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**Ben Gibbons**

**‘Cows, Pigs and ‘The City’: An Animal  
History of Bristol Through the Lens of Meat’**

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**'Cows, Pigs and 'The City': An Animal History of Bristol**  
**Through the Lens of Meat'**

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## Introduction

“[I]t was divine nature which gave us the country, and man's skill that built the cities”, writes Varro in 37 BC.<sup>1</sup> He neatly encapsulates the nature-culture dichotomy, which still dominates academic writing: animals are largely absent from traditional works of urban history.<sup>2</sup> Recently, however, certain scholars have challenged this epistemic dualism. Brown writes of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Seattle: “animals shaped the city's physical form, the bodies of urban-dwellers, and the meanings city-people attached to [...] places.” Here, he usefully differentiates between animals’ involvement in the material and cultural construction of ‘the City’.<sup>3</sup> Almeroth-Williams’ analysis focuses on the former. He details Hanoverian London’s prosperous urban meat industry, centred around living animals. Livestock markets and urban husbandry were located in the heart of the metropolis; this ubiquitous animal presence provided the food that sustained London’s expanding population.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, Atkins’ edited volume explores animals’ position in changing cultural understandings of ‘the urban’. Largely focussing upon London, it charts the 19<sup>th</sup> century developments which rendered animals out of place in modernised conceptions of ‘the City’, engendering their physical removal.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding England, this nascent body of scholarship has so far concentrated mainly upon London. Complementing and reinforcing the validity of this historiographic development, this thesis will, overall, seek to assess the unexamined narrative of animals’ involvement in the material and cultural shaping of Bristol, from 1800 to today. With meat as its central theme, it will present an animal history of this city. To facilitate detailed analysis, the essay will solely concentrate on cows and pigs. It provides a fresh contribution to the burgeoning field of animal studies, and to understandings of urban history, by challenging anthropocentric narratives of Bristol’s progress. For example, findings here will be

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus Terentius Varro, *Res Rusticae* (37BC), in *Cato and Varo on Agriculture*, ed. and tr. by William Hooper and Harrison Ash (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 422-530 (p. 425).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Peter Aughton, *Bristol: A People's History* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Limited, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Brown, ‘Cows in the Commons, Dogs on the Lawn: A History of Animals in Seattle’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Washington, 2010), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Almeroth-Williams, ‘Horses and Livestock in Hanoverian London’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2013)

<sup>5</sup> *Animal Cities: Beastly Urban Histories*, ed. by Peter Atkins (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012)

contrasted with Aughton's '*Bristol: A People's History*', the very title of which evidences animals' marginalisation.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter One will explore the 19<sup>th</sup> century, examining the material contribution of urban livestock to Bristol's development: they fuelled industrialisation and urbanisation, served an economic function, and influenced the city's architecture. Bristol's population increased by over 40,000, 1800-1851; industrial work and demographic expansion augmented the urban demand for meat.<sup>7</sup> Due to refrigeration and transportation limitations, livestock markets and slaughterhouses were located within Bristol. Country-reared cattle and pigs were driven on foot to Temple Meads Cattle Market, constructed in 1829.<sup>8</sup> Here, butchers purchased these animals, and then walked them through the streets to their slaughterhouses, makeshift structures attached to their shops. Cattle and pigs were also supplied from Europe and America; imported livestock provided an important trade for the Bristol city docks. Hardly nature's antithesis, Bristol was entwined with rural agricultural production. Further, many urbanites kept pigs, which, unlike cattle, were suited to urban rearing, as they required little space. These animals were then sold to butchers for profit, or domestically consumed. Overall, regular interactions with livestock affected many Bristolians, shaping their cultural conceptions of urban existence. Crucially, animals influenced the city's expansion, industry, commerce and landscape.<sup>9</sup> These are fundamental topics in traditional narratives of Bristol's 19<sup>th</sup> century history, yet livestock's role has been largely overlooked. This thesis aims to demonstrate that a focus upon fauna not only 'writes animals in', but actually complicates these localised studies.<sup>10</sup>

To understand the aim of Chapters Two and Three, it is first necessary to explore both Atkins' aforementioned work and the concept of 'modernity'. The latter should be defined broadly, as all that is associated with emergence and progression of an industrial, scientific

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<sup>6</sup> Aughton.

<sup>7</sup> Graham Bush, *Bristol and its Municipal Government, 1820-1851* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1976), p. 3, 205.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Almeroth-Williams, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Aughton; Bush; David Large, *The Port of Bristol 1848-1884* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1984).

and liberal civilisation.<sup>11</sup> Atkins details that, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, middle-class understandings of 'the City' changed, and certain features were no longer welcome. Firstly, as anxiety about cholera increased with urbanisation, the Victorian Public Health Movement gained prominence, espousing its miasmatic theory of infected air. Accumulations of livestock's blood and manure became intolerable.<sup>12</sup> Further, in 'civilised' society, the urban realities of animal slaughter and cruelty were increasingly rendered impermissible. Finally, population growth of people and animals engendered unprecedented levels of street congestion; such obstruction was no longer acceptable. Therefore, urban livestock contradicted new conceptions of 'the City' as a hygienic, caring and smoothly-flowing space.<sup>13</sup>

Atkins' then posits his theory of the 'Great Separation' of the urban and rural: from the 1840s, livestock were gradually removed from cities, owing to government action and legislation, and the technological developments of refrigeration and rail transportation. The above modern conceptions of 'the City' provide some of the driving forces behind this change. He concentrates upon London. The State, responding to pressure regarding Smithfield Cattle Market's insanitary conditions and the inhumane actions of livestock drovers, built a new complex in Islington, 1852. Serviced by rail, animals' street presence was somewhat reduced. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of refrigerated, imported meat caused the Islington market's decline. Regarding slaughterhouses, the 'municipal abattoir' was a modernising 19<sup>th</sup> century conception, championed as a hygienic institution capable of eradicating the insanitary private slaughterhouses and their archaic, cruel techniques. Though London butchers prevented its establishment, metropolitan slaughterhouses were eradicated, due to increasingly stringent regulation, and wholesale meat transportation by rail from other cities.<sup>14</sup> Further, piggeries, epitomising an absence of hygiene, were gradually expelled by government.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Atkins, 'Animal Wastes and Nuisances in Nineteenth Century London', in *Animal Cities*, ed. by Atkins, pp. 19-52 (pp. 21-33).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Atkins, 'The Urban Blood and Guts Economy', in *Animal Cities*, ed. by Atkins, pp. 77-106 (pp. 79-82).

<sup>14</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (pp. 77-90).

<sup>15</sup> Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 46).

Ultimately, Atkins situates the ‘Great Separation’ in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with such changes largely complete by the early 1900s. Thus, for Atkins, an essential, yet largely overlooked, factor in the material emergence of modern London involved removing the animal presence; the urban-rural distinction was physically enforced. Animals’ bodies, and the reality of their slaughter, were increasingly hidden from the urban public gaze. New cultural understandings of ‘the City’ underlay this change. Subsequently, the change itself then defined contemporary urban existence as one devoid of livestock.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, Pearson, in reviewing Atkins’ volume, writes that though the title implies a broad geographical scope, London is the main focus of the analysis for England: thus, one must be cautious when applying its theoretical conclusions to other English cities.<sup>17</sup> In light of Pearson’s comment, Chapters Two and Three will seek to critically assess Atkins’ ‘Great Separation’ theory, through a case study of Bristol (inevitably, parts of Chapter 1 also deal with his hypothesis, cultural conceptions of urbanity, and the theme of modernity). Significantly, in Chapter Two it will be shown that, in Bristol, the urban-rural division largely occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Factors such as the slower growth of the city’s wholesale meat market, and practical issues hindering the regulation of urban piggeries, account for this difference. Thus, the material contribution of livestock to Bristol’s urban history is visible for a longer epoch. Nonetheless, the local authority finally opened its slaughterhouse in 1935, Bristol Cattle Market closed in the 1960s and urban piggeries were largely removed by the 1970s. Additional factors, compared with London, helped foster the ‘Great Separation’ here. Ultimately, however, the urban-rural schism occurred, as residents’ modern cultural conceptions of Bristol increasingly necessitated the physical removal of meat-producing animals. Consequently, as Atkins argues, humans were distanced from nature.<sup>18</sup> The connection between meat and the living animal was obscured.<sup>19</sup> Livestock’s involvement in the narrative of Bristol’s modernity has also been ignored by the traditional historiography on this city, an omission this thesis will seek to redress.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Atkins, ‘Animal Wastes’; Atkins, ‘Urban Blood’.

<sup>17</sup> Chris Pearson, *Review of Atkins, Peter, ed., Animal Cities: Beastly Urban Histories* (H-Net, 2013) <<https://networks.h-net.org/node/22277/reviews/23087/pearson-atkins-animal-cities-beastly-urban-histories>> [accessed 10 September 2017]

<sup>18</sup> Atkins, ‘Animal Wastes’, (p. 21).

<sup>19</sup> Brown, p. 193.

<sup>20</sup> Aughton.



Chapter Three will explore developments of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The multiplication of urban supermarkets and resultant decline of high-street butchers changed the way people bought meat, to a ready-cut, vacuum-packaged form. Charting this development at a local level, focussing upon Bristol, it will be argued that it actually represents an additional stage of the 'Great Separation', unidentified by Atkins. With meat presented in this way, the commodity's living animal origins were further hidden.<sup>21</sup>

By writing animals into Bristol's history, this thesis will demonstrate the inadequacy of purely human-centred definitions of agency. Brown describes his study: "First, it forces us to recognize that human intentions...develop in the process of interacting with nature...Second, [it] [...] forces us to ask whether animals themselves have agency".<sup>22</sup> Brown's former point will be continually substantiated throughout this dissertation. Concerning his latter, my previous analysis of the North American beaver outlines that the inclusion of animals as historical actors is contentious, but supports an expanded definition of agency that moves away from the traditional constrictions of 'rationality'.<sup>23</sup> This thesis will further build upon this argument: ultimately, it will be shown that animals possess agency when they contribute to historical processes, or exhibit intentionality.<sup>24</sup> Livestock sustained an important urban commerce and fuelled industrialisation. Further, certain court cases analysed here, involving bolting cattle, evidence that animals could also show cognitive independence.

The reality that all archival material is human-authored raises methodological considerations. Many Animal History studies focus upon animal representations, given that only people leave a written trace.<sup>25</sup> Yet, Baratay warns against all scholarship folding solely to the cultural approach: "[t]his work is necessary; but [...] [w]e must [also] once again be searching for [physical] realities".<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Almeroth-Williams critiques historians of

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<sup>21</sup> Brown, p. 16, 227.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Gibbons, 'An Examination of Representations of the North American Beaver from the 19th Century' (unpublished undergraduate essay, University of Bristol, 2016), pp. 15-16.

<sup>24</sup> Chris Pearson, 'History and Animal Agencies', in *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Studies*, ed. by Linda Kalof (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 240-257 (p. 252).

<sup>25</sup> As I detailed in Gibbons, 'Examination', pp. 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Eric Baratay, 'Building an Animal History', in *French Thinking about Animals*, ed. by Louisa Mackenzie and Stephanie Posthumus (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2015), pp. 3-15 (p. 4).

the Victorian animal welfare movement: their employment of theoretical sources, such as philosophical treatises, discloses information about animal symbolism, but does not shed light on tangible human-animal relations.<sup>27</sup> Further, he writes that the authors of these sources had less involvement with real animals, than did, say, butchers.<sup>28</sup> Significantly, those most economically reliant on livestock tended to be from the 'non-educated' classes. This adds another source material complication, since this social stratum has produced less written documentation. These academic critiques and methodological considerations are important: this thesis aims to explore 'real' animals' involvement in Bristol's material construction (which includes their removal). Thus, this essay will draw upon sources such as newspaper articles, court records, and official reports, focussing upon lived interactions with cows and pigs. This material will be read for the presence of animals, simultaneously demonstrating the value non-elite citizens placed upon their relations with livestock.

Nonetheless, this essay also explores animals' position in cultural understandings of 'the City', especially Chapter Two. Here, the sources reveal a narrative in which cows and pigs became symbolic of uncleanness, and an antiquated way-of-life; human action thus increasingly removed their physical urban presence. Fundamentally, animals are both representations, and 'real' living creatures.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, regarding Chapter Three, owing to the mundane nature of purchasing meat from a standardised national supermarket, there is little available archival material that directly addresses this recent phenomenon. Therefore, Oral History interviews have been conducted, as a means of understanding the impact of the decline of traditional butchers' shops upon Bristolians' relationships with living animals.

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<sup>27</sup> Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights: Political and Social Change in Britain Since 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000). Cited in Almeroth-Williams, pp. 26-27.

<sup>28</sup> Almeroth-Williams, pp. 26-27.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Flack, *The Wild Within: Histories of a Landmark British Zoo* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), p. 6.

## Chapter One: 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Livestock have been entwined with Bristol's everyday rhythms since its medieval beginnings, but the 16<sup>th</sup> century establishment of the St. Thomas Street Cattle Market finally provided an official, centralised space for the sale of country-reared cows and pigs to city butchers.<sup>30</sup> Subsequent urbanisation and industrialisation augmented Bristol's meat consumption. While exact empirical data is lacking, an understanding of this growth is gauged from an 1821 letter sent to Mr. Ludlow, of the City Corporation, from the Parish of St. Thomas. The anonymous author writes that this market used to be smaller, but now extends to cover most of the street. They lament: "[for those] occupying houses [...] in St. Thomas Street [...] it [has] become a most serious nuisance and injury".<sup>31</sup> The market's expansion indicates the increasing volume of livestock in Bristol, implying an expanding, prosperous urban meat trade. The reference to 'occupying houses' suggests the confluence of animals with ordinary urban living patterns. Simultaneously, 'serious nuisance and injury' shows that the growing demand for meat was increasingly disrupting such rhythms, as the rising numbers of driven livestock caused street congestion. Accidents inevitably ensued, implied by the word 'injury'.

The Parish's petitions clearly influenced the Bristol Corporation: the Cattle Market was moved to Temple Meads in 1828.<sup>32</sup> Positioned on the city's periphery, this undeveloped land would also house Bristol's main railway station from the next decade.<sup>33</sup> The Cattle Market Committee chose this site. Their *Minute Book* notes that the multiple access routes would separate incoming and exiting livestock, diminishing "the inconvenience to the [city's] regular traffic."<sup>34</sup> In a sense, the closure of the St. Thomas Street Market represents an early sign of the 'Great Separation' in Bristol, removing this spectacle from an overcrowded residential area. Thus, in fact, this case study complicates Atkins' theory by extending the

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<sup>30</sup> Bristol Archives (hereafter BA): P.B/OP/10n, Records of St. Mary, 1642-2005, Case for the Opinion of Mr. Ludlow, 16 December 1821.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> BA: 17560/7, Bill for Removing the Cattle Market in St. Thomas Street, 1828.

<sup>33</sup> Colin Maggs, *The GWR Bristol to Bath Line* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2013), pp. 36-37.

<sup>34</sup> BA: M/BCC/CMK/1/1, Bristol Cattle Market and Wool Hall Committee Minute Book, 1828-1831, 1 September 1828.

temporality backwards as well as forwards. Bristol contradicts the implied argument in Atkins' work that the metropolis led the way in the construction of 'modern' cattle markets. Nonetheless, he presents the 1855 relocation of London's Smithfield Cattle Market as fuelled by a desire to appease growing public health and animal welfare concerns, and relieve urban congestion.<sup>35</sup> In the case of Bristol, only the latter factor is evident: the Committee *Minute Book* lacks concerns over hygiene and animal cruelty. This reflects the nascent influence of these movements in broader 1820s public discourse.

The above Committee *Minute Book* quotation simultaneously highlights the influence of animals upon the cityscape. Not only did the increased faunal presence necessitate the purchase of a new market, but Corporation members, in determining the location of this site, clearly considered the physical flow of livestock. To return to Brown and his musings on historical agency, one clearly witnesses the interplay between animal bodies and human actions.<sup>36</sup> Bush writes that the Corporation's construction of this institution shows "its desire for possessing [...] imposing public buildings".<sup>37</sup> He conflates the Cattle Market with the extension of local government authority, a broader theme in 19<sup>th</sup> century urban history.<sup>38</sup> While partially convincing, the aforementioned Committee documentation and 1821 letter suggest that the practical considerations regarding urban congestion offer the greatest impetus for the Corporation's actions. A focus on human-animal relations thus provides nuances to Bush's narrative: while this construction may have extended their symbolic power, local government was, first and foremost, reacting to the city's enlarged animal presence.

Though the Temple Meads Cattle Market's rail connection somewhat reduced the amount of livestock walked into Bristol, butchers still had to drive purchased animals to their slaughterhouses. Reported court cases evidence the human-animal urban coexistence. For example, *The Western Daily Press* writes in 1871 that butchers Jeffries and Hillier were found guilty of manslaughter, after they drove a bullock down Temple Street and it fatally

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<sup>35</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (pp. 79-82).

<sup>36</sup> Brown, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Bush, p. 44.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Hellen Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

knocked Clarke off a ladder. The prosecution argued negligence, since the customary route for cattle was along Cart Lane. Though the Jury found these men guilty, they suggested lenient sentencing, influenced by the defence's argument that: "[everyone] knows the difficulty of directing [...] such great, unyielding animals [...] [it is] common to hear of beasts putting their horns through shop windows."<sup>39</sup> 'Unyielding' illustrates that urban livestock could display cognitive independence. As such, this court case undermines those definitions of historical agency predicated upon human rationality.<sup>40</sup> The adjective 'common' implies the volume of bovine traffic, again indicative of a flourishing city commerce. Further, it subtly shows that cattle are an accepted urban 'nuisance'. Nonetheless, one must be cautious with the implications of this word, and the reported court case more broadly. Such sources solely provide the historian with detail into those fragments of the past when cattle disrupted urban rhythms. Yet, these incidents were generally irregular: for example, of 8431 cases heard before the Bristol Magistrates' Court, January to June 1880, none involved disobedient cattle and pigs.<sup>41</sup> This silence should be read as indicating the regular flow of urban animals; one must not imply a norm of disorder. Therefore, livestock would have been an ordinary, unspectacular feature in local residents' conceptions of 'the City'.

As stated, from the 1840s, central government began incrementally introducing legislation that confronted the nation's sanitary problems. For them, 'infectious' smells and visible dirt had become intolerable in the modern city.<sup>42</sup> The Public Health Act 1848 encouraged local authorities to establish a Board of Health, which could license urban slaughterhouses, as a means of ensuring more hygienic conditions.<sup>43</sup> Central government released model local authority by-laws in 1877 suggesting that slaughterhouses be situated 100 feet from the shop, or face closure.<sup>44</sup> Regulation, Atkins argues, gradually pushed these institutions out of

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<sup>39</sup> [Anon.], 'Bristol Spring Assize', *The Western Daily Press* (hereafter 'TWDP'), 3 April 1871, p. 3. In *The British Newspaper Archive* (hereafter 'TBNA') <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000264/18710403/008/0003>> [accessed 10 November 2017]

<sup>40</sup> See Gibbons, 'Examination', pp. 15-16.

<sup>41</sup> BA: JMag/J/1/1, Bristol Magistrates' (Petty Sessions) Court, Register of Summary Jurisdiction, January-June 1880.

<sup>42</sup> Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (pp. 28-33)

<sup>43</sup> United Kingdom, *Public Health Act 1848*, s. 61, 114. Cited in Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 29).

<sup>44</sup> Local Government Board, *Seventh Annual Report of the Local Government Board 1877-78* (London: House of Commons, 1878), [unknown page]. Cited in Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 32).

the metropolitan core: under an active Inspector of Nuisances, private slaughterhouses within the City of London fell from 135 to 31, 1851-1873.<sup>45</sup> Moving further out, urban slaughterhouses in the wider city gradually declined, from 1500 to 305, 1873-1905.<sup>46</sup> This was also due to the development of a wholesale meat trade.<sup>47</sup> The unprecedented scale of London's demand for this commodity, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the British railway system, encouraged some cities, such as Aberdeen, to act as processing centres, delivering 'dead-meat' to the metropolis.<sup>48</sup> Thus, wholesale trade supplied London's meat, as regulatory pressure closed urban slaughterhouses.

In contrast to London, the displacement of these institutions in Bristol was slow. Significantly, and, as Atkins admits, much of this central government legislation was permissive.<sup>49</sup> Though Bristol Corporation appointed a permanent Medical Officer of Health from 1875,<sup>50</sup> for unknown reasons, a slaughter-house licensing system was only introduced in 1885.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the Officer's *Reports* actually provide clear evidence for the vitality of Bristol's traditional urban meat trade, and its system of private slaughterhouses. The annual 1895 *Report* lists 85 licensed institutions, which collectively processed 18,573 cattle the previous year.<sup>52</sup> The 1900 *Report* mentions 117 urban slaughterhouses.<sup>53</sup> Significantly, Bristol does not fit the pattern of slaughterhouse decline, as outlined by Atkins. Around the century's close, the number of these institutions was in fact rising, in spite of their widespread insanitary conditions, with over half deemed unfit in 1895.<sup>54</sup> A number of factors explain this difference. Firstly, as Perren states, the interurban transportation of slaughtered meat to London was unique, engendered by unparalleled metropolitan

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<sup>45</sup> Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 30).

<sup>46</sup> Hannah Velten, *Beastly London: A History of Animals in the City* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), p. 37.

<sup>47</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (p. 82).

<sup>48</sup> Richard Perren, 'The Meat and Livestock Trade in Britain, 1850-70', *The Economic History Review*, 28 (1975), 385-400 (pp. 387-389).

<sup>49</sup> Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 33).

<sup>50</sup> Robert Wofinden, 'Public Health in Bristol: Some Historical Aspects', *Public Health*, 69 (1956), 124-129 (p. 128).

<sup>51</sup> BA: 33416/2, Medical Officer of Health Reports (hereafter MOHR), 1883-1885, City and County of Bristol Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health (hereafter CCBARMOH), p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> BA: 33416/6, MOHR, 1894-1895, City of Bristol Report by the Medical Officer of Health on Slaughterhouses (hereafter CBRMOHS), 1895, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> BA: 33416/8, MOHR, 1899-1901, CCBARMOH, 1899, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> BA: 33416/6. MOHR, 1894-1895, CBRMOHS, 1895, p. 5.

demand.<sup>55</sup> As such, this specific wholesale market did not develop in Bristol; the system of meat production remained embedded in the city. And as the Medical Officer writes in a later *Report*, closing the insanitary slaughterhouses, without an alternative, would simply overcrowd the hygienic ones.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, in 1897, the city's boundaries were officially extended, adding 7000 acres.<sup>57</sup> This included new districts, such as Easton, which Meller labels "a working-class industrial and suburban area".<sup>58</sup> As such, the increase in slaughterhouses can be seen as both engendered by and supporting industrialisation and urbanisation, reflecting Bristol's rising demand for meat. Thus, collectively, these *Reports* portray a thriving city commerce, revolving around living animals. This is further reinforced by Figure 1, a map produced in the 1895 *Report*. It plots Bristol's slaughterhouses, and thus highlights the numerous butcher's shops that served the residential districts. Simultaneously, the scattered pattern provides a sense of the plethora of routes that livestock would have taken from the Cattle Market. Overall, Aughton's reluctance to highlight the significance of meat-producing animals, when examining both urban commerce, and the pace of the city's industrialisation, is starkly flawed.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Perren, (pp. 385-389)

<sup>56</sup> BA: 33416/16, MOHR, 1932-1934, CCBARMOH, 1934, p. 78.

<sup>57</sup> BA: 33416/8, MOHR, 1899-1901, CCBARMOH, 1900, p. 26.

<sup>58</sup> Meller, p. 24.

<sup>59</sup> Aughton, pp. 78-91, 208-210.

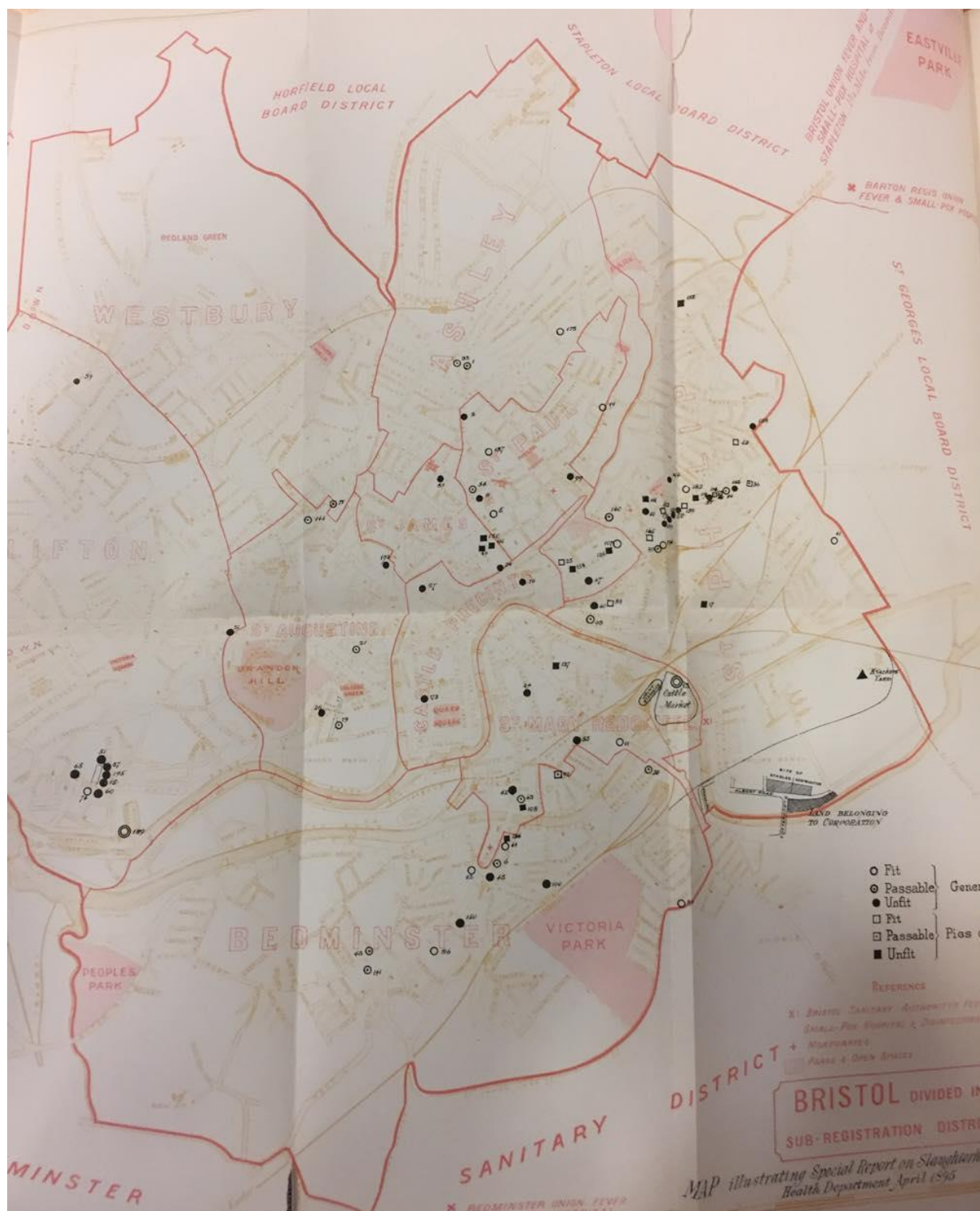


Figure 1: Slaughterhouses. BA: 33416/6, CBRMOHS, p. 1.



Importation of livestock, from Europe, and later America, constituted a significant portion of Bristol city docks' trade. The animals were subsequently driven to the Cattle Market.<sup>60</sup> There is a more complete archival record for cows than pigs: importation figures increased throughout the century, peaking in 1896 at 17,376 cows (this is, however, a combined total with Avonmouth Docks).<sup>61</sup> Significantly, central government curtailed continental livestock importation following the 1865 Cattle Plague outbreak, which originated in Europe. Such restrictions fostered the 1870s emergence of the transatlantic livestock trade.<sup>62</sup> To support this development, Bristol city docks needed a second wharf, to separate American and European stock. Yet the Privy Council initially refused to authorise the Corporation's plans, for structural reasons.<sup>63</sup> The Docks Committee *Minutes* reveal a desperate desire to capitalise on this new trade, labelling this proposed construction "most essential".<sup>64</sup> Eventually, following formal approval, the wharf was built in 1880.<sup>65</sup> Overall, this highlights that cattle represented a lucrative industry, including the prospect of increased toll revenue for the Corporation. Simultaneously, the wharf emphasises animals' influence in shaping Bristol's urban landscape. Large praises the Bristol Docks Committee's modernising 19<sup>th</sup> century actions, such as reducing dues, which ensured the "port acquired new trades as an importer of [...] metal ores".<sup>66</sup> He only briefly covers the additional facilities for American livestock.<sup>67</sup> However, the urgent tone of the Committee's *Minutes*, above, suggests the great importance of these animals. The wharf's construction should be viewed a fundamental feature of this 'modern' port, as the Committee acted to accommodate the new transatlantic trade. Large fails to warrant cattle their justified historical significance.

In addition to encountering livestock in the streets, civilians were made aware of the living origins of meat by 19<sup>th</sup> century butcher's shops. For example, *The Bristol Mercury*, 1867,

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<sup>60</sup> BA: 33416/25a, MOHR, 1947-1950, CCBARMOH, 1948, p. 40.

<sup>61</sup> [Anon.], 'The Frozen Meat Trade of Bristol', *The National Provisioner*, 51 (1914), p. 35. In *Hathi Trust Digital Library* <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32435065933012;view=1up;seq=145>> [accessed 16 December 2017]

<sup>62</sup> Richard Perren, *The Meat Trade in Britain, 1840-1914* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1978) pp. 107-114.

<sup>63</sup> BA: PBA/Corp/M/2/8, Minutes of Bristol Docks Committee with Indexes (hereafter MBDCI), November 1874-December 1877, 15 October 1877.

<sup>64</sup> BA: PBA/Corp/M/2/9, MBDCI, January 1878-April 1881, 29 July 1879.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 24 May 1880.

<sup>66</sup> Large, pp. xi-vxii

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

describes the annual Christmas meat show, when the city's butchers hung displays of whole carcasses outside their shops, competing for festive custom. The article congratulates the businesses, with exhibits offering unprecedented quantity and quality. For instance, Hern, a butcher in Clifton, suspended the exceedingly large body of Harley, a prize-winning bull, which the populace "admired for its [...] great weight".<sup>68</sup> Purchasable meat is presented as a visible public spectacle. As Brown argues, livestock carcasses could act as advertisements.<sup>69</sup> Though the cow is dead, the whole carcass is intact: one can thus assume customers understood the connection to the 'real' living animal, a point further emphasised through the specific mentioning of their interest in Harley. Further, in describing the unparalleled scale of the 1867 displays, the article implies both that butchery was a prosperous urban trade, and that the city's meat consumption was increasing. Overall, while few contemporaries voiced written appreciation for livestock's material contribution to Bristol's growth, the urban meat trade's chain of production was starkly visible, linking drovers, slaughterhouses, and retail butchers. As Cronon argues, describing early 19<sup>th</sup> century Chicago: "the ties between field [...] butcher shop and dinner table were everywhere apparent, constant reminders of the relationships that sustained one's own life."<sup>70</sup> Animals, and 'the countryside' more broadly, shaped urban identities.

In contrast to cows, pigs were suited to urban rearing, being fed cheaply with domestic food waste and not needing large pastures.<sup>71</sup> As such, Almeroth-Williams argues, porcine husbandry in the city was often a small-scale plebeian activity. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century London actually consumed more city-reared pigs than rurally-raised (unfortunately, comparable data for Bristol has proven unobtainable). Raised in backyards, or small plots, the animals could then be domestically consumed, or sold to directly butchers, satisfying rising demand. Often, urban pig-keeping was a supplementary profession, in addition to residents' main jobs.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> [Anon.], 'The Butchers' Christmas Show', *The Bristol Mercury*, 21 December 1867, p. 8. In *TBNA* <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000034/18671221/032/0008>> [accessed 25 November 2017]

<sup>69</sup> Brown, p. 191.

<sup>70</sup> William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York City: W. W. Norton, 1992) p. 256.

<sup>71</sup> Robert Malcolmson and Stephanos Mastoris, *The English Pig: A History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1998), pp. 43-44.

<sup>72</sup> Almeroth-Williams, pp. 45-46, 80-83.

Nonetheless, due to the minimal quantity of archival material authored by non-elite Bristolians, directly evidencing the importance of such animals to ordinary lives, is challenging. A methodological solution can be extrapolated from Almeroth-Williams' analysis: he draws upon London's Old Bailey records, concerning pig theft, as a means of unearthing the plebeian voice, and illuminating the interwoven reality of human and porcine lives.<sup>73</sup> The Bristol Quarter Sessions *Transcriptions* record that, on 26 February 1817, the Court found Webb guilty of theft. He stole a pig worth "five pounds" from Taylor's home in Westbury-upon-Trym, drove the purloined animal into Bristol, and sold it to Allen at his house in Temple Street. The latter is labelled a "pig-keeper": this is actually his sole profession.<sup>74</sup> Sustaining Allen's livelihood, pigs appear inherently linked to urban commerce; commodifying language such as 'five pounds' further emphasises this connection. Concurrently, livestock constructed Allen's urban, professional identity.

Atkins focusses on London's 'The Potteries', a poverty-stricken region of Kensington. In 1820, 3000 pigs cohabited this 9-acre district: husbandry provided a livelihood for most of the residents. Sanitary legislation increasingly targeted the urban pig.<sup>75</sup> For example, the Nuisances Removal Act 1846 enabled the authorities to consider pig-keeping a legal 'nuisance' if manure or filth accumulated.<sup>76</sup> Yet, initially, Atkins writes, the legislation was sparingly enforced in Kensington, upsetting those residents in the neighbouring, newly-constructed middle-class housing estates. Finally, in the 1870s, a zealous Medical Officer of Health was appointed: by applying the legislation, pigs were finally removed by 1878.<sup>77</sup> Hence, porcine husbandry was increasingly rendered a rural activity.<sup>78</sup>

In contrast, attitudes to urban pigs in Bristol remained more accepting. For example, though the Bristol Board of Health prosecuted Niblett in 1864, the Quarter Sessions Court acquitted

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<sup>73</sup> Almeroth-Williams, pp. 80-83.

<sup>74</sup> BA: JQS/P/360, Quarter Sessions Papers, Informations and Examinations, January-June 1817, 26 February 1817.

<sup>75</sup> Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 46).

<sup>76</sup> United Kingdom, *Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act 1846*, s. 1. Cited in Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (pp. 29-30).

<sup>77</sup> Atkins, 'Animal Wastes', (p. 46).

<sup>78</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (p. 77).

him. Niblett kept two pigs in his garden in Bedminster, for home consumption. The authority argued that Niblett had committed a nuisance, refusing upon request to supply the sty with adequate drainage. The defence successfully refuted the charges, summoning various witnesses, who stated that they could not smell the animals from their neighbouring backyards. The court clerk concluded: “[i]t is useless for the Board of Health to try to prevent persons keeping pigs”.<sup>79</sup> His comment here suggests a disparity between official and ordinary understandings of ‘the City’: the lower classes were slow to accept the sanitary urban ideal of the educated. Significantly, Franklin describes 19<sup>th</sup> century Bedminster as primarily composed of working-class housing, with residents employed in nearby coal mines.<sup>80</sup> Thus, one might cautiously suggest that the lack of middle-class propertied interests weakened the prosecution’s case here, diminishing the pool of ‘witnesses’ that the Board could draw upon. This likely explains the differences between London and Bristol. For many in latter, at the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s close, pigs were still an engrained feature of daily life, continuing to shape conceptions of urban Bristolian existence. Niblett worked as a railway porter, a profession that was a product of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>81</sup> His pigs clearly provided a valuable calorific source and a form of food security. Thus, in an abstract sense, the case simultaneously illustrates that living, urban animals helped ‘fuel’ industrial Bristol’s diurnal rhythms.

Overall, animals served a multifaceted, indisputable role in shaping Bristol’s 19<sup>th</sup> century progression. City cows and pigs sustained an expanding commerce, supported industrialisation and urbanisation, and shaped the city landscape. Livestock were thus an integral feature in understandings of urbanity. Ultimately, the flawed anthropocentrism of

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<sup>79</sup> [Anon.], ‘The Local Board of Health and Keepers of Pigs’, *The Bristol Mercury*, 8 August 1863, p. 8. In *TBNA* <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000034/18630808/030/0008>> [accessed 21 November 2017]

<sup>80</sup> Adrian Franklin, ‘Working-Class Privatism: An Historical Case Study of Bedminster, Bristol’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 7 (1989), 93-113 (p. 102).

<sup>81</sup> British Government, *England Census, Bristol, St. Philip and Jacob* (1881), p. 2. In *Ancestry.com* <[https://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-g&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=Joseph&gsfn\\_x=0&gsln=Niblett&gsln\\_x=0&msypn\\_\\_ftp=Bristol%2c+Gloucestershire%2c+England&msypn=202043&cpxt=1&cp=11&catbucket=rstp&MSAV=0&uidh=65o&pcat=ROOT\\_CATEGORY&h=6072247&dbid=7572&indiv=1&ml\\_rpos=2&hovR=1](https://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gss=angs-g&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=Joseph&gsfn_x=0&gsln=Niblett&gsln_x=0&msypn__ftp=Bristol%2c+Gloucestershire%2c+England&msypn=202043&cpxt=1&cp=11&catbucket=rstp&MSAV=0&uidh=65o&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=6072247&dbid=7572&indiv=1&ml_rpos=2&hovR=1)> [accessed 24 November 2017]

the traditional urban historiography is laid bare.<sup>82</sup> As Brown describes Seattle, “animals, as much as humans, helped make [...] [the] city [...] [they] defined the contours of daily life”.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Aughton; Bush; Large.

<sup>83</sup> Brown, p. 12, 69.

## **Chapter Two: 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Atkins presents the eradication of private slaughterhouses as key to the 'Great Separation', removing animals from the urban gaze.<sup>84</sup> The concept of a centralising municipal abattoir, an institution that would displace the multiple, maligned private slaughterhouses, originated in France in 1860. Advocates idealised a policed, hygienic space, constructed at the city's edge, in which animal suffering was reduced: it appealed both Sanitarian and 'animal welfare' sentiment, and the issues of congestion.<sup>85</sup> Atkins states that butchers' resistance delayed their establishment, but by 1892, 42 had been opened in cities throughout Britain. Meanwhile, though no public abattoir was constructed in London, the 'dead-meat' trade worked to reduce the metropolis' array of private slaughterhouses, as mentioned above.<sup>86</sup>

Conversely, Bristol's 'Great Separation' largely occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: though calls for this municipal facility were voiced in the 1880s,<sup>87</sup> construction only began in 1935.<sup>88</sup> The Medical Officer of Health's *Report* 1899 vociferously calls for a public abattoir. It critiques the unclean condition of many butchers' slaughterhouses, makeshift buildings with non-washable flagstones and lacking ventilation. It states that while Bristol's by-laws allow the Inspector to partially regulate these institutions, they cannot tackle large structural defects. A centralised, public abattoir would ensure effective oversight of Bristol's meat production, and remove these scattered, unhygienic buildings from crowded city streets. Finally, he states that it should be serviced by rail, thus promoting animal welfare by preventing the cruel exhaustion of manually driven cattle.<sup>89</sup> Urban livestock clearly contradicted the modern ideal of Bristol as a sanitary, compassionate and smoothly-flowing city.

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<sup>84</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (pp. 86-88).

<sup>85</sup> Chris Otter, 'Civilizing Slaughter: The Development of the British Public Abattoir, 1850-1910', in *Meat Modernity and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*, ed. by Paula Lee (Lebanon: University Press of New England, 2008), pp. 89-106 (pp. 90-96).

<sup>86</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood' (p. 88-89, 82).

<sup>87</sup> BA: 33416/3, MOHR, 1886-1889, CCBARMOH, 1888, p. 80.

<sup>88</sup> BA: 33416/23, MOHR, 1935-1937, CCBARMOH, 1935, p. 88.

<sup>89</sup> BA: 33416/8, MOHR, 1899-1901, CBRMOHS, 1899, pp. 8-12, 20.

Nonetheless, the city's butchers successfully thwarted the Corporation's proposals until the 1930s.<sup>90</sup> Significantly, the Bristol and District Master Butchers Association (BDMBA) was established in 1891, a powerful, organised lobby.<sup>91</sup> Maclachlan states that the butchers' opposition championed laissez-faire capitalist values, aiming to avoid state interference.<sup>92</sup> A *Western Daily Press* article, 1933, hints at why resistance was more successfully sustained in Bristol than other cities. In 1933, butchers here had finally begun to support the proposed public abattoir. Reemphasising the insanitary conditions of the private slaughterhouses, the article states: "[t]here has been a growing public demand for the abattoir during the past 10 years".<sup>93</sup> Here, it implies that the vast majority of Bristol's populace had only relatively recently become aware of the Medical Officer's 1899 arguments. Once the butchers' customers had internalised the Sanitary Reformers' views on private slaughterhouses, arguably the BDMBA could no longer afford to resist the Corporation's plans.

Bristol's public abattoir was finally built in 1935, located at Whitehall, in the city's outer boundary.<sup>94</sup> Figure 2, portrays this building. Its architecture speaks for the various cultural changes underlying its construction. Multiple windows and drainpipes suggest a preoccupation with cleanliness. More subtly, its modest size, and dearth of signage, reflect the public's shifting emotions. Elias writes that civilisation's development involved the gradual distancing of reminders of death and violence.<sup>95</sup> Drawing upon this, Otter argues that by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, urban sights of animal slaughter and cruelty had become culturally taboo.<sup>96</sup> He describes the modern abattoir, an "unsignposted [...] anonymous warehouse [...] it compels [...] society to forget its bloodier aspects".<sup>97</sup> This description succinctly encapsulates the building in Figure 2. Significantly, the city's private

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<sup>90</sup> [Anon.], 'Bristol Abattoir Inquiry', *TWDP*, 19 October 1933, p. 4. In *TBNA* <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000513/19331019/030/0004>> [accessed 12 December 2017]

<sup>91</sup> BA: 41935, Minutes of the Bristol and District Master Butcher's Association, 1891-2001, 1 November 1891, 6 May 1919.

<sup>92</sup> Ian Maclachlan, 'A Bloody Offal Nuisance: The Persistence of Private Slaughter-Houses in Nineteenth-Century London', *Urban History*, 34 (2007), 227-254 (p. 230).

<sup>93</sup> [Anon.], 'Bristol Abattoir Inquiry', p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> BA: Pamphlet/687, Formal Opening of the Bristol Corporation Public abattoir, 16 October 1935, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2000), pp. 102-103. Cited in Otter, (p. 90).

<sup>96</sup> Otter, (p. 90, 105).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, (pp. 105-106).

slaughterhouses slowly closed; by 1944 they had been eradicated.<sup>98</sup> The Whitehall Abattoir must be thus viewed a fundamental step in Bristol's 'Great Separation'. Displaced from the city's bustling centre, inconspicuously designed, and reducing the necessity for the numerous private slaughterhouses, it diminished citizens' interactions with, and thoughts of, living animals.

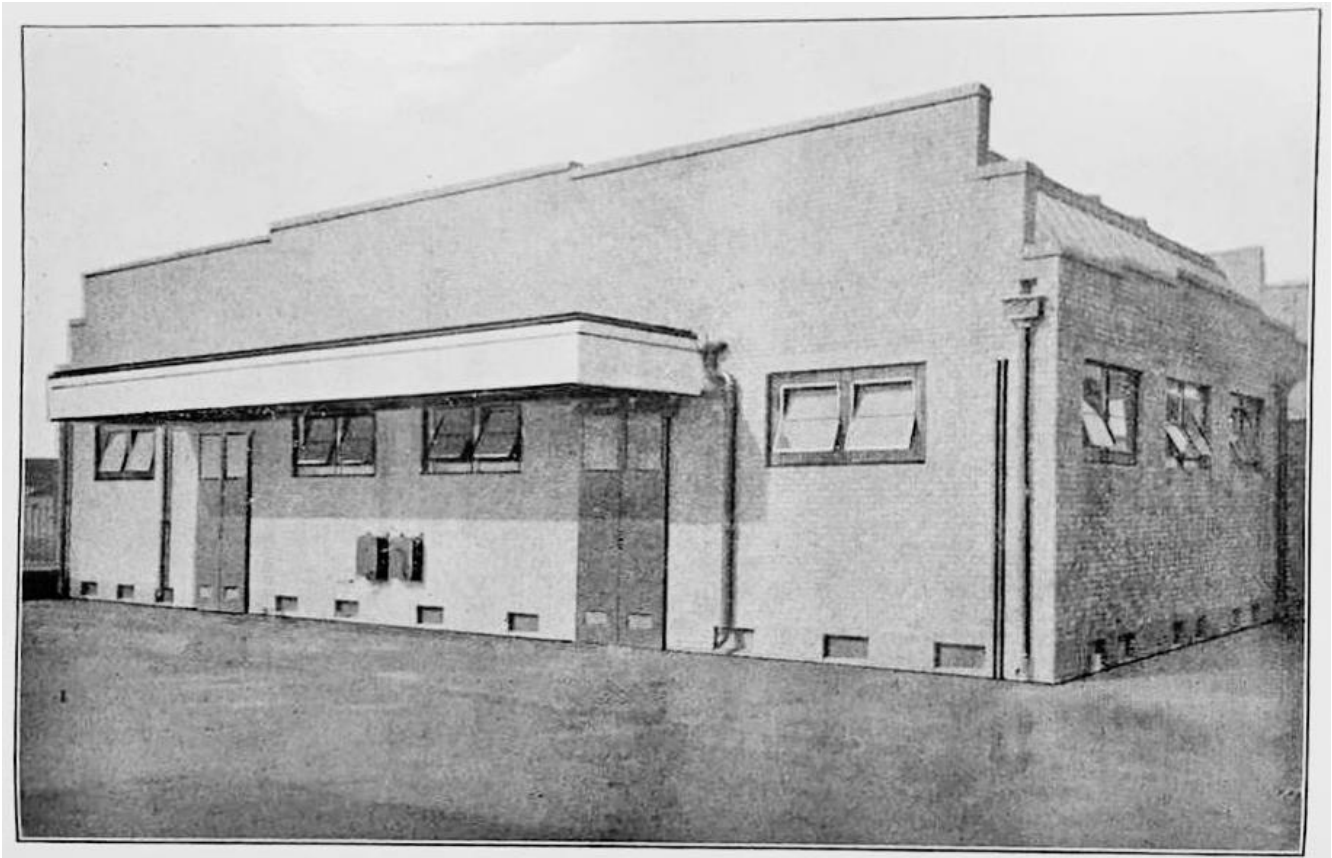


Figure 2: Whitehall Abattoir. BA: Pamphlet/687, p. 3.

Historians offer differing analyses of Europe's urban slaughterhouse reforms. In fact, Aughton, detailing Bristol's progression into modernity, neglects any mention of the Whitehall Abattoir.<sup>99</sup> Koolmees, regarding the Netherlands' introduction of public abattoirs, writes: "[m]ass outbreaks of meat-borne diseases [...] demonstrated the need for [state

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<sup>98</sup> BA: 33416/24, MOHR, 1938-1946, CCBARMOH, 1943, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> Aughton, pp. 242-244.



action]”.<sup>100</sup> Conversely, Atkins portrays the municipal abattoir as an institution that not only satisfied public health concerns, but responded to an emergent cultural unease regarding the reality of animal slaughter. In the modern ‘City’, he argues, meat’s ‘production’ must be both controlled and made invisible.<sup>101</sup> Both Koolmees and Atkins rightly highlight the municipal abattoir’s significance, exemplifying modern scientific understanding and the increasing societal acceptance of state intervention. However, the above exploration of Bristol’s 1935 Abattoir validates Atkins: this new institution’s architecture reveals a deeper cultural significance, in addition to a discourse of sanitation. Yet, relating this back to the ‘Great Separation’, the urban-rural schism was, evidently, more protracted in Bristol than Atkins’ work allows for. His theory’s temporality neglects the significance of the Bristolian butchers’ resistance to change, which demonstrates the continued strength of principles of laissez-faire capitalism in this city.<sup>102</sup> More fundamentally, this delay extends the narrative of living animals’ clear material contribution in shaping the city.

As mentioned, London was increasingly supplied with wholesale ‘dead’ meat. Significantly, late 19<sup>th</sup> century technological advancements in cold storage facilities further boosted this commerce, enabling supply from other cities to continue through the summer months.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, refrigeration facilitated the emergence of an international frozen meat trade by the 1880s, importing carcasses from countries such as Australia. Metropolitan Butchers largely purchased wholesale ‘dead-meat’ by the early 1900s.<sup>104</sup> Atkins cites these developments as explaining Islington Cattle Market’s demise: annual sales of animals here rapidly decreased in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>105</sup> though livestock trading finally ceased in 1939.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Peter Koolmees, ‘From Stable to Table. The Development of the Meat Industry in The Netherlands, 1850-1990’, in *Exploring the Food Chain: Food Production and Food Processing in Western Europe, 1850-1990*, ed. by Yves Segers, Jan Bieleman and Erik Buyst (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2009), pp. 117-137 (p. 125).

<sup>101</sup> Atkins, ‘Urban Blood’, (pp. 86-87).

<sup>102</sup> MacLachlan, ‘Bloody Offal’, (p. 230).

<sup>103</sup> Richard Perren, ‘The Marketing of Agricultural Products: Farm Gate to Retail Store’, in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, ed. by Joan Thirsk, 8 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), VII, pp. 953-998 (pp. 960-974).

<sup>104</sup> Atkins, ‘Urban Blood’, (p. 82).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Velten, p. 25.

The wholesale international frozen meat market also emerged in Bristol: over 6,800 tons of this commodity were arriving at the city's ports annually by 1914.<sup>107</sup> Nonetheless, Bristol Cattle Market's sales contracted at a slower rate than Islington's. For example, 17,074 cattle were sold during 3 months of 1908;<sup>108</sup> compared to 2,686 over a similar period in 1933.<sup>109</sup> Clearly, some trade continued, which explains the necessity for the Whitehall Abattoir. Perren writes that, in those areas of England with an abundance of local, country-raised cows, the frozen international meat trade developed more gradually.<sup>110</sup> This explains the differing rates of cattle market decline in Bristol and London.

Although refrigeration impacted sales, Bristol Cattle Market, and by extension the livestock themselves, were not immediately viewed symbols of a bygone era, providing another contrast with Atkins' analysis of Islington's decline.<sup>111</sup> *The Western Daily Press*, 1950, proclaims the completion of site improvements, in an attempt to revive the market: "Bristol now [has] a fine market which [can] accommodate 160 'attested' cattle in the new building."<sup>112</sup> It refers to the addition of an area for bovine livestock that had been ratified as 'disease-free' by veterinarians, in line with modern scientific knowledge. The very form of this source, a locally read newspaper, combined with the adjective 'fine' here, implies a widespread civic pride in this institution and its avant-garde facilities. Interestingly, a focus on 1950s Bristol extends the logic of an argument made by Almeroth-Williams regarding cattle markets. In a criticism that could be partially levelled at Atkins, Almeroth-Williams denounces those historians who suggest "that modernity [significantly] arrived with the ascendancy of dead-meat delivered by rail". For him, such arguments downplay the importance of 18<sup>th</sup> century developments in trading practices at Smithfield Cattle Market.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> [Anon.], 'Frozen Meat', p. 35.

<sup>108</sup> [Anon.], 'Local Happenings', *The Horfield and Bishopston Record*, 13 February 1909, p. 8. In *TBNA* <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002144/19090213/046/0003?browse=true>> [accessed 4 December 2017]

<sup>109</sup> [Anon.], 'City Council and Cattle Disease', *TWDP*, 6 November 1933, p. 5. In *TBNA* <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000513/19331106/038/0005>> [accessed 4 December 2017]

<sup>110</sup> Perren, *Meat Trade 1840-1914*, p. 166.

<sup>111</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (p. 82).

<sup>112</sup> [Anon.], 'Cattle Market Completed', *TWDP*, 14 April 1950, p. 3. In *TBNA* <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000513/19500414/078/0003>> [accessed 20 November 2017]

<sup>113</sup> Almeroth-Williams, p. 212.

Crucially, the above *Western Daily Press* article further highlights the inadequacy of narratives of urban modernity that overly emphasise the wholesale dead-meat market; the improved Bristol Cattle Market exemplified innovation.

While the Bristol authorities, and the public more broadly, accepted urban cattle and pigs within the enclosed market walls, those in the streets were increasingly seen as modernity's antithesis. Significantly, Bristol's public abattoir and Cattle Market were actually located some distance from each other, without a rail connection.<sup>114</sup> The Medical Officer's 1947 *Report* recommends the construction of a centralising site: "many complaints have been received regarding the driving of animals through the streets [...] this problem is receiving the urgent attention of the Health Committee and City Council."<sup>115</sup> One must compare the *Report* with the aforementioned 1871 *Western Daily Press* article, detailing the court case of Jeffries and Hillier. In the latter, while urban cattle appear an occasional danger, they are portrayed as an accepted feature of city life. Conversely, 'many complaints' suggests that, by 1947, citizens regarded such animals as inadmissible in modern Bristol. That the Health Committee is addressing these complaints demonstrates the impact of the Victorian Public Health Movement upon visions of the city: symbolic of uncleanness, the smell and sight of roaming cattle became intolerable.

Further, this *Report* should be contextualised. By 1939, 2 million people owned a car.<sup>116</sup> That such developments engendered a new, motorised image of Bristol's roads, with an emphasis on speed, is shown by the City Council's postwar redevelopments. Bullock writes: "[one] priority [was] speeding up the flow of traffic [...] [building] a main traffic artery across Queen Square."<sup>117</sup> The Medical Officer's 1947 *Report*, owing to its nature, focusses upon the public health concerns of urban livestock. One encounters a limitation in using these sources: explicit mention of Bristol's motorisation is absent. Yet, contextualising the *Report*, one can cautiously suggest the different motivations behind the quoted 'complaints',

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<sup>114</sup> BA: 33416/25a, MOHR, 1947-1950, CCBARMOH, 1947, p. 42

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Theodore Barker and Christopher Savage, *An Economic History of Transport in Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 160.

<sup>117</sup> Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 262.

further implied by the fact that the 'City Council' was also addressing these issues. Petrol-consuming vehicles, arguably, rendered manually driven livestock symbols of an antiquated era, displaced from modern understandings of 'the Road', and 'the City' more broadly. As detailed later, though proposals for a centralising site did not materialise due to the Cattle Market's closure, motorisation gave added support to this change. Thus the ascendancy of the car provides an additional driving force behind Bristol's Great Separation that Atkins neglects in his 19<sup>th</sup> century analysis. Simultaneously, this 1947 *Report* illustrates the continued presence of city livestock, thus further complicating his theory.

Malcolmson and Mastoris argue that, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the sanitary reformers, urban pigs were increasingly symbolic of poor hygiene.<sup>118</sup> Atkins emphasises the expulsion of Kensington's commercial piggeries. His analysis implies that by 1900, porcine husbandry, for both income and home consumption, was highly uncommon and unwelcome in the modern metropolis. Regarding Bristol, tracing the history of urban pigs becomes problematic. The Medical Officer of Health meticulously recorded those raised for profit by city-dwellers, regularly inspecting these pigsties. Yet, regarding those solely kept for domestic consumption, the archival trace is thin. In disputes between the Officer and residents, court settlement, as with Niblett's case, was a final resort.<sup>119</sup> Further, though pig theft does not appear in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Bristolian court records,<sup>120</sup> this alone cannot be taken to imply the decline of the urban 'household' pig, as such cases were themselves quite uncommon in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century anyway.<sup>121</sup> The methodological issues are further compounded by the fact that 'household' pigs were generally taken for granted, a prosaic feature of domestic life.<sup>122</sup>

Nonetheless, the history of such husbandry can be cautiously inferred by exploring the fate of those pigs kept by Bristolians for income, often on separate plots of city land than their garden. The two forms of pig-keeping are likely to have followed a similar narrative: as mentioned, both tended to be small-scale, 'lower-class' activities. Significantly, and despite

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<sup>118</sup> Malcolmson and Mastoris, p. 43.

<sup>119</sup> [Anon.], 'Local Board', p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> BA: JMag/J/1, Bristol Magistrates' (Petty Sessions) Court, Registers of Summary Jurisdiction, 1920-1930.

<sup>121</sup> BA: JQS/P/360, Quarter Sessions Papers, Informations and Examinations, January-June 1817.

<sup>122</sup> Malcolmson and Mastoris, p. xiii.

the Medical Officer's regulatory pressure, urban pigs sustained a presence in Bristol well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, the Officer's 1957 *Report* records 71 known city piggeries; 12 of which are denounced as unacceptably dirty.<sup>123</sup> Clear differences are apparent, when compared with 'The Potteries'. The significance of middle class interests in Kensington has been noted. Further, the Bristol Medical Officer writes in 1960: "most of the piggeries are only [a] part-time occupation and it is [...] difficult to find the occupier on the site to register specific complaints".<sup>124</sup> This contrasts with London's 'The Potteries', where one man, Lake, owned much of the land, leasing it specifically for pig-keeping.<sup>125</sup> Thus, practical considerations hindered the speed of change. His reference to 'complaints' does, however, imply that many Bristolians endorsed the Sanitarian view of urban pigs by this point, regarding them a nuisance that must, at the very least, be regulated.

Yet, one must not overemphasise this latter point. Smith, a resident of Downend during the 1950s, says of urban 'commercial' piggeries: "it was nice to have animals so close."<sup>126</sup> Though this suburb is technically outside the city's precise boundaries, her comment still suggests that some urbanites did not internalise the authority's representation of urban pigs as unhygienic. Smith's remark reveals the limitations of uncritically endorsing the Medical Officer's portrayal of 20<sup>th</sup> century Bristol, and potentially exposes a further reason for urban pigs' continued presence: some residents still accepted them. In fact, this analysis of Bristol could possibly be taken to suggest that Atkins' narrative, in choosing to solely cover the 19<sup>th</sup> century, potentially obscures a significant history of porcine husbandry in London. Urban piggeries outside Kensington, unexplored by Atkins, may have retained a metropolitan presence past 1900; confirming this would require a separate study.

Attempts to centralise the Cattle Market and Abattoir did not materialise, probably because the former finally closed in 1967, with land-ownership transferred to the Post Office.<sup>127</sup>

Efforts to reinvigorate sales clearly failed. As noted, the rise of the wholesale 'dead-meat'

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<sup>123</sup> BA: 33416/28a, MOHR, 1956-1958, CCBARMOH, 1957, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> BA: 33416/29a, MOHR, 1959-1961, CCBARMOH, 1960, p. 16.

<sup>125</sup> Velten, p. 28.

<sup>126</sup> Email Interview with Julie Smith, Interviewed by Benjamin Gibbons, 7 December 2017-7 February 2018, 7 February 2018.

<sup>127</sup> BA: 25483, Estates Deeds Miscellaneous, Conveyance Between Corporation of Bristol and Her Majesty's Postmaster General, May 1967.

trade caused the institution's decline. Additionally, refrigerated meat delivered in motorised vehicles, direct from rural parish abattoirs, also increasingly supplied Bristol's wholesale stock (although exact figures are lacking).<sup>128</sup> While the practical reality of declining sales explains the Bristol Cattle Market's closure, changing understandings of 'the City' arguably supported this development. However, directly evidencing this is problematic: for unknown reasons, the records of both *The Western Daily Press*, and *The Bristol Evening Post*, from the 1950s, become fragmented. Some limited insights can be inferred from an article in *The Guardian*, 1957, detailing the closure of Norwich's urban cattle market. The journalist compares the city to Bristol, writing that both view themselves as regional capitals of large rural areas. He states that the closure in Norwich is supported by many citizens: "in the interests of hygiene [or] logistics, or just straight modernity".<sup>129</sup> 'Logistics' here links to the above argument about motorisation. Drawing upon this article, one might cautiously suggest that by 1967, Bristol's Cattle Market, and livestock more specifically, had also, for many, become symbols of uncleanness and of an antiquated era. Significantly, Atkins actually fails to explore the London public's opinion on Islington's closure.<sup>130</sup>

Urban piggeries were eventually removed from Bristol. Exactly dating this eradication has proved difficult, since the Medical Officer's *Reports* end in 1975. Yet, they note that numbers fell from 71 to 33, 1957-1961.<sup>131</sup> Significantly, in 1960, the Officer refused to license a number of smallholdings, due to constructional defects causing insanitary conditions.<sup>132</sup> This indicates the Officer's role in contributing to the pig's decline. Additionally, his 1969 *Report* details a further decrease, to 21, stating that Bedminster's piggeries had been displaced because the area "was required for tipping purposes".<sup>133</sup> The spatial realities of land availability in an increasingly populated city worked to remove this

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<sup>128</sup> BA: 33416/16, MOHR, 1932-1934, CCBARMOH, 1934, p. 76; BA: 33416/31a, MOHR, 1965-1967, CCBARMOH, 1967, p. 138.

<sup>129</sup> Norman Shrapnel, 'Where the Pigs Have Plenty to Squeal About', *The Manchester Guardian*, 30 May 1957, p. 5. In *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* <<https://search-proquest-com.bris.idm.oclc.org/hnpguardianobserver/docview/480044330/C409CCCA37164524PQ/1?accountid=9730>> [accessed 2 January 2018]

<sup>130</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (pp. 81-82).

<sup>131</sup> BA: 33416/28a, MOHR, 1956-1958, CCBARMOH, 1957, p. 13; BA: 33416/29a, MOHR, 1959-1961, CCBARMOH, 1961, p. 16.

<sup>132</sup> BA: 33416/29a, MOHR, 1959-1961, CCBARMOH, 1960, p. 16.

<sup>133</sup> BA: 33416/32a, MOHR, 1968-1970, CCBARMOH, 1969, p. 96.

husbandry. Thus, urban development provided a further driving force behind Bristol's 'Great Separation', unidentified by Atkins.

Divergent analyses of the urban pig have been presented by historians. In a sweeping generalisation, Trow-Smith dismisses any evidence of this animal past the 18<sup>th</sup> century, presenting porcine husbandry as an overwhelmingly rural activity.<sup>134</sup> Clearly, the latent falsity of this argument has been exposed in this thesis: pigs provided both income and subsistence for many Bristolians. Atkins' analysis, which has been outlined, does somewhat avoid these simplifications. Yet, and in contrast to this scholar, Malcolmson and Mastoris state: "[World War Two] witnessed [a] revived interest in the [urban] pig, [but] the decade marked the last gasp of domestic pig-keeping on any scale." They focus solely on the pig kept for home consumption, drawing upon sources such as working-class memoirs, from urban areas across England. They cite the increasingly restrictive sanitary by-laws, and the declining price of shop-bought pork, as accounting for the decline.<sup>135</sup> Unfortunately, as mentioned, the dearth of comparable documentation in Bristol Archives prevents similar analysis. However, this dissertation's exploration of Bristol's 'commercial' piggeries implies the validity of Malcolmson and Mastoris' remarks about the urban pigs' 20<sup>th</sup> century presence, and the eventual impact of the Medical Officer. Thus, Malcolmson and Mastoris' wide-ranging analysis appears more justified than Atkins' argument. One might argue it is unfair to criticise Atkins for this, as he largely focusses on one English city; nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, Pearson states that the implied assumption is that his 'Great Separation' theory is applicable to other localities.<sup>136</sup>

Therefore, a confluence of forces removed urban cows and pigs by the 1970s; modern cultural conceptions of Bristol underlay many of these changes. Public health concerns brought urban livestock under increasing scrutiny, as they defied the sanitary ideal of Bristol; 'civilised' emotion rendered animal slaughter unacceptable to the urban gaze. Further, motorisation altered understandings of 'the road'. Meanwhile, other developments

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<sup>134</sup> Robert Trow-Smith, *A History of British Livestock Husbandry, 1700-1900* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1957), p. 217. Cited in Almeroth-Williams, p. 42.

<sup>135</sup> Malcolmson and Mastoris, p. 126

<sup>136</sup> Pearson, *Review of Atkins*

also supported this change, though not themselves directly propelled by modern conceptions of 'the City'. The wholesale meat market engendered the Cattle Market's decline; undeveloped land was increasingly valuable, displacing urban piggeries. Overall, though this significantly extends the temporal scale of Atkins' 'Great Separation', and provides additional driving forces, this case study chimes with his overall conclusion of an urban-rural fracture. Thus, Aughton's omission of this narrative of livestock's expulsion, when charting the emergence of modern Bristol, is erroneous.<sup>137</sup> Conversely, Brown argues that by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, livestock had been removed from Seattle. For example, urban piggeries here were non-existent by 1960, partially due to local government action. He writes: "[t]hroughout the [20<sup>th</sup>] century the hiding of livestock [...] [worked] to define what it meant to be urban".<sup>138</sup> Clearly, in Seattle, as in Bristol, city residents' modern identities, by the 1970s, fundamentally excluded meat-producing animals. Although they continued to supply urbanites' dinner plates, this material significance was obscured.<sup>139</sup> Browns' work evidences the global applicability of the 'Great Separation' theory; simultaneously, the commonalities with Bristol support this dissertation's argument regarding Atkins' concept.

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<sup>137</sup> Aughton, pp. 242-251.

<sup>138</sup> Brown, pp. 205-206, 15-16.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp. 191-194.



### Chapter 3: Late 20<sup>th</sup> century

Supermarkets began to spread across England from the 1960s. Providing various consumer goods, they absorbed the custom of many high-street shops, causing mass-closure.<sup>140</sup> For example, while Bedminster housed 13 butchers in 1965, a count today suggests only 5.<sup>141</sup> Notably, Sainsbury's owned multiple supermarkets in Bristol by the 1970s,<sup>142</sup> and in 1991 opened a 'Superstore' in Bedminster.<sup>143</sup> For reasons of customer convenience, and corporation profits, supermarkets increasingly removed their in-store butchers, and sold meat through self-service refrigerators, in packaged trays and a pre-cut form.<sup>144</sup> Figure 3 is a 1980s national advert for Sainsbury's, appearing in *The Sunday Times*. Unlike the aforementioned 1867 *Bristol Mercury* article about the Christmas meat show, reading for the 'real' animal is difficult. Ready-prepared and compartmentalised, the whole production process is concealed. Thus, self-service reinforced the earlier pattern, where society's 'civilised' manners rendered notions of animal death taboo. Arluke and Bogdan write: "[t]he association between [...] meats sold in supermarkets and animal flesh is obscure".<sup>145</sup> The symbolic connection between meat and living animals was broken; city residents were able to think less and less about rural cows and pigs. In light of this human-animal distancing, the rise of supermarkets must be viewed as an additional, yet unidentified, stage in Atkins' 'Great Separation'. Livestock, and their continued material contribution to urban history, as the 'fuel' for daily rhythms, were obscured even more. This mental displacement of animals further defined modern urban identity.

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<sup>140</sup> Joanna Blythman *Shopped: The Shocking Power of British Supermarkets* (London: HarperCollins, 2005), p. 23, 4.

<sup>141</sup> BA: 41935/IM/PM/3/12, Bristol Consumer Group, Butcher's Shops: Surveys, 1965, pp. 14-15.

<sup>142</sup> Bridget Williams, *The Best Butter in the World: A History of Sainsbury's* (London: Ebury Press, 1994), p. 147.

<sup>143</sup> Douglas Meritt, *Sculpture in Bristol* (Bristol: Sansom & Company, 2002), p. 92.

<sup>144</sup> Brown, p. 227.

<sup>145</sup> Arnold Arluke and Robert Bogdan, *Beauty and the Beast: Human-Animal Relations as Revealed in Real Photo Postcards, 1905-1935* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010), p. 250.

# At Sainsbury's if we don't sell our mince in a day, we don't sell it.

The best mince is fresh mince.  
So all our ground beef and mince beef has a  
sell-by date of just one day.

What we don't sell in a day comes out of the  
cabinet as a fresh supply goes in.

Does this mean we waste a lot of mince?

On the contrary.

It seems when people know you sell good lean  
mince at good keen prices, they can't wait to buy it.

Not even for a day. **Good food costs less at Sainsbury's.**



Figure 3: Meat. Sainsbury's, *The Sunday Times*, 1980s [exact date unknown], [unknown page]. Cited in Paul Burke, 'How Sainsbury's Ads Revolutionised the UK's Food Culture', *Campaign*, 17 October 2016 <<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/sainsburys-ads-revolutionised-uks-food-culture/1412027>> [accessed 12 January 2018]

However, with advertising, we cannot know how these coded messages were received. To only analyse this image of mince, and then state that consumers were distanced from meat-producing animals, is unjustified. Actual consumer reaction must be explored. Nonetheless, there is little by way of local diaries, or newspaper articles, that explore the act of purchasing meat from a standardised supermarket. Consequently, several Bristolians were interviewed for this study. All interviewees stated that they largely purchased meat from these corporations, thus confirming the national trend in purchasing habits.<sup>146</sup> Significantly,

<sup>146</sup> Oral Interview with Louise Cavell, Interviewed by Benjamin Gibbons (hereafter 'IBG'), 7 February 2018; Oral Interview with Peter Newley, IBG, 7 February 2018; Oral Interview with Avril Green, IBG, 10 February 2018.

Cavell said: “I do feel very detached. If I went to an abattoir [...] I probably would have a completely different attitude. But because [supermarket meat] is sealed in a packet [...] that probably suits me”.<sup>147</sup> Here, she overtly confirms Arluke and Bogdan’s argument, especially with the verb ‘detached’. Hence, one must extend Atkins’ theory into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Cavell’s response also highlights that slaughterhouses are now removed from daily urban experience. In fact, the spread of supermarkets actually exacerbated this trend. Despite the Cattle Market closure, the Whitehall Abattoir continued to function. It serviced Bristol’s ‘dead-meat’ market, providing a slaughtering facility for wholesalers, who purchased livestock from nearby country farmers, with the animals transported by motorised trucks.<sup>148</sup> Nonetheless the facility had finally closed by 1989.<sup>149</sup> Unfortunately, the archives lack material exploring the Abattoir’s demolition, a lacuna which perhaps further hints at the cultural impropriety of animal slaughter. A recent publication from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) provides for some generalised conclusions, stating that national abattoir numbers declined as they were subsumed into large-scale private institutions. Supplying the supermarkets, these sizeable abattoirs purchased livestock directly from farmers, and then processed and packaged the animal.<sup>150</sup> Consequently, the domination of supermarkets helps account for the Whitehall Abattoir’s closure: this further emphasises the necessity of including supermarkets within the ‘Great Separation’ narrative.

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with Cavell.

<sup>148</sup> BA: 33416/31a, MOHR, 1965-1967, CCBARMOH, 1965, p. 123; BA: 33416/31a, MOHR, 1965 to 1967, CCBARMOH, 1967, p. 138.

<sup>149</sup> HM Land Registry, *Land Register Wainbrook Drive, Bristol* (2018), p. 3. In *HM Land Registry Eservices* <[https://eservices.landregistry.gov.uk/www/wps/myportal!/ut/p/b1/04\\_SjzQ2NjSxMDM0MdOP0I\\_KSyzLTE8syczPS8wB8aPM4o2NLEwMDU2MPCyMzcnNPE3d3I0NQ0yNDUyM9YNT8\\_RzoxwVAW0L970!/](https://eservices.landregistry.gov.uk/www/wps/myportal!/ut/p/b1/04_SjzQ2NjSxMDM0MdOP0I_KSyzLTE8syczPS8wB8aPM4o2NLEwMDU2MPCyMzcnNPE3d3I0NQ0yNDUyM9YNT8_RzoxwVAW0L970!/)> [accessed 7 April 2018]

<sup>150</sup> AHDB, *A Review of Livestock Markets in England* (Kenilworth: AHDB, 2017) <<http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Livestock-markets-170517.pdf>> [accessed 5 January 2018] (p. 9).

## Conclusion

*'Bristol: A People's History'*.<sup>151</sup> Or is it? Taking 'meat' as its overarching theme, this thesis has shown animals' significance to Bristol's urban history, thus complicating such traditional, anthropocentric narratives. Chapter One highlighted the multifaceted, material importance of cows and pigs to residents' lives. They provided the human 'fuel' behind the city's industrial rhythms, sustained urban commerce, and shaped the cityscape. Owing to the Cattle Market, city piggeries, and multiple private slaughterhouses, animals were integral to cultural conceptions of 'the City'.

Chapters Two and Three critically analysed Atkins' theory of the urban-rural 'Great Separation'. He emphasised the 19<sup>th</sup> century emergence of the modern City, in which livestock's physical presence was removed.<sup>152</sup> Significantly, a case study of Bristol indicated several necessary qualifications for Atkins' argument to be applied here: one must extend its temporality, and account for additional driving forces. Bristol's urban livestock continued to exist into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most significantly due to the slow expansion of the city's wholesale meat industry. Nonetheless, the urban-rural schism did occur, especially with the public abattoir's construction in 1935, and the Cattle Market's closure in 1966. Motorisation and urban development supported these changes, in addition to those factors outlined by Atkins. Finally, exploring the later emergence of supermarkets highlighted an additional, yet unidentified, stage in his theory. Plastic-wrapped meat further distanced Bristolians from living cows and pigs. Ultimately, however, I reached the same overall conclusion: a modern city, in which meat-producing animals are far removed from urbanites' daily lives and thoughts. This obscures their continued material contribution as calorie-yielding sustenance for human populations.

Brown writes: "[w]e cannot tell the history of [...] [our] cities without including animals."<sup>153</sup> He neatly encapsulates the historiographic revisionism advanced by a handful of scholars, which this thesis has substantiated. Significantly, recent developments in Bristol add specific

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<sup>151</sup> Aughton.

<sup>152</sup> Atkins, 'Urban Blood', (p. 81).

<sup>153</sup> Brown, p. 242.

contemporary relevance to this dissertation's argument. In 2016, Bristol University acquired the former Cattle Market lands, intending to construct the Temple Quarter Campus in the foreseeable future.<sup>154</sup> Thus, we are faced with a decision: should we commemorate livestock's importance to Bristol's development, or continue to marginalise this multi-faceted, 'four-legged history'?

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<sup>154</sup> Michael Yong, 'Bristol University to Take Over Old sorting Office by Temple Meads for New £300m Campus', *The Bristol Post Online*, 29 November 2016 <<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/bristol-university-take-over-old-603>> [accessed 2 December 2017]

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