a subscribers list "for raising a fund of £200 to pay Messrs Ridler, Preece & others the expenses incurred by them at the election in 1832." This includes W. Pulling, and the subscribers list may have been written by him. In 1839 there are payments for electoral registers for "six Districts" and "45 sheet lists". At some stage or other (there are records from 1836) Mr Pulling joined the Conservative Club (see Societies, below).

In **1893** there is a note that "In consequence of the retirement from our firm of one of our Partners on the 29th September last, it is necessary that we should ascertain whether the amounts standing in our books are correct" (William Pulling and Co., Nov, 1893). At this time

there were branches of Pullings in Hereford, Cardiff and Ross (these confirmed from the letterhead).

Payments to Family Members

Mr William Pulling had various children, some of whom were entitled to money from his estate:

“Received of Messrs William Pulling & Co. the sum of [£5 6s 0d] being the ½ year’s interest on the [ordinary?] estate of the late Wm Pulling due to me on 1st July 1907” signed **H.G. Pulling**

“Received of Messrs William Pulling & Co. by payment of Messrs Ward Pinks [?] McKay the sum of forty seven pounds 1s 8d half year’s annuity (less tax) due to me under the Will of my father” (1910) signed **J.M. [?] Pulling**

Societies which Mr Pulling was associated with:

There are many. Here is a sample with dates for subscriptions or contributions made:

Conservative Club (1836, 1840)

Hereford All Saints Parochial School (1890)

Herefordshire Agricultural Society (1891)

Herefordshire and District Working Boys Home (1887, 1888)

Hereford and City Licensed Victuallers Association (1891)

North Herefordshire Hunt (1891, 1910)

Union Workhouse, Hereford (1902)

Premises

These were in Hereford (Distillery, Bonded Warehouse –and cider store?) and Wine Merchants / Offices –all located in the vicinity of St. Owen’s Street. There were additional branches in Ross and in Cardiff (1893 is one date which is confirmed for this branch) too. There is also a lot of activity around Bristol, and possibly a branch there too (around 1851? – carrier Vaughan refers to a cask being measured for gin content in Bristol, but this may not be at a Pullings branch).

Domestic Purchases:

This is a putative list of some items purchased, with dates, which gives something of a flavour of life among the well-to-do at that time:

Oatfield and Sons -12 cut glass tumblers (1902, further glassware? 1907), also order from 1899

Sponges (1891)

Loew and Co. –importers of Havana cigars and manufacturer of pipes (1891)

E.J. Baker and Son –gentleman’s outfitters

T. Nash –butcher, supplying Mr Rootes (1910)

Greenlands Ltd –carpets and lino (1908)

J. Elliott, Withington Dairy (1891)

Albert W. Marriott –motor car repairer and driver (19??)

Chave and Jackson –chemist 1901

Hull and Co. (1910)

Ralph and Clarke (1900)

City Arms –drinks and meals out (1850)

County Tea House –fine cheddar cheese, double Gloucester (1832, 1853)

Rent and Rates Payments

All of the following are provisional, and need expanding in the light of more documents which have come to light:

Hereford Society for Aiding The Industrious –rent for cider stores (1910)

Parish Rates (1891, 1910)

Sewers Rate (1902)

Income Tax

Does not seem to be personal, or to do with salaries / wages, but more concerned with premises:

1909/1910

1910/1911

Gas and Electricity Payments

Bills (1882, 1888, 1890, 1894, 1908, 1910)

Telephone Payments

Bills (1900, 1910)

Bristol (1891)

Insurance Payments

Royal Exchange Assurance (1845)

Vulcan Boiler and General Insurance Company (1902)

Work on Premises

Work went on in the wine merchants, the distillery, and Mr Pulling's home. It is difficult, sometimes to distinguish which.

Examples follow:

Distillery works? Bonded Warehouse?

1827-1830: Wm. Thomas –“Closing up the splice in a shaft and securing setting up dashing iron & rectifying the feet” etc. (1827-1830) –but possibly to do with horses and wagons!

1842: Dillon –extensive repairing and maintenance of taps, spirit safe and spoutings

1844: ironmonger order for '18 ft strong stove pipe'

1853: John Dillon –for spirit measurer, plus something on stove top

1881: John Derry –altering of fittings to various taps in bonded warehouse

1891: John Derry (locksmith) –repairing capsule presser (1891)

1902 / 1910: T. Brock –refitting gas engine (1902, 1910)

1907: William Rowberry –repairs to cider stores, etc.

1908: T. Brock (machinist): tube and washers fitted in gas engine, lining chimney with new asbestos etc.

1908: William Rowberry –repairs to bonded stores and spoutings

1908: Harding Brothers: “Taking apart thoroughly repairing cider filter” and dealing with copper

Phillip Morris and Son –“removing gas stove from Broad St, to distillery”, “repairing large Spirit Measures” plus mention of coopers rivets and bottling wire (1909)

Other Sundries:

Godwin and Hewitt (1891) –tiles

Coals, cobbles, sand, gravels, paving slabs: Hereford Town Council (1888), J. Butler (1891), T. Parry (1903), G. Witherstone (1902)

Work on Barrels (Cooperage)

M.E. George –sawdust, staves etc. (1890)

J. Williams –cooperage (1909)

(There are also much earlier records which time has precluded inclusion of.)

Work on Jar, Hamper Repair etc.

A. Crump (1891) –reference to numerous jars being ‘bottomed’, ‘6 extra handles’, ‘2 gallon jars cased’ etc. (1890) (in Kelly’s Anne Crump basket maker)

Where did he obtain the spirit for his gin?

There are at least two candidate distilleries:

The ‘Wandsworth distillery’ (synonym later: Watneys distillery), in London (1891, 1902) and the Marrowbone Lane Distillery in Dublin. There are more receipts for the former. Firstly I will deal with Marrowbone Lane:

- **The Marrowbone Lane Distillery (Dublin)** (working between 1752 – c. 1923) of Jamieson Whiskey was used (1849, 1888, 1891, 1902). It was a very large spirit wholesaler: “At its height [the Marrowbone Lane Distillery] was the second largest distillery in Dublin, extending to an incredible 13 acres and producing 900,000 gallons of whiskey annually” (http://www.irelandwhiskeytrail.com/?pg=william_jameson_marrowbone_lane_distillery_dublin.php)

On one receipt to Mr Pulling (1849) the Marrowbone Lane supplier says: “We regret that we cannot make any reduction in the price until we have new spirit. The spirits that we now send are worth in Bond here without any advance of **duty 2/11d [?] per Gallon being nearly 4d per Gallon more than the price we charge you nets us after deducting the allowance of a Gallon 2 Pence**” [and] “... we find that to compete with the English prices is quite out of our power” (1849).

- **The Wandsworth (Watneys) Distillery:** 12 receipts (presumably for spirit) are noted from Watney’s Distillery in 1882, amounting to roughly £165 each (e.g. approximately £2,000 per annum –undoubtedly the main spirit supplier in that year). Other receipts are from 1893, 1894 and 1907 and 1908. The Wandsworth Distillery was a large operation: prominent along the banks of The Thames until recent times. For example, in 1928 it was noted that simply one of the vats on the site contained 45,000 gallons of ‘wort spirit’ (Western Daily Press, Wednesday 6th June 1928). The

distillery also had military significance, supplies of spirit sometimes being diverted for manufacture of munitions.

Pullings liked to shop around: there are also orders / receipts from the following distilleries:

Bandon (1890, 1891)

Bristol Distillery (1891)

Andrew Usher (1890, 1909)

There is also an interesting note from Cork Distilleries (1883):

“Dear Sirs: The Cork Distilleries will stop working about the end of this month. As I still hope you will take a parcel of Murphy’s or Wise’s Whisky this season, I ask you to send casks to Cork as soon as possible, to be filled direct from the still, at the price quoted to you last January, 2/11 per gallon 25 op [over proof?] in your own wood.”

Quality of Pulling’s Gin

This was somewhat variable, though must have been good, much of the time: there are frequent references to ‘Best Gin’ and ‘Best Old Gin’. However, deficiencies, where they occur, are almost of more interest!

For example the carrier Vaughan recorded in 1851: “last gin very bad quite yellow” as reported to him by Matthews, Windsor Arms, Llanyphent [?].

Flavour variants: on some orders there is a specification for ‘sweetened’ gin. David Thomas Willington, Cowbridge, specified 10 Galls gin ½ sweetened (carrier Vaughan, 1851).

Sometimes orders requested “7% proof gin”. This is thought to be 7% below proof: see the note below ‘quantities ordered’.

Botanicals

There is, of course, no listing of botanicals for Pullings gin available, at least in the archive documents so far seen. There is one catalogue containing Juniper berries in wholesale quantities, which offers circumstantial evidence for the use of Juniper. But: this would be entirely expected.

Other mysteries in the distilling and brewing processes:

In 1843/1844 numerous orders for ‘lumps’ and sugar (mostly) went to Wm. Webb, Cheese and Butter Factor, Hereford. Possibly for ‘sweetening’ gin, though the allied cider production work should not be forgotten.

In 1891 four sacks of charcoal were ordered from the Pontrilas Chemical Works.

In 1910 a synthetic sweetener, porcherine, was ordered three times.

There are also orders for quantities of powdered alum

Quantities of Gin Ordered

These were, by present day standards, substantial to prodigious. Two gallons of gin was a typical order, but fifteen to twenty gallons was not unheard of. These quantities were of a similar order of magnitude, but generally greater in quantity, than those of other spirits also ordered simultaneously.

Here are some examples, placed in order of increasing volume, together with some anecdotes:

1 bottle gin: “Please send for ... one Bottle Gin place it to my acct.” J. Worthing, Family Grocer and Tea Dealer

2 bottles gin: “7 /- Money is sent” (undated)

1 gallon gin: Reverend Joseph Hill, Dormington: “Please send me a gallon of gin to my cart ...” (undated)

2 gallons gin: “[Messrs] Pulling will please send [Mrs Stowe] two Galls of best old Gin.” Eign Gate (1853)

2 gallons gin: Eastnor Castle (1851)

2 gallons gin: Oxford Arms, Presteigne (1872) –to be supplied in 2 x 1 gallon casks

2 gallons gin: J. Walker, Chemist and Druggist, Widemarsh Street, Hereford

2 gallons gin: New Harp (undated?)

2 gallons gin: Bells Inn, Almeley

2 gallons gin: P.B. Giles (1872)

2 gallons gin: “Sir: I beg to inform you that I have forwarded ... 6 empty Cyder Casks on my a/c. I will forward the remainder the [moment] they are Empty which I hope will be in a few days –I have not as yet received the 2 Galls gin which Mr Pulling ... promised and as a compensation for a Bad Bargain.” From Elliott, Gloucester (1846).

[unquantified, ‘a small cask’] gin: William Lover, Carmarthen (1849)

4 gallons gin (3 similar orders within a year) Hereford [Union?] (1872)

10 gallons gin: Richard Lowe, Oxford Arms, Presteigne: “Sir: you will oblige me by sending 10 Gallons of the Best Gin the same as the last I will send the Casks by the next Wagon they are two ... Please to send it as soon as you [possibly?] can” (1872?)

10 gallons gin: Ian Davis Rummer, Cardiff (carrier Vaughan, 1851))

10 gallons gin: David Rees, Britannia (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

12 gallons gin: This time, going aboard a boat: “The ‘Ellen [Gwilliam?]' is now at Bristol and will leave Bristol for home on Thursday the 3rd of August. I will thank you to send, so as to be in time 12 gallons of gin, 4 of rum, 4 of Bristol Brandy, 2 of French Brandy, 2 of Peppermint”
John H. Jones (1849)

12 to 15 gallons gin: John Williams, Red Lion, Lampeter (1867)

15 gallons gin: John Williams, Black Lion, Llanybyther nr. Lampeter (1867)

15 gallons gin: William Lover (1849) –to be supplied in small casks

15 gallons gin: Mr Lewis, Holly Bush, Whitchurch, nr Cardiff: “15 Galls Gin ... he paid his Bill”
(carrier Vaughan, 1851)

15 gallons gin: Thomas Williams, Tredegar and Ponty Pridd (carrier Vaughan, 1851)

15 gallons gin: Mrs Barbara Gorath, Maltsters Arms, Llandaff (carrier Vaughan, 1851)

15 gallons gin: Francis Frances, Ship & Castle (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

15 gallons gin: David Roberts, Trafalgar, Llanellay [?] Flats (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

16 to 20 gallons gin: Thomas Edwards, Coopers Arms, Carmarthen: “an old Excise officer tries the strength –be particular” (carrier Vaughan, 1857)

20 gallons gin: Grant / Evans / Radnor: “Gentlemen: please to forward me 20 Gallons of 17 Gin by the first waggon you will much Oblige.” (1852)

20 gallons gin: Henry Davies, Angel, Green Hill, Swansea (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

20 gallons gin: John Jones (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

25 gallons gin: Mr Johnson, Whitchurch, near Cardiff: “25 Galls Gin as before immediate”
(carrier Vaughan, 1851)

25 gallons gin: Evan Rees, Boars Head, Carmarthen (carrier Vaughan, 1857)

30 gallons gin: Thomas Purnele, Bridgewater and Ponty Pridd: “This order to wait a fortnight he will write if it is to be sent not quite certain that he will continue in the house” (carrier Vaughan, 1851)

30 gallons gin: John Thomas, Bush, Laugharne [?]: “have been expecting the 2 Doz Perry promised by WTP will not balance the account till this is done” (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

30 gallons gin: John Lawrence, White House, Carmarthen (carrier Vaughan, 1857)

36 gallons gin: Elizabeth Masters, Welcome to Town, Swansea: "... particular in measure" (carrier Vaughan, 1850)

73 ½ gallons "fine old gin": [Dowlais?] Abergavenny, on Pullings letterhead (1839)

The above of course, only represent single orders. It will be good to gain an idea of the number of iterations of these orders within a given year.

Sometimes, deliveries were late, and often there is a sense of urgency over their supply:

"Sir: the Gin is not arrived we have sent to Leominster an Ludlow an can have nothing of it we are quite without it puts us to great ill convenience as we keep sending to Ludlow for Gallon after Gallon we are neither with or without ..." The writer goes on to politely request that it needs to be "forwarded immediately". (Letter from Sarah Roberts, Lion Inn, Leintwardine, October 13th 1846).

N.B. We suspect '17 gin' refers to '17% below proof'. Sometimes '7 gin' is ordered. Again we suspect this is 7% below proof.

Prices Paid and Reference to Duty

Prices Paid

A more detailed analysis needs to be made, but here are some initial findings:

This data is from a note by the carrier Vaughan (1851) for delivery to various parts of Wales, but hence may be carrier charge only?

10 gallons gin: 10s (Cardiff)

15 gallons gin: 10s (Whitchurch nr. Cardiff)

15 gallons gin: 9s 6d (Llandaff)

Unfortunately he doesn't set out rates for 25 and 30 gallon gin orders he is dealing with at the same time.

In 1857 carrier Vaughan identifies that one of Mr Pulling's customers has been overcharged: (Thomas Edwards, Coopers Arms, Carmarthen) "Thos. Edwards –charged Gin 28 gallons @ 9/6. 14.7.0. should be £13.6.0 Error £1.1 please credit him."

Duty

In the early 19th century, it seems that individual customers were (sometimes?) responsible for paying duty:

Tredegar Arms, Newport (1851):

“let me know the amount of duty deducting what I paid to (*sic*) much last time ...”
[Brandy]

See also the (above) commentary from Marrowbone Lane / Jamieson Distillery, Dublin.

Containers for Supplying Gin

These ranged from wooden casks (barrels) of various sizes to stone jars. Some insights into prices for carriage of different sizes / quantities can be obtained from the following bill from W. Ariss, carrier, or Madley (1891);

Two gallon jar (full) 6d

(2 x two gallon jars (full) 1s

Six gallon cask (full) 1s

One dozen case 6d (equivalent to a dozen case gin bottles?)

3 x 6 gallon casks, plus 2 x 2 gallon jars –all empty, were charged at 1s

Where and When Did He Obtain Apples for Cider?

There are some orders / receipts, mainly dating to around 1909/1910. Undoubtedly, these must be very selective:

W.H. Smith –Kingstone Black / Devon Red (1909)

R.N. Dampier (pears) (1909)

-apples, perry / poultry (!) via rail (1910)

Other Essential Supplies: Bottles, Bottle Envelopes, Corks, Rope, Stationery

There are many more receipts, etc. which need to be entered below to show the range of suppliers used:

Bottle Baskets & Envelopes

Chas. Lane, Bewell Street and Market Hall, Hereford (1882) –bottle baskets

Rawlings and Son ‘Best French Straw Envelopes at Low Prices’, Bristol (1902, 1910)

Corks

Lumley (1902)

Rope

William Kenyon and Sons (1891)

Stationery Orders:

S. Adams (1890)

Charles Skipper and East (1909)

Jakeman and Carver (1909/1910) –printing 10,000 bottle labels, cider sample labels etc.

Buying and Selling for Pullings Wine Merchants

He also bought / sold between numerous different wine and spirit merchants. Again, the list can be extended greatly:

Most of these were London-based:

For example:

Liqueurs:

George Simon and Whelan (1891)

Sherries / Madeira:

Gonzalez and Co. (1910)

Blandy Brothers –Madeira (1910)

Wine:

Australian Wine Importers (1891)

Champagne:

George Simon and Son (1886)

Simon Kingscote and Co. (1902)

Some tended to be more local:

James and Son, Eign Street, Hereford (1873?) –ale, stout and bottles

Geo. A.B. Landon, Broad Street, Hereford (186?) -2 gallons spirit wine [?]

Mineral Waters

R. Ellis and Sun, Mineral Water Works, Ruthin (1890, 1910)

Alton Court Brewing Co., Ross Water (1892)

Southard and Co., London (1910)

Suppliers of Unknown Things (London-based)

Matthew Clark & Sons (1891)

J. Parnwell and Son (1910?)

M.C. Browning (1872)

E. Beanes and Co. (1902)

Bousot and Co. (1910)

Advertising and Promotion of Pullings gin (plus cider)

This list needs extending. It can be noted that Pullings frequently had stands at agricultural shows, up and down the country:

(Plus newspaper subscriptions -1843/1844 and 1893.)

Birmingham Gazette and Express (1907 cider advert)

Commercial Directory (1907)

Hereford ABC (1907, 1910)

Hereford Journal (1901, 1909)

Hereford Times (1832)

S. Nicholas Magazine (1907)

Western Mail (1902, cider advert 1907, 1910)

Wine Trade Review (1910)

Worcester Press / Hereford ABC (1910)

South West Daily Press (1910)

Carriage and Transport of Spirits, Cider and Ale

There are numerous records: e.g. 1831, 1850, 1851, 1857, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1902, 1910

By Boat:

This interest seems to be mainly around the 1840s, prior to railway development:

Bought from William Wright, Head of Quay, Bristol: "One Hogshead of fine old Pontac" (1844)

'The Breeze' in Bristol, 1849

"The Breeze is discharging but slowly, we understand some of her cargo is not entered at the custom house" (the same letter also notes: "In reply to yours of

yesterday we have ordered our stationer to send you 56lbs of wax agreeably to the sample in our letter")

Here is a request from a boat owner for gin:

"The 'Ellen [Gwilliam?]' is now at Bristol and will leave Bristol for home on Thursday the 3rd of August. I will thank you to send, so as to be in time 12 gallons of gin, 4 of rum, 4 of Bristol Brandy, 2 of French Brandy, 2 of Peppermint" John H. Jones (1849)

The listing of boats can be extended by further work on the archives.

By Railway:

Again, the listing below can be greatly extended using archive documents:

Bristol and Birmingham Railway (1848)

Great Western Railway (187?)

By Wagon:

Again, numerous instances. Some anecdotes are useful / informative:

Carrier Vaughan states (1850):

"... have lost 2 orders because of dirty casks. Can something be done to obviate this."

Carrier Vaughan states (1851):

"Mr Campbell Carmarthen states there was a gallon and a half short measure in the cask of Gin. The cask is gone to Bristol to have it measured when it arrives."

Transactions and Bad Debtors

Many lists of paid or unpaid people exist (cash lists), together with letters asking Mr Pulling for clemency.

One of the first instances may be that of Shannon "against Shannon before bankruptcy" (1816), but this may relate to something more serious.

Lists of debtors appear in 1831 / 1837.

It appears that in 1891 Stubbs Mercantile Offices were used as debt chasers, and in 1910, Kemps Mercantile Offices may also have had the same function.

Letters explaining inability to pay –some examples:

"He has been all this time, it appears, endeavouring to prevail on his other creditors to take his composition & has fairly nearly succeeded." (J.H. Langley, Cardiff, on behalf of one of Mr Pulling's creditors (1849))

Notes on Pulling headed paper:

“Told me will send a balance shortly. Please do not press. Good a/c.” (Mr J. Tucker, Plough Hotel, [Doulais] (1923))

“I called on this man yesterday and he told me he would ... your asking to extend his credit awile (*sic*) wither so because he is expecting in money he is a sound man and the owner of Property which are of ... value.” (Mr E. Thomas, Mason’s Arms, Kidwelly (1923))

Other Trades: Timber and Bark

Another trade which Pullings had an interest in was that of bark, and possibly timber. Further detail can be provided. The following is an initial two receipts which may hint at the trade.

George Davies –log wagon repair (1910)

George and Tudor –timber (1910)