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Special Issue Paper

Twenty-one years of going shopping 21年間にわたる買い物の歴史

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The study of the history of retailing and marketing is an expanding one. Corporate and consumption studies of many eras and in many countries have been developed and much new work is underway. Curiously though, the “voice” of the consumer, especially around the act of shopping is often absent or muted. Instead the focus tends to be on the business and corporate narrative on the one hand and the consumption and socio-cultural product on the other. This is not a new observation and there have been calls for, and some papers using various consumer artefacts and records arounds shopping. This paper considers the use of a serendipitous donation of a long-run (1977-1999) series of shopping diaries recording one individual's every shopping trip and retail purchase over this period. Considering this extensive record suggests that the consumer voice is needed in historical studies of retailing and consumption. The paper outlines the need for, and the possibilities and benefits of, using such personal shopping artefacts in retail historical research.

Key Words : shopping, history, diaries, data, personal records, purchase behaviour

本研究は、小売とマーケティングの歴史に関する拡張的な研究である。これまで、さまざまな時代や国における企業や消費に関する研究が発展を遂げてきたが、これに並行して、多くの新たな研究潮流が見られる。不思議なことに、特に買い物行動に関わる消費者の「声」は、ほとんど取り上げられておらず看過されている。むしろ研究の焦点は、一方ではビジネスや企業の物語に、他方では消費および社会-文化的なものに置かれている。消費者の買い物行動に関する各種の文化的遺物や記録を使用した研究は、まったく新しい観察方法というわけではなく、これまでも必要とされてきたものである。本論文では、掘り出し物の寄贈品、すなわち長期間にわたる（1977-1999）、個人の日々の買い物生活や小売店での購買を記録した買い物日記を使用して考察を行う。この広範な記録は、消費者の声が小売や消費の歴史的研究に必要とされていることを示唆している。本論文は、こうした個人的な買い物に関する文化的遺物を、小売の歴史的研究において使用する必要性や発展性、利点について概説する。

キーワード：ショッピング、歴史、日記、データ、個人的記録、買い物行動

(翻訳：戸田裕美子)

Historical research in the fields of marketing and retailing has expanded in volume and emphases in recent decades (see for example amongst others the reviews and research agendas in Alexander A 2010, Alexander N 2010, Deutsch 2010, Ingene 2014, Jones and Monieson 1990, Savitt 1980 and Tadjewski and Jones 2014). The history of retailing has become an area of significant academic interest, including the development of new journals, and we perhaps now know more about this retailing past than we could have anticipated (e.g. Stobart and Howard 2019). These fields though are neither complete nor coherent. Issues with the historical record are well known and the

partial or fortuitous survival of artefacts or records is never satisfactory, introducing biases and questions. A strong sense of the big moments in retailing and consumer history, as for example the birth of consumer society, the origination of the Co-operative Movement, the introduction of self-service in food retailing or the introduction of the shopping centre industry, has been developed. There may be good records, accounts and analyses of the surviving major operators in a sector or a location, and corporate histories are a strong sub-field of research. More recently, research into the development of individual shops and streets in specific places (e.g. Warnaby and Medway

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2017) has been a rising research area, perhaps due a sense of loss of place in modern towns and town centres.

In recent decades this field of study has been extended by the development of new techniques and technologies. The digitalisation of local newspapers in the United Kingdom for example has transformed the ease with which developments in a place or the activities of a company or a business individual can be traced. Linkages across organisations and places have become more obvious as a consequence. Again though, this is not an argument for completeness but rather for an expanding understanding of our retail and marketing past. Technology, and especially the digitisation of a range of records and sources, has enabled a better and faster integration and analysis of sources and materials, and increased our knowledge often beyond the corporate.

The explosion of interest in family history and the development of online resources to support this has added another layer. Thus, for example, in an attempt to recreate the corporate history of Sanders Brothers¹ in the United Kingdom (Tyler 2014), a combination of business/trade listings, census material, local newspapers and a few surviving written accounts (including family memorabilia) allowed a set of interacting understandings of operations (stores, supply and manufacture) to be developed. Combining these sources with ancestry and family history sources, led to contacts with descendants of business partners and operators and store managers for example, which in turn produced artefacts and further leads (Tyler and Sparks 2013). The increase in interest generally in the past, and specifically about personal and business history, in turn encourages people to share on Ebay, Pinterest, Facebook and so on, leading to an expanded ecosystem of possibilities around retailing. In one way we have never been so capable of developing a collection, and perhaps understanding, of the retailing past.

There remain however, even with this expanded potential, many remaining gaps in our records and in this understanding. Returning to the recreation of the Sanders Brothers business for example, due to the destruction of the corporate records, we do not know how the business was run on a day-to-day basis, nor how or why some decisions were taken. Secondly, whilst it has been possible to obtain photographs of some of the stores, through the

mechanisms described above, these images have been of exteriors and street scenes. Through a decade or so of research there has been next to no understanding of what the stores looked like inside, neither how they were set out nor merchandised². Finally in this example, we have no idea about who used the shops or how they shopped them (in both the specific and the personal sense). We do not know the customer in any way, nor how the shop operated, or the shopkeeper, staff and customers interacted and related. The only glimpse we get is when a court case for consumer theft or for shopkeeper malpractice in selling is reported in the local newspaper or trade press.

This specific example is used deliberately to make a particular point. Much of the work in recent decades to build up corporate and marketing histories in retailing, whilst obviously beneficial and important, tends to be unable to contribute to an understanding of the consumer or of shopping, at other than the most general level. The artefacts of retailing have survived (shopfronts, product packaging, some photos, trade press, perhaps an operating manual or store accounts) or can be rebuilt to an extent. The patterns of shopping at a company or a place are developed only through some proxies of the experience and the activity, and often at a very general level. Even when companies have extensive archives (e.g. M&S, Sainsbury) the very personal shopping experience is often lacking.

This is entirely understandable, though does leave a gap in our consideration of retailing history. At a detailed level, despite all this work, there are no good answers to fundamental questions such as how did people shop or why did people shop? We know to some extent what retailers did, but far less so about consumers in the past.

The latter of these two questions is more easily answered at a general or conceptual level. We understand that many people shop to satisfy basic needs and as consumer society develops, so to satisfy other needs, wants or impulses. A movement from a functional requirement to a performative, social or cultural one is broadly understood, though may not be the reality for most, certainly at particular points in time. A variant of the question though, illustrates a different side of the problem; why and how did person X shop in place or shop Y.

Overall in the history of retailing, understanding of the

1 Sanders Brothers was a grocery retailer in the UK from the late 19th century, which in the 1930s was bigger than either Tesco or Sainsbury, but which by the 1950s had disappeared

2 A couple of years ago, using the census and ancestry sites to contact descendants of store managers, a rare interior photograph of a Sanders store was obtained.

shopping activity is partial. That is not to say it does not exist in some dimensions. The estate records of landed country houses provide a detailed account of the purchases to keep such operations running. We often know how that shopping process worked. Records of individual retailers may provide the purchases of people or families over a period. Receipts and other ephemera provide snapshots of activity. From all of these we can deduce the method of shopping and thus address the question of how people shopped. These examples though are often for high wealth families and/or high-status goods, especially in more distant history. Whilst they shine a light on that sub-set of the population, they tell us little about the shopping practicalities of the bulk of households or individuals. Records from individual independent local retailers often do not survive, nor do individual shopping behaviours, though an exception is provided by the record books of Co-operative societies. More can be achieved to develop our understanding in this regard.

That there is a major gap in our historical research into retailing and marketing is not a novel idea. Stobart (2010) noted "The focus is firmly on what retailers did and on what consumers possessed: much less is said about the interaction of the two. This neglect is remarkable not least because it is through the act of shopping and the practices of shoppers that consumption and retailing come together" (p 345). From a very different approach, Bowlby (2021) laments the neglect of shops and shopping in social and cultural studies of both the past and to an extent the present.

Schwarzkopf (2015) sees the answer to this in the repositioning of the consumer (the shopper) in the historical narrative. In what he terms "marketing history from below" he argues that "marketing historians need to open the historical narratives they construct much more than before to the experiences and voices of ordinary consumers i.e. of those who actually shop and buy and choose" (p295). An example of how this may be done is provided by Bailey (2015) who uses consumer voices to add "flesh" to the corporate "skeleton" of the development of the Australian shopping centre.

There are further examples of what can be achieved. The Mass Observation project in the United Kingdom is one example of a valuable resource for consumer voices (Hubble 2006). Kynaston (2007, 2009, 2015) in his studies of post-war Britain covers shops and shopping and the everyday acts they encompass. Alexander et al (2009), Bailey et al (2010), Bailey et al (2019) and Nell et al (2009) research the similar post-war period and fore-

ground the consumer/shopper in their work. They note in particular the contestation of some retail innovation introductions such as self-service, and contrast the business narrative with the voices of everyday consumers on the ground and as they grappled with retailer change. Slightly earlier, Alexander (2002) covers shopping voices in war-time Britain. These though tend to be the exceptions.

There are of course major issues in developing such an approach, namely around sources and theorising (Stobart 2010, Schwarzkopf 2015). Some of the work cited above has combined oral histories, small diary projects, contemporary reports from a range of sources amongst others, to weave the consumer voice into the narrative. It is possible that there may be more sources available than initially anticipated. The voice of the consumer or shopper can be recreated, albeit with some caveats, including biases in what remains, especially in more distant times.

This broad discussion emphasises a gap which is important for a number of reasons. First, it seems that if we base our understanding of the past on a (partial) retail history and do not consider the consumer or shopping side, then we are missing a good part of the day-to-day reality that was taking place. As Schwarzkopf (2015) writes, where are the experiences and voices of ordinary consumers? Secondly, we need more studies of the consumer past in order both to understand the activities but also, depending on the timeframe, to rebalance the current histories. The regular activities of ordinary consumers are under-represented in the record. Histories are written normally by the survivors, the powerful or the distinct. The stories of everyday activities are subjugated to the corporate or the aristocratic. This provides a highly unbalanced account which paints a partial, if not misleading view. The focus in historical analysis is shifting from the 'spectacular' to the 'ordinary' and there is, probably because of the increase in personal ancestry research, a greater general interest in how people lived. This can translate into shopping histories. Thirdly, understanding consumption and shopping patterns over a period of time (preferably contemporaneously) allows for a search for patterns of behaviour but also can indicate key alterations in behaviours. These might be due to life stage changes at a personal level (something of contemporary concern) but can also indicate responses to changes in the macro-environment, including competition amongst retailers, the opening or closing of shops in the locality, or as above, the introduction of new retail techniques. Understanding changing patterns is a key dimension of retailing, but there is need to know more about their impact on people

on a day-to-day basis.

In repositioning the individual shopper, and shopping, in the history of retailing, there are obvious issues to address, most notably in the areas of sources and method. The expansion of research methods and the interest in the individual ordinary citizen are relatively recent innovations. Our current business ability to collect and store data for commercial and marketing purposes is not a reflection of much of the past. Future researchers looking back to the present will have an easier time than we do looking to the past. As noted above however, this is not to say that these voices of past shopping behaviours cannot be recreated. There are a range of possible sources and commentaries, mostly oral histories and observations of behaviours. There may be recorded research by companies. Many comprise one-off elements though the closer the period to the present so formal market and consumer research becomes more likely. What does not seem to be present is a long-run consistent source that deals with individuals and their behaviours. This is not to privilege any form of source, but to point out the nature of our likely records, and in some cases its reliance on non-contemporary remembrance.

The remainder of this paper is concerned with a longitudinal, everyday record of shopping. The recent donation of a set of personal shopping diaries spanning twenty-one years is the focus. This is not a complete analysis, but rather is a brief description of the donation and their contents, and discussion of why this could be a useful record, worthy of further study and development.

Twenty-One Years of Shopping: a personal record

In 2018 one of the authors was approached by an individual whose aunt had recently passed away. He wondered if there was any interest in receiving, and then using for research purposes if appropriate, a collection of 'shopping diaries' over multiple years his aunt had written throughout her retirement. Whilst a brief description was provided, the detail and depth of this collection was unclear. Whilst numerous donations of many and varied items have been made to the retail group at the University of Stirling over the years, a personal shopping reflection via long-term diaries would be unusual. When the donation arrived, it became apparent that this had been a considerable exercise in record keeping, in that shopping trips and

purchases over more than twenty-years had been routinely recorded. Between 1977 and 1999, a period of great change in British retailing, one individual had documented her shopping patterns in detail.

The diaries were written by MB³. MB was a woman who had a long career as a teacher. She was born in 1915 in Yorkshire, England and was sufficiently well educated and intelligent to obtain a BSc from the University of Manchester in mathematics in 1939. During the Second World War she qualified and practiced as a teacher; a profession she followed in various schools until her retirement in 1975, spending over twenty years in her final school. In retirement she moved back from the South of England to Yorkshire and commenced the detailed recording of her shopping trips⁴. MB continued the diaries for almost twenty-three years (twenty-one of them complete), residing in the same place for the last 19 years of the sequence. We understand she lived alone and had no children. The diaries relate to her retired period of life commencing in August 1977 and ending in October 1999, by which time she was 84 years of age. The late 1970s to the late 1990s is a period of considerable change in British retailing, with the development of food and non-food superstores on out-of-town sites and regional and other shopping centres. The scale and location of retailing altered dramatically over this period. MB eventually passed away at the age of 99. The period covered is thus from her early 60s through to her mid-80s. The bulk of the record consists of one person's changing patterns of shopping behaviour, assiduously and consistently recorded in notebooks over a long duration.

In total, there are 6422 data entry points, here defined as a transaction, entered in the record. A transaction could thus be the purchase of a single item (a magazine, bus ticket or product) or multiple items in a store. The diary entry covers the products, the prices, the shop frequented, and the journey made. The entries though are not all uniform or completely similar. A diary entry could be the product purchase, transaction or experience, sometimes with the receipt and sometimes with a commentary about personal circumstances and/or the spending. Typical entries are shown in Figures 1 and 2, dating respectively from 1990 and 1999. The 1990 example (Figure 1) is a handwritten record of visits to various stores (Co-operative, Morrisons, local newsagent and so on). The 1999 example (Figure 2) is a mixture of till receipts (Kwik Save) and hand entries. Variability is evident in these ex-

3 We have more detail about the person who created the diaries but have chosen here to maintain anonymity. MB is a pseudonym.

4 There are also a couple of diaries for parts of the 1950s but these are not the focus here.

Friday 7 December 1990		Thursday 13 December 1990			
Monsoon	4 Longley Farm eggs (17)	68	2 Miller eggs (34)	68	
	2 Miller Eggs (34)	68	2 Shi eggs (27)	54	
	2 Shi eggs (27)	54	Beefsteak	69	
	Beefsteak		Vannelli Capuchino	£1-09	
	2lb frozen chips	55	2lb frozen chips	55	
	Shin Beef 189 pack	£2-82	6 large cheese DS	75	
	2 small sliced wholemeal loaves (37)	74	6 Canary Tams 79 pack 1lb 2 1/2 oz	90	
	5 Vanille shells	49	1 small sliced wholemeal loaf	37	
	500g of Delight	75	2 Biotic Grapefruit Juice (35)	70	
	Big Fruit Dessert Peach	99	4 Blue Cheese cubes (15)	60	
		£8-43	Wensleydale Cheese 149 pack 1lb 10z	£1-02	
			SRampoz	59	
				£7-99	
Klips Development of film		£1-99			
Tuesday 11 December 1990		Friday 14 December 1990			
CRS Gudersons	2kg potatoes	69	Monsoon	Pkt of 'Nice' fungus	22
	70cl Milk	£1-89		1lb Fine cut marmalade	59
	2 large Amherst ice pudding (89)	£1-38		1lb Apples	29
	2 large Coop evapor. milk (41)	82		2lb Lyle's Golden Syrup	95
	2 small Coop evapor. milk (25)	50		500g Land	29
	1/2 pint carton of semi-skimmed milk	55		6 Cox apples 69 pack 1lb 3 1/2 oz	£1-07
	4 brown bread rolls	43		1 Dunlee Cake	£2-69
	Blue Cheese 125g	79		250g Lurpak butter	69
	Cheshire Cheese 149 pack 9oz	82		500g Delight	79
		£7-87		Jacob's Ct Ct	26
Monsoon	1st Blue Van	£3-29			£7-84
New agent	R. Times 50p TV Times 50p	£1-00	Monday 17 December 1990		
Boats	2lb Lemon drops	85	Monsoon	4 B's for St + K plus	£1-59
Rambo Rentals	4 x 30min EMI Video Cassettes	£11-94		1 small sliced wholemeal loaf	37
	5 x 90min TDK Audio Cassettes			6 Cox apples 69 pack 1lb 9oz	£1-08
		£9-99		Vannelli Vanille loaf	£1-09
		£4-95		Cheshire Cheese 149 pack 12 1/2 oz	£1-16
		£14-94			£5-29

Figure 1: 1990

<p>NON 15-12-97</p> <p>WERE SERVED BY VERA</p> <p>THIN CUT MA MADE £1.15</p> <p>SOJA WATER £0.47</p> <p>SOJA WATER £0.47</p> <p>1M APPLE PIES £0.79</p> <p>1M COX APPLES £1.21</p> <p>1M PINEAPPLE SLICES £0.22</p> <p>1M PINEAPPLE SLICES £0.22</p> <p>HEINZ BEANS/SAUSAGE £0.42</p> <p>HEINZ BEANS/SAUSAGE £0.42</p> <p>HEINZ BAKED BEANS £0.23</p> <p>HEINZ BAKED BEANS £0.23</p> <p>HEINZ BAKED BEANS £0.23</p> <p>HEINZ BAKED BEANS £0.23</p> <p>FOX'S BUTTER CREAMS £0.89</p> <p>F.8 SAUSAGE ROLLS £0.89</p> <p>1M MALTED BISCUITS £1.29</p> <p>GROCERY U/S £1.29</p> <p>GROCERY U/S £1.29</p> <p>1M HOUSEHOLD GLOVES £0.59</p> <p>1M BABY BANANAS £0.89</p> <p>1M REDSKIN PEANUTS £0.89</p> <p>1M REDSKIN PEANUTS £0.89</p> <p>1M TOMATOES £0.30</p> <p>0.50 1/2 @ £0.59 1/4 £0.52</p> <p>1M XMAS PUDDING £0.85</p> <p>1M XMAS PUDDING £0.21</p> <p>LONGLEY FARM YOGURT £0.21</p> <p>LONGLEY FARM YOGURT £0.21</p> <p>LONGLEY FARM YOGURT £0.21</p> <p>LONGLEY FARM YOGURT £0.21</p> <p>SUB TOTAL £16.91</p> <p>TOTAL £16.91</p> <p>Tax £2-50 £20.00</p> <p>CHANGE from 20 £3.09</p> <p>75248 29 ITEM 13412M</p> <p>Double R. Times £1-50</p> <p>Double TV Times £1-20</p>	<p>***** KWIK SAVE *****</p> <p>VAT NO 1602925 82 - STORE1002</p> <p>MULLER .28</p> <p>MULLER .28</p> <p>MULLER .28</p> <p>MULLER .28</p> <p>MILKSEMIKIM .27</p> <p>MILKSEMIKIM .27</p> <p>LURPAK .88</p> <p>DELIGHT 250G .41</p> <p>DELIGHT 250G .41</p> <p>BABY B/ROOT .44</p> <p>ALLINSONB006 .44</p> <p>SUB-TOTAL 4.26</p> <p>CASH CHANGE 15.74</p> <p>2 Melons £1</p> <p>TOTAL ITEMS 11</p> <p>17/12/97 12:58 1002505 0044 14061</p> <p>KWIK SAVE NO NONSENSE FOODSTORES</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR CUSTOM</p> <p>Wednesday 31 December 1997</p> <p>Coop</p> <p>2pints milk 55</p> <p>large loaf 65</p> <p>tom pump 47</p> <p>Tonic Water 55</p> <p>Pastilles (28) 56</p> <p>£2-78</p> <p>Radio Times 75</p>	<p>***** WILKINSON HORLEY *****</p> <p>***** TELEPHONE 01132 525600 *****</p> <p>DIY TAPE 1.85</p> <p>BOOK 7 floppy 3.99</p> <p>SUBTOTAL 5.84</p> <p>CASH 10.00</p> <p>CHANGE 4.16</p> <p>07.01.98 11:24 14244 50 7 144</p> <p>***** VAT NUMBER 125 5966 51 *****</p> <p>*** THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING WITH US ***</p> <p>***** KWIK SAVE *****</p> <p>VAT NO 1602925 82 - STORE1002</p> <p>ROSS/YOUNG 399</p> <p>ROSS/YOUNG 206</p> <p>MILT VINEGAR 19</p> <p>ANZCOUP 300G 78</p> <p>FAIRYLIGHTS00M 78</p> <p>MULLER 37</p> <p>MULLER 37</p> <p>HORLICKSTWIM 43</p> <p>HORLICKSTWIM 43</p> <p>PG TEA 250MG 1.07</p> <p>ALLINSONB006 16</p> <p>MILK 1 BNT 27</p> <p>DELIGHT 250G 11</p> <p>PHILIP. REG 1.15</p> <p>SUB-TOTAL 8.49</p> <p>CASH CHANGE 10.00</p> <p>7/01/98 11:14 1422500 0128 14662</p> <p>KWIK SAVE NO NONSENSE FOODSTORES</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR CUSTOM</p>	<p>***** WILKINSON HORLEY *****</p> <p>***** TELEPHONE 01132 525600 *****</p> <p>DIY TAPE 1.85</p> <p>BOOK 7 floppy 3.99</p> <p>SUBTOTAL 5.84</p> <p>CASH 10.00</p> <p>CHANGE 4.16</p> <p>07.01.98 11:24 14244 50 7 144</p> <p>***** VAT NUMBER 125 5966 51 *****</p> <p>*** THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING WITH US ***</p> <p>***** KWIK SAVE *****</p> <p>VAT NO 1602925 82 - STORE1002</p> <p>ROSS/YOUNG 399</p> <p>ROSS/YOUNG 206</p> <p>MILT VINEGAR 19</p> <p>ANZCOUP 300G 78</p> <p>FAIRYLIGHTS00M 78</p> <p>MULLER 37</p> <p>MULLER 37</p> <p>HORLICKSTWIM 43</p> <p>HORLICKSTWIM 43</p> <p>PG TEA 250MG 1.07</p> <p>ALLINSONB006 16</p> <p>MILK 1 BNT 27</p> <p>DELIGHT 250G 11</p> <p>PHILIP. REG 1.15</p> <p>SUB-TOTAL 8.49</p> <p>CASH CHANGE 10.00</p> <p>7/01/98 11:14 1422500 0128 14662</p> <p>KWIK SAVE NO NONSENSE FOODSTORES</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR CUSTOM</p>
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Figure 2: 1998

amples but the range of data available is clear. These two figures show thirteen of the 6422 transactions in the record.

We have only recently begun to consider how to analyse and use these diaries. They are an extensive, but unique and thus idiosyncratic record. As with most records they could be partial (though the belief is that every shopping trip is documented), but in this case, they are also personal, reflecting one person over a long period of time. They are thus unusual in their survival.

As has been noted earlier, there is a strand of qualitative research in the study of the history of retailing and marketing (Witkowski and Jones 2006). Contemporary research is well used to the concept of diary research (e.g. Anthony 2005, Belk 2006, Bolger et al 2003) and the benefits and issues in using diaries. Our diaries though are different in that they cover such a long period and are in the main factual and not observational. They thus also differ from many personal diaries and day-books of the past. Assuming they provide a close to complete record though, they could be useful in examining shopping over a period of social, economic, and personal change.

In the remainder of this paper, we provide some broad data description from the diaries to generate an overview of what they contain. At this point the detail has not been analysed, so it is not the focus of this paper. Here our intention is to consider the value such diaries could have to retail and marketing history of the place and time (and possibly more widely) and the approaches we might take to further in-depth analysis.

A Descriptive Overview of the Diary Record

In the figures discussed below the years 1997 and 1999 have been removed, as the diaries are incomplete for those years (they start and end part way through each year respectively). Figures 3–5 thus present aggregate data characteristics of the diaries between 1978 and 1998, a period of 21 complete years. In turn the figures cover the number of transactions (figure 3), amount spent in aggregate (figure 4) and the average spend per transaction (figure 5). The latter two figures have been adjusted for inflation.

There is no linear pattern in this data, though there may be a tendency for a decline in activity in the latter years of the series. Obviously however this aggregate description masks regular, irregular, and altered patterns of behaviour and these can only be revealed by a thorough detailed analysis. This has not been attempted yet and is clearly too large in scope for this paper, the aim of which

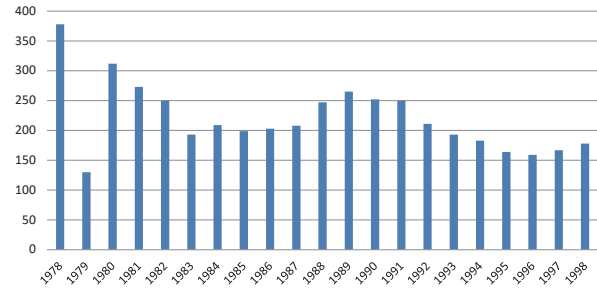


Figure 3. Number of transactions annually between 1978 and 1998.

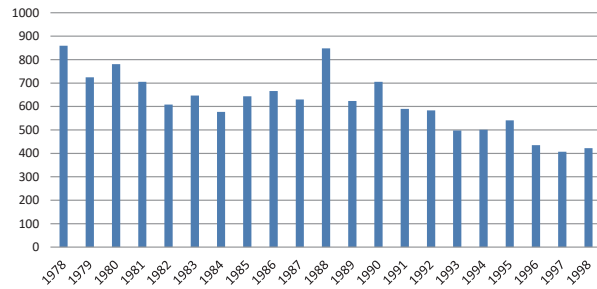


Figure 4. Total annual amount in pounds spent on shopping adjusted for inflation between 1978 and 1998.

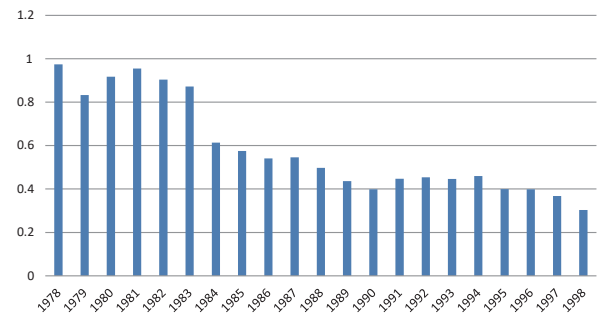


Figure 5. Average annual spend per transaction in pounds adjusted for inflation between 1978 and 1998.

is somewhat different. Each transaction contains a range of data which allows the understanding of the patterns of shopping behaviour to be rebuilt at a point, and over time. At the outset there are some questions that can be posed to direct future analysis:

First, from a shopping approach, an understanding of where trips were made is possible. The method (and here it is mainly public transport) of transport and this the exact journey and to which unique stores may be able to be rebuilt. How this changes over time can then be considered and potentially partially explained by transport and retail competition effects. The use of which particular stores, for which products, and thus the role and type of trips can be understood. As an illustration, the dominant food retailers are Morrisons and the Co-operative, though Sainsbury is used in the early years and Asda makes an irregular appearance.

Secondly, the difference between or the association

amongst retail types in terms of food and non-food purchases can be identified. This balance between grocery and non-grocery trips and their changing association is an important dimension of changes in the retail offer at this time.

Thirdly, the period also saw major structural changes in retailing, most notably the increasing dominance of major chains and the impact on the small independent stores and sector, the rise of regional and other shopping centres and the introduction of Sunday trading hours. Again, the record is amenable to consideration of all of these aspects.

Finally, there is a commercial dimension to the diary records in that they record products and prices. There are consistent products over the record as well as clearly replacement products and brands. This allows the long-term dimensions of choice, product substitution, variety seeking (or not) and pricing to be considered.

There are no doubt other dimensions of analysis and questions that can be posed and considered. These will emerge as the diaries are systematically analysed at the detailed level.

At the heart of this project and opportunity however we must remember there is a known identifiable person. These diaries chart her changing lifestyle and ageing and the ways in which her behaviour remained the same and/or altered, not only as the competitive system changed, but as she grew older. We know quite a lot already about MB from her family. The diaries allow a more detailed personal picture to be drawn up. The personal picture is important, but it is not the objective of the research project. It is clearly not representative and indeed may be an outlier. One diary does however provide an authentic “voice” on terms of shopping behaviour of an individual over a long period of time. That is something that has been lacking thus far.

Discussion

The study of the history of retailing and marketing continues to expand as a field of research. As has been noted previously, there appears to be a gap between the corporate and the consumption arenas. This is described in various terms but is often seen as the absence of the “voice” of the shopper or indeed the dimensions and characteristics of the act of shopping itself. Filling this gap is not easy. In the contemporary world there is enhanced digital capture of such behaviour and voices (textual and visual) and this will prove fruitful for future research on our times. For historic times however, researching this topic

is a search for fragments in existing archives and resources. This is not an easy task, and there are issues in what can be re-assembled, but it is a necessary one. The work of bodies such as Mass Observation in the UK have been essential to this area, and researchers such as Andrew Alexander and Gareth Shaw amongst others have pioneered the consumer voice in their post-war retail history accounts.

This paper considers a serendipitous donation of a personal shopping diary, built up over more than twenty years by a retired woman between 1977 and 1999. The brief description presented here is at the general level and simply intended to indicate some aspects and potential of the data and the resource. In the previous section we considered how a more detailed analysis might proceed and what we would hope to be able to reveal. This is not without problems but there is scope to present a new shopping voice, representing a more “ordinary” (in only one sense) shopping life.

The diaries allow us to probe and rebuild the long-term change in a single person’s shopping trips and habits, during a time of considerable change in British retailing and shopping. The “voice” of the consumer in their regular, ordinary shopping experiences can be heard and builds some bridges between our studies of corporate change and histories and the broader understanding of consumption changes. We believe this is important.

There is a need to be mindful of what such a resource cannot do. This is a personal record at a particular place, time and life stage. Whilst it represents ‘normal’ regular shopping behaviour we cannot claim it is typical or representative. In that respect, despite their richness the diaries also suffer from the known partiality of many historical records. They are though a powerful starting point.

This paper positions the diaries as a different voice on our shopping past, providing some information and insight on a hidden part of retailing history. We need to learn more about the act of shopping in the past and where, how and why people went to which shops, and for what. This paper presents a small exemplar of some of the possibilities. These possibilities will only be realised if we can obtain and preserve more of these (and other) personal and individual records. There is much potential here, but time may be short to make sure people, including researchers, understand the value of collecting and preserving such records.

This paper began by suggesting that personal shopping records could be useful. The literature on retailing and marketing history has called for such studies and for a re-

positioning of shopping between retailing and consumption, and for building an understanding from the (consumer/shopper) ground up. It is unlikely that a twenty-one record of one individual's shopping patterns was quite what was in researchers' minds, but its serendipitous survival provides some interesting possibilities and adds another dimension to the various sources we can use to develop a stronger shopper voice in retail history.

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