

Employment

Women's work

In Camden Square there were two servants in most of the houses and three in some:¹ a young servant, often coming from a country background, and older cook who assisted the family would live in, with 'episodic' help from chars and laundresses. In working-class Somers Town in 1881, 38% of employed women were in domestic service, and 22% in clothing.²

Factories employed both men and women: an informant for Booth's survey, in the 1890s, described a Christmas service held at the Idris soft drinks factory in College Street having 200 women compared with 50 men. Goodall's card factory in College Street had women in trades including sorting and packing. The North London School of Telegraphy at 41-43 Camden Road is mentioned in the papers 1890-1892 of suffragette Millicent Garrett Fawcett.³ An early film clip titled 'London. Factory girls on strike' (Figure 3.8) shows workers marching in St Pancras Way near to the (then) Vestry house.⁴



Figure 3.9 Workers on strike, Kings Road, 1911 ²²⁵

¹ Camden New Town

<camdennewtown.info/B/Internet/Camden%20New%20Town/People/Servants.html>

² Andrew August, *Poor women's lives*, London 1999:153

³ Manchester Archives and Local Studies, (microfilm) M50/3/22/1-10

⁴ 'Factory girls of strike, 1911' <britishpathe.com/video/factory-girls-on-strike/query/Camden>

Across London, women let out properties, both as landladies and in their own homes.⁵ Middle-class women took employment, although remaining 'respectable' was an important consideration. It was more often done from within the home, maintaining independence and drawing on networks. Enterprises included dress-making, provision of lodgings and education for children.⁶ Scientist Oliver Heaviside's mother Rachel, who had herself been a governess, opened a small school for girls in 'the best part of the house' at 55 King Street;⁷ and Charles Dickens' mother had a school in (North Gower Street) when the family lived in Bayham Street.⁸

Construction and skilled trades

Employment for men in the first half of the nineteenth century included construction of housing, the canal and railways. At Bangor Wharf, on Regent's Canal, were builders Mansbridge & Mansbridge; at Kentish Town Road Wharf, Grover & Grover. Wood and Co. at Camden Town wharf were named as 'very respectable' in evidence to the House of Lords' enquiry on the coal trade.⁹ Pubs along the High Street, Pratt Street and Camden Road would have acted as 'houses of call' for these working men.¹⁰ In the later half of the century, the railways gave employment both for the passenger and good services and in offices at the main termini.

The Regent's Canal enabled wood to be brought from High Wycombe and iron from the Midlands, and heavy finished products transported to the London docks. While some histories of piano manufacture have focused on the circular factory of Collard and Collard in Chalk Farm, which memorably had a fire, the industry was widespread across Camden Town and included the circular Willis' organ factory in Rochester Place. At the time of the 1870 Paris Commune, an instrument-maker in Georgiana street employed 15 exiles.¹¹

Furniture-making, although mainly centred on Tottenham Court Road, extended into Camden Town, as did coach-making firms¹². Oetzmann & Co, with their retail store near Tottenham Court Road, had their 'works' at 12 Camden Town High Street, and Maples had storage and deliveries in Camden Street. Furniture-makers also provided additional trades – cleaning, repairs and alterations; decorating and furnishing; caretaking, house-letting and

⁵ Alison Kay, 'A little enterprise of her own: lodging house keeping and the accommodation business in nineteenth-century London', *The London Journal* 2003;28(2):41–53.

⁶ Alison Kay, *The foundations of female entrepreneurship*, London 2009:134. a

⁷ Basil Mahon, *The forgotten genius of Oliver Handiside*, London 2017:26.

⁸ Frederic Kitton, *The country Dickens*, London 1905.

⁹ UK Parliament, House of Lords, 'Coal trade: minutes of evidence', *Journal* 1830;62:1466-72.

¹⁰ David Green, *From artisans to paupers*, Aldershot 1995.

¹¹ Piano manufacture in Camden Town <locallocalhistory.co.uk/industrial-history/piano/page1-m.htm> Alastair Lawrence, *Five London piano makers*, London 2010. Thomas Jones, Robert Tomb, 'The French left in exile', in Debra Kelly, Martyn Cornick eds, *A history of the French in London*, London 2013:180.

¹² Peter Hall, *The industries of London*, London 1962:71-95.

advertising for rental; and funerals – even tombstones.¹³

Engraving and printing

Many engravers lived in Camden Town – for example, Richard Rhodes living in Gloucester Place, Samuel Freeman in Jeffreys Street, Benjamin Cranwell in College Street,¹⁴ and the fathers of educationalist Frances Buss and scientist Oliver Heaviside were both engravers. David King Dyer, a miniature painter, lived at 1 Canal Terrace (and also owned the property of 4 to 6 Canal Terrace).¹⁵ George Hawkins was a lithographic artist living at 116 Camden Road Villas, while John Hosmer, 103 Camden Town Villas, and Richard Dent were draughtsman – Dent was the Camden Town surveyor from 1810 to 1850.

Edward Whymper, in his diary, 1856-1859,¹⁶ describes his visits to Camden Town – ‘to Mr Pickersgill’s, R.A.’¹⁷, ‘to Millers’ for optical diagrams and to ‘the Camden locomotive works’ where he ‘sketched one of those magnificent monuments to the name of Stephenson’. Using his own income, Edward Wymper went on to become famous as a mountaineer, leading expeditions in the Alps and Greenland.

The Whymper firm of Lambeth were in good standing with engravers and printers the Dalziell brothers who, producing illustrations for magazines and books, had their business at 53 (now 110) High Street from 1858 with the title The Camden Press.¹⁸ Examples of their work are in the Victorian and Albert Museum. Among the artists whose work they printed were Holman Hunt, Millais, Rossetti and Whistler. They cut the illustrations for Edward Lear’s *Book of Nonsense* (1862), and Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

Charles Goodall started in business printing playing cards and message cards in Soho, central London, in the 1820s. Larger premises in 1830s were found in College Street.¹⁹ With the Goodall sons in the family firm, the company came to lead the national market, and continued through to the World War. A new factory in 1868 (Figure 3.9), extended products into stationery, games and toys, pens and toilet paper, and employed men and women across a range of skills of design, printing, production and distribution.

¹³ Akiko Shimbo, *Furniture-makers and consumers in England, 1754–1851*, London 2015:158.

¹⁴ TNA, Rhodes:PROB11/1903/142; Freeman:PROB11/2249/141; Cranwell:PROB11/2246/237.

¹⁵ TNA, Dyer:MS11936/558/1298304.

¹⁶ Edward Whymper, ‘The apprenticeship of a mountaineer’, in Ian Smith, *Edward Whymper’s London diary, 1855-1859*, London 2008:39-62.

¹⁷ Frederick Richard Pickersgill 1820-1900, painter and book illustrator
<avictorian.com/Pickersgill_Frederick.html>

¹⁸ The Brothers Dalziel, *A record of work, 1840–1890*, London 1901.

¹⁹ Michael Goodall, *The family and the firm 1820-1922*, [no place] 2000.

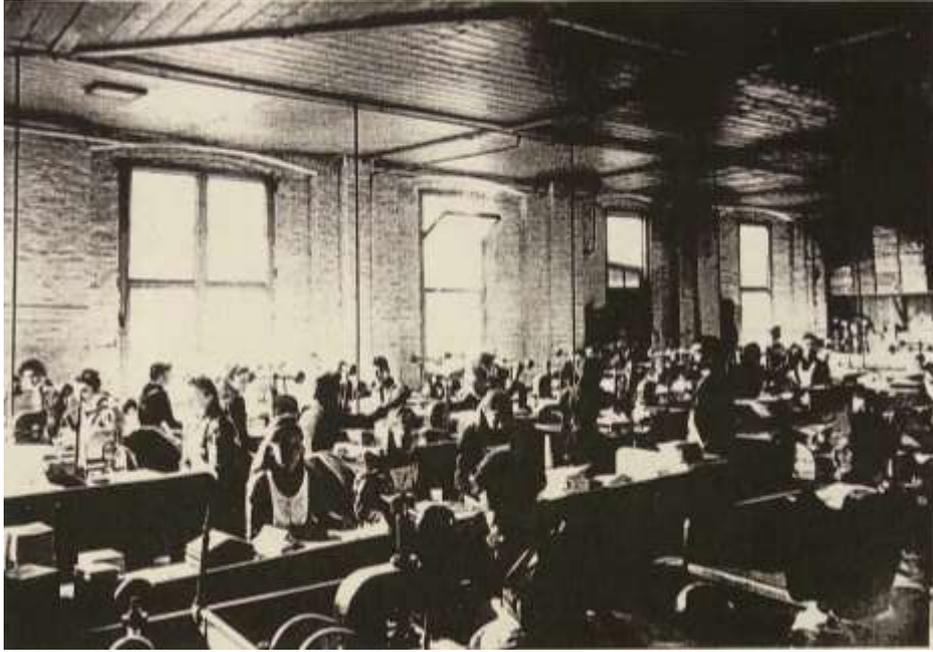


Figure 3.10 Die-stamping works, Goodall's card manufactory, nineteenth century²²⁶