



# 2015 BRNO - CZ

## XXII ENOMETRICS CONFERENCE



ID=147

### Changing Trends in British Wine Consumption, 1800-1914

**Graham HARDING**

**Oxford University – UK**

*grahamharding169@gmail.com*

What wines did British consumers drink in the nineteenth century – and what do changing tastes say about the changing nature of British society and British taste?

Drawing from governmental, archival and trade records, Graham Harding will examine the fluctuating fortunes of port and sherry, which were the staple wines of British consumers from 1700-1850, and claret and champagne, the most successful of the new, 'light' wines that boomed after the 1860s.

Port and sherry sales dropped as a proportion of all wine sales after duty changes in 1860-2 and the sales of unfortified 'light' wines boomed for 15 years until the late 1870s. The sales of sherry (which was drunk by women as well as men) never recovered. Port, aided by new forms of connoisseurship in the late nineteenth century, did recover its lost ground. Low-priced Bordeaux wines took significant share amongst new, middle and lower middle class consumers, whilst Champagne (and other sparkling wines going under that name) came to account for as much as 10% of all wine consumption. By 1914, however, wine consumption per head was largely unchanged from that of 1860.

To what extent were these changes driven by duty structures and pricing; to what extent by deeper changes in the nature of Victorian society? And why did wine consumption, which peaked in the mid-1870s start to decline thereafter? The 'light wine revolution' that William Gladstone wished for to halt the dangerous effect of fortified and adulterated wines never succeeded. Was this because of economic pressures, inadequate distribution, the impact of the temperance movement, the influence of cigarettes or changing patterns of leisure?